



Preliminary Ecological Appraisal

Report prepared for: Mr Peter Webb

The Old Smithy
Holloway Road
Malmesbury
Wiltshire
SN16 9HX

April 2026

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Executive Summary

The proposals comprise the demolition of an existing timber outbuilding and construction of a new garage within a small section of a wider residential plot. The application site is currently characterised by disturbed ground with very limited vegetation, while the wider property and surrounding landscape support more varied habitats, including a traditional orchard and the nearby Tetbury Avon. These higher value features are clearly separated from the works and will not be directly affected.

No Priority Habitats will be lost as part of the development, and no impacts to designated sites are anticipated. There is some potential for indirect effects to the adjacent watercourse during construction, which can be appropriately managed through standard measures secured within a Construction Environmental Management Plan.

The building proposed for removal and the nearby mature tree were found to offer no suitable features for roosting bats, and no evidence of use was recorded. As such, impacts to bats are not anticipated and no further survey effort is required. Other protected and notable species, including badger, dormouse, reptiles, amphibians and riparian mammals, are either absent or considered highly unlikely to be affected. Nesting birds may utilise the nearby tree, and appropriate safeguards will be required to ensure compliance with legislation.

Overall, the site itself supports only limited ecological interest, and with appropriate safeguards in place, the proposals are not expected to result in significant adverse effects on habitats or protected species. Opportunities for biodiversity enhancement can be incorporated where appropriate

1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This report provides the results of a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal undertaken at The Old Smithy, Holloway Road, Malmesbury, Wiltshire SN16 9HX (central Ordnance Survey (OS) Reference ST 93627 87338).
- 1.2 Development proposals are described as the removal of the existing outbuilding in order to facilitate the construction of a new oak-framed garage.
- 1.3 The findings included in this report are based on a survey undertaken during April 2026 by Cotswold Environmental Ltd. The purpose of the survey was to undertake an appraisal of the site for its potential ecological value to notable and protected wildlife, and to look for evidence of such species. The survey results provide information to determine the likely ecological impact the proposed development will have on wildlife species, and to inform the level of further survey effort and mitigation required to comply with relevant nature conservation policies and legislation. The evaluation and findings in this report can be used by Wiltshire Council in their view of a planning application. Survey results detailed within this report should be considered valid for a period of 18 months from the survey date.
- 1.4 The Old Smithy is located to the immediate east of Holloway Road, at the south-eastern edge of Malmesbury. The site location is shown in Fig. 1.
- 1.5 All survey and assessment work was completed in accordance with official assessment guidelines¹ and largely followed that recommended by the Chartered Institute for Ecology and Environmental Management (CIEEM)² and follows the British Standard Code of Practice³.

Survey Objectives

- To determine suitability for protected species
- Ascertain evidence of protected species
- Determine potential ecological impacts the proposed development will have on protected species.
- Inform the level of further survey effort that is required.

¹ Collins J (2023) Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines, 4th edn. Bat Conservation Trust, London.

² CIEEM (2017) Guidelines for Ecological Report Writing. CIEEM, Winchester.

³ British Standards Institution (2013) BS 42020:2013. Biodiversity – Code of practice for planning and development. British Standards Institution, London.

2 METHODOLOGY

Desk Study

- 2.1 A records search was undertaken using freely available desktop resources such as the Multi-Agency Geographic Information for the Countryside⁴ (MAGIC) website. MAGIC was used to search for records of designated sites, habitats and granted European Protected Species Licenses (EPSLs) within a 2km radius. Google Earth⁵ was also used to study the nearby landscape.

Field Survey

- 2.2 Ecological consultant Jason Skinner (NE Class 2 Bat Survey licence 2025-86057-CL18-BAT, NE Barn Owl licence number 2026-88685-CL29-OWL) carried out a field visit on Wednesday 1st April 2026.

Relevant surveyor experience

- 2.3 Jason Skinner has nine years professional ecological experience, primarily involved with bats and reptiles through consultancy and assisting on research projects. Experienced with small-scale and large-scale development projects and involvement in the management and supervision on multiple bat mitigation licences. Co-author of peer-reviewed research papers on reptiles and amphibians. Member, BBCARG and Wiltshire Bat Group.
- 2.4 The field visit involved a walkover using visual encounter survey techniques. The dominant vegetation structure was assessed, allowing habitats on site to be valued for their ecological importance to protected wildlife. Habitats were classified using the UK Habitat Classification Version 2.0 (UKHab V2)⁶, which provides a standardised framework for describing habitat types in the UK.
- 2.5 Binoculars were also used to scan for features likely to support protected species. All protected species were considered during the assessment and all wildlife species were recorded. The work was completed largely following methodologies set out by the Chartered Institute for Ecology and Environmental Management (CIEEM) and British Standard Code of Practice.

Species

- 2.6 All protected species were considered during the survey. Only those considered likely to utilise the site are mentioned in this report.

⁴ Multi-Agency Geographical Information for the Countryside (MAGIC). Crown Copyright and database rights [2026]. Ordnance Survey 100022861. Available at: <http://www.magic.gov.uk/>

⁵ https://www.google.co.uk/intl/en_uk/earth/

⁶ UKHab Ltd (2023). UK Habitat Classification Version 2.0. Available at: <https://ukhab.org/>

Bats

- 2.7 Survey effort was completed in line with official assessment guidelines⁷ and largely followed that recommended by the Chartered Institute for Ecology and Environmental Management (CIEEM)⁸ and British Standard Code of Practice⁹. The assessment followed the standard methodology. The site was searched using visual encounter survey techniques. Potential bat movement corridors and movement barriers were assessed and noted. During the site visit, where possible, all suitable areas were examined for evidence of bats.
- 2.8 Trees deemed suitable for use by roosting bats were identified at species level, their specific features were photographed, and a GPS recording was mapped. Notable bat roosting features may include:
- Rot holes
 - Woodpecker holes
 - Horizontal and/or vertical cankers in the stems of branches
 - Knot holes
 - Scar crevices
 - Loose/flaking bark
 - Covering of dense ivy
 - Bat boxes
 - Any other features deemed suitable for roosting bats

Table 1: Guidelines summary for assessing potential bat roost suitability

Suitability	Description of building, tree or structure
None	The building, tree, or structure has no features with the potential to support roosting bats and is entirely unsuitable. This includes structures that are fully sealed, modern, well-lit, and/or in exposed locations with no access points, no internal voids, and high levels of human disturbance.
Negligible	The building or tree has minimal features (e.g. small gaps or cracks), but these are assessed as highly unlikely to be used by bats due to their condition, location, or lack of access to suitable internal voids.
Low	A structure or tree with one or more potential roost sites that could be used by individual bats opportunistically. However, potential roost sites not suitable for larger numbers or regular use (i.e. maternity or hibernation).
Moderate	A structure or tree with one or more potential roost sites that could be used by bats, but unlikely to support a roost of high conservation status.

⁷ Collins J (2023) Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines, 4th edn. Bat Conservation Trust, London.

⁸ CIEEM (2017) Guidelines for Ecological Report Writing. CIEEM, Winchester.

⁹ British Standards Institution (2013) BS 42020:2013. Biodiversity – Code of practice for planning and development. British Standards Institution, London.

High	A structure or tree with one or more potential roost sites that are obviously suitable for use by larger numbers of bats on a more regular basis and potentially for longer periods of time.
Confirmed roost	Evidence of bats or use by bats found.

Badger

2.9 All habitats within the site boundary were inspected for badger *Meles meles* activity. Whilst on site, the search included evidence of:

- Scratching posts
- Faeces
- Latrines
- Guard-hairs
- Paw prints
- Trackways

Dormouse

2.10 Hedgerows, scrub and treelines within and bordering the surveyed site were assessed for their suitability to support breeding populations of hazel dormice *Muscardinus avellanarius*, as well as suitability to provide connectivity to nearby suitable breeding habitats.

European Hedgehog

2.11 The site was assessed for its suitability to support European hedgehog *Erinaceus europaeus*, a UK Biodiversity Action Plan species and Species of Principal Importance under Section 41 of the NERC Act 2006. Features such as hedgerows, scrub, dense vegetation, log piles, and gaps under fencing were checked for signs of hedgehog activity, including droppings, tracks, or nests. Habitat connectivity with surrounding green spaces was also considered to assess the site's value for hedgehog movement.

Reptiles and Amphibians

2.12 Habitats were assessed for their potential to support reptiles and amphibians, including great crested newt *Triturus cristatus* (GCN). Waterbodies typical of those utilised for breeding and foraging activity, and terrestrial refugia suited to sheltering and basking such as waste heaps and plastic/metal/timber sheeting were noted if present (see limitations). In addition, any dense vegetation including tall ruderal and scrub that is connected to hedgerows and linear tree features was inspected during the assessment.

Riparian mammals

- 2.13 Watercourses adjacent to the site, together with their associated bankside habitats, were assessed for their suitability to support riparian mammals, specifically otter *Lutra lutra*, water vole *Arvicola amphibius*, and Eurasian beaver *Castor fiber*.
- 2.14 The assessment comprised a visual inspection of accessible sections of the river corridor and its margins, focusing on habitat features that may provide opportunities for resting, sheltering, commuting, or foraging. This included consideration of bank structure, vegetation cover, flow characteristics, and levels of disturbance.
- 2.15 A systematic search was undertaken for field signs. For otter, this included evidence such as spraints, footprints, feeding remains, slides, couches, and holts. For water vole, searches targeted characteristic signs including latrines, burrow entrances, feeding stations, grazing lawns, and footprints. For Eurasian beaver, signs such as gnawed or felled trees, feeding remains, scent mounds, tracks, slides, and any evidence of lodges or burrows were also recorded where present.

Nesting Birds

- 2.16 The survey also included an internal and external inspection of the surveyed building for evidence of common nesting birds as well as notable and protected species. Inside the building, artificial light was used to search for birds, dead birds, dead chicks, nesting material and eggs.
- 2.17 All accessible elements of the surveyed buildings containing nesting potential were checked to see if the development would have any adverse effects on nesting birds. The active nests of all wild birds are protected under the Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981 (as amended). An active nest is one that is being built, containing eggs or chicks, or on which fledged chicks are still dependent. Birds within Schedule 1, such as barn owl *Tyto alba*, are also protected from disturbance during the nesting period.
- 2.18 The presence of notable and protected bird species and any signs indicative of their past and present use was taken into consideration during the inspection of the buildings. Likely perches and nesting locations were checked, and all ledges and cavities were examined for nesting debris where accessible.

Limitations

- 2.19 The absence of evidence for a particular species does not confirm its absence from the site. Wildlife, including protected species, can be elusive or transient, and may use habitats or structures intermittently, meaning they can go undetected during a single visit.

- 2.20 Evidence of bat activity, such as droppings or feeding remains, can degrade quickly due to weathering or be removed by wind or rain, particularly around external building features. Therefore, the absence of such signs should not be taken as confirmation that bats are not present.
- 2.21 Many UK bat species are crevice-dwellers and can roost in small or concealed spaces such as gaps under roof tiles, behind fascia boards, or within wall cavities. These features are often inaccessible and cannot always be fully inspected during a Preliminary Roost Assessment (PRA).
- 2.22 For Health & Safety purposes the roof of the building was assessed from ground level.
- 2.23 Biological records were not obtained. Given the modest scale and scope of the proposed development, the lack of data from the Local Environmental Records Centre (LERC) is not considered to materially affect the conclusions drawn in this report.

3 RESULTS

Desk Study

Designated sites

- 3.1 According to the MAGIC website, the boundary of the Cotswolds National Landscape lies 840 metres to the west, and one statutory designated site was identified within a 2 km radius; Conygre Mead Local Nature Reserve (LNR), a 2.53 hectare urban fringe reserve located 135 metres to the north-west of the site. No further statutory or non-statutory designated sites were identified within a 2 km radius (see limitations) and no internationally designated sites, such as special areas of conservation (SACs) designated for their bat populations, exist within a 10 km radius of the site.

Granted European Protected Species Licences (EPSL) within a 2km radius

- 3.2 According to the MAGIC website, two EPS licences have been granted for GCN to the north-west of The Old Smithy; the closest was granted in 2017 at a site located 1.2 km, the second was granted in 2021 at a site located 1.5 km from the site. Furthermore, a total of nine Class Licence returns for GCN have been returned from four locations within a 2 km radius, the closest located 1.3 km to the south-west, although no GCN Pond Surveys have been conducted from 2017-2019 within the same radius. No EPSLs for bats were returned from the 2 km desktop study.

Surrounding Habitats

- 3.3 The site is located on the edge of town, where land use transitions from the built environment to the surrounding countryside. Residential development lies to the west and immediately to the east of the site, two channels of the Tetbury Avon flow in a north-south direction. These are lined with well-established bankside vegetation, including mature trees, with several large crack willows *Salix fragilis*

evident. The river corridors are accompanied by grazed pasture fields situated between the watercourses and the A429.

- 3.4 Within the wider 2 km study area, woodland cover is relatively limited, although a number of small and scattered blocks are present. The nearest area of deciduous woodland, listed as a Priority Habitat, is located approximately 95 metres to the north-east of the site. Long Wood, situated around 1.5 km to the north-east, is identified on the Ancient Woodland Inventory as Ancient Replanted Woodland. Additional Priority Habitats recorded within the surrounding area include two traditional orchards, the closest of which lies approximately 20 metres to the south-west within the wider property boundary. An area of wood pasture and parkland is present approximately 1.7 km to the north-east, and three small parcels of lowland meadow are located approximately 1.8 km to the south-east. No further Priority Habitats were identified within the 2 km search area.

Local waterbodies

- 3.5 Through the use of aerial imagery and the MAGIC website, no standing water bodies were identified within a 250 metre radius of the site boundary. The banks of the Tetbury Avon River occur 8 m from the nearest point of the surveyed structure.

Field Survey

- 3.6 Weather conditions during the daytime assessment are shown in the below table. Temperatures were recorded onsite using an Elitech RC-51 Temperature Logger.

Table 2: Weather conditions during Preliminary Ecological Appraisal

Date	Start	Finish	Temp °C	Wind	Cloud %	Rain	Notes
1/04/2026	10:30	12:00	12	12 km/h	80	Dry	N/A

Onsite Habitats

- 3.7 The site forms part of The Old Smithy, comprising a residential dwelling with an associated outbuilding set within a wider plot near the Tetbury Avon. The surrounding land reflects a typical domestic garden setting, with managed lawn, ornamental and semi-natural vegetation, and several scattered mature trees. The application site lies to the south-east of the main dwelling and is accessed via a hardstanding driveway. It comprises a small, enclosed area centred on a timber-framed outbuilding, with largely bare ground following recent vegetation clearance and very limited established plant growth. A single mature sycamore *Acer pseudoplatanus* is located approximately 4 m to the east of the structure.
- 3.8 The Tetbury Avon runs approximately 8 m to the east of the application area, separated from the site by a line of mature common hawthorn *Crataegus monogyna* shrubs along the riverbank, forming a clear boundary with the adjacent riverside habitat.

- 3.9 No ponds are present within the survey area, and no ponds or Priority Habitats will be lost or affected by the proposed works.
- 3.10 The outbuilding is a detached structure of simple timber frame construction, predominantly clad in corrugated metal sheeting with limited areas of timber cladding. Internally, it is divided into four compartments, with a partially open northern elevation allowing direct access. The structure lacks bargeboards, soffits, guttering, enclosed roof voids, and internal cavities. Sparse ivy *Hedera helix* growth is present on the rear elevation.
- 3.11 The surrounding land to the south, east and west is dominated by bare ground following recent clearance, with only small patches of vegetation remaining. These comprise perennial rye-grass *Lolium perenne*, cow parsley *Anthriscus sylvestris*, common nettle *Urtica dioica* and cleavers *Galium aparine*.
- 3.12 The mature sycamore located approximately 4 m to the east of the outbuilding (GR ST 93634 87332) has three main stems and a DBH of approximately 60 cm.

Notable Flora

- 3.13 No plant species listed under Schedule 8 or 9 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act (1981) were identified on site (see limitations). Site habitats are shown in Fig 2: Site Map.

Species

Bats

- 3.14 The outbuilding was subject to a detailed Preliminary Roost Assessment (PRA), including both an external and internal inspection. Externally, the structure was found to be of relatively simple construction. No gaps were identified within the sections of wooden cladding, and the overlapping corrugated metal sheets were tightly fitted, with no suitable crevices observed that could support crevice-dwelling species. The building lacks additional features such as soffits, bargeboards or lifted roofing elements that might otherwise provide access points. Ivy growth present along the rear of the structure was sparse and not considered sufficiently dense to conceal potential roosting features or to provide roosting habitat in its own right. No evidence of bat activity, such as droppings, staining or feeding remains, was recorded during the external inspection.
- 3.15 An internal inspection of the structure confirmed that the roof comprises exposed timber rafters beneath the metal sheeting, with no roofing underlay, insulation, or internal lining present. The internal walls are similarly unlined, and the building offers no enclosed voids or sheltered cavities suitable for roosting bats. No evidence of bats was recorded internally, with no droppings, feeding remains such as discarded insect wings, or other signs of use identified.

- 3.16 The single sycamore tree within the application site was assessed from ground level for Potential Roosting Features (PRFs). The tree did not exhibit any features associated with bat roosting potential, such as rot holes, cavities, splits, or areas of flaking bark.
- 3.17 While no roosting features or evidence of bat use were identified within the application site, habitats within the wider property, including garden vegetation and the adjacent Tetbury Avon, provide linear features and foraging habitats that may be used by commuting and foraging bats within the local landscape.

Badger

- 3.18 The application site is predominantly composed of bare ground, with limited shelter or foraging value for badgers. No signs of badger activity, such as setts, latrines, snuffle holes, or tracks, were observed within the site or its immediate surroundings during the field survey. The wider property grounds and surrounding wider landscape offer more suitable sett building, foraging and commuting habitat.

Dormouse

- 3.19 The common hawthorn shrubs that lie to the east of the application site offer limited value for hazel dormouse, as it lacks the structural and floristic diversity typically associated with dormouse nesting or foraging. No evidence of dormouse activity was observed during the survey.

European Hedgehog

- 3.20 The bare and disturbed ground present within the application site is of low suitability for European hedgehog, offering limited foraging and sheltering opportunities, although habitats within the wider property grounds will provide more suitable features. No field signs indicating hedgehog presence were identified during the assessment.

Nesting Birds

- 3.21 The outbuilding was assessed for its suitability to support nesting birds and although the open nature of the structure offers access to small Passerines and barn swallow *Hirundo rustica*, no evidence of nesting was discovered during the building assessment and the structure was considered to be unsuitable for nesting/roosting barn owl due to regular disturbance and lack of internal ledges and perches.
- 3.22 A nearby sycamore tree will offer nesting opportunities for a variety of species, although no bird nests were identified during the ground level tree assessment.

Reptiles and Amphibians

- 3.23 The application site offers few opportunities for reptile and amphibian species as the site comprises largely bare ground with minimal vegetative cover or structural complexity. No log piles, compost heaps, rubble, or other refugia were observed. Nearby vegetation offers some limited potential for

shelter and foraging, although such areas are limited in extent and located outside the application site. No ponds are present within the site and no reptiles or amphibians were observed during the field survey.

Riparian mammals

- 3.24 No evidence of otter, beaver or water vole was recorded during the field survey. This includes the absence of spraints, feeding remains, footprints, burrows, or latrines. However, the adjacent channel of the Tetbury Avon, which runs immediately east of the survey area, would provide potential commuting and foraging habitat for otter, and suitable burrowing and cover habitat for water vole along the vegetated sections of the earth banks.

4 DISCUSSION & RECOMMENDATIONS

Proposals

- 4.1 The proposals are for the construction of a new garage which will require the removal of the existing timber framed structure. A planning application shall be submitted to Wiltshire Council in due course. The purpose of the survey was to undertake an appraisal of the site for its potential ecological value to notable and protected wildlife, and to look for evidence of such species. The survey results provide information to determine the likely ecological impact the proposed development will have on wildlife species, and to inform the level of further survey effort and mitigation required to comply with relevant nature conservation policies and legislation.

Habitats

- 4.2 The application site forms part of a wider residential plot on the edge of the town, where habitats reflect a mix of domestic land use and nearby semi-natural features. Within the application boundary itself, habitats are limited and affected by recent disturbance. The area is dominated by bare ground with only small patches of remnant vegetation. A single mature sycamore provides the only notable feature within the site. The wider property, however, supports a more varied range of habitats. This includes managed garden areas, scattered mature trees, and notably a traditional orchard located approximately 20 metres to the south-west of the application site. This area is identified as a Priority Habitat and represents a feature of higher ecological value within the local area, offering greater structural diversity and opportunities for wildlife. The application site is clearly separate from this area, and the proposed works will not directly affect it.
- 4.3 Within the surrounding 2 km landscape, a range of Priority Habitats are present, including deciduous woodland, ancient woodland, wood pasture and parkland, and lowland meadow. The Tetbury Avon, located approximately 8 m to the east of the site, is the most notable nearby feature, with its associated bankside vegetation contributing to local habitat connectivity. While these habitats add

ecological value to the wider landscape, the application site itself is relatively contained and does not form a strong link to these features. One statutory designated site, Conygre Mead Local Nature Reserve (LNR), is located within 2 km of the application site. However, the site is not directly connected to this designation, and no impacts are anticipated as a result of the proposed development.

- 4.4 The application site also lies within an Impact Risk Zone associated with a designated site located further afield. Given the nature and scale of the proposals, the development is not considered likely to have an adverse effect on any designated sites.
- 4.5 The proposals involve the demolition of the existing outbuilding and the removal of the single sycamore tree within the application site. No Priority Habitats will be affected, and no other vegetation will be lost. Access is already in place via an existing hardstanding driveway, so no additional habitat loss is required to facilitate the development.
- 4.6 Although no direct impacts to the Tetbury Avon are anticipated, there is potential for indirect effects during construction, such as pollution or disturbance. To manage this, it is recommended that a Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) is put in place. This should include pollutions prevention measures such as installation of buffers, appropriate storage of chemicals, reducing airborne dust, and minimising use of overnight lighting, to ensure that the river and nearby habitats are protected.
- 4.7 With appropriate safeguards in place, the proposed development is unlikely to result in adverse impacts on local habitats.

Species

Bats

- 4.8 According to the MAGIC database, no EPSLs for bats have been granted for bats within a 2 km radius, although habitats surrounding the site are considered to have a high level of suitability to support foraging and commuting activity for bats of various species.
- 4.9 A Preliminary Roost Assessment (PRA) of the structure proposed to be removed as part of the development was undertaken. The assessment considered the presence of Potential Roosting Features (PRFs), evidence of bat use and the suitability of the structure to support roosting bats. Subsequently, the structure was found to be of lightweight construction with a timber frame and a flat roof clad in metal box-profile sheeting. No gaps, crevices or raised materials that could function as PRFs for crevice-dwelling bats were identified. Internally, the structure is highly exposed and well illuminated due to the open entrances. The structure lacks enclosed roof voids, cavities or sheltered recesses that could provide suitable roosting conditions. No evidence of bat use, such as droppings, or feeding remains was identified during the survey. The outbuilding is therefore considered to provide

negligible suitability for roosting bats and the removal of this structure as part of the proposals is not expected to result in impacts to bats.

- 4.10 A ground-level tree assessment of the onsite tree also recorded no suitable PRFs. Consequently, no further bat survey effort is considered necessary. However, all workers should be vigilant and mindful of bats, taking extra care at all times during tree felling and the demolition of the outbuilding. In the unlikely event that bats are discovered, work should cease immediately and a suitably qualified ecologist contacted for further advice.
- 4.11 It should be noted that if bats are discovered, works would not be able to lawfully proceed until further surveys have been completed and a full mitigation and compensation strategy has been designed. A Bat Mitigation licence would be required from Natural England before works commence.
- 4.12 To minimise potential impacts on foraging and commuting bats, it is recommended that any new external lighting be designed in accordance with best practice guidance, to prevent excessive light spill onto surrounding habitat features. Consequently, any proposed lighting scheme must ensure that light spill is minimised, and dark corridors are retained. Sensitive lighting measures should be detailed within the CEMP to avoid unnecessary artificial lighting during the construction period and to reduce light spill onto the adjacent river

Nocturnal lighting measures

- 4.13 In addition to the above, any permanent external lighting installed as part of the development must be used in accordance with Guidance Note 08/23: Bats and Artificial Lighting¹⁰. When selecting appropriate external lighting, the following specifications should be taken into consideration:
- Any external lighting incorporated into the proposed development should be LED luminaires due to their sharp cut-off, lower intensity, good colour rendition and dimming capability.
 - Luminaires should feature peak wavelengths higher than 550nm to avoid the component of light most disturbing to bats¹¹.
 - All luminaires should lack UV elements when manufactured. Metal halide, fluorescent sources should not be used¹²

Badger

- 4.14 The site is considered unsuitable for regular badger activity, with no setts, latrines, foraging signs or evidence of movement recorded during the field survey. The disturbed nature of the site further reduces its suitability. As such, no direct or indirect impacts to badger are anticipated as a result of the proposed development, and no further surveys are considered necessary.

¹⁰ <https://theilp.org.uk/publication/guidance-note-8-bats-and-artificial-lighting/>

¹¹ Stone, E.L. (2013) *Bats and lighting: Overview of current evidence and mitigation*

¹² Bat Conservation Trust & Institute of Lighting Professionals (ILP) 2023. *Guidance Note 08/23: Bats and artificial lighting in the UK. Bats and the Built Environment Series.*

Dormouse

- 4.15 The absence of structurally diverse, native hedgerows or shrubs within the garden confirms that the construction area is of negligible value to hazel dormouse. No field evidence of dormice was recorded during the survey, and the site lacks suitable habitat features such as dense, floristically diverse understorey or continuous connectivity to known dormouse habitat.
- 4.16 On this basis, dormice are considered absent, and no adverse impacts are expected. Further survey or mitigation for this species is not required.

European Hedgehog

- 4.17 Although no field evidence (e.g. droppings, tracks or nests) of European hedgehog was observed during the survey, the species may occasionally traverse the site. However, the site is dominated by bare ground, which provides no permanent shelter or foraging value. Given the absence of significant habitat features, the development is not expected to impact this species.

Nesting Birds

- 4.18 No nests or signs of nesting were found during the survey. However, the tree offers suitable nesting habitat for a range of common bird species.
- 4.19 To avoid committing an offence, tree felling should be undertaken outside of the bird nesting season which runs from February to August. If this is not possible, a pre-works nesting bird check must be undertaken by a suitably qualified ecologist no more than 24 hours prior to works. Irrespective of the time of year, if nesting birds are discovered, an area around the nest site should be protected from disturbance with a suitable fence (not HERAs fencing) that should include an appropriate buffer zone. Work should then be avoided in this area until the nest is no longer in use. Buffer zones in this respect will normally be 5m in diameter, and will be delineated by canes, cordon tape and signage.

Reptiles and Amphibians

- 4.20 The application site is dominated by bare and disturbed ground, offering very limited suitability for reptiles and amphibians. No suitable refugia such as log piles, rubble, or artificial cover objects were identified within the site, and vegetation is sparse and fragmented in nature. While habitats immediately surrounding the application site provide a small degree of sheltering and foraging opportunity, these areas are limited in extent and largely isolated from more suitable semi-natural habitat. The Tetbury Avon, located immediately to the east, forms a linear feature which may act as a partial constraint to the movement of terrestrial amphibians, particularly in the absence of suitable crossing points and given the disturbed and fragmented nature of habitats within the application site. No ponds are present within or immediately adjacent to the site, and no reptiles or amphibians were recorded during the survey.

- 4.21 On this basis, reptiles and amphibians are considered highly unlikely to be present within the application site, and no impacts to local populations are expected as a result of the proposed development. No further survey effort is required.

Riparian mammals

- 4.22 No evidence of riparian mammals was identified along the adjacent channel of the Tetbury Avon during the survey. The river lies immediately to the east of the application site and represents a feature of high ecological value, providing suitable habitat and connectivity for otter and water vole. However, the proposed works are small in scale and largely limited to the footprint of the existing building, with no encroachment into the river or its banks. On this basis, no direct impacts to riparian mammals will arise from the development.
- 4.23 Given the close proximity of the Tetbury Avon, there is some limited potential for indirect effects during construction, primarily in relation to pollution or disturbance. To address this, Reasonable Avoidance Measures (RAMs) will be implemented as part of a Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP). These will include appropriate storage of materials and chemicals, prevention of surface water run-off into the river, and control of lighting and noise to minimise disturbance. With these measures in place, no impacts to local riparian mammal populations are expected.

Biodiversity Enhancement

- 4.24 As a householder application, the scheme is exempt from mandatory Biodiversity Net Gain. However, the NPPF (2024) outlines obligations of Local Planning Authorities to promote Biodiversity Net Gain where possible. Suitable options with regards to biodiversity enhancement on site are;

Bats

- 4.25 An option to increase biodiversity relating to bats on site would be to affix two or more bat boxes to mature trees within the site boundary, ideally using either Schwegler 1FF boxes (or similar) or Schwegler 2F boxes (or similar). Alternatively, they may also be pole-mounted in an appropriate position or fixed to the walls of buildings. Bat boxes must be positioned no lower than 4m above ground level and they must not face in a northerly direction.

Nesting Birds

- 4.26 Ways to enhance the site value with regards to bird nesting would be to fit nest boxes to existing trees or buildings. Options include close-hole boxes and open-fronted boxes which would then provide opportunity for a variety of bird species. We recommended that a minimum of two external bird nest box (Schwegler 1B or similar) is installed onsite as part of the proposals.

APPENDIX A: LEGISLATION SUMMARY

Habitats Directive

Species listed in the Habitats Directive 1992 (transposed into UK law through the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010 and subsequently 2017 as amended) for which it is illegal to deliberately capture, kill or disturb any individual, or deliberately damage or destroy a breeding site or resting site. In 2007 and 2009, the Habitats Regulations were amended to define illegal disturbance as that which would affect the ability of a significant group of animals of a European Protected Species to survive, breed or to rear or nurture their young, or to hibernate or migrate, or to affect the local distribution or abundance of the species.

Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006

The act to makes provision about bodies concerned with the natural environment and rural communities; to make provision in connection with wildlife, Sites of Special Scientific Interest, National Parks and the Broads; to amend the law relating to rights of way; to make provision as to the Inland Waterways Amenity Advisory Council; to provide for flexible administrative arrangements in connection with functions relating to the environment and rural affairs and certain other functions; and for connected purposes.

Countryside and Rights of Way (CRoW) Act 2000

The CRoW applies to England and Wales only, enforcing a statutory policy for biodiversity conservation. The UK Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) provides the framework for fulfilling the UK's responsibilities towards the Convention on Biological Diversity. The CRoW Act is compliant with the provisions of the European Convention on Human Rights, requiring consultation where the rights of the individual may be affected by these measures.

The Conservation of Habitats & Species Regulations 2017 (the Habitat Regulations) (as amended)

The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended) consolidate the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010 with subsequent amendments. The Regulations transpose Council Directive 92/43/EEC, on the conservation of natural habitats and of wild fauna and flora (EC Habitats Directive), into national law. They also transpose elements of the EU Wild Birds Directive in England and Wales. The Regulations came into force on 30th November 2017 and extend to England and Wales (including the adjacent territorial sea) and to a limited extent in Scotland (reserved matters) and Northern Ireland (excepted matters). In Scotland, the Habitats Directive is transposed through a combination of the Habitats Regulations 2010 (in relation to reserved matters) and the and the Conservation (Natural Habitats &c.) Regulations 1994. The Conservation (Natural Habitats, &c) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 1995 (as amended) transpose the Habitats Directive in relation to Northern Ireland.

Bats

In England and Wales, bats and their roosts are protected under the Conservation of Species and Habitats Regulations 2017 (as amended) and the Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981 (as amended). Taken together, this legislation makes it an offence to:

- Deliberately capture (or take), injure or kill a bat
- Intentionally or recklessly disturb a group of bats where the disturbance is likely to significantly affect the ability of the animals to survive, breed, or nurture their young or likely to significantly affect the local distribution or abundance of the species whether in a roost or not
- Damage or destroy the breeding or resting place of a bat
- Possess a bat (alive or dead) or any part of a bat
- Intentionally or recklessly obstruct access to a bat roost
- Sell (or offer for sale) or exchange bats (alive or dead) or parts of bats

A roost is defined as being 'any structure or place that is used for shelter or protection' and since bats regularly move roost site throughout the year, a roost retains such designation whether or not bats are present at the time.

Reptiles

All native British species of reptile (of which there are six) are listed in Schedule Five of the Wildlife and Countryside Act (1981) (as amended) and as such are protected from deliberate killing, injury or trade. Therefore, where development is permitted and there will be a significant change in land use, a reasonable effort must be undertaken to remove reptiles off site to avoid committing an offence. The same act makes the trading of native reptile species a criminal offence without an appropriate licence.

Great Crested Newts

Great crested newts and their habitats receive protection under The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended). This species is also afforded full protection under the Schedule 5 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended). Under such legislation it is an offence to:

- Intentionally or recklessly kill, injure or capture a great crested newt;
- Possess or control any live or dead specimen or anything derived from a great crested newt;
- Intentionally or recklessly* damage, destroy or obstruct access to any structure or place used for shelter or protection by a great crested newt; and
- Intentionally or recklessly* disturb a great crested newt while it is occupying a structure or place which it uses for that purpose.
- Damage or destroy a breeding site or resting place.
- Sell, barter, exchange or transport or offer for sale great crested newts or parts of them.

*Reckless offences were added by the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000, which applies only to England and Wales.

Badger

Badger is protected in Britain under the *Protection of Badgers Act 1992* and *Schedule 6 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981* (as amended).

The legislation affords protection to Badgers and Badger setts and makes it a criminal offence to:

- wilfully kill, injure, take, possess or cruelly ill-treat a Badger, or to attempt to do so;
- interfere with a sett by damaging or destroying it;
- to obstruct access to, or any entrance of, a Badger sett; or
- to disturb a Badger when it is occupying a sett.

Dormouse

The dormouse has undergone substantial declines in recent years as a result of habitat loss, deterioration and fragmentation and is consequently protected as a 'European Protected Species' under the 2017 Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations, which implements the EC Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC in the United Kingdom. In relation to European Protected Species (EPS), the 2017 Regulations make it an offence to:

- Deliberately capture, injure or kill any wild animal of a EPS;
- Deliberately disturb wild animals of any such species, in particular any disturbance which is likely to:
 - (i) impair their ability to survive, to breed or reproduce, or to rear or nurture their young; or to hibernate or migrate or
 - (ii) affect significantly the local distribution or abundance of the species to which they belong;
- Damage or destroy a breeding site or resting place of such an animal; and/or
- To (a) be in possession of, or to control; (b) to transport any live or dead animal or any part of an animal; (c) to sell or exchange or (d) offer for sale or exchange any live or dead animal or part of an animal of an EPS.

In addition, Dormice are protected under the 1981 Wildlife and Countryside Act (as amended).

Dormice are listed on Schedule 5 of the Act and are subject to the provisions of Sections 9.4b and 9.4c, which make it an offence to:

- Intentionally or recklessly disturb a Dormouse while it is occupying a structure or place which it uses for shelter or protection; and/or
- Intentionally or recklessly obstruct access to any structure or place used for shelter or protection by a Dormouse.

Birds

All common wild birds are protected under The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (and as amended). Under this legislation it is an offence to:

- Kill, injure or take any wild bird
- Take, damage or destroy the nest of any wild bird while it is in use or being built
- Take or destroy the egg of any wild bird

Certain rare breeding birds are listed on Schedule 1 of The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (and as amended). Under this legislation they are afforded the same protection as common wild birds and are also protected against disturbance whilst building a nest or on or near a nest containing eggs/unfledged young.

APPENDIX B: MAPS & SITE PLANS

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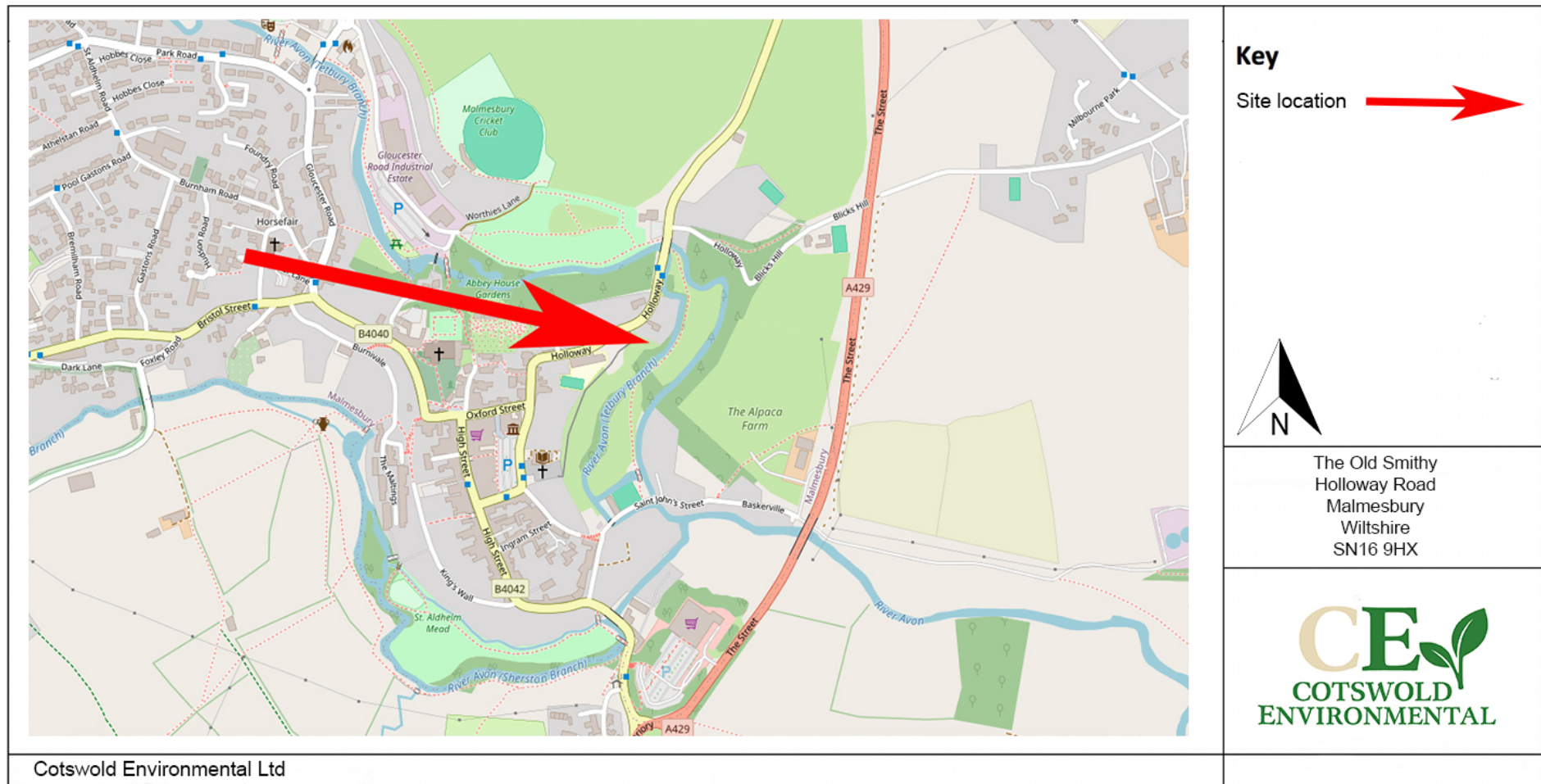
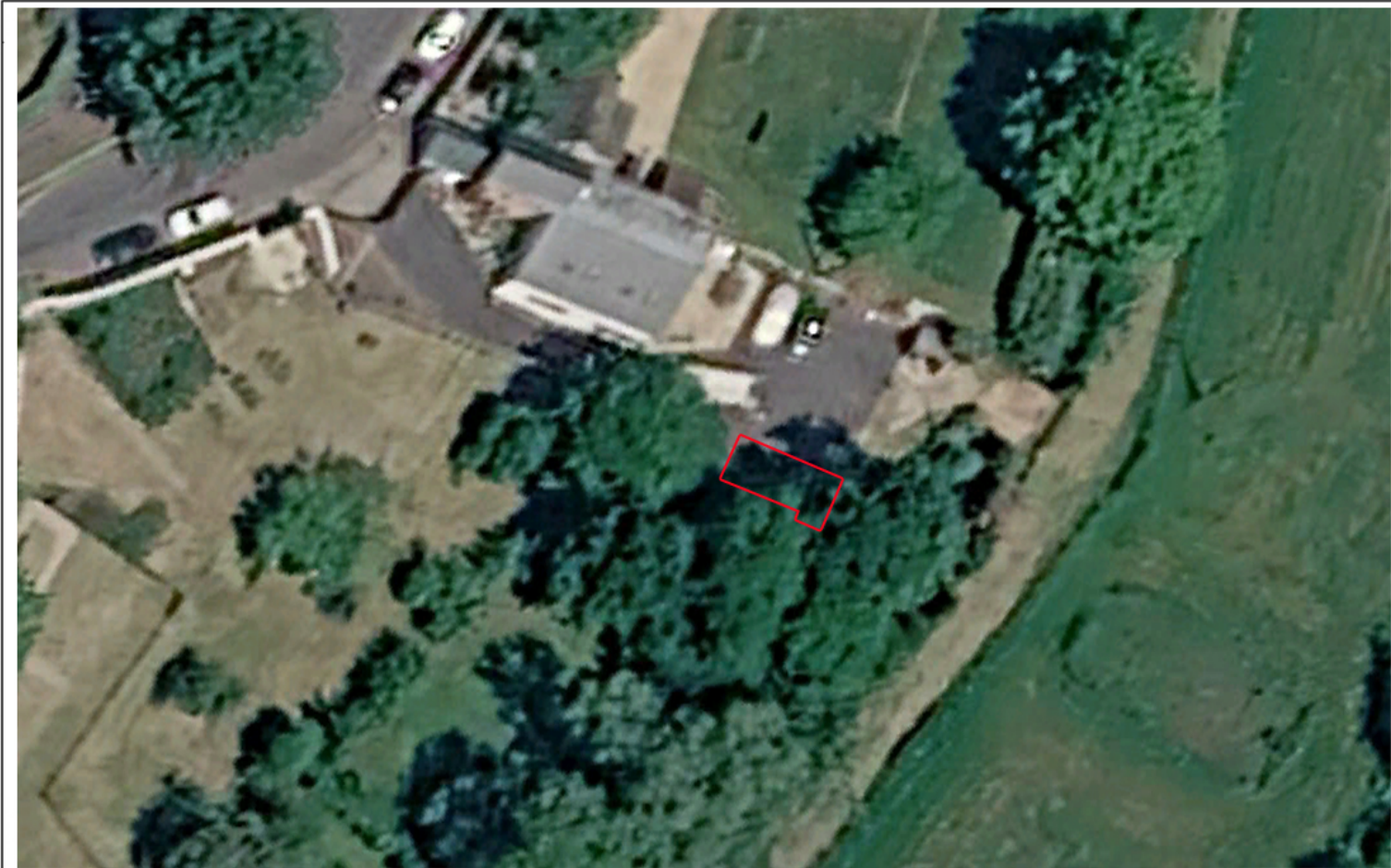


Figure 1: Location Map



Key
Survey boundary 

The Old Smithy
Holloway Road
Malmesbury
Wiltshire
SN16 9HX



Cotswold Environmental Ltd

Figure 2: Habitat Map

APPENDIX C: SITE IMAGES



Photo 1: A general view of the site from the west.



Photo 2: A general view of the site from the north-east.



Photo 3: A view of the timber framed outbuilding from the rear.



Photo 4: An internal view of the timber framed outbuilding.



Photo 5: Bare earth surrounding the structure to the rear.



Photo 6: Tarmacked driveway to the front of the structure.



Photo 7: The adjacent sycamore that grows within the application site.



Photo 8: A view of the adjacent stretch of the Tetbury Avon.