

Ecological Impact Assessment

Maunditts Park Farm Barn

February 2025

Ecology | Green Space | Community | GIS

Unit 1, Brassmill Lane Enterprise Centre | Bath | BA1 3JN

01225444114 | info@ethosep.co.uk

www.ethosep.co.uk



Report Produced for

BA Marsh Farming

Written by:

Ellie Shearn, Ecologist

Approved by:

Jim Phillips, Managing Director

Issue:

Final

Date:

February 2025

Project:

ETH25-036



CONTENTS

	Page(s)
SUMMARY	3
1 INTRODUCTION	4
2 POLICY AND LEGISLATION	6
3 METHODOLOGY	7
4 BASELINE ECOLOGICAL CONDITIONS	11
5 DESCRIPTION OF THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT	22
6 ASSESSMENT OF IMPACTS AND MITIGATION MEASURES	24
7 ENHANCEMENTS	27
8 MONITORING	29
9 CONCLUSIONS	30
APPENDIX 1 POLICY	33
APPENDIX 2 SURVEY METHODOLOGY	38
APPENDIX 3 – STRUCTURES ASSESSMENT PHOTOS	40

SUMMARY

Purpose of the Report	This Report has been produced by Ethos Environmental Planning on behalf of BA Marsh Farming. It provides an assessment of the likely ecological effects associated with the proposed Class Q barn conversion of an area of land known as 'Maunditts Park Farm Barn'.
Description of the scheme	The development proposals for the site include plans for a Class Q barn conversion application.
Methodology	A desk study, UK Habitat Classification survey and bat structures inspection were undertaken for the site in February 2025.
Baseline Ecological Conditions	The site comprises developed land, sealed surface with a cow barn, bare ground, modified grassland, other neutral grassland and a hedgerow with trees. Pigeons were confirmed to be nesting in the barn. The trees and boundary hedgerows were assessed as suitable habitat for invertebrates, commuting bats and birds.
Key impacts and mitigation	The development layout has been designed to avoid impacts on ecological features in the immediate vicinity, such as the adjacent hedgerows and trees. Mitigation measures are described to ensure compliance with protected species legislation for bats and birds.
Conclusion	Assuming the implementation of effective mitigation measures, as set out in this report, no significant adverse ecological effects are predicted. The proposed development is therefore in accordance with relevant national and local planning policies in relation to nature conservation and relevant wildlife legislation.

1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This Ecological Impact Assessment (EclA) report has been prepared by Ethos Environmental Planning (Ethos) on behalf of BA Marsh Farming. The EclA was written by Ellie Shearn BSc (Hons) ACIEEM, Ecologist, and approved by Jim Phillips, Managing Director at Ethos. The details and experience of the authors and field survey team are provided in Section 3.15.
- 1.2 The report provides the results of an EclA in relation to the proposed development of Land at Maunditts Park Farm Barn (Central Grid Reference ST 94986 85767), hereafter referred to as 'the site' and shown in Figure 1. The site is located adjacent to the town of Malmesbury, Wiltshire.
- 1.3 The site comprises 0.05 hectares and includes an area of modified grassland, bare ground, developed land, sealed surface and other neutral grassland with a cow shed and stable barn present.



Figure 1 Site location

- 1.4 The site is proposed for development of one Class Q barn conversion to a residential structure.
- 1.5 The aims of this EclA report are to:

- provide an assessment of the likely effects of the proposed development on important ecological features on site;
- identify the measures required to mitigate impacts on site biodiversity;
- identify opportunities to deliver ecological enhancements and measurable gains for biodiversity as part of the development proposals; and
- to enable the Local Planning Authority to assess whether the proposals comply with relevant planning policy or legislation.

1.6 This report has been produced following the approach set out in CIEEM's 'Guidelines for Ecological Report Writing' (CIEEM, 2017).

2 POLICY AND LEGISLATION

2.1 National Policy

- 2.1.1 The **National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)** (published Dec 2024) sets out national planning policy, including policies of relevance to conserving and enhancing the natural environment. Policies of relevance to the proposed development (parts of paragraphs 187, 192, 193 and 198) are provided in Appendix 1.

2.2 Local Policy

- 2.2.1 The Wiltshire local plan. Relevant policies from the Core Strategy (2015) are listed below and provided in detail within Appendix 1:

- Core Policy 13: Spatial Strategy for the Malmesbury Community Area
- Core Policy 50: Biodiversity and Geodiversity
- Core Policy 51: Landscape
- Core Policy 52: Green Infrastructure

- 2.2.2 Wiltshire Council submitted the Wiltshire Local Plan to the Secretary of State for Housing Communities and Local Government for independent examination on 28 November 2024 and is not available for review at the time of writing.

2.3 Relevant Legislation

- 2.3.1 The following pieces of legislation have been considered within this assessment with an explanation of their relevance provided in Table 1.

Table 1 Relevant legislation

Legislation	Relevance
Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended, including by the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000), which provides legislative protection for certain species. The Act also prohibits the spread of invasive plant species, as well as providing the mechanism for the designation and protection of Sites of Special Scientific Interest;	Presence of nesting birds on site.
The Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006 (the NERC act) places a duty on all public authorities, including local planning authorities, to consider biodiversity in their work. Local planning authorities are to ensure that there is no net loss of biodiversity on a site, no net loss in habitat connectivity and aims to enhance biodiversity.	Potential presence of hedgehog on site Enhancements for biodiversity

3 METHODOLOGY

3.1 Scope of Assessment

3.1.1 This assessment has been undertaken following the approach set out in the '*Guidelines for Ecological Impact Assessment in the UK and Ireland, 1.3*' (CIEEM, 2018). The assessment has considered 'Important Ecological Features' that are present within the 'Zone of Influence' of the project. Important Ecological Features for this project comprise¹:

- Designated nature conservation sites;
- Habitats and Species of Principal Importance for the Conservation of Biodiversity in England;
- Legally protected species; and
- Red Listed or rare species (based on Red Data Book lists, Birds of Conservation Concern and species considered to be nationally rare / scarce).

3.1.2 The Zone of Influence (Zoi) is the area over which the project could have an influence on ecological features. The Zoi is likely to vary for different features. However, in general terms the Zoi for this development proposal is considered to comprise the land within the red line boundary as well as immediate adjacent habitat features. It also includes designated nature conservation sites in the surrounding area.

3.1.3 The scope of the assessment was informed by an 'UKHab and desktop assessment' undertaken in February 2025. The purpose of this was to identify the habitats on site, their potential for protected species and to establish the scope of surveys that would be required to inform a future planning application at the site.

3.1.4 The overall assessment has been informed by guidelines provided in CIEEM (2017) Guidelines for Ecological Report Writing.

3.2 Background Data Search

3.2.1 A background data search was received from Wiltshire and Swindon Biological Record Centre in February 2025. The search area included records of bats within 2km of the proposed development site. No further data was considered necessary considering the nature of the proposals.

3.2.2 An additional search for statutory designated sites within 2km of the development site and granted European Protected Species (EPS) licences within 2km of the site boundary was undertaken using publicly available information (DEFRA Magic map).

¹ Box 14 in CIEEM's ECiA Guidelines (2018)

3.3 UK Habitat Classification Survey

- 3.3.1 A UKHab survey was undertaken on 5th February 2025. The survey incorporated detailed assessment of the land within the development boundary, including a description and mapping of all key features and habitat types. The survey was carried out to identify the range of habitats within the site and the predominant and notable species of flora. This survey was informed by the UKHab classification Version 2 (UKHab Ltd., 2023).

3.4 NERC S. 41 Mammals

- 3.4.1 The survey included an assessment of the habitats on site for their potential to support NERC Section 41 species such as hedgehog (*Erinaceus europaeus*), polecat (*Mustela putorius*), harvest mouse (*Micromys minutus*) and brown hare (*Lepus europaeus*). This included a search for nests, runs, latrines, paw prints, and live specimens.

3.5 Badger

- 3.5.1 The survey for badger (*Meles meles*) included a search of the development site and surrounding habitats (up to 30metres where feasible) for any evidence including setts, foraging signs (snuffle holes), runs and latrines.

3.6 Hazel Dormouse

- 3.6.1 The survey included an assessment of the potential of the site for hazel dormouse (*Muscardinus avellanarius*), focusing on the connectivity and suitability of the habitat on site.

3.7 Riparian Mammals

- 3.7.1 The survey included an assessment of the site to support riparian mammals such as otter (*Lutra lutra*) and water vole (*Arvicola amphibius*). This included an assessment of the riparian habitats on site or within the wider environment to support these species.

3.8 Bats

- 3.8.1 The methodology for the bat survey has been informed by the *Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists Good Practice Guidelines 4th Edition* (Collins, 2023).
- 3.8.2 Targeted surveys for bats were undertaken as set out in Table 2, with further details of survey methodology provided in Appendix 2.

Table 2 Surveys undertaken for bats

Survey	Description	Date Undertaken
Assessment of habitat suitability	Habitats on site were assessed for their suitability to support foraging and commuting bats.	5 th February 2025
Preliminary roost inspection	Physical external and internal inspection of buildings on site.	
Ground level assessment of trees for roosting bats	Potential roosting features on trees were identified and classified in line with guidance (BCT, 2023).	

3.9 Birds

- 3.9.1 The bird survey included an assessment of the habitats on site for their potential to support protected and notable species of bird as well as their potential to support breeding birds.

3.10 Reptiles

- 3.10.1 The potential presence of reptiles on site was assessed considering the habitats present (availability of refugia and basking areas) and suitability of surrounding environment. The assessment of habitats was informed by the *Herpetofauna Workers Manual* (Gent and Gibson, 2003). Where possible, attempts to confirm reptile presence on site were made following *Froglife Advice Sheet 10 – Surveying for Reptiles* through direct observation in reptile “hotspots” and checking of any existing refugia.

3.11 Amphibians

- 3.11.1 Surveys for GCN were informed by the *Great Crested Newt Conservation Handbook*, Froglife 2001.
- 3.11.2 The site was examined for suitable waterbodies and for breeding terrestrial habitat. Terrestrial habitats providing sufficiently structured vegetation in which amphibians may forage or hibernate over winter were also surveyed for.

3.12 Invertebrates

- 3.12.1 Due to the many invertebrate taxonomic groups that exist, the often-large differences in invertebrate diversity between habitats and the many survey techniques available, invertebrate surveys are highly specific to individual sites. Therefore, an assessment of the site’s potential for invertebrates was undertaken, including the need for targeted surveys, as recommended in *Considering Invertebrates in Preliminary Ecological Appraisals* (Jukes, 2021).

3.13 Limitations

- 3.13.1 The site was fully accessible for the survey and all surveys were undertaken in line with best practice. Therefore, there are considered to be no significant limitations to the assessment.
- 3.13.2 The UKHab survey was undertaken outside of the recognised survey window for botanical species (March – October), however given the size of the site, habitats present and the proposals, it was determined that this was not a significant limitation to the assessment.

3.14 Evaluation of Ecological Features

- 3.14.1 In line with CIEEMs guidelines on EcIA, this assessment has focused on relevant Important Ecological Features. The scale of importance of these features has been determined based on available contextual information, which for this project are considered only to include:
- **International** – of international importance and protected through international legislation;
 - **National** – of importance in England and protected through national legislation;
 - **County** – of importance to the county (Wiltshire) but not sufficiently important to warrant ‘National’ scale of importance; and
 - **Local** – of importance to the local area (Malmesbury), but not sufficiently important to warrant County scale of importance.
- 3.14.2 Potential impacts on Important Ecological Features are identified and assessed; likely significant effects are those likely to result in a change to the conservation status of a habitat or species population or undermine/support nature conservation policy. Mitigation measures have been devised following the mitigation hierarchy; appropriate mechanisms for securing mitigation measures have been identified.

3.15 Personnel

- 3.15.1 The surveyors on site have been detailed in Appendix 2.

4 BASELINE ECOLOGICAL CONDITIONS

4.1 Designated Sites

Statutory designated sites

- 4.1.1 There are no designated sites within 2km of the site and therefore none are considered in this assessment.

Priority habitats

- 4.1.2 Areas of priority meadows are located in close proximity to the site, however no priority habitats are located on site. Given the size of the site and extent of the proposals, it has been assessed that the priority habitats nearby will not be impacted and therefore will not be discussed further in this report.

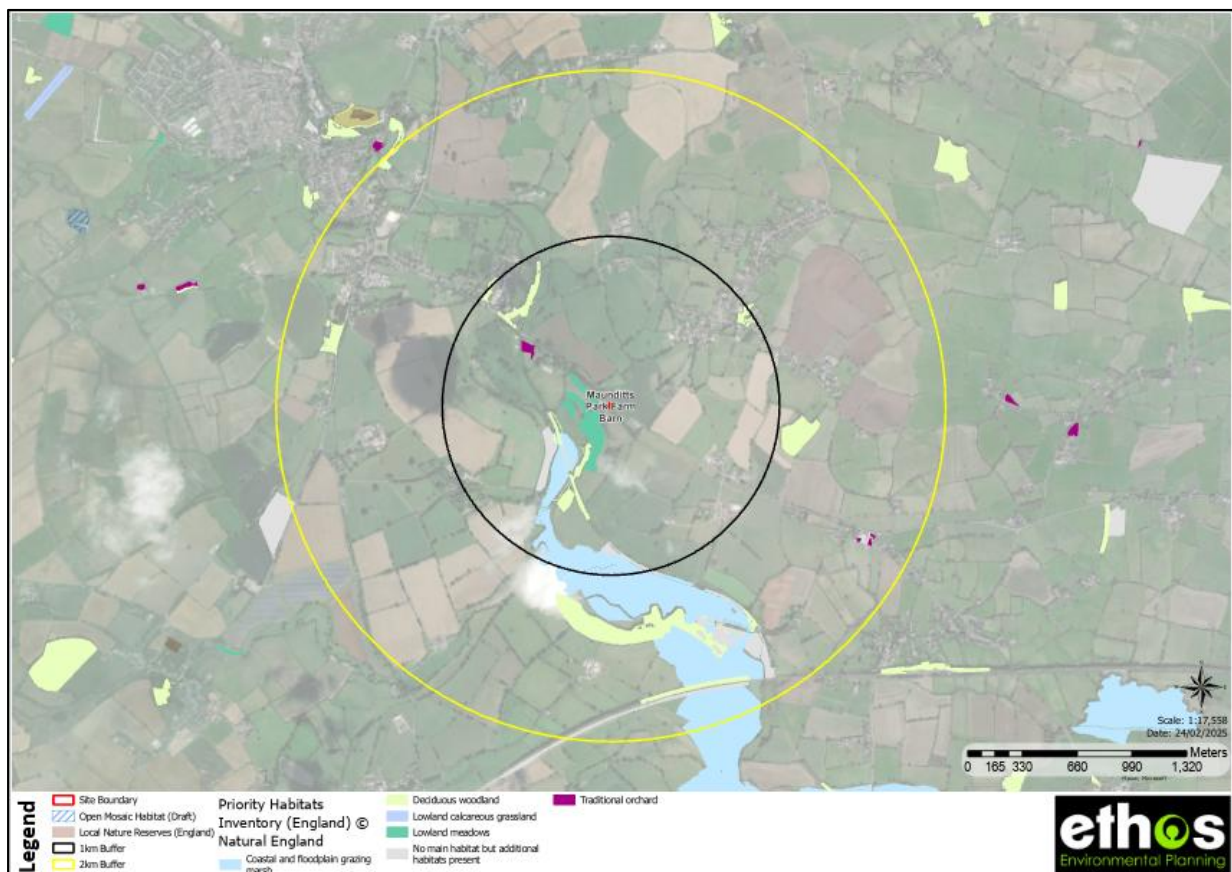


Figure 2 Priority habitats within 2km of the site

4.2 Habitats

General site description

- 4.2.1 The site contains bare ground, developed land, sealed surface and other neutral grassland habitats.
- 4.2.2 There are modified grassland, other neutral grassland, hedgerows and mature tree habitats adjacent to the site boundary
- 4.2.3 The site is rural with the B4042 road adjacent to the northeastern site boundary and arable/agricultural land and a network of hedgerows within the immediate vicinity of the site.

UKHab survey

- 4.2.4 Figure 3 shows the key habitats using the UK habitat classifications. The key features described within this section are:
 - Grassland – Other neutral grassland;
 - Urban – Bare ground; and
 - Urban – Developed land; sealed surface.

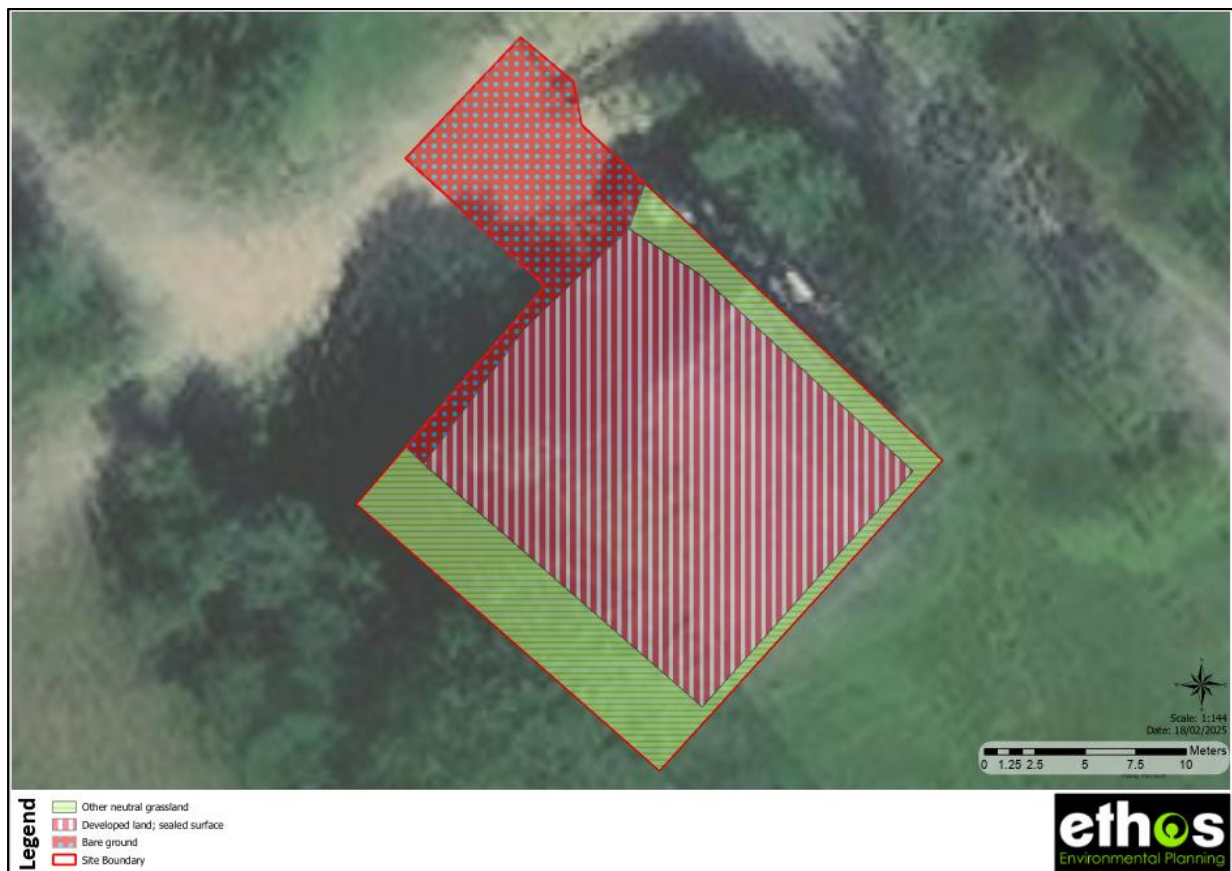


Figure 3 UKhab survey

Other neutral grassland

- 4.2.5 The area surrounding the barn structure was comprised of poached other neutral grassland from the cows in the barn, that extended eastwards into the wider field. The habitat is managed and utilised by cows with a species poor composition. The habitat is of negligible value for conservation importance and will only be considered further in relation to protected species carrying capacity.

Developed land, sealed surface

- 4.2.6 This area of the site is comprised of extremely poached areas of concrete blocks and bare ground with a metal barn structure present above; given the extent of poaching and hay present, it is unclear how far the developed land, sealed surface or bare ground extends. However, the habitat is of negligible value for conservation importance and will not be considered further in this assessment.



Photo 1 Developed land, sealed surface barn with other neutral grassland adjacent



Photo 2 Developed land, sealed surface barn with other neutral grassland adjacent



Photo 3 Developed land, sealed surface with internal barn structure



Photo 4 Developed land, sealed surface barn with other neutral grassland adjacent

Bare ground

- 4.2.7 The access and west of the site is comprised of bare ground in the form of poached earth from vehicular and bovine damage with hay bales present. This habitat is of

negligible value for conservation importance and will not be considered further in this assessment.



Photo 5 Bare ground

4.3 NERC S. 41 Mammals

Habitats

- 4.3.1 The habitats on site provide low value to NERC S.41 mammals as they are well-used by cattle being heavily managed, grazed and poached.
- 4.3.2 The wider environment is suitable for NERC S.41 mammals as it is comprised of arable and agricultural fields with a networks of hedgerows and woodland present.

Assessment

- 4.3.3 No evidence of NERC S.41 mammals were recorded on site.
- 4.3.4 There is some potential for NERC S.41 mammals, specifically hedgehog to be present in a transitory capacity through the wider environment; therefore, they are included in the assessment in a precautionary capacity, that will be covered by good working mitigation measure practices (Section 6.2).

4.4 Badger

Habitats

- 4.4.1 The habitats on site had low suitability for sett-building activities, however, have some potential for transitory or foraging badgers. The habitats on site are suitable for badger and are well connected to the wider environment via a network for arable and agricultural fields with hedgerows and woodland nearby.

Assessment

- 4.4.2 No evidence of badger was recorded on site.
- 4.4.3 There is some potential for badger to be present in a transitory capacity through the wider environment; therefore, they are included in the assessment in a precautionary capacity, that will be covered by good working mitigation measure practices (Section 6).

4.5 Hazel Dormouse

Habitats

- 4.5.1 The habitats on site have low suitability for hazel dormouse, however there are two hedgerows with trees located immediately outside the red line; these hedgerows included species such as elm (*Ulmus procera*), willow (*Salix spp*), bramble (*Rubus fruticosas*), ash (*Fraxinus excelsior*), hawthorn (*Crataegus monogyna*) and mature oak (*Quercus spp*).
- 4.5.2 No other habitat on site was deemed suitable to support hazel dormice.

Assessment

- 4.5.3 It has been assessed that as any suitable potential habitat is outside the red line it therefore will not be impacted by the proposed development.

4.6 Riparian Mammals

Habitats

- 4.6.1 No waterbodies are present on site. The closest suitable waterbody is the River Avon located over 360m west of the site. It is known that riparian mammals are present within the River Avon. There are hedgerows, fields and a potential pond between the site and the River Avon, therefore there is more suitable habitat present between the river and the site.
- 4.6.2 The habitats on site are deemed not particularly suitable for riparian mammals, with only minimal potential for commuting mammals on the grassland on site.

Assessment

- 4.6.3 Given the lack of suitable habitats on site and the abundance of suitable habitats for riparian mammals in the local area, it has been determined that riparian mammals are likely absent on site; the small scale of the proposals ensure that there will be negligible impacts on riparian mammals, if they are present in the local area.

4.7 Bats

Data search

- 4.7.1 Several species of bat were provided in the data search, including Lesser Horseshoe, Greater Horseshoe, Barbastelle, Brown Long-eared Bat, Soprano Pipistrelle, Common Pipistrelle, Noctule, Whiskered Bat, Daubenton's Bat, Myotis Bat species, Serotine.
- 4.7.2 The majority of the records are non-roost, with remaining roost locations exact locations withheld.
- 4.7.3 The data search shows a wide variety of bat species in the local area, which considering the sites' context is expected.

Habitats

- 4.7.4 The site was dominated by developed land, sealed surface with bare ground and other neutral grassland present. There are hedgerows with trees and mature trees located immediately adjacent to the red line boundary which would be suitable for commuting and foraging bats.
- 4.7.5 The wider local area of the site is comprised of arable and agricultural fields with a network of hedgerows and woodlands present as well as the River Avon located approximately 300m southwest of the site, which are all suitable habitats for bats.

Roosting – Structures

- 4.7.6 There is one large, open and fully accessible metal, agricultural/cattle barn present on the site, all photos are shown in Appendix 3.
- 4.7.7 The structure is comprised of breeze block partial walls with corrugated metal and slated wooden wall panels with a saltbox style corrugated metal roof structure; there is no internal loft void, and the structure is open on the southeast and northwest elevations. The roof structure is single layer with metal beams.
- 4.7.8 The structure is light, open and exposed with a corrugated plastic skylight panel present. It has been assessed that the structure holds negligible bat roost potential.
- 4.7.9 To the south east of the large barn is a small wooden stable block (not in the redline), photos are provided at appendix 3. No evidence of bats was found within the stables, and it is likely it would only be used for opportunistic night roosting (although there was no evidence of that). No further action is required in relation to the stables as it is not proposed for development.

Roosting – Trees

- 4.7.10 There are no trees present within the red line boundary of the site.

- 4.7.11 Two mature oak (*Quercus spp*) trees are present immediately off the southwest boundary of the site (Photos 6 and 7); these trees have been subject to a ground level roost assessment and have been assessed as having no potential roost features present.



Photo 6 Oak tree off southwest boundary



Photo 7 Oak tree off southwest boundary

Assessment

- 4.7.12 There are no suitable roosting features for bats on site. However, the site is set within a high value landscape for bats, and immediately adjacent to potential commuting habitat, notably the mature hedge to the south of the site (see figure 4/photo 8). This feature is likely to form a commuting feature local to the site, as such commuting bats are assessed as being of **Local Importance** for nature conservation. The hedgerow to the north of the site (photo 9) is defunct with several dead trees and gaps and abuts a road and is likely to be less important for commuting bats.



Photo 8 Hedgerow running south east from barn



Photo 9 Hedgerow running north east from barn



Figure 4 Site location and bat habitat

4.8 Birds

Habitats

- 4.8.1 The site was dominated by developed land, sealed surface with bare ground and other neutral grassland present. There are hedgerows with trees and mature trees located

immediately adjacent to the red line boundary which would be suitable for nesting birds.

- 4.8.2 The grassland on site was of a short sward at the time of survey and seemed to be well-managed and potentially grazed, therefore unsuitable for ground nesting birds.
- 4.8.3 The main barn structure on site was recorded as having woodpigeon (*Columba palumbus*) actively present at the time of survey and likely nesting there. Woodpigeon are on the UK Amber List for conservation status.
- 4.8.4 A large amount of common ivy (*Hedera helix*) is present and growing on the eastern corner of the barn structure on site and may be suitable for nesting birds.
- 4.8.5 Old swallow (*Hirundo rustica*) nests were recorded as being present within the smaller horse stable located immediately outside the red line boundary to the south east of the site (although this structure falls outside of the redline and will be impacted).

Assessment

- 4.8.6 It has been assessed that woodpigeon are present nesting on site, whilst the barn is not considered an important resource for wood pigeon, mitigation measures are provided within section 6 of this report. Swallow are present and nesting in the barn immediately adjacent, which remains unimpacted.

4.9 Reptiles

Habitats

- 4.9.1 The site was dominated by developed land, sealed surface with bare ground and short sward other neutral grassland present.
- 4.9.2 There are hedgerows with trees and mature trees located immediately adjacent to the red line boundary which would be suitable for commuting or resting reptiles.
- 4.9.3 The wider local area of the site is comprised of arable and agricultural fields with a network of hedgerows and woodlands present as well as the River Avon located over 300m southwest of the site, which are suitable habitats for a range of reptiles.

Assessment

- 4.9.4 Given the limited extent of vegetated habitat on site and its short sward management, it has been assessed that reptiles are likely absent from the site and will not be considered further in this assessment.

4.10 Amphibians

Habitats

- 4.10.1 The site was dominated by developed land, sealed surface with bare ground and short sward other neutral grassland present.
- 4.10.2 There are hedgerows with trees and mature trees located immediately adjacent to the red line boundary which would be suitable for commuting or resting amphibians.
- 4.10.3 The wider local area of the site is comprised of arable and agricultural fields with a network of hedgerows and woodlands present as well as the River Avon located over 300m southwest of the site, which are suitable habitats for a range of amphibians.
- 4.10.4 Three ponds have been recorded within 500m of the site, located within grassland or hedgerows in the wider landscape.

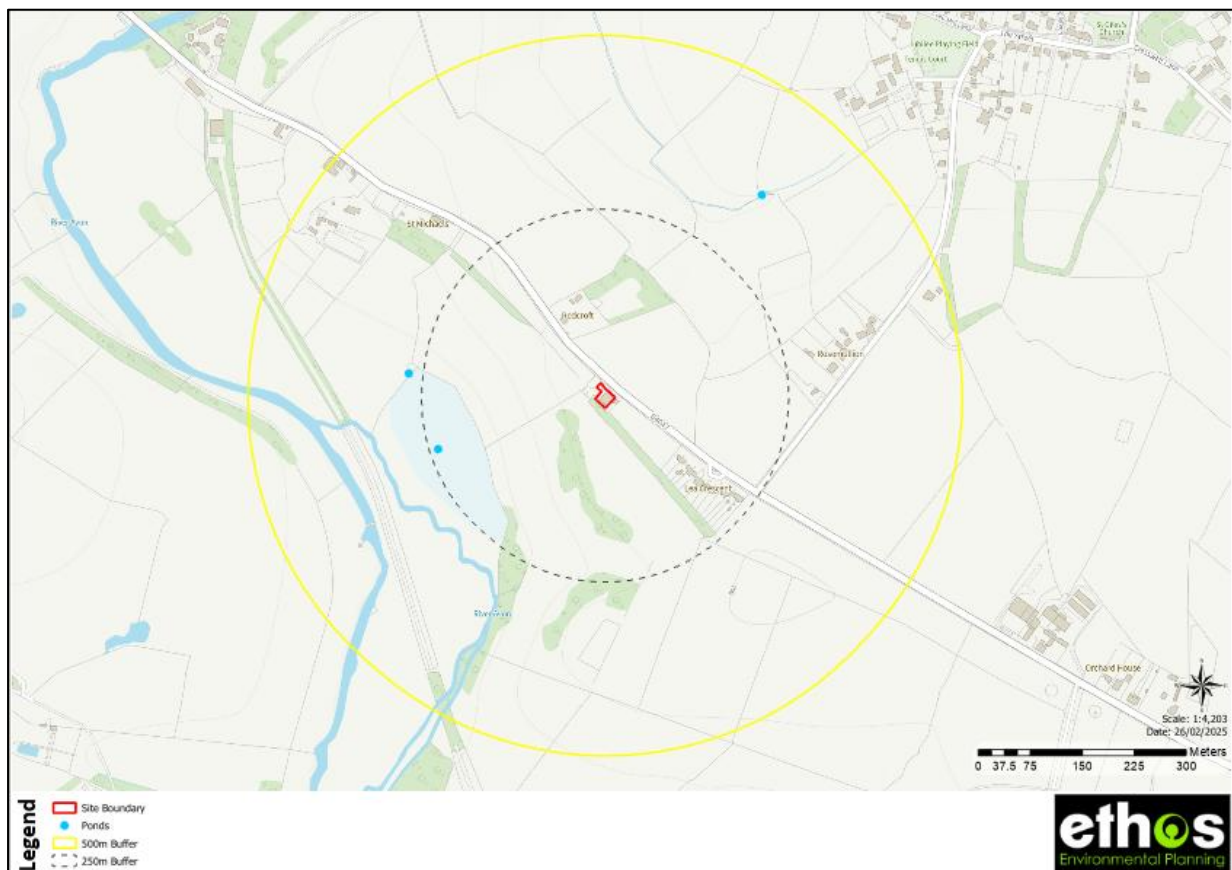


Figure 5 Ponds within 500m of the site

Assessment

- 4.10.5 The site is of a small scale and provides a lack of suitable habitat for amphibians, with the closest pond is located over 200m from the site. It has been assessed that

amphibians are likely absent from the site and therefore are not considered further in this assessment.

4.11 Invertebrates

Habitats

- 4.11.1 The site was dominated by developed land, sealed surface with bare ground and short sward other neutral grassland present.
- 4.11.2 There are hedgerows with trees and mature trees located immediately adjacent to the red line boundary, notably the two mature oak trees which would be suitable for a range of invertebrates.

Assessment

- 4.11.3 It has been assessed that the habitats on site are of a low quality for invertebrates and given the small scale of the proposed development and lack of suitable habitat, invertebrates are considered likely absent from the site and will not be discussed further in this assessment.

4.12 Invasive Species

Habitats and assessment

- 4.12.1 None were recorded on site and are therefore determined to be absent from the site.

4.13 Summary

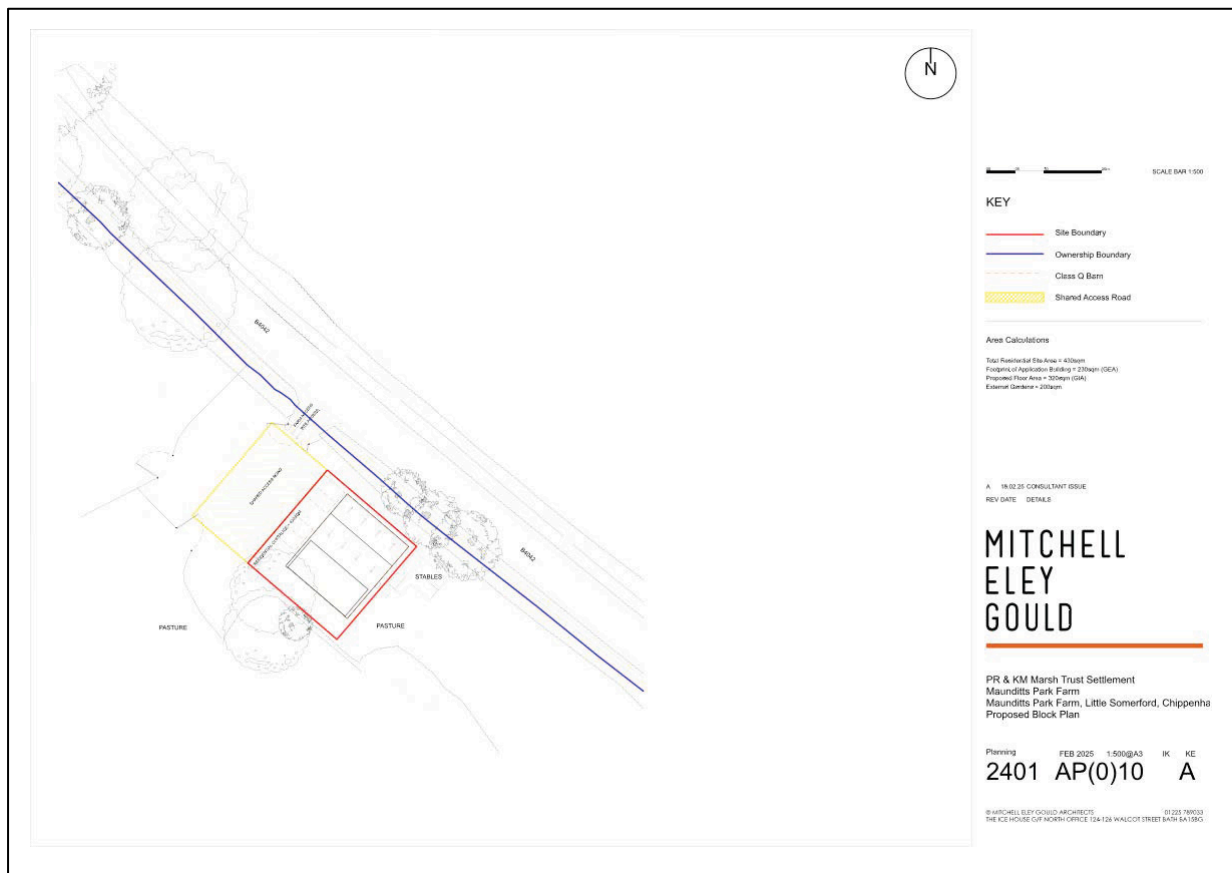
- 4.13.1 A summary of the important ecological features on site and their scale of importance for nature conservation is shown in Table 3.

Table 3 Important ecological features on site

Important Ecological Features	Scale of Importance
Nesting birds – barn	N/A – legal/precautionary
Bats - Commuting	Local

5 DESCRIPTION OF THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

- 5.1 The development proposals comprise a Class Q barn conversion application of the structure on site into one residential dwelling.
- 5.2 The layout of the development has been developed to minimise impacts on site ecology as the main development footprint is located on developed land, sealed surface and bare ground habitat, which is not assessed to be important for nature conservation and is not impacting the adjacent valuable habitat, namely the mature trees and hedgerows.



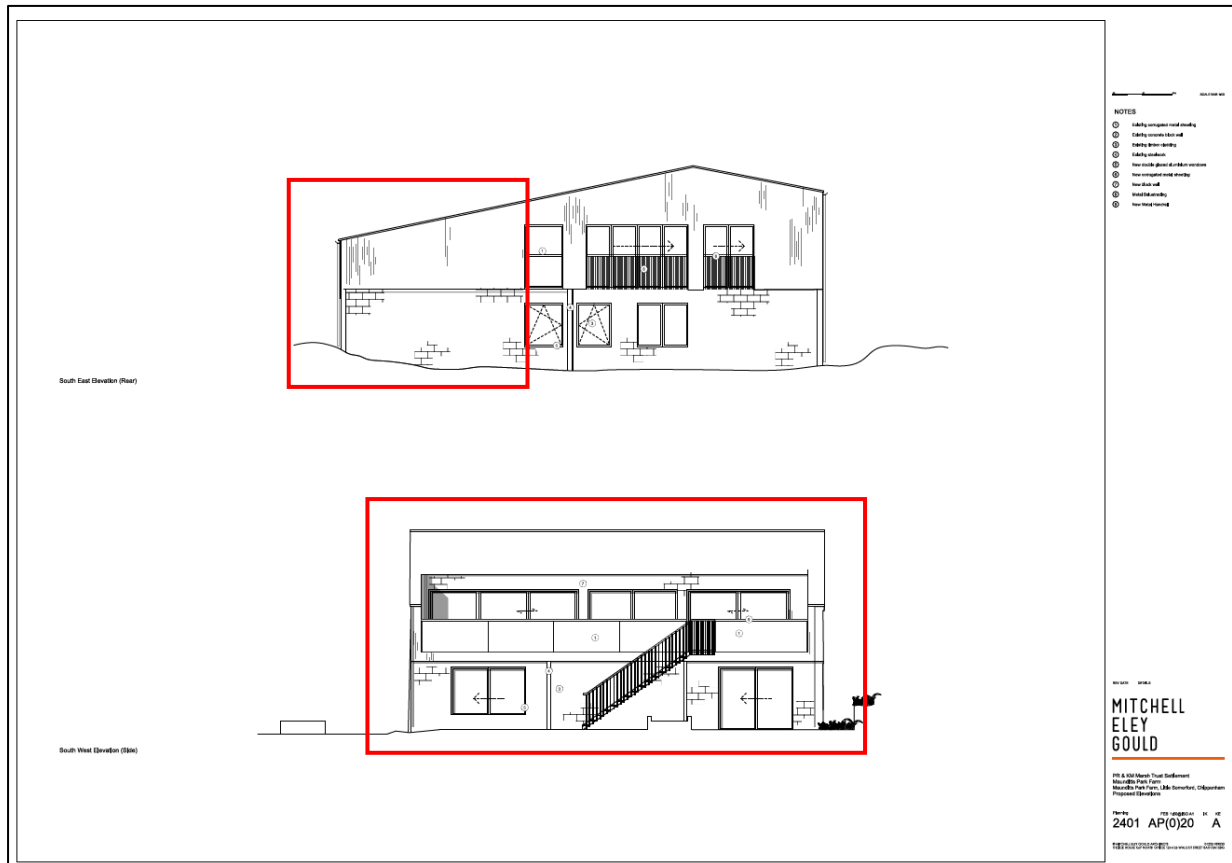


Figure 7 Proposed South East and South West elevations

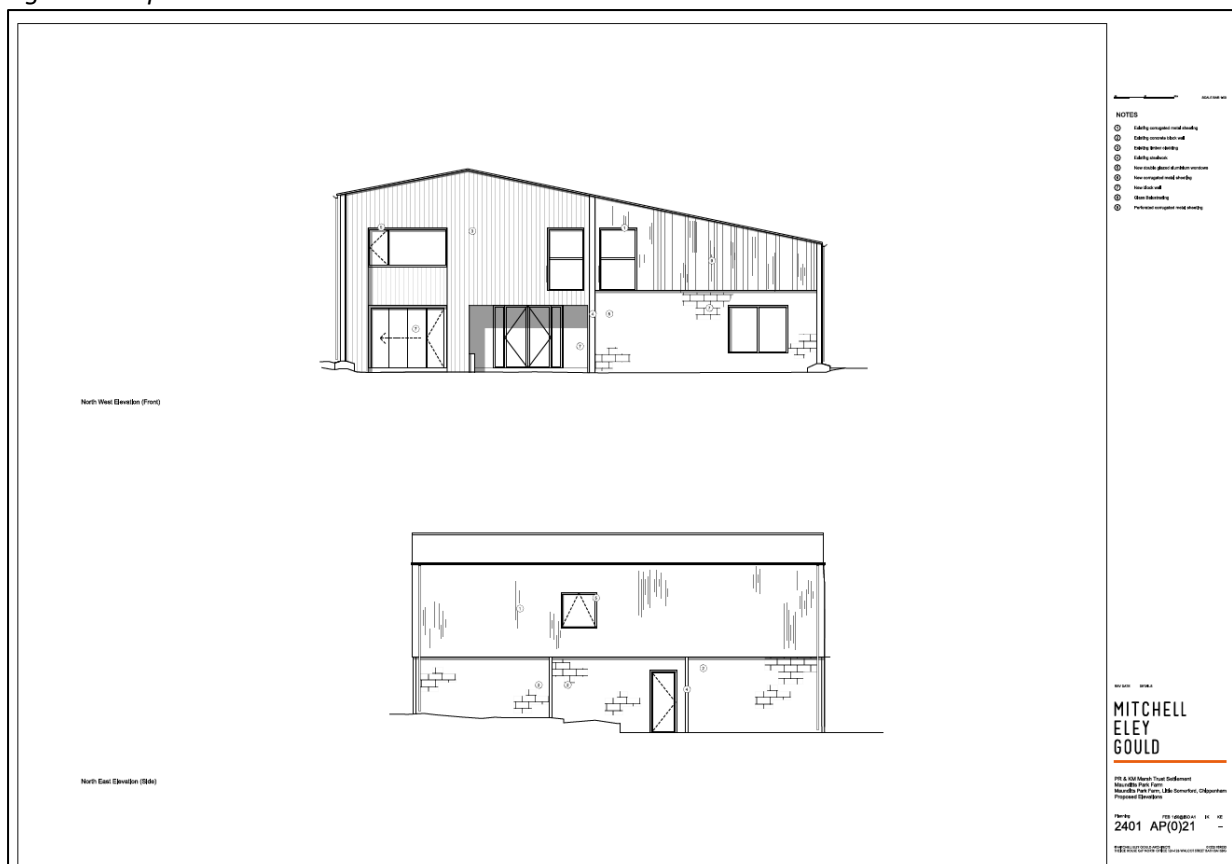


Figure 8 Proposed North and South elevations

6 ASSESSMENT OF IMPACTS AND MITIGATION MEASURES

6.1 Bats

Construction impacts

- 6.1.1 There will be no direct impacts on roosting bats, however, impacts on commuting bats could arise as a result of construction lighting on to the adjacent hedgerow to the south of the barn. It is unlikely that construction lighting will be required, however, details of this can be secured by condition should it be necessary.

Operational Impacts

- 6.1.2 The south west elevation of the structure abuts the mature hedgerow which has been identified as being suitable for commuting bats. The proposed elevation is shown at figure 7 (in red box). This comprises glazing at lower and upper floor levels. The upper floor has a solid balustrade and walkway, and the glazed elevation is set back 4.5 metres from the balustrade.
- 6.1.3 The south east elevation (shown at figure 7) has minimal glazing on the elevation closest to the hedgerow, and similarly, there is balustrade at the upper floor level.
- 6.1.4 Therefore, the design of the building, location of windows and balustrade/walkway will ensure any light spill from the windows is unlikely to extend beyond the structure itself ensuring the nearby mature hedgerow will not be impacted from lux spill.
- 6.1.5 No external lighting is proposed.

6.2 Nesting Birds - Barn

Loss

- 6.2.1 As the barn will be renovated there will likely be a loss of the existing woodpigeon nesting on site. A replacement bird box will be provide on the structure which will be large enough for wood pigeon (see section 7 of this report).

Construction impacts

- 6.2.2 Nesting birds are protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended), so it will be necessary to avoid damage to or destruction of nests, or disturbance of nesting birds, during the construction phase. In order to mitigate impacts to breeding birds, all construction work on the barn or vegetation removal (including the trimming or removal of ivy) will undertake outside of the nesting season (March-August, inclusive) or under the supervision of a suitably qualified ecologist.

- 6.2.3 If structure construction works occurs during the breeding bird season, then the ECoW will remain on site to check all potential nesting areas for birds before works are undertaken on site. If active bird nests are identified during the survey, a buffer zone will be set up by the ECoW around the nest until all young birds have fledged and left the area.

6.3 General Good Practice Mitigation Measures

- 6.3.1 The following section details general good practise measures which will be adopted during the construction process. It will be the responsibility of the site manager to ensure that all staff are inducted and made aware of these recommendations.

Dust generation

- 6.3.2 Generation of dust will be mitigated by wetting down and/or the use of screening if appropriate. This will avoid dust deposition on sensitive habitats such as the adjacent trees and hedgerows.

Excavations and trenches

- 6.3.3 All excavations and trenches will include an escape ramp to prevent nocturnal species such as badger and hedgehog from becoming trapped. This could be in the form of a roughened plank of wood. The trenches/pits will be inspected each morning to ensure no badgers or hedgehog have been trapped.

Open pipework

- 6.3.4 Open pipework larger than 150mm outside diameter will be blanked off at the end of each working day to avoid nocturnal mammals entering the pipes and potentially becoming trapped or injured.

Contractor materials and hazardous waste

- 6.3.5 All chemicals and hazardous materials and waste will be stored in-line with best practice guidelines, ensuring they are secure and cannot be accessed by roaming animals.

Sympathetic working practices

- 6.3.6 Avoid creating potential refuges. Keep the site tidy and store materials off the ground, for example on pallets where possible, to avoid protected species utilising crevices.
- 6.3.7 Store materials away from areas of retained vegetation which are considered suitable for reptiles and hedgehog (e.g. adjacent hedgerows).

- 6.3.8 Should it be necessary to store materials such as topsoil on site, the stockpile should be smoothed to prevent access by faunal species such as reptiles or hedgehog into potential cavities.
- 6.3.9 Staff should simply demonstrate awareness when working and moving materials. Should an animal be found, it should be gently moved, for example in a clean bucket, to a suitable location within habitat well away from the working area.

6.4 Summary

- 6.4.1 A summary of the predicted significance of any effects, as well as the proposed mitigation measures and how these may be secured are outlined in Table 4.

Table 4 Summary of significance of effects and mitigation

Ecological Feature	Mitigation	Mechanism for securing delivery	Residual Effects
Bats	Details of construction lighting provided Mitigation to avoid lux spill from windows embedded in design.	Pre commencement condition	None
Nesting birds - barns	Replacement bird box Sensitive timing of works Ecological Clerk of Works	Shown on drawing Compliance with this EcIA	None

6.5 Cumulative Effects

- 6.5.1 Given the small and constrained nature of the proposed development combined with the lack of ecological impacts, it has been determined that there is likely no cumulative effects to be incurred and therefore will not be considered further in this assessment.

7 ENHANCEMENTS

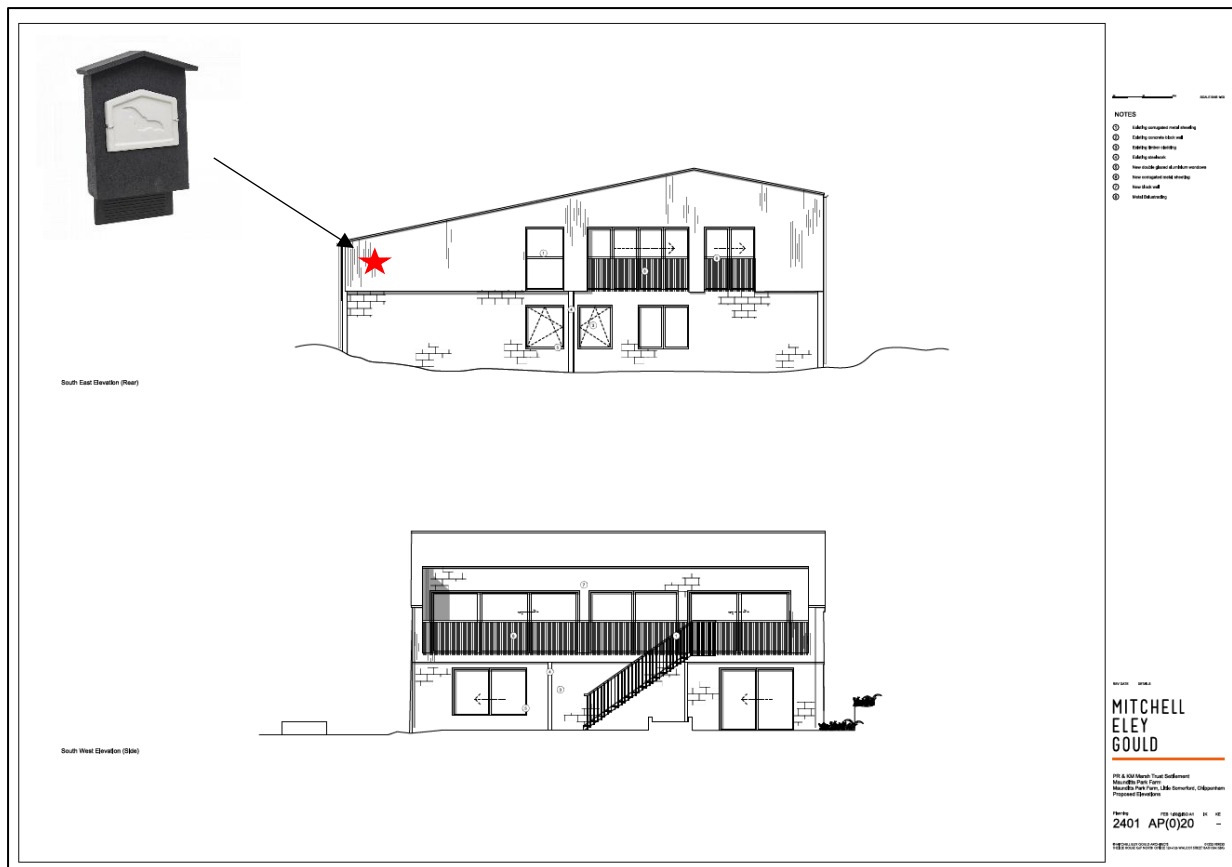


Figure 9 Ecological enhancements

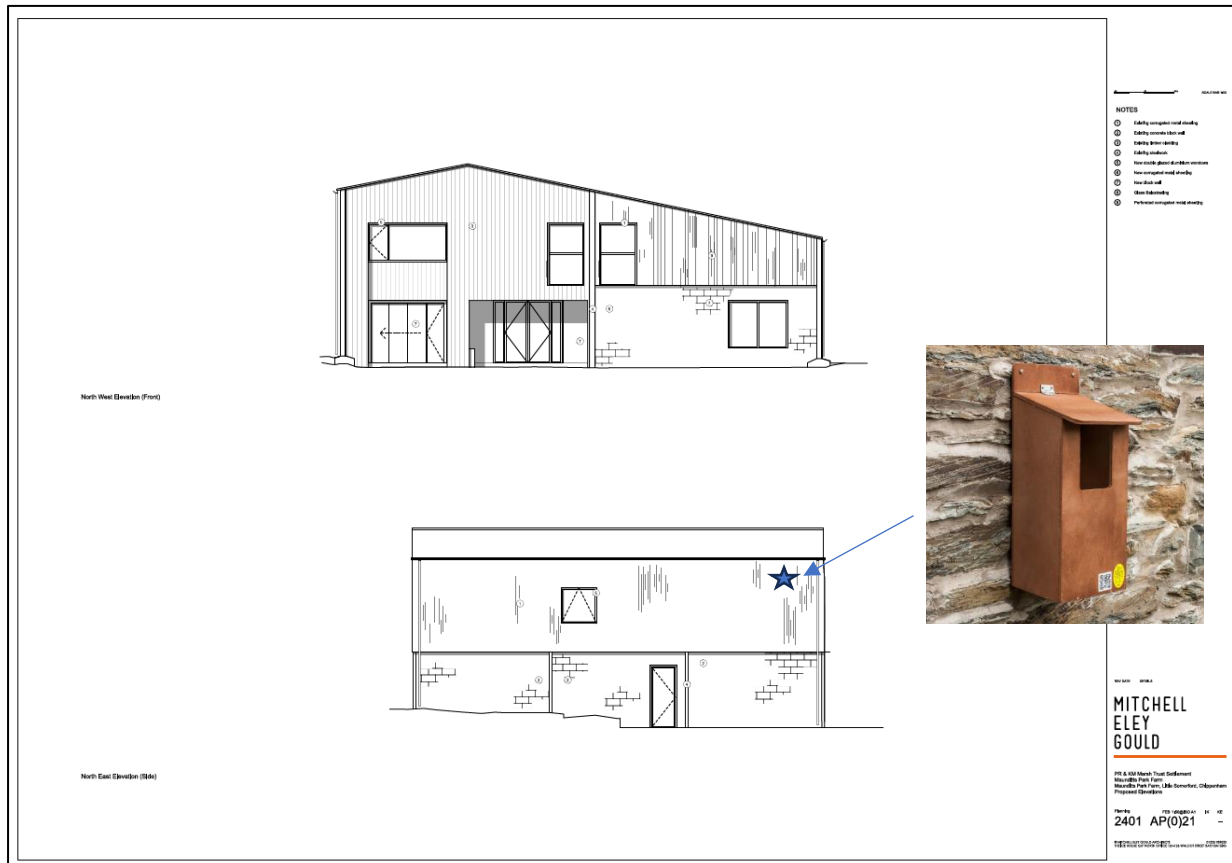


Figure 10 Ecological enhancements

8 MONITORING

- 8.1 The mitigation measures set out in Section 6 which will be supervised by an Ecological Clerk of Works (ECoW) will be recorded as a 'site note' by the ECoW, and if required made available to the LPA.
- 8.2 The provision of the ecological enhancements as set out in Section 7 will be subject to an ecological compliance report undertaken by the ECoW.

9 CONCLUSIONS

- 9.1 The site itself does not contain any habitat of importance for nature conservation,. However, the site is set within a landscape with high value for bats, and there is good connectivity between the site and the wider landscape, via a mature hedgerow to the south of the site. Evidence of a nesting wood pigeon, an amber listed species was recorded in the barn.
- 9.2 Mitigation measures for bats have been embedded within the scheme design to avoid light spill from glazing onto the adjacent hedgerow south east of the structure. This comprises a balustrade and a walkway separating the main glazed elevation on the south west elevation and minimal glazing and balustrade on the south east elevation.
- 9.3 A replacement bird box will be provided on the structure suitable for wood pigeon and a bat box will be provided in close proximity to the mature hedgerow as an enhancement.
- 9.4 The delivery of the mitigation and ecological enhancement can be secured through compliance with this report. The delivery of which will ensure the scheme is compliant with paragraph 193 of the NPPF and Core Policy 50 of the Wiltshire Council's Core Strategy, as well as ensuring the scheme is compliant with relevant legislation.

REFERENCES

BTHK (2018) Bat Roosts in trees: A Guide to Identification and Assessment for Tree-care and Ecology Professionals. Exeter: Pelagic Publishing.

CIEEM (2016) UK Guidelines for Accessing and Using Biodiversity Data. Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management, Winchester.

CIEEM (2017^a) Guidelines on Ecological Report Writing. Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management, Winchester.

CIEEM (2017^b) Guidelines for Preliminary Ecological Appraisal, 2nd edition. Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management, Winchester

CIEEM (2018) Guidelines for Ecological Impact Assessment in the UK and Ireland: Terrestrial, Freshwater, Coastal and Marine version 1.3. Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management, Winchester.

Collins, J. (ed) (2023) Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines (4th Edition). The Bat Conservation Trust, London. ISBN-978-1-7395126-0-6.

Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000.

Available at: <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2000/37/contents>

JNCC (2010) Handbook for Phase 1 Habitat Survey. A Technique for Environmental Audit. JNCC, Peterborough. ISBN-978-0-86139-636-8.

Jukes, A (2021) Considering Invertebrates in Preliminary Ecological Appraisals. In Practice. 40-45, Issue 111. CIEEM.

Mitchell-Jones, A. J. (ed.) (2004) Bat Mitigation Guidelines. English Nature, Peterborough. ISBN-1 85716-781-3.

National Planning Policy Framework (2023). Available at:

<https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/675abd214cbda57cacd3476e/NPPF-December-2024.pdf>

Oldham R.S., Keeble J., Swan M.J.S. & Jeffcote M. (2000). Evaluating the suitability of habitat for the Great Crested Newt (*Triturus cristatus*). Herpetological Journal 10(4), 143-155.

Reason, P.F. and Wray, S. (2023). UK Bat Mitigation Guidelines: a guide to impact assessment, mitigation and compensation for developments affecting bats. Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management, Ampfield.

Stanbury, A., Eaton, M., Aebischer, N., Balmer, D., Brown, A., Douse, A., Lindley, P., McCulloch, N., Noble, D., and Win I. (2021). *The status of our bird populations: the fifth Birds of Conservation Concern in the United Kingdom, Channel Islands and Isle of Man and second IUCN*

Red List assessment of extinction risk for Great Britain. British Birds 114: 723-747. Available at <https://britishbirds.co.uk/content/status-our-bird-populations>.

The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended) Available at: <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukdsi/2019/9780111176573/contents>

UKHab Ltd. (2023) UK Habitat Classification Version 2.0. Available at: www.ukhab.org

Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981. Available at: <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1981/69>

APPENDIX 1 POLICY

National Policy - NPPF

The **National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)** (published Dec 2024) sets out national planning policy, including policies of relevance to conserving and enhancing the natural environment. Policies of relevance to the proposed development (parts of paragraphs 187, 192, 193 and 198) have been summarised below:

Para 187: Planning policies and decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by:

- a) protecting and enhancing valued landscapes, sites of biodiversity or geological value and soils (in a manner commensurate with their statutory status or identified quality in the development plan)*
- d) minimising impacts on and providing net gains for biodiversity, including by establishing coherent ecological networks that are more resilient to current and future pressures and incorporating features which support priority or threatened species such as swifts, bats and hedgehogs;*

Para 192: To protect and enhance biodiversity and geodiversity, plans should:

- a) Identify, map and safeguard components of local wildlife-rich habitats and wider ecological networks, including the hierarchy of international, national and locally designated sites of importance for biodiversity; wildlife corridors and stepping stones that connect them; and areas identified by national and local partnerships for habitat management, enhancement, restoration or creation; and*
- b) promote the conservation, restoration and enhancement of priority habitats, ecological networks and the protection and recovery of priority species; and identify and pursue opportunities for securing measurable net gains for biodiversity.*

Para 193: When determining planning applications, local planning authorities should apply the following principles, notably:

- a) if significant harm to biodiversity resulting from a development cannot be avoided (through locating on an alternative site with less harmful impacts), adequately mitigated, or, as a last resort, compensated for, then planning permission should be refused;*
- d) development whose primary objective is to conserve or enhance biodiversity should be supported; while opportunities to improve biodiversity in and around developments should be integrated as part of their design, especially where this can secure measurable net gains for biodiversity or enhance public access to nature where this is appropriate*

Para 198: c) limit the impact of light pollution from artificial light on local amenity, intrinsically dark landscapes and nature conservation.

Local Policy – Wiltshire Core Policy (*Adopted January 2015*)

Core Policy 13 - Spatial Strategy: Malmesbury Community Area

Development in the Malmesbury Community Area should be in accordance with the Settlement Strategy set out in Core Policy 1.

Market Towns: Malmesbury

Large Villages: Ashton Keynes, Crudwell, Great Somerford, Oaksey and Sherston

Small Villages: Brinkworth, Charlton, Corston, Dauntsey, Lea, Luckington, Milbourne, Minety and Upper Minety

The following Principal Employment Areas will be supported in accordance with Core Policy 35: Malmesbury Business Park, Dyson Site, and Land North of Tetbury Hill.

Over the plan period (2006 to 2026), 5 ha of new employment land (in addition to that delivered or committed at April 2011) will be provided, including:

Land North of Tetbury Saved North Wiltshire 1 ha Hill District Plan allocation

Land at Garden Centre, Saved North Wiltshire Malmesbury District Plan allocation 4 ha

Over the plan period (2006 to 2026), approximately 1,395 new homes will be provided of which about 885 should occur at Malmesbury. Approximately 510 homes will be provided in the rest of the Community Area. Growth in the Malmesbury Community Area over the plan period may consist of a range of sites in accordance with Core Policies 1 and 2.

Development proposals in the Malmesbury Community Area will need to demonstrate how the relevant issues and considerations listed in paragraph 5.73 will be addressed.

Core Policy 50 Biodiversity and geodiversity

Protection

Development proposals must demonstrate how they protect features of nature conservation and geological value as part of the design rationale. There is an expectation that such features shall be retained, buffered, and managed favourably in order to maintain their ecological value, connectivity and functionality in the long-term. Where it has been demonstrated that such features cannot be retained, removal or damage shall only be acceptable in circumstances where the anticipated ecological impacts have been mitigated as far as possible and appropriate compensatory measures can be secured to ensure no net loss of the local biodiversity resource, and secure the integrity of local ecological networks and provision of ecosystem services.

All development proposals shall incorporate appropriate measures to avoid and reduce disturbance of sensitive wildlife species and habitats throughout the lifetime of the development.

Any development potentially affecting a Natura 2000 site must provide avoidance measures in accordance with the strategic plans or guidance set out in paragraphs 6.75-6.77 above where possible, otherwise bespoke measures must be provided to demonstrate that the proposals would have no adverse effect upon the Natura 2000 network. Any development that would have an adverse effect on the integrity of a European nature conservation site will not be in accordance with the Core Strategy.

Biodiversity enhancement

All development should seek opportunities to enhance biodiversity. Major development in particular must include measures to deliver biodiversity gains through opportunities to restore, enhance and create valuable habitats, ecological networks and ecosystem services. Such enhancement measures will contribute to the objectives and targets of the Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) or River Basin/ Catchment Management Plan, particularly through landscape scale projects, and be relevant to the local landscape character.

Local sites

Sustainable development will avoid direct and indirect impacts upon local sites through sensitive site location and layout, and by maintaining sufficient buffers and ecological connectivity with the wider environment. Damage or disturbance to local sites will generally be unacceptable, other than in exceptional circumstances where it has been demonstrated that such impacts:

- i. cannot reasonably be avoided
- ii. are reduced as far as possible
- iii. are outweighed by other planning considerations in the public interest
- iv. where appropriate compensation measures can be secured through planning obligations or agreements.

Development proposals affecting local sites must make a reasonable contribution to their favourable management in the long-term.

Core Policy 51

Landscape

Development should protect, conserve and where possible enhance landscape character and must not have a harmful impact upon landscape character, while any negative impacts must be mitigated as far as possible through sensitive design and landscape measures. Proposals should be informed by and sympathetic to the distinctive character areas identified in the relevant Landscape Character Assessment(s) and any other relevant assessments and studies. In particular, proposals will need to demonstrate that the following aspects of landscape character have been conserved and where possible enhanced through sensitive design, landscape mitigation and enhancement measures:

- i. The locally distinctive pattern and species composition of natural features such as trees, hedgerows, woodland, field boundaries, watercourses and waterbodies.
- ii. The locally distinctive character of settlements and their landscape settings.

- iii. The separate identity of settlements and the transition between man-made and natural landscapes at the urban fringe.
- iv. Visually sensitive skylines, soils, geological and topographical features.
- v. Landscape features of cultural, historic and heritage value.
- vi. Important views and visual amenity.
- vii. Tranquillity and the need to protect against intrusion from light pollution, noise, and motion.
- viii. Landscape functions including places to live, work, relax and recreate.
- ix. Special qualities of Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONBs) and the New Forest National Park, where great weight will be afforded to conserving and enhancing landscapes and scenic beauty.

Proposals for development within or affecting the Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONBs), New Forest National Park (NFNP) or Stonehenge and Avebury World Heritage Site (WHS) shall demonstrate that they have taken account of the objectives, policies and actions set out in the relevant Management Plans for these areas. Proposals for development outside of an AONB that is sufficiently prominent (in terms of its siting or scale) to have an impact on the area's special qualities (as set out in the relevant management plan), must also demonstrate that it would not adversely affect its setting.

Core Policy 52 Green infrastructure

Development shall make provision for the retention and enhancement of Wiltshire's green infrastructure network, and shall ensure that suitable links to the network are provided and maintained. Where development is permitted developers will be required to:

- i. retain and enhance existing on site green infrastructure
- ii. make provision for accessible open spaces in accordance with the requirements of the adopted Wiltshire Open Space Standards
- iii. put measures in place to ensure appropriate long-term management of any green infrastructure directly related to the development
- iv. provide appropriate contributions towards the delivery of the Wiltshire Green Infrastructure Strategy
- v. identify and provide opportunities to enhance and improve linkages between the natural and historic landscapes of Wiltshire.

If damage or loss of existing green infrastructure is unavoidable, the creation of new or replacement green infrastructure equal to or above its current value and quality, that maintains the integrity and functionality of the green infrastructure network, will be required.

Proposals for major development should be accompanied by an audit of the existing green infrastructure within and around the site and a statement demonstrating how this will be retained and enhanced through the development process.

Development will not adversely affect the integrity and value of the green infrastructure network, prejudice the delivery of the Wiltshire Green Infrastructure Strategy, or provide inadequate green infrastructure mitigation.

Green infrastructure projects and initiatives that contribute to the delivery of a high quality and highly valued multi-functional green infrastructure network in accordance with the Wiltshire Green Infrastructure Strategy will be supported. Contributions (financial or other) to support such projects and initiatives will be required where appropriate from developers

APPENDIX 2 SURVEY METHODOLOGY

Bats

Habitats

The habitats on site were assessed for their suitability to support foraging and commuting bats. This assessment was also contextualized through examination of suitable habitat and features in the wider landscape and possible flight-lines across the proposed site following natural linear features such as hedgerows.

Preliminary roost inspection

Physical external and internal inspection of the buildings were undertaken on 5th February 2025 using the equipment described below to assist the inspection. Approximately 2 hours of search effort were expended.

The physical search includes a search for live animals and a search for other signs that give an indication of past or present occupancy as outlined below. In the case of bats, typical indicators include droppings (which are characteristic and can often be speciated or at least be indicative of species type), signs of staining, urine splashing, characteristic odours, and accumulations of discarded prey remains.

Where required, the search included an endoscope search of features with potential for bats. Equipment included a Rigid micro-CA-350 Inspection Camera with micro 6mm extension, camera, laser measure, and binoculars.

Ground level assessment of trees

The methodology draws upon guidance within Collins (2023) and the Bat Tree Habitat Key (2018). The surveys were undertaken using binoculars and a high-powered torch to view features from the ground. Details on the potential roosting features were recorded as well as information to identify the specific trees.

Potential roosting features on trees were identified as any feature within a tree that could provide shelter for a roosting bat. These features result from the following three mechanisms:

- Disease and decay;
- Damage; and,
- Associations.

Tree with no potential roost features were assessed as having 'negligible' potential for roosting bats and no further surveys were carried out. Potential features have been categorised following the guidelines set out in table 6.2 (extract below):

Table 6.2. Guidelines for categorising the potential suitability of PRFs on a proposed development site for bats, to be applied using professional judgement.

Suitability	Description
PRF-I	PRF is only suitable for individual bats or very small numbers of bats either due to size or lack of suitable surrounding habitats.
PRF-M	PRF is suitable for multiple bats and may therefore be used by a maternity colony.

Surveyors on Site

Table 5 Site surveyors

Ecologist	Position	Qualifications/ Licences	Experience	Role in assessment
Jim Philips	Managing Director	MSc BSc (Hons), MCIEEM Class 2 Bat Licence Class 1 GCN Licence	Jim's experience in ecology covers a wide range of projects and clients and his focus is on interpreting relevant policy and legislation to ensure projects are delivered efficiently and meet the needs of the client. He holds survey licenses for bats and great crested newts in England and Wales and is a registered consultant on Natural England's Bat Low Impact Class License (BLICL)	Site assessor and report checker
Ellie Shearn	Ecologist	BSc (Hons), ACIEEM	Ellie is an ecologist at Ethos with over three years' relevant experience in ecological field survey. Ellie undertakes a range of protected species surveys including bat surveys and assessment. Ellie manages the bat call data analysis within Ethos.	Site assessor and report author

APPENDIX 3 – STRUCTURES ASSESSMENT PHOTOS



Photo 10 Barn north west elevation



Photo 11 Barn north west elevation



Photo 12 Barn southeast elevation



Photo 13 Barn east corner with ivy present



Photo 14 Barn north/northeast elevation



Photo 15 Barn east elevation with adjacent shed outside of red line



Photo 16 Barn internal



Photo 17 Barn internal



Photo 18 Stables external



Photo 19 Stables internal