

Preliminary Ecological Appraisal

Survey site:

Woodland View Farm, Silver Street Lane, Brokerswood, Westbury BA13 4EY

Client:

Ms T Mulcrone

Survey date:

27/07/2026

Project:

This report is prepared to inform a planning application with Wiltshire Council. The construction of a single detached residential dwelling.

On the assumption that site conditions and habitats remain unchanged, the results of this assessment will remain valid for 18 months from the date of this survey i.e. until January 2028, in accordance with CIEEM guidance in the lifespan of Ecological Reports and Surveys. This survey and report should be updated if a planning application has not been submitted within this timeframe.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The following is work you will need to commission to obtain planning permission and to comply with legislation. Further information, along with opportunities for biodiversity enhancement, are outlined in the proceeding sections of this report.

Table 1: Summary of key findings arising from this survey.

Key Findings
▪ It is likely that the proposed works will result in a net loss of biodiversity at the site. However, in the absence of proposed development plans, it is currently unclear whether a Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) assessment will be required or whether the development may qualify for a suitable exemption. ▪ A Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) may be requested by the LPA via condition. ▪ As the proposal involves the construction of an additional dwelling, increased recreational pressure on the SPA must be addressed through Wiltshire Council’s strategic mitigation approach; therefore, an appropriate CIL contribution associated with the new dwelling may be required. ▪ Despite the absence of published development plans, it is likely that a low-impact lighting strategy will need to be adopted during and following development. This should be designed to incorporate the measures set out in the latest (2023) Bat Conservation Trust guidance, Guidance Note 08: Bats and Artificial Lighting. ▪ If the proposed development is to impact either of the native hedgerows on site, dormouse scoping surveys are likely to be required to determine the site’s suitability for dormice and/or to characterise its use by the species. ▪ Various precautionary working methods have been recommended which have been fully detailed within the fauna section of this report. IMPACTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS ARE TO BE REVIEWED POST PUBLICATION OF PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT PLANS.

1. INTRODUCTION

The aim of the PEA was to obtain data on existing ecological conditions, and to conduct a preliminary assessment of the likely significance of ecological impacts on the proposed development.

No previous ecology reports have been produced for this site by Arbtech Consulting Ltd or, to the author’s knowledge, by any other consultancy.

Methodology

PEA survey methodology and legislation can be found in the Arbtech Supplement: [PEA Methodology and Legislation - 2025](#).

Survey Details

The site survey was undertaken on 27/07/2026 by Kiera Horman BSc (Hons), Graduate Ecologist an accredited agent on the Natural England survey licences for bats 2025-85589-CL18-BAT (level 1).

Table 2: The weather conditions during the survey.

Temperature (°C)	Humidity (%)	Cloud Cover (%)	Wind (km/h)	Rain
19.7	64.0	9	1.6	None

Survey Limitations

It should be noted that whilst every effort has been made to describe the baseline conditions within the survey area, and evaluate these features, this report does not provide a complete characterisation of the site. This assessment provides a preliminary view of the likelihood of protected species being present. This is based on suitability of the habitats on the site and in the wider landscape, the ecology and biology of species as currently understood.

A biological records data search has not been undertaken. However, given the location of the site, the nature of the habitats present and the assessed suitability of the site for protected or notable species, it is not anticipated that the purchase of biological records data will add any significant weight or alter the conclusions and recommendations outlined in this report at this moment in time.

2. SITE LOCATION AND LANDSCAPE CONTEXT

2.1 Summary of Survey Findings

Site Location & Context

The site is centred at National Grid reference ST 83577 52367 and has an area of approximately 0.15ha. The site comprises modified grassland, native hedgerow with trees, native hedgerow and scattered trees.

The site is located within a rural setting, immediately surrounded by scattered residential and agricultural buildings to the north and south, woodland to the east, and grassland to the west. Aerial imagery shows that the wider landscape remains predominantly rural, comprising extensive areas of woodland, grassland, and agricultural fields interconnected by a network of mature hedgerows and field margins.

A review of historic maps indicates the landscape has remained largely unchanged since the late 1800s.

There are no ponds or watercourses located within or immediately adjacent to the development site. Medium, loamy but locally light, silt-rich, or sometimes heavy clay-rich soil and subsoil. Highly variable pH due to mixed parent materials.

Priority Habitats

There are six priority habitats within 2km of the site. These comprise traditional orchard, deciduous woodland, ancient & semi-natural woodland, ancient replanted woodland, priority ponds and coastal and floodplain grazing marsh. The closest priority habitat comprises traditional orchard located along the northwestern site boundary.

The site is considered to be well connected to nearby habitats, particularly the traditional orchard, deciduous woodland, and ancient woodland. This is due to their close proximity to the development site, together with the absence of significant development or other barriers that would be likely to impede connectivity.

Designated Sites

Statutory Designations within 2km

There are no statutory designations within 2km of the site.

Statutory Designations (SAC, SPA & RAMSAR) within 10km

There are three national network sites (SAC, SPA, Ramsar) located within 10km, as detailed below:

Table 3: The additional national network sites within 10km of the site boundary.

Designation	Distance from Site
Salisbury Plain Special Area of Conservation (SAC) and Special Protection Area (SPA)	~5550m southeast
Mells Valley Special Area of Conservation (SAC)	~8580m southwest
Bath & Bradford on Avon Bats Special Area of Conservation (SAC)	~9220m northwest

As outlined above, the development site is located approximately ~5.5km from Salisbury Plain SAC/SPA and therefore falls within the 6.4km recreational Zone of Influence for Salisbury Plain SPA.

SSSI Risk Zone

The site falls within the Impact Risk Zone (IRZ) for Westbury Ironstone Quarry SSSI. The proposed development comprises the construction of a single residential dwelling outside an existing settlement and has the potential to increase lighting levels and affect the neighbouring woodland.

Non-Designated Sites

The presence of non-statutory designated sites within 2km of the site cannot be established without data from the local records centre. Whilst some habitats in the wider landscape may host designations, the immediate environs of the site do not host habitats likely to be of designable quality.

2.2 Foreseen Impacts

No direct impacts to any designated sites or priority habitats are anticipated to occur as a result of the proposed development. However, due to the proximity of the site to the traditional orchard, and the possible presence of non-statutory designations in the vicinity, indirect effects such as pollution during construction could occur.

2.3 Recommendations

Best practice measures to minimise the possibility of pollution, damage to adjacent habitats must be implemented during construction. A Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) may be requested by the LPA via condition. This should include the following measures:

- Retained trees and hedgerows adjacent to the site will be protected in line with the measures outlined in the British Standard 'Trees in Relation to Design, Demolition and Construction to Construction - Recommendations' (BS 5837) (2012).
- Appropriate buffering between the development zone and retained habitats (e.g. 15m for ancient woodland)
- Use of Heras or other appropriate fencing to prevent encroachment by contractors onto adjacent habitats.

As the proposal involves the construction of an additional dwelling, increased recreational pressure on the SPA must be addressed through Wiltshire Council's strategic mitigation approach. This mitigation is funded through the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL); therefore, an appropriate CIL contribution associated with the new dwelling may be required, subject to the applicable CIL liability and any relevant exemptions.

3. ONSITE HABITATS

This section may include further work you will need to commission (if any) to obtain planning permission or comply with legislation for other consent. All clients are expected to read and understand this section, or to contact the lead surveyor for advice.

3.1 Summary of Survey Findings

Modified grassland (g4) - Scattered Trees (32)

The majority of the site comprises unmanaged modified grassland with a variable and heterogeneous sward height. The species composition of the grassland was assessed as poor, with fewer than six vascular plant species recorded within per m² quadrat. It should be noted that due to the recent dry weather, the vegetation had begun to wilt, meaning that some plant species may have been overlooked during the survey. Despite the wilting vegetation, no other signs of damage or compaction were recorded throughout the grassland, with bare ground not exceeding 10%. Separate from the trees associated with the hedgerows, one scattered tree was recorded within the grassland: a large, mature oak (*Quercus robur*). This is a native UK species, and no suitable potential roosting features for bats were identified on the tree.

Table 4a: Species abundance for modified grassland.

Abundance	Species
Dominant	-
Abundant	Cock's-foot (<i>Dactylis glomerata</i>), Yorkshire fog (<i>Holcus lanatus</i>), Perennial Rye-grass (<i>Lolium perenne</i>)
Frequent	Broad-leaved Dock (<i>Rumex obtusifolius</i>), Creeping Buttercup (<i>Ranunculus repens</i>)
Occasional	Creeping Thistle (<i>Cirsium arvense</i>), Bramble (<i>Rubus fruticosus</i>), Common Nettle (<i>Urtica dioica</i>)
Rare	Clover sp. (<i>Trifolium sp.</i>), Parsnips (<i>Pastinaca sativa</i>), Spear Thistle (<i>Cirsium vulgare</i>), Cherry Laurel (<i>Prunus laurocerasus</i>)

In accordance with the Statutory Biodiversity Metric Condition Assessment Sheets, the modified grassland was assessed to have a poor condition value. The full condition assessment for this, and all other habitats subject to condition assessments, are provided in Appendix 5.

In accordance with the Statutory Biodiversity Metric Condition Assessment Sheets, the tree was assessed to have a good condition value. The full condition assessment is provided in Appendix 5.

Native hedgerow with trees (h2a)

A native hedgerow is present along the northwestern site boundary (H2), predominantly comprising native species such as bramble and hawthorn, alongside the non-native species snowberry. Scattered trees are also present throughout the hedgerow, including a mature ash and semi-mature and young hawthorn, hazel, and pin cherry trees. Shorter sections are present where the hedgerow is less developed and mature than the remainder of the stretch; however, these are limited, with the hedgerow maintaining an average height of approximately 1.5 m. The hedgerow is not currently subject to any intensive management regime. Ground flora recorded along the hedgerow includes species such as nettle, broad-leaved dock, and common burdock.

Table 4b: Species abundance for native hedgerow with trees.

Abundance	Species
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Dominant	-
Abundant	Bramble (<i>Rubus fruticosus</i>), Snowberry (<i>Symphoricarpos albus</i>)
Frequent	Hawthorn (<i>Crataegus monogyna</i>)
Occasional	Common & Atlantic Ivy (<i>Hedera helix</i>)
Rare	-

In accordance with the Statutory Biodiversity Metric Condition Assessment Sheets, the native hedgerow with trees was assessed to have a good condition value. The hedgerow comprises at least 80% native species, is longer than 20 m and narrower than 5 m, and does not present gaps longer than 20 m. Therefore it is considered a habitat of principal importance under the NERC Act 2006.

Native hedgerow (h2a)

A native hedgerow is present along the northeastern site boundary (H1), comprising four native species and two non-native species. The hedgerow is not currently subject to any strict management regime, which may contribute to its vertical 'gapiness'. The majority of the hedgerow has a gap of approximately 0.5 m between ground level and the base of the canopy, with the thicker woody stems and trunks visible beneath the canopy. The hedgerow measures approximately 3m in height and 1.5m in width on average. Ground flora recorded along the base of the hedgerow includes species such as nettle, broad-leaved dock, common burdock, and male fern.

Table 4c: Species abundance for native hedgerow.

Abundance	Species
Dominant	-
Abundant	-
Frequent	Bramble (<i>Rubus fruticosus</i>), Hawthorn (<i>Crataegus monogyna</i>), Hazel (<i>Corylus avellana</i>), Blackthorn (<i>Prunus spinosa</i>)
Occasional	-

Rare	Cherry Laurel (<i>Prunus laurocerasus</i>), Sycamore (<i>Acer pseudoplatanus</i>)
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In accordance with the Statutory Biodiversity Metric Condition Assessment Sheets, the native hedgerow was assessed to have a moderate condition value. The hedgerow comprises at least 80% native species, is longer than 20 m and narrower than 5 m, and does not present gaps longer than 20 m. Therefore it is considered a habitat of principal importance under the NERC Act 2006.

3.2 Foreseen Impacts

At the time of writing, no proposed development plans had been published. However, it is anticipated that the proposed development will result in the loss of modified grassland. Given the low ecological value of this habitat, the resulting impact on biodiversity is likely to be minimal. Nevertheless, the loss of modified grassland could contribute to a net reduction in biodiversity at the site. It is recommended that the hedgerows and the oak tree are retained in full, where feasible.

3.3 Recommendations

Best practice measures to minimise the possibility of pollution must be implemented during construction. This should include the following measures:

- Grasscrete, cell web or any other porous surface treatment facilitating recovery of vegetation is preferred to hard standing.
- Retained hedgerows and trees will be protected in line with the measures outlined in the British Standard 'Trees & hedgerows in Relation to Design, Demolition and Construction to Construction - Recommendations' (BS 5837) (2012).
- Remove only the minimum of habitat required to facilitate the development
- Use of Heras or other appropriate fencing to prevent encroachment by contractors onto retained habitats.
- Protect retained turf and soil resource from destruction and compaction using plastic matting and wooden boarding. Do not store skips and other heavy materials on retained turf.
- Grasscrete, cell web or any other porous surface treatment facilitating recovery of vegetation is preferred to hard standing.

A Construction Ecological Management Plan (CEMP) may be required, outlining best practice measures delineate the construction zone and to minimise the possibility of pollution and habitat damage during construction.

The proposed development may require a Biodiversity Net Gain assessment, to calculate the value of habitats on site and ensure the delivery of a minimum of 10% measurable biodiversity net gain.

4. INVASIVE SPECIES

This section may include further work you will need to commission (if any) to obtain planning permission or comply with legislation for other consent. All clients are expected to read and understand this section, or to contact the lead surveyor for advice.

4.1 Summary of Survey Findings

No non-native invasive or otherwise problematic plants were recorded on site or are considered likely to be on site, but, given seasonal limitations and the sites wider context, may be visible at other times of year.

4.2 Foreseen Impacts

None.

4.3 Recommendations

No further surveys but remain vigilant.

5. FAUNA: BATS

This section may include further work you will need to commission (if any) to obtain planning permission or comply with legislation for other consent. All clients are expected to read and understand this section, or to contact the lead surveyor for advice.

5.1 Summary of Survey Findings

EPSL data and local records

A search of the magic.gov.uk database for granted EPSLs within a 2km radius of the site has been completed. Displaced bats from licensed sites <2km away from the survey site will find alternative habitat either within the mitigation measures implemented as part of the licence or will relocate to other known roosts sites in close proximity to the licensed site. There is 1 EPSL within a 2km radius of the site, as detailed below:

Table 5: EPSL survey returns for bats within a 2km radius.

EPSL Reference	Bat Species Affected	Distance from Site <i>(EPSL records are accurate to 100m)</i>	Impacts Allowed by Licence
2017-31427-EPS-MIT	Lesser horseshoe	~1,733m northeast	Destruction of a resting place and damage to a breeding place affecting breeding.

Although Bath and Bradford on Bats SAC is located approximately ~9.22km northwest of the development site, the site does not fall within the designated SAC's Zones of Influence.

Foraging and commuting habitat

Habitats recorded on site are assessed to provide foraging and commuting opportunities for bats in the form of unmanaged modified grassland, native hedgerow with trees, native hedgerow and scattered trees. Habitats within the wider environment such as traditional orchard, deciduous woodland, ancient & semi-natural woodland, ancient replanted woodland and coastal and floodplain grazing marsh, also offer additional foraging and commuting habitat for bats. These habitats are likely to provide micro-climatic conditions that support invertebrates that will in turn provide foraging opportunities for local bat populations. Most notably, the hedgerows onsite extend beyond the site adding to the continuity of vegetated linear features present in the wider landscape. Bats are well known to utilise linear features to aid navigation whilst travelling between foraging resources and roost sites.

Roosting habitat

Trees within the site boundary were assessed for their suitability to support roosting bats. No suitable roosting features were identified on any of the trees present, and the relatively small stature of the majority of the trees further reduces their suitability for roosting bats. T1 and the mature

ash within H2 were assessed as the only trees of sufficient stature and size to support roosting bats; however, no suitable features were identified. All trees were therefore assessed as None (i.e. no roosting features present).

5.2 Foreseen Impacts

Roosting habitat [Buildings]

There are no buildings on site, therefore no impacts are foreseen.

Roosting habitat [Trees]

None of the trees present on site included suitable roosting features for bats to utilise. Therefore, no impacts to roosting bats are anticipated.

Foraging and commuting habitat

Due to the absence of proposed development plans, the extent of habitat loss is currently unknown. However, it is anticipated that the development will result in the loss of unmanaged modified grassland. Given its low ecological value and the presence of more extensive areas of suitable foraging and commuting habitat within the surrounding locality, this loss is likely to be inconsequential for bats.

Artificial lighting

The proposed development may lead to an increase in the amount of current lighting of surrounding habitats or the retained building without mitigation. This may disturb commuting bats.

5.3 Recommendations

Roosting habitat [Buildings]

None.

Roosting habitat [Trees]

In the unlikely event that a bat or evidence of bats is discovered during the development all work must stop and a bat licensed ecologist contacted for further advice.

Foraging and commuting habitat

It is recommended that the hedgerows and T1 are retained in their entirety, where feasible.

Artificial lighting

None required.

Suggested biodiversity enhancements

The installation of one bat box at the site will provide additional roosting habitat for bats.

The bat boxes will be either incorporated into the fabric of the new dwelling or installed externally. Suitable bat boxes include Habibat Bat Box, Ibstock Enclosed Bat Box, Beaumaris Woodstone® Bat Box, Low Profile WoodStone® Bat Box or similar alternative brand.

Bat boxes should be positioned 3-5m above ground level facing in a south or south-westerly direction with a clear flight path to and from the entrance, away from artificial light.

6. FAUNA: BIRDS

This section may include further work you will need to commission (if any) to obtain planning permission or comply with legislation for other consent. All clients are expected to read and understand this section, or to contact the lead surveyor for advice.

6.1 Summary of Survey Findings

Buildings

There are no buildings on site.

Trees and vegetation

No active bird nests were identified within the vegetation on site. However, the unmanaged modified grassland provides foraging opportunities for birds, while the native hedgerows and scattered trees provide suitable nesting and foraging opportunities for local bird populations.

Due to the small size of the site and the extent and type of the habitats recorded, the site is not considered suitable to support a significant assemblage of protected and/or notable birds.

Barn Owls

The site does not appear to provide any suitable nesting sites for barn owls.

6.2 Foreseen Impacts

Buildings / trees

The proposed development could result in the destruction or the disturbance and subsequent abandonment of active bird nests.

Trees and vegetation

There are currently no proposed development plans available; however, it is anticipated that areas of unmanaged modified grassland will be removed during construction. The loss of this habitat could result in a reduction in available foraging opportunities for birds. If the hedgerows or scattered trees are to be impacted, additional suitable nesting and foraging habitat may also be lost. Furthermore, the proposed development could result in the destruction of active bird nests or disturbance leading to the abandonment of active bird nests.

Barn Owls

None foreseen.

6.3 Recommendations

Buildings / trees

Any vegetation removal, particularly the removal of hedgerows or trees, should be undertaken outside the period from 1st March to 31st August. If this timeframe cannot be avoided, a close inspection of the vegetation should be undertaken immediately, by a qualified ecologist, prior to the commencement of work. All active nests will need to be retained until the young have fledged or an ecologist has confirmed the nesting attempt has concluded.

Precautions should be taken with machinery and noise levels when working close to any retained nests so as not to disturb any nearby nesting birds during construction works. At least a 3-5m buffer should be created between any machinery and active nests until the young have fledged or an ecologist has confirmed the nesting attempt has concluded.

Precautions should be taken with machinery and noise levels when working close to any retained habitats so as not to disturb any nearby nesting birds during construction works.

Trees and vegetation

No additional surveys required.

Barn Owls

No further barn owl surveys required.

Suggested biodiversity enhancements

The installation of a minimum of one bird box on either the proposed dwelling or on retained mature trees around the site will provide additional nesting habitat for birds e.g. Schwegler No 17 Swift Nest Box (buildings), Schwegler 1SP Sparrow Terrace (buildings), Schwegler 1B Nest Boxes (trees), Schwegler 2H Robin Boxes (trees), Woodstone Nest Box (buildings or trees) or a similar alternative brand.

Tree boxes should be positioned approximately 3m above ground level where they will be sheltered from prevailing wind, rain and strong sunlight. Small-hole boxes are best placed approximately 1-3m above ground on an area of the tree trunk where foliage will not obscure the entrance hole.

Swift and sparrow boxes should be positioned at the eaves of a building and can be incorporated into the fabric of the building during construction.

7. FAUNA: REPTILES

This section may include further work you will need to commission (if any) to obtain planning permission or comply with legislation for other consent. All clients are expected to read and understand this section, or to contact the lead surveyor for advice.

7.1 Summary of Survey Findings

EPSL data and local records

A review of the MAGIC database returned no granted EPSL records for protected reptiles within 2km of the site.

Habitat suitability

Habitats recorded on site are considered to provide foraging, commuting, and refuge opportunities for reptiles. The hedgerows provide elevated value for reptiles as these habitats provide a suitable structure for refuge, whilst also providing foraging and commuting opportunities. However, the site is predominantly comprised of grassland, which, due to its limited structural diversity and lack of suitable shelter, is considered suboptimal habitat for reptiles. The unmanaged nature of the grassland may increase its suitability to some extent; however, it remains generally suboptimal.

The site also has good connectivity to further suitable reptile habitat within the wider landscape through a network of interconnected field margins

and hedgerows. In particular, the hedgerow along the northwestern site boundary extends well beyond the site. Therefore, the presence of reptiles within the site cannot be discounted, although any presence is likely to be limited to low numbers, primarily associated with the boundary hedgerows.

7.2 Foreseen Impacts

There are currently no proposed development plans available; therefore, the impacts on the optimal habitats within the site, the boundary hedgerows, cannot be confirmed at this stage. However, it is anticipated that areas of unmanaged grassland will be lost as a result of the proposed development. Given the low ecological value of this habitat and the presence of more extensive suitable habitat within the local area, the loss is likely to be inconsequential to local reptile populations. Nevertheless, site clearance activities could result in the injury or mortality of reptiles, if present.

7.3 Recommendations

A precautionary working method will be implemented for widespread reptiles during construction, including the following measures:

- Grassland will be subject to a two-stage cut (if sward is >10cm) prior to removal in a directional manner, the first cut at 10cm and the second to ground level and maintained as a short sward (5cm) or bare ground throughout construction.
- Removal of any root systems / refugia will be undertaken outside the reptile hibernation season (November – February).
- Any excavations will be covered overnight, or a ramp will be installed to enable any trapped animals to escape.
- Best practice pollution prevention measures will be implemented to minimise impacts to nearby habitats.
- Any chemicals or pollutants used or created by the development should be stored and disposed of correctly according to COSHH regulations.
- If any reptiles are found in the working area these should be allowed to disperse of their own accord or, if at immediate risk, should be moved by hand to a sheltered, vegetated area away from disturbance.
- In the unlikely event that a reptile is identified, works must cease and advice must be sought from a suitably qualified ecologist.

8. FAUNA: AMPHIBIANS

This section may include further work you will need to commission (if any) to obtain planning permission or comply with legislation for other consent. All clients are expected to read and understand this section, or to contact the lead surveyor for advice.

8.1 Summary of Survey Findings

EPSL and survey data

A review of the MAGIC database returned no granted EPSL records for amphibians within 2km of the site.

Table 6: Great crested newt search results.

Record type	Distance from Site
GCN pond survey 2017-2019	~466m north
GCN pond survey 2017-2019	~737m northeast
GCN pond survey 2017-2019	~1,918m west

The site location falls within an Amber Risk Zone under the Natural England GCN District Level Licensing Scheme and therefore would qualify under the scheme.

Aquatic habitat suitability (including ponds within 500m)

Great crested newts (GCN) exist in metapopulations and are known to utilise ponds and their connecting terrestrial habitat during their life cycle; great crested newts are typically found within terrestrial habitats up to 500m from breeding ponds (Langton et al. 2001).

There are no ponds present within the site; however, a review of aerial imagery and mapping data (MAGIC and OS Maps) identified six ponds within 500m of the site boundary. The closest pond, P1, is located approximately ~138m northeast of the site within the adjacent ancient woodland. P1 was considered to be suitably ecologically connected to the development site through intervening habitats, including woodland and hedgerows. The small country road located between the pond and site was not considered to represent a significant barrier to dispersal. P2 (~241m west), P3 (~253m northeast), and P5 (~445m northwest) were also considered to be suitably connected to the development site through

habitats including hedgerows, field margins, and woodland with dense understory. However, while P5 is connected through suitable habitats, its greater distance from the site may reduce the likelihood of connectivity. It should be noted that P4 (~352m southwest) and P6 (~458m north) were not considered to be suitably connected to the development site. This is due to the presence of urban development, including residential properties and farmyards, as well as linear features such as fences and walls, which may act as barriers to amphibian dispersal between the ponds and the site.

A pond map showing approximate pond locations is provided in Appendix 6.

Terrestrial habitat suitability

Despite the lack of optimal amphibian habitat on site, such as scrub and rank grassland, the site was considered to provide suitable foraging and commuting habitat within the boundary hedgerows due to their structure and shelter. The unmanaged grassland may provide some limited commuting and foraging opportunities; however, the lack of suitable shelter may increase exposure to predation and therefore this habitat is considered suboptimal. The site also has good connectivity to further suitable terrestrial and aquatic amphibian habitat within the wider landscape through a network of interconnected field margins and hedgerows. In particular, the hedgerow along the northwestern site boundary extends well beyond the site. Therefore, the presence of amphibians within the site cannot be discounted, although any presence is likely to be limited to low numbers, primarily associated with the boundary hedgerows.

8.2 Foreseen Impacts

Due to the absence of published development plans, the impacts on amphibians and suitable terrestrial habitats within the site cannot currently be confirmed. However, taking into account the proximity of the closest suitably connected pond (P1) and the overall area of the site, it is anticipated that the Natural England Rapid Risk Assessment (Natural England, 2015) would produce a green risk score, indicating that an offence is unlikely. This is because an amber risk score, indicating that an offence is likely, would require more than 0.5 ha of suitable amphibian habitat to be impacted or lost. As the total site area is approximately 0.15 ha, the proposed development is unlikely to result in direct impacts to more than 0.5 ha of suitable amphibian habitat. Nevertheless, this assessment **MUST** be reviewed once detailed development plans have been published.

8.3 Recommendations

Owing to the anticipated Green risk score associated with the proposed development and the consequently low potential for impacts to great crested newts, further surveys are considered disproportionate. A precautionary working method will be implemented for common amphibians during construction, including the following measures:

- A staged approach will be adopted for vegetation clearance, whereby the vegetation will be strimmed to 15cm and left overnight to allow any amphibians to disperse. The vegetation can then be cleared to ground level and must be maintained at this level for the duration of construction to deter amphibians from the working area.
- Any rubble piles will be dismantled by hand outside the amphibian hibernation window and debris and brash will be stored on pallets or removed from the site to prevent amphibians from utilising these areas.
- Best practice pollution prevention measures will be implemented to minimise impacts to nearby aquatic habitats that amphibians could use.
- Any chemicals or pollutants used or created by the development should be stored and disposed of correctly according to COSHH regulations.
- If any common amphibians are found in the working area these should be allowed to disperse of their own accord or, if at immediate risk, should be moved by hand to a sheltered, vegetated area away from disturbance.
- In the unlikely event that a great crested newt is identified, works must cease and advice must be sought from a suitably qualified ecologist.

This **MUST** be reviewed once proposed development plans have been published.

9. FAUNA: RIPARIAN ANIMALS

This section may include further work you will need to commission (if any) to obtain planning permission or comply with legislation for other consent. All clients are expected to read and understand this section, or to contact the lead surveyor for advice.

9.1 Summary of Survey Findings

A search of the magic.gov.uk database for granted EPSLs within a 2km radius of the site has been completed for riparian animals (otters and water voles). No EPSLs relating to riparian animals are present within a 2km radius of the site.

Habitat suitability

There are no water courses on or connected to the site. There are also no riparian habitats present on site or within an influencing distance.

9.2 Foreseen Impacts

No impacts are anticipated on riparian animals as a result of the proposed development.

9.3 Recommendations

No further surveys for riparian animals required.

10. FAUNA: HAZEL DORMOUSE

This section may include further work you will need to commission (if any) to obtain planning permission or comply with legislation for other consent. All clients are expected to read and understand this section, or to contact the lead surveyor for advice.

10.1 Summary of Survey Findings

EPSL data and local records

A search of the magic.gov.uk database for granted EPSLs within a 2km radius of the site has been completed for hazel dormouse. No EPSLs relating to hazel dormouse are present within a 2km radius of the site.

Habitat suitability

Hazel dormice typically require a complex, three-dimensional habitat structure to facilitate safe movement between feeding and breeding areas while reducing exposure to predation. As the majority of the site comprises unmanaged modified grassland, there is limited habitat considered suitable to support hazel dormice. However, the native hedgerows along the northeastern and northwestern site boundaries may provide some suitable commuting opportunities. Furthermore, the site is considered to be well-connected to suitable habitats within the wider landscape, including additional mature hedgerows and the ~28ha of ancient deciduous woodland to the east.

10.2 Foreseen Impacts

As there are currently no proposed development plans available; the impacts on dormice and suitable habitats within the site, particularly the boundary hedgerows, cannot be confirmed at this stage. It is recommended that this assessment is reviewed once detailed development proposals have been prepared.

10.3 Recommendations

At present, there are no published development plans. However, if the proposed development is likely to impact the native hedgerows on site, hazel dormouse surveys are likely to be required to determine the presence or likely absence of dormice. These surveys would comprise the deployment and monitoring of nest tubes and boxes, alongside nut searches and searches of artificial refugia, over several months between April and November, in accordance with current survey guidelines (Bright et al., 2006). This recommendation is based not only on the presence of suitable habitat on site, but also on the site's strong connectivity to extensive areas of woodland to the east.

Such surveys are likely to be required prior to the granting of planning permission.

However, if the proposed works are primarily restricted to the unmanaged grassland, the level of potential impact on dormice may be sufficiently low that further dormouse surveys would be considered disproportionate. In this scenario, works should proceed under a precautionary working method statement incorporating the following measures:

- Site clearance will be undertaken outside of the dormouse hibernation season (November to March) insofar as is possible.
- A toolbox talk will be given to contractors regarding the possible presence of dormice at the site.
- Heras fencing will be erected around the working area to prevent encroachment into retained habitats where dormice could be present.
- Appropriate buffer zones (5m) should be established when working adjacent to retained optimal habitats, such as the native hedgerows.
- A pre-commencement inspection of the site will be undertaken for dormice.

In the unlikely event that a dormouse or evidence of dormouse is identified, works must cease and advice must be sought from a suitably qualified ecologist.

11. FAUNA: BADGERS

This section may include further work you will need to commission (if any) to obtain planning permission or comply with legislation for other consent. All clients are expected to read and understand this section, or to contact the lead surveyor for advice.

11.1 Summary of Survey Findings

No badger setts were identified within the site or within 30m of the site boundary. Furthermore, no evidence of badger foraging activity was recorded within the development area. However, the site is considered to provide suitable foraging and commuting habitat for badgers, particularly the fruiting scrub present within the boundary hedgerows. The site is also considered to be well-connected to further suitable and optimal habitats within the wider landscape, including arable fields, grassland, and expanses of woodland. Therefore, although no evidence of badger activity was identified during the survey, the presence of badgers within the wider site cannot be discounted.

11.2 Foreseen Impacts

No works will be undertaken within 30m of a badger sett. However, it is anticipated that areas of unmanaged grassland will be removed during construction. Given the low ecological value of this habitat and the presence of more extensive suitable habitat within the local area, its loss is likely to be inconsequential to local badger populations. Nevertheless, construction activities could result in the injury or mortality of badgers, if present.

11.3 Recommendations

Owing to the nature of the proposed development and the low potential for impacts to badgers, further badger surveys are considered to be disproportionate. A precautionary working method will be implemented during construction, including the following measures:

- Any excavations will be covered overnight, or a ramp will be installed to enable any trapped animals to escape.
- The use of night-time lighting will be avoided, or sensitive lighting design will be implemented to avoid light spill on to retained habitats which badgers could use.
- Any chemicals or pollutants used or created by the development should be stored and disposed of correctly according to COSHH regulations.

- In the unlikely event that a badger sett is identified, works must cease and advice must be sought from a suitably qualified ecologist.

12. FAUNA: INVERTEBRATES

This section may include further work you will need to commission (if any) to obtain planning permission or comply with legislation for other consent. All clients are expected to read and understand this section, or to contact the lead surveyor for advice.

12.1 Summary of Survey Findings

The habitats present on-site, including the modified grassland, native hedgerow and scattered trees likely provide common invertebrates with opportunities to forage and shelter. The site contains no further notable habitats which may provide niches for specialised or protected invertebrates.

12.2 Foreseen Impacts

Despite the lack of published development plans, it is anticipated that areas of modified grassland will be removed during construction. Given the low ecological value of this habitat and the presence of more extensive suitable habitat within the local area, its loss is likely to be inconsequential to local invertebrate populations.

12.3 Recommendations

No further surveys.

13. FAUNA: OTHER NOTABLE SPECIES

This section may include further work you will need to commission (if any) to obtain planning permission or comply with legislation for other consent. All clients are expected to read and understand this section, or to contact the lead surveyor for advice.

13.1 Summary of Survey Findings

Hedgehogs

The site provides suitable foraging and commuting opportunities for hedgehogs through the presence of grassland and native hedgerows. The site is also considered to be well-connected to further suitable habitat within the local and wider landscape, including agricultural fields, grassland, large woodland copses, and a network of mature hedgerows and field margins.

13.2 Foreseen Impacts

Hedgehogs

Despite the lack of published development plans, it is anticipated that areas of modified grassland will be removed during construction. The loss of such habitats is likely to be inconsequential to local hedgehog populations owing to their low value and the presence of more extensive habitat locally. However, construction activities could result in the death or injury of hedgehogs, if present.

13.3 Recommendations

Hedgehogs

Similar to the badgers, a precautionary working method will be implemented during construction, including the following measures:

- Any excavations will be covered overnight, or a ramp will be installed to enable any trapped animals to escape.
- The use of night-time lighting will be avoided, or sensitive lighting design will be implemented to avoid light spill on to retained habitats which hedgehogs could use.
- Any chemicals or pollutants used or created by the development should be stored and disposed of correctly according to COSHH regulations.

If any hedgehogs are found in the working area these should be allowed to disperse of their own accord or, if at immediate risk, should be moved by hand to a sheltered, vegetated area away from disturbance.

13.4 Suggested Biodiversity Enhancements

Hedgehogs

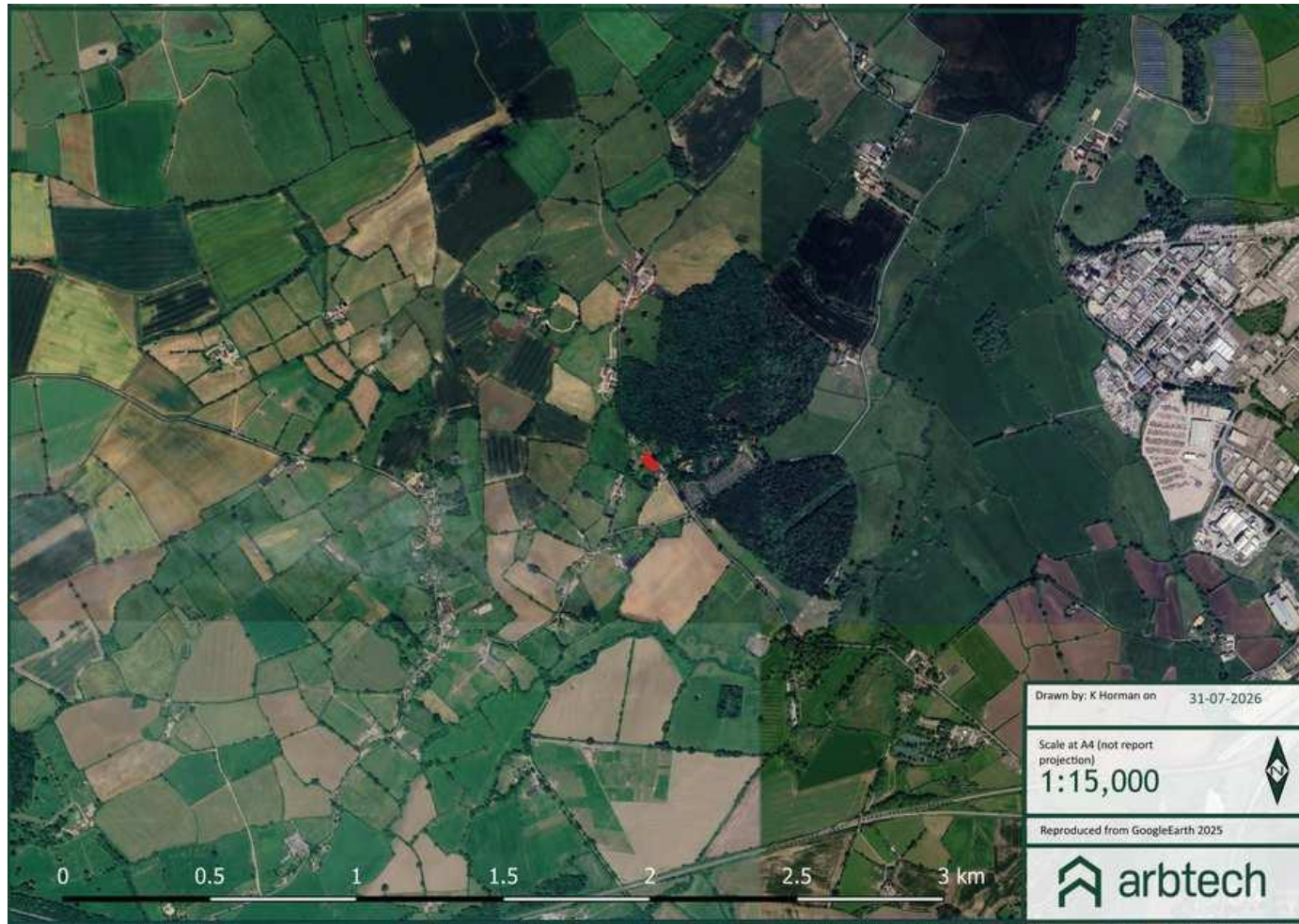
The following habitat creation and enhancement opportunities could be incorporated into the proposed development which would be beneficial for hedgehogs:

- Planting fruit bearing trees
- Installation of hedgehog houses in shady areas.
- Installation of gaps under any proposed boundary fencing to enable hedgehogs to move freely through the site.

APPENDIX 1: SURVEY/HABITAT MAP



APPENDIX 2: LOCATION MAP



APPENDIX 3: PROPOSED PLAN

No plans available.

APPENDIX 4: HABITAT IMAGES



Modified grassland taken from the southern site corner.



H2 - Native hedgerow with trees along the northwestern site boundary



H1 - Native hedgerow along the northeastern site boundary.



T1 - Oak

APPENDIX 5: BASELINE CONDITION SCORE TABLES

Modified grassland (g4) condition assessment.

	Criteria Description	Criteria Passed?
A	There are 6-8 vascular plant species per m2 present, including at least 2 forbs (these may include Creeping thistle <i>Cirsium arvense</i> , spear thistle <i>Cirsium vulgare</i> , curled dock <i>Rumex crispus</i> , broad-leaved dock <i>Rumex obtusifolius</i> , common nettle <i>Urtica dioica</i> , creeping buttercup <i>Ranunculus repens</i> , greater plantain <i>Plantago major</i> , white clover <i>Trifolium repens</i> and cow parsley <i>Anthriscus sylvestris</i>). Where the vascular plant species present are characteristic of medium, high or very high distinctiveness grassland, or there are 9 or more of these characteristic species per m2 (excluding those listed in the previous sentence), please review the full UKHab description to assess whether the grassland should instead be classified as a higher distinctiveness grassland.	N
B	Sward height is varied (at least 20% of the sward is less than 7 cm and at least 20% is more than 7 cm) creating microclimates which provide opportunities for vertebrates and invertebrates to live and breed.	Y
C	Any scrub present accounts for less than 20% of the total grassland area. (Some scattered scrub such as bramble <i>Rubus fruticosus</i> agg. may be present). Note - patches of scrub with continuous (more than 90%) cover should be classified as the relevant scrub habitat type.	Y
D	Physical damage is evident in less than 5% of total grassland area. Examples of physical damage include excessive poaching, damage from machinery use or storage, erosion caused by high levels of access, or any other damaging management activities.	Y
E	Cover of bare ground is between 1% and 10%, including localised areas (for example, a concentration of rabbit warrens). For example, this could include small, scattered areas of bare ground allowing establishment of new species, or localised patches where not exceeding 10% cover.	Y
F	Cover of bracken <i>Pteridium aquilinum</i> is less than 20%.	Y
G	There is an absence of invasive non-native plant species (as listed on Schedule 9 of WCA).	Y
		Total 6/7
	Condition poor due to passing 6 of 7 criteria. Essential criteria (A) not met; condition capped at poor.	

Native hedgerow with trees (h2a) condition assessment.

	Criteria Description	Criteria Passed?
A	Height >1.5 m average along length. (The average height of woody growth estimated from base of stem to the top of the shoots, excluding any bank beneath the hedgerow, any gaps or isolated trees. Newly laid or coppiced hedgerows are indicative of good management and pass this criterion for up to a maximum of four years (if undertaken according to good practice). A newly planted hedgerow does not pass this criterion (unless it is >1.5 m height).)	Y
A	Width >1.5 m average along length. (The average width of woody growth estimated at the widest point of the canopy, excluding gaps and isolated trees. Outgrowths (such as blackthorn <i>Prunus spinosa</i> suckers) are only included in the width estimate when they are >0.5 m in height. Laid, coppiced, cut and newly planted hedgerows are indicative of good management and pass this criterion for up to a maximum of four years (if undertaken according to good practice).)	Y
B	Gap between ground and base of canopy <0.5 m for >90% of length. (This is the vertical 'gappiness' of the woody component of the hedgerow, and its distance from the ground to the lowest leafy growth. Certain exceptions to this criterion are acceptable (see page 65 of the Hedgerow Survey Handbook).)	Y
B	Gaps make up <10% of total length; and No canopy gaps >5 m. (This is the horizontal 'gappiness' of the woody component of the hedgerow. Gaps are complete breaks in the woody canopy (no matter how small). Access points and gates contribute to the overall 'gappiness' but are not subject to the >5 m criterion (as this is the typical size of a gate).)	Y
C	>1 m width of undisturbed ground with perennial herbaceous vegetation for >90% of length: Measured from outer edge of hedgerow; and Is present on one side of the hedgerow (at least). (This is the level of disturbance (excluding wildlife disturbance) at the base of the hedgerow. Undisturbed ground is present for at least 90% of the hedgerow length, greater than 1 m in width and must be present along at least one side of the hedgerow. This criterion recognises the value of the hedgerow base as a boundary habitat with the capacity to support a wide range of species. Cultivation, heavily trodden footpaths, poached ground etc. can limit available habitat niches.)	Y
C	Plant species indicative of nutrient enrichment of soils dominate <20% cover of the area of undisturbed ground. (The indicator species used are nettles <i>Urtica</i> spp., cleavers <i>Galium aparine</i> and docks <i>Rumex</i> spp. Their presence, either singly or together, does not exceed the 20% cover threshold.)	N
D	>90% of the hedgerow and undisturbed ground is free of invasive non-native plant species (including those listed on Schedule 9 of WCA) and recently introduced species. (Recently introduced species refer to plants that have naturalised in the UK since AD 1500 (neophytes). Archaeophytes count as natives. For information on archaeophytes and neophytes see the JNCC website, as well as the	Y

	BSBI website where the 'Online Atlas of the British and Irish Flora' contains an up-to-date list of the status of species. For information on invasive non-native species see the GB Non-Native Secretariat website.)	
D	>90% of the hedgerow or undisturbed ground is free of damage caused by human activities. (This criterion addresses damaging activities that may have led to or lead to deterioration in other attributes. This could include evidence of pollution, piles of manure or rubble, or inappropriate management practices (for example, excessive hedgerow cutting).)	Y
E	There is more than one age-class (or morphology) of tree present (for example: young, mature, veteran and or ancient), and there is on average at least one mature, ancient or veteran tree present per 20 - 50m of hedgerow. (This criterion addresses if there are a range of age-classes or morphologies which allow for replacement of trees and provide opportunities for different species.)	Y
E	At least 95% of hedgerow trees are in a healthy condition (excluding veteran features valuable for wildlife). There is little or no evidence of an adverse impact on tree health by damage from livestock or wild animals, pests or diseases, or human activity. (This criterion identifies if the trees are subject to damage which compromises the survival and health of the individual specimens.)	Y
		Total 9/10
	Condition good due to passing 9 of 10 criteria.	

Native hedgerow (h2a) condition assessment.

	Criteria Description	Criteria Passed?
A	Height >1.5 m average along length. (The average height of woody growth estimated from base of stem to the top of the shoots, excluding any bank beneath the hedgerow, any gaps or isolated trees. Newly laid or coppiced hedgerows are indicative of good management and pass this criterion for up to a maximum of four years (if undertaken according to good practice). A newly planted hedgerow does not pass this criterion (unless it is >1.5 m height).)	Y
A	Width >1.5 m average along length. (The average width of woody growth estimated at the widest point of the canopy, excluding gaps and isolated trees. Outgrowths (such as blackthorn <i>Prunus spinosa</i> suckers) are only included in the width estimate when they are >0.5 m in height. Laid, coppiced, cut and newly planted hedgerows are indicative of good management and pass this criterion for up to a maximum of four years (if undertaken according to good practice).)	Y
B	Gap between ground and base of canopy <0.5 m for >90% of length. (This is the vertical 'gappiness' of the woody component of the hedgerow, and its distance from the ground to the lowest leafy growth. Certain exceptions to this criterion are acceptable (see page 65 of the Hedgerow Survey Handbook).)	N
B	Gaps make up <10% of total length; and No canopy gaps >5 m. (This is the horizontal 'gappiness' of the woody component of the hedgerow. Gaps are complete breaks in the woody canopy (no matter how small). Access points and gates contribute to the overall 'gappiness' but are not subject to the >5 m criterion (as this is the typical size of a gate).)	Y
C	>1 m width of undisturbed ground with perennial herbaceous vegetation for >90% of length: Measured from outer edge of hedgerow; and Is present on one side of the hedgerow (at least). (This is the level of disturbance (excluding wildlife disturbance) at the base of the hedgerow. Undisturbed ground is present for at least 90% of the hedgerow length, greater than 1 m in width and must be present along at least one side of the hedgerow. This criterion recognises the value of the hedgerow base as a boundary habitat with the capacity to support a wide range of species. Cultivation, heavily trodden footpaths, poached ground etc. can limit available habitat niches.)	Y
C	Plant species indicative of nutrient enrichment of soils dominate <20% cover of the area of undisturbed ground. (The indicator species used are nettles <i>Urtica</i> spp., cleavers <i>Galium aparine</i> and docks <i>Rumex</i> spp. Their presence, either singly or together, does not exceed the 20% cover threshold.)	N
D	>90% of the hedgerow and undisturbed ground is free of invasive non-native plant species (including those listed on Schedule 9 of WCA) and recently introduced species. (Recently introduced species refer to plants that have naturalised in the UK since AD 1500 (neophytes). Archaeophytes count as natives. For information on archaeophytes and neophytes see the JNCC website, as well as the	N

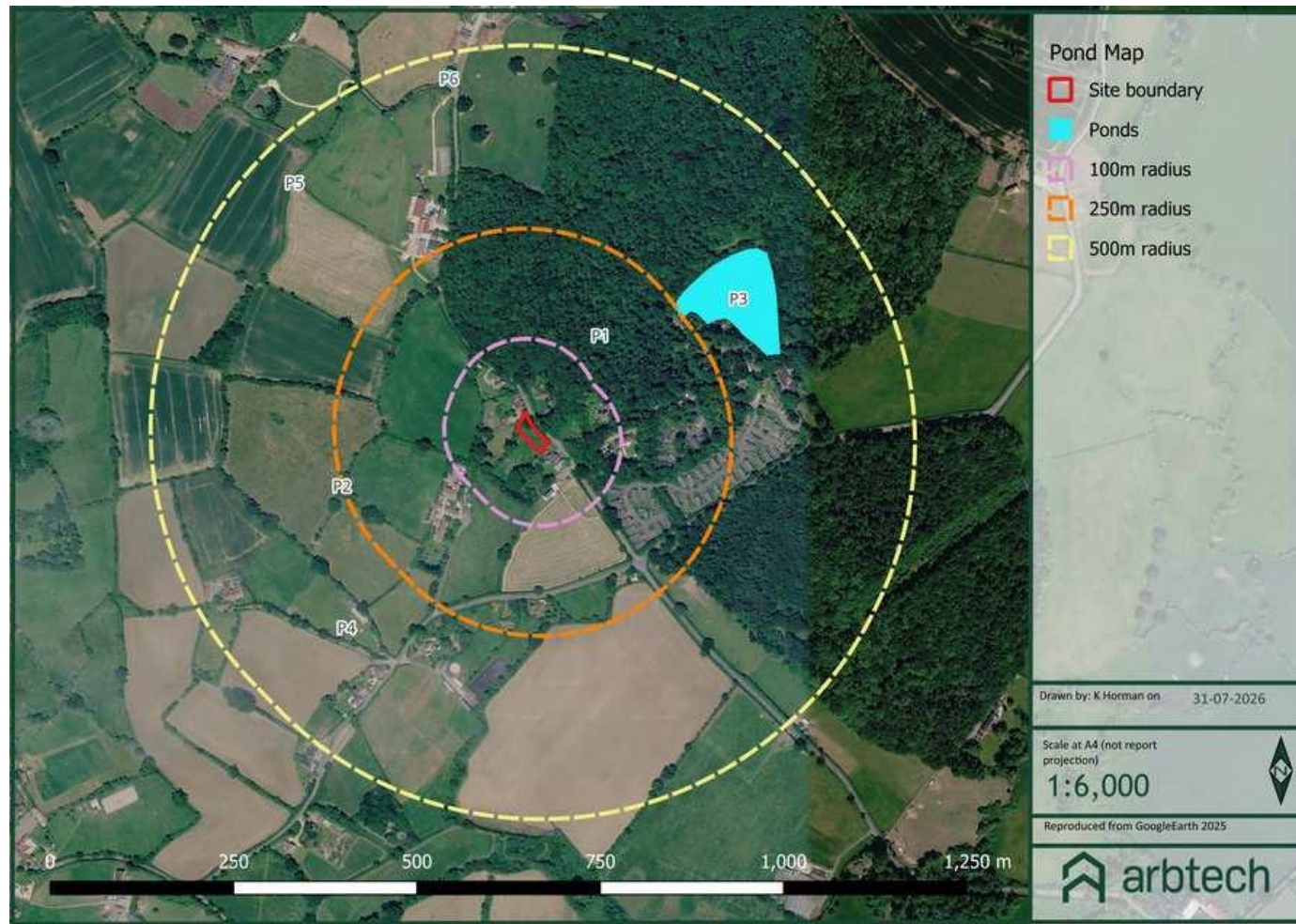
	BSBI website where the 'Online Atlas of the British and Irish Flora' contains an up-to-date list of the status of species. For information on invasive non-native species see the GB Non-Native Secretariat website.)	
D	>90% of the hedgerow or undisturbed ground is free of damage caused by human activities. (This criterion addresses damaging activities that may have led to or lead to deterioration in other attributes. This could include evidence of pollution, piles of manure or rubble, or inappropriate management practices (for example, excessive hedgerow cutting).)	Y
		Total 5/8
	Condition moderate due to passing 5 of 8 criteria.	

Scattered trees (T1) condition assessment.

	Criteria Description	Criteria Passed?
A	The tree is a native species (or at least 70% within the block are native species).	Y
B	The tree canopy is predominantly continuous, with gaps in canopy cover making up <10% of total area and no individual gap being >5 m wide (individual trees automatically pass this criterion).	Y
C	The tree is mature (or more than 50% within the block are mature).	Y
D	There is little or no evidence of an adverse impact on tree health by human activities (such as vandalism, herbicide or detrimental agricultural activity). And there is no current regular pruning regime, so the trees retain >75% of expected canopy for their age range and height.	Y
E	Natural ecological niches for vertebrates and invertebrates are present, such as presence of deadwood, cavities, ivy or loose bark.	Y
F	More than 20% of the tree canopy area is oversailing vegetation beneath.	Y
		Total 6/6
	Condition good due to passing 6 of 6 criteria.	

APPENDIX 6: PONDS

Pond Map



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