

COYNE ENVIRONMENTAL LTD

**Lydiard Farm
The Street
Lydiard Millicent
SN5 3LU**



Ecological Review

September 2025

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INTRODUCTION

Offgrid Architecture has instructed Coyne Environmental to carry out an ecological study of Lydiard Farm, The Street, Lydiard Millicent, SN5 3LU to establish the potential presence or absence of protected ecological features of significance. This was for a planning application to extend the existing house. A Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA) survey has been undertaken, which found no ecology of significance, including bats (European Protected Species) in the buildings or the grounds. A Biodiversity New Gain (BNG) has also been undertaken in accordance with the Environment Act 2021. A new application for a dwelling between the existing house is being proposed and this is a PEA review on the site, including re-examining the boundary hedges, as specifically requested by the LPA.

The completed PEA will enable Wiltshire County Council (LCC) to consider the impact of the proposal on wildlife. The authority can then discharge its legal obligations under the 'Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations' (2018) and any 'Outline Mitigation and Compensation Strategy' if required.



I am a qualified Ecologist, with over 40 years' experience in the environmental field. This includes being a licence bat worker (Bat Licence 2015-15943-CLS-CLS). The PEA review survey was carried out on the 22.07.25. This was conducted in the daytime, (19 c) variable conditions, light winds, dry.

LOCATION

Large parts of the county of Wiltshire are Chalk downland, with sheep grazing, one of the major land uses. The area's two major rivers, both called Avon have influenced the topography of the land, with Salisbury Plain being a prominent feature and Stonehenge a testimony to the ancient history of the region.

The village of Lydiard Millicent “gate by the ford “and Millicent de Clinton (12th C), is in Domesday and was a small settlement (1,580 pop. 2011) within Braydon Forest. There was an Iron Age hill fort at Ringsbury Camp (AM), north of the village and Roman pottery has been found in the area. Lydiard House is 18th C and All Saints parish church is a Grade 11 Listed Building (LB).

The village is surrounded by farmland and woods (remnants of the royal hunting Forest of Braydon). To the east is the beginning of urban Swindon with the river Ray passing to the south. It is thus generally a very rural area of the country.

SITE

Lydiard Farm is at the northern end of the main village street and is now a residential property with the former agricultural buildings no longer used for farming purposes. The main house, with detached garage, is a modern property of brick with clay tiled roof and PVC windows. Surrounding the building are extensive grounds, mainly laid to amenity lawns. It is now proposed to construct a new dwelling between the existing house, for which planning permission is being sought



The existing grounds to the immediate house are all amenity grass with mature trees in the garden and along the road boundary. There are clipped hedges on the roadside and an old field hedge, now in effect a linear native tree belt, on the west boundary. Habitats that would appear to be of minimal value for wildlife.

At the rear of the property the amenity grass continues to the boundaries. These are fenced with no hedges. Over mature fruit trees have been planted and may be the remanent of an old orchard. There is a small patio by the house with a few herbaceous plants, as the only other decorative vegetation. Like the front of the site this all appears to be a habitat of minimal wildlife value.

Outside the residential garden are fields and the rest of the farm buildings. These are not part of the planning application and have therefore not been surveyed. Lydiard Farm is at the edge of the village with agricultural land beyond.

AREA DESIGNATIONS

Management and protection of biodiversity within the UK planning system is set out through European and UK legislation. The Wildlife and Countryside Act (1981) is the main protection for wildlife. There is also legislation for specific species, Protection of Badgers Act 1992, Habitat Regulations 1994 Schedule 2 (European Protected Species), EU Habitats and Birds Directive and more general guidance, EU Biodiversity Strategy 2011-2020. These all are aimed at ensuring the environment of Wiltshire and its wildlife is adequately protected. This study and report have also considered BS 42020 (2013) Biodiversity -Code of practice for planning and development.

Wiltshire County Council has several policies in its Local Plan (LP) 2021 including a Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) 2008 with Landscape Biodiversity Areas and has a Local Nature Partnership (Link2Nature). Local initiatives include a National Dormouse Monitoring Programme (NDMP) and the Avon is a Special Area of Conservation (SAC).



Wiltshire Council is now a Unitary Authority which covers Lydiard Millicent. The village has its own Parish Council which has produced a Neighbourhood Plan (2018-2036) and one of the first priorities is improving the footpath system in association with Wiltshire County Council. Woodbridge Brook rises near the village and in the Middle Ages supported a water mill. In recent years, the effects of climate change have reduced the watercourse flow rate. The nearest nature reserve is Mornington Meadow outside the search area.

CONDITION

A full Phase 1 Habitat Survey was not deemed necessary, as this is a site has not changed since the original PEA survey. It is therefore proposed to carry out an ecological Walk Over Site Survey. However, if the survey identifies any wildlife of significance, measures will be taken as set out in the JNCC guidance Handbook for Phase 1 Habitat Surveys (2010) and CIEEM Guidelines (2017).

The current house occupies the centre of the site, a building with various extensions over time. This sits within a large garden of amenity lawns and mature trees, mostly

non-native There is a long tarmac drive from the road to the premises opening out for parking. At the rear of the site is more close mown grass, with fruit trees of a former orchard. To the side is the farm building of Lydiate Farm, some now derelict and no longer in use, others still part of the working farm (outside the Application).

ECOLOGICAL EVALUATION

As this proposal does not affect the existing property, a survey of the current buildings, was not required. In the previous PEA survey, an inspection of the house was carried for bats (European Protected Species) and found no evidence of them. This was assessed to have **no** potential as a bat roost.



External areas of the house and grounds were surveyed. The gardens of the property are generally an area where wildlife may occur. The trees and boundary vegetation will probably be used by birds for foraging and nesting sites. On inspection no nests or evidence of nest building was found. No birds were seen visiting or passing through the site, on the inspection. On the British Trust for Ornithology (BTO) guidelines the proposal site is classed as low for Avifauna.

The site was also inspected for other evidence of bats. Using binoculars, none of the trees had suitable holes (woodpecker), cracks or other crevices as potential roosting sites. No evidence of urine stains, scratches etc was found. Therefore, in accordance with the Bat Conservation Trust (2012) Guidelines and having regard to the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017. It is concluded that the proposal site will have no impact on roosting bats.

As most of the area of the proposed site is amenity grass, (*Poa* spp. *Festuca* spp.), it would appear to be of minimal ecological value. A few ruderals (*Reseda lutea*, *Sisymbrium officinale*, *Daucus carota*, *Persicaria maculosa* etc.) with patches of bramble (*Rubus fruticosus*) and nettle (*Urtica dioica*), around the borders, is the main vegetation. This is a habitat which may attract nectar seeking insects, bees, butterflies but little else.

The hedges along the boundaries are highly managed evergreen non-native species, so there is no rich herb base layer, or potential linear eco-zones of tall herbs and shrubs where small mammals would use foraging for food and passing to other habitats. The old former field hedge is the only diverse habitat of any merit, on the site. This is a line of oak (*Quercus robur*) with ash (*Fraxinus excelsior*) and hornbeam (*Carpinus betulus*), an understorey of hawthorn (*Crataegus monogyna*), blackthorn (*Prunus spinosa*) and elder (*Sambucus nigra*). The sparse ground flora is dominated by ivy (*Hedra helix*)

This linear habitat will provide nesting, food sources (winter berries), and singing posts etc. for birds. Animals, like voles and shrews, could be expected to use the base of the hedge line to pass between habitats. No evidence of footprints, droppings, burrowing or other wildlife activity was evident.

No runs were observed by larger animals, such as badgers, through the overall vegetation, indicating that this part of the farm was not used as a transit to other habitats. As there is no area of water near the proposal site, protected species like Great Crested Newts (GCN) would not be encountered. A GCN Suitability Index was therefore not considered necessary. Examination under stones and similar refugia sites found no signs of amphibians, as well as the lack of suitable vegetation cover and water.

This site survey and PEA review assessment confirms that Lydiard Farm has a habitat of only limited value for most wildlife, apart from a few common garden birds. There would therefore appear to be no ecological problems with the proposed extension and new garages proceeding.

BIODIVERSITY NET GAIN (BNG)

The Environment Act 2021 has a require for Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) on most development, of a minimum of 10%. Within this scheme it is proposed that the BNG will be undertaken as part of the planning permission with suitable mitigation or enhancement required to meet the statutory Net Gain. It is proposed this will be incorporated into an ecological and landscape design.

This can include native species of planting, selected wild flora mixes and habitat creation in the form of bat and bird boxes and other features for fauna (refugia). Areas of wildflower meadow and could form part of the proposals along with any required SuDS design.

CONCLUSION

Offgrid Architecture has instructed the commissioning of an Ecological Assessment of details of the ecology of Lydiard Farm, Lydiard Millicent, SN5 3LU and any wildlife of significance to the proposed development. This Report details the findings of the survey which indicates that there is a low probability of the presence of significant

wildlife on site, including EPS, and therefore this should not affect the development proceeding.

Therefore, in my professional opinion this review survey, analysis and PEA Report, should satisfy the requirements in respect of ecology and biodiversity enhancement for the LPA. Following the conclusions from the BNG metric assessment, I recommend that the application can be considered, by Wiltshire County Council on this basis and that no further environmental surveys are necessary to determine the proposed application.

REFERENCES

Site Plan

Lydiard Millicent Neighbourhood Plan

JNCC Handbook for Phase 1 Habitat Surveys

The Wildlife and Countryside Act (1981)

Environment Act (2012)

BS 42020 (2013) Biodiversity -Code of Practice

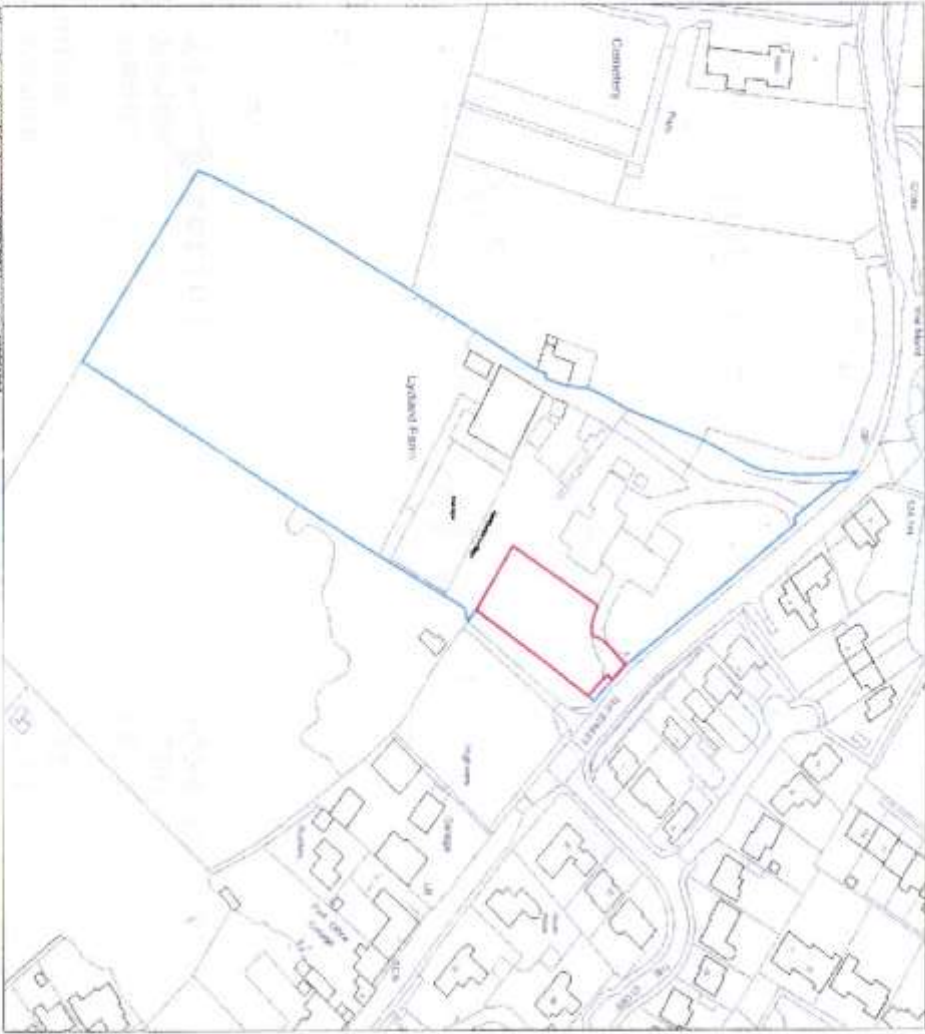
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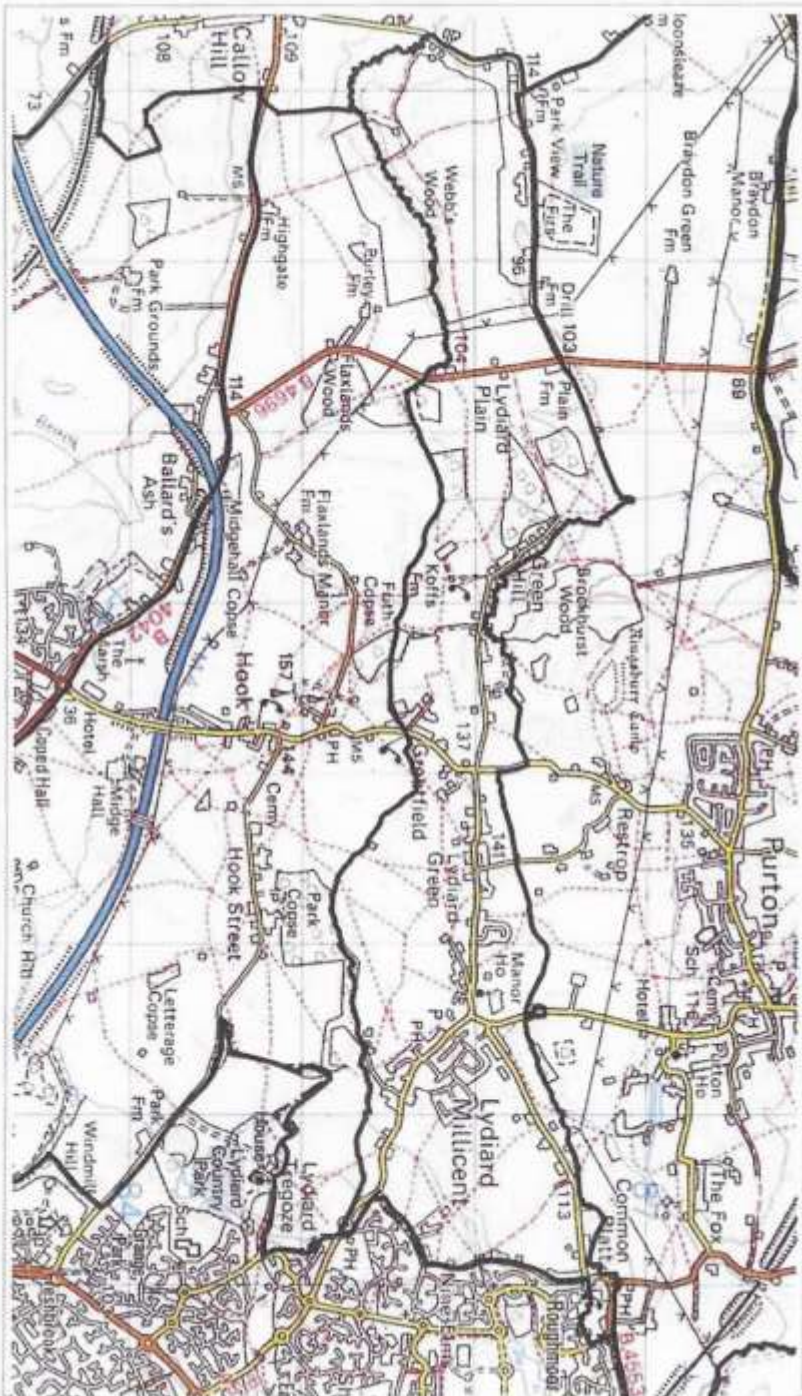
EXG. LOCATION PLAN 1:1250

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EXTENSION A/C/REVISION Project Name: EXG. LOCATION PLAN Scale: 1:1250 Author: [Name] Check: [Name] Date: 2020-08-18	

Map of Parish



North Wiltshire District Council

Lydiard Millicent Parish Boundary
SCALE: 1:30000

Parish Boundary Review

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