



Preliminary Ecological Appraisal Report

Land at Hole Farm,

Alderbury

Salisbury

SP5 3EL

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Project Details

Client:	Peter Read
Site/Job:	Land at Hole Farm, Alderbury, Salisbury SP5 3EL
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Report author:	Laura Kahane
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Surveyed by:	Laura Kahane
Architect/Agent:	BCM LLP

Quality Control

Version	Status	Date	Author(s)	Signature	Reviewed/ Approved by	Signature
1	Complete	15/01/2026	Laura Kahane		Kari Bettoney	K.BETTONEY

This report remains valid for 12 months from date of issue.
Survey data are valid for 12-24 months from the date the survey was undertaken.
If during the planning process; the proposals change which results in an impact on a habitats which has not been mitigated for within this report or; the boundary line changes or; the habitat change significantly, a re-assessment in relation to ecology is likely to be required.

Disclaimer:

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This is a technical report which does not represent legal advice. You may wish to seek legal advice if this is required. This report is not intended to be submitted with a planning application for a development without supporting documents, including results of further surveys and detailed assessments of the effects of the proposed development.

It is the duty of care of the landowner/developer to act responsibly and comply with current environmental legislation if protected species are suspected or found prior to works.

¹ CIEEM (2017) *Guidelines on Ecological Report Writing*. Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management, Winchester.

Executive Summary

Purpose	Laura Kahane was commissioned by Mr Peter Read to undertake a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA) to support a planning application for the development of an agricultural storage barn on land at Hole Farm, Alderbury, Salisbury SP5 3EL centred at grid reference SU 17710 27977 (hereafter referred to as the 'site').
Methodologies	- A field survey, in the form of an extended Phase 1 Habitat Survey, was undertaken. Habitats within the site were identified and mapped in compliance with the 'Handbook for Phase 1 habitat survey: A Technique for Environmental Audit' (Joint Nature Conservation Committee, 2010). - An assessment was also undertaken of the likely presence or absence of protected and notable animal species within the zone of influence of the proposed development. - During the survey work undertaken, areas of modified grassland were identified within the site. - The nearby hedgerows and treelines were considered to have suitability to support nesting birds and other species that occur locally, such as commuting bats, nesting birds, and the European hedgehog (<i>Erinaceus europaeus</i>) however, these habitats are not due to be impacted by the proposals. The modified grassland was also considered to provide commuting and foraging habitat for small mammals and some nesting birds. - Based on the area of the site to be impacted and the location of the nearest water bodies to the site (which could be assessed using a Habitat Suitability Index (HSI), results show that the chalk river (310m away) and chalk stream ditch (140m away) both present as 'poor' suitability to support Great Crested Newt. The site is also located within a green area for GCN, on the GCN Risk Zones (Swindon and Wiltshire) impact risk zone map. Therefore, whilst no further surveys for this species are considered necessary, Recommended Avoidance Measures have been recommended to protect amphibians throughout the site preparation and construction phase. - A web-based desk study was undertaken for designated sites and protected species and habitat records within 2 km of the site.
Key Issues	Root Protection Zone All off-site trees that fall on the boundary of the site should be protected throughout the development in accordance with British Standards BS 5837:2012. Root protection areas should be 12x the diameter at breast height (DBH) or the reach of the longest branch (whichever is greater), unless otherwise advised by a qualified arboriculturist. The mature oak tree to the southeast (off site) near to the access track from the lane is likely have roots within the zone of influence. No materials should be allowed to be stored within these root protection areas and no heavy machinery should run over them. Nesting birds In order to protect bird nests and comply with the law protecting them, any vegetation removal should take place outside of the breeding bird season, which is generally considered to be from March to September inclusive. If this is not possible, prior to removal, such vegetation should first be checked for the presence of nesting birds by an experienced ecologist. If any nests are found, they will be left undisturbed until the chicks have fledged. Reptiles, amphibians and hedgehogs (Recommended Avoidance Measures) It is anticipated that the impacts on incidences of amphibians, transitory reptiles, and small mammals such as hedgehogs can be avoided by adopting reasonable avoidance measures (RAMs), which should include; General good practice measures during the construction phase, including storage of materials and protective HERAS fencing

- Ensuring that any open excavations are sloped to prevent entrapment of amphibians, reptiles or small mammals.
- When stored, construction materials should be raised off the ground (on pallets or skids). This will provide an opportunity for refuge within the development until completed. This should include any aggregates which are newly delivered.
- Timing of works (vegetation clearance to avoid sensitive periods to be undertaken during the April to September period).
 - Staged Vegetation Clearance - using hand-held tools (such as strimmers and brush cutters) to minimise the risk to any reptiles, amphibians or hedgehogs that are incidentally found. This includes any clearance of vegetation, such as grassland or tall ruderal vegetation found on or along the periphery of the site.

Ecological Enhancement

Enhancements will be easy to integrate into the design of the development and suitable recommendations which will aim to meet the NPPF / local planning policies which include on-site planting. On-site planting will include x2 native trees, bat box and a bird nesting boxes (swallow nest cups). This project qualifies under the *de minimus* criteria and therefore is exempt from Biodiversity Net Gain.

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1.0 Introduction & Background

Overview & Proposed Development

- 1.1. Laura Kahane was commissioned by Peter Read to undertake a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA) to support a planning application for the development of an agricultural storage building on land at Hole Farm, Alderbury, Salisbury SP5 3EL centred at grid reference SU 17710 27977 (hereafter referred to as the 'site').

Site Description

- 1.2. The survey and report undertaken followed the Bat Conservation Trust (2023) guidelines and the standard JNCC Phase 1 Survey Methodology, extended to assess the potential for the site to support protected species. The proposed development site is in the village of Alderbury, approximately 6km south-east of Salisbury, Wiltshire. Immediately surrounding the proposed development site are areas of agricultural land to the north, south-east and west with a mature treeline to the northwest (Map 1).



Map 1. Approximate boundary of the proposed development site (Copyright Google Satellite Hybrid, 2026, left; and BCM Wilson Hill location plan, right).

- 1.3. The wider landscape comprises open fields with boundary hedgerows/treelines, woodland, agricultural and residential properties to the west (Map 2).



Map 2. The proposed development site in the context of the wider landscape (Copyright Google Satellite Hybrid, 2026).

- 1.4. The surrounding habitats, particularly the open grassland fields, arable fields, boundary hedgerows/treelines and woodland, are considered to provide suitable foraging and commuting opportunities for a number of protected species, including commuting bats, badger, nesting birds, amphibians, common reptiles and European hedgehog.

2.0. Methodology

Desk Study

2.1. Table 1 – Sources of biodiversity and ecological records

Source	Information (search buffer between 2 km from site centre/boundary)
National Biodiversity Atlas (NBN)	Including a search radius of 2km from the site boundary.
Multi-Agency Geographic Information for the Countryside (MAGIC) and Joint Nature Conservation Committee (JNCC)	To obtain information on any designated sites of nature conservation interest within 2 km of the site and details of any European Protected Species licences issued within 2 km (http://www.magic.gov.uk/MagicMap.aspx).
Google Maps / Google Earth	To view aerial photographs, maps and mapnik data, to assess the ecological context of the site (http://acme.com/planimeter/).

Given the location of the site set within a large agricultural area, 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 full biological records data will add any significant weight or alter the conclusions and recommendations outlined in this report. Possible impacts on species which are directly relevant to the habitats on or adjacent to (such as amphibians and birds) have been assessed comprehensively.

Field Survey

- 2.2. Ecologist Laura Kahane BSc (Hons) MRes MRSB was commissioned to carry out a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal on 14th July 2026.
- 2.3. The survey included carrying out an extended phase 1 habitat survey. This consisted of a walkover assessment of the site within the red line boundary provided, using a phase 1 habitat survey methodology (JNCC, 2010, as amended by the Institute of Chartered Environmental Assessment (IEA, 1995)). This is a standard technique for classifying and mapping British habitats. All areas within the site were successfully surveyed, with the main plant species recorded and habitat types mapped. Indications of ecological value were recorded which included any presence or signs of any legally protected or rare species.
- 2.4. The survey also included a search to identify the presence of any invasive, non-native plant species, particularly those listed on Schedule 9 of the Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) which include Japanese Knotweed (*Reynoutria japonica*) and Himalayan Balsam (*Impatiens glandulifera*). Any existing trees on site were assessed for their potential to support roosting bats and birds.

Preliminary Ecological Appraisal

- 2.5. The PEA survey identified the habitats present and their potential for protected species, particularly bats, birds, hedgehogs, badgers, hazel dormouse (*Muscardinus avellanarius*), amphibians, reptiles and invertebrates following the standard guidelines set out by the Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (CIEEM, 2018).
- 2.6. The survey focused on the land within the red line boundary of the planning application and the zone of impact.
- 2.7. The trees and other habitats to be affected within the site were assessed for their potential to support roosting and foraging bats, birds and other protected species.

Bats

- 2.8. Any trees to be affected by the proposed works were assessed visually for evidence of bats and assessed for features which increase the likelihood of bats roosting, such as storm damage, rot holes, ivy cover, flaking bark and splits in the trunk. Linear habitat features, both within and connecting to the site, were visually assessed for their likely use as foraging and commuting corridors.
- 2.9. Other habitats on site were visually assessed for their likely use as foraging sites.

Amphibians

- 2.10. Any waterbodies within the site were assessed for their potential for use by amphibians and for features which increase the likelihood of use as breeding sites for great crested newts *Triturus cristatus*, such as suitable submerged vegetation, low water turbidity, absence of fish and low levels of use by waterfowl.

- 2.11. Other habitats on site were assessed for their likely use outside of the breeding season for both foraging and shelter purposes.

Reptiles

- 2.12. Open areas of habitat were visually assessed for suitability for reptiles and features which increase the likelihood of use by reptiles, including the presence of tussocky vegetation, log and rock piles, basking spots and compost heaps.

Otter

- 2.13. Habitats deemed suitable for Otter (*Lutra lutra*) such as rivers, streams, ditches, wetlands, reed beds, lakes, ponds and reservoirs within close proximity of the site or other potential important habitats such as fisheries, resting places, holts including tunnels and hollows within dense, undisturbed vegetation, were assessed. Field signs of Otter were also sought including spraints, feeding remains, footprints and slides.

Water Vole

- 3.14. An assessment for Water vole *Arvicola amphibius* observes suitable habitats and their proximity to the site such as rivers, streams, ditches, wetlands, reed beds, lakes, ponds and reservoirs, as well as bankside vegetation and structure. Field signs including burrows, latrines, feeding remains, trails and footprints are also recorded.

Badger

- 3.15. Any evidence of Badger (*Meles meles*) use including setts, paths and latrine sites were recorded during the ecological appraisal.

Birds

- 3.16. An appraisal for nesting and wintering farmland birds on site assesses the suitability of habitat and the presence of bird species including active and inactive nesting sites.

Invertebrates

- 3.17. During the Ecological Appraisal, features including dead wood, plant diversity and flora, spoils, woodland structure, and waterbodies on site were assessed for their suitability to support a range of invertebrates.

Other Mammals

- 2.13. Areas of dense vegetated cover on site and adjacent to the site were assessed for their likely use by badgers, and attention was paid to the presence of any signs of current or historic badger activity such as setts and latrines.
- 2.14. Open areas of habitat were visually assessed for signs of mammal tracks, push throughs and latrines.

- 2.15. Areas of woodland, copse, tree lines, hedgerows and other boundary vegetation were assessed for their likely use by hazel dormice, or increased likelihood of use due to presence of hazel and other suitable food species.

Surveyor Information

2.16. Table 2 – Surveyor Information

Surveyor	Licences	Ecological Experience or qualification
Laura Kahane	Class licence CL18 (Bats) Licence reference: 2025-86000-CL18-BAT	MRes Ecology, Evolution & Conservation BSc (Hons) Wildlife, Ecology & Conservation Certificate in Ecological Consultancy The Royal Society of Biology (MRSB)

Limitations and Assumptions

- 2.17. The desk study and field survey will not produce a comprehensive list of plants and animals as this will be limited by factors that influence their presence (e.g., activity and dormancy periods). An assessment can however be made of the habitats within the survey area, their nature conservation value and potential to support protected or priority species.
- 2.18. Bats can utilise buildings or trees seasonally, with frequent movement often caused by fluctuations in weather conditions. Therefore, they may arrive and begin utilising a site after it has been assessed for bats, or roost temporarily somewhere during the assessment. As a result, their cryptic nature means there is potential for them to be present during the assessment, remaining undetected, especially during the daytime when they are inactive.
- 2.19. No other limitations were encountered, or assumptions made during either the desk study or the field survey and it is considered that with the access gained and recording undertaken, an accurate assessment of the site's ecological value has been made.

3.0 Results

Desk Study

Designated Sites (statutory)

- 3.1. Two statutory designated sites are present within 2km of the proposed development site. The River Avon (SAC) (and River Avon System Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) and Britford Water Meadows SSSI are located approximately 320m southwest of the site's red line boundary, at their nearest. The closest stretch of this SSSI designation is currently in unfavourable/recovering condition. This stretch of the River Avon is a classic chalk river, plus a network of associated wetland habitat, and is designated for the presence of rarer species such as Desmoulin's whorl snail (*Vertigo moulinsiana*), Brook lamprey (*Lampetra planeri*), Bullhead (*Cottus gobio*), Otter (*Lutra lutra*), Southern damselfly (*Coenagrion mercurial*) and occasional breeding Atlantic salmon (*Salmo salar*).
- 3.2. The desk study has revealed that the site is located within an Impact Risk Zone (IRZ) with respect to River Avon SSSI & SAC which states that Natural England should be contacted for

certain development types. The SSSI IRZs indicate that at the location selected, there is potential for all proposed developments to have a harmful effect on terrestrial SSSIs and SACs. **Therefore, you should consult Natural England for advice on the nature of the potential.**

Designated Sites (non-statutory)

- 3.3. No areas of non-statutory designation are located within 2km of the proposed development site.

Priority Habitats and Ancient Woodland

- 3.4. No areas of priority habitat are present adjacent to the site.
- 3.5. A number of priority habitats are present within the wider area, including areas of good quality semi-improved grassland, wood pasture and parkland, chalk streams, ancient woodland, deciduous woodland, coastal and floodplain grazing marsh and lowland fens. The closest area of priority habitat is an area of deciduous woodland located approximately 68m south of the red line boundary and on the other side of the road, where the access track adjoins the site. In total, three areas of ancient woodland exist within 2km of the site boundary to the north and southeast, including Hendon and Canon copse woodland, which has been replanted. The nearest ASW 995m to the southeast.

Impacts and Mitigation

- 3.6. Given their distance from the site, no designated sites or areas of priority habitat will be directly affected through land take (other direct effects) of the development. The mitigation and enhancement measures set out in this report will effectively minimise any indirect effects of the development.

Field Survey

Timing and Conditions

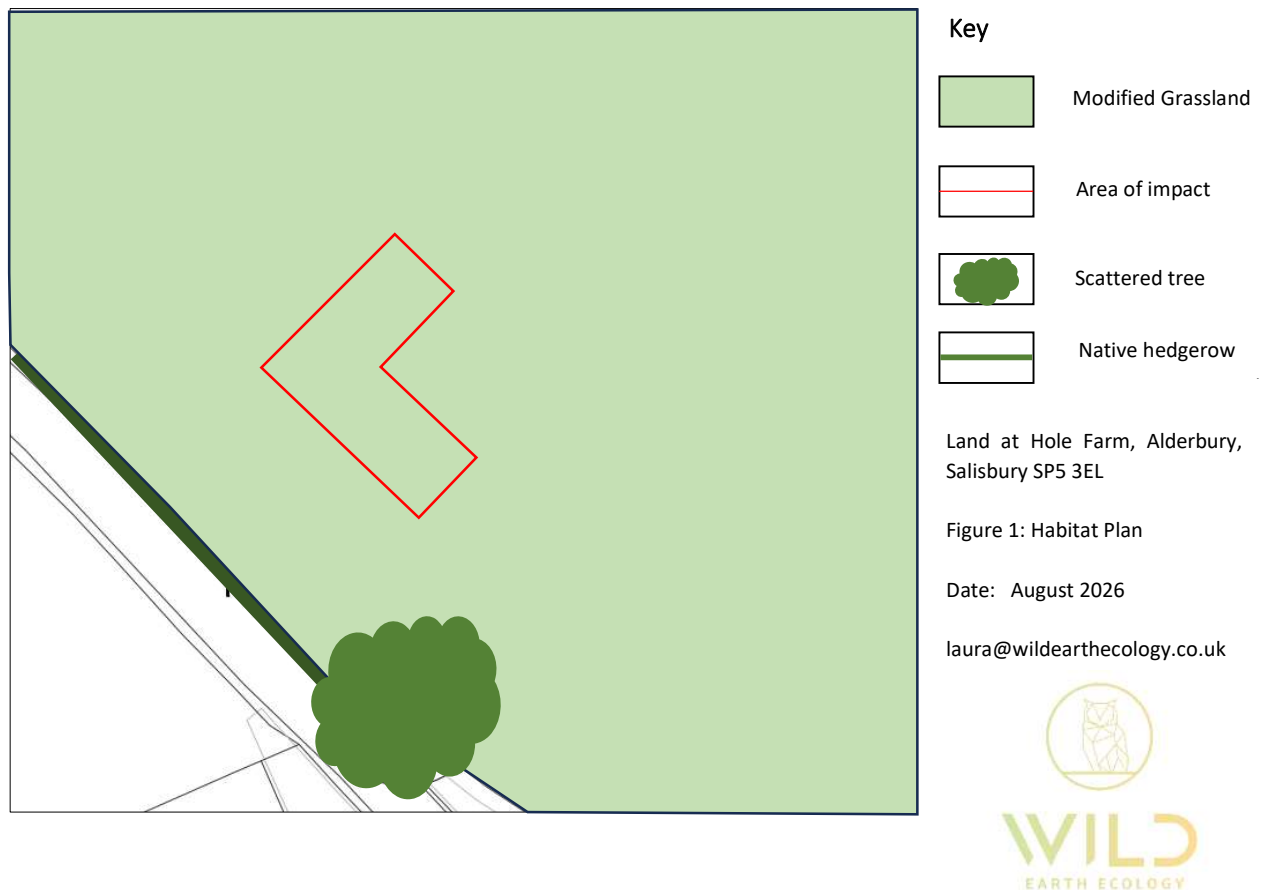
- 3.6. Table 5 – Summary of conditions during survey

<i>Survey Date:</i>	14/07/2026
<i>Survey Type:</i>	Preliminary Ecological Appraisal
<i>Temperature start:</i>	26°C
<i>Temperature finish:</i>	26°C
<i>Wind speed (Beaufort Scale):</i>	0
<i>Cloud Cover (Oktas Scale):</i>	3
<i>Precipitation:</i>	0

Habitat Groups

- 3.7. During the field survey, areas of modified grassland were identified within the site.
- 3.8. Figure 1 illustrates the location and extent of all habitats recorded on site.

Figure 1. Habitat Map



Baseline Ecological Conditions

Modified grassland

- 3.9. The area of impact, as well as the surrounding land, as shown within the habitat map above, is comprised of modified grassland, which is subject to frequent management through grazing and supports a short sward (up to 10cm in height) (Images 1-3). The grassland is dominated by perennial ryegrass (*Lolium perenne*) and white clover (*Trifolium repens*), to around 80%, with a low species (grass and forb) diversity (approximately 1–4 species per m²). Species present included ribwort plantain *Plantago lanceolata*, dandelion (*Taraxacum officinale*), cranesbill (*Geranium pratense*) and common vetch (*Vicia sativa*), which resemble a common grazing seed mix sown for cattle grazing purposes. The proposal requires the loss of a limited area of modified grassland to enable the siting of the new agricultural barn near the existing entrance gate and access track to the southeast. The area is gently sloping to the south and comprises areas of cattle dung, mostly present to the east.
- 3.10. Overall, this habitat is considered to be of low botanical value due to its low species diversity as a sward typical of that grazed by cattle.

Schedule 9 species

- 3.11. No Schedule 9 (non-native, invasive) plant species were observed within the red line boundary.

Protected species

Birds

- 3.12. The study returned records of a number of protected, priority or notable bird species within 2km of the site, including the Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) Schedule 1 species, including Skylark (*Alauda arvensis*), Kingfisher (*Alcedo atthis*), Barn Owl (*Tyto alba*), Tawny owl (*Strix aluco*). Other species includes Tree Pipit (*Anthus trivialis*), Grey Heron (*Ardea cinerea*), Cetti's Warbler (*Cettia cetti*), Black-headed Gull (*Chroicocephalus ridibundus*), Cuckoo (*Cuculus canorus*), Lesser Spotted Woodpecker (*Dryobates minor*), Little Egret (*Egretta garzetta*), Corn Bunting (*Emberiza calandra*), Yellowhammer (*Emberiza citrinella*), Reed Bunting (*Emberiza schoeniclus*), Pied Flycatcher (*Ficedula hypoleuca*), Brambling (*Fringilla montifringilla*), Herring Gull (*Larus argentatus*), Linnet (*Linaria cannabina*), Crossbill (*Loxia curvirostra*), Red Kite (*Milvus milvus*), Grey Wagtail (*Motacilla cinerea*), Yellow Wagtail (*Motacilla flava*), House Sparrow (*Passer domesticus*), Grey Partridge (*Perdix perdix*), Bullfinch (*Pyrrhula pyrrhula*), Water Rail (*Rallus aquaticus*), Firecrest (*Regulus ignicapilla*), Sand Martin (*Riparia riparia*), Woodcock (*Scolopax rusticola*), Starling (*Sturnus vulgaris*), Redwing (*Turdus iliacus*), Song Thrush (*Turdus philomelos*), Fieldfare (*Turdus pilaris*), Mistle Thrush (*Turdus viscivorus*), blackcap (*Sylvia Atricapilla*), swifts (*Apus apus*) and small numbers of the rare turtle dove (*Streptopelia turtur*), have also been recorded locally.
- 3.13. The modified grassland on site (to a lesser extent), hedgerows, grassland and woodland habitat within the wider site provide suitable nesting and/or foraging opportunities for a variety of bird species which may be found in the local area. On this basis, recommendations with respect to this species group are set out below to ensure that they are safeguarded throughout the development works.
- 3.14. It is recommended that all trees adjacent to the site, such as the mature oak to the southeast bordering the access track, are retained and protected sufficiently throughout the development works.
- 3.15. On this basis, recommendations with respect to this species group are set out below to ensure that they are safeguarded throughout the development works. The modified grassland on site is not considered suitable for ground-nesting birds, but could offer foraging opportunities, and no evidence of use or nesting was observed. Therefore, it is considered that the current development proposals will not result in the loss of suitable wintering bird habitat, and the remainder of the grassland is due to be fully retained.
- 3.16. All occupied birds' nests have legal protection from damage and destruction under the Wildlife & Countryside Act (1981) (as amended). All works should therefore aim to be undertaken outside of the nesting bird season (March to September inclusive for most species in the UK). If this is not possible, a nesting bird check will need to be carried out a maximum

of 24 hrs prior to the start of work. If any active nests are present, work must be delayed until the young have fledged.

Reptiles

- 3.17. The area of modified grassland (species-poor) within the site offers limited potential to support common reptile species. This habitat is considered sub-optimal due to the lack of floristic diversity within the grassland and low sward height due to regular grazing. However, given the site's location on farmland and adjacent to habitats of higher suitability such as tree lines, hedgerows and a chalk stream, including peripheral vegetation with low disturbance, it is possible that reptiles pass through the site on occasion. Eleven records for reptiles were found locally, including four slow worm (*Anguis fragilis*), nine grass snake (*Natrix Helvetica*), one adder (*Vipera berus*) and one common lizard (*Zootoca vivipara*) record. The site and area of impact are limited in size, and it is considered likely that only a small number of common reptile species will utilise the site, if present.
- 3.18. Further to a habitat survey, it has been concluded that any reptile population present in adjacent habitats is likely to be limited to low numbers or the possible presence of transient common reptile species, as part of a wider home range.
- 3.19. Given that the proposed development will result in the loss of a very small area of habitat and that the majority of the habitat within the site is sub-optimal for reptiles, it is not recommended that further survey work with respect to reptiles is carried out. To ensure that the proposed development area remains unfavourable, it is essential that the modified grassland area due to be impacted by the proposed development is maintained as a short sward until and throughout the construction phase. If the sward is maintained, then no further survey or mitigation is required. Any vegetation to be removed (e.g. modified grassland including tussocky grass, or tall ruderal that could develop if left) should be done under the precautionary approach (RAMS) described below to avoid and/or minimise any unforeseen disturbance or residual impacts and account for any residual risk.
- 3.20. Further to a habitat survey and desktop study of the site, it has been concluded that due to the presence of a limited area of suitable habitat within the site boundary and in the wider area, as well as local records, it is possible that reptiles may pass through the site on occasion. In the absence of mitigation, the vegetation clearance and construction work have the potential to injure or kill amphibians passing through the site. Therefore, precautionary mitigation in the form of reasonable avoidance measures (RAMS), informed by best practice have been recommended in case reptiles are present in nearby terrestrial habitat. This precautionary approach aims to avoid and/or minimise any unforeseen disturbance or residual impacts and account for any residual risk to reptiles by following best-practice methods of working;

Reasonable avoidance measures (RAMs)

The following RAMS should be implemented on site during the construction phase to avoid injury/killing of common reptiles, amphibians, and small mammals and should include.

Before and during the development

- Until works commence, to ensure that the proposed development area remains unfavourable to reptiles, it is essential that the modified grassland area due to be impacted by the proposed development is maintained as a short sward until and throughout the construction phase. If the sward is maintained by grazing (or mowing/topping), then no further survey or mitigation is required. This includes the area of grassland south of the stream adjacent to the road.
- Clearance works to remove any soil, debris or rubble piles should be conducted by hand and only occur during the active reptile season (March-end of September, inclusive). This will allow reptiles the opportunity to move to suitable habitat nearby safely, if they are present within the working area. Works should proceed if the weather is 9 degrees or higher and is dry with no strong winds.

Staged vegetation clearance

- For the initial stages of the development, vegetation clearance including any tall, tussocky ruderal vegetation or marginal grassland, and any peripheral tall ruderal vegetation to enable access, should be undertaken in a phased manner. Any tussocky, tall vegetation (e.g. tall grasses, nettles, cow parsley, etc) and bramble scrub that are to be trimmed/mown in stages to encourage wildlife using the site to migrate off-site. This must be done between March and October, with the first cut at a height of 150mm. After a period of 48 hours, the sward is to be cut to less than 100mm and maintained at this height, as well as any arisings removed to discourage reptiles from using the site. It is recommended that, where the bramble scrub is scheduled for removal, this is done outside of the bird breeding season. Where vegetation clearance during March-August (inclusive) cannot be avoided, works should be carried out under the supervision of a suitably experienced ecologist, who will carry out checks for breeding birds and their nests in advance of removal works commencing. Only once the ecologist is satisfied that no legal offence could occur, would works be permitted to proceed. The removal of the bramble scrub should be carried out carefully by hand, to ensure that any amphibians, reptiles, or European hedgehogs, which may be present, can escape unharmed.

Excavations and trenches

- Any excavations that are left open overnight (even if covered over) should be visually inspected prior to infilling to ensure that no reptiles (or any other species) are present. Any excavations with reptiles or amphibians should not be filled in until they are removed.

Materials and storage

- Construction materials (including aggregates) on site should, where possible, be stored off the ground on pallets or sleepers to ensure that artificial refugia which could be used by sheltering reptiles are not created. The materials will then be inspected by the contractors on-site prior to use. Where possible, open excavations and trenches should be filled in or covered by the end of every working day. Alternatively, the ends of the trench should be left at an angle of around 45° in order to allow any reptiles or amphibians which may fall into the trench to escape unassisted.

Further considerations

- Habitat fencing, e.g. Heras fencing, secured around the development area will provide a buffer between suitable habitat within the local area and the construction works.
- In the unlikely event that reptiles are found on site during works, the project manager should contact an ecologist to supervise their removal and release. Wild Earth Ecology can be reached on 07930216662.

Compensation

- 3.21. To provide a new resting and hibernating habitat for reptiles that potentially feature within the area and may occasionally occur on site, a habitat brush pile/hibernaculum will have been incorporated into the ecological enhancement recommendation for the site.
- 3.22. Provided the above mitigation and compensation measures are adhered to, it is anticipated that there will be no residual impacts of the current proposals on reptiles.

Amphibians

- 3.23. Seventeen records for amphibians were returned within 2km of the site, including two for smooth newt (*Lissotriton vulgaris*) as close as 550m to the southeast and two records for common frog (*Rana temporaria*) approximately 700m to the southeast. No records of Great crested newts were present within 2km of the site boundary. Ten records for common toad (*Bufo bufo*) and two records for common frog (*Rana temporaria*) were also present within 2km. No evidence of amphibian presence was recorded during the survey.
- 3.24. Two lentic water bodies have been identified within 500m of the proposed development site, however, no lotic freshwater bodies are present within this area or within the site boundary. The River Avon System SSSI, a chalk river, is located approximately 310m to the southwest and is wide and fast-flowing. This chalk river is located west of the main road running adjacent to the site, as well as Shute End Road. A chalk stream ditch, which was dry at the time of the survey (July 2026), is also located approximately 140m to the east and is set within the grazing land which surrounds the site (image 5). Both water bodies were accessible at the time of the survey. The chalk river presented as a fast-flowing watercourse, and the ditch presented without water. Therefore, a full HSI was completed, and the results can be found below. Only grassland exists between the ditch and the site, and two roads exist between the chalk river and the site, offering poorly lit, but fast-travelling, well frequented/high-disturbance habitat which presents a barrier to dispersal for amphibians. The terrestrial habitats within the proposed site are considered sub-optimal in suitability, with the modified grassland maintained at a short sward. The tree and hedgerow bases found south of the site have some suitability for common amphibians during their terrestrial phase but will not be indirectly impacted by the works. Therefore, there is limited potential breeding habitat for amphibians within a suitable range and no records of GCN being present within 2km. The site is located within a green zone (indicating low habitat suitability for GCN) on the GCN Risk Zones (Swindon and Wiltshire) impact risk zone map.

Map 3. Location of the nearest water bodies to the site. The River Avon SSSI is shown in orange, and the chalk stream ditches in light green (Magic Maps, 2026)



Table 6. HSI Results

ARGUK GCN HSI Calculator			
Pond Name			
Grid Ref			
SI No	SI Description	River Avon System	Chalk stream ditch
1	Geographic location	1	1
2	Pond area	0.8	0.2
3	Pond permanence	0.9	0.1
4	Water quality	1	0.33
5	Shade	1	1
6	Water fowl effect	0.67	0.67
7	Fish presence	0.01	0.67
8	Pond Density	0.8	0.8
9	Terrestrial habitat	0.67	0.33
10	Macrophyte cover	0.3	0.3
HSI Score		0.49	0.43
Pond suitability (see below)		Poor	Poor
Categorisation of HSI Score by Lee Brady			
HSI Score		Pond Suitability	
< 0.50		Poor	
0.50 - 0.59		Below average	
0.60 - 0.69		Average	
0.70 - 0.79		Good	
> 0.80		Excellent	

Impacts & Mitigation

- 3.24. Based on the area of the site to be impacted and the location of the nearest water bodies to the site, which could be assessed using an HSI, it shows that the Chalk River and Chalkstream Ditch, located as close as 140m to the southeast, present poor suitability to support GCN. Therefore, no further surveys for this species are recommended.
- 3.25. Based on these waterbodies being located nearby, it is possible that common amphibians may pass through the site on occasion. However, if an individual is displaced it will have minimal impact on this species' conservation value. It is considered that the mitigation measures outlined above including RAMS, which also apply to small mammals and reptiles, will safeguard any common amphibians in the event that they are present within the site during

the development works. Any green vegetation, including grassland, to be removed should be done so carefully following the RAMS and allow any animals which may be present to escape. Any animals found remaining in the area should be carefully picked up in a gloved hand and moved to a suitable habitat (such as the surrounding woodland). In the unlikely event that GCN are found during site works, all works must stop immediately, and a suitably qualified ecologist must be consulted. Research suggests that the vast majority of the GCN populations shelter within 50m of a standing water body, although this is certain to depend on the availability of suitable habitat. Jehle *et al* suggest the maximum extent of nightly migration to be 100m (based on several studies), which indicates the potential distance an animal could disperse during an active season, if desired. The fact that most animals appear not to do so is more telling. Also, home ranges/dispersal distances are always going to vary depending on habitat quality/availability and distribution, yearly or seasonal environmental changes, habitat losses/gains, animal age/sex/health, seasonal changes in resources, hibernation migrations, etc. In the absence of a detailed survey, it is reasonable to consider these factors to form a reasonable hypothesis as to the risk of impact. Therefore, to protect both reptiles and amphibians, the precautionary approach (RAMS) described aims to avoid and/or minimise any unforeseen disturbance or residual impacts and account for any residual risk.

Dormice

- 3.26. There were no records of Hazel dormouse (*Muscardinus avellanarius*) within 2km of the site boundary. The habitat on-site offers limited ecological value to dormice, and the habitats nearby, which do offer suitability, including the native hedgerow, are not proposed to be impacted.
- 3.27. Dormice are unlikely to be present and therefore no impacts are anticipated on this species. It is not recommended that further survey work be carried out with respect to this species.

Hedgehog

- 3.28. The data search revealed a total of two records of hedgehogs within 2km of the site, as close as 500m to the southwest. Hedgehogs are known to feature within the local area, and the modified grassland and hedgerows on site are considered suitable habitat for foraging, commuting and hibernating hedgehogs. Therefore, it is considered likely that they are present on site on occasion.
- 3.29. Hedgehogs may be present on site and are likely to pass through the site. Hedgehogs are listed as a Priority Species for Conservation Action under the UK Biodiversity Action Plan and protected from harm in the UK under Schedule 6 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981. Under the NERC Act 2006, the hedgehog is categorised as a 'Species of Principal Importance' for biodiversity.
- 3.30. Hedgehogs do not exhibit fight-or-flight behaviour and will therefore not move out of the way during works. Any areas of dense vegetation on site that are due to be cleared should be cleared carefully by hand. Any hedgehogs encountered are carefully removed to a safe place off-site.

Badgers

- 3.31. No records of badgers were revealed by the data search within 2km of the development site. No badger setts or evidence of badgers were found on site. However, habitats within the surrounding area, such as open grassland with boundary hedgerows/treelines, do offer foraging opportunities for this species, and it is considered possible that they pass through the site on occasion.
- 3.32. It is considered that the mitigation measures outlined above with respect to hedgehogs will safeguard any badgers in the event that they are present within the site during the development works. Where appropriate it is recommended that wildlife access holes suitable for badgers are incorporated into any proposed fence lines. 25cm by 20cm is suitable for badgers to pass through. In addition, any trenches or ditches created during the development should be covered at night or provide a means of escape for mammals such as badgers and brown hares that feature in the surrounding landscape.

Brown Hare

- 3.33. The area of modified grassland within the site boundary provides suitable foraging habitat. No evidence of Brown hare was found within the survey area however, and no records were found locally. They are likely to occur locally and often go unrecorded.
- 3.34. Even if brown hare are present on site, the limited size of the development would have minimal impact on this species and the mitigation measures outlined above with respect to hedgehogs and badgers will safeguard them in the event that they are present within the site during the development works.

Bats

- 3.35. The data search returned records of common pipistrelle (*Pipistrellus pipistrellus*), soprano pipistrelle (*Pipistrellus pygmaeus*), brown long-eared (*Plecotus auritus*), noctule (*Nyctalus noctula*), Natterer's (*Myotis nattereri*), Whiskered (*Myotis mystacinus*), Daubenton's (*Myotis daubentonii*) and serotine (*Cnephaeus serotinus*) within the 2km search area. Records for two rare species, including Barbastelle (*Barbastella barbastellus*) (from 1993) and the lesser horseshoe bat (*Rhinolophus hipposideros*) (1980), were also found within 2km of the site and are likely to be under-recorded within the local area. Four European Protected Species Licences (EPSLs) were applied for within 2 km, for which the details are shown below.

Table 4. European Protected Species Licence (EPSL) for bats within 2km of the site

Species	Licence Start Date	Distance to site
BLEB, PIP PIP	2016	1.5km southeast
C-PIP,SER,S-PIP	2017	1.7km southeast
BLEB	2019	1.3km northwest
C-PIP;S-PIP	2019	1.2km south-west

- 3.36. No structures or trees are due to be impacted, and there are no potential roosting opportunities present, although the modified grassland and hedgerows/treelines in the wider site provide potential foraging and commuting opportunities for a range of bat species. The site however, is limited in size, and the habitats are not considered to form part of a significant resource for foraging/commuting bats. The site is considered to offer low suitability for foraging and commuting bats.
- 3.37. It is understood that no trees located on or within close proximity to the site will be impacted under the current development proposals. These features are of ecological value to foraging and commuting bats. Should any trees require removal, they should be replaced with suitable native planting to ensure that the existing biodiversity value of the site is maintained in the long term.
- 3.38. All retained trees (off-site) should be protected throughout the development in accordance with British Standard BS 5837:2012. Root protection areas should be 12x the diameter at breast height (DBH) or the reach of the longest branch (whichever is greater), unless otherwise advised by a qualified arboriculturist. The mature oak tree located off-site to the southeast will likely have its roots on-site but near to the access route to site, and therefore should remain protected. No materials should be allowed to be stored within these root protection areas and no heavy machinery should run over them.

Lighting

- 3.39. Where light spill occurs on linear habitat features, such as hedgerows or trees, this may deter bats, especially the more light-averse bat species, that may use these features. Bats are highly sensitive to light and could potentially avoid the area if access points or the surrounding areas become further lit. As other foraging and commuting bats are likely to be present in the local area and light-sensitive species such as woodland specialist bat species have been recorded locally, it is recommended that any new external lighting be directed to avoid light spillage onto vegetation or foraging features such as the hedgerows and treeline to the west and south, and the grassland surrounding the site. Appropriate lighting options will prevent a negative impact on bats potentially using the habitats on site and should be approved by a suitably qualified Licensed Bat Ecologist.

- 3.40. Any potential impact on bats can be minimised through the use of “warmer” lights, as these are less penetrating than bright white lights (such as LEDs), as well as maintaining the brightness as low as possible and limiting the times during which the lighting can be used to provide some dark periods. Motion sensors are strongly recommended, using a short timer to reduce the duration of lighting and reduce disturbance to bats. In addition, directing the lighting to where it is needed to avoid light spillage onto vegetated margins and minimising upward light by fitting lights with downward-facing baffles to avoid light pollution will also mitigate the impact of any new lighting on bat species.
- 3.41. Light can be restricted by fitting hoods which direct the light below the horizontal plane, at an angle less than seventy degrees. Limiting the height of lighting columns and directing light at a low level away from vegetation reduces the ecological impact of the light.

Timber Treatment

- 3.42. Any use of timber treatment or pest control treatment that is necessary for works should be from the approved lists for safe use in or near bat roosts which can be found at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/bat-roosts-insecticides-and-timber-treatments/timber-treatment-products-suitable-for-use-in-or-near-bat-roosts>.

Other approved brands are also available and can be provided on request.

Residual & cumulative Effects

- 3.43. No significant residual effects are anticipated on any of the species considered within this report. Therefore, there will be no cumulative effects on local populations as a result of the proposed works if the above mitigation and compensation outlined above are followed.

Impacts of Proposed Development

- 3.44. Table 8 – Summary of potential impacts of the proposed development on protected species

Species	Ecological Evaluation (including scale and nature of impact*)	Further survey recommendations
Amphibians	Low	RAMS (section 3.20) will apply to any vegetation removal, including grassland. All other vegetation to be removed should be done so carefully by hand in order to allow any animals which may be present to escape.
Reptiles	Negligible - Low	
West European Hedgehog	Moderate	
Bats	Negligible	No further surveys recommended
Hazel Dormouse	Negligible	
Great crested newt	Negligible	
European Badger	Low	Wildlife access holes suitable for badgers are incorporated into any proposed fence lines. 25cm by 20cm is suitable for badgers to pass through. Any trenches or ditches created during the development should be covered at night or provide a means of escape for mammals.
Brown hare	Low	

Nesting birds	Low	In order to protect bird nests and comply with the law protecting them, any vegetation removal should take place outside of the breeding bird season, which is generally considered to be from March to September inclusive. If this is not possible, before removal, such vegetation should first be checked for the presence of nesting birds by an experienced ecologist. If any nests are found, they will be left undisturbed until the chicks have fledged.
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**Ultimate assessment of the scale and nature of impacts is dependent on the final design of the proposed development and the exact habitats affected.*

4.0. Enhancement recommendations

- 4.1. The Local Planning Authority (LPA) has a duty to ask for enhancements under the NPPF (2021). Recommendations have been made for modest post-change of use ecological enhancement at the site that are proportionate to the low level of environmental impact from the proposed works. The following recommendations have been made, proportionate to the scale of the development and appropriate for the species found locally. Below is a summary of measures, which should be implemented on-site to achieve a minimum no net loss of functional habitat for biodiversity from those areas due to be impacted, as well as to enhance the area for wildlife long-term. The recommended on-site location for each ecological enhancement has been included on a site plan in Appendix 3. Full maintenance advice for the long-term management of each of these features will also be provided to the client to ensure the optimum benefit to wildlife. Any future landscaping planting should seek to enhance biodiversity, improve connectivity to the surrounding habitats and provide food and shelter for a wide range of faunal species. Non-invasive species should not be planted. Any invasive species found to be currently on site should be removed with care during vegetation clearance and disposed of appropriately.
- 4.2. This project qualifies under the *de minimus* criteria and therefore is exempt from Biodiversity Net Gain.
- 4.3. As records of a range of bat and bird species, including WaCA 1981 (as amended) and UK BAP priority species, have been returned from within the habitats surrounding the site, it is recommended that a number of roost/nest boxes be incorporated into the proposed development in order to improve the availability of roosting and nesting opportunities for these species' groups.
- 4.4. If the mitigation and enhancement recommendations included in the report are implemented appropriately, the proposed development will not have a negative impact on the biodiversity of the site and may result in tangible benefits for wildlife in the local area through the provision of nesting, foraging and roosting habitat.

Tree planting

- 4.5. Two native tree species are proposed to be planted in accordance with the following standard specifications and maintenance advice in order to achieve optimal benefits. The native tree species are proposed to be planted on the western boundary of the site, which will help to screen the building and the views from the lane. These tree species could include;

- a. Apple *Malus domestica*, English oak *Quercus Robur*, Sweet cherry *Prunus avium*, Silver Birch, *Betula pendula*, Whitebeam *Sorbus aria* (or any other truly native species) and should ideally be at least 425mm – 600mm in height, with a girth of 14-16mm (size EHS) with a specification of; RB, clear stem 175-200mm. Any other truly native species is also acceptable.
- b. Bark mulch can be used to surround the base of the tree at an average depth of 75cm. Mulching will help protect the tree from competing weeds, shade the soil and trap necessary water to sustain root growth.
- c. Any dead, damaged (vandalism or otherwise) or dying specimens should be removed and replaced with the same species and age of plant to ensure continuity of habitat and connectivity.
- d. Water regularly and particularly throughout periods of warm, sunny weather.
- e. If tree stakes and ties are used when initially planted, these should be checked twice annually for damage and repaired as required.
- f. If used, bark mulch, should be topped up annually to an average of 75cm depth. The surrounding soil should also be forked over annually to aerate the soil.
- g. Hand weeding around the base of the tree to aid weed control. Non-residual herbicides should only be used when necessary.
- h. Once established or settled, trimming or pruning can be undertaken annually (outside of the bird breeding season as is application hedgerow management e.g. avoiding Mar – Aug inclusive).
- i. Replacement of any dead, dying or damaged trees within the first five years of planting will also help improve the appearance of the site in the interests of visual amenity.

Bat & Bird boxes

- 4.6. As records of a range of bat and bird species, including WaCA 1981 (as amended) and UK BAP priority species, have been returned from within the habitats surrounding the site, it is recommended that a number of roost/nest boxes are incorporated into the proposed development in order to improve the availability of roosting and nesting opportunities for these species group.
- 4.7. It is recommended that one stand-alone bat box be sited to enhance opportunities for bats post-development. One 2FN Schwegler Bat Box or equivalent (dependent on product availability, e.g., Beaumaris Bat Box, Vivara Pro Woodstone Bat Box) should be installed on a suitably retained tree nearby. A suitable location for this might be on the mature oak tree southeast of the site near the lane access. The position of a box should have a clear route of entry to it and be free from dense vegetation or branches. To maximise opportunity, multiple bat boxes can be placed on the trunk of the same tree at a similar height, facing in different directions (south to southwest) to offer a choice between thermal conditions. Any further detailed advice on the location and erection of these boxes can be sought from the author of this report and is subject to the mitigation specified by the bat licence to follow. The bat box should ideally be made of woodcrete and be positioned at least 3-5m high, in a south or south-

west facing direction with a clear flight path to and from the entrance (free from obstruction) and away from artificial light such as sensor-operated flood lights. Please note that the inclusion of a bat box on a tree or building does not mean that bats will be attracted to roosting within the building itself. The installation of bat boxes within the vicinity of the site will provide additional roosting habitat for bats. Bats often require time to locate new roosting sites, and it may be several years before a box is colonised. An enhanced option for the above would be to include a single Schwegler 1FF (or similar) colony box which attracts species such as Noctules and Barbastelles in larger numbers.

- 4.9. Consideration should be given to the provision of nest sites for swallows and other target species of conservation concern within the development area to further enhance the value of the application site for breeding birds. Swallows, Martins and Swifts prefer to nest high up inside of agricultural buildings, or where there is cover and should be encouraged to nest by attaching nest cups (to beams, rafters, overhang boxes, eaves, or ridges, for example) that have an open bottom. Given swallows' presence within the area, 4x swallow nest cups should be sited in an elevated location, with easy access through an open-sided section, within the barn (ideally on the apex). At least four swallow nest cups should be fitted inside the new structure, in an attempt to attract the species to the site following development.

https://www.nhbs.com/no-10-schwegler-swallow-nest?bkfno=174809&ca_id=1495&adlocale=uk&gad_source=1&gclid=CjwKCAiA0rW6BhAcEiwAQH28Ii0L5JxRwuCcCE_mntP3wklt-q-Ci5lod6N1-QMjxerKPUrYFoykHBoCt3cQAvD_BwE

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6.0. Appendix

Appendix 1 – Protected Species Legislation

Bats

In England and Wales, all bat species and their roosts are legally protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act (1981) (as amended); the Countryside and Rights of Way Act, 2000; the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act (NERC, 2006); and by the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations (2019) (as amended). You will be committing a criminal offence if you:

- Deliberately capture, injure or kill a bat
- Intentionally or recklessly disturb a bat in its roost or deliberately disturb a group of bats
- Damage or destroy a bat roosting place (even if bats are not occupying the roost at the time)
- Possess or advertise/sell/exchange a bat (dead or alive) or any part of a bat
- Intentionally or recklessly obstruct access to a bat roost

Barbastelle, Bechstein's, greater horseshoe, lesser horseshoe, brown long-eared, soprano pipistrelle, and noctule bats are all priority species under the UK Biodiversity Action Plan (UK BAP) and have also been adopted as species of principal importance in England under Section 41 of the NERC Act 2006.

Badgers

Badgers and their setts are afforded strict protection under the Protection of Badgers Act 1992. This Act consolidates past badger legislation and, in addition to protecting the badger itself, makes it an offence to damage, destroy or obstruct badger setts. Badgers are also protected under Schedule 6 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended), and listed under Appendix III of the Bern Convention, as a species that is in need of protection but may be hunted in exceptional instances. Only badger setts that are currently in use are covered by wildlife legislation.

Birds

All wild birds in the UK are protected under Section 1 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) which makes it an offence to intentionally kill, injure or take any wild bird or to take, damage or destroy the nest or its eggs. Some bird species, such as the barn owl *Tyto alba*, are listed in Schedule 1 of the 1981 Act and receive further protection, making it an offence to intentionally or recklessly disturb these birds whilst building a nest or in, on or near a nest containing eggs or young; or to disturb dependent young of such a bird. The NERC Act (2006) inserts a new schedule into the Wildlife and Countryside Act (1981) to protect the nests of some bird species that regularly re-use their nests, even when the nests are not in use. This protection currently applies to golden eagle, white-tailed eagle and osprey.

Reptiles

All British reptiles are listed under schedule 5 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) and are therefore protected from intentional killing or injury. This is largely as a consequence of a national decline in numbers associated with habitat loss. Two scarcer native British reptiles (smooth snake *Coronella austriaca* and sand lizard *Lacerta agilis*), are afforded 'full' protection. This legislation makes it an offence to intentionally or recklessly kill, injure, disturb, take, possess or sell these species (in all life stages). It is also illegal to damage, destroy or obstruct access to places they use for breeding, resting, shelter and protection. All species of reptile are priority species in the UKBAP and have been adopted as Species of Principal Importance under Section 41 of the NERC Act (2006) in England (Section 42 in Wales).

Amphibians

Great crested newts (GCN's) and their habitats are fully protected by the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations (2019) and partially protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended). This legislation makes it an offence to kill, injure or capture GCN's, their young or eggs, or destroy / damage their ponds or places of shelter used for breeding or protection. The great crested newt is also a Priority species in the UK Biodiversity Action Plan (UKBAP), and had been adopted as a Species of Principle Importance in England under Section 41 of the NERC Act 2006. The natterjack toad *Epidalea calamita* is fully protected under Schedule 5 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) and Schedule 2 of The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2019 making it a European Protected Species. The natterjack toad is also a priority species under the UK Biodiversity Action Plan. The pool frog *Rana lessonae* is protected under the Conservation (Natural Habitats & C.) Regulations 1994 (as amended). As a European protected species the deliberate capturing, disturbing, injuring or killing of this species is prohibited, as is damage or destruction of its breeding sites or resting places. The pool frog is also a priority species under the UK Biodiversity Action Plan due to a 100% decline over 25 years (1980-2005). Common toads are also designated UKBAP species due to a serious decline of populations across large areas of southern, eastern and central England, thought to be mainly due to changes in habitat management, mortalities on the roads, and climate change.

Dormice

Common dormice *Muscardinus avellanarius* and their habitats are fully protected by both the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) and the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations (2019). This legislation makes it an offence to kill, injure, disturb or capture dormice, or destroy or obstruct their resting or breeding places. The dormouse is also a priority species under the UK Biodiversity Action Plan and has been adopted as a species of Principal Importance in England under Section 41 of the NERC Act 2006 (section 42 in Wales) and so is protected from any adverse effects as a result of development.

Otters

Otters are protected by both the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) and The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2019. This legislation makes it is illegal to; deliberately or recklessly kill, injure or capture an otter, deliberately or recklessly disturb or harass an otter, damage, destroy or obstruct access to a breeding site or resting place of an otter.

The otter is also a UK BAP Priority Species and has been adopted as a Species of Principal Importance in England under Section 41 of the NERC Act 2006 (Section 42 in Wales) and the Conservation (Scotland) Act in Scotland.

Water Voles

Water voles *Arvicola terrestris* are fully protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended). This legislation makes it an offence to kill or injure water voles, and to damage, destroy or obstruct access to places used for protection or shelter, and to disturb water voles whilst they occupy such a place. The water vole is also a Priority species in the UK Biodiversity Action Plan, and had been adopted as a Species of Principal Importance in England under Section 41 of the NERC Act 2006.

White-clawed Crayfish

The white-clawed crayfish *Austropotamobius pallipes* is protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended), making it a criminal offence to; intentionally or recklessly kill or injure a white-clawed crayfish, or sell or attempt to sell any part of this species. The Habitats Regulations (2019) provide further protection through the declaration of Special Areas of Conservation (SAC). This protection aims to prevent commercial harvesting of white clawed crayfish and prohibits their capture without a licence. The white-clawed crayfish is also a Priority species in the UK Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP), and has been adopted as a Species of Principal Importance in England under Section 41 of the NERC Act 2006.

Hedgehogs

Hedgehogs are UK Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) species, and therefore must be taken into consideration as part of development planning. A recent report (Wembridge, 2011) shows that hedgehog numbers have declined by 25% in the last ten years.

Stag Beetles

Stag Beetles *Lucanus cervus* are protected under section 5 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended). This legislation prohibits: The killing, injuring or taking of Stag Beetles; the damage, destruction, or obstruction of access to any structure or place which Stag Beetles use for shelter or protection; or the disturbance of Stag Beetles while they are occupying a structure or place which they use for that purpose.

Appendix 2 - Planning Policy and Legislation

Planning and Biodiversity

The biodiversity policies which are most relevant are the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF, 2012), Biodiversity 2020, the Wiltshire's Biodiversity Strategy.

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 2021

NPPF aims to minimise impacts on biodiversity and provide net gains in biodiversity where possible, contributing to the Government's commitment to halt the overall decline in biodiversity. Chapter 179 refers to Habitats & Biodiversity stating that 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. 180:

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

- 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;
- b) development on land within or outside a Site of Special Scientific Interest, and which is likely to have an adverse effect on it (either individually or in combination with other developments), should not normally be permitted. The only exception is where the benefits of the development in the location proposed clearly outweigh both its likely impact on the features of the site that make it of special scientific interest, and any broader impacts on the national network of Sites of Special Scientific Interest;
- c) development resulting in the loss or deterioration of irreplaceable habitats (such as ancient woodland and ancient or veteran trees) should be refused, unless there are wholly exceptional reasons(63) and a suitable compensation strategy exists; and
- d) development whose primary objective is to conserve or enhance biodiversity should be supported; while opportunities to improve biodiversity in and around developments should

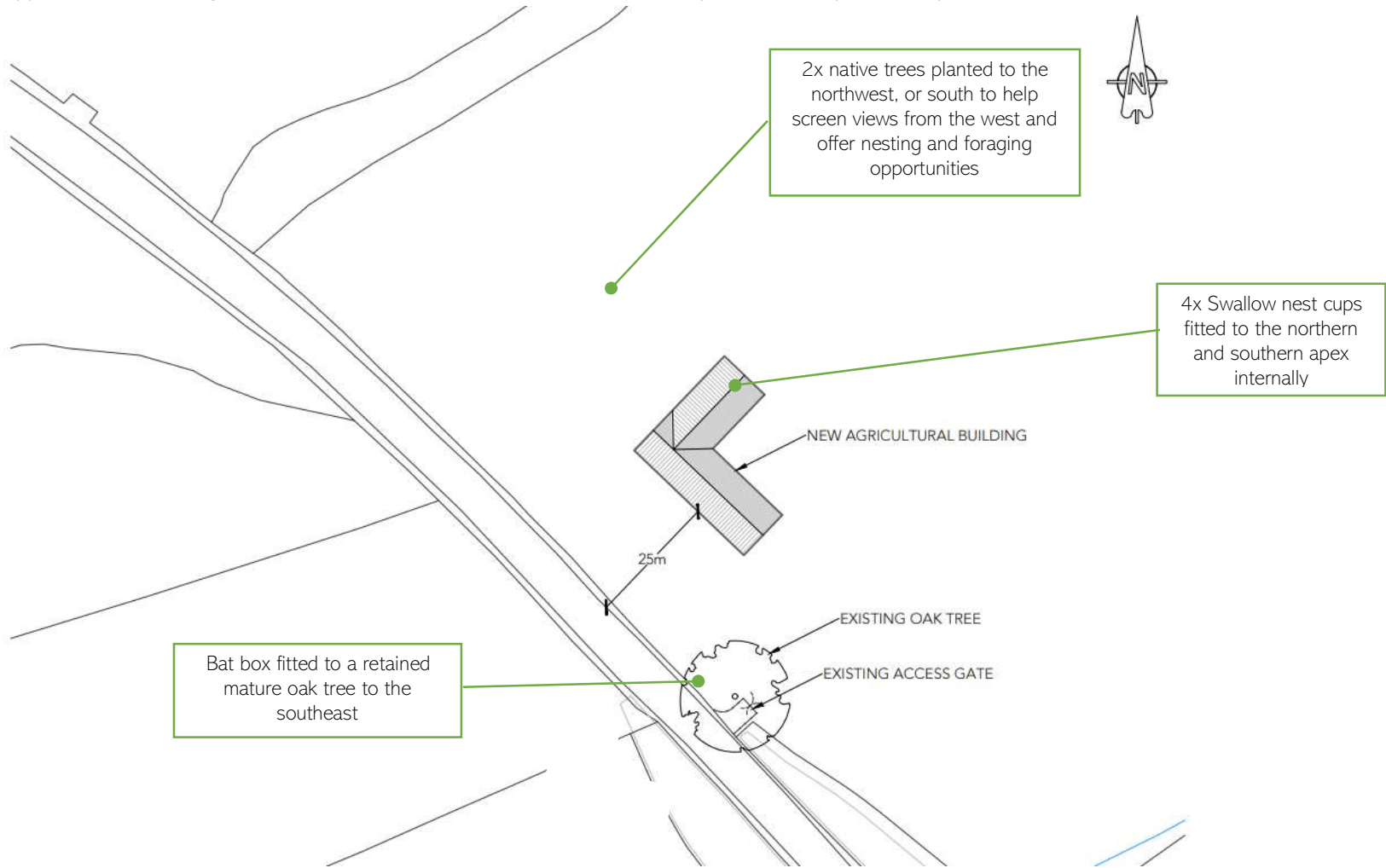
be integrated as part of their design, especially where this can secure measurable net gains for biodiversity or enhance public access to nature where this is appropriate.

UK Biodiversity Action Plan & Habitats and Species of Principal Importance

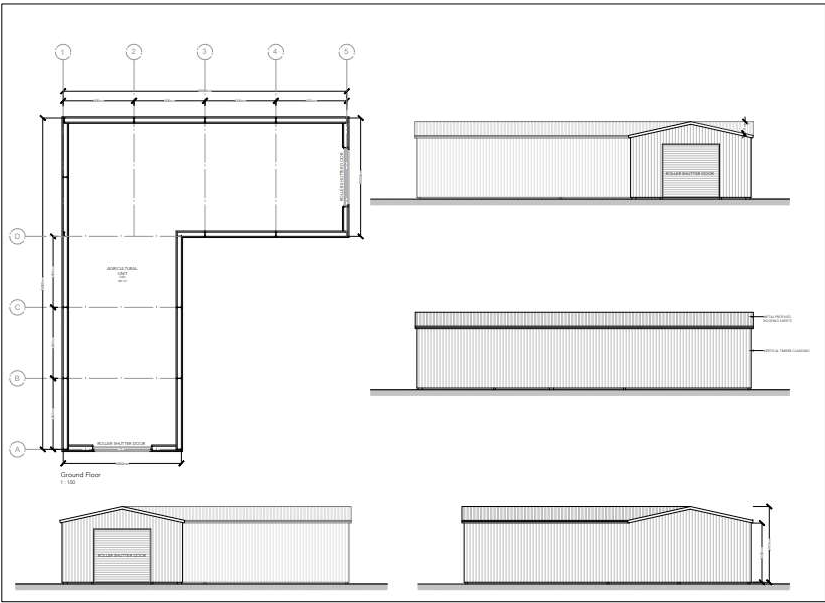
The UK Biodiversity Plan (BAP) was a programme designed to help conserve the UK's biodiversity. It led to the production of 436 action plans between 1995 and 1999 to help many of the UK's most threatened species and habitats to recover. A review of the UK BAP priority list in 2007 led to the identification of 1,150 species and 65 habitats that met the BAP criteria at UK level. Currently 56 Habitats of Principal Importance and 943 Species of Principal Importance are included within Schedule 41 of the NERC Act and these include species and habitats which were identified in the UK BAP and which continue to be considered to represent the conservation priorities of England in the UK Post-2010 Biodiversity Framework.

Species of Principal Importance and Habitats of Principal Importance are those identified as the most threatened and requiring conservation action under the Schedule 41 of the UK Biodiversity Action Plan & Habitats and Species of Principal Importance. Species include West European hedgehog *Erinaceus europaeus*, great crested newt *Triturus cristatus*, dormouse and common toad *Bufo bufo*.

Appendix 3. A. Ecological Enhancement Recommendation Site Plan (adapted from Proposed site plan, BCM Wilson Hill, 2026).



B. Floor plans and elevations of proposed building



Appendix 4. Photographs of the habitats on site

