

HalpinRobbins

Ecology & Environmental Services

Ecological Impact Assessment

New Buildings at Oakstone Farm, Bratton Road, West Ashton,
Trowbridge BA14 6AX
ST 89788 54135



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

HalpinRobbins Limited was commissioned to undertake an Ecological Impact Assessment of Oakstone Farm, Bratton Road, West Ashton, Trowbridge, BA13 4NJ, the hereafter referred to as “The Site” in support of a planning application to construct a number of small new buildings including a welfare unit and storage hut.

An Extended UK Habitat Classification Survey were undertaken in November 2024 by Acorus and an updated site visit was conducted by HalpinRobbins in October 2025. The table below summarises the proposed impacts of the development and the recommended mitigation, compensation and enhancement measures.

The following surveys have been undertaken at the site; Extended UK Habitat Survey, Ecological Building Survey, Great Crested Newt HSI Assessment, Great Crested Newt eDNA Survey.

The table below summarises the proposed impacts of the development and the recommended mitigation, compensation and enhancement measures.

Ecological Feature	Potential Effect	Significance in the absence of mitigation	Mitigation/Compensation and Enhancement	Residual Effect
Statutory Designated Sites	None	-	-	-
Habitats	Damage to off-site hedgerows and trees during construction. Loss of modified grassland and bramble scrub	Moderate adverse impact at site level.	Protective fencing during construction. New areas of scrub and unmanaged grassland	Positive
Flora and Invertebrates	Spread of Cotoneaster	Moderate adverse impact at site level.	Cotoneaster removal	Positive

Ecological Feature	Potential Effect	Significance in the absence of mitigation	Mitigation/Compensation and Enhancement	Residual Effect
Amphibians (including GCN)	Harm during construction. Loss of terrestrial habitat. Damage to nearby pond Damage to nearby hedges/scrub		Follow CEMP guidance Maintain grassland to under 5cm. Silt fencing during construction Works to be carried out with an ECoW present. Protective fencing during construction. New areas of scrub and unmanaged grassland	Positive
Reptiles	None	-	New areas of scrub and unmanaged grassland	Positive
Birds	Harm during construction.		Nesting bird check immediately prior to works. Nesting opportunities to be provided as enhancement.	Positive
Badgers	None	-	New areas of scrub and unmanaged grassland	Positive
Bats	None	-	New areas of scrub and unmanaged grassland Bat box as an enhancement	Positive
Other Notable Mammals	Harm during construction. Loss of commuting and foraging habitat. Trapped in construction trenches	Moderate adverse impact at site level.	Methods of escape from trenches Enhancement of grassland and scrub on site	Positive

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background and Purpose of Survey

HalpinRobbins Limited was commissioned to undertake an Ecological Impact Assessment of Oakstone Farm, Bratton Road, West Ashton, Trowbridge, BA13 4NJ, the hereafter referred to as “The Site” in support of a planning application to construct 3 ancillary buildings including a staff welfare facility, agricultural storage building and replacement biomass building.

This report has been prepared by Genevieve Labram, Senior Ecologist, Associate CIEEM who has eight years ecological consultancy experience and holds survey licences for bats and great crested newt.

The methodology used for the assessment has been designed to examine the ecology of the site based on a field survey and an appraisal of the surrounding biodiversity using data obtained from a variety of sources to meet the following objectives:

- Establish the ecological baseline of the site by describing existing habitats
- Identify and describe all potentially significant ecological effects associated with the proposed development
- Identify and describe the mitigation and compensation measures required to ensure compliance with nature conservation legislation and address the potentially significant ecological effects
- Identify ecological enhancement measures appropriate to the project

Nature conservation legislation and policies relevant to the project are provided in Appendix A.

1.2 Site Location and Description

The development site is centred upon Ordnance Survey (O.S.) Grid Reference ST 89788 54135 within the village of Trowbridge, c.3.5km to the north-east of Westbury in Wiltshire. The location of the site is shown at Figure 1, Appendix B. The red line boundary of the site has been changed to facilitate the submission of two separate applications.

The red line boundary of the site now comprises hardstanding access track and small parcel of grassland. The wider ownership boundary contains two poultry sheds, bound by wider areas of grassland, a pond and scrub, bound by hedgerows and trees. The site is accessed from Bratton Road to the east.

1.3 Proposed Development

The client is seeking planning permission to construct 3 ancillary buildings including a staff welfare facility, agricultural storage building and replacement biomass building. The red line boundary of the site has been changed to facilitate the submission of two separate applications Design plans have been provided by Acorus Report Ref: JW/2402/0625 – 200-02 (July 2025) Proposed plans are shown at Appendix C.

1.4 Relationship to Other Documents

This update ECIA should be read alongside and in full accordance with:

- BNG report by HalpinRobbins Report Ref: 01.132.006.05 Oakstone Farm New Buildings BNG (June 2026)
- The Preliminary Ecological Assessment by Acorus: Report Ref: Oakstone Farm PEA 2025 V1 (January 2025)
- Great Crested Newt Walkover Assessment by HalpinRobbins: Report Ref: 01.132.006.02 Oakstone Report Welfare Unit
- Bat Assessment in Relation to Trowbridge and Westbury Bat Mitigation Strategy (TWBMS) by HalpinRobbins. Report Ref: Oakstone: Ecological Technical Note – New Buildings (October 2025)
- The Landscape Proposals by Acorus : Report Ref: JW/2402/0625 – 200-02 (July 2025)

2 METHODOLOGY & LIMITATIONS

2.1 *Scope and Assessment*

2.1.1 *Zone of Influence*

The ‘zone of influence’ of a project is the area within which ecological features may be impacted by the proposed works. This may often extend beyond the site boundary due to the distance that certain species travel, the nature of the potentially affected habitats and the site’s location in relation to important ecological sites.

For this assessment the following zones have been considered:

- 10km surrounding Statutory Conservation Designations relating to bats (e.g. Special Areas of Conservation (SAC) and Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)).
- 2km surrounding other Statutory Conservation Designations and Non-Statutory sites of importance to biodiversity (e.g. Local Wildlife Sites (LWS) and Sites of Nature Conservation Importance (SNCI).
- 2km surrounding known records of protected and notable species.
- The site and its immediate surroundings

2.1.2 *Impact Assessment*

Impact assessment has been carried out based on the outline proposals provided (detailed in Section 1.3 and shown in the Proposed Plan at Appendix C) using the findings of the desk study and field surveys.

Ecological features have been scoped in and out as appropriate based on the baseline conditions of the site; i.e. what ecological features the site is likely to support, and as appropriate to the scale of the proposals.

An assessment of the potential project impacts on each ecological receptor (i.e. designated sites, protected and notable habitats and species) is provided, including the magnitude, duration and significance of the anticipated effects to each receptor. An assessment of significance has been undertaken considering the local, national and international value to ecological features as informed by the desk study.

Table 1 below includes details on how the significance has been determined.

Table 1 - General criteria for significance

SIGNIFICANCE	CRITERIA
Major	Change resulting in breaches of legislation or exceeding statutory objectives.
	Likely to impact on sites designated for national or international importance.
	Likely to affect a large-scale area or a large number of species or populations on frequent or permanent basis.
	May result in an irreversible decline or rise.
Moderate	Unlikely to cause a breach of legislation but likely to impact on a site of regional or local importance.
	Likely to affect a small number of species or populations on a permanent basis.
Minor	Likely to impact an area or feature of local interest or importance.
	Likely to have a temporary impact on a small number of species or populations or be a recoverable impact.
Negligible	Indiscernible impact predicted.

Where possible significant ecological effects will be avoided through careful design and application of the mitigation hierarchy:

- **Avoidance**
Seek options that avoid harm to ecological features.
- **Mitigation**
Adverse effects should be avoided or minimised through mitigation measures, either through the design of the project or subsequent measures that can be guaranteed. Mitigation is relevant for negative impacts assessed as being potentially significant (before mitigation) or where required to ensure compliance with legislation.
- **Compensation**
Where there are significant adverse ecological effects despite the mitigation proposed, these should be offset by appropriate compensatory measures. Compensation is relevant for negative impacts assessed as being significant or where required to ensure compliance with legislation.
- **Enhancements**
Seek to provide net benefits for biodiversity over and above requirements for avoidance, mitigation or compensation.

2.2 Desk Study

A data search was previously carried out by Acorus (Report Ref: Oakstone Farm PEA 2025 V1). This included geographic information within 2km on key statutory designated nature conservation sites and other ecological features of relevance to the site; obtained from the web-based DEFRA resource Multi-Agency Geographic Information for the Countryside (MAGIC)(re-confirmed by HalpinRobbins); and biological records from the Wiltshire and

Swindon Biological Records Centre (WSBRC), comprising protected and notable species records and Non-Statutory Nature Conservation Designations within a 2km radius of the site. Data search results only give an indication of species presence in a location. The absence of recent records for certain species in an area may be due to low levels of biological recording or the non-submission of records, rather than absence. Many species records are also at low geographical resolution and do not indicate their exact location and often provide little detail about abundance.

Additionally, a search for great crested newt presence within a 1km radius of the site confirmed via data from Natural England Class Survey Licence Returns and 2017-2019 Pond Surveys as published on the MAGIC website was undertaken by HalpinRobbins in Juane 2026. OS Maps were also used to check for ponds within a 250m radius of the site.

A review of the Trowbridge planning portal was undertaken in June 2026 to identify any previous applications and ecological findings relevant to the current proposals.

2.3 Extended UK Habitat Classification Survey

A field survey identifying the habitats, legally protected and notable species and the site's potential for supporting these species was undertaken. The potential for habitats to support legally protected species is important as legal protection of some species extends to the habitats they depend on, as well as the individuals themselves.

The field survey used UK Habitat Classifications (UKHab, 2023) combined with species specific field observation techniques. The UKHab Professional edition was used with a Minimum Mapping Unit (MMU) of 5m² and habitats were classified to level 5 where possible with all secondary codes reported as necessary. Where given, habitat measurements are appropriate and based on satellite/georeferenced maps.

The nature conservation value of ecological features that may be affected by development (ecological receptors) is adapted from the Chartered Institute of Ecology & Environmental Management (CIEEM) guidelines for Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (CIEEM, 2017).

This report records the habitats, flora and fauna evident on the day of the site visit. It does not record any flora or fauna that may appear at other times of the year, and as such, were not evident at the time of the field survey. The process is not intended to produce a comprehensive list of plants and animals but to evaluate the ecological resources within the site and thus identify potential issues of ecological relevance to the proposed works.

2.4 Ecological Building Survey (including Preliminary Roost Assessment)

The structures were inspected both externally and internally using a surveyor's ladder, high powered torch, bat detector and video endoscope where necessary to assess potential for the structures to hold nesting birds (including barn owl) and roosting bats.

Evidence of nesting birds could include feathers, nesting material, eggs and potentially pellets. Evidence of roosting bats could include live animals, carcasses, droppings and feeding remains. A rating of between none and high suitability was assigned to the structures based on their likelihood of supporting roosting bats. If a bat was identified in a structure during the survey the structure was recorded as a confirmed roost (Collins, 2023).

- **None:** No habitat features likely to be used by any roosting bats at any time of year.
- **Negligible:** No obvious habitat features likely used to be used by roosting bats.
- **Low:** A structure with one or more potential roost sites that could be used by individual bats opportunistically at any time of year. However, these potential roost sites do not provide enough space, shelter, protection, appropriate conditions and/or suitable surrounding habitat to be used on a regular basis by larger numbers of bats (i.e. unlikely to be suitable for maternity and not classic hibernation site but could be used by individual hibernating bats).
- **Moderate:** A structure with one or more potential roost sites that could be used by bats due to their size, shelter, protection, conditions and surrounding habitat but unlikely to support a roost of high conservation status.
- **High:** A structure with one or more potential roost sites that are obviously suitable for use by larger numbers of bats on a more regular basis and potentially for longer periods of time due to their size, shelter, protection, conditions and surrounding habitat. These structures have the potential to support high conservation status roosts, e.g. maternity or classic hibernation site.

Several bat species roost in very small crevices, such as the space between the roofing tiles, corrugated sheeting, and gaps in wooden trusses, therefore it is possible that individual bats and bat droppings may have been missed. In addition, bird nests in concealed locations may not have been visible to the surveyor.

Identification of species based on dropping morphology is challenging and does not provide a definitive identification of species.

2.5 Great Crested Newt Surveys

2.5.1 Habitat Suitability Index

Habitat Suitability Index (HSI) for great crested newts has been developed as a means of evaluating habitat quality for the species. The HSI for great crested newts incorporates ten suitability indices known to affect the presence of this species including geographic location, pond area, water quality and permanence. The HSI undertaken follows guidance published by Amphibian and Reptile Groups of the United Kingdom (ARG UK) in their UK Advice Note 5 (2010). A single pond, Pond 1, was surveyed.

2.5.2 eDNA Surveys

When great crested newts inhabit a waterbody they leave traces of their DNA in the water as evidence of their presence. This is referred to as environmental DNA (or eDNA). Surveys involved taking 50ml water samples. Water samples were then sent to a laboratory for analysis. eDNA sampling followed methodology outlined within the Freshwater Habitats Trust technical advice note (Biggs et al. 2014).

A pond within the ownership boundary, located 30m south of the site was subject to eDNA surveys for great crested newts. A full detail of the DNA surveys are results is provided in HalpinRobbins associated GCN report; (Report Ref: 01.132.006.02 Oakstone Report Shed New Buildings) and summarised in this report for clarity.

2.6 Bat Surveys

2.6.1 Daytime Bat Walkover (DBW)

The Extended UK Habitat Classification Survey also assessed the site's potential to support foraging and commuting bats both on site and in the surrounding area, with the aim to determine the suitability of the site for bats and establish whether further surveys are required. The site was assessment with a rating between none and high suitability based on the suitability of habitats within the site for commuting and foraging habitats bats (Collins, 2023).

- **None:** No habitat features likely to be used by any commuting or foraging bats at any time of year.
- **Negligible:** No obvious habitat features likely used to be used as flight-paths or by foraging bats.
- **Low:** Habitat that could be used by small numbers of bats as flight-paths such as gappy hedgerow but isolated. Habitat suitable but isolated, that could be used by small numbers of foraging bats such as a lone tree or a patch of scrub.

- **Moderate:** Continuous habitat connected to the wider landscape that could be used by bats for flight-paths and foraging, such as lines of trees and scrub and trees, scrub, grassland and water.
- **High:** Continuous, high-quality habitats that is well connected to the wider landscape that is likely to be used regularly by bats for flight-paths such as river valleys, streams, hedgerows, lines of trees and woodland edge.

Trees within the site were categorised for their suitability to support roosting bats, using professional judgement. The site was assessed with a rating between None and PRF (Collins, 2023).

- **NONE:** Either no PRFs in the tree or highly unlikely to be any.
- **FAR:** Further assessment required to establish if PRFs are present in the tree.
- **PRF:** A tree with at least one PRF present.

2.6.2 Ground Level Tree Assessment (GLTA)

A Ground Level Tree Assessment (GLTA) was undertaken comprising a detailed inspection of the exterior of individual trees from the ground on site, or immediate off site to look for features that bats could use for roosting; Potential Roosting Features (PRFs). The aim of the assessment was to determine whether the site holds any roosting resource within the trees and the need for further survey and/or mitigation (Collin, 2023).

The GLTA was undertaken during daylight using a high-powered torch and binoculars to identify PRFs. Information was compiled on tree, PRFs, and any evidence of bats. The inspection was carried out systemically and consistently around all parts of the tree and the results recorded in a standard format (Collins, 2023). PRF types were assigned were possible based on Bat Roosts in Trees (BTHK, 2018).

2.7 Personnel

The update survey was undertaken by Miranda Maybank MSc BSc (Hons), Ecologist, Qualifying CIEEM, Natural England Bat Class Licence 2026-89122-SCI-CL17 (Level 1) on the 8th October 2025.

2.8 Limitations

The original Ecological Impact Assessment was conducted in January, outside of the advised survey window of May-September. An update site visit was conducted in 8th October 2025 by Halpin Robbins, just outside of the survey optimal survey window. However, given the low quality of habits on site, and proximity to the optimal season window, the ecologists used

their professional judgement to determine likely impacts and species present. Therefore, this is not considered to be a significant limitation. No other limitations were noted as part of this assessment.

3 BASELINE ECOLOGICAL CONDITIONS

3.1 Relevant Ecological Information from Planning Portal

A review of the Wiltshire Planning portal did not identify any applications of ecological relevance to the project.

3.2 Designated Sites

3.2.1 Statutory Designated Sites

There are two statutory wildlife sites within 2km, Picket & Clanger Wood SSSI (Site of Special Scientific Interest) located c.1.48km west and; Steeple Ashton SSSI c.2km northwest of the site.

Further, WSBRC has confirmed the presence of a single non-statutory designations for biodiversity within the 2km search radius; Bratton Verge Protected Road Verge – located c.2km southeast of the site.

The site falls within the ‘yellow zone’ within the Trowbridge and Westbury Mitigation Strategy (TWMS). The zones are based on whether development in the area could negatively impact on rare bats linked to the Bath and Bradford on Avon Special Area of Conservation (SAC)- designated for Bechstein’s bat *Myotis bechsteinii*, greater horseshoe bat *Rhinolophus ferrumequinum* and/or lesser horseshoe bat *Rhinolophus hipposideros*. Further details on this are addressed within HalpinRobbins technical note on (Report Reference: 01.132.006.03 Oakstone_Ecological Technical Note_New Buildings).

3.3 Habitats

The site is approximately 0.31ha in size and comprises the following UK Habitat Classification types (secondary codes have been added where applicable):

- g4, 64 – Modified grassland, mown;
- h3d- Bramble Scrub
- u1b - Developed land, sealed surface

A map of the habitats within the site and associated Target Notes (TN) are provided in Figure 2, Appendix B.

3.3.1 g4 (64) Modified Grassland (mown)

Grassland to the rear (south-west) of the site comprises an area of modified grassland, which is maintained through regular mowing to approximately 10 cm in height year-round. The

grassland is dominated by frequent perennial ryegrass *Lolium perenne*, annual meadow grass *Poa annua* and creeping buttercup *Ranunculus repens*, with occasional creeping bent *Agrostis stolonifera*, daisy *Bellis perennis*, cock's foot *Dactylis glomerata* and dock *Rumex* sp. Also present were rare occurrences of burnet-saxifrage *Pimpinella saxifraga*, meadow buttercup *Ranunculus acris*, common sorrel *Rumex acetosa*, groundsel *Senecio vulgaris*, dandelion *Taraxacum officinale* agg. and white clover *Trifolium repens*.

3.3.2 H3d- Bramble Scrub

A small area of bramble scrub is present on the eastern side of the site, comprising bramble *Rubus fruticosus* agg., ivy *Hedera helix*, cherry laurel *Prunus laurocerasus* and cotoneaster *Cotoneaster* sp.

3.3.3 u1b-Developed land- Sealed surface

Access and curtilage around the structures is comprised of well compacted hogging and concrete. There is an area of concrete east of the easternmost structure. A single structure is present on site- comprised of a caravan in occasional use.

3.3.4 Off site habitat of note

A pond (Pond 1) is present off site, within 5m of the redline boundary and due to be retained and protected.

3.4 Protected species

3.4.1 Plants and invertebrates

WSBRC has returned 18 records of rare or otherwise notable plants recorded in the last 10 years within 2km of the site. This includes species such as Spreading Hedge Parsley *Torilis arvensis*.

Additionally, WSBRC has returned 67 records of invertebrates recorded in the last 10 years within 2km of the site.

No notable invertebrate or plant species were identified within the site. The site is considered to support common and widespread flora and invertebrate species.

Cotoneaster was identified within the eastern scrub parcel corner of the site. Many species of cotoneaster are considered invasive and should be removed and not left to spread.

3.4.2 Amphibians – including Great Crested Newt

WSBRC returned no records of Great Crested Newt recorded in the last 10 years within 2km of the site. However, Pond 5 (located 295m from site) has had previous positive results in 2017-2019 according to data from MAGIC.

The site straddles Amber and Green Risk Zones for District Level Licensing of Great Crested Newts in Somerset (Natural England - DEFRA (2023)).

Acorus noted a total of six ponds are located within 500m of the site, and 3 located within 250m. P1 is located 30m south of the site, P3 is located around 250m north of the site, and P2, is located 240m southwest of the site. Only Pond 1 was accessible for surveys.

The site itself has limited suitable terrestrial GCN habitat within the mown modified grassland, unsuitable for GCN as it lacks the topography offered by rough grassland and is subject to regular cutting and lack of shelter.

Suitable habitat is present within the wider ownership boundary including the scrub bund to the west and the unmanaged hedgerows and bramble scrub that offer sheltering opportunities for great crested newt in their terrestrial phase but will not be impacted by the proposed.

Pond 1 was found to be “good” Habitat Suitability for GCN, based on a score of 0.7583. A table of these workings is presented in Table 1. No other ponds were assessed due to access constraints.

Ponds Locations are shown in Map 1 below, taken from the Acorus PEA report.



Map 1- Pond locations and Natural England Great Crested Newt Risk Zones.

eDNA The results revealed that the presence of great crested newt eDNA was found on the on-site pond based on a positive score, with an indicator of 1/12. The project impact was then scrutinised based on a visual assessment of the pond and surrounding habitat and using professional judgement. A summary of the key findings is presented below.

“From the field survey it was determined that there is little to no impact on newts and their habitats because of the new proposals. All the areas were determined to offer little value for great crested newts and other wildlife which may live around the farm. No habitat loss is predicted through the development scheme”

Full details are presented in the Non-licensed Method Statement and CEMP provided by HalpinRobbins (Report Reference: 01.132.006.04 Oakstone Farm CEMP).

The HSI/eDNA survey results are shown at Appendix E and Appendix F.

3.4.3 Reptiles

WSBRC returned six records of reptiles within 2 km of the site within the last 10 years. Species recorded include common lizard *Zootoca vivipara*, slow-worm *Anguis fragilis* and adder *Vipera berus*. The closest record was an adder located approximately 1,946 m from the site.

As with amphibians, the site itself provides suitable habitat for reptiles in the mown grassland. However, the wider ownership boundary has some potential foraging and hibernation opportunities within the scrub bund to the west and the unmanaged hedgerows surrounding the site.

3.4.4 Birds

WSBRC returned 112 records of birds within 2 km of the site within the last 10 years. Records include species such as spotted flycatcher *Muscicapa striata*, which utilise scrub, trees and grassland habitats present within the site.

A single unused nest was noted to the rear of the caravan during the October 2025 survey. The site is not considered suitable for ground nesting birds however the scrub within the site provides suitable nesting and foraging habitat for bird species and may be used in future breeding seasons.

3.4.5 Badgers

No records of badgers *Meles meles* were identified within a 2km radius of the site.

No direct evidence of badgers was identified within the site; however it is considered likely that badgers pass through the site on occasion.

3.4.6 Bats

WSBRC has returned 106 records of bats recorded in the last 10 years within 2 km of the site. Records include myotis species, barbastelle bat *Barbastella barbastellus*, Natterer's bat *Myotis nattereri*, noctule bat *Nyctalus noctula*, soprano pipistrelle *Pipistrellus pygmaeus*, common pipistrelle *Pipistrellus pipistrellus*, brown long-eared bat *Plecotus auritus*, greater horseshoe bat, and lesser horseshoe bat.

A single record of granted European Protected Species Licences (EPSLs) for bats were identified within a 2km radius including brown long-eared bat, common pipistrelle, lesser horseshoe bat, The closest record is located c.1.6km to the south-west concerning common pipistrelle, brown long eared and lesser horseshoe bat.

3.4.7 Preliminary Roost Assessment

The caravan is not suitable for roosting bats. No other structures are present on site.

3.4.8 Daytime Bat Walkover

The site itself was assessed as comprising habitats of **low** value to foraging and commuting bats.

Hedgerows and trees, scrub and ponds off-site, but which are within the site ownership boundary provide Moderate suitable foraging and commuting habitat for bat species.

3.4.9 Other Notable Mammals

No records of water vole *Arvicola amphibius* were returned by WSBRC within 2km of the site. No habitats on site are suitable for water vole and these are not considered further.

No Records of dormouse *Muscardinus avellanarius* were returned by the WSBRC. No habitats on site are suitable for dormice and these are not considered further.

No records of Otter *Lutra lutra* were returned by WSBRC within 2km of the site. No habitats on site are suitable for otter and these are not considered further.

A total of 7 records of hedgehog *Erinaceus europaeus*; a UK Priority species were identified within a 2km radius of the site. Grassland within the site provide suitable habitat for hedgehogs.

4 ASSESSMENT OF EFFECTS, MITIGATION AND COMPENSATION MEASURES

The mitigation and compensation recommendations provided are based on the principles of established best practice guidelines set out by the Chartered Institute for Ecology and Environmental Management (CIEEM), the local planning authority and other relevant organisations. Where applicable, the cumulative effects potentially arising from other developments are discussed in this section.

A Biodiversity Mitigation and Enhancement Plan (BMEP) has been produced showing the measures detailed below, see Figure 4, Appendix B.

4.1 Designated Sites

4.1.1 Potential Impacts

Site proposals are not considered likely to impact nearby designated sites due to the small scale and nature of the development.

The proposals are compliant with the requirements of the TWMS as they will ensure there is not a net loss of bat suitable habitat or severance of habitat connectivity.

4.2 Habitats

4.2.1 Potential Impacts

The removal of 0.05ha of Modified grassland, a common and widespread habitat of low ecological value, is not anticipated to result in any significant impacts.

Construction activities have the potential to damage off-site hedgerows and trees habitats in the absence of mitigation, which is anticipated to have a temporary moderate adverse impact at a site level.

4.2.2 Mitigation and Compensation Measures

The following mitigation measures will be incorporated to avoid, mitigate and compensate the identified impacts to ecologically important habitats:

- Retained off-site hedgerows must be protected during construction works with the use of Heras fencing (or similar) which will also protect associated ground flora species. The fencing should be installed 1m from the edge of hedge/hedge banks.

- Off-site mature trees along site boundaries which have potential to be impacted by construction activities will be demarcated with suitable root protection zones in accordance with British Standard BS5837 (2012).

4.2.3 Residual Effects

The above measures will address the anticipated impacts of the proposals to habitats designated sites; there are no expected residual effects.

4.3 Flora and Invertebrates

4.3.1 Potential Impacts

The site is considered likely to support common and widespread flora and invertebrate species. There are no anticipated impacts to these species.

Site clearance to facilitate development has the potential to cause the spread of cotoneaster; considered a moderate adverse impact at a site level.

4.3.2 Mitigation and Compensation Measures

The following mitigation measures will be incorporated to avoid, mitigate and compensate the identified impacts arising from the spread of invasive non-native plant species:

- The identified cotoneaster will be removed and disposed of responsibly.

4.3.3 Residual Effects

The above measures will address the anticipated impacts of the proposals to the spread of invasive non-native plant species; there are no expected residual effects.

4.4 Amphibians (including Great Crested Newt)

4.4.1 Potential Impacts

Site clearance to facilitate development has potential to harm great crested newt, as well as common and widespread amphibian species such as common toad, a UK Priority species. Proposals will also result in the loss of small areas of terrestrial habitat with limited suitability for these species resulting in a moderate adverse impact at a site level.

Proposals are not anticipated to impact great crested newts, however site clearance to facilitate development has potential to harm common and widespread amphibian species such as common toad, a UK Priority species. Proposals will also result in the loss of terrestrial

habitat and sheltering/hibernating opportunities for this species, resulting in a moderate adverse impact at a site level.

The waterbody off site will be retained, however construction activities have potential to damage amphibian habitat, including great crested newt, resulting in a major adverse impact at a local level.

Without mitigation, the highest ecological risks for amphibians are associated with:

- Ground disturbance and pollution near the on-site pond
- Creation and subsequent uncontrolled clearance of rubble and vegetation piles

4.4.2 Mitigation and Compensation Measures

The following mitigation measures will be incorporated to avoid, mitigate and compensate the identified impacts to amphibians, including great crested newt:

- The site straddles both a Green and Amber Zone of the Natural England GCN District Level Licence risk zone, and a pond is present within 30m of the site. Habitats are of limited suitability to support GCN. A Non licensed method statement and CEMP has been provided by HalpinRobbins (Report Reference 01.132.006.04 Oakstone Farm CEMP) that details methods to successfully mitigate the risks to GCN. No licenceNo licence is required.
- The site will retain its existing management methods, where the grassland around the site is kept short, and frequently mown to a height of under 5cm. This ensures that all the work areas are maintained as unsuitable habitat for terrestrial newts. In order to be effective vegetation clearance should be undertaken during the active season for newts, typically February to October inclusive when temperatures are >5°C degrees centigrade and should avoid prolonged periods of hot dry weather when amphibian activity is reduced.
- GCN hibernate in autumn and winter. Works will be completed prior to GCN and reptiles coming out of hibernation. As no hibernation suitable habitats are present within the working areas, works will not impact hibernating GCN.
- The storage of materials/waste will take place on areas of hard standing or bare ground. Waste should be stored in skips or removed off site as soon as possible and away from suitable retained or off-site habitat to avoid creating refuges which could be colonised by newts. Any mounds of soil should be compacted around the base to avoid creating refuges which newts could occupy.

- Measures detailed in the CEMP include a Non-licenced Method Statement, a Toolbox talk, prior commencement inspection by ECoW, maintenance of a minimum 10m pond buffer, sensitive lighting and strict pollution prevention controls, residual impacts are reduced to Low/negligible and are not expected to result in significant adverse ecological effects.
- Provision of new scrub around the pond edge will increase the area of suitable terrestrial foraging habitat.

4.4.3 Residual Effects

The above measures will address the anticipated impacts of the proposals to amphibians, including great crested newt; there are no expected residual effects.

4.5 Reptiles

4.5.1 Potential Impacts

Habitats within the site are not considered suitable to support reptiles, the proposals are not anticipated to result in impacts to reptiles.

4.6 Birds

4.6.1 Potential Impacts

Vegetation removal near the caravan and clearing the bramble scrub may result in damage/destruction the nests of wild birds, resulting in a moderate adverse impact at a site level.

4.6.2 Mitigation and Compensation Measures

The following mitigation measures will be incorporated to avoid, mitigate and compensate the identified impacts to birds:

- Works which have potential to impact nesting birds (i.e. any vegetation removal to facilitate removal of existing structures) must be undertaken outside of the main bird nesting season (i.e. avoiding the period March to mid-September). If works cannot be timed sensitively, a check by an ecologist for nesting birds the day before works are due to commence will be required. Any active bird nests identified will be left in situ until the young have fully fledged.

- Compensatory nesting opportunities for a variety of bird species will be provided within the ownership boundary on mature trees. A total of 1x general purpose nest boxes (e.g. WoodStone Seville Nest Box 32mm) will be installed on trees or walls on the northern/eastern elevation of the structures. Suggested nest box designs are available from www.wildcare.co.uk or www.nhbs.com. Nest box locations are indicative are shown within the BMEP, Figure 4, Appendix B.

4.6.3 Residual Effects

The above measures will address the anticipated impacts of the proposals to birds; there are no expected residual effects.

4.7 Badgers

4.7.1 Potential Impacts

Development proposals are not anticipated to impact upon badgers.

4.7.2 Residual Effects

The above measures will address the anticipated impacts of the proposals to badgers; there are no expected residual effects.

4.8 Bats

4.8.1 Potential Impacts

Roosting

The site does not comprise any habitats which support potential bat roost features. The project is not anticipated to result in impacts to roosting bats.

Foraging/Commuting

The proposals are not anticipated to impact the hedgerows and trees which border the site.

Construction activities to facilitate development have potential to damage off-site retained hedgerows and trees which form foraging and commuting routes. Increases in artificial illumination both during the construction and operational phases of the development will also impact bat species and have the potential to disturb dark flight corridors thereby affecting the ecological functionality of the retained hedgerows and trees. These impacts are anticipated to result in a major adverse impact at a local level.

4.8.2 Mitigation and Compensation Measures

The following mitigation measures will be incorporated to avoid, mitigate and compensate the identified impacts to bats:

Foraging/Commuting

- A sensitive lighting strategy will be implemented into the construction and operational phases of the development to avoid impacts to bats arising from increases in artificial illumination. The strategy will include:
 - No illumination above the current lux levels or above 0.5lux to all retained hedgerows and trees to provide dark corridors through and around the site.
 - No illumination of any bat roost provision within the development (i.e. bat boxes/tubes on/in buildings or trees).
- Retained off-site hedgerows must be protected during construction works with the use of Heras fencing (or similar) which will also protect associated ground flora species. The fencing should be installed 1m from the edge of hedge/hedge banks.

4.8.3 Residual Effects

The above measures will address the anticipated impacts of the proposals to bats; there are no expected residual effects.

4.9 Other Notable Mammals

4.9.1 Potential Impacts

Scrub and grassland removal to facilitate development has potential to harm hedgehogs and remove hedgehog foraging habitat, resulting in a moderate adverse impact at a local level.

4.9.2 Mitigation and Compensation Measures

The following mitigation measures will be incorporated to avoid, mitigate and compensate the identified impacts to hedgehogs:

- During construction works, any trenches/ holes left exposed overnight will be provided with a means of escape, such as a shallow sloped edge or angled board (minimum 30cm width), positioned at a maximum angle of 30°.

4.9.3 *Residual Effects*

The above measures will address the anticipated impacts of the proposals to hedgehogs; there are no expected residual effects.

5 ENHANCEMENT MEASURES

Enhancement measures are recommendations over and above the mitigation required, which aim to enhance biodiversity in line with national and local planning policy and are deemed appropriate for the site and its proposals. A Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment has been produced which accompanies this report (01.132.006.05 Oakstone Farm New Buildings BNG).

A Biodiversity Mitigation and Enhancement Plan has also been produced showing the measures detailed below, see Figure 4, Appendix B.

- Enhancement measures should include planting of a diverse mix of native tree, shrub and other floral species as part of any proposed landscaping scheme.
- Areas of unmanaged grassland are of value at the edges of scrub to act as transition habitats for foraging reptile and amphibians.
- A bat box could be affixed to the trees around the edge of the pond to provide roosting opportunities for bat species as an ecological enhancement. Suggested location of bat box is provided in the BMEP, Figure 4, Appendix B.
- A bird box could be mounted to the scrub or suitable vegetation to the east of the site to provide enhancement for nesting birds. Suggested location of bat box is provided in the BMEP, Figure 4, Appendix B.

6 CONCLUSIONS TABLE

Table 2 - Summary of Ecological Mitigation, Compensation and Enhancement Measures for the site:

Ecological Feature	Potential Effect	Significance in the absence of mitigation	Mitigation/Compensation and Enhancement	Residual Effect
Statutory Designated Sites	None	-	-	-
Habitats	Damage to off-site hedgerows and trees during construction. Loss of modified grassland and bramble scrub	Moderate adverse impact at site level.	Protective fencing during construction. New areas of scrub and unmanaged grassland	Positive
Flora and Invertebrates	Spread of Cotoneaster	Moderate adverse impact at site level.	Cotoneaster removal	Positive
Amphibians (including GCN)	Harm during construction. Loss of terrestrial habitat. Damage to nearby pond Damage to nearby hedges/scrub		Follow CEMP guidance Maintain grassland to under 5cm. Silt fencing during construction Works to be carried out with an ECoW present. Protective fencing during construction. New areas of scrub and unmanaged grassland	Positive
Reptiles	None	-	New areas of scrub and unmanaged grassland	Positive

Ecological Feature	Potential Effect	Significance in the absence of mitigation	Mitigation/Compensation and Enhancement	Residual Effect
Birds	Harm during construction.		Nesting bird check immediately prior to works. Nesting opportunities to be provided as enhancement.	Positive
Badgers	None	-	New areas of scrub and unmanaged grassland	Positive
Bats	None	-	New areas of scrub and unmanaged grassland Bat box as an enhancement	Positive
Other Notable Mammals	Harm during construction. Loss of commuting and foraging habitat. Trapped in construction trenches	Moderate adverse impact at site level.	Methods of escape from trenches Enhancement of grassland and scrub on site	Positive

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8 SITE PHOTOS



Plate 1. Access track comprising of hogging



Plate 2. Access track comprising of hogging



Plate 3. Soil Strip conducted under ECOW following CEMP guidance



Plate 4. Caravan to be replaced



Plate 5. Areas for the proposed new building



Plate 6. Hardstanding in the centre of the site.

APPENDIX A - RELEVANT WILDLIFE LEGISLATION AND POLICIES

Ecological Feature	Legislation / Policy
Great crested newts	Great crested newts are protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) and Conservation of Habitats and Species (Amendment) (EU Exit) Regulations 2019. This makes it an offence to kill or injure great crested newts or damage or destroy a place of shelter or protection. Deliberate or reckless disturbance of great crested newts which could affect the ability of any significant group of animals to survive or breed may also result in an offence.
Reptiles	Reptiles are protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended). It is an offence to intentionally or recklessly kill or injure reptiles.
Birds	Under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) it is illegal to take, damage or destroy the nests of wild birds whilst being built or in use. Bird species also listed on Schedule 1 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) receive additional protection including protection from intentional or reckless disturbance when they are nesting or rearing dependant young.
Badgers	Badgers are protected under the Protection of Badgers Act 1992. Under this legislation, it is an offence to kill or injure a badger, damage or destroy a sett or disturb a badger whilst it occupies a sett.
Bats	British bat species are protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) and Conservation of Habitats and Species (Amendment) (EU Exit) Regulations 2019. This makes it an offence to kill or injure bats or damage or destroy a place of shelter or protection. Deliberate or reckless disturbance of bats which could affect the ability of any significant group of animals to survive, breed, rear or nurture their young may also result in an offence.
Invasive non-native species	Invasive, non-native species are those listed on Schedule 9 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended). It is an offence to plant or cause the spread of these species in the wild.
UK Priority Species/Habitats	UK Priority Species/Habitats are those that have been identified as being the most threatened and requiring conservation action.

Ecological Feature	Legislation / Policy
Biodiversity Net Gain	The Environment Act 2022 and the National Planning Policy Framework require all developments to show a net gain for biodiversity.

APPENDIX B – FIGURES

On following pages.



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Key:

 Site Boundary- New Buildings

Figure 1.

Site Location Plan -New Buildings
Oakstone Farm ECIA update
Ecological Impact Assessment

Project No.: 01.132.006.05

Date: 22/06/2026



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Key:

- Ownership Boundary
- Pond 1
- Site Boundary- New Buildings
- U1b - Developed land: Sealed Surface
- g4- (64) Grassland; Modified grassland (Mown)
- h3d- Scrub and Heathland: Bramble Scrub

Figure 2.

UKHAB Habitats - New Buildings
Oakstone Farm ECIA update
Ecological Impact Assessment

Project No.: 01.132.006.05

Date: 22/06/2026



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Key:

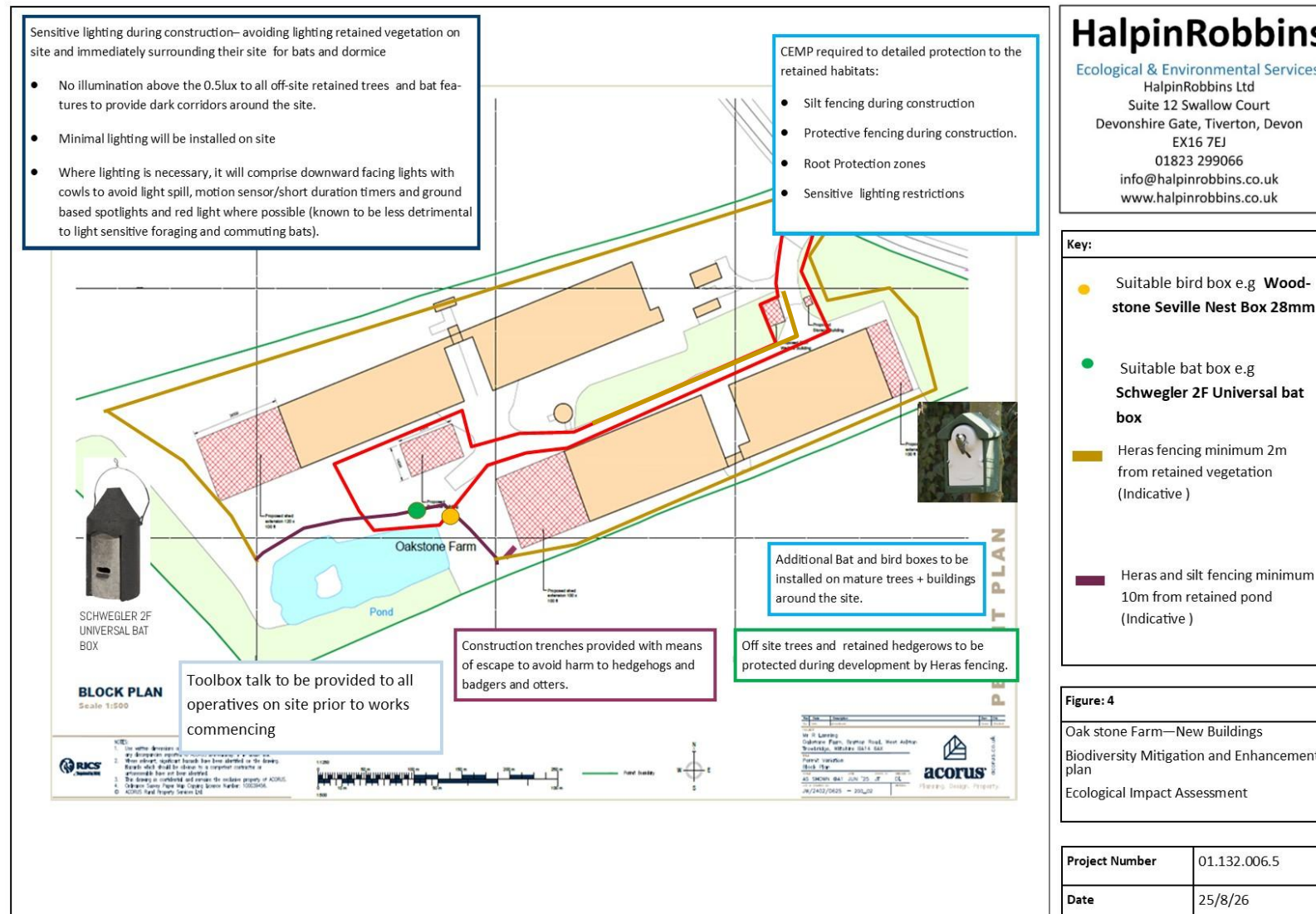
- Ownership Boundary
- Pond 1
- Site Boundary- New Buildings
- U1b - Developed land: Sealed Surface
- g4- (64) Grassland; Modified grassland (Mown)
- h3d- Scrub and Heathland: Bramble Scrub
- New Buildings
- Scrub and Heathland- Mixed Scrub

Figure 3.

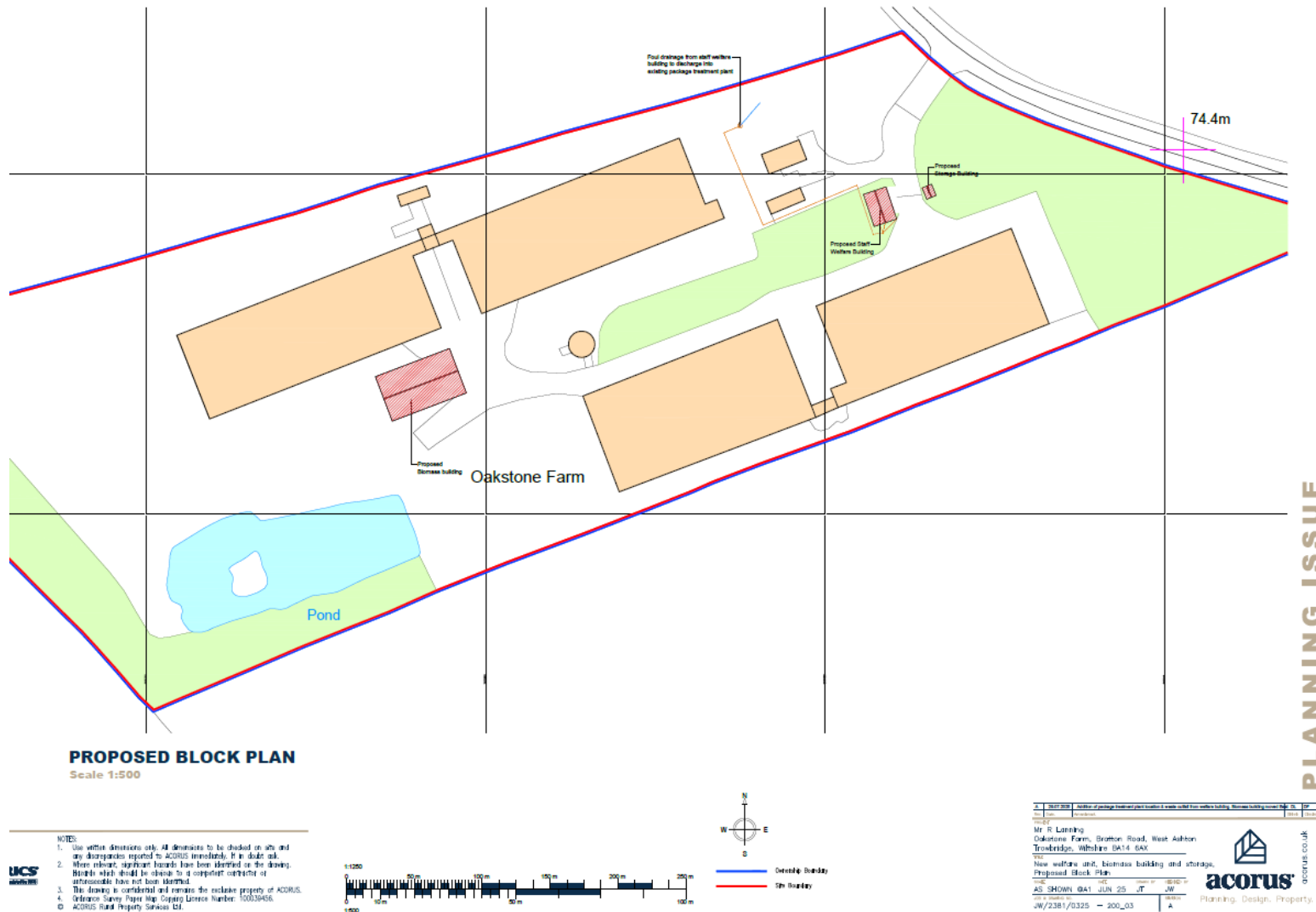
Proposed Habitats - New Buildings
Oakstone Farm ECIA update
Ecological Impact Assessment

Project No.: 01.132.006.05

Date: 22/06/2026



APPENDIX C – PROPOSED PLANS



APPENDIX D - SURVEY DETAILS AND RESULTS DATA

Table D1. Details of the Personnel, Dates and Types of Survey Undertaken at the Site

SURVEY	DATE	PERSONNEL
UK Habitat Survey and site assessment	November 2024	Acorus
eDNA of Pond	April 2025	Unknown (Acorus)
Updated Habitat Suitability Assessment of pond on site	18 June 2025	Jon Cranfield BSc, PGCEM, MCIEEM
Registered Low Impact Class Licence visit	18 June 2025	Jon Cranfield BSc, PGCEM, MCIEEM
Updated Extended UK Habitat Classification Survey & Daytime Bat Walkover Survey (DBW) Site walkover for Bats and GCN Ground Level Tree Assessment (GLTA)	8 th October 2025	Miranda Maybank MSc BSc (Hons), Ecologist, Qualifying CIEEM, Natural England Bat Class Licence (Level 1) 2026-89122-SCI-CL17.

APPENDIX E - HSI RESULTS

Table 4: Updated HSI Score

As conducted by Halpin Robbins based on the site visit in June 2025. HSI Calculator ©Owen Crawshaw,2015.

SI ₁	Location	Zone A
	Score	1
SI ₂	Pond Area	1600m ²
	Score	0.865
SI ₃	Pond Drying	Never Dries
	Score	0.9
SI ₄	Water Quality	Moderate
	Score	0.67
SI ₅	Shade	0-60%
	Score	1
SI ₆	Fowl	Minor
	Score	0.67
SI ₇	Fish	Possible
	Score	0.67
SI ₈	Ponds	>12
	Score	1
SI ₉	Terrestrial Habitat	Moderate
	Score	0.67
SI ₁₀	Macrophytes	6-10%
	Score	0.4
Product		0.06275059
HSI		0.7581616
Suitability		Good

APPENDIX F– DNA ANALYSIS RESULTS

Folio No:	333-2025	 SureScreen Scientifics
Purchase Order:	Oakstone	
Contact:	Acorus Rural Property Services	
Issue Date:	28.04.2025	
Received Date:	17.04.2025	

GCN eDNA Analysis

Summary

When great crested newts (GCN), *Triturus cristatus*, inhabit a pond, they continuously release small amounts of their DNA into the environment. By collecting and analyzing water samples, we can detect these small traces of environmental DNA (eDNA) to confirm GCN habitation or establish GCN absence.

Results

Lab ID	Site Name	OS Reference	Degradation Check	Inhibition Check	Result	Positive Replicates
GCN25 0933	Oakstone Farm P1	ST 897 540	Pass	Pass	Positive	1/12

Matters affecting result: none

Reported by: Chelsea Warner Approved by: Chelsea Warner