



Preliminary Ecological Appraisal

Report prepared for: Mr David House

Littlecott Mill

Enford

Pewsey

Wiltshire

SN9 6AW

May 2026

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Methods used to prepare this report, including those carried out in the field followed The Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management's Code of Professional Conduct.

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Document Number:	CE001783

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1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This report provides the results of a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal undertaken at Littlecott Mill, Enford, Pewsey, Wiltshire SN9 6AW (central Ordnance Survey (OS) Reference SU 14263 51825).
- 1.2 Development proposals are described as the erection of a detached plant room outbuilding within the grounds of the property.
- 1.3 The findings included in this report are based on a survey undertaken during May 2026 by Cotswold Environmental Ltd. The purpose of the survey was to undertake an appraisal of the site for its potential ecological value to notable and protected wildlife, and to look for evidence of such species. The survey results provide information to determine the likely ecological impact the proposed development will have on wildlife species, and to inform the level of further survey effort and mitigation required to comply with relevant nature conservation policies and legislation. The evaluation and findings in this report can be used by Wiltshire Council in their view of a planning application. Survey results detailed within this report should be considered valid for a period of 18 months from the survey date.
- 1.4 The property is located to the north-east of the village, approximately 400m east of the A345. The site location is shown in Fig. 1.
- 1.5 All survey and assessment work was completed in accordance with official assessment guidelines¹ and largely followed that recommended by the Chartered Institute for Ecology and Environmental Management (CIEEM)² and follows the British Standard Code of Practice³.

Survey Objectives

- To identify and describe the habitats and ecological features present within the survey area.
- To assess the suitability of the site to support protected and notable species.
- To identify any evidence of protected or notable species within the survey area.
- To determine the potential ecological impacts of the proposed development on habitats and protected species.
- To identify any requirements for further ecological survey, mitigation, compensation, or enhancement measures.

¹ Collins J (2023) Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines, 4th edn. Bat Conservation Trust, London.

² CIEEM (2017) Guidelines for Ecological Report Writing. CIEEM, Winchester.

³ British Standards Institution (2013) BS 42020:2013. Biodiversity – Code of practice for planning and development. British Standards Institution, London.

2 METHODOLOGY

Desk Study

- 2.1 A records search was undertaken using freely available desktop resources such as the Multi-Agency Geographic Information for the Countryside⁴ (MAGIC) website. MAGIC was used to search for records of designated sites, habitats and granted European Protected Species Licenses (EPSLs) within a 2km radius. Google Earth⁵ was also used to study the nearby landscape

Review of Previous Survey Effort

- 2.2 In addition to the desk study and field survey undertaken as part of this assessment, a review was undertaken of the previous ecology assessment prepared by LC Ecological Services Ltd in support of separate development proposals within the wider landholding at Littlecott Mill. The document included a dedicated assessment of riparian mammals, comprising desk study information, biological records and targeted field surveys for otter and water vole along the adjacent River Avon. The findings of this assessment have been reviewed and are referenced herein, insofar as they relate to the current proposals and the section of river corridor adjoining the application site.

Field Survey

- 2.3 Ecological consultant Jason Skinner (NE Class 2 Bat Survey licence 2025-86057-CL18-BAT, NE Barn Owl licence number 2026-88685-CL29-OWL) carried out a field visit on Wednesday 13th May 2026.

Relevant surveyor experience

- 2.4 Jason Skinner has nine years professional ecological experience, primarily involved with bats and reptiles through consultancy and assisting on research projects. Experienced with small-scale and large-scale development projects and involvement in the management and supervision on multiple bat mitigation licences. Co-author of peer-reviewed research papers on reptiles and amphibians. Member, BBCARG and Wiltshire Bat Group.
- 2.5 The field visit involved a walkover using visual encounter survey techniques. The dominant vegetation structure was assessed, allowing habitats on site to be valued for their ecological importance to protected wildlife. Habitats were classified using the UK Habitat Classification Version 2.0 (UKHab V2)⁶, which provides a standardised framework for describing habitat types in the UK.
- 2.6 Binoculars were also used to scan for features likely to support protected species. All protected species were considered during the assessment and all wildlife species were recorded. The work was

⁴ Multi-Agency Geographical Information for the Countryside (MAGIC). Crown Copyright and database rights [2026]. Ordnance Survey 100022861. Available at: <http://www.magic.gov.uk/>

⁵ https://www.google.co.uk/intl/en_uk/earth/

⁶ UKHab Ltd (2023). UK Habitat Classification Version 2.0. Available at: <https://ukhab.org/>

completed largely following methodologies set out by the Chartered Institute for Ecology and Environmental Management (CIEEM) and British Standard Code of Practice.

Species

- 2.7 All protected species were considered during the survey. Only those considered likely to utilise the site are mentioned in this report.

Bats

- 2.8 Survey effort was completed in line with official assessment guidelines⁷ and largely followed that recommended by the Chartered Institute for Ecology and Environmental Management (CIEEM)⁸ and British Standard Code of Practice⁹. The assessment followed the standard methodology. The site was searched using visual encounter survey techniques. Potential bat movement corridors and movement barriers were assessed and noted. During the site visit, where possible, all suitable areas were examined for evidence of bats.
- 2.9 Trees deemed suitable for use by roosting bats were identified at species level, their specific features were photographed, and a GPS recording was mapped. Notable bat roosting features may include:
- Rot holes
 - Woodpecker holes
 - Horizontal and/or vertical cankers in the stems of branches
 - Knot holes
 - Scar crevices
 - Loose/flaking bark
 - Covering of dense ivy
 - Bat boxes
 - Any other features deemed suitable for roosting bats

Table 1: Guidelines summary for assessing potential bat roost suitability

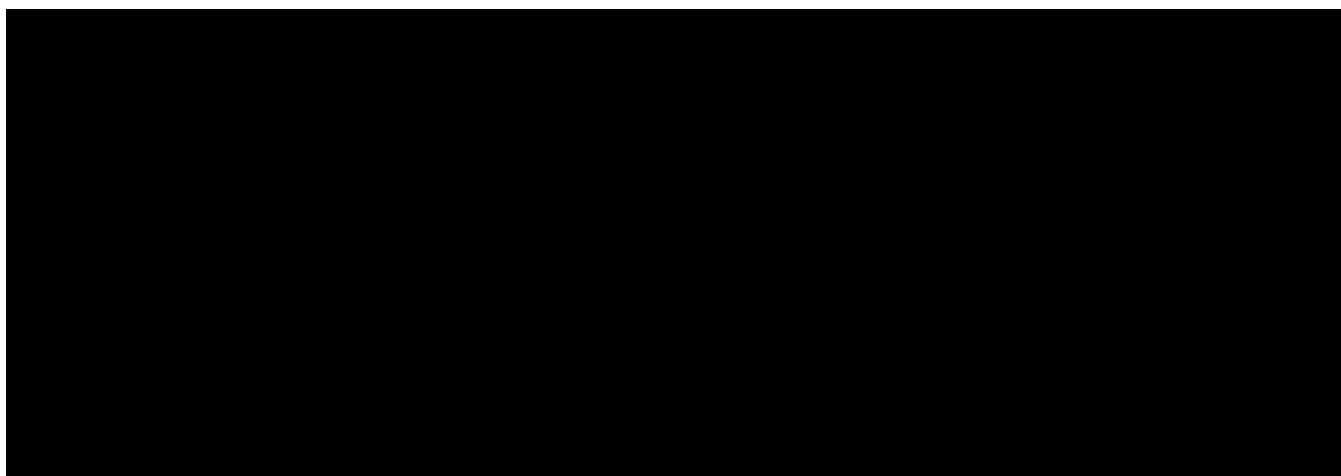
Suitability	Description of building, tree or structure
None	The building, tree, or structure has no features with the potential to support roosting bats and is entirely unsuitable. This includes structures that are fully sealed, modern, well-lit, and/or in exposed locations with no access points, no internal voids, and high levels of human disturbance.
Negligible	The building or tree has minimal features (e.g. small gaps or cracks), but these are assessed as highly unlikely to be used by bats due to their condition, location, or lack of access to suitable internal voids.

⁷ Collins J (2023) Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines, 4th edn. Bat Conservation Trust, London.

⁸ CIEEM (2017) Guidelines for Ecological Report Writing. CIEEM, Winchester.

⁹ British Standards Institution (2013) BS 42020:2013. Biodiversity – Code of practice for planning and development. British Standards Institution, London.

Low	A structure or tree with one or more potential roost sites that could be used by individual bats opportunistically. However, potential roost sites not suitable for larger numbers or regular use (i.e. maternity or hibernation).
Moderate	A structure or tree with one or more potential roost sites that could be used by bats, but unlikely to support a roost of high conservation status.
High	A structure or tree 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.
Confirmed roost	Evidence of bats or use by bats found.



European Hedgehog

- 2.11 The site was assessed for its suitability to support European hedgehog *Erinaceus europaeus*, a UK Biodiversity Action Plan species and Species of Principal Importance under Section 41 of the NERC Act 2006. Features such as hedgerows, scrub, dense vegetation, log piles, and gaps under fencing were checked for signs of hedgehog activity, including droppings, tracks, or nests. Habitat connectivity with surrounding green spaces was also considered to assess the site's value for hedgehog movement.

Reptiles and Amphibians

- 2.12 Habitats were assessed for their potential to support reptiles and amphibians, including great crested newt *Triturus cristatus* (GCN). Waterbodies typical of those utilised for breeding and foraging activity, and terrestrial refugia suited to sheltering and basking such as waste heaps and plastic/metal/timber sheeting were noted if present (see limitations). In addition, any dense vegetation including tall ruderal and scrub that is connected to hedgerows and linear tree features was inspected during the assessment.

Riparian mammals

- 2.13 Watercourses adjacent to the site, together with their associated bankside habitats, were assessed for their suitability to support riparian mammals, specifically otter *Lutra lutra*, water vole *Arvicola amphibius*, and Eurasian beaver *Castor fiber*.
- 2.14 The assessment comprised a visual inspection of accessible sections of the river corridor and its margins, focusing on habitat features that may provide opportunities for resting, sheltering, commuting, or foraging. This included consideration of bank structure, vegetation cover, flow characteristics, and levels of disturbance.
- 2.15 A search was undertaken for field signs. For otter, this included evidence such as spraints, footprints, feeding remains, slides, couches, and holts. For water vole, searches targeted characteristic signs including latrines, burrow entrances, feeding stations, grazing lawns, and footprints. For Eurasian beaver, signs such as gnawed or felled trees, feeding remains, scent mounds, tracks, slides, and any evidence of lodges or burrows were also recorded where present.

Nesting Birds

- 2.16 The survey included a thorough inspection of all suitable habitats across the site for evidence of nesting birds, including both common and notable or protected species. Vegetation such as trees, shrubs, hedgerows, and areas of dense ground cover were examined for nests, nesting material, and any signs of recent or historical nesting activity.
- 2.17 All accessible features within the site that offer potential nesting opportunities were assessed to determine whether the proposed development could adversely affect nesting birds. All wild birds, their active nests, and eggs are protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended). An active nest is defined as one under construction, containing eggs or chicks, or one where fledged chicks are still dependent on the nest site. Additional legal protections apply to bird species listed under Schedule 1 of the Act, such as barn owl *Tyto alba*, which are protected from disturbance during the nesting period.
- 2.18 The survey also considered the presence or likely presence of notable and protected bird species. Indicators such as droppings, feathers, vocalisations, or other signs of use were recorded, and areas commonly used as perches or nest sites, such as tree forks, hedgerow bases, and scrub thickets, were closely inspected where accessible.

Limitations

- 2.19 The absence of evidence for a particular species does not confirm its absence from the site. Many wildlife species are cryptic in nature, transient, or may use habitats sporadically, and could therefore go undetected during a single survey visit.

- 2.20 Signs of some protected species, such as droppings, can degrade rapidly due to environmental exposure. As such, a lack of visible field signs should not be taken as definitive evidence of absence.
- 2.21 Many UK bat species roost in natural crevices such as tree holes, split limbs, or behind loose bark. These features are often difficult to inspect thoroughly during tree assessments, particularly when using ground-based survey methods.
- 2.22 A bespoke biological records search was not commissioned as part of this assessment. However, biological records and desk study information relating to otter and water vole were available from the previous ecological assessment prepared by LC Ecological Services Ltd and have been reviewed where relevant to the current proposals.

3 RESULTS

Desk Study

Designated sites

- 3.1 According to the MAGIC website, the River Avon System SSSI and River Avon SAC run through the grounds of the property, approximately 3 m from the nearest bank to the zone of impact for the proposed works. No further statutory or non-statutory designated sites exist within a 2km radius (see limitations).

Granted European Protected Species Licences (EPSL) within a 2km radius

- 3.2 According to the Magic website, one EPS licence has been granted in 2019 for brown long-eared *Plecotus auritus*, common pipistrelle *Pipistrellus pipistrellus* and serotine *Eptesicus serotinus* bats at a site located 1.8 km to the south-west. Based on the MAGIC database results, no EPSLs have been granted for other species. Furthermore, no Class Licence returns for GCN have been returned within a 2 km radius, and no GCN Pond Surveys have been conducted from 2017-2019 within the same radius.

Surrounding Habitats

- 3.3 The site is located within a village setting on the bank of the River Avon and is surrounded by residential gardens comprising amenity lawn, ornamental planting and scattered mature trees. Immediately north of the site, a narrow lane runs below a vegetated embankment supporting a linear group of mature trees which will provide local habitat connectivity in addition to the river corridor.
- 3.4 The wider landscape is predominantly agricultural in character, comprising a mosaic of pastoral land and arable fields. Field boundaries are generally open, with relatively few intact hedgerows present. However, scattered woodland copses and areas of Deciduous Woodland (Priority Habitat) occur throughout the surrounding landscape, particularly to the north and south of the site. The closest area

of Deciduous Woodland (Priority Habitat) is located approximately 35 m south-east of the property and area of Woodpasture and Parkland (Priority Habitat) is located approximately 750 m north of the site. No Ancient Woodland Inventory sites were identified within the surrounding 2 km study area.

- 3.5 Several notable grassland habitats were identified nearby, including an area of Floodplain Grazing Marsh (Priority Habitat) approximately 75 m west of the site associated with the River Avon floodplain. A parcel of Lowland Meadow (Priority Habitat) is located approximately 390 m south-west, while several parcels of Lowland Calcareous Grassland (Priority Habitat) occur within the wider landscape, the closest located approximately 480 m north of the site. No further notable or Priority Habitats were identified within the wider 2 km study area.

Local waterbodies

- 3.6 Through the use of aerial imagery and the MAGIC website, no standing waterbodies were identified within a 250 m radius of the site boundary.
- 3.7 The River Avon passes through the site, with the closest bank located 3 m south-west of the zone of impact. This bank forms part of a small inlet connected to the main river channel.

Field Survey

- 3.8 Weather conditions during the daytime assessment are shown in the below table. Temperatures were recorded onsite using an Elitech RC-51 Temperature Logger.

Table 2: Weather conditions during Preliminary Ecological Appraisal

Date	Start	Finish	Temp °C	Wind	Cloud %	Rain	Notes
13/05/2026	10:30	11:30	17	12 km/h	23	Dry	N/A

Onsite Habitats

- 3.9 The site comprises a residential property and surrounding vegetated garden dominated by amenity lawn, ornamental planting beds and scattered mature trees. The River Avon passes through the property grounds and forms a notable feature within the local landscape, with the closest point being located 12 m from the zone of impact. The application site is located to the north of the residential dwelling and comprises a raised ornamental planting bed supporting ornamental vegetation, introduced shrubs and three semi-mature trees. A narrow strip of short-mown amenity grassland is present between the application site and the riverbank.
- 3.10 Two mature trees grow immediately west of the application site and are to be retained as part of the proposals. These comprise a mature sycamore *Acer pseudoplatanus* with a diameter at breast height (DBH) of approximately 47 cm and a mature ash *Fraxinus excelsior* with a DBH of approximately 42 cm. No buildings or other structures are present within the application site.

- 3.11 No ponds exist within the survey area and no ponds or priority habitats are to be destroyed or impacted by the proposed works. The individual habitat types recorded within the application site are described under the sub-headings below, using the UK Habitat Classification (UKHab) framework, with the location and extent of each illustrated in the Habitat Map in Figure 2.

Ornamental plant bed

- 3.12 The application site comprises a raised ornamental planting bed associated with the garden boundary. The habitat is well-managed and supports a range of low-growing ornamental herbaceous species and introduced shrubs typical of domestic landscaping. Species recorded within the planting bed include purple rock cress *Aubrieta deltoidea*, evergreen candytuft *Iberis sempervirens*, common peony *Paeonia officinalis*, common violet *Viola odorata*, common primrose *Primula vulgaris*, hart's-tongue fern *Asplenium scolopendrium* and green hellebore *Helleborus viridis*. A small ornamental fir tree *Abies* spp. is also present within the planting area.

Individual trees

- 3.13 Three individual trees are present within the application boundary. These comprise a catalpa *Catalpa bignonioides* with a diameter at breast height (DBH) of approximately 25 cm, a common hawthorn *Crataegus monogyna* with a DBH of approximately 12 cm and a multi-stemmed yew *Taxus baccata* with a combined DBH measurement of approximately 17 cm. It is understood that these trees will be removed as part of the proposals.

Notable Flora

- 3.14 No plant species listed under Schedule 8 or 9 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act (1981) were identified on site (see limitations). Site habitats are shown in Fig 2: Site Map.

Species

Bats

- 3.15 No buildings or other structures are present within the application site. A ground level assessment was undertaken of the three trees located within the application boundary, along with the two mature trees immediately west of the site, to assess their suitability for roosting bats. None of the trees surveyed displayed Potential Roost Features (PRFs) typically associated with roosting bats, such as rot holes, lifted or flaking bark, cavities, splits or dense ivy cover.
- 3.16 The mature sycamore located adjacent to the west of the application site, outside of the proposed works area, supports a single bat box fixed to the main stem. This tree is located at grid reference SU 14259 51829. No evidence of bat roosting, including staining, droppings or feeding remains, was observed beneath the bat box during the survey. Inspection of the bat box using a torch and ladder confirmed that no bats were present at the time of survey.

- 3.17 Vegetation within the wider residential grounds, including mature trees and ornamental planting, together with the adjacent River Avon corridor, provide highly suitable habitat for commuting and foraging bats. The river corridor and associated linear vegetation features are likely to contribute to local landscape connectivity for bat species within the wider area.

Badger

- 3.18 The application site is predominantly composed of low growing herbaceous plants, with limited shelter or foraging value for badgers. No signs of badger activity, such as setts, latrines, snuffle holes, or tracks, were observed within the site or its immediate surroundings during the field survey. [REDACTED]
- [REDACTED]
- [REDACTED]

European Hedgehog

- 3.19 The plant bed within the application site is of low suitability for European hedgehog, offering limited foraging and sheltering opportunities, although habitats within the wider property grounds will provide more suitable features. No field signs indicating hedgehog presence were identified during the assessment.

Nesting Birds

- 3.20 The three trees present within the application site will offer limited nesting opportunities for small species, although no bird nests were identified during the ground level tree assessment.

Reptiles and Amphibians

- 3.21 The application site offers few opportunities for reptile and amphibian species as the plant bed comprises low growing herbaceous plants with minimal structural complexity. No log piles, compost heaps, rubble, or other refugia were observed. Nearby vegetation offers some potential for shelter and foraging, although such areas are located outside the application site. No ponds are present within the site and no reptiles or amphibians were observed during the field survey.

Riparian mammals

- 3.22 The River Avon runs immediately west of the application site and comprises a moderately flowing watercourse bordered by predominantly vegetated earth banks. Marginal and bankside vegetation was present along much of the accessible river corridor. Sections of the bank exhibited profiles potentially suitable for burrowing water vole, whilst the river corridor as a whole provides suitable commuting, foraging, and dispersal habitat for otter. No evidence of otter, Eurasian beaver, or water vole was recorded during the field survey, including the absence of obvious field signs such as spraints, feeding remains, footprints, burrows, or latrines within the accessible areas inspected adjacent to the application site.

4 DISCUSSION & RECOMMENDATIONS

Proposals

- 4.1 The proposals are for the construction of a plant room outbuilding which will require the removal of existing vegetation within the proposed development footprint. The purpose of the survey was to undertake an appraisal of the site for its potential ecological value to notable and protected wildlife, and to look for evidence of such species. The survey results provide information to determine the likely ecological impact the proposed development will have on wildlife species, and to inform the level of further survey effort and mitigation required to comply with relevant nature conservation policies and legislation.

Habitats

- 4.2 The site is located within a village setting on the bank of the River Avon and consists primarily of managed residential garden habitat of generally low ecological value. Habitats within the application boundary include a raised ornamental planting bed containing introduced garden species and three semi-mature ornamental trees. These habitats are typical of residential gardens and are common within the surrounding area.
- 4.3 No Priority Habitats are present within the application site and no works are proposed to the River Avon, its banks, or associated bankside vegetation.
- 4.4 The wider landscape supports a more diverse range of habitats, including areas of Deciduous Woodland, Floodplain Grazing Marsh, Lowland Meadow and Lowland Calcareous Grassland Priority Habitats. The River Avon also provides an important ecological corridor through the local area. However, the proposed works are limited to a small area of existing ornamental planting within the residential curtilage and will not result in the loss, fragmentation or modification of these higher value habitats.
- 4.5 The proposals to construct a plant room will require the removal of vegetation within the application boundary, including the ornamental planting bed and three semi-mature trees. Two mature trees immediately west of the application site, comprising a sycamore and ash, are to be retained. Given the ornamental and low-value nature of the habitats affected, and the absence of any onsite Priority Habitat, the proposals are not expected to result in significant adverse effects to habitats of ecological importance.
- 4.6 The River Avon System SSSI and River Avon SAC are located within the grounds of the property, approximately 3 m west of the application site. The proposed development is limited to the construction of a detached plant room within an existing residential garden and will not result in direct impacts to the river corridor, associated habitats, or designated features. However, the proposals lie

in close proximity to the River Avon SAC and SSSI and therefore construction activities have the potential to result in indirect impacts in the absence of appropriate safeguards.

4.7 To avoid this, a Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) should be prepared and implemented during the construction phase. This should include standard precautionary measures such as appropriate storage of fuels and chemicals, dust suppression where necessary, and minimising unnecessary overnight lighting close to the river corridor. This should include, as a minimum:

- no storage of fuels, oils, chemicals, cement or loose materials within 10 m of the riverbank;
- no refuelling within 10 m of the riverbank;
- no discharge of water, cement washout or other potentially contaminated run-off to the River Avon;
- use of appropriate sediment control measures such as silt fencing where ground disturbance could result in run-off towards the river;
- spill kits to be retained on site during construction;
- dust suppression measures where required; all excavations to be covered overnight or provided with a means of escape for mammals;
- no unnecessary night-time lighting of the river corridor during the construction phase.

4.8 Provided these measures are implemented, the proposed development is not expected to result in adverse effects on the River Avon System SSSI or River Avon SAC.

Species

Bats

4.9 A single EPSL has been granted for three bat species within a 2 km radius of the site. The River Avon and associated riparian vegetation immediately adjacent to the site provide high-quality commuting and foraging habitat for bats, and the wider landscape is considered to offer a high level of suitability to support bat activity. A bat box is also present on a mature sycamore tree adjacent to the proposed development.

4.10 A ground-level assessment of the onsite trees recorded no suitable PRFs. The bat box and host tree are to be retained as part of the proposals and no works are proposed which would directly affect either feature. Given the limited scale of the proposed development, the retention of the bat box and surrounding vegetation, and the absence of suitable PRFs within trees affected by the proposals, no further bat survey effort is considered necessary. The bat box and supporting tree must be clearly identified to contractors prior to the commencement of works and protected from accidental damage, disturbance, or modification throughout the construction period. No works will be undertaken to the bat box, and no pruning or felling of the host tree should occur without prior ecological advice.

- 4.11 In the unlikely event that a bat is encountered during works, all works within the immediate area should cease immediately and a suitably qualified ecologist contacted for further advice. Bats and their roosts are protected under UK legislation and works should not recommence until appropriate advice has been obtained.
- 4.12 Whilst significant impacts on bats are not anticipated, the close proximity of the proposed plant room to the River Avon has the potential to affect commuting and foraging bats through inappropriate lighting. Consequently, any external lighting associated with the development should be designed in accordance with current best-practice guidance and should ensure that dark corridors are maintained along the River Avon and associated riparian vegetation. Light spill onto the river corridor, retained vegetation, and the bat box should be avoided through the use of appropriate luminaire selection, directional shielding, and sensitive lighting design. Sensitive lighting measures will be detailed within the CEMP to avoid unnecessary artificial lighting during the construction period and to minimise light spill onto the adjacent river corridor.

Nocturnal lighting measures

- 4.13 In addition to the above, any permanent external lighting installed as part of the development must be used in accordance with Guidance Note 08/23: Bats and Artificial Lighting¹⁰. When selecting appropriate external lighting, the following specifications should be taken into consideration:
- Any external lighting incorporated into the proposed development must be LED luminaires due to their sharp cut-off, lower intensity, good colour rendition and dimming capability.
 - Luminaires must feature peak wavelengths higher than 550nm to avoid the component of light most disturbing to bats¹¹.
 - All luminaires must lack UV elements when manufactured. Metal halide, fluorescent sources must not be used¹²

Badger

- 4.14 The site is considered unsuitable for regular badger activity, with no setts, latrines, foraging signs or evidence of movement recorded during the field survey. As such, no direct or indirect impacts to badger are anticipated as a result of the proposed development, and no further surveys are considered necessary.

European Hedgehog

- 4.15 Although no field evidence (e.g. droppings, tracks or nests) of European hedgehog was observed during the survey, the species may occasionally traverse the site, despite the site offering no

¹⁰ <https://theilp.org.uk/publication/guidance-note-8-bats-and-artificial-lighting/>

¹¹ Stone, E.L. (2013) *Bats and lighting: Overview of current evidence and mitigation*

¹² Bat Conservation Trust & Institute of Lighting Professionals (ILP) 2023. *Guidance Note 08/23: Bats and artificial lighting in the UK. Bats and the Built Environment Series.*

permanent shelter or foraging value. Given the absence of significant habitat features, the development is not expected to impact this species.

Nesting Birds

- 4.16 No nests or signs of nesting were found during the survey. However, the trees offer limited suitable nesting habitat for a range of common bird species.
- 4.17 To avoid impacts to nesting birds, it is recommended that tree felling be undertaken outside of the bird nesting season which runs from February to August. If this is not possible, a pre-works nesting bird check must be undertaken by a suitably qualified ecologist no more than 24 hours prior to works. Irrespective of the time of year, if nesting birds are discovered, an area around the nest site should be protected from disturbance with a suitable fence (not HERAs fencing) that should include an appropriate buffer zone. Work should then be avoided in this area until the nest is no longer in use. Buffer zones in this respect will normally be 5m in diameter, and will be delineated by canes, cordon tape and signage.

Reptiles and Amphibians

- 4.18 The application site comprises a small, actively managed ornamental planting bed which provides negligible suitability for reptiles and limited suitability for amphibians. No suitable refugia such as log piles, rubble piles, compost heaps, or dense tussocky vegetation were identified within the zone of impact. Although the adjacent River Avon and associated riparian habitats may provide opportunities for amphibians and occasional reptiles within the wider landscape, the application site itself offers limited sheltering, foraging, or basking opportunities.
- 4.19 No ponds were identified within or immediately adjacent to the site and the River Avon is unlikely to provide suitable breeding habitat for great crested newt. Given the small scale of the proposals, the highly managed nature of the habitat to be affected, and the limited suitability of the application site for reptiles and amphibians, significant impacts to these species are not anticipated and no further survey effort is considered necessary. Nevertheless, reasonable avoidance measures should be implemented during site clearance and construction activities and incorporated within the Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP).

Riparian mammals

- 4.20 The River Avon immediately adjoins the site and provides suitable habitat for otter and water vole. Sections of the riverbank support vegetated earth banks with profiles potentially suitable for burrowing water vole, whilst the river corridor also provides suitable commuting and foraging habitat for a range of other wildlife. The proposed plant room is located in close proximity to the watercourse; however, no direct impacts to the river channel, riverbank, or bankside vegetation are proposed.
- 4.21 Whilst no evidence of otter, water vole, or other riparian mammals was recorded during the current survey, it is recognised that the assessment comprised a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal and did not constitute a dedicated riparian mammal survey. Consequently, a review was undertaken of the

Environmental Statement - Ecology Assessment prepared by LC Ecological Services Ltd (June 2026) in relation to separate proposals within the wider Littlecott Mill landholding. That assessment included biological records searches together with dedicated surveys for otter and water vole along the adjacent River Avon. A total of 15 otter records and 118 water vole records were identified within 2 km of the site; however, no field evidence of either species was recorded during the targeted surveys undertaken in the vicinity of the proposed development.

- 4.22 The findings of the previous dedicated surveys are considered directly relevant to the current proposals given the close proximity of the site and the shared river corridor. In the absence of any evidence of otter holts, couches, spraints, water vole burrows, feeding remains, latrines, or other signs of occupation, and taking account of the limited scale of the proposed development and absence of direct impacts to the River Avon or its banks, the proposals are considered unlikely to result in adverse effects upon either species.
- 4.23 Notwithstanding the above, standard precautionary measures should be incorporated into the Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP), or equivalent pollution prevention method statement. These will include measures to prevent pollution entering the watercourse, maintaining all works, machinery, and material storage within the defined construction footprint, avoiding unnecessary disturbance to the river corridor, covering excavations overnight or providing a suitable mammal escape ramp, and ensuring that construction and operational lighting is not directed towards the river.

Biodiversity Enhancement

- 4.24 As a Householder application, the scheme is exempt from mandatory Biodiversity Net Gain. However, the NPPF (2024) outlines obligations of Local Planning Authorities to promote Biodiversity Net Gain where possible. Suitable options with regards to biodiversity enhancement on site are;

Bats

- 4.25 An option to increase biodiversity relating to bats on site would be to affix one or more bat boxes to mature trees within the site boundary, ideally using either Schwegler 1FF boxes (or similar) or Schwegler 2F boxes (or similar). Alternatively, they may also be pole-mounted in an appropriate position or fixed to the walls of buildings. Bat boxes must be positioned no lower than 4m above ground level and they must not face in a northerly direction.

Nesting Birds

- 4.26 Ways to enhance the site value with regards to bird nesting would be to fit nest boxes to existing trees or buildings. Options include close-hole boxes and open-fronted boxes which would then provide opportunity for a variety of bird species. We recommended that one external bird nest box (Schwegler 1B or similar) is installed onsite. For maximum success, our recommendations are as follows:

- Bird boxes must be positioned away from busy areas where disturbance would be more likely.
- Following British Ornithology Trust guidelines, bird boxes must be positioned no lower than 2m from ground level and preferably above 3 m to prevent possible predation.
- The proposed placement of the bird nest boxes must allow for a clear flight path, without obstruction to the nest box entrance.
- Avoid installing nest boxes in a south-westerly facing direction in order to offer protection from prevailing winds and rain.
- The nest box should ideally be slightly tilted in a downwards position to offer further weather protection.

APPENDIX A: LEGISLATION SUMMARY

Habitats Directive

Species listed in the Habitats Directive 1992 (transposed into UK law through the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010 and subsequently 2017 as amended) for which it is illegal to deliberately capture, kill or disturb any individual, or deliberately damage or destroy a breeding site or resting site. In 2007 and 2009, the Habitats Regulations were amended to define illegal disturbance as that which would affect the ability of a significant group of animals of a European Protected Species to survive, breed or to rear or nurture their young, or to hibernate or migrate, or to affect the local distribution or abundance of the species.

Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006

The act to makes provision about bodies concerned with the natural environment and rural communities; to make provision in connection with wildlife, Sites of Special Scientific Interest, National Parks and the Broads; to amend the law relating to rights of way; to make provision as to the Inland Waterways Amenity Advisory Council; to provide for flexible administrative arrangements in connection with functions relating to the environment and rural affairs and certain other functions; and for connected purposes.

Countryside and Rights of Way (CRoW) Act 2000

The CRoW applies to England and Wales only, enforcing a statutory policy for biodiversity conservation. The UK Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) provides the framework for fulfilling the UK's responsibilities towards the Convention on Biological Diversity. The CRoW Act is compliant with the provisions of the European Convention on Human Rights, requiring consultation where the rights of the individual may be affected by these measures.

The Conservation of Habitats & Species Regulations 2017 (the Habitat Regulations) (as amended)

The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended) consolidate the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010 with subsequent amendments. The Regulations transpose Council Directive 92/43/EEC, on the conservation of natural habitats and of wild fauna and flora (EC Habitats Directive), into national law. They also transpose elements of the EU Wild Birds Directive in England and Wales. The Regulations came into force on 30th November 2017 and extend to England and Wales (including the adjacent territorial sea) and to a limited extent in Scotland (reserved matters) and Northern Ireland (excepted matters). In Scotland, the Habitats Directive is transposed through a combination of the Habitats Regulations 2010 (in relation to reserved matters) and the and the Conservation (Natural Habitats &c.) Regulations 1994. The Conservation (Natural Habitats, &c) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 1995 (as amended) transpose the Habitats Directive in relation to Northern Ireland.

Bats

In England and Wales, bats and their roosts are protected under the Conservation of Species and Habitats Regulations 2017 (as amended) and the Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981 (as amended). Taken together, this legislation makes it an offence to:

- Deliberately capture, injure or kill a bat.
- Deliberately disturb bats where the disturbance is likely to impair their ability to survive, breed or reproduce, rear or nurture their young, hibernate or migrate, or significantly affect the local distribution or abundance of the species.
- Damage or destroy the breeding or resting place of a bat.
- Possess a bat (alive or dead) or any part of a bat.
- Intentionally or recklessly obstruct access to a bat roost.
- Sell, offer for sale, or exchange bats (alive or dead) or parts of bats.

A roost is defined as being 'any structure or place that is used for shelter or protection' and since bats regularly move roost site throughout the year, a roost retains such designation whether or not bats are present at the time.

Reptiles

All native British species of reptile (of which there are six) are listed in Schedule Five of the Wildlife and Countryside Act (1981) (as amended) and as such are protected from deliberate killing, injury or trade. Therefore, where development is permitted and there will be a significant change in land use, a reasonable effort must be undertaken to remove reptiles off site to avoid committing an offence. The same act makes the trading of native reptile species a criminal offence without an appropriate licence.

Great Crested Newts

Great crested newts and their habitats receive protection under The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended). This species is also afforded full protection under the

Schedule 5 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended). Under such legislation it is an offence to:

- Intentionally or recklessly kill, injure or capture a great crested newt;
- Possess or control any live or dead specimen or anything derived from a great crested newt;
- Intentionally or recklessly* damage, destroy or obstruct access to any structure or place used for shelter or protection by a great crested newt; and
- Intentionally or recklessly* disturb a great crested newt while it is occupying a structure or place which it uses for that purpose.
- Damage or destroy a breeding site or resting place.
- Sell, barter, exchange or transport or offer for sale great crested newts or parts of them.

*Reckless offences were added by the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000, which applies only to England and Wales.

Badger

Badger is protected in Britain under the *Protection of Badgers Act 1992* and *Schedule 6 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981* (as amended).

The legislation affords protection to Badgers and Badger setts and makes it a criminal offence to:

- wilfully kill, injure, take, possess or cruelly ill-treat a Badger, or to attempt to do so;
- interfere with a sett by damaging or destroying it;
- to obstruct access to, or any entrance of, a Badger sett; or
- to disturb a Badger when it is occupying a sett.

Dormouse

The dormouse has undergone substantial declines in recent years as a result of habitat loss, deterioration and fragmentation and is consequently protected as a 'European Protected Species' under the 2017 Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations, which implements the EC Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC in the United Kingdom. In relation to European Protected Species (EPS), the 2017 Regulations make it an offence to:

- Deliberately capture, injure or kill any wild animal of a EPS;
- Deliberately disturb wild animals of any such species, in particular any disturbance which is likely to:
 - (i) impair their ability to survive, to breed or reproduce, or to rear or nurture their young; or to hibernate or migrate or
 - (ii) affect significantly the local distribution or abundance of the species to which they belong;
- Damage or destroy a breeding site or resting place of such an animal; and/or

- To (a) be in possession of, or to control; (b) to transport any live or dead animal or any part of an animal; (c) to sell or exchange or (d) offer for sale or exchange any live or dead animal or part of an animal of an EPS.

In addition, Dormice are protected under the 1981 Wildlife and Countryside Act (as amended).

Dormice are listed on Schedule 5 of the Act and are subject to the provisions of Sections 9.4b and 9.4c, which make it an offence to:

- Intentionally or recklessly disturb a Dormouse while it is occupying a structure or place which it uses for shelter or protection; and/or
- Intentionally or recklessly obstruct access to any structure or place used for shelter or protection by a Dormouse.

Birds

All common wild birds are protected under The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (and as amended).

Under this legislation it is an offence to:

- Kill, injure or take any wild bird
- Take, damage or destroy the nest of any wild bird while it is in use or being built
- Take or destroy the egg of any wild bird

Certain rare breeding birds are listed on Schedule 1 of The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (and as amended). Under this legislation they are afforded the same protection as common wild birds and are also protected against disturbance whilst building a nest or on or near a nest containing eggs/unfledged young.

APPENDIX B: MAPS & SITE PLANS

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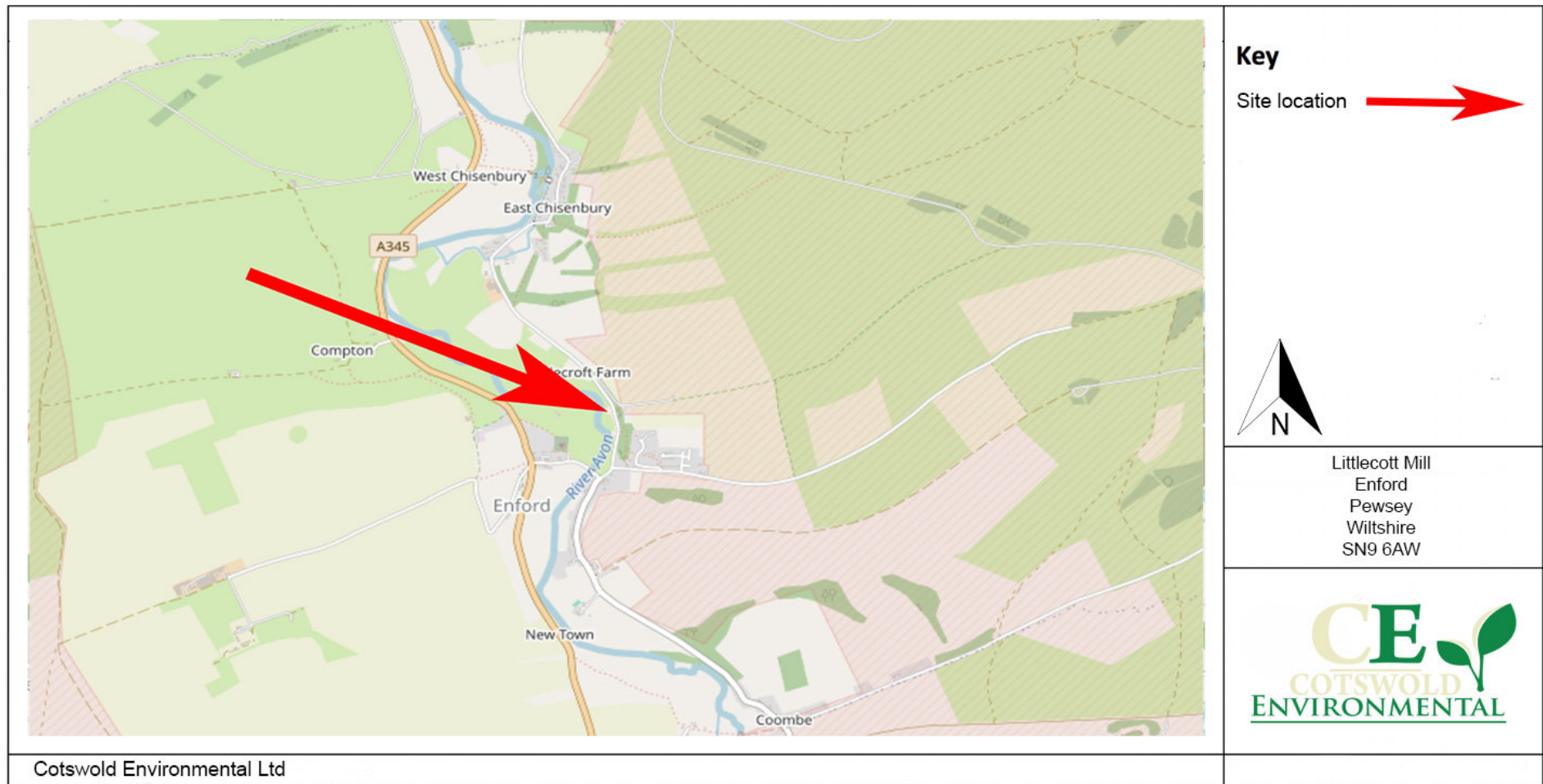
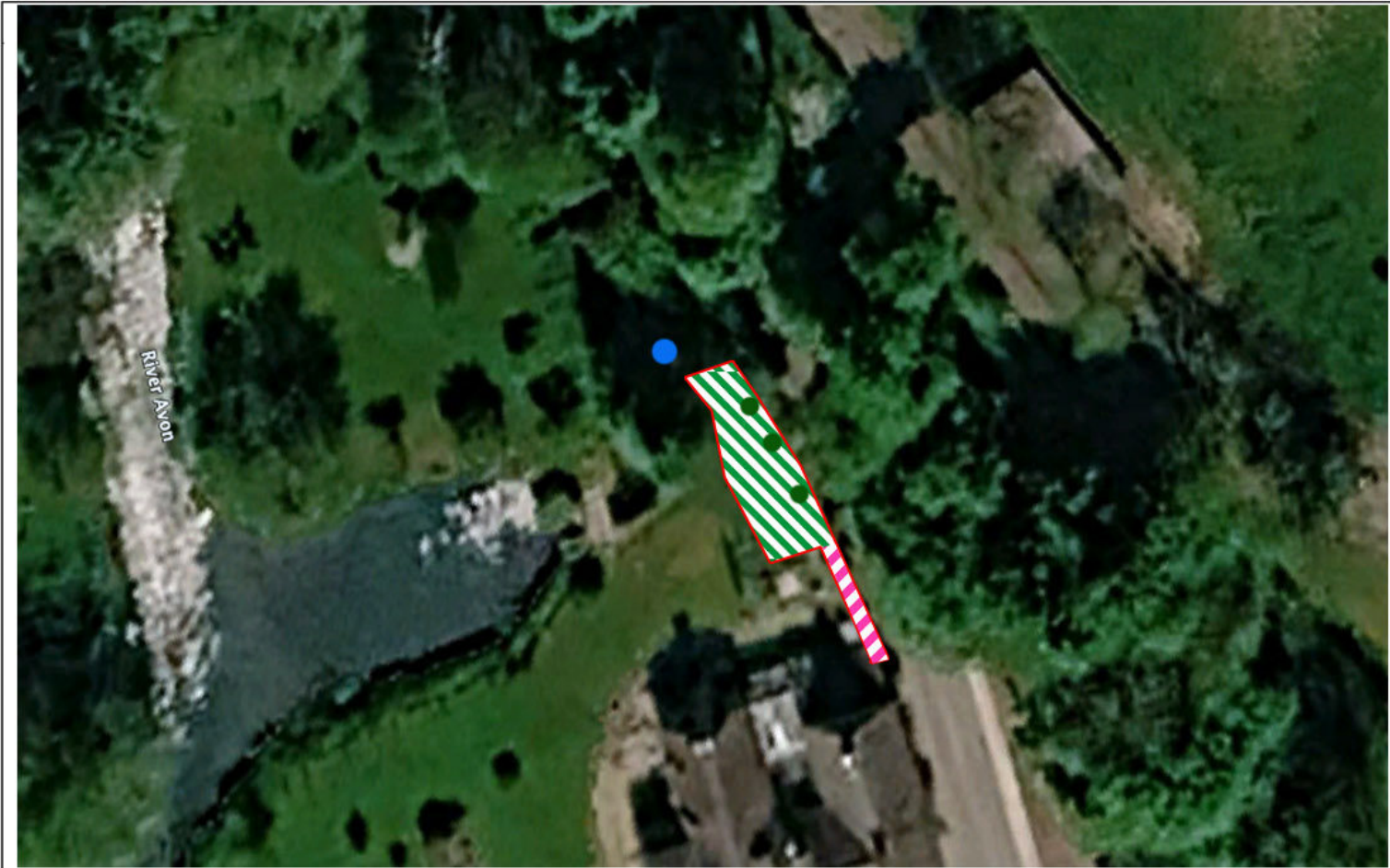


Figure 1: Location Map



Key

- Survey boundary
- Developed Land/Sealed Surface
- Ornamental plant bed
- Individual tree
- Bat box installed on tree

Littlecott Mill
Enford
Pewsey
Wiltshire
SN9 6AW



Cotswold Environmental Ltd

Figure 2: Habitat Map

APPENDIX C: SITE IMAGES



Photo 1: A general view of the site from the south.



Photo 2: A general view of the site from the west.



Photo 3: A view of the River Avon which runs adjacent to the application site.



Photo 4: The catalpa tree which is to be removed.



Photo 5: The common hawthorn which is to be removed.



Photo 6: The yew tree which is to be removed.



Photo 7: The adjacent sycamore and ash trees that grow outside the application site.



Photo 8: The bat box which is fixed to the sycamore tree.