

Ecological Impact Assessment

Meadow House, Dinton Road, Fovant, SP3 5JW

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Supporting Documents

Document Title	Document Category	Document Type	Document Number & Revision	Date Received by Eclipse Ecology
Feasibility Study	Report & Drawings	PDF	2503	30 June 2026
Existing Site Plan	Plan	PDF	SK20	25 June 2026
Proposed Site Plan	Plan	PDF	SK21 Rev A	25 June 2026

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Abbreviations

BCT	Bat Conservation Trust
BNG	Biodiversity Net Gain
CHSR	The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended)
CIEEM	Chartered Institute of Ecology & Environmental Management
CRoW Act	Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000
CWS	County Wildlife Site
EclA	Ecological Impact Assessment
ECow	Ecological Clerk of Works
EPS	European Protected Species – protected by the CHSR
GCN	Great crested newt <i>Triturus cristatus</i>
ILP	Institute of Lighting Professionals
JNCC	Joint Nature Conservation Committee
LBAP	Local Biodiversity Action Plan
LERC	Local Environmental Records Centre
LNR	Local Nature Reserve
LPA	Local Planning Authority
LWS	Local Wildlife Site
MAGIC	Multi-Agency Geographical Information for the Countryside
MCIEEM	Member of Chartered Institute of Ecology & Environmental Management
National Sites Network	A network of SACs and SPAs in the UK designated for nature conservation
NERC Act	Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006
NNR	National Nature Reserve
NPPF	National Planning Policy Framework 2024
OS	Ordnance Survey
PEA	Preliminary Ecological Appraisal
PIR	Passive Infrared
PRA	Preliminary Roost Assessment
PRF	Potential Roost Feature
PS	Protected Species
PSML	Protected Species Mitigation Licence
SAC	Special Area of Conservation
SAP	Species Action Plan
SINC	Site of Importance for Nature Conservation
SNCI	Site of Nature Conservation Interest
SNCO	Statutory Nature Conservation Organisation
SPA	Special Protection Area
SPI	Species of Principal Importance
SQE	Suitably Qualified Ecologist
SSSI	Site of Special Scientific Interest
TAN	Technical Advice Note
WCA	Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981 (as amended)

1. Summary

Site	Meadow House, Dinton Road, Fovant SP3 5JW
OS Grid Reference	ST 99960 29283
Development Proposal	A rear of the house, including a large rear window, PV arrays on the front roof slope, and replacement slate tiles. A subterranean garage is also proposed beneath the rear garden lawn, requiring the temporary removal of c. 3.5 m of existing native hedgerow. This section will be reinstated following completion of the works, with a further 3.5 m of native hedging planted, providing 7 m of total hedge planting.
Survey Dates	Preliminary Bat Roost Assessment of House: 22 July 2026 Bat Emergence Survey of House: 29 July 2026 Bat Activity Survey of Hedgerow: 1–6 August and 1–6 September 2026 Dormouse Survey/Nest Check: 9 September 2026
Results	Preliminary Bat Roost Assessment of House: areas of the front and rear sections of the building are of low suitability for roosting bats. Other areas of the building are considered to be of negligible suitability. Bat Emergence Survey of House: no bats were detected exiting or entering the building. Negligible importance for roosting bats. Bat Activity Survey of Hedgerow: at least 13 species/species groups were detected. Activity was dominated by relatively widespread species, particularly soprano pipistrelle and noctule. Barbastelle, greater horseshoe and lesser horseshoe bats were recorded at low levels. Dormouse Survey/Nest Check: no evidence of dormice was recorded.
Further Surveys	No further surveys/assessments are required.
Avoidance, Precautionary Measures & Mitigation	Avoidance/mitigation measures have been included for Chilmark Quarries SAC, roosting/foraging/commuting bats, birds, badgers and hedgehogs.
Enhancements	Enhancements shall be incorporated for invertebrates, birds and bats.

2. Introduction

2.1 Background

Eclipse Ecology Ltd was commissioned to undertake an Ecological Impact Assessment in relation to proposed works at Meadow House, Dinton Road, Fovant SP3 5JW, hereafter referred to as “the site”. This report presents the findings of the desk study and field surveys, which have been evaluated in the context of the proposed development. Where necessary, mitigation and enhancements are provided.

2.2 Site Location & Description

The site is in a rural location at Ordnance Survey Grid Reference ST 99960 29283. It includes a house with a parking area to the front and a patio and garden to the rear that is partially bounded by a hedge. The surrounding landscape is characterised by a mosaic of residential dwellings and agricultural land, predominantly arable fields bounded by established hedges and areas of semi-natural deciduous woodland. The nearest woodland is located c. 60 m to the southwest of the site, while the closest waterbody is also c. 60 m to the southwest.

2.3 Development Proposal

The applicant proposes to extend the rear of the house, including a large rear window, install PV arrays on the front roof slope, and replace the existing clay roof tiles with slate. A subterranean garage is also proposed beneath the rear garden lawn, requiring the temporary removal of c. 3.5 m of existing native hedgerow. This section will be reinstated following completion of the works, with a further 3.5 m of native hedging planted, providing 7 m of total hedge planting.

2.4 Legislation & Policy

Wildlife legislation and policy relevant to this project are given in **Appendix 1**.

2.5 Objectives

The objectives of these surveys were to:

- identify any designated sites and Section 41 Priority Habitats¹ within the proposed development’s zone of influence;
- assess the suitability of the building on-site for roosting bats;
- assess any impacts on bats and other protected/notable species (where applicable) as a result of the proposed works;
- decide if further surveys/assessments are required for the planning application; and
- advise any avoidance, mitigation and enhancement measures, where required.

¹ Listed under the NERC Act.

3. Methodology

3.1 Surveyors

The surveys were led by Principal Ecologist Cassie Todd BSc (Hons) MCIEEM of Eclipse Ecology Ltd (a CIEEM Registered Practice). Cassie holds a Natural England bat survey licence (WML-CL18 Level 2; Licence No. 2015-15941-CLS-CLS). She has 16 years' ecological experience and is the named ecologist on 15 bat mitigation licences for common pipistrelle *Pipistrellus pipistrellus*, soprano pipistrelle *Pipistrellus pygmaeus*, brown long-eared bat *Plecotus auritus*, serotine *Eptesicus serotinus* and whiskered bat *Myotis mystacinus*.

In addition, Cassie also holds badger *Meles meles* mitigation licences and is licensed by Natural England to survey for barn owl *Tyto alba*, great crested newts *Triturus cristatus*, hazel dormice *Muscardinus avellanarius*, smooth snake *Coronella austriaca*, sand lizard *Lacerta agilis* and white-clawed crayfish *Austropotamobius pallipes*².

3.2 Desk Study

Publicly available sources of biodiversity information were used to inform the assessment where required, as follows:

- Natural England's MAGIC³ website to check if the site occurs within a 'SSSI Impact Risk Zone' – this tool identifies development types with the potential to result in adverse effects on designated sites including SSSIs⁴, SPAs⁵, SACs⁶ and Ramsars⁷.
- NBN Atlas^{8,9} was used to obtain records of protected/notable species records in the local area.
- Aerial imagery and OS maps¹⁰ were reviewed to characterise habitats in the wider area.

3.3 Field Surveys

3.3.1 Walkover Survey

An ecological walkover survey was undertaken on 22 July 2026, focusing on areas of the site that will be affected by the proposed works only. The survey included the house, areas immediately adjacent to the house and the end of the rear garden.

Weather conditions during the survey were 25°C, Beaufort wind force 1, 5% cloud cover and dry. Habitat types and ecological features were recorded with reference to the *Guidelines for Preliminary Ecological Appraisal* (CIEEM, 2017) and the UK Habitat Classification Version 2.0 (UK Hab Ltd, 2023).

3.3.2 Preliminary Bat Roost Assessment

² Licence no's 2015-15441-CLS-CLS, 2016-20629-CLS-CLS, 2015-18630-CLSCLS, 2021-51716-SCI-SCI, 2016-19729-CLS-CLS & 2016-25162-SCI-SCI.

³ <https://magic.defra.gov.uk>

⁴ SSSIs are representative samples of British habitats forming a national series aimed at maintaining the present diversity of wild plants and animals in Great Britain. SSSIs are protected by the WCA and CRoW Act.

⁵ SPAs are sites that support rare, vulnerable or large numbers of regularly occurring migratory bird species. SPAs are part of the National Sites Network. SPAs are protected by the CHSR, WCA and the CRoW Act.

⁶ SACs are high quality conservation sites which significantly contribute to conserving habitats and species threatened in Europe as a whole. SACs are part of the National Sites Network. SACs are protected by the CHSR, WCA and CRoW Act.

⁷ Ramsar sites are wetlands of international importance that support wildfowl and other important species. Ramsar sites are protected by the Ramsar Convention, CHSR (by policy), WCA and CRoW Act

⁸ NBN Atlas website at <http://www.nbnatlas.org>. The Data Provider, Original Recorder [where identified], and the NBN Trust bear no responsibility for any further analysis or interpretation of that material, data and/or information.

⁹ Data with CC0 or CC-BY Licences maybe used in this report as per NBN Atlas' policy <https://docs.nbnatlas.org/guidance-for-using-data/>

¹⁰ <https://wtp2.appspot.com/wheresthepath.htm>

The building was subject to a daytime bat roost assessment on 22 July 2026 in accordance with the BCT's *Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines* (Collins, 2023). Binoculars (Pentax Papilo II 6.5 x 21), a high-power torch and an endoscope (Ridgid CA-350X) were used where appropriate to inspect the building for bats and their evidence such as droppings, staining, scratch marks, feeding remains and audible squeaking. A level of bat roosting suitability was then assigned to the building in accordance with **Table 3.1**. The weather during the survey was 25°C, Beaufort 1, 5% cloud cover and dry.

Table 3.1 Categorisation of the bat roosting suitability of buildings (adapted from Collins, 2023)

Roost Suitability	Description of Roosting Habitats
Negligible	Negligible habitat features on-site likely to be used by roosting bats.
Low	One or more potential roost sites that could be used by individual bats opportunistically. 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 or by larger numbers of bats (i.e. unlikely to be suitable for maternity or hibernation).
Moderate	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	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.
Confirmed roost	Direct evidence of bat occupation found e.g. fresh bat droppings, live bats and dead specimens. Note that a confirmed roost can still be categorised as low, moderate or high roosting suitability depending on the amount/type of bat evidence found and features of the building.

3.3.3 Bat Emergence Survey

A single bat emergence survey was undertaken on 29 July 2026 in accordance with standard bat survey guidance^{11 12}. The survey focused on areas of the building with suitability for bats. It commenced 15 minutes prior to sunset and continued for 1 hour and 40 minutes after sunset. Survey timings and weather conditions are presented in **Table 3.2**.

Two survey stations assisted by two Canon XA40 infrared cameras were used to ensure appropriate coverage of the building. Refer to **Appendices 2 and 3** which show the position of each survey station and the field of view of each camera.

Additional equipment used included four Nightfox XB5 infrared lights and two Echo Meter Touch 2 Pros connected to iPads. Any bat activity observed, including species, flight direction and behaviour was recorded. Bat calls were analysed using Wildlife Acoustics Kaleidoscope software and camera footage was viewed in real-time using VLC Media Player.

Table 3.2 Times & weather conditions of the bat emergence survey

Date	Sunset Time	Survey Duration	Weather Conditions
29 July 2026	21:12	20:57–22:52	Start: 23°C, Beaufort 1, 0% cloud cover End: 22°C, Beaufort 1, 0% cloud cover Dry throughout the survey

¹¹ Collins, J., 2023. *Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines*. 4th ed. London: The BCT.

¹² BCT, 2022. *Interim Guidance Note: Use of night vision aids for bat emergence surveys and further comment on dawn surveys* – states that bat emergence surveys can be used in place of re-entry surveys where night vision cameras are used to cover all potential bat access points on a building.

3.3.4 Bat Activity Survey

A bat activity survey, comprising automated acoustic recording, was undertaken in August and September 2026. One Song Meter 4 full-spectrum bat detector was deployed within the section of hedge proposed for removal for five consecutive nights during each month (refer to **Appendix 2**).

The resulting bat call recordings were analysed using Wildlife Acoustics Kaleidoscope Pro software. *Myotis* calls were identified to species level where possible. The dates and weather conditions recorded during each automated survey period are presented in **Table 3.3**.

Transect surveys were considered disproportionate to the scale of habitat loss proposed, which is limited to approximately 3.5 m of hedgerow. Similarly, requiring a spring 2027 bat activity survey of the hedge was considered excessive given the very limited extent of hedgerow removal. The results of additional transect and automated surveys are not considered likely to materially alter the assessment of impacts or the mitigation measures that are required. It was therefore considered appropriate and proportionate to undertake automated acoustic surveys in August and September only.

Table 3.3 Bat activity automated survey dates, times and weather conditions¹³

Date	Weather Conditions (Upper & Lower Limits)
1–6 August 2026	8–30 °C; wind 0–25 kph; 0 mm rain
1–6 September 2026	11–26 °C; wind 2–13 kph; 0 mm rain

3.3.5 Dormouse Survey

The hedge at the end of the rear garden was assessed for its suitability for hazel dormouse in accordance with the Hazel Dormouse Conservation Handbook (Bullion, 2025). Dormice typically favour connected hedges containing suitable food plants such as bramble *Rubus fruticosus* agg. and hazel *Corylus avellana*, together with suitable nesting material including honeysuckle *Lonicera periclymenum*.

The hedge, together with adjacent sections, was searched for evidence of dormouse nests on 9 September 2026. According to Natural England, this level of survey effort is considered sufficient where only a small amount of suitable habitat is proposed to be removed on-site¹⁴. Weather conditions during the survey were 24°C, Beaufort 1, 10% cloud cover and dry.

3.3.6 Other Protected/Notable Species

Evidence/potential for other protected/notable species was also incidentally assessed during the survey. This includes species listed under the CHSR, the WCA and those given extra protection under the NERC Act, CRoW Act and the Protection of Badgers Act 1992.

3.4 Evaluation & Impact Assessment

The evaluation and impact assessment are made with reference to the *Guidelines for Ecological Impact Assessment in the UK and Ireland: Terrestrial, Freshwater, Coastal and Marine* (CIEEM, 2018). These guidelines aim to give consistency in evaluating ecological features, which help inform any effects or impacts a scheme will have upon them.

¹³ Weather taken from <https://www.wunderground.com/>

¹⁴ <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/hazel-or-common-dormice-surveys-and-mitigation-for-development-projects>

3.5 Limitations & Assumptions

No significant constraints were encountered during the surveys, and the findings are considered to provide a robust assessment of the site's ecological baseline. Transect surveys were not undertaken, for the reasons of proportionality set out in **Section 3.3.4**; this is not considered to materially limit the assessment.

These surveys will remain valid for a period of two years (i.e. until July–September 2028) and should be updated if works have not commenced within this timeframe¹⁵.

¹⁵ In accordance with *Advice Note on the Lifespan of Ecological Reports and Surveys* (CIEEM, 2019).

4. Results & Evaluation

The findings of the desk study and field surveys are presented below, alongside an evaluation of ecological features that are, or have the potential to be, associated with the site.

4.1 Desk Study

Statutory nature conservation sites of **international** importance within the proposed development's zone of influence are listed in **Table 4.1**. The application site lies within the River Avon SAC catchment and the 4 km greater horseshoe and 6 km barbastelle consultation buffers associated with the Chilmark Quarries SAC.

The following protected/notable species have been recorded within 1 km of the site: slow-worm *Anguis fragilis*, house sparrow *Passer domesticus*, house martin *Delichon urbicum*, hedgehog *Erinaceus europaeus* and beaver *Castor fiber*. None of the records are associated with the site.

Table 4.1 Designated sites of international importance within the proposed development's zone of influence

Site Name	Distance & Direction from Application Site	Area (ha)	Qualifying Features
River Avon SAC	c. 1.23 km west	467.58	Annex I habitats that are a primary reason for selection: water courses of plain to montane levels with the <i>Ranunculus fluitans</i> and <i>Callitriche-Batrachion</i> vegetation. Annex II species that are a primary reason for selection: Desmoulin's whorl snail <i>Vertigo moulinsiana</i> , sea lamprey <i>Petromyzon marinus</i> , brook lamprey <i>Lampetra planeri</i> , Atlantic salmon <i>Salmo salar</i> and bullhead <i>Cottus gobio</i> .
Chilmark Quarries SAC	c. 2.75 km northwest	10.43	Annex II species that are a primary reason for selection: this complex of abandoned stone mines provides suitable hibernation conditions for a range of bat species and has a long history of usage by greater horseshoe <i>Rhinolophus ferrumequinum</i> and small numbers of barbastelle <i>Barbastella barbastellus</i> and Bechstein's bat <i>Myotis bechsteinii</i> . Annex II species that are a secondary reason for selection: lesser horseshoe <i>Rhinolophus hipposideros</i> .

4.2 Field Surveys

Refer to **Appendix 2** for the survey map.

4.2.1 Habitat Description

Habitats within the areas to be impacted by the proposed works include a house comprise and associated hard-standing and a managed rear garden containing a mown lawn and native hedgerow (see **Figures 4.1 and 4.2**).

The hedgerow is c. 3 m in height, is subject to annual cutting and comprises abundant hazel *Corylus avellana* and hawthorn *Crataegus monogyna*, with occasional ash *Fraxinus excelsior*. The lawn is regularly mown and is dominated by annual meadow-grass *Poa annua*, with occasional creeping thistle *Cirsium arvense* and hawkweed *Hieracium* sp.

Figure 4.1 Rear garden



Figure 4.2 Hedgerow at the end of the garden



4.2.2 Roosting Bats

A description of the building and associated photographs are given in **Table 4.2** and **Figures 4.3 and 4.4** below. To summarise, the building has **low** suitability for roosting bats.

Table 4.2 Building description

Building feature	Description
Type/use/age/shape/no. storeys	A modern L-shape, two-storey detached house.
Roof structure and orientation	Open gable roof. East-west orientation
Roof material(s)	Plain clay tile
Wall material(s)	Brick
External building features	Timber eaves, bargeboard, building frame and window frames. Hipped dormer windows on the west elevation. Two external chimney breasts. Lead flashing around chimney stacks.
External lighting	Two security lights positioned on the front and rear elevations. Minimal lighting elsewhere.
Voids/lofts/eaves storage/cellars	Absent – the house comprises a vaulted ceiling throughout and no other storage/cellar space is present.
Suitability of surrounding habitat for foraging/commuting bats	Low suitability for foraging/commuting bats – managed garden that is too small to support large numbers of foraging bats.
Potential bat roosting opportunities	Spaces suitable for crevice-dwelling bats are present under occasional lifted roof tiles above the existing garage on the front elevation and above the area of the proposed extension on the rear elevation. The ridge tiles on the east elevation were broken on the surface but no gaps suitable for bats could be seen under the tiles here. Other areas of the roof were also considered negligible for bats.
Evidence of bats	None observed on the building's exterior.
Bat hibernation suitability	Negligible – unheated cellars and suitable crevices leading into solid walls appear to be absent from the building.
Overall bat roosting suitability	Low – negligible suitability for roosting bats.

Figure 4.3 Front elevations of the building



Figure 4.4 Rear elevations of the building



4.2.3 Bat Emergence Survey

Roosting activity: no roosting bats were detected exiting or entering the building during the emergence survey (Table 4.3). Refer to **Appendix 3** for screenshots showing the field of view of each infrared camera taken at the darkest point of the survey.

Foraging/commuting activity: soprano and common pipistrelles were recorded commuting and foraging adjacent to the building – refer to **Table 4.3**. Other species occasionally recorded include brown long-eared, serotine, noctule, Leisler's bat and Natterer's bat.

Table 4.3 Bat emergence survey results

Species Recorded	Time of First Recording	Peak No. of Passes Recorded by a Surveyor	Max. No. Bats Observed at Any One Time	Activity
Emergence Survey 29 July 2026				
Common pipistrelle <i>Pipistrellus pipistrellus</i>	22:08	6	1	Commuting and foraging along all building elevations.
Soprano pipistrelle <i>Pipistrellus pygmaeus</i>	21:32	136	2	Commuting and foraging along the east, west and south building elevations.
Brown long-eared <i>Plecotus auritus</i>	21:50	8	1	Commuting and foraging along the east, west and south building elevations.
Serotine <i>Eptesicus serotinus</i>	21:31	3	1	Commuting and foraging along the east, west and south building elevations.
Noctule <i>Nyctalus noctula</i>	21:24	19	1	Commuting high above the site.
Leisler's bat <i>Nyctalus leisleri</i>	22:12	4	1	Commuting along the east and south building elevation.
Natterer's bat <i>Myotis nattereri</i>	22:11	1	1	Commuting along the east/south elevations.

4.2.4 Summary of Bat Survey Results for the House

The building is considered to be of **negligible** importance for roosting bats. However, areas adjacent to the building are considered to be of **local** importance for foraging and commuting bats.

4.2.5 Bat Activity Survey of the Hedgerow

The results of the automated bat detector surveys undertaken within the section of hedgerow proposed for removal are presented in **Table 4.4** below.

The automated detector surveys undertaken over five consecutive nights in August and five consecutive nights in September 2026 recorded 1,540 bat passes representing at least 13 species/species groups. Activity was dominated by relatively widespread species, particularly soprano pipistrelle and noctule. Barbastelle, greater horseshoe and lesser horseshoe bats were also recorded, although at very low levels. No Bechstein's bats were recorded.

The results demonstrate low levels of activity for the SAC-relevant species and therefore indicate that the hedge is unlikely to provide an important flight route for the qualifying bat assemblage.

The hedge is located within the buffer zone of the Chilmark Quarries SAC and therefore provides some potential supporting habitat associated with the designated site. However, given the relatively small contribution of the hedge to the wider network of suitable habitat, it is considered to be of **low to moderate local value for bats**.

Table 4.4 Number of passes per species per automated recording survey

Survey Dates	Bat Species	Number of Passes
1–6 August 2026	Common pipistrelle	52
	Soprano pipistrelle	386
	Nathusius' pipistrelle	5
	Noctule	362
	Leisler's bat	72
	Serotine	13
	Brown long-eared	64
	Barbastelle	4
	Daubenton's bat	7
	Natterer's bat	0
	Whiskered / Brandt's bat	13
	Lesser horseshoe	1
	Greater horseshoe	2
1–6 September 2026	Common pipistrelle	24
	Soprano pipistrelle	203
	Nathusius' pipistrelle	1
	Noctule	189
	Leisler's bat	67
	Serotine	19
	Brown long-eared	29
	Barbastelle	5
	Daubenton's bat	10
	Natterer's bat	2
	Whiskered / Brandt's bat	9

Survey Dates	Bat Species	Number of Passes
	Lesser horseshoe	0
	Greater horseshoe	1

4.2.6 Dormouse

No evidence of dormice or their nests was recorded during the nest check of the hedge and its adjacent sections. The site is therefore considered to be of **negligible** importance for dormice.

4.2.7 Birds

4.2.8 Other Protected/Notable Species

The following incidental observations were also made during the survey:

- **Amphibians:** a large waterbody is located c. 60 m to the southwest of the site (OS Maps, 2026). Natural England's Rapid Risk Calculator indicates that the proposed works are highly unlikely to breach wildlife legislation if GCN are present within this waterbody (**Table 4.5**). The site is therefore considered to hold **negligible** potential for GCN, and impacts on other amphibians are not expected.
- **Reptiles:** the site is considered to be of **negligible** suitability for reptiles. This is due to the presence of predominantly unsuitable habitat, characterised by a simple structure lacking habitat edges and the absence of mosaic features, which are typically required to support reptile populations.
- **Birds:** the hedge on-site is considered to have **high** potential for nesting birds.
- **Badgers & Hedgehogs:** no direct evidence of these species was observed during the surveys; however, the rear garden is considered to provide low–moderate foraging suitability for both species.

Table 4.5 GCN risk calculator

Component	Likely effect	Notional probability score	offence
Great crested newt breeding pond(s)	No effect	0	
Land within 100 m of any breeding pond(s)	0.001–0.01 ha lost or damaged	0.05	
Land 100–250 m from any breeding pond(s)	No effect	0	
Land >250 m from any breeding pond(s)	No effect	0	
Individual great crested newts	No effect	0	
Maximum:		0.05	
Rapid risk assessment result:	GREEN: OFFENCE HIGHLY UNLIKELY		

5. Impact Assessment

Potential impacts of the proposed works in the absence of mitigation have been considered below:

5.1 Designated Sites

5.1.1 Chilmark Quarries SAC

Habitat Loss:

Approximately 3.5 m of the terminal end of the hedgerow will be removed and reinstated during the works. An additional 3.5 m will be replanted, totalling 7 m of hedge planting. The remainder of the hedge will also remain intact, such that no break in the wider linear feature or significant loss of connectivity is anticipated.

Although occasional barbastelle and horseshoe bat activity was recorded, activity levels were consistently low, with no evidence that the section proposed for removal is of particular importance or forms an established flight route associated with Chilmark Quarries SAC.

The hedge removal therefore represents a minor and localised reduction in supporting bat habitat. The affected section will be replaced using the same native species, hazel and hawthorn. Subject to this replacement, **no likely significant effects** are expected.

Lighting Adjacent to the Proposed Garage:

No external lighting is proposed around the subterranean garage. The adjacent hedgerow is c. 50 m from the proposed house extension, and any light from vehicles or the garage interior would be intermittent and short-lived. Therefore, no material disturbance to bats using the hedgerow is anticipated. **No likely significant effects** are therefore expected.

Lighting Adjacent to the Proposed House Extension

The nearest hedgerow is c. 17 m from the proposed window, exceeding the 15 m stand-off distance recommended in the *Wiltshire Bat SAC Planning Guidance* (2015). The hedge is also already subject to light spill from the existing property and surrounding residential development.

No SAC-associated bat species were recorded along the rear elevation during the emergence survey, providing no evidence of an important flight route in this area. Given the existing lighting environment and separation distance, the additional window is not expected to materially increase light levels at the hedgerow. **No likely significant effects** are therefore expected.

5.1.2 River Avon SAC

The proposed extension will not increase nutrient inputs to the River Avon SAC catchment, as it does not create a new dwelling or increase occupancy. Foul water generation will remain at existing levels, with no additional nutrient loading to the wastewater system. As such, **no likely significant effects** on the River Avon SAC are expected.

5.2 Habitats

Native hedgerows are considered a Section 41 Priority Habitat¹⁶. Assuming replacement hedge planting is implemented, **no significant adverse impact** is expected.

¹⁶ Section 41 Priority Habitats are protected by the NERC Act, 2006.

5.3 Protected/Notable Species

Impacts of the proposed works on protected/notable species are discussed below:

- **Roosting Bats:** no significant impacts on roosting bats are expected.
- **Hazel Dormice:** no significant impacts on dormice are expected.
- **Nesting Birds:** hedge clearance during the bird nesting season (March to August inclusive) has the potential to damage or destroy active nests, which would be a significant adverse impact and an offence under the WCA.
- **Badgers and Hedgehogs:** construction activities have the potential to result in significant adverse effects on nocturnal wildlife, including badgers and hedgehogs, which may become trapped if excavations are left open overnight.
- **Other Protected/Notable Species:** no significant adverse impacts on protected/notable species such as great crested newts and reptiles are expected.

6. Further Surveys/Assessments

No further surveys are considered to be required for the planning application. A Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment is also not required as the development meets the BNG exemption criteria.

7. Avoidance, Precautionary Measures & Mitigation

The measures below shall be implemented to avoid/reduce any anticipated adverse impacts on ecological features and ensure compliance with wildlife legislation and policy (see **Appendix 1**).

- **Habitats & Chilmark Quarries SAC:** a 3.5 m section of existing hedgerow will be temporarily removed to facilitate construction and subsequently reinstated in the same location, over the proposed subterranean garage. A total of 7 m of hazel *Corylus avellana* and hawthorn *Crataegus monogyna* bare-root whips will be planted at a density of 5 plants per metre in a double-staggered row, using locally sourced stock to match the existing hedge composition. Hedge planting will be undertaken between November and March. The newly planted and reinstated hedge will be maintained until successfully established.
- **Foraging and Commuting Bats:** any new or replacement external lighting shall be implemented in accordance with BCT/ILP Guidance Note 08/23 Bats and Artificial Lighting at Night – warm white luminaires (≤ 2700 K), mounted low and directed downwards, cowled or shielded to prevent spill onto the hedgerow and roofline, and controlled by short-duration timers or PIR sensors.
- **Roosting Bats:** as a precautionary approach, the existing roof tiles shall be removed by hand rather than mechanically, working from the ridge downwards, so that any bat sheltering beneath a tile can be seen before the tile is lifted. Roof works should be undertaken in mild, dry conditions and avoided during periods of low temperature when bats may be torpid and slow to respond. In the unlikely event that any bats are discovered during the works, all work to the roof must stop immediately and the advice of an SQE must be sought. A Mitigation Licence from Natural England would be required prior to directly affecting any bat roosts.
- **Birds:** remove the required section of hedge between September and February (inclusive) to avoid the nesting bird season. Alternatively, an SQE shall check potential nesting habitat immediately before any vegetation clearance scheduled in the nesting season (March to August inclusive). Any active nests shall be retained *in situ* with a suitable buffer until the SQE confirms that the chicks have fledged and the nest is no longer active.
- **Badger & Hedgehogs:** to prevent the accidental entrapment of terrestrial mammals during construction, all excavations will be either securely covered overnight or fitted with suitably angled escape ramps (e.g. wooden planks) to allow any animals that may enter to exit safely. A designated member of the construction team will undertake daily inspections of the site, including at the close of each working day, to ensure that these measures are in place and functioning effectively. All excavations will be checked each morning prior to the commencement of works to confirm that no animals have become trapped.

8. Enhancements

New development is required to accord with the NPPF, minimising impacts on ecological features and promoting ecological enhancements where possible. Ecological enhancements have been proposed below to ensure the development is compliant with the NPPF. Note: these measures have been incorporated within the relevant architectural plans and shall be integrated within the building walls/roof during construction:

- **Invertebrates:** integrate two bee bricks into the outer walls of the proposed garage at a minimum height of 1 m, with no vegetation obstructing the holes. Bee bricks can be purchased from online stores such as NHBS (<https://www.nhbs.com/>). It is recommended that bee-friendly plants are planted nearby so that the bees using the bricks have food. Lavender, honeysuckle and buddleia are pollinator-friendly plants.
- **Birds:** install four house martin nest bowls/cups at a height of 3–5 m above ground level onto a north elevation of the building just below the eaves (the cups/bowls must not be positioned directly south-facing to prevent chicks from overheating). Bird boxes can be purchased from online stores such as RSPB <https://www.rspb.org.uk/>.
- **Bats:** integrate two bat access tiles onto the roof – ensure the tiles are sited away from any artificial sources of light or solar panels. Bat access tiles can be purchased from online stores such as Habitat (<http://habibat.co.uk/>).

9. Conclusion

The development can proceed with minimal impact to ecological features if the avoidance/mitigation measures outlined in **Section 7** are implemented. There is also the opportunity to enhance biodiversity within the development by incorporating the measures in **Section 8**.

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Appendix 1 Legislation & Policy

SPAs & SACs

Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) and Special Protection Areas (SPAs) are areas in the UK protected by The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended). Under this legislation, public bodies must help preserve, maintain and re-establish the habitats in these areas for wild flora and fauna.

Hedgerows Regulations

The Hedgerows Regulations 1997 were made under Section 97 of the Environment Act 1995 and came into force in 1997. They introduced new arrangements for local planning authorities in England and Wales to protect important hedgerows in the countryside, by controlling their removal through a system of notification. Important hedgerows are defined by complex assessment criteria, which draw on biodiversity features, historical context and the landscape value of the hedgerow.

Birds

Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) is the principal mechanism for the legislative protection of birds in the UK. The Act makes it an offence to (with the exception of species listed in Schedule 2) intentionally:

- kill, injure, or take any wild bird;
- take, damage or destroy the nest of any wild bird while that nest is in use; or
- take or destroy an egg of any wild bird.

Or to intentionally do the following to a wild bird listed in Schedule 1:

- disturb any wild bird while it is building a nest or is in, on or near a nest containing eggs or young; or
- disturb dependent young of such a bird.

Bats

All 18 British bat species are listed as protected in Schedule 5 of the WCA and Schedule 2 of the CHSR as European Protected Species. The CRoW Act (Schedule 12, Paragraph 5) has also amended Section 9 of the WCA thereby strengthening the level of protection to include 'reckless' offences as well as 'intentional'.

Ultimately, the above legislation makes it an offence to, or to attempt to do, any of the following:

- Deliberately capture, injure or kill a bat;
- Deliberately disturb a bat, including in particular any disturbance which is likely to impair a bat's ability to survive; breed or reproduce; or rear or nurture their young;
- In the case of hibernating or migratory species, to impair their ability to hibernate or migrate;
- Affect significantly the local distribution or abundance of the species to which they belong;
- Damage, destroy or obstruct a breeding site or resting place of a bat whether intentionally or recklessly; and/or,
- Possess, control, transport, exchange or sell a bat or parts of a bat, alive or dead.

Further, where development will result in damage to, or obstruct access to, any bat roost (whether occupied or not) or risks harming or significantly disturbing bats a PSML is required from Natural England, the regulatory body responsible for protected species in England, to allow the development to proceed.

The legal interpretation of 'development' in the context of PS is not restricted to works requiring planning permission from LPAs but includes permitted development and can encompass works that do not require any formal permission.

Bats are also afforded more general protection in England (and Wales) within the NERC Act. This imposes a duty on all public bodies, including local authorities and statutory bodies, in exercising their functions, "to have due regard, so far as is consistent with the proper exercise of those functions, to the purpose of conserving biodiversity" [Section 40 (1)]. It notes that "conserving biodiversity includes restoring or enhancing a population or habitat" [Section 40 (3)]. Consequently, attention should be given to dealing with the modification or development of an area if aspects of it are deemed important to bats, such as roosts, flight corridors and foraging areas.

The conservation of four UK bat species also requires the designation of SACs under certain criteria. These four species are the greater horseshoe bat *Rhinolophus ferrumequinum*, the lesser horseshoe bat *Rhinolophus hipposideros*, Bechstein's bat *Myotis bechsteinii* and the barbastelle *Barbastella barbastellus*.

SPI (formerly UK BAP priority species) include the barbastelle, brown long-eared bat *Plecotus auritus*, soprano pipistrelle *Pipistrellus pygmaeus*, noctule *Nyctalus noctula*, greater horseshoe, lesser horseshoe and Bechstein's bat.

Protection of Badgers Act 1992

The main legislation protecting badgers in England and Wales is the Protection of Badgers Act 1992 (the 1992 Act). Under the 1992 Act it is an offence to: wilfully kill, injure, take or attempt to kill, injure or take a badger; dig for a badger; interfere with a badger sett by, damaging a sett or any part thereof, destroying a sett, obstructing access to a sett, causing a dog to enter a sett or disturbing a badger while occupying a sett. The 1992 Act defines a badger sett as: "any structure or place which displays signs indicating current use by a badger".

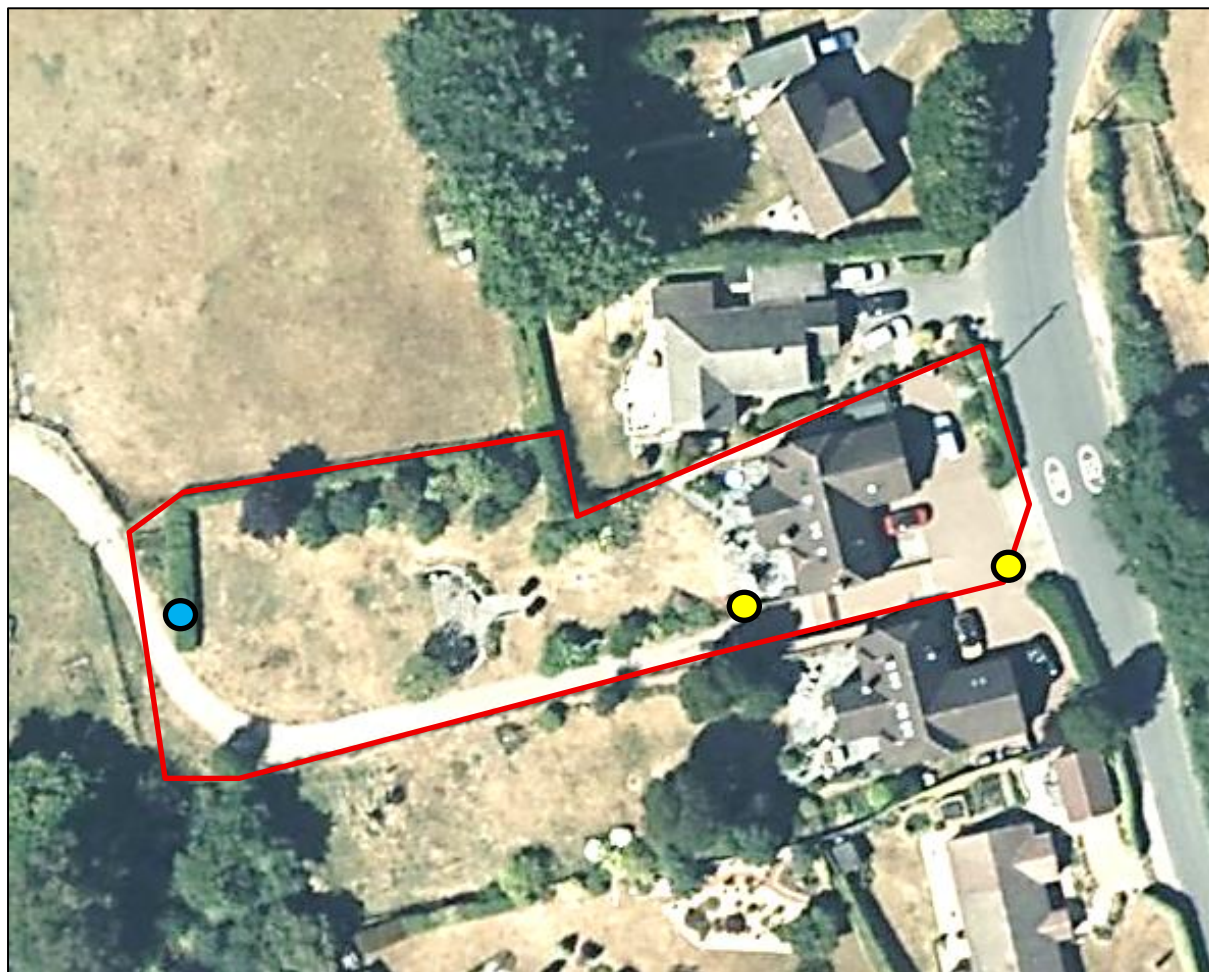
Hedgehogs

The Wild Mammals (Protection) Act 1996 protects all wild species of mammals (such as hedgehogs), irrespective of other legislation, and is focussed on animal welfare, rather than conservation. Unless covered by one of the exceptions, a person is guilty of an offence if he mutilates, kicks, beats, nails or otherwise impales, stabs, burns, stones, crushes, drowns, drags or asphyxiates any wild mammal with intent to inflict unnecessary suffering. Its application is typically restricted to preventing deliberate harm to wildlife (in general) during construction works etc.

National Planning Policy

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) sets out current government policy on biodiversity and nature conservation and places a duty on planners to make material consideration to the effect of a development on legally protected species when considering planning applications (MHCLG, 2024). The NPPF also promotes sustainable development by ensuring that developments take account of the role and value of biodiversity and that it is conserved and enhanced within a development.

Appendix 2 Survey Map



Key

-  Site boundary
-  Bat emergence survey station with infrared camera
-  Automatic static bat detector

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Appendix 3 Infrared Camera Screenshots

Front elevation



Rear elevation

