

Barn at Wilsford Down Cottage

Preliminary Ecological Appraisal

Prepared on behalf of Tuckey Design Studio

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Barn at Wilsford Down Cottage

Ecology 8541

Version 01

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Contents

	Page
1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	1
2.0 INTRODUCTION.....	2
PROJECT BACKGROUND.....	2
BRIEF	2
RELEVANT LEGISLATION AND PLANNING POLICY.....	2
3.0 METHODOLOGIES	4
DESK STUDY	4
ECOLOGICAL ASSESSMENT	4
4.0 RESULTS AND ANALYSIS.....	8
DESIGNATED SITES	8
ECOLOGICAL ASSESSMENT	9
PROTECTED AND/OR NOTABLE SPECIES.....	13
5.0 IMPACTS AND MITIGATION.....	19
IMPACTS AND REQUIRED MITIGATION FOR THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT	19
ENHANCEMENT MEASURES FOR THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT	21
6.0 REFERENCES AND BIBLIOGRAPHY	22

Appendices

Appendix A:	Site Location
Appendix B:	Proposed Plans
Appendix C:	Habitat Survey
Appendix D:	Waterbody Locations
Appendix E:	Mitigation and Enhancements
Appendix F:	Relevant Legislation

1.0 Executive Summary

- 1.1 The Client is proposing to apply for planning permission to demolish and convert barns into a residential dwelling at Wilsford Down Cottage, Wilsford, Pewsey, SN9 6HB. Pro Vision were commissioned to provide the ecological assessment for this application.
- 1.2 The ecological appraisal comprised a desk study of existing ecological data in relation to the site, and an assessment of the sites habitats and suitability to support protected species within the application site.
- 1.3 The site comprises areas of modified grassland which have been left unmanaged with an area of tall forbs and developed land, including three farm buildings and areas of hardstanding.
- 1.4 The buildings comprise two agricultural barns and a breezeblock building and have been assessed as having **negligible** potential to support roosting bats. No evidence of bats was recorded internally or around the exterior of the buildings. No suitable roost features were identified, and the open nature of the barns provide little shelter for roosting bats.
- 1.5 A barn owl box is present within Building B and a barn owl was recorded in the barn during the update walkover survey, as well as two bird nests. Any works which have potential to impact nesting birds must be scheduled to avoid peak bird nesting season unless inspection by an ecologist concludes that there are no nesting birds present immediately prior to the commencement of works. If the presence of nesting birds is confirmed, any works which may disturb them will be delayed until the young birds have fledged the nest of their own accord. Details regarding this are provided in **Section 5.0**.
- 1.6 Building B is a confirmed barn owl nest, the proposed development will result in the loss of this nest and will therefore need to be moved elsewhere on site. A new barn owl box must be installed on site prior to the removal of the existing box. Further details regarding this are provided in **Section 5.0**.
- 1.7 The site contains limited suitable reptile habitat which has only recently established due to lack of management. Development on site will result in the loss of suitable habitat and any clearance will need to be completed through a sensitive clearance methodology, which is detailed in **Section 5.0**.
- 1.8 The development will provide ecological enhancements in line with national and local planning policy to secure net gains on the site. Details regarding this are provided in **Section 5.0**.

2.0 Introduction

Project Background

- 2.1 Pro Vision Ecology were commissioned in May 2024 to carry out a Preliminary Roost Assessment (PRA) of two barns at Wilsford Down Cottage, Wilsford, Pewsey, SN9 6HB. For the site location refer to **Appendix A**. This report will contribute to a planning application for the demolition of an existing farm building and the partial demolition and conversion of existing barns, the development proposed are provided in **Appendix B**.
- 2.2 Pro Vision were commissioned to complete an update survey in July 2026. The habitats around the building had altered since the initial survey and therefore the survey was expanded to incorporate a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal.
- 2.3 This report describes the current ecological baseline of the site based on the findings of the ecological assessment and provides information for further survey requirements and potential mitigation on the site.

Brief

- 2.4 To carry out a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA) of the land within the site boundaries, to inform the Client of any further survey work required and of the ecological implications of their proposals.

Relevant Legislation and Planning Policy

- 2.5 The key legislative provisions of relevance to this report with respect to the development proposals and their potential effects on ecological features are listed below:
 - The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017
 - The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended)
 - The Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006
 - The Protection of Badgers Act 1992
 - The Environment Act 2021
- 2.6 The UK Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) was the Governments response to the 1992 Convention on Biodiversity (The Rio Convention), with the aim of halting the loss of biodiversity in the UK. The new UK post-2010 Biodiversity Framework replaced the previous BAP and is the government's response to the new strategic plan on the United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD). Although the UK post-2010 Biodiversity Framework supersedes the UK BAP, the UK BAP lists of priority species and habitats still remain an important reference source for identifying habitats and species of principal importance within the UK. Within England, Section 41 of the NERC Act (2006) lists species and habitats of principal importance for the conservation of biodiversity.
- 2.7 The Government has set out its policies for the protection and enhancement of biodiversity through the planning system in the National Planning Policy Framework Section 19 (NPPF, 2026).

- 2.8 The Environment Act 2021 includes the requirement for future developments to provide 10% biodiversity net gain, to be evidenced with the use of the relevant statutory metric unless identified as being exempt under The Biodiversity Gain (exemptions) Regulations 2024.
- 2.9 The application site is located within Wiltshire Council. The Wiltshire Core Strategy (adopted in January 2015) includes the Core Policy 50 relating to Biodiversity and Geodiversity.

Biodiversity and geodiversity Protection

Development proposals must demonstrate how they protect features of nature conservation and geological value as part of the design rationale. There is an expectation that such features shall be retained, buffered, and managed favourably in order to maintain their ecological value, connectivity and functionality in the long-term. Where it has been demonstrated that such features cannot be retained, removal or damage shall only be acceptable in circumstances where the anticipated ecological impacts have been mitigated as far as possible and appropriate compensatory measures can be secured to ensure no net loss of the local biodiversity resource and secure the integrity of local ecological networks and provision of ecosystem services.

All development proposals shall incorporate appropriate measures to avoid and reduce disturbance of sensitive wildlife species and habitats throughout the lifetime of the development.

Any development potentially affecting a Natura 2000 site must provide avoidance measures in accordance with the strategic plans or guidance set out in paragraphs 6.75-6.77 above where possible, otherwise bespoke measures must be provided to demonstrate that the proposals would have no adverse effect upon the Natura 2000 network. Any development that would have an adverse effect on the integrity of a European nature conservation site will not be in accordance with the Core Strategy.

Biodiversity enhancement

All development should seek opportunities to enhance biodiversity. Major development in particular must include measures to deliver biodiversity gains through opportunities to restore, enhance and create valuable habitats, ecological networks and ecosystem services. Such enhancement measures will contribute to the objectives and targets of the Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) or River Basin/ Catchment Management Plan, particularly through landscape scale projects, and be relevant to the local landscape character.

Local sites

Sustainable development will avoid direct and indirect impacts upon local sites through sensitive site location and layout, and by maintaining sufficient buffers and ecological connectivity with the wider environment. Damage or disturbance to local sites will generally be unacceptable, other than in exceptional circumstances where it has been demonstrated that such impacts:

- i. cannot reasonably be avoided*
- ii. are reduced as far as possible*
- iii. are outweighed by other planning considerations in the public interest*
- iv. where appropriate compensation measures can be secured through planning obligations or agreements.*

Development proposals affecting local sites must make a reasonable contribution to their favourable management in the long-term.

3.0 Methodologies

Desk Study

- 3.1 The desk study methodology is based upon guidelines set out by the Chartered Institute of Environmental and Ecological Management (CIEEM, 2017). A data-gathering exercise was undertaken to obtain any available information relating to statutory and non-statutory nature conservation sites.
- 3.2 In addition to this, records were requested for the presence of bat species within one kilometre of the site. These records were provided by Wiltshire & Swindon Biological Records Centre (WSBRC) and a search was undertaken to obtain records of granted European Protected Species Licences (EPSLs) within two kilometres of the development, using the Defra interactive website MAGIC.

Ecological Assessment

Habitats

- 3.3 A site visit was carried out on 24th May 2024 by experienced ecologist Jake Purchase in predominantly overcast conditions with occasional sunny spells, a slight breeze and an ambient temperature of 15°C.
- 3.4 An update site walkover was completed on 7th July 2026 by experienced ecologist David Casson ACIEEM in dry, still and clear conditions, with an ambient temperature of 28°C. The survey employed techniques based on UK Habitat Classification System.
- 3.5 The collection of botanical information focused on the dominant and/or key indicator species for each habitat, to allow allocation of habitats to hierarchy levels 3 and/or 4 and where relevant to identify any priority habitats which are present on site.

Protected Species

- 3.6 The PEA included an assessment of the potential for habitats on or immediately adjacent to the site to support legally protected or conservation-notable species. The location and nature of any signs of the presence of protected species (such as droppings, footprints, burrows, etc.) were documented and mapped accordingly. Indicative survey methods for protected species are outlined below.

Badgers (Meles meles)

- 3.7 The site and where possible 30 metres outside the site boundary was assessed for its suitability to support badgers. A direct search was undertaken for evidence of badgers. Evidence includes
- Active or disused setts;
 - Diggings;
 - Latrines / dung pits;
 - Foraging ('snuffle holes');

- Footprints; and
- Badger hairs.

Bats

Buildings

- 3.8 Bats use features within buildings such as stone crevices or cracks in brickwork, ridge beams, gaps between roofing materials and the main building structure, and any potential access points. Any evidence of bats such as droppings, urine staining, claw marks, feeding remains or bats themselves were recorded. An assessment of the potential of the building to support roosts was then made in line with Bat Conservation Trust (BCT) guidelines (2023) shown in **Table 1** below.

Table 1: Assessment of buildings to support roosting bats.

Potential	Criteria
None	No features on site likely to be used by any roosting bats at any time of the year
Negligible	No obvious features on site likely to be used by bats
Low	A structure with one or more potential roost sites that could be used by individual bats opportunistically.
Moderate	A structure with one or more potential roost sites due to their size, shelter, protection, conditions and surrounding habitat but unlikely to support a roost of high conservation significance.
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.

- 3.9 Any bat droppings collected were sent to Swift Ecology for DNA analysis and tested for multiple bat species.

Survey Limitations

- 3.10 Bats will often roost in places that are inaccessible to the surveyor, such as under tiles and crevices within structures. During the inspection of the building on site for bats, features that have the potential to support crevice dwelling species were also noted as it is not possible to definitively conclude that bats are absent from these areas.

Foraging and commuting

- 3.11 Bats use features in the landscape to navigate and also habitats may provide key foraging areas. Foraging and commuting habitat was assessed based on based on BCT guidelines (Collins, 2023) shown in **Table 2** below.

Table 2: Assessment of foraging/commuting habitat

Suitability	Criteria
Negligible	Negligible features on site likely to be used by bats
Low	Suitable but isolated habitat that could be used by small numbers of bats.
Medium	Habitat that is well connected to the wider landscape and could be used by bats for foraging such as trees, scrub, grassland or water.
High	Continuous high-quality habitat that is well connected to the wider landscape and may be used by significant numbers of bats including annex II species.

Birds

- 3.12 Any habitat features, for example, scrub and trees, which could potentially be used by nesting birds, were surveyed and any nesting activity was noted. The habitat was also assessed regarding its potential for bird activity.

Great Crested Newts (Triturus cristatus)

- 3.13 Ponds within the vicinity of the site were noted and the potential of the land to act as a commuting route, shelter or foraging resource for great crested newts was assessed.

Hazel dormouse (Muscardinus avellanarius)

- 3.14 An assessment of the suitability of the habitat to support hazel dormouse was undertaken in accordance with The dormouse Conservation Handbook (Bullion *et al*, 2025). Any small mammal feeding signs were checked and assessed, including:
- Examination of hazel nuts; and
 - Evidence of nest building.

Invasive species

- 3.15 During the survey any invasive species listed on Schedule 9 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) were noted

Invertebrates

3.16 An assessment was undertaken to assess the potential of the habitats recorded on site to support diverse communities of invertebrates, or any Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) species. The assessment was based on the presence of a number of habitat features which may support important invertebrate communities such as:

- An abundance of deadwood;
- Presence of diverse plant communities;
- Presence of varied woodland structure and sunny woodland edge;
- Presence of ponds or watercourses; and
- Presence of free draining soil exposures.

Reptiles

3.17 Habitat features that could be suitable as hibernacula, foraging or basking areas were noted. Extant refugia were lifted and examined for evidence of reptiles, including sloughs (shed skins).

4.0 Results and Analysis

Designated sites

Statutory Designated Sites

- 4.1 The data search returned three records of International Statutory Designated Sites within five kilometres of the site.
- **Salisbury Plain Special Area of Conservation (SAC):** This 21465.94 ha site includes a variety of habitats ranging from heath, scrub, and maquis, through dry, humid and improved grassland, to broadleaved, coniferous and mixed woodland. The primary reason for this site's designation is the presence of Annex I habitats: *Juniperus communis* formations on heaths or calcareous grasslands, semi-natural dry grasslands and scrubland facies on calcareous substrates (*Festuco-Brometalia*). The latter are important orchid sites. Annex II species marsh fritillary butterfly (*Euphydryas aurina*) is also present on site. This site lies 2.4 kilometres south of the proposed development.
 - **Salisbury Plain Special Protection Area (SPA):** This 19715.99 ha site is designated due to the presence of four Annex II species. Stone curlews (*Burhinus oedichenus*) quail (*Coturnix coturnix*), and hobby (*Falco subbuteo*) all have a breeding population in this designated site. Hen harriers (*Circus cyaneus*) overwinter in the SPA. This site lies 2.4 kilometres south of the proposed development.
 - **River Avon SAC:** The Avon is a large, lowland river system that includes sections running through chalk and clay, with transitions between the two. Five aquatic *Ranunculus* species occur in the river system, but stream water-crowfoot (*Ranunculus penicillatus* ssp. *Pseudofluitans*) and river water-crowfoot (*Ranunculus fluitans*) are the main dominants. Some winterbourne reaches, where *Ranunculus peltatus* is the dominant water-crowfoot species, are included in the SAC. Annex II species present within the SAC include Desmoulin's whorl snail (*Vertigo moulinsiana*), sea lamprey (*Petromyzon marinus*), brook lamprey (*Lampetra planeri*), Atlantic salmon (*Salmo salar*) and bullhead (*Cottus gobio*). This site lies 3.7 kilometres east of the proposed development.
- 4.2 The data search returned one record of a national Statutory Designated Site within two kilometres of the site. The **River Avon System Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)** is of national and international importance for its wildlife communities. The Avon is richer and more varied than in most chalk streams with over 180 species of aquatic plant having been recorded, one of the most diverse fish faunas in Britain and a wide range of aquatic invertebrates. The lower Avon supports a good breeding population of kingfisher (*Alcedo atthis*), reed warbler (*Acrocephalus scirpaceus*) and sedge warbler (*Acrocephalus schoenobaenus*). The system as a whole is well used by water voles and water shrews (*Neomys fodiens*), with occasional recent evidence of otter. The SSSI runs west to east with its closest point located 0.43 kilometres north of the development site.
- 4.3 The development lies within the 6.4-kilometre zone of influence for Salisbury Plain SPA and impact risk zones for the Salisbury Plain designated sites regarding recreational pressure and the proposed plans include an increase in residential units. The development therefore has the potential to impact the designated sites; mitigation measures will be required and are provided in **Section 5.0**.
- 4.4 The site is also located with proximity of the River Avon SAC where increases in residential units can result in impacts through increased phosphates. This is discussed further in **Section 5.0**.

- 4.5 Due to the size and nature of the development, it is also considered that there will be no impacts to non-statutory designated sites should they present in proximity to the site.

Ecological Assessment

Introduction

- 4.6 The results of the update PEA are presented below. A habitat survey map is shown in **Appendix C**. The map illustrates the location and extent of the sites surveyed, along with additional notable features.

Habitats

Surrounding habitat

- 4.7 The application site is located within the village of Wilsford, Wiltshire. The surrounding land use is predominantly agricultural and rural residential, with arable and pasture fields surrounding the villages on all sides. The River Avon flows in a southeasterly direction approximately 430 metres north of the development site.

Developed Land; Sealed Surface

- 4.8 The development mostly comprises developed land which includes three farm buildings and areas of concrete hardstanding within the yard which have scarce vegetation present, including a sycamore (*Acer pseudoplatanus*) shrub (**Figures 1 and 2**). The buildings are discussed further in the bat section of the report.



Figures 1 and 2: Hardstanding yard areas.

Modified Grassland

- 4.9 The vegetated areas around the site predominantly comprise modified grassland. The grassland areas were previously well maintained during the initial site walkover in 2024 with a short sward height but have since been left unmanaged (**Figures 3 and 4**). The grassland is present between

the barn building and in the northern area of the site. Small patches of this grassland are also present around the hardstanding in the northwest corner of the site.

- 4.10 These grassland areas comprise cock's foot (*Dactylis glomerata*) and false oat-grass (*Arrhenatherum elatium*) with common nettle (*Urtica dioica*), perennial sow-thistle (*Sonchus arvensis*), ragwort (*Jacobaea vulgaris*) and spear thistle (*Cirsium arvense*).



Figures 3 and 4: Modified grassland in north of the site in 2024 and 2026, respectively.

- 4.11 A modified grassland road verge is present along the northern boundary of the site (**Figure 5**). The road verge has a similar composition to the modified grassland on site but is dominated by false oat-grass with occasional broadleaved dock (*Rumex obtusifolius*).



Figure 5: Modified grassland road verge.

Ruderal/Ephemeral Vegetation

- 4.12 A small section of ephemeral vegetation has encroached into the northern yard area which was previously hardstanding (**Figure 6**). It now comprises false oat-grass, broadleaved dock, common nettle and spear thistle.



Figure 6: Small patch of ruderal vegetation.

Tall Forbs

- 4.13 An area of tall forbs is present in the northeast corner of the site. This area was also previously short sward modified grassland but has since become dominated by spear thistle of a uniform sward height over one metre high (**Figure 7**).



Figure 7: Spear thistle tall forbs.

Individual Trees

- 4.14 A single individual tree is present in the centre of the site and comprises a small sycamore (**Figure 8**). An elder (*Sambucus nigra*) shrub is located adjacent to this but is too small to be considered a tree.



Figure 8: Small sycamore.

Hedgerows

- 4.15 There are two hedgerows present on the site. Hedgerow 1 (**Figure 9**) is a native hedgerow comprising beech (*Fagus sylvatica*) and field maple (*Acer campestre*). The hedgerow is unmanaged and is over 3 metres high and 2 metres wide.
- 4.16 Hedgerow 2 (**Figure 10**) is a species-rich native hedgerow and comprises dogrose (*Rosa canina*), dogwood (*Cornus sanguinea*), field maple, hawthorn (*Crataegus monogyna*), hazel (*Coryllus avellana*), wayfaring tree (*Viburnum lantana*) and yew (*Taxus baccata*). This hedgerow is similarly managed to hedgerow 1.



Figures 9 and 10: Hedgerows 1 and 2, respectively.

Protected and/or notable species

Badgers

- 4.17 The habitats on site provide limited suitable habitat for badger with the presence of modified grassland and hedgerows. No evidence of badger was recording during the site walkover.
- 4.18 Badgers are not considered present within the site or within 30 metres and no further action is required.

Bats

- 4.19 The WSBRC data search returned 47 records post-2005, species recorded include:
- Serotine (*Eptesicus serotinus*)
 - Myotis bat (*Myotis spp.*)
 - Daubenton's (*Myotis daubentonii*)
 - Whiskered bat (*Myotis mystacinus*)
 - Noctule bat (*Nyctalus noctula*)
 - Pipistrelle bat (*Pipistrellus spp.*)
 - Common pipistrelle (*Pipistrellus pipistrellus*)
 - Soprano pipistrelle (*Pipistrellus pygmaeus*)
 - Long-eared bat (*Plecotus spp.*)
 - Brown long-eared bat (*Plecotua auritus*)
- 4.20 The Defra run website, MAGIC, was searched for a list of granted European Protected Species Licences (EPSL's). Records of one EPSL granted within two kilometres of the site was recorded for brown long-eared and serotine bats. This EPSL did not include the damage or destruction of a breeding site.
- 4.21 The presence of bat records in the area indicate that bats might use the site for foraging, commuting, and roosting if suitable habitat and roosting locations are present.

Buildings

Preliminary Roost Assessment

- 4.22 The buildings on site comprise two barns and a breezeblock building. Descriptions and photos are provided with locations provided in **Appendix C**. The buildings are unchanged from the previous survey.
- 4.23 The buildings on site are detailed in **Table 3** below.

Table 3: Building descriptions.

Building	Photo	External Description	Internal Description
Building A		• Large, open-faced barn. • Single skin corrugated cement walls and roof. Breezeblock on base of elevations. • Lean-to section on west of northern elevation – timber cladding.	• Open and light inside. • Metal support beams. • Used for storage, including hay storage. • Remnant bird nests. • Lean-to section also open and light. • No internal potential roost features.

Building	Photo	External Description	Internal Description
			
Building B		• Corrugated metal elevations and roof. • Corrugated metal fascia. • Open barn door on west elevation and open window on east elevation. • Open timber vents on apex of southern elevation.	• Open and light. • Metal supports. • Barn owl box with barn owl present. • No internal potential roost features.

Building	Photo	External Description	Internal Description
Building C		• Breezeblock elevations. • Corrugated cement fibre roof with concrete fascia on gable ends. • Timber, well-sealed doors. Metal sliding door on west elevation. • Sealed up windows with timber frames.	• Dark but no internal roost features present. • Small storage room in north of building, no potential roost features.

Summary

- 4.24 The three buildings on site are all considered to have negligible potential for roosting bats. The two barns are very open and light with no potential features suitable for roosting bats. Building C has no external crevice features present and also lacks internal roosting features. No further action is required on the buildings on site in regard to roosting bats.

Foraging and Commuting Habitat

- 4.25 The hedgerows and grassland provide suitable foraging and commuting habitat for bats and have connectivity to further suitable habitat off site.
- 4.26 The development may result in increased lighting on site and mitigation has been provided in **Section 5.0**.

Birds

- 4.27 The hedgerows and trees on site are considered suitable for common nesting bird species. The grassland areas are considered unsuitable due to the small area of the site.
- 4.28 The barns (Buildings A and B) provide suitability for nesting birds, with remnant nests present in building 1 and an active barn owl nest box present with confirmed use by a barn owl in building B (**Figures 11 and 12**).



Figures 11 and 12: Barn owl box and barn owl, respectively.

- 4.29 There will be impacts to the existing barn owl nest with the proposed development which includes the conversion of building B. Mitigation measures are provided for barn owls in **Section 5.0** along with mitigation measures for any demolition/clearance required.

Great Crested Newts

- 4.30 The Defra run website, MAGIC, was searched for a list of granted European Protected Species Licences (EPSL's) within two kilometres of the site and no records were returned and no great crested newt classes licences were returned. Following a review of the Wiltshire and Swindon GCN Risk Zone Map, the site is located in a green risk zone, indicating sparsely distributed great crested newts and the site is less likely to contain important pathways of connecting habitat for this species.
- 4.31 The grassland provides limited suitable terrestrial habitat for great crested newts and has not been long established, with grassland management relaxing over the last two years which has allowed the site to become more suitable. The hedgerows provide suitable shelter and commuting habitat.

- 4.32 OS Maps indicate no waterbodies present within 250 metres of the site, except for two drainage ditches (see **Appendix D**). It is considered unlikely that these ditches provide suitable breeding habitat for great crested newts due to how vegetated the ditches appear from satellite images.
- 4.33 Great crested newts are considered absent from the site due to the absence of suitable breeding ponds in the area. No further action is required.

Hazel Dormouse

- 4.34 The Defra run website, MAGIC, was searched for a list of granted European Protected Species Licences (EPSL's) within two kilometres of the site, no records were returned.
- 4.35 The hedgerows on site provide suitable habitat for hazel dormice, due to the presence of suitable food plants and connectivity to further suitable habitat off site.
- 4.36 There is potential for hazel dormice to be present within the hedgerows; however, they are due to be retained and will not be impacted by the development proposals and therefore there will be no impacts to hazel dormice. No further action is required.

Invertebrates

- 4.37 No habitats of note that could support assemblages of rare invertebrates were recorded on the site. Therefore, no further action is required.

Reptiles

- 4.38 The long sward grassland provides suitable habitat for reptiles, however due to the grassland sward height being recently established, it is unlikely that reptiles are present on site.
- 4.39 Suitable habitat for reptiles will be impacted by the development proposals, and whilst it is unlikely that reptiles are present on site, it would be prudent to clear the vegetation with a sensitive clearance methodology to prevent any potential impacts. This is detailed further in **Section 5.0**.

5.0 Impacts and Mitigation

Impacts and Required Mitigation for the Proposed Development

Salisbury Plain SPA

- 5.1 The proposed development is located 2.4 kilometres from Salisbury Plain SPA and is within the 6.4-kilometre radius of the SPA identified in Wiltshire Council HRA and Mitigation Strategy for Salisbury Plain SPA (Reviewed in 2018). The development includes an increase in residential units and therefore has the potential to impact the delicate habitats and protected species within the SPA through increased recreational pressure.
- 5.2 Specific mitigation measures for the SPA will include annual contributions to be paid towards the Stone Curlew Management Plan to continue to fund monitoring of stone curlew populations, visitor surveys, and support for landowners/managers. Contributions are collected through Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) Payments
- 5.3 Mitigation to offset the potential impacts on the SPA will be sufficient to also offset the impacts on the Salisbury Plain SSSI.

River Avon SAC

- 5.4 The development site is within the catchment of the River Avon and due to the scheme resulting in an increase in residential dwellings there is the potential for impacts due to increase in wastewater. Natural England has advised councils within the catchment that increased nutrients are impacting this Special Area of Conservation. This is due to high levels of phosphorus entering the environment and causing eutrophication.
- 5.5 The current recommended approach is that all new developments must achieve nutrient neutrality. A nutrient budget will need to be devised, and suitable mitigation included as part of the application. Mitigation measures can include direct methods through upgrading sewage works or indirect by taking land out of high phosphate uses.
- 5.6 Any proposed mitigation scheme will need to be discussed and agreed with Natural England and Wiltshire Council.

Bats

- 5.7 The site provides potential for foraging and commuting bats along the boundary hedgerows of the site. Any lighting scheme will need to adhere to the following guidelines (ILP, 2023).:
 - Minimise light spill on the hedgerow boundaries.
 - LED luminaires should be used of a warm white spectrum (<2700 Kelvin) which will feature peak wavelengths higher than 550 nm.
 - Internal luminaires should be recessed to reduce light spill outside the property.
 - Only luminaires with a negligible or zero Upward Light Ratio, and with good optical control, should be considered.
 - Luminaires should always be mounted horizontally, with no light output above 90° and/or no upward tilt.

Nesting Birds

- 5.8 The hedgerows and buildings provide suitable habitat for nesting birds, with remnants nests recorded in both barns. It is an offence under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) to take, damage or destroy the nest of any wild bird while that nest is in use. Any vegetation clearance or demolition works required must be scheduled to avoid peak bird nesting season (1st March to 31st August, although this will vary between species and local conditions) to avoid contravention of protected species legislation; unless inspection by an ecologist concludes that there are no nesting birds present immediately prior to the commencement of works.
- 5.9 If the presence of nesting birds is confirmed, a 5-metre buffer will be implemented, and no works will be permitted within this buffer. Works will be able to proceed once the young birds have fledged the nest of their own accord.

Barn Owl

- 5.10 Barn owls are listed under Schedule 1 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act as amended (1981), nesting adults and dependent young are protected against disturbance, and thus the buildings or trees they occupy are effectively protected during the nesting season.
- 5.11 It is considered unlikely the barn owl box will be able to be retained within the proposed barn conversion.
- 5.12 An alternative nesting site will be provided on land within the client's ownership and should be installed between September and January. This will allow the barn owls to occupy the new site in time for the following breeding season. A nest box with 40cm-by-40cm floor space and a sliding panel to allow human access for cleaning will be provided. The entrance to the box will be sited such that it faces open countryside, in an area with the least disturbance and avoids the prevailing winds (**Appendix E**). The entrance hole should measure between 10 and 12cm wide by 25cm high. The box should be sited as high as possible, at least three metres above the ground.
- 5.13 The new nest box must be provided prior to commencement of the barn conversion works which must take place between September and February to avoid impacts on nesting birds.

Reptiles

- 5.14 The grassland areas of the site are considered to provide limited suitable habitat for reptiles. To minimise impacts to reptiles on site, a trim and push exercise involving vegetation in two stages towards retained areas of grassland will be required. The adjacent field to the east of the development site will be retained and continue to provide suitable habitat for reptiles. The areas will first be trimmed to a height of 20cm and then to ground level, this will encourage any reptiles in the area to move away from the works area of their own accord.
- 5.15 This must be completed during the reptile active season (March to October, dependant on temperatures). Any rubble piles will also need to be carefully dismantled by hand during the reptile active season to avoid impacting hibernating reptiles.

Enhancement Measures for the Proposed Development

Biodiversity Enhancement

- 5.16 The Environment Act 2021 includes the requirement for developments to provide 10% biodiversity net gain, to be evidenced with the use of the statutory metric. The development site has a site area of less than 0.2 hectares and is therefore exempt from the Biodiversity Gain Requirement. Whilst priority habitat in the form of native and species-rich native hedgerows are present on site, these will be retained and will not be negatively impacted by the proposed development and therefore the site will still be exempt from BNG requirements.
- 5.17 In accordance with the Natural Planning Policy Framework (NPPF, 2026) plans should minimise any adverse impacts on biodiversity and include features which support priority or threatened species such as swift, bats and hedgehogs.
- 5.18 To provide enhancements and to secure net gains which are specific to protected species on the site the following measures should also be included within the development design (see **Appendix E**):
- Bird boxes will be included within the development. Two boxes will be integrated into the cladding of the proposed barn elevations with access to the box through a gap in the cladding. The boxes will be placed on the northern elevations of both barns, sheltered from the glare of the sun; they will also have ample air space to allow for their flight paths. The box on the elevation of building B can be situated under the roof canopy.
 - Bat boxes will be included within the development. Two boxes will be integrated into the proposed timber cladding on the southern elevations for maximum thermal gain and nearest to the retained green corridors. Access to the boxes will be provided through a gap in the cladding.
 - The hedgerows will be retained within the development, to provide further suitable habitat for a range of species, the grassland edges in the field adjacent to the development site and within land under client ownership should be enhanced through over-sowing with a wildflower meadow species mix.
 - Areas of existing hardstanding areas will be cleared and replaced with soft landscaping which will comprise further grassland areas and should also be sown with a wildflower lawn mix.
 - The proposals include the planting of multiple native fruit trees to create an orchard, this will provide addition suitable habitat for a range of species, including nesting birds.

6.0 References and Bibliography

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Appendices

Appendix A: Site Location

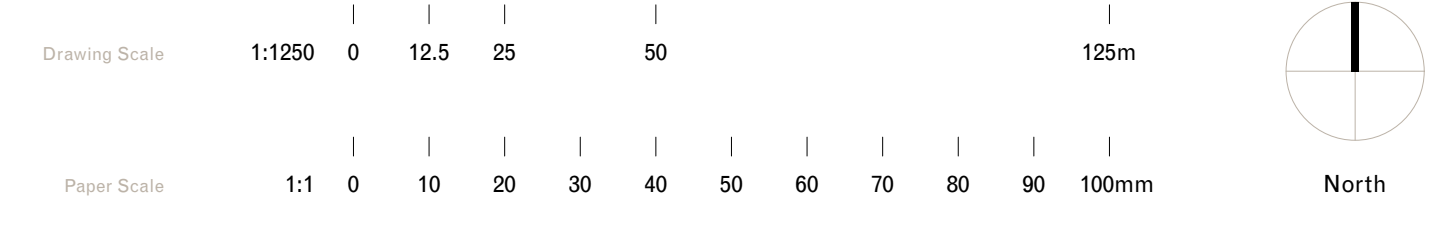


General Notes

Existing topographical and building survey information based on R&S CONSULTANTS LTD , 24018-1 , 24018-2 , 24018-3 & 24018-4.

Key

- Site Boundary
- Land Ownership Boundary



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-	Planning Issue	04 August 2026	JD/FB
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Project	Job Number
Wilsford barn	0302
Sheet Title	Scale at A1
Site Location Plan	1:1250
Drawing Number	Scale at A3
TDS_0302_03_000	1:2500

Planning

Appendix B: Proposed Plans



General Notes

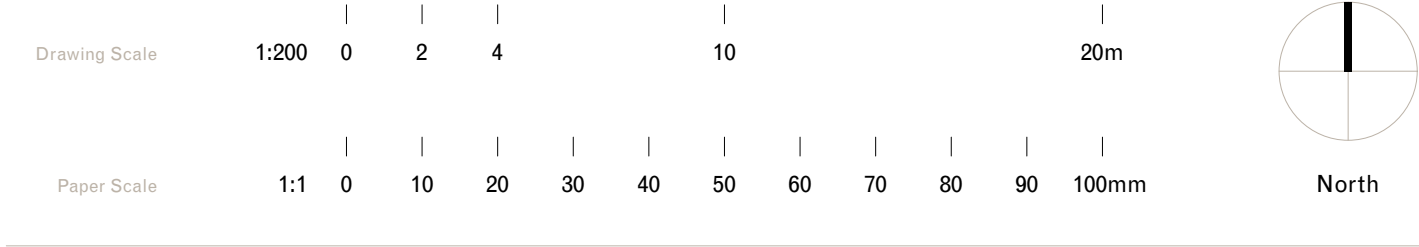
Existing topographical and building survey information based on R&S CONSULTANTS LTD , 24018-1 , 24018-2 , 24018-3 & 24018-4.

Key

Site Boundary

Existing Trees

Proposed Trees



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-	Planning Issue	03 July 2026	JD/FB
Rev.	Notes	Date	Drawn/Checked

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Project	Job Number
Wilsford barn	0302
Sheet Title	Scale at A1
Proposed - Site Plan	1:200
Drawing Number	Scale at A3
TDS_0302_03_100	1:400

Planning

Appendix C: Habitat Survey Results

The plan shown here is for the purpose of supporting a planning application only. Only scale from this drawing for the purposes of determining a planning application. Do not scale from this drawing for construction purposes.

The proposal presented here is subject to review by specialist consultants, and is to be read in conjunction with all relevant specialist's drawings and information where available. Any discrepancies between this and any other consultant's drawings and information should be reported to Pro Vision immediately.

Legend

- Red Line Boundary
- Building
- Developed Land; Sealed Surface
- Modified Grassland
- Ruderal/Ephemeral
- Tall Forbs
- Small Tree
- Native Hedgerow
- Species-rich Native Hedgerow



ISSUE	DATE	DESCRIPTION	DRAWN	CHECKED
v1	21/08/26	First Issue	DC	LSJ

CLIENT:	Tuckey Design Studio		
PROJECT:	Barns at Wilsford Down Cottage		
DRAWING:	Habitat Survey	1:350	
NUMBER:	8541-XX-E0-01	A4	
ISSUE:	v1	21.08.26	



Appendix D: Waterbody Location Plan

The plan shown here is for the purpose of supporting a planning application only. Only scale from this drawing for the purposes of determining a planning application. Do not scale from this drawing for construction purposes.

The proposal presented here is subject to review by specialist consultants, and is to be read in conjunction with all relevant specialist's drawings and information where available. Any discrepancies between this and any other consultant's drawings and information should be reported to Pro Vision immediately.

Legend

- Red Line Boundary
- 250m Radius
- Waterbody



ISSUE	DATE	DESCRIPTION	DRAWN	CHECKED
v1	18/08/26	First Issue	DC	LSJ

CLIENT:	Tuckey Design Studio		
PROJECT:	Barns at Wilsford Down Cottage		
DRAWING:	Waterbody Locations	1:4000	
NUMBER:	8541-XX-E0-02	A4	
ISSUE:	v1	18.08.26	



Appendix E: Mitigation and Enhancements

The plan shown here is for the purpose of supporting a planning application only. Only scale from this drawing for the purposes of determining a planning application. Do not scale from this drawing for construction purposes.

The proposal presented here is subject to review by specialist consultants, and is to be read in conjunction with all relevant specialist's drawings and information where available. Any discrepancies between this and any other consultant's drawings and information should be reported to Pro Vision immediately.

Legend

- Red Line Boundary
- Bat box
- Bird Box
- Barn Owl Box



ISSUE	DATE	DESCRIPTION	DRAWN	CHECKED
v1	21/08/26	First Issue	DC	LSJ

CLIENT:	Tuckey Design Studio		
PROJECT:	Barns at Wilsford Down Cottage		
DRAWING:	Mitigation and Enhancements	1:500	
NUMBER:	8541-XX-E0-03	A4	
ISSUE:	v1	21.08.26	



Appendix F: Relevant Legislation

The Conservation of Habitats and Species 2017

The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (the Habitats Regulations) transpose Habitats Directive into UK legislation. The Habitats Regulations provide for the designation and protection of European Sites and European Protected Species. European Sites include Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) and Special Protection Areas (SPAs), which form part of the Natura 2000 network of protected areas across Europe.

European Protected Species (EPS) are those listed under Schedule 2 of the Habitats Regulations and include dormouse, great crested newt, otter and all species of bat. The regulations prohibit the deliberate capture, killing or disturbance of any EPS; it is also an offence to damage or destroy a breeding site or resting place of any of these species. In order to carry out a lawful operation (e.g. development work which has full planning permission) that may result in an offence under the Habitats Regulations, it is necessary to obtain a licence from Natural England. EPS Licences will only be granted after Natural England has been satisfied that there are no satisfactory alternative and that there will not be any adverse impacts on the favourable conservation status of the species.

WILDLIFE AND COUNTRYSIDE ACT 1981

The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 is the principle piece of legislative protection of wildlife in Great Britain. Various amendments have occurred since the original enactment. The Wildlife and Countryside Act contains both habitat and species protection. Certain bird, animal and plant species are afforded protection under Schedules 1, 5 and 8 of the Act. Measures for the protection of the countryside, National Parks, Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs) are also included within the Act.

THE NATURAL ENVIRONMENT AND RURAL COMMUNITIES ACT 2006

The Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006 improved wildlife protection by amending the WCA. The main function of the NERC Act was to raise the profile of biodiversity amongst public authorities. Section 40 (S40) of the Act places a 'Biodiversity Duty' on all public bodies to have regard to the conservation of biodiversity when carrying out their normal functions.

THE PROTECTION OF BADGERS ACT 1992

The Protection of Badgers Act 1992 consolidates previous legislation (including the Badgers Acts 1973 and 1991 Badgers (Further Protection) Act 1991). It makes it a serious offence to:

- kill, injure or take a badger;
- attempt to kill, injure or take a badger; or
- to damage or interfere with a sett.

The 1992 Act defines a badger sett as "any structure or place which displays signs indicating current use by a badger".

ENVIRONMENT ACT 2021

The Environment Act 2021 received royal assent in November 2021 and introduces new environmental protection regimes. This includes the creation of the Office for Environmental Protection who will oversee the framework. The Act includes several measures which impact on the planning application process to provide measures to ensure developments result in a net gain in biodiversity. The Act includes the mandatory requirement of 10% net gain for new developments, unless listed within the exemptions. Biodiversity net gain must be evidenced with the use of the statutory metric and associated documents.