



**Rowan Tree Cottage, Lagpond Lane,
Sutton Mandeville,
SP3 5NG**
Ecology Assessment

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1.0 Summary

The 0.1 Hectare site along Lagpond Lane is the western side of the garden of Rowan Tree Cottage. The area of garden is mostly lawn with: shrubs; sheds; a hedge to the south; a storage container; greenhouse; vegetable plot; and trees along the eastern and northern boundary. The site is situated in a rural location with fields used for arable and for grazing on all sides. The land is connected into the wider countryside by lines of trees and woodland leading off as wildlife corridors in all directions.

The proposal is to construct a new dwelling in the garden and use the existing access off the lane. There are no major ecological implications associated with the proposals as the buildings have no bat roosting value and the trees and hedgerow can be retained. Lighting has been considered to make sure it does not disrupt dark corridors around the site. There are opportunities to provide enhancements in line with local and national policies to ensure there is a Net Gain for Biodiversity. Mitigation and enhancement measures include:

- planting new native hedgerows and trees
- planting native bulbs
- installing bat and bird boxes on trees and in buildings
- ensuring that any external lighting follows an approved lighting plan
- hedgehog-friendly fencing
- pollution prevention measures and adherence to sustainable drainage guidelines will be implemented to protect local watercourses and habitats
- creating a new woodland edge using a range of fruit trees
- constructing a porch on the house as a place for bats to use as a hang up and for birds to use to nest

The proposal is exempt from a Biodiversity Net Gain assessment as it is less than 0.2 Hectares.

2.0 Introduction

Background

- 2.1 Peach Ecology was commissioned in July 2026 to carry out an Ecological Assessment of the proposed new dwelling at Rowan Tree Cottage, Lagpond Lane, Sutton Mandeville, SP3 5NG (Appendix A). It has a central Grid Reference: SU 56668 14106 and is laid out as shown in Appendix B. This report will be submitted to Wiltshire Council in support of an application to construct a dwelling.
- 2.2 This report describes the existing ecology on-site based on the findings of an initial site visit, protected species and habitats data searches, and a review of local and national policies.

Description of site and surrounding area

- 2.3 The application site is part of the garden of Rowan Tree Cottage, it consists of lawn with shrubs, vegetable plot, a native hedge along the southern boundary and several mature trees along the eastern and northern boundary. There are several sheds and a green house on the land. The site is surrounded by fields used for grazing and arable farming and it is connected into the surrounding landscape by hedges and trees. The wider area within 1km consists of farmland and Ancient Woodland with residential areas and farmsteads.

Brief

- 2.4 The main objectives of the PEA are:
- To identify and describe the habitats present on-site.
 - To assess the potential for protected and notable species.
 - To evaluate any ecological constraints associated with the proposed development.
 - To provide recommendations for mitigation and enhancement measures.

3.0 Methodology

Desk Study

- 3.1 This involved gathering ecological data relating to statutory nature conservation sites from within 2km as shown in Appendix D. Multi-Agency Geographic Information for the Countryside (MAGIC) a DEFRA run website was used along with Ordnance Survey maps and aerial images to check for relevant data on notable habitats and species nearby, including European Protected Species license data and wildlife corridors where the site connects into the surrounding area. Planning applications for nearby sites were also reviewed to look at the impacts of other proposals and schemes nearby.

Site Assessment

- 3.2 The initial site survey was undertaken on the 22nd July 2026. The survey employed techniques based on standard Phase I Habitat Survey methodology (CIEEM, 2016). Habitat types on and adjacent to the site were identified according to standard habitat definitions (UKHabs). The collection of botanical information focused on the dominant and key indicator species for each habitat type. The site survey included an assessment of the habitats immediately adjacent to the site, where possible, to look at its value within the local landscape. Indicative methodologies for the most likely protected and notable species that could occur on site or adjacent to the site and be impacted by the proposals are set out below.

Bats

- 3.3 A preliminary bat roost assessment was undertaken following BCT Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists (2023). The buildings were checked for any signs of use by bats, access points, droppings etc. The trees within the site were also assessed for features such as rot holes, lifted bark, and ivy cover. The assessment followed standard methodologies to determine the site's suitability for bat roosting and also commuting and foraging, and to identify any requirements for further survey work.

Badgers & Hedgehogs

- 3.4 During the field survey, the site and a surrounding buffer (typically 100m) was systematically walked to identify badger & hedgehog signs, including setts (main, annex, subsidiary, and outlier), latrines, foraging evidence (snuffle holes, digging), well-trodden paths, scratching posts, and footprints as well as droppings and deep piles of leaves.

Birds

- 3.5 Any habitat features, for example, scrub, trees, hedgerows and buildings which could potentially be used by nesting birds, were surveyed and any nesting activity was noted. Any bird records were also noted down during the survey in relation to the habitats.

Dormice

- 3.6 The site was assessed to ascertain habitat suitability and identify any signs of dormouse presence. Key features such as species-rich hedgerows, woodland edges,

scrub, and areas with a diverse shrub layer (including hazel, honeysuckle, and bramble) are noted as potential nesting or foraging sites. The survey includes a search for indirect evidence such as gnawed hazelnuts, which have a characteristic smooth, bevelled edge.

Reptiles

- 3.7 The habitats on site were assessed for their suitability for reptile species. Key features such as rough grassland, hedgerows, woodland edges, scrub, and open ground with refugia (e.g., log piles, stone heaps, and compost heaps) are noted as potential basking, foraging, or hibernation sites. Observers record any direct sightings of reptiles or indirect evidence such as shed skins. Findings are mapped to determine whether further presence/absence surveys are required.

Great Crested Newts

- 3.8 Any ponds on site and within the vicinity of the site were checked for features such as aquatic vegetation, shading, and water quality these were used to assess their potential as breeding sites. Terrestrial habitats, including grassland, scrub, hedgerows, and woodland, are evaluated for their suitability for foraging, sheltering, and hibernation. The survey also involved searching for indirect evidence, such as egg-laying vegetation or aquatic invertebrates indicative of newt presence. Findings are mapped, and the presence of suitable habitats may trigger further targeted surveys, such as eDNA testing or presence/absence surveys.

4.0 Results and Analysis

Desk study

4.1 The following statutory designated sites were identified within 2 km of the proposed development site:

- River Avon Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI/SAC) – Designated because it is one of the finest, most biologically diverse lowland chalk river systems in England, supporting rare habitats and wildlife. Designated a Special Area of Conservation (SAC) due to the Annex II species it contains, including: Desmoulin's whorl snail, Atlantic Salmon, Brook Lamprey and Bullhead; and the habitats contained within it which include: Water courses of plain to montane levels with the *Ranunculus fluitantis* and *Callitriche-Batrachion* vegetation.
- Cranborne Chase Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) - Cranborne Chase is a National Landscape, a designated Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, and covers 380 square miles of countryside, overlapping the boundaries of Wiltshire, Dorset, Hampshire and Somerset. It is a diverse natural landscape with a rich archaeological and historical significance. Cranborne Chase offers areas of rare chalk grasslands, scientifically important ancient woodlands, and chalk escarpments. The downland hillsides and chalk river valleys have a distinct and recognisable character. The primary purpose of the National Landscape designation is to conserve and enhance the natural beauty of the area – now and for future generations.
- Upper Chicksgrove Quarry SSSI - This site is of geological interest for both its exposures of the Portlandian rocks and for the fossil vertebrate remains found here.

4.2 The site is also surrounded by areas of Ancient Woodland to the north and west, with other areas located within 2km. The site is connected into these arboreally and by hedges and therefore it is important that the proposals do not result in any fragmentation long term or impacts from construction.

4.3 Due to the relatively small scale and extent of the proposals and the degree of separation it is unlikely that the development will impact directly upon protected sites. It is important that the proposals follow appropriate pollution prevention and drainage guidelines and it is important that a Construction Environment Management Plan is in place prior to any clearance or site preparation works. The habitats and flora associated with waterways and ground water are sensitive to changes cumulatively from different impacts locally so every development should consider and mitigate for their own impact with regards drainage and pollution.

Site Assessment

4.4 The following habitats were recorded on-site or nearby during the field survey. Each habitat is described in terms of its structure, ecological value, and potential ecological constraints.

- Vegetated Garden
- Native Hedgerow
- Trees

Vegetated Garden

- 4.5 The site is the western side of the garden of Rowan Tree Cottage, it is partially sectioned off by a line of trees. It consists of lawn (Photo 1) with shrubs (Photo 2), a vegetable plot, greenhouse, a native hedge along the southern boundary and several mature trees along the eastern and northern boundary. There are several sheds and a container on the land.
- 4.6 The lawn was parched at the time of survey however it could be seen that it was dominated by typical modified grassland species including: Cocksfoot, Yorkshire Fog, Perennial Rye, Dandelion, Creeping Buttercup. Species present at the edges and around buildings included Daisy, Broadleaf Willowherb and Ragwort. Some bramble and bracken were growing below the trees at the edges. Some shrubs were growing in the grassland beside buildings, these included ornamentals, Leylandii, Currant Bush.
- 4.7 The area of lawn and shrubs to be lost due to the proposals have low ecological value although they do provide a buffer to the tree canopy and hedge on site. This can be compensated with some new landscaping and planting of bulbs, trees and hedgerow.



Photo 1: The lawn was parched at the time of survey



Photo 2: The garden looking south

Native Hedgerow

- 4.8 The hedgerow along the southern boundary is a native hedge that connects into the other hedgerows and woodland locally. It has a field gate which will be used for the new site access so there is no proposed hedge loss. The hedge contains species including: Hazel, Hawthorn, Holly, Privet and Ash. The hedgerow will be used by wildlife locally including, birds, mammals, reptiles and amphibians and therefore it will need to be protected during construction work and post construction from lighting impacts. New hedgerow planting along the western boundary will add to this important habitat increasing connectivity along this side.



Photo 3: The hedgerow to the southern side with the container to the left

Trees

- 4.9 Several trees are located along the northern (Photo 4) and eastern side of the lawn, these separate the main house from the development site. The trees include some mature Birch, a small group of Larch and an Oak. Several Beech trees have their canopies hanging into the site from Rowan Tree Cottage garden. The trees, like the hedgerow, connect the site into the local area arboreally and provide structure and diversity. They form part of a wildlife corridor in the local area connecting it into Ancient Woodland. It is important therefore that any new landscaping uses native species. Planting the area below the trees with native bulbs is recommended to enhance the area at the edge of the garden. In addition to this some locally sourced fruit trees would add some additional edge planting to the trees.



Photo 4: The two Birch to the north of the garden

Developed Land Sealed Surface (Greenhouse)

- 4.10 A green house is located on the western side of the land (Photo 5).

Artificial unvegetated unsealed surface (sheds and container)

- 4.11 Several sheds and a container are located on the land and used for storage. These are all standard wooden sheds with limited ecological value to bats and birds due to their small size, lack of access and build materials.



Photo 5: The sheds (to the left), containers to the rear and greenhouse to the right

Protected Species Assessment

Birds

- 4.12 During the survey, a Blackbird, Robin and Swift were seen. The hedgerow, trees and shrubs have some nesting potential for common garden bird species, the grassland on site is not suitable as it is maintained short. No signs were noted of nests in the garden or in the buildings. Any removal of vegetation or the structures will need to be undertaken outside of the bird nesting season or under ecological supervision after they are checked for signs of nesting birds.
- 4.13 Enhancing the site with new hedgerow incorporating a diverse range of native fruiting species will enhance biodiversity by creating more of this valuable habitat. The inclusion of an integrated swift box will enhance the building for birds.

Bats

- 4.14 There are three records of granted European Protected Species Licenses within 2 km:
- 2015-16785-EPS-MIT to the north for Brown Long-ear, Common and Soprano Pipistrelle.
 - 2015-7803-EPS-MIT to the north for Daubenton's, Lesser Horseshoe and Soprano Pipistrelle.
 - 2019-43207-EPS-MIT to the north for Brown Long-ear, Natterer's, Serotine, Lesser Horseshoe, Common Pipistrelle and Soprano Pipistrelle.
- 4.15 The wider area is known to be highly suitable for roosting, foraging and commuting bats and therefore the proposals will need to ensure lighting is kept to a minimum to avoid any cumulative impact on bats as lighting is shown to disrupt bat behaviour. This is especially important along the edge of the trees and hedgerow to the front. Planting a new hedgerow to the west will be beneficial to bats in the local and wider area.
- 4.16 There are no building or trees suitable for roosting bats. The buildings are constructed in ways and from materials that are not suitable for roosting bats, there were no signs inside. The garden itself will provide a little habitat for bats to forage, the most important parts are the hedgerow to the front along the road and the mature trees, and their edge. These habitats are connected into the wider countryside and bats, and other wildlife, use the corridors to forage along and for navigation.
- 4.17 The lawn and central area of garden is of limited value to foraging and commuting bats and the replacement of the habitat with a house and garden will have a negligible impact as long as lighting is considered. Planting new hedgerow on site will be beneficial to bats creating new flightlines for them to commute and hunt along, protecting these with some post and rail fencing will protect them from being removed when the new owners move in. The inclusion of integrated bat boxes will be an enhancement to the new building allowing bats a place to roost.

Reptiles & Amphibians

- 4.18 The grassland on site is not suitable for reptiles and amphibians as it is maintained too short and there are a lack of suitable basking or hibernation areas as it is well used with a lack of natural vegetation. There is one log pile along the northern boundary, this will be retained. The hedge and garden edge may provide some connectivity for reptiles and amphibians in the wider area and therefore this function of the garden will need to be maintained with appropriate fencing, design and landscaping.

- 4.19 There are no ponds on site and the nearest ponds are three ponds on the farmland to the north located 175m, 250m and 450m away. The area is not known to support Great Crested Newts and the small loss of garden habitat is unlikely to result in habitat loss for amphibians as long as the tree line and hedgerow are maintained, and as long as new fencing is not restrictive to movement at ground level by amphibians and other small mammals. The loss of garden habitat can be replaced with more optimal hedgerow habitat. A precautionary method is suitable to continue without the need for a licence as long as a Construction Environment Management Plan (CEMP) is produced to ensure the works take place in a considerate manner. This will involve an ecologist being on site during the initial site clearance works.

Mammals

- 4.20 The surrounding landscape is optimal for Dormice and the site is well connected into woodland and hedgerows, however the small loss of garden shrubs on site due to the proposals will have a negligible impact on the species. New planting of hedgerow along the western boundary will provide habitat for Dormice locally.
- 4.21 The site's connectivity to adjacent fields and hedgerows suggests potential movement corridors for Hedgehogs. Providing hedgehog-friendly features, such as access points in fencing and log piles, would enhance site suitability.
- 4.22 There were no signs of badgers on site or nearby.

5.0 Requirements and Recommendations

5.1 A Mitigation and Enhancement Plan is set out in Appendix E.

Construction Environment Management Plan (CEMP) and Site Clearance

5.2 A construction management plan will be prepared. This will take into account:

- Ecologist presence on site.
- Presence of protected species, birds, mammals, newts etc and what to do if found when an ecologist isn't present.
- Fingertip search of all vegetation to be cleared, by a licenced ecologist, immediately prior to clearance commencing (on the same day and every day clearance occurs).
- The ecologist will deliver a toolbox talk to the vegetation clearance contractors, detailing the sensitive measures required. The ecologist will then supervise all vegetation clearance. No clearance will be undertaken without the supervision of the ecologist.
- Lighting during construction.
- Retained trees and boundary features will be clearly marked.
- Any cutting back of vegetation will be done under ecological supervision at an appropriate time of year after checks have been undertaken.
- Prior to construction works commencing the retained trees, hedgerows and vegetation will be protected via the installation of suitable fencing, with regular information signage installed.
- Habitat on site at start of construction – an updated site visit will take place prior to construction.
- Storage of materials on site.
- Pollution and drainage.
- Working distances from hedgerows ensuring suitable buffer and root protection areas.

Bats

5.3 Install four integrated bat boxes in the new dwelling, as high as possible.

5.4 New lighting has been designed to use downlighters and have only three on the building at specific locations under the soffits pointing down to where the light is needed. This is in accordance with the most up to date BCT Bats and Lighting Guidance (2023). The lighting will avoid splaying onto trees and hedgerows or onto the new bat roosting features. Details of the dark corridor are shown in Appendix E, this will need to be maintained below 1lux.

5.5 A porch has been designed to the front. This will have direct flight access and can be used by foraging bats to hang up during the night.

Birds

5.6 Schedule vegetation clearance and building removal for outside of the nesting season or after an ecologist has checked to make sure there are no nests present. The bird nesting season runs from March to August inclusive.

- 5.7 Install an integrated swift box at the apex of the western gable under the eaves.
- 5.8 Install a Tawny Owl box on a tree.

Hedgehogs and Small Mammals

- 5.9 Maintain hedgehog highways in garden fencing by avoiding close boarded fencing and making sure there are sizeable gaps on each side.
- 5.10 Typical measures for avoidance of injury or death will also be employed during construction (e.g. escape ramps in excavations).

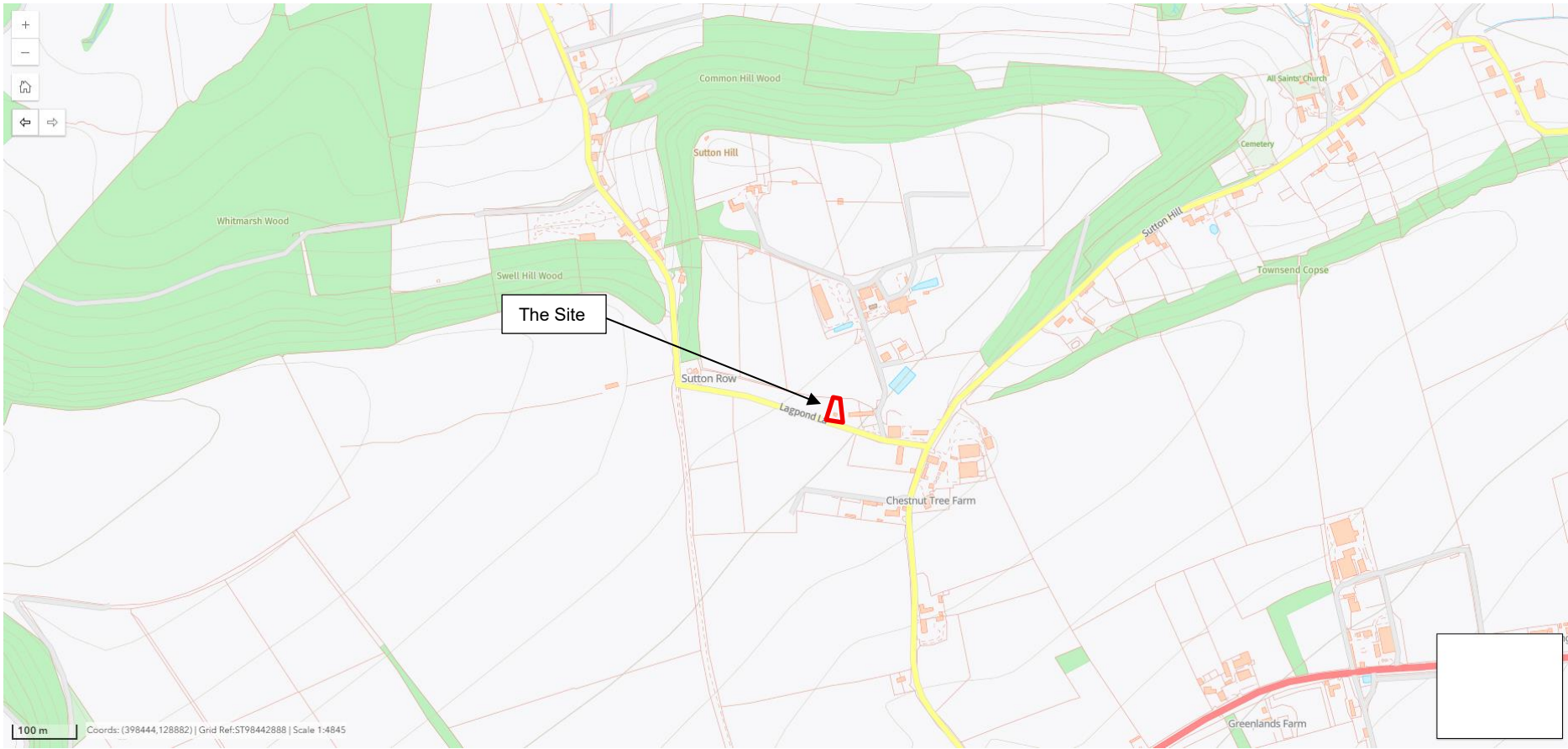
Landscaping and Habitat Enhancement

- 5.11 Eight native fruit trees to be planted at the edge of the wooded area to provide some 'woodland edge' to the trees. The fruit trees can be apple, wild cherry, bird cherry, crab apple etc
- 5.12 A row of new native hedgerow planted along the site boundary to the west, this will have a range of at least six native woody species in it in a double row. Native bulbs planted at the base of the hedgerow. This will be fenced off with post and rail fencing so that it will be retained long term.
- 5.13 Woodland understorey planted with native bluebells, snowdrops, daffodils etc at a density of 10-20 per sqm.

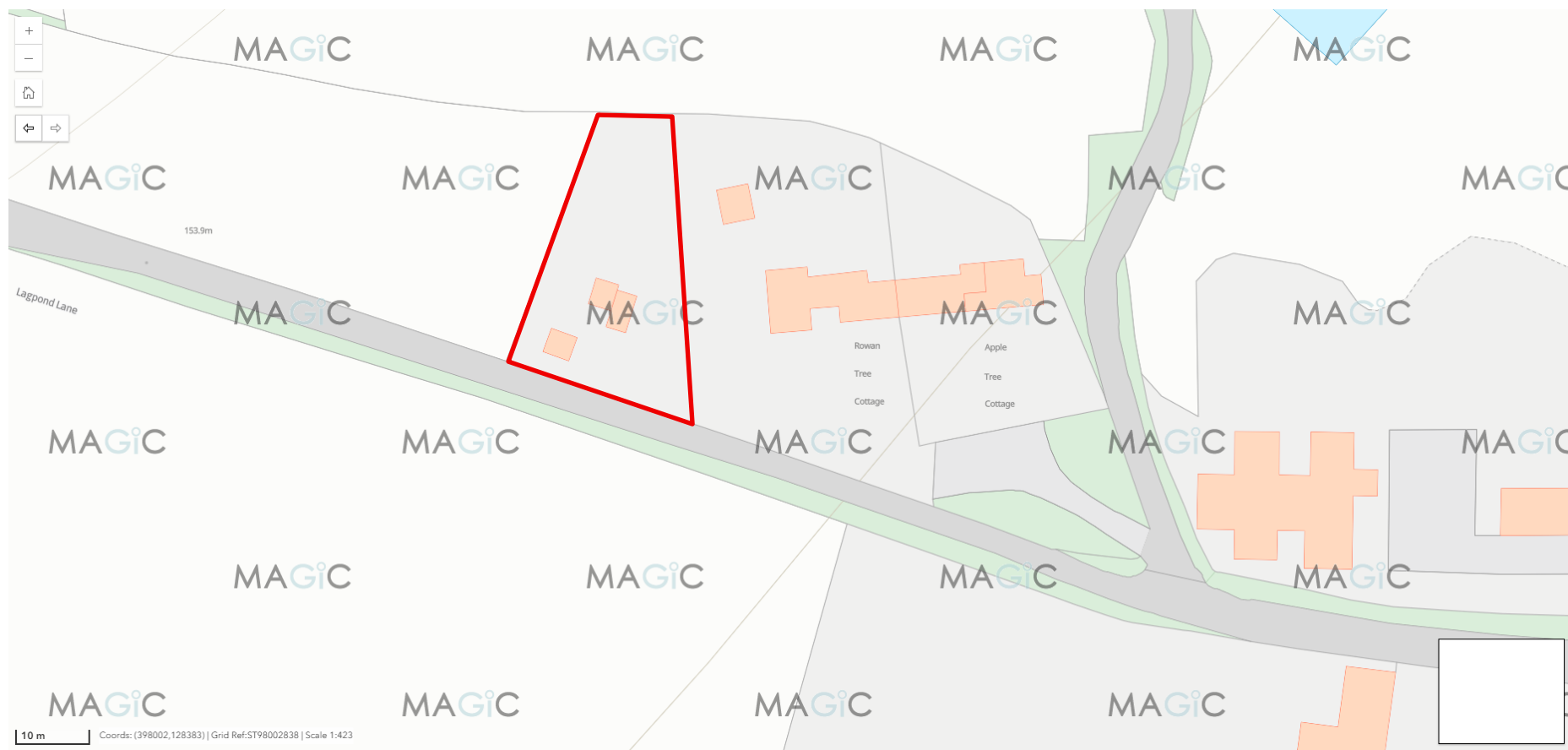
Pollution prevention and drainage

- 5.14 It is important that the proposals follow appropriate pollution prevention guidelines (PPG 6) and drainage guidelines (Defra guidelines for Sustainable Urban Drainage) to protect watercourses, ponds, groundwater and other habitats connected hydrologically to the site.

Appendix A: Site location



Appendix B: Existing plan, aerial and UKHabs





Vegetated Garden	
Trees	
Developed Land Sealed Surface (Greenhouse)	
Artificial unvegetated unsealed surface (sheds and container)	
Native Hedgerow	



Appendix C: Proposals





Proposed South Elevation
Scale - 1:100



Proposed West Elevation
Scale - 1:100

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1:100 0 1 2 3 4 5

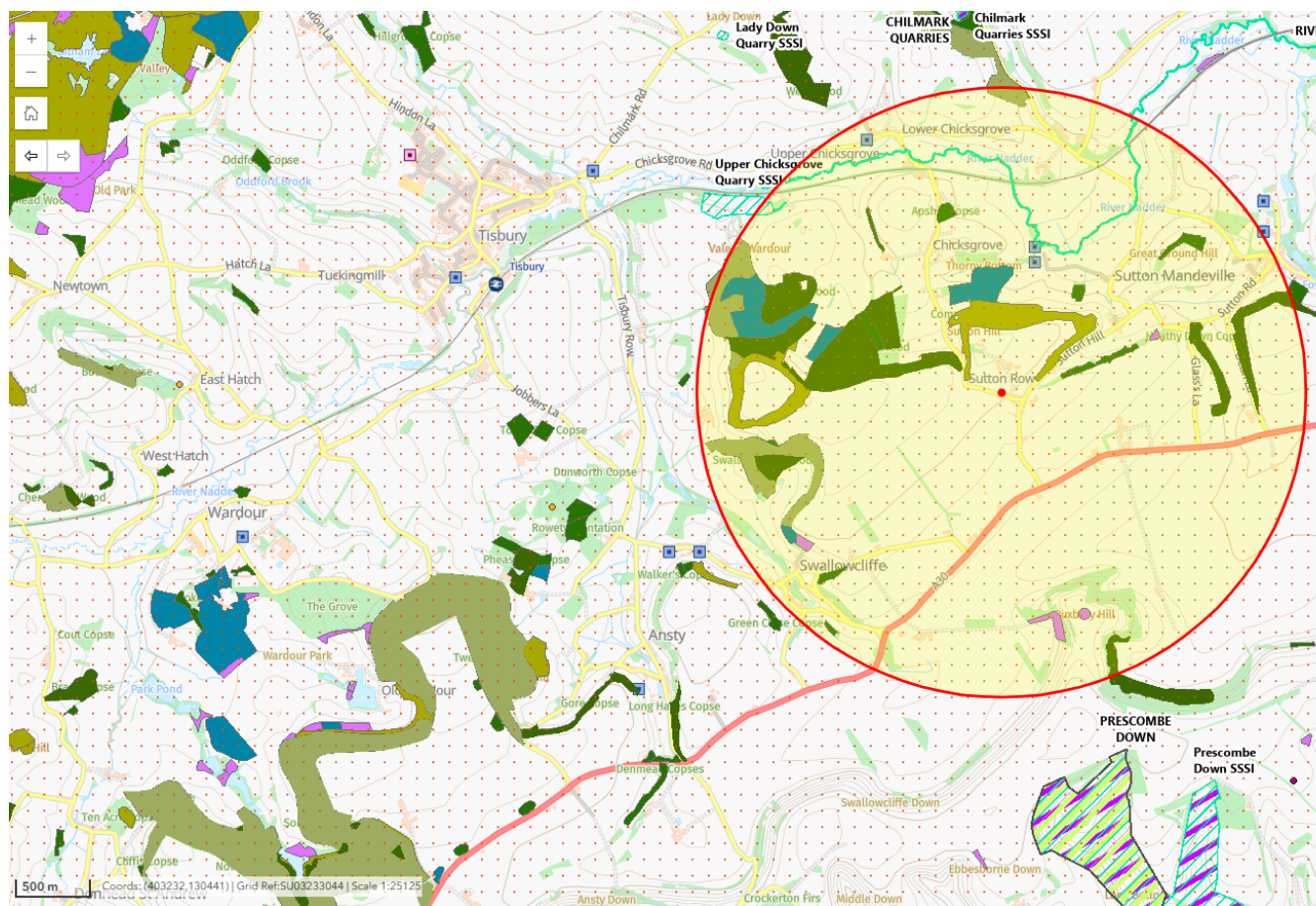
Rev:	Description	Drawn By:	Date
Client:	Mr & Mrs Hoey	Drawn By:	JF
Dwg Title:	Proposed Elevations	Checked By:	JF
Project:	New Dwelling, Lagpond Lane, Sutton Mandeville, SP3 5NG	Scale:	1:100 on A3
Job No.:	5332	Date:	18/08/2026
	P02	Revision:	-

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Appendix D: Protected sites, habitats and species data from MAGiC database within 2km



Legend

- Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (England)
- Local Nature Reserves (England)
- National Nature Reserves (England)
- Sites of Special Scientific Interest (England)
- Special Areas of Conservation (England)
- Special Protection Areas (England)

Granted European Protected Species Applications (England)

- Amphibian
- Bat
- Cetacean
- Invertebrate
- Other Mammal

- Plant
- Reptile
- Great Crested Newt Class
- Survey Licence Returns (England)

Great Crested Newt Pond Surveys 2017 - 2019

- 10 FIG present
- 10 FIG absent
- 10 FIG inconclusive
- 8 FIG present
- 6 FIG present
- 4 FIG present
- 4 FIG absent
- 4 FIG inconclusive

Appendix E: Mitigation and Enhancement Plan

Eight native fruit trees to be planted at the edge of the wooded area to provide some edge to the trees. The fruit trees can be apple, wild cherry, bird cherry, crab apple etc.



Woodland understorey planted with native bluebells, snowdrops, daffodils etc at a density of 10-20 per sqm.



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Driveway Gravel Surface
Paving
1:200 0 2 4 6 8 10

Rev	Description	Drawn By	Date
Client:	Mr & Mrs Hoey	Drawn By:	JF
Dwg Title:	Site Plan	Checked By:	-
Project:	New Dwelling, Lagpond Lane, Sutton Mandeville, SP3 5NG	Scale:	1:200 on A3
Job No.:	5332	Date:	17/09/2026
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Tawny Owl Box in a tree



A row of new native hedgerow planted along the site boundary to the west. Native bulbs planted at the base of the hedgerow. This will be fenced off with post and rail fencing so that it will be retained long term.

All boundary fencing will include gaps of at least 100mm wide by 100mm high for hedgehog access





Proposed West Elevation
Scale - 1:100



Proposed East Elevation
Scale - 1:100



Proposed North Elevation
Scale - 1:100



Four integrated bat boxes, two on the western and two on the eastern side.



Three swift nest bricks at the apex of the gable to the north



Front porch designed to be suitable for roosting bats and nesting birds. This will be constructed from wood with bats and birds able to fly in

Lighting Plan. All lighting will be down lighting pointed away from any vegetation to the front so these areas are maintained dark below 1lux.

Located under soffits

Downlighter at a height of no more than 2.5m

Area to be maintained below 1 lux to preserve dark corridors for bats

Site Plan
Scale - 1:200

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Driveway Gravel Surface
Paving

1:200 0 2 4 6 8 10

Rev	Description	Drawn By	Date
Client:	Mr & Mrs Hoey	Drawn By:	JF
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	P04	Revision:	-

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Appendix F: Protected species legislation

Amphibians

Natterjack toad, pool frog and great crested newt are protected under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended). They are also afforded additional protection under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended).

Natterjack toad, common toad, great crested newt and northern pool frog are also Species of Principal Importance (SPIs).

Reptiles

Smooth snake and sand lizard are protected under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended). They are afforded additional protection under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended).

Adder, grass snake, common lizard and slow-worm are all protected from killing and injury under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended). All UK reptile species are SPIs.

Birds

All wild birds are protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended). This includes damage and destruction of their nests whilst in use, or construction. Species listed under Schedule 1 of the Act, such as barn owl, are afforded protection from disturbance during the nesting season.

The following 50 bird species are SPIs: lesser redpoll, aquatic warbler, marsh warbler, skylark, white-fronted goose, tree pipit, scaup, bittern, dark-bellied brent goose, stone-curlew, nightjar, hen harrier, northern harrier, hawfinch, corncrake, cuckoo, Bewick's swan, lesser spotted woodpecker, corn bunting, ciril bunting, yellowhammer, reed bunting, red grouse, herring gull, black-tailed godwit, linnet, twite, Savi's warbler, grasshopper warbler, woodlark, common scoter, yellow wagtail, spotted flycatcher, curlew, house sparrow, tree sparrow, grey partridge, wood warbler, willow tit, marsh tit, dunnoek, Balearic shearwater, bullfinch, roseate tern, turtle dove, starling, black grouse, song thrush, ring ouzel and lapwing.

Birds are also categorised according to their level of conservation concern indicated by their population status and stability. These are known as the Birds of Conservation Concern (BoCC4), Red, Amber and Green lists (Eaton et al, 2015). Where red and amber species are present, their conservation status should be considered in determining the likely impacts of proposed projects and plans.

The conservation status of birds recorded during the survey was assessed against the following criteria:

- EC Birds Directive 2009 Annex 1,
- Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (As Amended) Schedule 1, (Table 1, WCA1)
- Natural Environment and rural communities (NERC) Act 2006 – Section 41
- Red and Amber lists of Birds of Conservation Concern in England (BoCC4)

Badger

Badger is protected under the Protection of Badgers Act 1992. Under this legislation it is an offence to kill or injure a badger; to damage, destroy or block access to a badger sett; or to disturb badger in its sett. The Act also states the conditions for the Protection of Badgers licence requirements.

Bats

All bat species are protected under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended), as detailed above. Bats are further protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended), making it an offence to:

- Deliberately or recklessly damage or destroy any structure or place which bat(s) use for shelter or protection.
- Disturb bat(s) while occupying a structure or place which it uses for shelter or protection.
- Obstruct access to any structure or place which they use for shelter or protection.

Furthermore, seven bat species are SPIs, covered under Section 41 of the NERC Act 2006. These include western barbastelle, Bechstein's, noctule, soprano pipistrelle, brown long-eared, lesser horseshoe and greater horseshoe.

Hazel dormouse

Hazel dormouse is protected under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended). It is afforded additional protection under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended), including obstruction to a place of shelter or rest.

Hazel dormouse is also a SPI.

Hedgerow

Under the Hedgerows Regulations 1997 it is against the law to remove or destroy certain hedgerows without permission from the LPA, which are also the enforcement body for offences created by the Regulations. LPA permission is normally required before removing hedges that are at least 20 m in length, more than 30 years old and contain certain plant species. The authority will assess the importance of the hedgerow using criteria set out in the regulations. The regulations do not apply to hedgerows within the curtilage of, or marking a boundary of the curtilage of, a dwelling house.

Hedgerow is a Habitat of Principal Importance (HPI).

Other mammals

West European hedgehog, brown hare, mountain hare, pine marten, harvest mouse, polecat and red squirrel are all SPIs.

The following mammals are listed under Schedule 5 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended): wildcat, brown hare (Schedule 5A), mountain hare (Schedule 5A), pine marten and red squirrel.

Non-native invasive plant species

Schedule 9 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) is a list of non-native plant species for which Section 14 of the Act applies. It is an offence to plant, or otherwise cause to grow in the wild species listed under Schedule 9 of the act. These include, but are not limited to:

- Himalayan balsam
- Cotoneaster sp.
- Japanese knotweed
- Giant hogweed

Habitats of Principal Importance

Section 41 of the NERC Act 2006 details 56 HPIs, of which the following could be present in south-east England: Lowland calcareous grassland, Lowland dry acid grassland, Lowland meadows, Lowland Heathland, Open Mosaic Habitats on Previously Developed Land, Lowland fens, Lowland raised bog, Reedbeds, Lowland beech and yew woodland, Lowland mixed deciduous woodland and Wet woodland.

Impacts to HPI are of material planning consideration.

Ancient woodland and veteran trees

The NPPF 2021 states that 'Planning permission should be refused for development resulting in the loss or deterioration of irreplaceable habitats, including ancient woodland and the loss of aged or veteran trees found outside ancient woodland, unless the need for, and benefits of, the development in that location clearly outweigh the loss'. In addition, Natural England's standing advice for ancient woodland indicates that a 15 m buffer is retained between ancient woodland and any works or development. Ancient woodlands, and ancient and veteran trees, may also be protected by Tree Preservation Orders.

National Planning Policy Framework (2026)

The National Planning Policy Framework sets out the government's policies for plan-making and for making decisions on development proposals in England. It is a material consideration of critical importance in both contexts. This version replaces the previous National Planning Policy Framework published in December 2024.

Environment Act (2021)

The Environment Act (2021) achieved Royal Assent in November 2021.

An Act to make provision about targets, plans and policies for improving the natural environment; for statements and reports about environmental protection; for the Office for Environmental Protection; about waste and resource efficiency; about air quality; for the recall of products that fail to meet environmental standards; about water; about nature and biodiversity; for conservation covenants; about the regulation of chemicals; and for connected purposes.

The "10% net gain" requirement in the UK's Environment Act 2021 refers to Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG), which mandates that most new developments must deliver a 10% increase in biodiversity compared to the pre-development state. This is achieved by creating or improving habitats on-site, off-site, or through a combination of both, and the gain must be maintained for at least 30 years. The requirement became mandatory for major developments in February 2024 and for small sites in April 2024.

Countryside and Right of Way Act 2000

Amends and strengthens the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended). It also details habitats and species for which conservation measures should be promoted.

Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006

Section 40 of the Act places a duty on local planning authorities to conserve and enhance biodiversity in England whilst carrying out their normal functions. Section 41 comprises a list of Habitats of Principal Importance (HPIs) and Species of Principal Importance (SPIs) which should be considered.

The LPA will need to have particular regard to any relevant local nature recovery strategies, and any relevant species conservation strategy or protected site strategy prepared by Natural England.

Hedgerows Regulations 1997

Under these regulations it is an offence to intentionally or recklessly remove, or cause or permits another person to remove, a hedgerow. Important hedgerows are defined in Section 4 of the Regulations. This includes hedgerows that have existed for over 30 years or satisfies at least one criteria listed in Part II of Schedule 1.

Wild Mammals (Protection) Act 1996

Under this act wild mammals are protected from the intentional unnecessary suffering by crushing and asphyxiation.

ODPM Circular 06/05: Biodiversity and Geological Conservation – Statutory Obligations and Their Impact within the Planning System (2005)

The Government's Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM) Circular 06/05 (ODPM 2005) presents the legal requirement for planning authorities with regard to statutory designated sites. Planning approval should not be granted where impacts to statutory designated sites that are not connected to the site maintenance for nature conservation, or will have a significant effect on the site's conservation objectives and/or affect the site's integrity. Permission may be granted if the proposed development overrides public interest. The presence of a protected species is a material planning consideration. The Circular clearly outlines that it is essential that the presence or otherwise of protected species, and the extent that they may be affected by the proposed development, is established before planning permission is granted. Otherwise, all relevant considerations may not have been addressed in making the decision.