



# **PRELIMINARY ECOLOGICAL APPRAISAL**

## **LAND TO THE REAR OF LING VILLA MICKLETON**

**SAL-22-01  
JUNE 2022**



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# PRELIMINARY ECOLOGICAL APPRAISAL

## LAND TO THE REAR OF LING VILLA MICKLETON COUNTY DURHAM DL12 0LL

**GRID REF  
NY96582377**

## REPORT FOR SUMMERHOUSE ARCHITECTS LTD

### Quality Assurance

Version	Prepared by	Date	Checked by	Date	Approved by	Date
R1	Connor Pimm	22/06/2022	Hannah Currie	22/06/2022	Graeme Skinner	22/06/2022

*This assessment is intended to provide an accurate description of findings from the desktop study and from survey work undertaken on the date shown; however, all ecological data has a shelf life, which is dependant on the discretion of the governing body overseeing licencing or condition application. This is usually one survey season. This assessment cannot fully account for the reliability of third-party data provided or for any changes to site conditions following the completion of the survey work due to activities carried out on site or the dynamic nature of the natural environment. All work carried out by Naturally Wild Consultants Ltd is subject to our Terms and Conditions.*

*The report has been produced in accordance with current best practice guidelines.*

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Naturally Wild were instructed to undertake a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA) at land to the rear of Ling Villa, Mickleton. The site comprised a stone and rubble infill building with a concrete and traditional slate tile roof, as well as a second stone building with a tin roof and an area of semi-improved grassland to the northern aspect of site. The proposals are for the conversion of the two buildings into accommodation.

The PEA comprised two parts: a desktop study and a survey visit. The desktop study collated available public information regarding the biodiversity of the area, including the habitat structure of the site and surrounding area and the presence of any statutory or non-statutory designated sites. In addition, biological records within 1 km of the site were requested from the Environmental Records Information Centre North East (ERIC).

The survey visit consisted of an assessment of all habitats on site and in the surrounding area to determine their ecological value and was conducted on by ecologists Graeme Skinner MRSB, Bat License holder – ref: 2020-10747-CLS-CLS, Connor Pimm BA (Hons), Katie Pearson MSc (Hons)

The site was found to be of moderate ecological value. The building was deemed to be of high value for roosting bats and nesting birds. The surrounding habitat could provide some suitable habitat for hedgehog.

Following the site assessment and in review of the findings, a series of ecological mitigation and enhancement measures to be incorporated into the works have been outlined. These include a minimum of two bat activity surveys, as well as nesting bird surveys and works to be carried out outside of the bird nesting season, where possible. Full details are provided in Section 5.

Providing the recommendations of this report are implemented in full, Naturally Wild would conclude that there will not be a significant impact to protected species or habitats as a result of the proposed works.

## SUMMARY OF POTENTIAL ECOLOGICAL CONSTRAINTS

### Summary Assessment

Works can start only once authorised by an ecologist.	Additional ecological works required.	No action required.

Potential Ecological Constraints		
Designated sites		
Ecologically valuable watercourses		
Plants and habitats		
Badgers		
Bats		
Dormice		
Great crested newts		
Nesting birds		
Otters		
Reptiles		
Water voles		
White-clawed crayfish		
Invasive species		
Other		

Recommended Actions		
Requirement for formal Environmental Impact Assessment		
Requirement for consultation with statutory environmental bodies		
Requirement for 'assent' from Natural England (e.g., within or adjacent to a European site or SSSI)		
Requirement for further ecological surveys		
Requirement for protected species licensing		
Requirement for an ecologist to oversee the works (see below)		

**The contractor should inform the ecologist of the works programme with sufficient notice to coordinate the following**

Ecologist to be on site before works begin (includes vegetation clearance)		
Ecologist to be on site during the first day of works		
Ecologist to be on site throughout the works		
Ecologist to be on site as the works are completed		
Ecologist to be on site once all the works is completed		

## PRELIMINARY ECOLOGICAL APPRAISAL: LAND TO THE REAR OF LING VILLA, MICKLETON

### 1 INTRODUCTION

Naturally Wild were instructed to undertake a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA) at land to the rear of Ling Villa, Mickleton (Figure 1). The site comprised a stone and rubble infill building with a concrete and traditional slate tile roof, as well as a second stone building with a tin roof and an area of semi-improved grassland to the northern aspect of site. The main objective of the assessment was to determine the suitability of the site to support protected species and to check for any evidence of the presence of protected species, as well as the presence of any protected or notable habitats.

The proposals are for the conversion of the two buildings into accommodation. As part of the planning process, an ecological assessment is required to determine if any protected or notable species/habitats are likely to be affected by the proposed works, and to show how any negative ecological impacts would be mitigated and compensated.



Figure 1. Site location plan. Red line shows the area proposed for re-development.

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## 2 RELEVANT LEGISLATION

British wildlife is protected by a range of legislation, the most important being the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended), The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended), and the Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006.

The Wildlife and Countryside Act, as amended mainly by the Countryside Rights of Way (CRoW) Act 2000, protects species listed in Schedules 5 and 8 of the Act (animals and plants respectively) from being killed, injured, and used for trade. For some species, such as great crested newts and all bat species, the provisions of this Act go further to protect animals from being disturbed or taken from the wild and protects aspects of their habitats. The Act also stipulates that offences occur regardless of whether they were committed intentionally or recklessly. The parts of this legislation that apply to most reptile species are in regard to killing, injury and trade only and do not protect their habitat, nor are they protected from disturbance or from being taken from their habitat.

The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations is the English enactment of European legislation and provides similar but subtly different protection for species listed on Schedules 2 and 4 of those regulations. Species to which these provisions apply are known as European Protected Species. Activities that might cause offences to be committed can be legitimised by obtaining a licence from the relevant statutory body.

The NERC Act 2006 extends the biodiversity duty set out in the CRoW Act to public bodies and statutory undertakers to ensure due regard to the conservation of biodiversity. Section 40 of the Act states: *“every public authority must, in exercising its functions, have regard, so far as is consistent with the proper exercise of those functions, to the purpose of conserving biodiversity.”* Section 41 of the Act sets out a list of habitats and species that are considered to be of principal importance for the conservation of biodiversity in England. These species may be referred to as ‘priority species/habitats’ or ‘UK Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) priority species/habitats.’

Further details on the legislation protecting species of British wildlife relevant to this assessment can be found in Section 8.1 of this report.



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### 3 METHODOLOGY

#### 3.1 Overview

The PEA comprised a desktop study and a survey visit. All work undertaken has been completed in line with official guidelines produced by Natural England and the Chartered Institute for Ecology and Environmental Management (CIEEM), and British Standard document BS 42020: 2013 '*Biodiversity – Code of practice for planning and development.*'

The desktop study collated available public information regarding the biodiversity of the area, including the habitat structure of the site and surrounding area and the presence of any statutory or non-statutory designated sites, and any records of previously granted European Protected Species (EPS) mitigation licences in relation to certain species, using the Multi-Agency Geographic Information for the Countryside (MAGIC) resource, along with a search of the Local Planning Authority's website for any trees in the area covered by Tree Preservation Orders (TPOs). In addition, biological records within 1 km of the site were requested from the Environmental Records Information Centre North East (ERIC), which included records of protected and notable species and any nearby non-statutory designated sites (Local Wildlife Sites, Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation, etc.) not available through MAGIC.

The objective of the survey was to ascertain if any protected species may be using the site, document the habitats present and determine any potential ecological impacts during and following the completion of the works. The survey would be completed under suitable weather conditions and by experienced ecologists. Further to this, the results of the desktop study and site survey would be assessed to determine the ecological impacts posed by the work, any additional survey work required, and how such impacts should be mitigated and compensated for.

The survey work and the preparation of this report has been conducted by ecologists Graeme Skinner MRSB, Bat License holder – ref: 2020-10747-CLS-CLS, Connor Pimm BA (Hons), Katie Pearson MSc (Hons) who are experienced in undertaking ecological assessments.

### 3.2 Survey Area

The application site is located at Grid Reference NY96582377 and can be accessed via the B6277. The assessment focused on the application site, as well as all habitats in the immediate surrounding area (where access was available).



Figure 2. Location of the surveyed area. Site boundary is shown by the red line.

(Image taken from Google Earth Pro: ©2022 Map Data Google).

### 3.3 Survey Constraints

There were no constraints with regards to site access or completion of the survey objectives across the site.

### 3.4 Field Survey

#### 3.4.1 Habitat Assessment

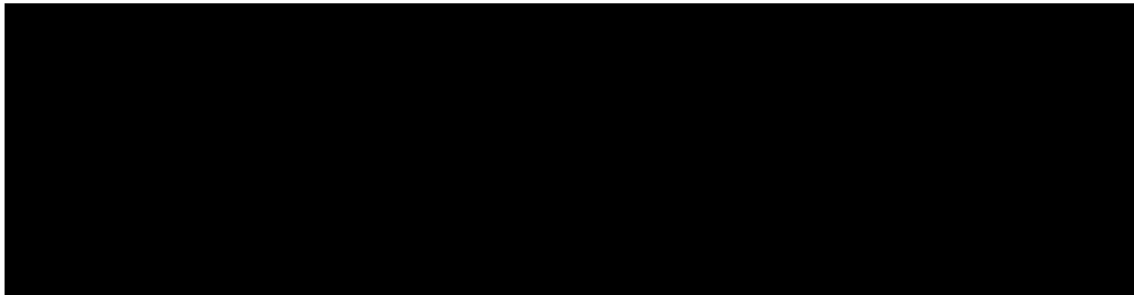
The survey was carried out on Tuesday 17<sup>th</sup> May 2022 and consisted of an assessment and classification of the habitats on and adjacent to the site, based on their structure and the dominant vegetation coverage, where present, following the UKHabs system of habitat classification (UK Habitat Classification Working

Group, 2018). Following this, the habitats present were assessed for their suitability to support protected species and for the presence of any evidence of protected species. Each habitat present was then assigned a level of value (negligible, low, moderate, or high) on a geographical scale from site level to European/international level, with reference to guidance provided by CIEEM (2018).

Weather conditions during the initial survey were temperature 19°C, cloud cover (Oktas) 7, wind (Beaufort) 3 and conditions were dry with no precipitation during the extent of the survey.

### 3.4.2 Protected Species Impact Assessment

Based on the habitats present, the site was assessed with particular regard to determine the presence or otherwise of badgers (*Meles meles*), bats, great crested newts (GCN) (*Triturus cristatus*), nesting birds, and reptiles. An overview of the survey methods used is outlined below.



**Bats:** An assessment of the on-site buildings was carried out in order to identify the presence of any potential roost features (PRFs) for bats, and/or evidence of roosting bats, in accordance with the current Bat Conservation Trust (BCT) survey guidelines (Collins, 2016). An external inspection of the buildings was carried out, focussing on features that may provide roosting opportunities or access points to roosting features internally, such as the roof and ridge tiles, soffits and fascias. An internal inspection was also carried out, with any roof spaces present checked for any evidence of bats. The buildings were then categorised based on their assessed value for roosting bats, in accordance with the BCT guidelines, detailed in Table 1.

**Table 1. Guidelines for assessing bat roosting potential of structures and trees.**

Suitability	Habitat description	Further action required?
Negligible	Negligible habitat features on site likely to be used by roosting bats.	No further bat risk assessment effort or bat activity surveys are required.
Low	A structure with 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).	<b>Structures:</b> One bat activity survey is required to determine whether the structure is being utilised by roosting bats; this may be a dusk or dawn survey. This survey must occur between May and August. The discovery of a roosting bat during this single bat activity survey will require further survey effort.

	A tree of sufficient size and age to contain PRFs, but with none seen from the ground or features seen with only very limited roosting potential.	<b>Trees:</b> No further bat risk assessment effort or bat activity surveys are required.
<b>Moderate</b>	A structure or tree with one or more potential roost sites that could be used by bats due to their size, shelter, protection conditions and surrounding habitat, but unlikely to support a roost of high conservation status.	Two bat activity surveys are required to determine whether the structure or tree is being utilised by roosting bats; this should be comprised of one dusk and one dawn survey. One survey must occur between May and August.
<b>High</b>	A structure or tree with one or more potential roost sites that are obviously suitable for use by larger numbers of bats on a more regular basis and potentially for longer periods of time due to their size, shelter, protection, conditions and surrounding habitat.	Three bat activity surveys are required to determine whether the structure or tree is being utilised by roosting bats; this should be comprised of one dusk and one dawn survey, with an additional survey (either dusk or dawn). Two surveys must occur between May and August.

Evidence of roosting bats includes: bat droppings in, around or below an entrance hole; staining around an entrance hole; audible squeaking at dusk or in warm weather; smoothening of surfaces around cavity or an entrance hole; distinctive smell of bats.

The assessment was completed using binoculars and powerful torches. An endoscope was also available to check any small gaps/cracks for evidence of bats. The initial assessment was completed by Graeme Skinner MRSB, Bat License holder – ref: 2020-10747-CLS-CLS, Katie Pearson MSc (Hons) and Connor Pimm BA (Hons).

**Great Crested Newts:** An assessment of the habitats present on the site was carried out in order to determine their suitability to support foraging and sheltering GCN, and any natural or artificial refugia (such as logs, stones, discarded building materials, etc.) present were also lifted to check for the presence of GCN.

**Nesting Birds:** The habitats on site were assessed to determine their suitability for nesting, with a check carried out for the presence of any active nests or any evidence of nesting behaviour.

**Reptiles:** The assessment for reptiles followed survey guidance provided by Froglife (1999), with an assessment of the habitats present carried out to determine their suitability to support reptiles for shelter, foraging and basking, and with any refugia lifted to check for the presence of reptiles or evidence of reptiles, such as sloughs (shed skins).

**Other Wildlife:** In accordance with good practice, the site was checked for the presence of any other protected/notable species, with particular regard to any other species highlighted in the desktop study.

**Invasive Species:** The site was also surveyed for the presence of any invasive, non-native flora or fauna.

## 4 RESULTS

### 4.1 Desktop Study

#### 4.1.1 Designated Sites

**Statutory Designated Sites:** There is one statutory designated site within 1 km of the site boundary in the form of an area of outstanding natural beauty (AONB) located approximately 193 m to the south of the site at its closest point. Furthermore, the North Pennine Moors special protection area and Moor House – Upper Teesdale special conservation area are located approximately 2227 m to the west of site at its closest point.

The proposed development will be small scale, contained to areas within the red line boundary, and the site is located at least 193 m from the AONB and 2227 m from the special protection areas and special conservation areas. On this basis, any direct or indirect impacts resulting from works during the construction phase (such as direct damage or disturbance, significant noise pollution, light spill, dust deposition, vibration, or other forms of pollution) are expected to be negligible.

For the same reasons, any indirect impacts (in line with those mentioned above) are also expected to be negligible.

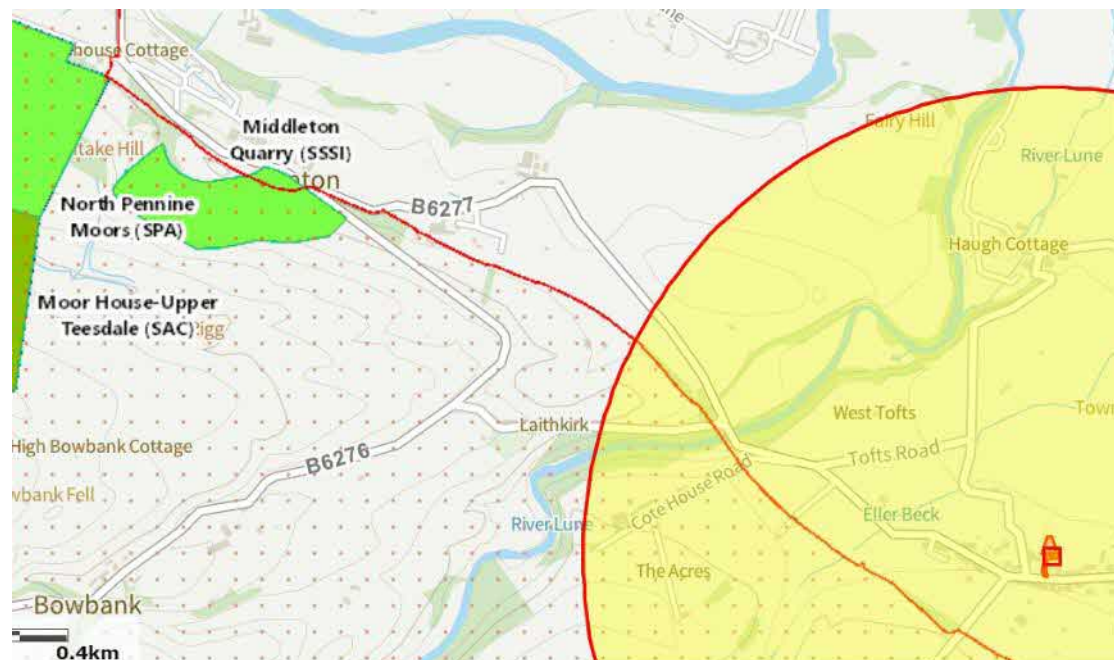


Figure 3. Location of the surveyed site in relation to the surrounding designated sites.

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**Non-statutory Designated Sites:** There are no non-statutory sites within 1 km of the site. The nearest non statutory site is a drinking water protected area located approximately 2069 m to the southwest of the site. Due to the scale of the works and the distance from site, it is expected that any impacts from the development, both direct and indirect, will be negligible.



**Table 3. Statutory and non-statutory designations in the areas surrounding the site.**

Designation	Reference	Name	Area (ha)	Distance and direction from site
Area of outstanding natural beauty	AONB	North Pennines Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty	200000	193 m south
Site of special scientific interest	SSSI	Bollihope, Pikestone, Eggleston and Woodland Fells	7949	2183 m to north
Site of special scientific interest	SSSI	West Park Meadows	6.7	2491 m southwest
Special area of conservation	SAC	Moor House – Upper Teesdale	7400	2251 m west

**Notable Habitats:** There are four areas of deciduous woodland and one area of good quality semi-improved grassland within 1 km of the site. The closest of which is located approximately 477 m to the north of the site boundary at its closest point. These habitats are considered an HoPI under the NERC Act 2006, as they offer suitable sheltering, foraging, and commuting habitat for a range of UK species. Trees offer suitable nesting and roosting opportunities for birds and bats, and the associated woodland understory and ground layer in these habitats provides areas in which small mammals, amphibians and reptiles can commute and forage. In addition, woodland habitats can harbour a diverse array of invertebrates due to the suitable foraging habitat and deadwood present.

Notwithstanding the above, due to the distance from the application site, and the works being restricted to the footprint of the site boundary, any impacts to any nearby notable habitats, either direct or indirect are expected to be negligible.

#### 4.1.2 Biological Records

A total of 579 records were returned from Environmental Records Information Centre North East (ERIC), which can be separated into the following groups: one amphibian record (common toad, *Bufo bufo*); 459 bird records (78 species); 22 bony fish records (five species); ten flowering plant records (eight species); several historic lichen records; 15 terrestrial mammal records, including one European otter (*Lutra lutra*) and [REDACTED]; and 53 bat records (four species). The importance of individual species records in the context of the proposals are discussed in Section 4.3 – Protected Species, where and if appropriate. A full list of received records is available on request with the permission of the records centre, excluding records of sensitive species.

## 4.2 Site Assessment

### 4.2.1 On-Site Ecological Features

The site comprised a stone and rubble infill building with a concrete and traditional slate tile roof, as well as a second stone building with a tin roof and an area of semi-improved grassland to the northern aspect of site as shown in Figure 4. The general ecological value of each habitat is described in the paragraphs below, with any notable species-specific findings detailed in Section 4.3. A UKHabs habitat map showing the distribution of the habitats on site is provided at the end of this section in Figure 5, and a series of site photographs giving an overview of the habitats present are provided in Section 6.



Figure 4. Locations of buildings on-site. B1 highlighted in orange, B2 highlighted in green, B3 highlighted in purple  
(Image taken from Google Earth Pro: ©2022 Map Data Google)

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### **B1 – main building**

B1 was constructed of traditional stone with a rubble infill, concrete and traditional slate tiled roof. The interior of the building consisted of several rooms to the ground floor which were used as workshops/storage areas, with a loft void to the first floor. The interior of the building was largely insulated and was constructed using timber frames, as well as steel beams. The internal loft space of B1 had a confirmed active jackdaw (*Corvus monedula*) nest, as well as several swallow (*Hirundo rustica*) nests which were not confirmed to be active at the time of the survey. House sparrows (*Passer domesticus*) also appeared to be utilising the gaps in the southern elevation of B1 for nesting purposes. B1 also had some bat droppings present in the loft space. Spanning the southern elevation of the building were swathes of ivy (*Hedera helix*) as well as some ivy-leaved toadflax (*Cymbalaria muralis*). Due to the confirmed presence of active bird nests and bat droppings in the loft space, further survey effort is required to assess the presence/absence of bats and it is recommended that any clearance works are carried out outside of the bird nesting season.

### **B2 – stone outbuilding**

Immediately adjacent to B1 to the eastern aspect is a small stone outbuilding with a traditional concrete tile roof. The building is of similar construction to B1 and was also deemed to be highly suitable for roosting bats. The building also had several swallow nests present. Due to the PRFs viewed externally and the presence of bird nests within the building, further survey effort is required to assess the presence/absence of bats and active bird nests.

### **B3 – stone outbuilding**

B2 is a smaller structure to the south-eastern aspect of the site. The building was primarily constructed of stone with a metal tin roof. The building was assessed as being of moderate value for roosting bats due to gaps in the stonework being present that could be utilised by roosting bats. Furthermore, the large ivy growth on the roof of the building could act as suitable nesting and foraging habitat for nesting birds. Due to this, further survey effort is required to establish the presence/absence of bats, as well as confirm or deny the presence of active nests.

### **Semi-improved grassland**

To the northern aspect of site is an area of semi-improved grassland. Common species here included spear thistle (*Cirsium vulgare*), white clover (*Trifolium repens*), perennial rye-grass (*Lolium perenne*), meadow foxtail (*Alopecurus pratensis*) and cuckooflower (*Cardamine pratensis*). The semi-improved grassland could provide some suitable foraging habitat for species such as the western European hedgehog (*Erinaceus europaeus*). However, due to the lack of species diversity and managed and disturbed nature of the habitat, it was assessed as being of moderate ecological value at site level.

### **Hardstanding**

To the southern aspect of site was an area of hardstanding in the form of a gravel driveway. This was deemed to be of negligible ecological value as it is heavily managed and disturbed and as such, offers sub-optimal habitat for UK wildlife.





Figure 5. UKHabs habitat map.

#### 4.2.2 Off-Site Ecological Features

Immediately adjacent to the development is the town of Mickleton. Within the town are residential buildings with associated gardens and hardstanding. Amenity grassland was considered to be of negligible value at a wider level as it compromises largely common species and is heavily managed and regularly disturbed and as such, offers sub-optimal habitat for UK wildlife. Hardstanding in the form of driveways and parking is a habitat of inherently low ecological value as it is regularly disturbed and lacks any vegetation in which wildlife could safely forage, shelter, or commute. Consequently, this area of hardstanding was assessed as negligible ecological value. Residential areas are inherently of lower ecological value due to the lack of suitable habitat provided by hardstanding and built structures; however, the scattered trees and hedgerows present within gardens could provide some suitable nesting and potential roosting habitat for birds and bats. In addition, vegetated gardens could provide suitable habitat for amphibians and small mammals.

Further surrounding habitats consist of arable fields and their associated scattered trees and hedgerows. Arable land is typically of lower ecological value, due to the management cycle it undergoes preventing a mature assemblage of vegetation from developing, which in turn provides sub-optimal conditions for most wildlife. Notwithstanding this, the associated hedgerows and trees can provide suitable nesting, commuting and roosting habitat for birds and bats, as well as commuting and sheltering habitat for small mammals and amphibians.

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Approximately 477 m to the north of site are areas of deciduous woodland. This provides excellent habitat for nesting, feeding and roosting bats and birds, as well as open areas for larger mammals such as deer. Mature deciduous woodland comprises a great variety of species and is seen as a priority habitat in the UK. Due to the distance and small-scale nature of the development, any impacts upon the woodland and the flora and fauna it supports are likely to be negligible.

### **4.3 Protected Species**

#### **4.3.1 Badgers**

[REDACTED] No evidence of badger activity such as tracks, latrines or snuffle holes was recorded on-site and the site lacked any suitable sett creation habitat, being predominantly semi-improved grassland and residential buildings. Overall, the site was considered low value for badger due to the lack of suitable habitats on-site and the prevalence of a large main road to the south of the site, providing a barrier for commuting. Overall, badgers are considered likely absent from the site and as such, the impacts from the proposed development on them are expected to be negligible.

#### **4.3.2 Bats**

A total of 53 bat records were returned from ERIC. No European Protected Species Licenses were returned for bats within 1 km of MAGIC. The semi-improved grassland and some of the isolated trees offer moderately suitable foraging and commuting habitat for bats. External PRFs were visible on all faces of the building and bat droppings were observed in the loft void to the eastern aspect of B1. Due to the presence of PRFs externally on B1, and the faeces located internally, the building must be considered to be a confirmed bat roost and is considered to be highly suitable for roosting bats.

#### **4.3.3 Great Crested Newts**

One amphibian record was returned from ERIC. No European Protected Species Licenses were returned for GCN on MAGIC. There were no ponds within 500 m of the site. The adjacent semi-improved grassland which formed the dominant habitat within and immediately surrounding the red line boundary was deemed to be sub-optimal for GCN as the management cycle of these areas prevents the development of any late-stage vegetation community which would offer suitable habitat for GCN when in their terrestrial phase. Furthermore, the residential areas and main road to the south of site also provide significant barriers to commuting GCN. Provided basic mitigation measures are adhered to, the impacts of the development on GCN are expected to be negligible.

#### **4.3.4 Nesting Birds**

During the survey, a number of birds were identified visually and by their calls, including common cuckoo (*Cuculus canorus*), swift (*Apus apus*), blue tit (*Cyanistes caeruleus*), blackbird (*Turdus merula*), house sparrow (*Passer domesticus*), jackdaw (*Corvus monedula*), swallow (*Hirundo rustica*), greylag goose (*Anser anser*), chiffchaff (*Phylloscopus collybita*) and wren (*Troglodytes troglodytes*). An active jackdaw nest, as well as an active house sparrow colony and swallow nests were observed on site. The site was assessed as being of high value for nesting birds and so works should take place outside of the bird nesting season, where possible.

#### 4.3.5 Reptiles

The habitat on site was largely unsuitable for reptiles, with most of the habitat consisting of semi-improved grassland and buildings. Semi-improved grassland provides sub-optimal conditions for UK reptiles which require a range of transitional habitats to provide areas for foraging, shelter, and basking. The site is surrounded by further unsuitable habitat of residential housing and hardstanding, which decreases the likelihood of reptiles being able to access and use these areas. Overall, reptiles are considered likely absent from the site and as such, the impacts from the proposed development on them are expected to be negligible. There were no records of reptiles returned from ERIC within 1 km of the site.

#### 4.3.6 Other Wildlife

ERIC returned a further 12 terrestrial mammal records, including one European otter (*Lutra lutra*) record. The habitat on site is largely unsuitable for otters being primarily semi-improved grassland and buildings and so it is highly unlikely that they are present on site. The semi-improved grassland could provide some suitable foraging and commuting habitat for European hedgehog (*Erinaceus europaeus*). Provided basic mitigation measures are adhered to, the impacts to a local hedgehog population are considered to be negligible.

#### 4.4 Invasive Species

A search on ERIC returned one non-native invasive species listed on Schedule 9 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) within 1 km of the site in the form of an American mink (*Neovision vison*). The sighting was of suspected mink scat and is as such unconfirmed. A map showing the location of the sighting in relation to the site can be found below in Figure 6:

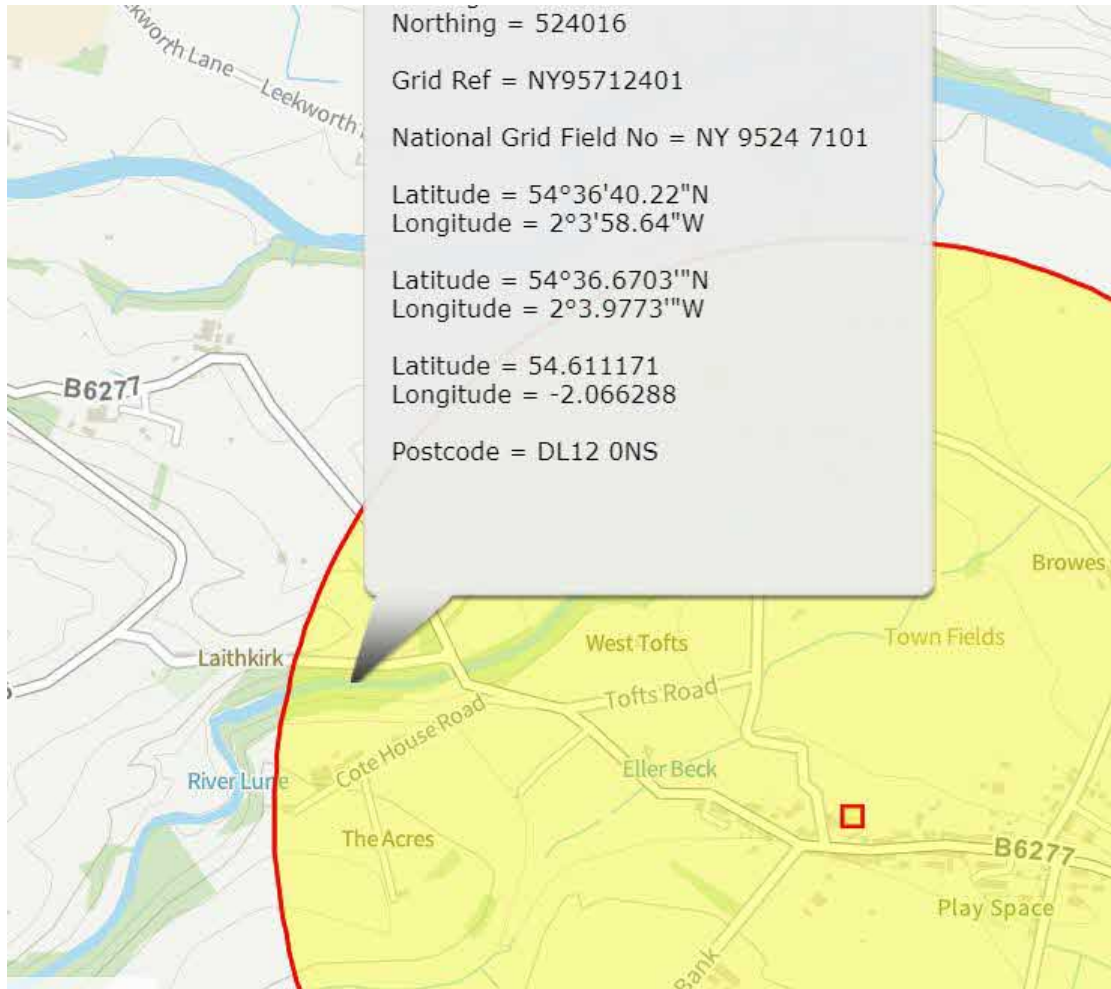


Figure 6 – map showing location of suspected invasive species sighting  
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## **5 CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **5.1 Conclusions**

The site was confirmed to be a bat roost due to the presence of faeces in the western aspect of the loft void, with a number of PRFs visible externally on all elevations of B1. The building was also confirmed to have several active bird nests, including jackdaw and house sparrow. Following the site assessment and in review of the findings, the following measures are considered to be required to be incorporated into the works:

### **5.2 Mitigation Measures**

Due to the PRFs for bats present, and the presence of bat droppings in B1 as a bat roost, in accordance with current best practice guidelines, a minimum of two bat activity surveys should be carried out to confirm continued presence or likely absence and accurately determine numbers and species of bats.

The surveys must be carried out between May and September, inclusive, with at least one of the surveys carried out between May and August, inclusive. The surveys must comprise of one pre-dawn return to roost survey and one dusk emergence survey. Survey visits must be carried out in weather conditions suitable for bats to be fully active.

If bats are confirmed to be present, it will be necessary to apply to Natural England for an EPS mitigation licence to legally permit the repair and replacement works of the PRFs and consequent destruction of any bat roosting habitat present. Proportionate mitigation (including the exclusion of any bats present) and compensatory roosting measures will also need to be incorporated into the works, full details of which would be provided once the population of bats present has been determined.

The exclusion of bats must be undertaken immediately prior to work commencing, otherwise there is the risk that the bats will return to the roost sites before or during work being undertaken. If the surveys indicate that bats are now likely absent, works should proceed under a method statement to ensure best working practises and that no bats are impacted by the works, however, in the unlikely event that bats are encountered during site works, it is a legal requirement to stop work and consult Natural England on requirements for an EPS mitigation licence.

A walkover over survey/check must be carried out within 3 months prior to an EPSL application submission by a suitably experienced ecologist to ensure that conditions have not changed since the most recent survey was undertaken.

Due to the suitability of the loft void and stone structure to support nesting birds, clearance works should be carried out outside of the nesting season, which is defined as running from March to August, inclusive. If this is not feasible for any reason, a nesting bird survey must be carried out by a suitably qualified ecologist shortly prior to the start of works to ensure no active nests are present. In the event that any active nests are found during this survey or at any point during the works, a suitable exclusion zone should be put around the nest, with no work taking place in this area until such time as the nest can be confirmed as no longer active.

Works should be carried out in a precautionary manner in relation to hedgehogs, with any hedgehogs encountered during the works allowed to move off of their own accord. If this is not feasible, they should be carefully moved to a safe location by gloved hand. If clearance works are being carried out during hedgehog hibernation season (defined as November to March), any structures suitable for hedgehog hibernation such as vegetation piles should be checked for hibernating hedgehogs. If a hibernating hedgehog is present, a suitable exclusion zone should be put around the hedgehog, with no works occurring in this area until the hedgehog has moved off of its own accord. If this is not feasible, the hedgehog will be carefully translocated to suitable off-site habitat by a suitably qualified ecologist under appropriate weather conditions. New nesting material and supplementary food safe for hedgehog consumption will be provided at the translocation site.

Any excavations should be covered at night to prevent wildlife becoming trapped, if feasible. If this is not feasible, a suitable means of egress such as a plank of wood at 45° (max.) should be provided

To prevent a further reduction in ecological connectivity resulting from the development, any fenced boundaries are to be gapped, with a 13 x 13 cm hole cut at ground level to allow small mammals to access and egress gardens.

A sensitive lighting scheme should be implemented during and after construction to avoid indirect disturbance to foraging and commuting bats, birds and small mammals that may be using the buildings, and should include the following elements:

- Sensitive positioning of lighting to avoid unnecessary spill onto the buildings and semi-improved grassland
- Angle of lighting: avoidance of direct lighting and light spill onto areas of habitat that are of importance as commuting pathways and/or foraging areas;
- Type of lighting: studies have shown that light sources emitting higher amounts of UV light have a greater impact to wildlife. Use of narrow-spectrum bulbs that avoid white and blue wavelengths are likely to reduce the number of species impacted by the lighting;
- Reduce the height of lighting columns to avoid unnecessary light spill.

#### **5.4 Enhancement Measures**

Any landscape planting should use native plant species and/or species of known wildlife value that will enhance the ecological value of the site for local populations of invertebrates, birds, bats and small mammals.

A series of invertebrate hibernacula should be installed at suitable locations on site post-development.

A series of bird and bat boxes should be incorporated into the development to provide enhanced roosting and nesting habitat.

This report should be reviewed and amended, as necessary, upon finalised development plans being produced, to ensure that further survey effort and mitigation measures are appropriate to the scale and nature of the works.



Providing the recommendations of this report are implemented in full, Naturally Wild would conclude that there will not be a significant impact to protected species or habitats as a result of the proposed works.

6 SITE IMAGES



*Image 1 – ivy-leaved toadflax adorning the stairs to the southern elevation of B1*





*Image 2 – internal loft void space at eastern end of B1 showing wooden beams*



*Image 3 – bat faeces on floor of eastern end of loft void*



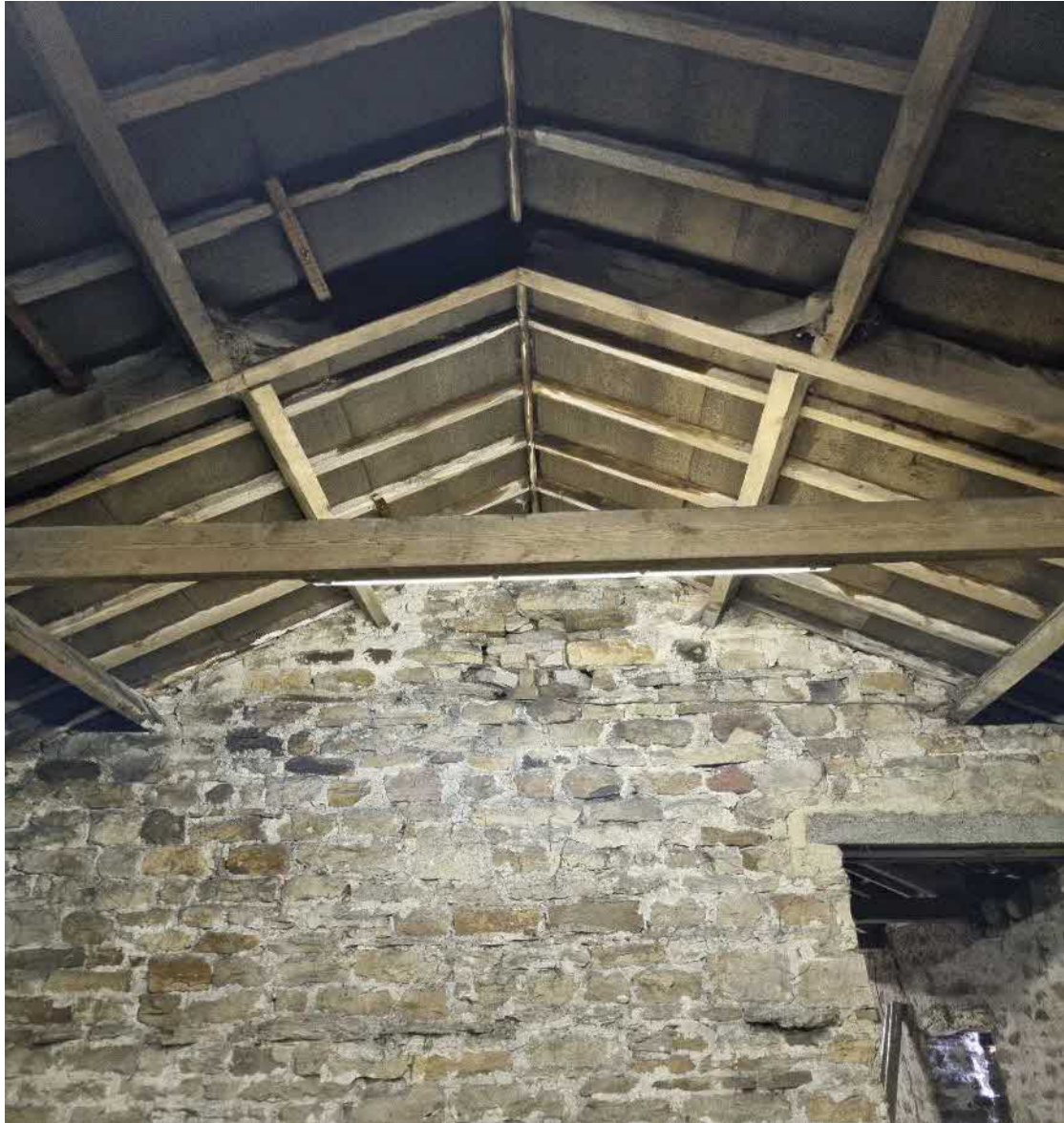


*Image 4 – further bat faeces present on floor of eastern end of B1*



*Image 5 – active jackdaw nest with chicks in eastern end of loft void*





*Image 6 – image showing eastern end of loft void of B1 looking west showing insulated roof with wooden beams and PRFs present in brickwork*



*Image 7 – possible jackdaw nest, thought to be inactive at time of survey*





*Image 8 – showing roof of loft void of B1 and PRFs present*



*Image 9 – possible swallow nest, thought to be inactive at time of survey*





*Image 10 – external view of northern and eastern elevations of B1, showing PRFs externally in brickwork and under roofing*



*Image 11 – northern elevation of B1 showing PRFs in brickwork*





*Image 12 – semi-improved grassland to northern aspect of site, including meadow foxtail and perennial rye-grass*





*Image 13 – interior of B2 showing some PRFs in brickwork*



*Image 14 – northern elevation of B2 showing PRFs visible in external brickwork*





*Image 15 – semi-improved grassland to northern aspect of site*





*Image 16 – small outbuilding to the eastern border of site with vegetation*





*Image 17 – hardstanding driveway to southern aspect of site*





*Image 18 – southern elevation of B1 showing PRFs visible in brickwork. House sparrows also utilising gaps in brickwork for nesting*



*Image 19 – southern elevation of B1 showing stairs which lead to entrance to loft void*





*Image 20 – gap in roof felting exposing PRFs.*



*Image 21 – internal space on ground floor of B1 used for storage*





*Image 22 – southern elevation of B2 showing PRFs in brickwork and roofing*



*Image 23 – eastern elevations of B1 and B2 showing PRFs in brickwork*





*Image 24 – semi-improved grassland to northern aspect of site showing wider habitat beyond site boundary*



*Image 25 – northern elevations of B1 and B2 showing multiple PRFs in brickwork and roofing*

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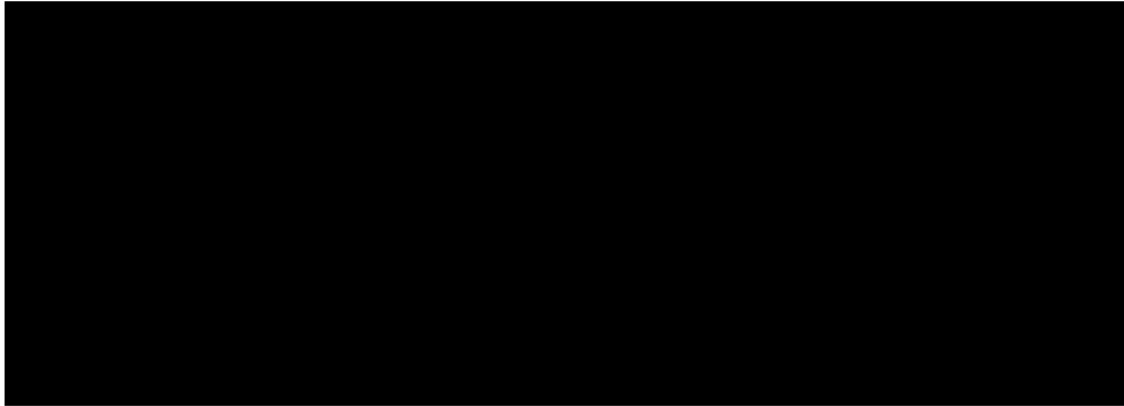
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## 8 APPENDICES

### 8.1 Additional Information for the Legislation of Other Protected Species



**Bats:** All British bat species are listed on Schedule 5 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) and are therefore afforded protection under Section 9 of this Act. In addition, all bat species are listed in Schedule 2 of The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations and are protected under Regulation 39 of the Regulations. These Regulations make provision for the purpose of implementing European Union Directive on the Conservation of Natural Habitats and of Wild Fauna and Flora 1992, under which bats are included on Annex IV. The Act and Regulations makes it an offence, *inter alia*, to:

Intentionally kill, injure, take (handle) or capture a bat;

Intentionally or recklessly damage, destroy or obstruct access to any place that a bat uses for shelter or protection (this is taken to mean all bat roosts whether bats are present or not) - under the Habitats Regulations it is an offence to damage or destroy a breeding site or resting place of any bat; or

Intentionally or recklessly disturb a bat while it is occupying a structure or place that it uses for shelter or protection - under the Habitats Regulations it is an offence to deliberately disturb a bat (this applies anywhere, not just at its roost) in such a way as to be likely to affect its ability to survive, breed, reproduce, rear or nurture their young or hibernate.

Further details of the above legislation, and of the roles and responsibilities of developers and planners in relation to bats, can be found in Natural England's Bat Mitigation Guidelines (Mitchell-Jones, 2004).

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**Great Crested Newts:** Great crested newts are protected under Schedule 2 of The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations. This species is also afforded full protection under the Schedule 5 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981. Under such legislation it is an offence to:

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

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

To undertake surveys for great crested newts it is necessary to hold an appropriate licence issued by Natural England.

**Nesting Birds:** Birds receive protection under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended). It is an offence to intentionally or recklessly kill, injure or take any wild bird; take, damage or destroy a nest of a wild bird whilst it is in use or being built; or to take, damage or destroy an egg of a wild bird. The bird-nesting season is defined as being from 1<sup>st</sup> March until 31<sup>st</sup> August with exceptions and alterations for some species.

**Reptiles:** All native British species of reptile (of which there are six) are listed on Schedule 5 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 and, as such, are protected from deliberate killing, injury or trade; therefore, where development is permitted and there will be a significant change in land use, a reasonable effort must be undertaken to remove reptiles off site to avoid committing an offence. The same Act makes the trading of native reptile species a criminal offence without an appropriate licence.



## 8.2 Development Plans

For reference only. For full details, please see original drawing(s).

