

PRELIMINARY ROOST ASSESSMENT

Outbuildings at Holly House Farm, Huncote, Leicestershire. Report Reference: BG21.169 April 2021



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Rev1			

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Grid reference: SP 51711 99142



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1 Summary

- 1.1 Brindle & Green Ltd were commissioned by Mr Julian Collier to undertake a Preliminary Roost Assessment of two outbuildings at Holly House Farm, Forest Road, Huncote, Leicestershire. The purpose of this assessment was to provide an evaluation of the ecological value of the site, and to identify key ecological constraints to the proposed development in relation to bats and birds. The survey was undertaken on 8th April 2020.
- 1.2 Two buildings are the subject of a full application for the conversion into a dog care centre. A site plan is presented in Appendix 4 of this report.
- 1.3 Building 1 was assessed to support a moderate suitability for roosting bats, due to suitability within the interior roof, and external suitability under fascia boards. Building 2 was assessed as negligible for roosting bats, however, suitability for breeding birds was present within both buildings.
- 1.4 Ecological constraints relating bats and birds within the building and surrounding environment were considered during the survey. A full description of the recommendations can be found within Chapter 7 (Page 25), below is a summary of the ecological issues recommended for further consideration as a result of our initial investigations:

Ecological	Recommendations (e.g. further survey,	Timing
Consideration	mitigation)	
Breeding Birds	Works should be sympathetic to this group of species following Reasonable Avoidance Measures (RAMS) outlined in chapter 7.	Optimal timing between October to February outside of breeding bird season.
Roosting Bats	Building 1 supports moderate suitability for roosting bats and therefore will require at least two further surveys to ascertain the presence or absence of roosting bats. This should comprise one dusk and one dawn survey.	May to August prior to submitting planning application/works commencing



2 Introduction

- 2.1 Brindle & Green Ltd were commissioned by Mr Julian Collier to undertake a Preliminary Roost Assessment at Holly House Farm, Forest Road, Huncote, Leicestershire. The purpose of this assessment was to provide a preliminary appraisal of the ecological value of the site for bats and birds and to identify key ecological constraints to the proposed development. The survey provides detail on the need for any additional, more detailed protected species surveys, and will allow the development of likely mitigation, compensation and enhancement measures to be developed.
- 2.2 The site comprises two outbuildings (Buildings 1 and 2) at Holly House Farm, situated within a rural area of Leicestershire, 8km south-west of Leicester. The surrounding environment is predominantly rural, comprising arable and pastoral land in all directions. The M69 is located 0.1km south-east. Both buildings are the subject of a full application for the conversion into a dog care centre. A site plan is presented in Appendix 4 of this report.
- 2.3 The legislation relevant to protected species within the United Kingdom is summarised within Appendix 2.
- 2.4 Results and recommendations contained within this report have been prepared by an experienced ecologist and are therefore the view of Brindle & Green Limited. The survey is based on information provided by our client, the development proposals, and the results of the desk study and our survey of the site. This report pertains to this information only.



3 Methodology

3.1 Desk Study

Table 1 below lists the resource used as part of the desk study process. Data regarding any known statutory or non-statutory sites in addition to any records for protected species were requested from the following source:

Table 1. Ecological Data Resources

Consultee	Requested Data	Search Radius	Date Requested
MAGIC Maps	National and International Site Designations	2km	06/04/2021
	Granted EPS Development Licences		

3.2 Surveyors

Survey carried out by Tom Hough MSc, QualCIEEM, Natural England Bat Licence Class 1 (2020-50050-CLS-CLS), Assistant Ecologist. The survey was overseen by Amy Trewick BSc ACIEEM, Natural England Bat Licence Class 2 (CL18-2018-37960-CLS-CLS), Senior Ecologist.

3.3 Survey Conditions

The survey was undertaken at 11:00am on 8th April 2020. The outside temperature was recorded as 10°C, with dry, sunny conditions, with 4/8 cloud cover recorded.

3.4 Field Survey

The habitats on site were assessed for their suitability to support protected species following standard survey guidance (Appendix 3). It is important to assess the surrounding habitat, as in some cases the legal protection of a protected species extends to the habitat in which it occupies. Any incidental sightings of field signs were noted at the time of survey. Where evidence of, or the confirmed presence of a Protected Species is identified, further, species specific surveys may be recommended to establish with certainty the presence

and extent, or absence of a legally protected species prior to the determination of any planning approval.

3.5 Protected Species

3.5.1 Breeding Birds

The building and immediate vegetation to be impacted from the proposed development have been the subject of a search for active or previously used bird nests, and identification of features considered conducive to breeding birds, alongside noting the activity and behaviour of birds on site during the survey. Following standard techniques, as recommended by Gilbert G, Gibbons DW, Evans J. (1998) *Bird Monitoring Methods: Breeding Bird Survey* (pages 389-393). RSPB.

3.5.2 Roosting Bats

3.5.2.1 Structures on site were assessed for their suitability to support roosting bats following Collins, J (2016) Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines, (3rd edition), Bat Conservation Trust, London. The potential suitability of each structure and the resulting survey effort to establish confidence in a result is summarised within Table 2.

During the external and internal (where possible) assessment of the structure potential roosting features (PRF's) such as slipped or missing roof tiles, gaps in brickwork, points in roof timbers and the presence of suitable soffits and fascia boards were recorded to evaluate the potential suitability of a structure to support roosting bats. Evidence of bat presence was also searched for including feeding remains, bat droppings and staining around potential access points. Bats often use different roosting sites at different times of the year, and the absence of evidence does not always equate to the absence/ or lower suitability of a structure to support a bat roost.

3.5.2.2 If bats are discovered emerging or re-entering any structure, the survey schedule should be appropriately adjusted to increase the survey effort so that sufficient information for roost characterisation can be collected to advise the planning application or EPS development licence.

Table 2. Classification of roosting habitat within structures (Buildings and trees), to be
applied to each structure using professional judgement. Adapted from Collins J (2016)

Category	Description of roosting habitat	Number of presence / absence surveys required
Negligible Suitability	Suitable cavities may exist, but these are less than ideal.	None
Low Suitability	A structure with one or more potential roost sites that could be used by individual bats opportunistically. The feature and surrounding habitat do not provide enough shelter, conditions* space for larger roost types such as a maternity or hibernation roost.	One survey between May and August
	A tree of sufficient size and age to support roosting bats, but with no features observed from the ground, or the features only have a limited potential to support roosting bats.	Trees – No further surveys required
Moderate Suitability	A structure or tree considered to have one or more potential roost sites that could be used by bats due to their size, shelter, protection, conditions* and surrounding habitat but are unlikely to support a roost of high conservation status (With regard to roost type only – assessments are made irrespective of species conservation status, which is established after presence is confirmed).	Two surveys between May and September (with at least one survey undertaken between May and August) One Dusk emergence and One Dawn re-entry survey to ideally be undertaken at least two weeks apart.
High Suitability	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 surveys between May and September (with at least two surveys undertaken between May and August) One Dusk emergence and One Dawn re-entry survey to be undertaken. The third survey can be either Dusk or Dawn undertaken at least two
Confirmed	This category is where positive evidence of bats has been recorded. For example, bats are found; bat droppings may be present at a suitable location for roosting bats; existing bat records may be associated with the structure.	weeks apart.

(* in this context conditions refers to the level of disturbance, light, height above ground, temperature, and humidity etc)

3.5.3 Foraging and Commuting Bats

Habitat features on site were assessed for their suitability to support foraging and commuting bat populations. This assessment was independent from the suitability of the site to support roosting bats, and provides information on the likeness of bat foraging activity within the local environment, and the dependence of individuals on these features for commuting to alternative roosting sites, foraging and migration. The suitability of the sites commuting and foraging habitat was assessed and evaluated against the proposed impacts to the site and Table 3 (below) to allow categorisation of the habitat.

Table 3. Potential suitability of foraging and commuting habitat within an application boundary. Features should be assessed following this guide and professional judgement. Adapted from Collins J (2016)

Category	Description of commuting and foraging habitat	Survey effort to establish the value of commuting and foraging habitat**
Negligible Suitability	Negligible habitat features on site likely to be used by commuting or foraging bats.	None
Low Suitability	Habitat which could be used by low numbers of commuting bats such as an isolated gappy hedgerow, or an unvegetated stream unconnected to suitable habitat in the wider environment. Suitable, yet isolated habitat that could be used by foraging bats such as individual trees, or a patch of scrub.	Transect /spot count/ timed search survey: One survey visit per active season AND Static automated surveys: One location per transect, over a five-night period, per season.
Moderate Suitability	Continuous habitat connected to the wider landscape that could be used by commuting bats, notably tree lines, hedgerows or linked back gardens. Habitat that is connected to the wider landscape which could be used by bats for foraging such as trees, open water, scrub or grassland.	Transect /spot count/ timed search survey One survey visit per month At least one survey should comprise dusk and pre-dawn (or dusk to dawn) within one 24-hour period. AND Static automated surveys: Two locations per transect, over a five-night period, per month (April to October)
High Suitability	Continuous, High-quality habitat that is well connected to the wider landscape which is highly conducive to commuting bats. High-quality habitat that is well connected to the wider landscape that is likely to be used regularly by foraging bats Site is close to and connected to known	Transect /spot count/ timed search surveyUp to two survey visit per month (As above)ANDStatic automated surveys: Three locations per transect, over a five-night period, per month
	roosts.	

(** This is only a guide for survey effort required, the complexity of the site and the proposed disturbance / loss of features will determine the extent of works required on a site by site basis).

3.6 Limitations

3.6.1 It should be noted that whilst every effort has been made to provide a comprehensive description of the site, no investigation could ensure the complete characterisation and prediction of the natural environment. The

protected species assessment provides a preliminary view of the likelihood of these species occurring on site, based upon the suitability of the habitats, know distribution of the species in the local area and any direct evidence on site. It should not be taken as providing a full and definitive survey of any protected species group.

3.7 Report Lifespan

Given the transient nature of the subject we would consider the survey results contained to be accurate for 2 years.



4 Site Context

4.1 Site Description

The application site can be found at SE 37214 45715 and comprises a series of outbuildings at Holly House Farm, situated within a rural area of Leicestershire, 8km south-west of Leicester. The surrounding environment is predominantly rural, comprising arable and pastoral land, with scattered trees and hedgerows along field boundaries providing connectivity to the site. The M69 is located 0.1km south-east, and although would act as a barrier to terrestrial species from the south, as well as partially inhibit connectivity for bats and birds. Areas of woodland border the motorway, and will likely provide further connectivity to the east and west.



4.2 **Zone of Influence**

The zone of Influence is used to describe the geographic extent of potential impacts of a proposed development in relation to the target species, in this case bats and breeding birds. Due to the scale and nature of the proposals, it is not considered that the impacts of the proposed works would extend beyond the scheme footprint and its immediate surroundings.



5 Results

5.1 Desk Study

5.1.1 Designated Sites

The site was subjected to a search for designated sites within a 2km radius of the site using data supplied by the online desk based resource MAGIC.

5.1.2 Magic Maps found no sites with statutory designations when compared to the local records centre data (Appendix 3).

5.1.3 Protected Species

Magic maps also provides details of granted European Protected Species (EPS) licences within 2km from the application area. Six EPS licences were identified, four pertaining to bats and two to great-crested newts (*Triturus cristatus*). All were located at least 1km from the site. Licences relating to bat species are as follows:

A licence for the destruction of a common pipistrelle (*Pipistrellus pipistrellus*) and brown long-eared bat (*Plecotus auritus*) breeding place 1.2km north-east, due to expire in 2025.

A licence for the destruction of a brown Long-eared (BLE) resting place 1.9km east, which expired in 2015.

A licence for a common pipistrelle breeding and resting place 1.8km south, expired in 2012.

A licence for the destruction of a natterer's bat (*Myotis nattereri*) breeding and resting place 1km west, due to expire in 2026.

5.2 Field Survey

The redline application boundary for the proposed extension was restricted to within the current footprint of Buildings 1 and 2, and a small area of hardstanding between the two structures (Appendix 4). No habitats will be impacted by the planning application, however, the impact of the redevelopment on protected species which may be present with associated habitats such as gardens, and hedgerows in close proximity of the works have been considered.

5.3 Protected Species

5.3.1 Breeding Birds

5.3.1.1 The assessment was undertaken during of the breeding bird season (March – September). There was no evidence to suggest that breeding birds had previously occupied either of the buildings during the external and internal inspections. However, suitable access points are present into both buildings, with suitability for species such as swift (*Apus apus*).

5.3.2 Roosting Bats

5.3.2.1 Building 1 was assessed to have moderate suitability to support roosting bats. The extent of the suitability internal cavities along the roof ridge and external cavities under fascia boards, providing crevices for individual bats to use on an intermittent basis. Building 2 was assessed as negligible, due to the nature of its construction of a single layer of timber with a lack of suitable cavities or beams. The main structural features of the buildings, and their suitability for supporting roosting bats are summarised below (Table 6), and associated figures can be found with Section 5.4.

5.3.3 Foraging and Commuting Bats

The wider environment supports scattered trees and hedgerows along field boundaries, providing some foraging and commuting habitat, and is considered to be of a low suitability. However the area within the red-line boundary supported no areas of vegetation, therefore it is considered to have negligible suitability for foraging and commuting bats.

Table	6.	Summary	of	Bat	Roost	potential	and	evidence	found	within	each	of	the
buildin	gs/s	structures o	n si	te (S	upportir	ng Figures	s withi	n Section \$	5.4).				

High	Moderate	Low	Negligible	None	
Building Number	Description	Ba Ro	at evidence / Po oosting Features (PR	otential (Fs)	Roost Suitability
B1	Single storey red-brick barr pitched asbestos roof. Timb on the northern elevation doorway and window on the eastern elevations respect fascias on all elevations, and the western elevation. Brickw for the majority of the building. The building is currently preparation for conversion. I the apex, with the interior root a timber frame. The easter building is divided into two fu upper floor accessible via a la Small adjoining single storey southern elevation.	Action of the floors, with the adder.	ccess points Access via open d the western elevatio open window o eastern elevation. otential roosting feat Suitable cavities timber fascia board all elevations. Suitable cavities ald interior roof ridge. Gaps in mortarin southern elevation of adjoining section. Suitable crevices timbers adjoin to interior. o evidence of previo	loor on on, and n the ures under ling on ong the of small where wall in ous bat during	Moderate
B2	Single storey barn co constructed of breezeblock layer of timber boarding, pitched asbestos roof with a Open fronted on the wes Small gaps located between frame and the roof, but due being open and exposed the negligible. Brickwork well-sealed and tim	onstructed of and a single supporting a timber frame. tern elevation. interior timber to the building ese considered nber well-fitted.	o suitable roosting fe ocated on the buildin vidence of previou ctivity was recorded ne assessment.	eatures ng. No is bat during	Neg

5.4 Site Photographs

Photographs were taken to provide evidence of the survey findings and support the classification of a buildings potential to support protected species.





Suitable cavities under fascia boarding



Southern and western elevation

Southern elevation adjoining a neighbouring structure, which is located outside of the red-line boundary.

Suitable cavities under fascia boarding in the western elevation due to missing soffit.

Access via open doorway.

Small gaps in mortaring on adjoining section on southern elevation.













6 Evaluation

6.1 Development Proposals

The site is the subject of a full application for the conversion into a dog care centre. A site plan is presented in Appendix 4 of this report.

6.2 Desk Study Impacts

Direct impacts on nearby designated sites as a result of the proposed development are considered unlikely. The extent of the development is to be contained within the application boundary. No designated sites were highlighted within 2km of the site therefore, the likelihood of indirect impacts to designated sites is considered negligible.

6.3 Breeding Birds

- 6.3.1 All wild birds, their eggs and nests are protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) which makes it an offence to intentionally kill, injure, or take any wild bird whilst nesting, or take, damage or destroy the nest of any such bird while in use or being built. In addition, species listed on Schedule 1 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 or their dependant young are afforded additional protection from disturbance whilst they are at their nests.
- 6.3.2 The survey was undertaken during the breeding season, however no evidence to suggest that birds had historically nested within either building. However, features within each building were considered suitable to support nesting birds and access for bird species was possible into both buildings. The recommendations section of this report sets out important guidance on measures to avoid impacts on this species group.

6.4 Bats

6.4.1 All bat species are protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act (1981) as amended and The Conservation of Habitat Regulations (2017) as amended making it an offence to, intentionally kill, injure, or take any species of bat, intentionally or recklessly disturb bats, intentionally or recklessly damage destroy or obstruct access to bat roosts.

6.4.2 Roosting bats

Building 1 was identified as having moderate suitability to support roosting bats due to the presence of PRFs within the building's internal roof features, and under external fascia boarding. Building 2 was assessed as negligible. To confidently determine if bat species are present, further activity surveys will be required upon Building 1. The proposed plans show the conversion of the building into a dog care facility, which will see the refurbishment of the roof structure. If the development was to continue as planned, it may lead to the destruction of a roosting site of a protected species, and increased disturbance, injury or harm to individual bats and/or their young. The recommendations section of this report sets out important guidance on measures to avoid impacts on this species and measures to support its conservation status through ecological enhancement.

6.4.3 Foraging and Commuting Bats

The application boundary comprised Buildings 1 and 2 and an area of hardstanding with negligible suitability for commuting and foraging bats. As a result, the impact of development works on foraging and commuting bats is not considered a constraint to the application.



7 Recommendations

As with all development sites; efforts should be made to support National and Local Biodiversity Action Plans, and seek opportunities to incorporate ecological enhancement schemes within the proposed development. Such site enhancements should be viewed positively in light of the NPPF (2019) which seeks biodiversity enhancements and net gain through the planning process.

7.1 Breeding Birds

Breeding Birds	Timing
Recommendations	
Building 1 on site has been identified as being suitable for use by breeding birds. Given their protection, development must be sympathetic to the value of this habitat and potential impacts on breeding birds, their eggs, nests and young. The breeding bird season is generally accepted as being between March and September.	Work should be conducted outside of the breeding bird season between March and September inclusive.
Developers should consider and implement the options most appropriate to their scheme.	
 a) Conversion works should be undertaken outside of the breeding bird season, between the months of October and February where possible. 	
b) In the circumstance of any works between the months of March and September, each building should be subjected to a search for active birds' nests 24 hours prior to commencement of works.	
Enhancement Prescriptions	
Where possible, a Woodstone Swift Next Box, or similar should be installed onto the northern elevation of Building 1 along the eaves, to provide habitat for breeding birds post-development.	

7.2 Roosting Bats

Roosting Bats	Timing
Recommendations	
Building 1 was assessed as having moderate suitability to support roosting bats. As such at two presence / absence survey undertaken; one at dusk and one at	May – August (In weather conditions conducive to finding bats)



dawn should be carried out in order to establish the presence or likely absence of bats within the building.	
Should evidence of roosting bats be found during the presence / absence survey the number of surveys will be increased to three to allow roost characterisation.	
Enhancement Prescriptions	
In light of the need for additional surveys, enhancement prescriptions would be set out within a Bat Emergence Survey Report as a separate document.	



Appendix 1. General References

Bat Conservation Trust's 'Good Practice Survey Guidelines' (Rev 2012).

Bell, S. McGillivary, D. (2006) Environmental Law. 6th ed. Oxford University Press.

Byron, H (2000) *Biodiversity and Environmental Impact Assessment: A Good Practice Guide for Road Schemes.* The RSPB, WWF-UK, English Nature and the Wildlife Trusts, Sandy.

Collins, J (2016) Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines, (3rd edition), Bat Conservation Trust, London

Gilbert G, Gibbons DW, Evans J. (1998) *Bird Monitoring Methods: Breeding Bird Survey* (pages 389-393). RSPB.

Mitchell-Jones A.J. McLeish, A.P. (2004) *Bat Workers Manual* (3rd Edition). Joint Nature Conservation Committee.

Mitchell-Jones A.J. Bat Mitigation Guidelines 2004. English Nature.

Treweek, J. (1999) Ecological Impact Assessment. Blackwell Science.

Williams, C. (2010) *Biodiversity for Low and Zero Carbon Buildings, A Technical Guide for New Build*. Riba Publishing.



Appendix 2. Legislation and Guidance Sources

Articles of British wildlife and countryside legislation, policy guidance and both Local and National Biodiversity Action Plans (BAPs) are referred to. The articles of legislation are:

The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended) The Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006 Department for Communities and Local Government. National Planning Policy Framework (2019) EC Council Directive on the Conservation of Wild Birds 79/409/EEC The United Kingdom Biodiversity Action Plan Local Biodiversity Action Plan (LBAP).



Appendix 3. Desk study results



BG21.169 Holly House Farm, Huncote

06/04/2021

Site Check Report Report generated on Tue Apr 06 2021 You selected the location: Centroid Grid Ref: SP51719914 The following features have been found in your search area:

Granted European Protected Species Applications (England)	
Oracle Construction and the set of the set o	
Case reference of granted application	2015-9797-EPS-MIT
Species group to which licence relates	Bat
Species on the licence	BLE,C-PIP
Site county of licence	Leicestershire
Licence Start Date	22/04/2015
Licence End Date	14/04/2025
Does licence impact on a breeding site	Y
Does licence allow damage of breeding site	N
Does licence allow damage of a resting place	N
Does licence allow destruction of breeding site	ř.
Does licence allow destruction of a resting place	N University
NEDO and a nibernation site	Unknown
NERC agreement reference	UIKIOWIT
One of second description for the	FR0N0000 040
Case reference of granted application	EPSM2009-943
Species group to which licence relates	
Species on the licence	
Lisense Start Date	
Licence Start Date	20/04/2012
Doos liconce impact on a broading site	0004/2012 V
Does licence allow damage of breeding site	
Does licence allow damage of a recting site	
Does licence allow destruction of broading site	v
Does licence allow destruction of a resting place	
Does licence allow destruction of a resting place	Inknown
NEBC agreement reference	
NERC agreement reference	CINIOWI
Case reference of granted application	EDSM2010-2156
Case reference of granted application	Amphibian
Species group to which licence relates	Croat Created Neut
Site county of licence	
Licence Start Date	19/07/2012
Licence End Date	30/06/2015
	SUM DE VID
Does licence impact on a breeding site	N
Does licence impact on a breeding site	N
Does licence impact on a breeding site Does licence allow damage of breeding site Does licence allow damage of a resting place	N
Does licence impact on a breeding site Does licence allow damage of breeding site Does licence allow damage of a resting place Does licence allow destruction of breeding site	N
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06/04/2021		
Case reference of granted application	2015-17622-EPS-MIT-1	
Species group to which licence relates	Bat	
Species on the licence	NATT	
Site county of licence	Leicestershire	
Licence Start Date	18/04/2017	
Licence End Date	01/02/2026	
Does licence impact on a breeding site	Y	
Does licence allow damage of breeding site	N	
Does licence allow damage of a resting place	N	
Does licence allow destruction of breeding site	Ŷ	
Does licence allow destruction of a resting place	N	
NERC agreement reference	Unknown	
Case reference of granted application	EPSM2013-6628	
Species group to which licence relates	Bat	
Species on the licence	BLE	
Site county of licence	Leicestershire	
Licence Start Date	13/11/2013	
Licence End Date	31/08/2015	
Does licence impact on a breeding site	N	
Does licence allow damage of breeding site		
Does licence allow damage of a resting place	N.	
Does licence allow destruction of breeding site	N	
Does licence allow destruction of a resting place	Ŷ	
Does licence impact on a hibernation site	Unknown	
NERC agreement reference	Unknown	
Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (England) No Features found		
Local Nature Reserves (England) - points No Features found		
Local Nature Reserves (England) No Features found		
National Nature Reserves (England) - points No Features found		
National Nature Reserves (England) No Features found		
National Parks (England) No Features found		
Ramsar Sites (England) - points No Features found		
Ramsar Sites (England) No Features found		
Sites of Special Scientific Interest (England) - points No Features found		
Sites of Special Scientific Interest (England) No Features found		
Special Areas of Conservation (England) - points No Features found		
Special Areas of Conservation (England) No Features found		
Special Protection Areas (England) - points No Features found		
Special Protection Areas (England) No Features found		
Biosphere Reserves (England) - points		
No Features found		
Biosphere Reserves (England) No Features found		



Appendix 4. Site plans



