



# *Goosemoor Farm, Baltonsborough*

**Ecological Report for Conditions 12 and 16 of  
Permission 2019/2469/FUL**

**Prepared for: Anne & Robert Hurford**

This report has been prepared and provided in accordance with the Code of Professional Conduct of the Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management.

#### Limitations

Nash Ecology Ltd has prepared this Report for the sole use of Anne & Robert Hurford ("Client") in accordance with the Agreement under which our services were performed.

The conclusions and recommendations contained in this Report are based upon information provided by others and upon the assumption that all relevant information has been provided by those parties from whom it has been requested and that such information is accurate.

The methodology adopted and the sources of information used by Nash Ecology Ltd in providing its services are outlined in this Report. The work described in this Report was undertaken between June and July 2022 and is based on the conditions encountered and the information available during the said period of time.

Nash Ecology Ltd disclaim any undertaking or obligation to advise any person of any change in any matter affecting the Report, which may come or be brought to Nash Ecology attention after the date of the Report.

Nash Ecology Ltd  
Halfway Farm  
Draycott Road  
Cheddar  
BS27 3RR

Tel: 07950 146082  
email: [info@nashecology.com](mailto:info@nashecology.com)

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## 1 INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Background and Scope

Nash Ecology Ltd was instructed to assist with the discharge of two pre-commencement conditions attached to planning permission 2019/2469/FUL (Goosemoor Farm). These conditions are as follows:

#### Condition 12: Wildlife Protection and Enhancement (Pre-commencement)

“No development shall take place until full details of a Wildlife Protection and Enhancement Scheme have been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. These details shall include:

- i. a statement in writing from the licensed bat ecologist to the effect that he/she does not consider that the specified development will require a licence; or
- ii. a copy of the licence issued by Natural England pursuant to Regulation 55 of The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 authorising the development to go ahead.
- iii. an 1FF Schwegler bat box to provide suitable alternative roosting locations, to accommodate any discovered bat(s), will be hung on a suitable tree or building on or adjacent to the site at a minimum height of 4 metres as directed by a licensed bat ecologist. Any such box will be maintained in-situ thereafter. Photographs showing their installation shall be submitted to the Local Planning Authority.
- iv. Construction operatives shall be inducted by a licensed bat ecologist to make them aware of the possible presence of bats, their legal protection and of working practices to avoid harming bats. Written confirmation of the induction shall be submitted to the Local Planning Authority by the licensed bat ecologist within one week of the toolbox talk.
- v. Works potentially affecting bats shall then proceed under the supervision of the licensed bat ecologist.
- vi. Details of a roosting place for lesser horseshoe bats at least 4m x 3m and 2m high and a serotine bat roost shall be provided prior to work commencing and the roosts shall be maintained thereafter.

All works within the scheme shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details prior to the occupation of the development.

Reason: A pre-commencement condition in the interests of the Favourable Conservation Status of populations of European protected species and to prevent ecological harm and to provide biodiversity gain in accordance with DP5 and DP6 of the Mendip District Local Plan Part 1: Strategy & Policies 2006-2029 (Adopted 2014).”

#### Condition 16: Badger Walkover

“Prior to work commencing on site a badger survey shall be undertaken by a competent ecologist and the findings reported in writing to the Local Planning Authority. Where mitigation is required a Badger Mitigation Strategy report, setting out measures to protect badgers, shall also be submitted and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Work shall be carried out in accordance with the approved strategy.

Reason: In the interests of a UK protected species and in accordance with policy DP5 of the Mendip Local Plan.”

## 2 WILDLIFE PROTECTION AND ENHANCEMENT STRATEGY

### 2.1 European Protected Species Mitigation Licence (EPSML)

Nash Ecology Ltd undertook an updated survey of all nine buildings at Goosemoor Farm in June 2022. The survey comprised a visual inspection of Buildings A – I by a Natural England-licensed bat ecologist. Based on the results of this initial inspection and historical survey results (Country Contracts, 2018 & 2020), Buildings A, B, C and G were subject to three emergence surveys in June and July 2022. Building A supported a day roost of two lesser horseshoe bats and Building C supported two night roosts of lesser horseshoe bats. No bats or signs thereof were recorded in the remaining buildings. Of note - no serotine bats were encountered and the most recent evidence of the species appeared to be from 2018 or older.

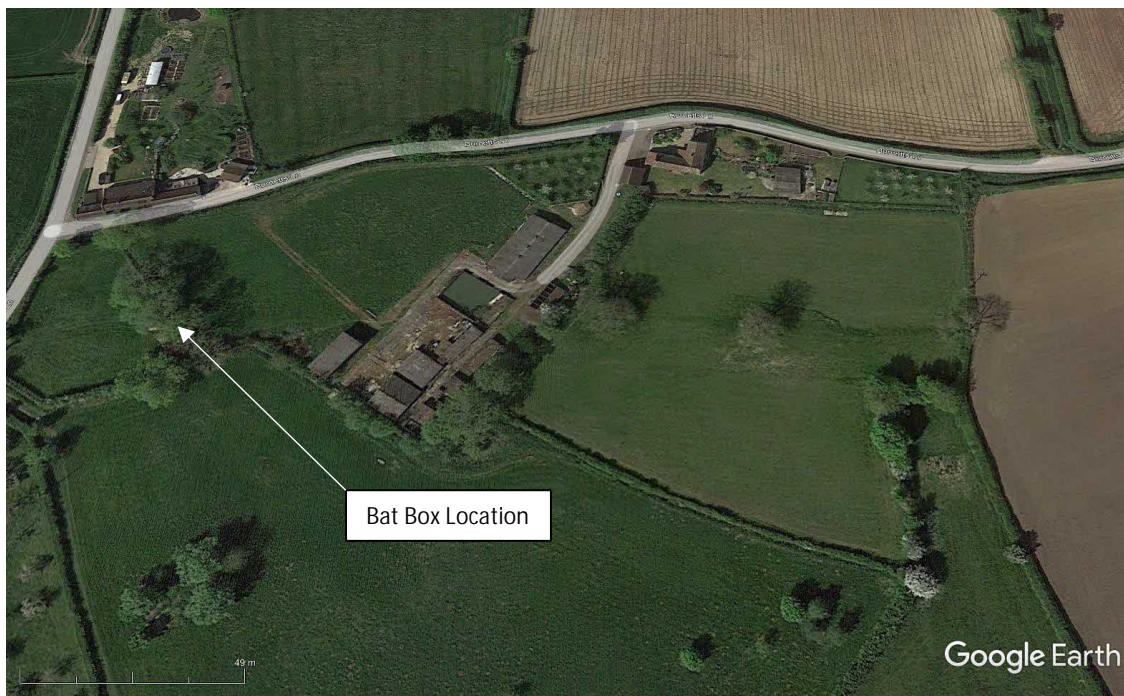
An EPSML application was submitted to, and acknowledged by, Natural England on 21th July 2022. Licence reference 2022-61879-EPS-MIT was provided for the project. A response from Natural England is due by 1<sup>st</sup> September 2022.

### 2.2 Bat Box

A Schwegler 1FF bat box (or equivalent) will be erected on a mature tree as shown below in Figure 1. The box would be sited in an uncluttered location at a height of between 4 m and 5 m. The box will be orientated to the southwest away from the development. The bat box will be retained in situ on the completion of the project. Any foliage encroaching on the bat box will be removed as and when required using hand tools.

A photograph of the bat box will be submitted to the Local Planning Authority.

Figure 1: Bat Box Location



## 2.3 Contractor Induction

Prior to the commencement of works, all contractors will have been inducted by the named ecologist – Dr Darryn Nash. The induction will cover broad topics such as legislation, licensing and bat ecology along with more site specific information including the locations of the bats, safe working methods and what to do in the event that a bat is discovered. All contractors will sign to confirm that they have been briefed and understood what is required of them for the project. Written confirmation of the induction will be provided to the LPA.

## 2.4 Proposed Mitigation

### 2.4.1 Bats

In this instance, the proposed mitigation strategy will comprise the construction of a new roost within one of the new dwellings to provide the bats with permanent roosting opportunities on site (Figure 2). The following broad steps would be required:

#### Exclusion

Prior to the exclusion, the named ecologist will undertake a thorough internal inspection of Building A. Following on from the inspection, an emergence survey would be undertaken. Once all bats have emerged from Building A, the false ceiling and sections of the roof would be dismantled. The building would then be fully illuminated for five nights. A static detector (Anabat Swift) would be left inside the building during this time to check for the presence of horseshoes. If no bats are detected, the building would be demolished. If bats are present, the lighting would be extended for a further two days until no bats are detected, at which point the building would be demolished. Note – the dissuasion by illumination approach was selected as the building contained too many potential access points to effectively exclude bats.

A visual inspection of Building C for horseshoe bats will be undertaken. As the building does not include any sheltered or hidden spots, the bats will be conspicuous. Assuming that no bats are recorded (as it is a night roost), the access doorways will be immediately blocked. In the highly unlikely scenario that a horseshoe bat is present, an emergence survey would be undertaken and once all bats have emerged, the doorways would be sealed.

The exclusion will only take place during suitable weather conditions (nightly temperatures are above 10 °C and conditions are calm). No bats will be handled unless an injured / sick bat is encountered.

#### Construction

The scheme involves the construction of three new houses, the northernmost of which would include a compensatory bat roost. A section of roof void measuring no less than 4.0 m x 3.0 m x 2.0 m would be sealed off (using stud walls where necessary);

A new bespoke ‘dormer-style’ access point would be created in the roof to allow flight access for the bats. This access point would be fitted with a baffle to prevent wind and rain entering the roost;

The roof of the roost would be augmented with rough-textured wooden beams from which the bats could hang;

A low-powered (12 W) heat mat would be affixed to a stud wall and covered over with chicken wire enabling the bats to hang from, but not come into contact with, the heat source. The heat mat would be fitted with a thermostat set to 30°C.

The roost would be seeded with droppings taken from the original roost. These would be in containers so that new evidence can be clearly recognised during monitoring;

No Breathable Roofing Membranes (BRM) would be used in the roost as these pose a serious risk to roosting bats; and

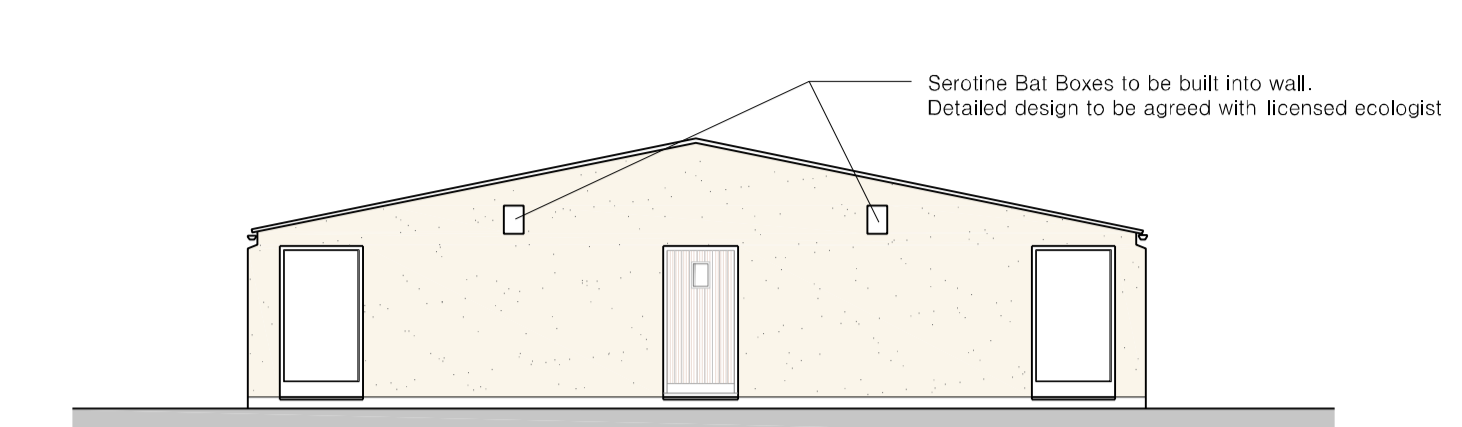
A lockable door into the bat roost would be constructed for maintenance and monitoring.

Figure 2: Bat Mitigation

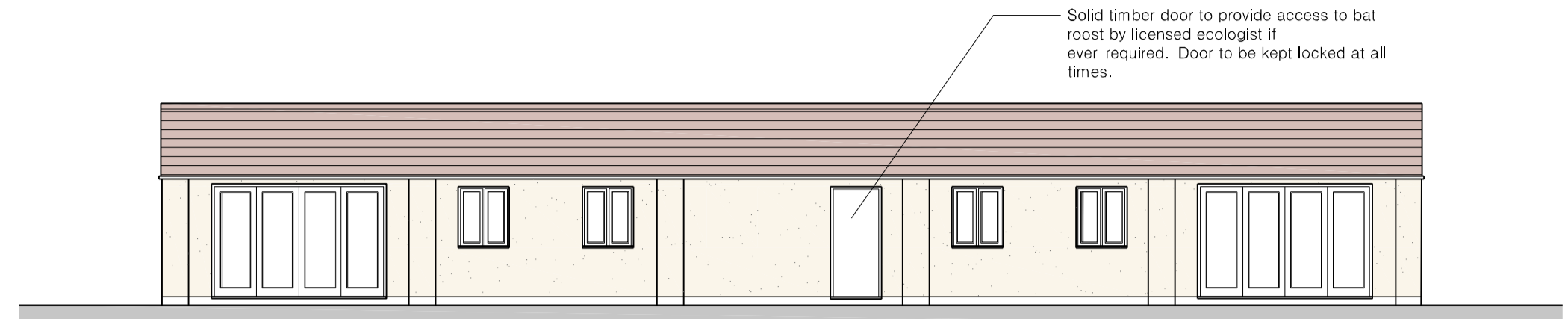
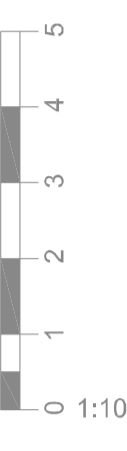


REPRODUCING THESE DRAWINGS BY PRINTING OR COPYING MAY LEAD TO ERRORS. PLEASE REFER TO SCALE BAR. DO NOT SCALE OFF THESE DRAWINGS FOR CONSTRUCTION PURPOSES. IF ANY DISCREPANCIES ARE FOUND, PLEASE CONTACT TOR ARCHITECTURAL SERVICES IMMEDIATELY. © TORARCHITECTURALSERVICES

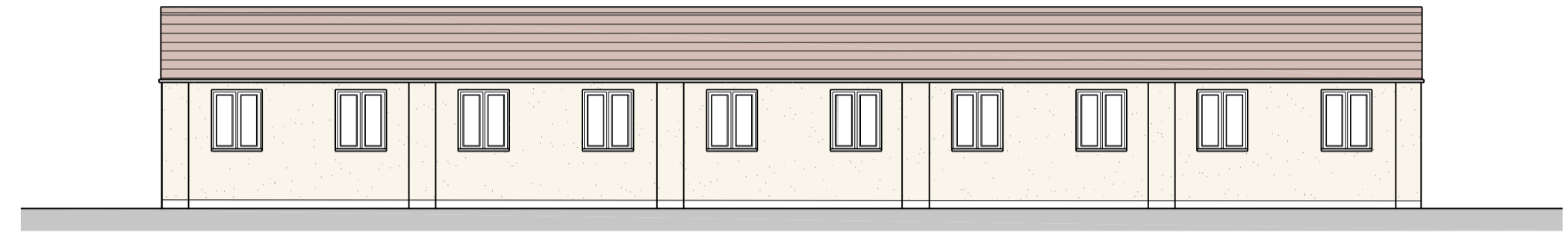
site plan by Greenslade Taylor Hunt



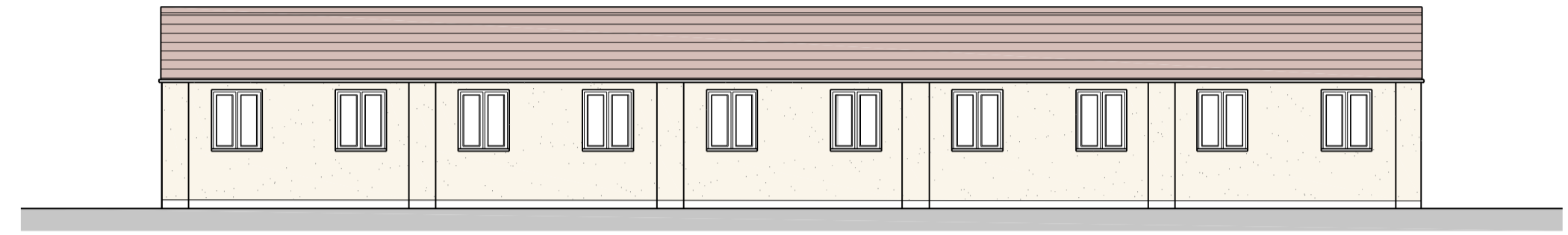
**PROPOSED SOUTH WEST ELEVATION**  
Scale 1:100



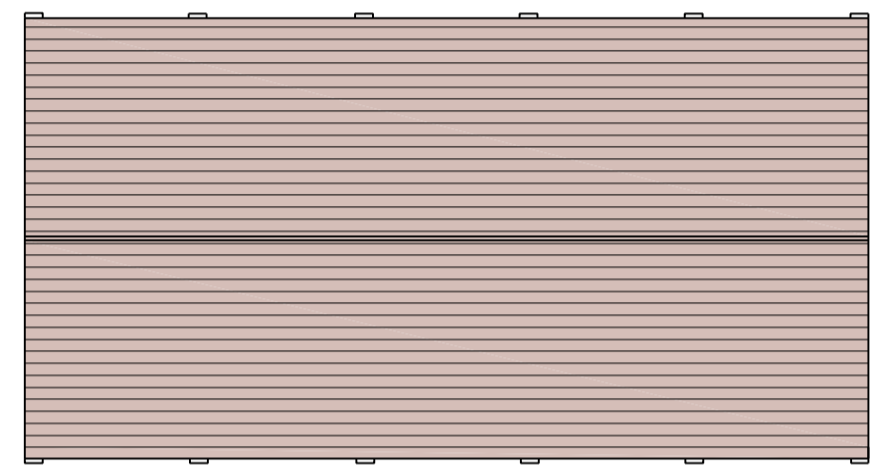
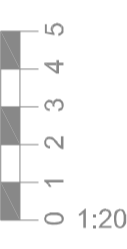
**PROPOSED SOUTH EAST ELEVATION**  
Scale 1:100



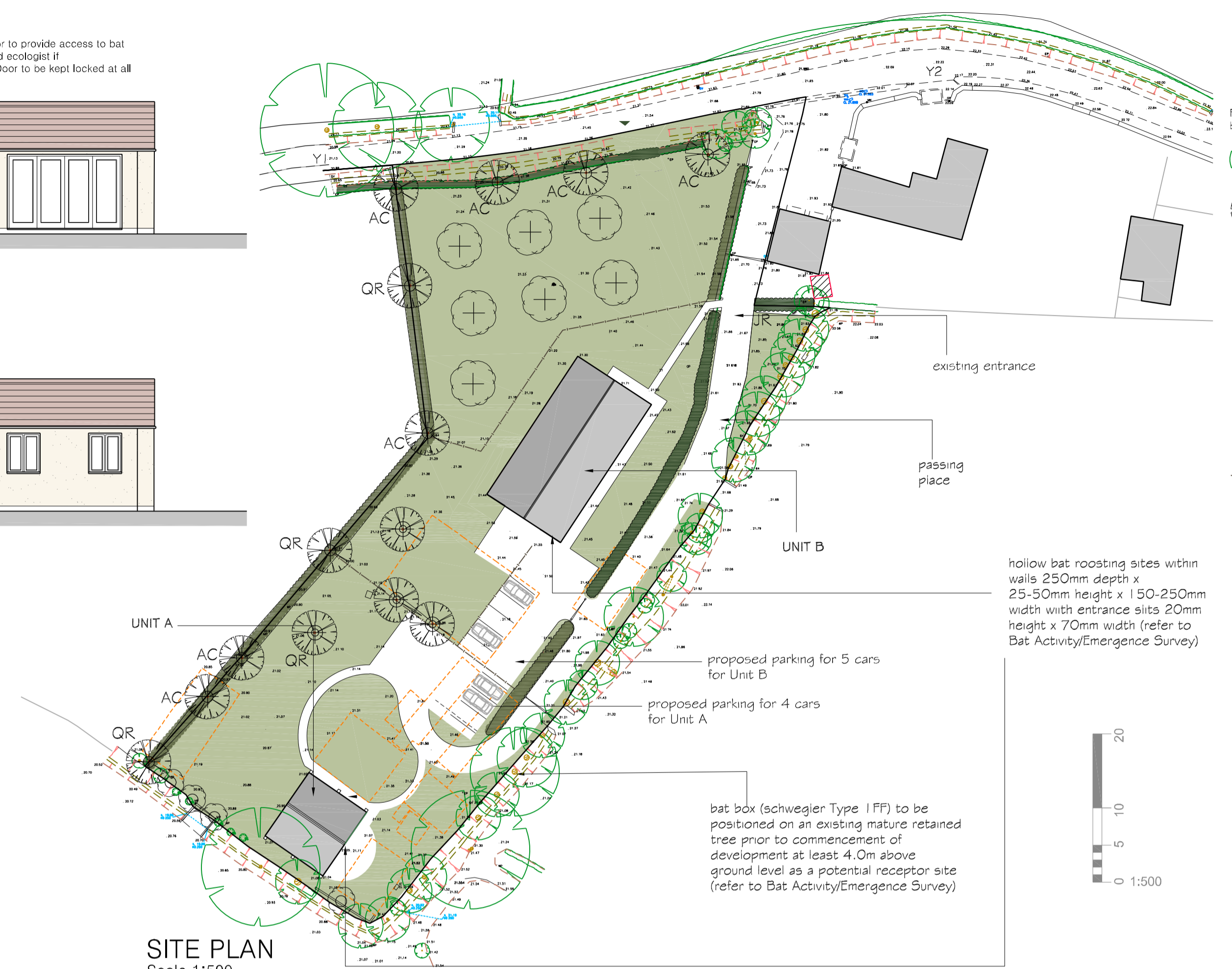
**PROPOSED NORTH EAST ELEVATION**  
Scale 1:100



**PROPOSED NORTH WEST ELEVATION**  
Scale 1:100



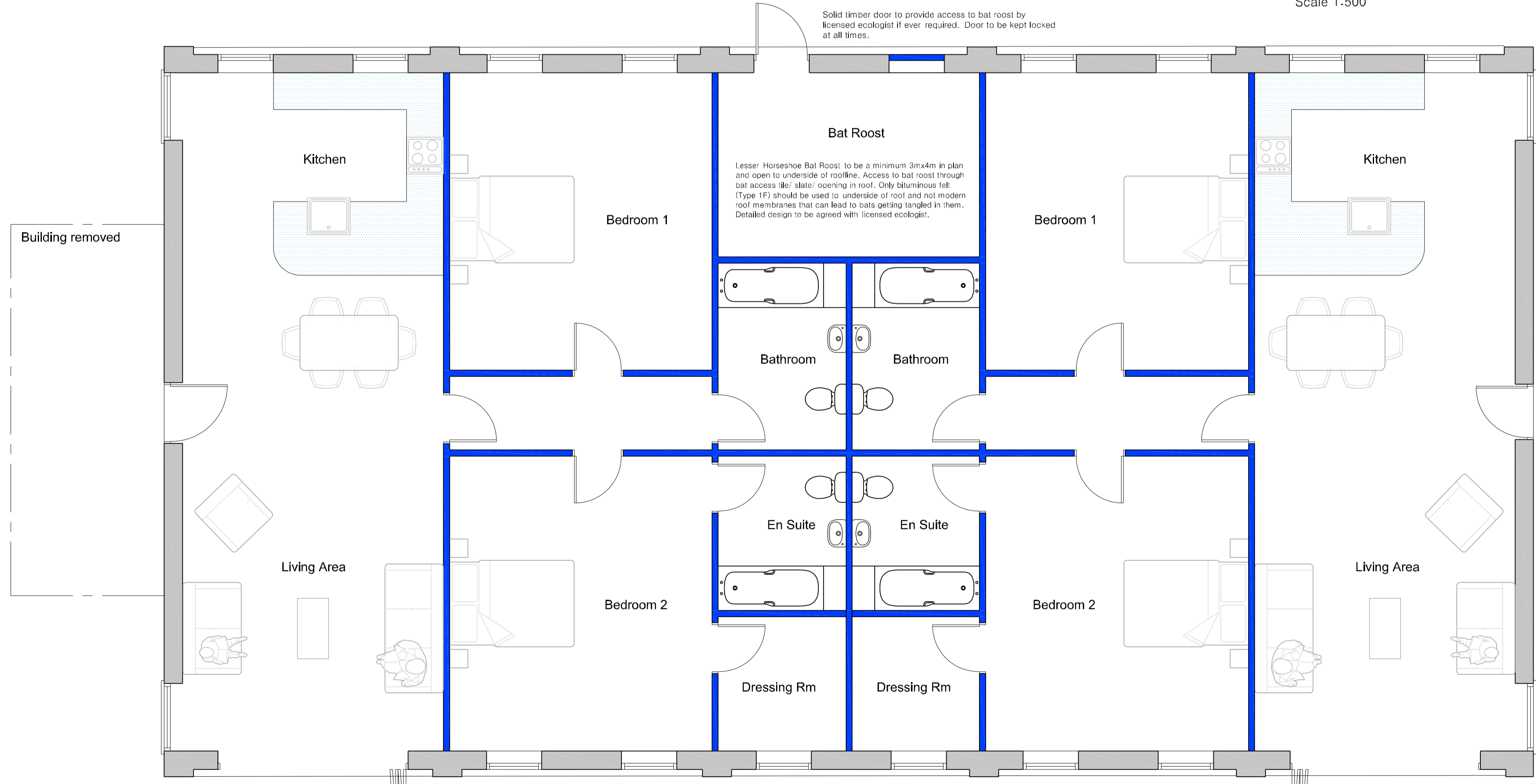
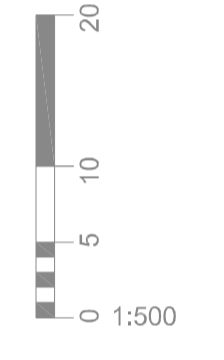
**PROPOSED ROOF PLAN**  
Scale 1:200



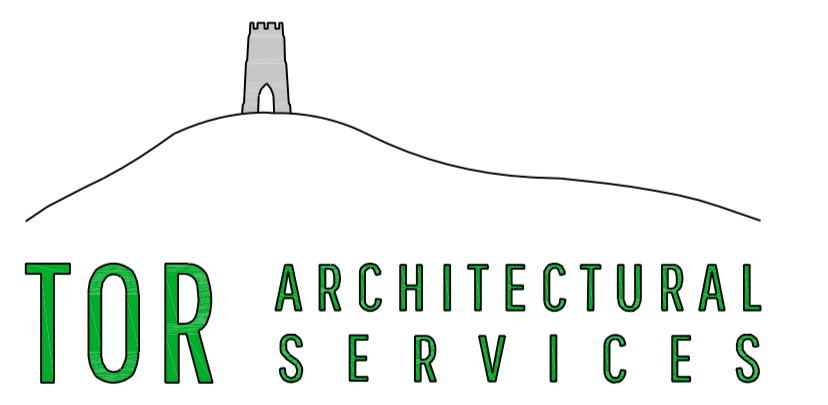
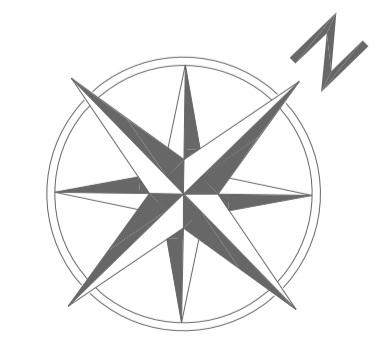
**SITE PLAN**  
Scale 1:500

- LANDSCAPE KEY**  
Please refer to Landscape Schedule and Specification by Clark Landscape Design Septs 2016
- existing trees
  - hedgerow trees (1.0m to 2.4m feathered)
  - garden trees (standard 1.0 to 1.2 cm)
  - orchard trees (standard 1.0 to 1.2 cm)
  - pollarded willows
  - native species hedgerow (60-80cm bare rootstock)
  - existing hedgerow
  - hurdle fencing
  - outline of existing buildings to be demolished

hollow bat roosting sites within walls 250mm depth x 25-50mm height x 150-250mm width with entrance slits 20mm height x 70mm width (refer to Bat Activity/Emergence Survey)



**PROPOSED GROUND FLOOR PLAN**  
Scale 1:50



**CHRIS JONES** ~ [chris@cajones.co.uk](mailto:chris@cajones.co.uk)  
[www.cajones.co.uk](http://www.cajones.co.uk)

*Client*  
Mr And Mrs Hurford

*Project*  
Barn Conversions

*Project Address*  
Goosemoor Farm,  
Burnetts Lane,  
BA6 8RD

*Revisions*  
A - November 2019 amended in line with ecology requirements

*Date*  
March 2019

*Scale*  
As Shown  
A1 Sheet

*Revision*  
A

*Drawing number / Details*  
004A - UNIT B PROPOSAL

### Monitoring

Monitoring would comprise a single inspection of the loft space one year after completion of the project. A report detailing the results of the monitoring would be submitted to Natural England.

### Lighting

Lesser horseshoe bats are highly photophobic and tend to avoid illuminated areas. To prevent any impacts on the species (and indeed other bat species), a sensitive lighting strategy will be implemented. The sensitive lighting strategy will comprise the following broad elements (BCT, 2018):

- o No excessive lighting - use only the minimum amount required for safety;
- o Where possible, external lights should be fitted with a passive infra-red sensor (PIR);
- o Minimise light spill – use short columns and direct light downwards and in towards the Site;
- o Use narrow spectrum bulbs that emit minimal ultra-violet light - avoid white and blue wavelengths of the spectrum, which can attract invertebrates;
- o Lights should either peak higher than 550 nm or use glass lantern covers to filter UV light;
- o Avoid using reflective surfaces under lights; and
- o Minimise the amount of light spill from within the new building by good design.



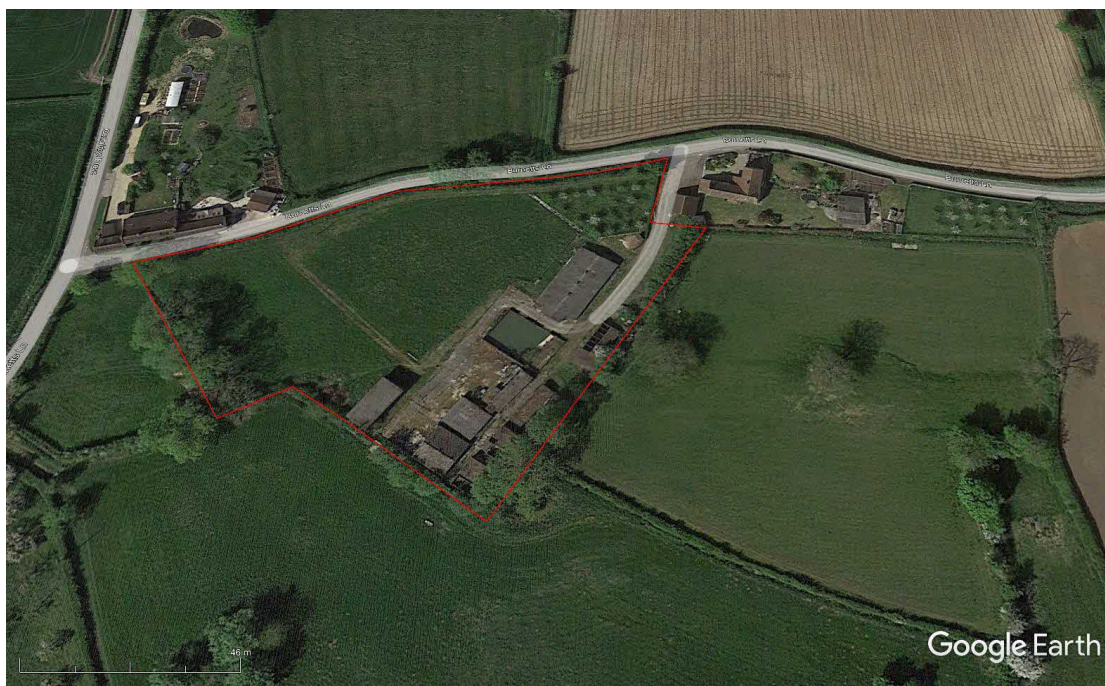
### 3 BADGER SURVEY

#### 3.1 Background and Scope

Nash Ecology Ltd was instructed to carry out an updated badger (*Meles meles*) survey of Goosemoor Farm (i.e. the 'Site'; see Figure 3). The survey was commissioned in order to satisfy Condition 16 (see Section 1.1).

#### 3.2 Site Location

Figure 3: Site Location (Google Earth, 2020)



#### 3.3 Legislation and Planning Policy Summary

##### 3.3.1 Summary of Legislation

The Protection of Badgers Act 1992 was enacted primarily for the purposes of preventing cruelty to and the persecution of badgers. The act makes it an offence to:

Wilfully kill, injure, take, possess or cruelly ill-treat a badger, or attempt to do so; and

To intentionally or recklessly interfere with a sett. Sett interference includes disturbing badgers whilst they are occupying a sett, as well as damaging or destroying a sett or obstructing access routes.

A sett is defined as any structure or place which displays signs indicating current use by a badger. Work that disturbs badgers whilst occupying a sett is illegal without a licence. Badgers may be disturbed by work near the sett if there is no direct interference or damage to the sett. Natural

England is responsible for the issuing of licences to allow development activities which would otherwise be unlawful.

### 3.3.2 Planning Policy Summary

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 2019 was considered in the preparation of this report. The NPPF specifies the obligations that the Local Authorities and the UK Government have regarding statutory designated sites and protected species under UK and international legislation and how this is to be delivered in the planning system. Protected or notable habitats and species should be considered as a material consideration in planning decisions and may therefore make some sites unsuitable for particular types of development. If the development is permitted, mitigation measures may be required to avoid or minimise impacts on certain habitats and species, or where impact is unavoidable, compensation may be required.

## 3.4 Methods

### 3.4.1 Desk-based Study

A site walkover, undertaken by Country Contracts in 2018, identified, a disused badger sett under the southwest corner of Building B. An updated walkover in 2020 (Country Contracts, 2020) also identified little evidence of use.

### 3.4.2 Field Survey

A detailed survey of the Site (as shown in Figure 2) was conducted on 24th July 2022. The survey involved a search of the entire area (and beyond where visibility permitted) and recording of the location of any evidence of badger in the form of:

Setts: comprising either single isolated holes or a series of holes. The number present would determine the sett category as either main, annexe, subsidiary or outlier (refer to Table 1 below for details);

Latrines: dung pits are regularly placed along paths on the boundary of the territory;

Paths leading to feeding areas;

Claw marks on the bark of trees, stones or scrapes in soil;

Hair usually with a white root, black band, white tip (often found on fences and other rough wood);

Holes formed during foraging and comprising characteristically disturbed ground vegetation; and

Footprints.

Setts are classified according to the criteria used in the National Badger Surveys (Harris et al., 1989; Wilson et al., 1998).

Table 1: Badger Sett Descriptions

Category	Description	Mean No. of Holes
Main	These usually have a large number of holes with large spoil heaps and the sett generally looks well used. There will be well-used paths to and from the sett and between sett entrances. Although normally the breeding sett and in continuous use, it is possible to find a main sett that has become disused.	12
Annexe	Often close to main sett, usually less than 150 m away, and are usually connected to the main sett by one or more obvious well-worn paths. They usually have several holes but may not be in use all the time if main sett is active.	5
Subsidiary	These are usually at least 50 m from a main sett and do not have an obvious path connecting them with another sett.	4
Outlying / Outlier	These have no obvious path connecting them to another sett. They are only used sporadically. When not in use by badgers, can be taken over by rabbits/foxes, but should still be recognisable as badger tunnels.	1-2

Any setts found are assessed for current activity levels. Three levels of activity are used as shown in Table 2 below.

Table 2: Levels of Activity Used for Recording Purposes

Activity Level	Description
Well-used	Entrances are clear of any debris or vegetation, are obviously in regular use, and may or may not have been excavated recently.
Partially used	Entrances are not in regular use and have debris such as leaves or twigs in the entrance, or have moss and/or other plants growing in or around the entrance. Partially used holes could be in regular use after a minimal amount of clearance.
Disused	Entrances have not been in use for some time, are partially or completely blocked, and cannot be used without considerable amount of clearance. If the hole has been disused for some time, all that may be visible is a depression in the ground where the hole used to be, and the remains of the spoil heap, which may be covered by moss and plants.

### 3.4.3 Survey Limitations

No limitations to the survey were noted.

### 3.5 Results



A pile of compost (garden waste) was located immediately to the west of Building 2. Rats (*Rattus norvegicus*) appear to have colonised the pile.

### 3.6 Mitigation

Badgers are a highly mobile species and can rapidly colonise (or recolonise) areas. Contractors will be vigilant for signs of digging in or around the Site. Any areas of digging encountered will be reported to the named ecologist.

Any trenches left open overnight will be fitted with a means of escape i.e. a plank of wood.