



HT ECOLOGY

Ecology Report

Proposed Indoor Swimming Pool,
Tregoad Holiday Park, Looe, Cornwall



Prepared for:
Waterside Holiday Parks

Date:
August 2023

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1. Introduction, legislation and methodology

1.1 Introduction

1.1.1 HT Ecology was commissioned by WMW Planning on behalf of Waterside Holiday Parks to produce an Ecology Report to support a planning application for the replacement of the indoor swimming pool at Tregoad Holiday Park, Looe, Cornwall, PL13 1PB (approximate OS Grid Ref. SX272559). Refer to Figure 1 for site location (hereafter referred to as the 'site').

1.1.2 This report was undertaken in accordance with BS42020:2013 and the Bat Surveys: Good Practice Guidelines (Collins, 2016). As the site is primarily built-form, the report focuses on roosting bats and nesting birds. The scope of the report covers the following:

- Results of the desk study and ecological surveys for the site; and
- Mitigation, enhancements and conclusions.

Legislation and planning policy

National planning policy

1.1.3 The Government's key national planning policy is set out in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), published in 2021. The NPPF includes the Government's policy on the protection of biodiversity through the planning system. It states that local plan policies and planning decisions should seek to minimise impacts on biodiversity and provide net gains in biodiversity. Planning policies should promote the conservation, restoration and enhancement of priority habitats, ecological networks and the protection and recovery of priority species populations (e.g. Habitats and Species of Principal Importance under the NERC Act 2006).

Local planning policy

Cornwall Local Plan 2010-2030 (Adopted 2016)

1.1.1 Cornwall council's policy requirements for planning applications are set out in the Cornwall Local Plan. The policies relating to biodiversity are outlined out below.

1.1.2 *Policy 22- European Protected Sites* sets out mitigation measures required for residential development and is not therefore relevant to this assessment.

1.1.3 *Policy 23- Natural Environment* is relevant to this assessment and states that development should conserve, protect and where possible enhance biodiversity interests commensurate with their status and giving appropriate weight to their importance. All development must ensure that the importance of habitats and designated sites are taken into account and consider opportunities for the creation of a local and county-wide biodiversity network of wildlife corridors which link County Wildlife Sites and other areas of biodiversity importance, helping to deliver the actions set out in the Cornwall Biodiversity Action Plan. The relevant sub-sections of Policy 23 are summarised below:

- **European Sites:** The highest level of protection will be given to Special Protection Areas (SPAs), Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) and Ramsar sites.
- **National sites:** Development proposals within or outside an SSSI which would be likely to adversely affect the site will not be permitted unless the benefits of the development, at this site, clearly outweigh both the adverse impacts on the site and any adverse impacts on the wider network of SSSIs.
- **Local Sites:** Development likely to adversely affect locally designated sites, including County Wildlife Sites, and sites supporting Biodiversity Action Plan habitats and species, will only be permitted where the need and benefits of the development

clearly outweigh the loss and the coherence of the local ecological network is maintained.

- Priority species and habitats: Adverse impacts on protected species and Biodiversity Action Plan habitats and species must be avoided wherever possible (i) subject to the legal tests afforded to them, where applicable (ii) otherwise, unless the need for and benefits clearly outweigh the loss.
- Ancient woodland and veteran trees: Development must avoid the loss or deterioration of ancient woodland and veteran trees, unless the need for, or benefits of, development on that site clearly outweigh the loss.
- Avoidance, mitigation and compensation for landscape, biodiversity and geodiversity impacts Development should avoid adverse impact on existing features as a first principle and enable net gains by designing in landscape and biodiversity features and enhancements, and opportunities for geological conservation alongside new development. Where adverse impacts are unavoidable they must be adequately and proportionately mitigated. If full mitigation cannot be provided, compensation will be required as a last resort.

1.1.4 *Policy 25: Green Infrastructure* is also relevant to this assessment. This policy encourages developments to contribute to an enhanced connected and functional network of habitat, open spaces and waterscapes through: retaining and enhancing the most important environmental infrastructure assets and connections, demonstrating that these assets and corridors have been taken into account during the design of the development, providing appropriate buffers, restoring or enhancing connectivity, providing accessible and good quality open space and providing clear arrangements for the long term maintenance and management of these assets and connections. Where these assets and corridors cannot be retained they should be replaced by equivalent or better provisions.

1.1.5 *Cornwall Planning for Biodiversity Guide and Net Gain Supplementary Planning Document*
The Cornwall Planning for Biodiversity Guide SPD was adopted in October 2018 and is a material consideration in planning decisions. The guide sets out Cornwall Council's approach for achieving a gain for nature within development sites. It does this by encouraging more biodiverse green and blue space within development sites, such as parks, ponds and corridors of open green space along rivers and hedges. It also gives prescriptive measures for the provision of bat and bird boxes, and bee bricks to make space for nature and the expected quality of ecological reporting for planning applications.

1.1.4 *Climate Emergency Development Plan Document (adopted February 2023)*
This DPD includes Policy G2 Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) Guidance, which states that Cornwall Council requires 10% net gain to be achieved for all major planning applications through the use of the DEFRA Biodiversity Metric.

1.1.6 *Cornwall Biodiversity Action Plan*
The Cornwall Biodiversity Action Plan identifies habitats and species that are priorities for conservation within the county.

1.1.5 **Legislation**
Bats and their roosts are fully protected by UK legislation, and all birds, and their nests, eggs and young are protected under UK legislation. Several bat and bird species are also Species of Principal Importance for Conservation of Biodiversity in England (Priority Species); refer to Annexe 2 for further information.

1.2 Methodology

Ecological Baseline

Desk study

1.2.1 Information on statutory designated sites of nature conservation value within 2km of the site was obtained by searching the following websites:

- MAGIC website (www.magic.gov.uk); and
- Environmental Layer on the Cornwall Council Interactive Map (<https://map.cornwall.gov.uk/website/ccmap> accessed 24/8/23).¹

1.2.2 The information obtained from the above websites was considered sufficient for this ecological assessment in view of the small size of the site and low value habitats that occur on-site.

Habitat survey

1.2.3 A UK Habitat Classification Survey of the site (UK Habitat Classification Working Group, 2018) was undertaken on 21 August 2023 (refer to Figure 2).

Bats: Preliminary Roost Assessment

1.2.4 A Preliminary Roost Assessment of the building was undertaken on 21 August 2023 in accordance with standard bat survey protocols (Collins, 2016). This involved a detailed search of the interior and exterior of the building, along with a ground level assessment of the vegetation for evidence of bats (e.g. droppings, feeding remains, staining). Information on potential or actual bat access points and roost locations was also recorded. A high-powered torch was used as necessary and the survey was carried out under an appropriate Natural England bat survey licence (T Davies 2015-11992-CLS-CLS Level 2).

1.2.5 Based on the survey results, the building was categorised in line with bat survey guidelines on a scale of 'Negligible' to 'High' bat roost suitability.

Birds

1.2.6 A search for evidence of nesting birds (i.e. active or disused nests) within the building was also undertaken on 21 August 2023.

Survey limitations

1.2.7 No survey limitations were noted. All parts of the building were accessed.

Ecological Assessment, Mitigation, Enhancement and Conclusions

1.2.8 The potential effects were described and the geographic scale at which the effect would occur was assessed; effects at 'Sub-Parish' (Low) level or below were not considered 'significant'. Where effects were identified, mitigation or compensation measures were described; residual effects after mitigation were assessed following the approach above.

1.2.9 A Small Sites Biodiversity Metric 4.0 (DEFRA, 2023) is summarised in this section and compares the number of habitat units to be lost with the number gained. Cornwall Council requires all developments to use this metric to demonstrate that 10% net gain would be achieved.

¹ The County Wildlife Sites shown on the CC Interactive Map are confidential and these sites have therefore been omitted from this desk study. A formal desk study from the local records centre would be undertaken should the search of this map identify CWS within or adjacent the site.

Survey validity

- 1.2.10 This report, and the results of the ecological survey contained within, remains valid for 18 months in accordance with CIEEM guidance (CIEEM, 2019).

Surveyor Experience and Code of Conduct

- 1.2.11 The author and surveyor, Hayden Torr, is a Director at HT Ecology. Hayden has 24 years' experience working in the ecological sector and is a full member of the Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (CIEEM) and a Chartered Environmentalist. CIEEM's Code of Conduct was followed during the survey and reporting.

2. Ecological baseline

2.1 *Designated sites*

2.1.1 No statutory designated sites of nature conservation value occurred within the 2km desk study area.

2.2 *Habitats*

2.2.1 The site comprised an existing indoor swimming pool surrounded by hard standing, mobile homes, modified grassland, introduced shrubs and native shrubs/trees (refer to Figure 2).

Buildings: Indoor Swimming Pool

2.2.2 The main indoor swimming pool building was constructed with rendered block walls with a flat-roof covered in solar panels (Target Note [TN] 1 on Figure 2 and Photo 1 below). A glass conservatory had been added to the west (TN2 and Photo 2).

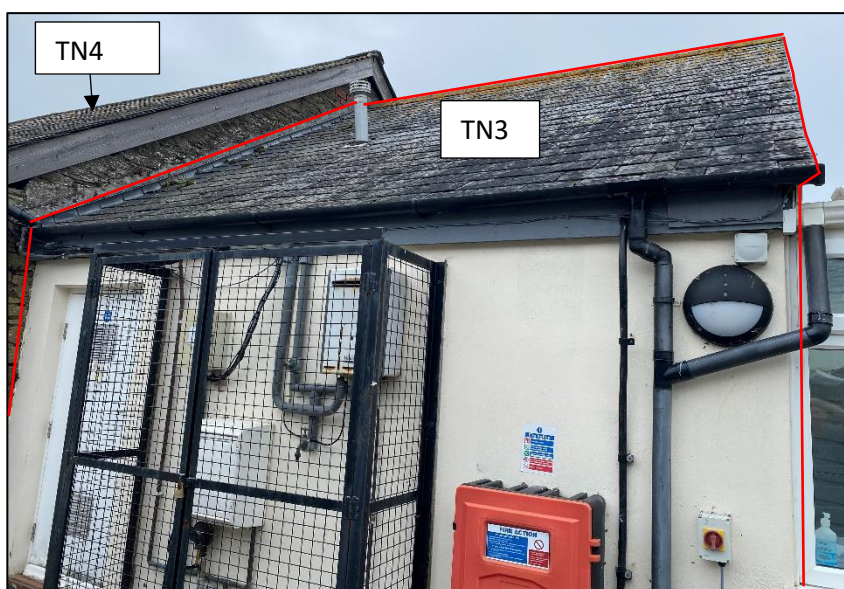
2.2.3 A single storey stone building with a pitched roof covered in artificial tiles was connected to the main swimming pool building and housed a boiler. A small loft area occurred in the pitched roof which was lined beneath the tiles with permeable roofing felt (refer to TN3 and Photo 3 and 4). This single storey building formed an extension to a two-storey stone building which occurred just outside the site boundary to the north (TN4 and Photo 3; unaffected by the proposals). This two-storey building contained a pitched slate roof and the loft area of this building had been converted into holiday accommodation.



Photograph 1 – Main swimming pool building (TN1)



Photograph 2 – Glass conservatory (TN2)



Photograph 3 – Single storey building (TN3) and two-storey building (TN4; to be retained)



Photograph 4 – loft space of single storey building (TN3)

Buildings: Mobile Homes

- 2.2.4 Several mobile homes were present within the site these were typically prefabricated structures with a low profile pitched roof (refer to Photograph 5).



Photograph 5 – modified grassland and mobile home

Modified Grassland

- 2.2.5 This grassland occurred between the mobile homes throughout the site and was dominated by annual meadow-grass with occasional broadleaved dock and Yorkshire fog (refer to Photograph 5).

Introduced shrubs

- 2.2.6 Several non-native ornamental shrubs were present in planted beds around the site.

Scattered broadleaved trees and mixed scrub

- 2.2.7 Several young or semi-mature cherry trees were present on the modified grassland. A small area of native shrubs occurred adjacent a semi-mature cherry tree in the west of the scheme (to be retained as part of the proposals).



Photograph 6 – cherry tree and native shrubs (to be retained)

2.3 *Adjacent habitats*

- 2.3.1 The site is surrounded on all aspects by further mobile homes, modified grassland, fruit trees and introduced shrubs. Arable and pasture fields surrounded by species-rich hedgerows and stands of woodland occur in the wider area. The town of Looe is located approximately 1.6km to the southwest of the site.

2.4 Protected/Notable Species

Bats

- 2.4.1 No bat evidence was recorded during the external or internal survey of the buildings within the site. All the buildings including the artificial slate roof of the single-storey building contained very limited gaps suitable for roosting bats and these were assessed as being of negligible suitability for roosting bats. The site appeared to be lit by several lamp posts along the roads which are likely to have further reduced the suitability of these buildings for this species.
- 2.4.2 No bat evidence was recorded during the external survey of the two-storey building at TN 4 which occurred just outside the proposed development site boundary. The loft space of this building had been converted; however, suitable gaps for roosting bats occurred on the gable wall tops of this building. This building was therefore assessed as being of 'Moderate' suitability for roosting bats as it could support low numbers of bats, however, the presence of a maternity colony was unlikely.

Birds

- 2.4.3 Part of an historic swallow nest was found on a timber support in the loft of the single storey building at TN3. This building was converted approximately 20 years ago and this nest was likely to have been constructed prior to this date as the roof and soffits were closely sealed and therefore no access was available for this species.



Photograph 16: historic swallow nest

- 2.4.4 No further evidence of nesting birds was recorded during the surveys. However, the buildings provided suitable habitat for crevice nesting birds (e.g. house sparrow). The scattered trees and shrubs also provided suitable bird nesting habitat.

Other protected/notable species

- 2.4.5 No suitable habitat for other protected/notable species occurred in the site. The close mown grassland was unsuitable for reptiles. The shrubs and trees were fragmented by several roads and this lack of connectivity renders them unsuitable for dormouse or amphibians.

3. Mitigation, enhancements and conclusions

3.1 *The proposed works*

3.1.1 The proposals comprise the demolition of the existing indoor swimming pool building and replacement with a larger building housing a 15m x 10m indoor pool. The existing road to the south would be realigned and several of the mobile homes would be moved (by others) to the south to accommodate the larger swimming pool (refer to Figure 3 for the Development Plan).

3.1.2 The proposed development would incorporate an integrated landscape and ecological design (refer to the Biodiversity Net Gain Plan at Figure 4). A key element of this would be creating new wildlife habitats within the site to ensure 'Biodiversity Gain'. The design would include the following features:

- Planting of 140m² of wildflower grassland around the western and southern banks of the new swimming pool building;
- Planting of 6 fruit trees and enhancement of a retained fruit tree;
- Planting of 1027m² of modified grassland within the site; and
- Retention of the 9m² of native scrub and the semi-mature fruit tree
- Installing a house sparrow box on the northern elevation of the swimming pool building (refer to Figure 4).

Designated sites

3.1.3 No effects on designated sites are predicted during the construction or operational phase.

Habitats

3.1.4 Construction would result in the removal of 1058m² of modified grassland, 78m² introduced shrubs, 3 fruit trees and 3469m² of developed/sealed surfaces. The removal of these habitats would be a short-term negative effect at the Sub-Parish level.

3.1.5 The landscape proposals would lead to the creation of wildflower grassland, fruit trees and modified grassland (refer to Section 3.1 above).

3.1.6 A Biodiversity Offsetting Metric (Small Sites Metric 4.0) has been produced for the site which compares the number of Biodiversity Units to be lost with the number to be gained (refer to Annexe 3 for full details). The results of the metric are summarised in Table 3.1 below.

Table 3.1: Biodiversity Metric Results

Headline Results			
Headline		BNG Targets Met ✓	
Trading Rules		Trading Rules Satisfied ✓	
Next steps		Submit metric to LPA	
Baseline Units	<i>Habitat units</i>	0.8953	
	<i>Hedgerow units</i>	Zero Units Baseline	
	<i>River units</i>	Zero Units Baseline	
Post-development Units	<i>Habitat units</i>	1.0062	
	<i>Hedgerow units</i>	0.0000	
	<i>River units</i>	0.0000	
Total net unit change	<i>Habitat units</i>	0.1110	☒
	<i>Hedgerow units</i>	0.0000	☒
	<i>River units</i>	0.0000	☒
Total net % change	<i>Habitat units</i>	12.39%	☒
	<i>Hedgerow units</i>	% target not appropriate	
	<i>River units</i>	% target not appropriate	

- 3.1.7 The increase in Habitat Units by **12.39%** would result in a beneficial effect at the Sub-Parish level in the medium and long-term.

Bats

- 3.1.8 The survey results indicate that the proposed works would be of negligible risk to bats and therefore no specific mitigation is considered necessary. The distance (>30cm) between the roof of the single-storey building at TN3, which is proposed for demolition, and the roof of the two-storey building at TN4 ensures that activities at the former won't impact the latter. Consequently, any bats that may roost within the building of TN4 are not predicted to be impacted by the proposed demolition of the building at TN3.
- 3.1.9 In the unlikely event that bats are found within the buildings during the proposed demolition, works should cease until advice has been received from Natural England. Overall post-construction impacts to bats are predicted to be negligible.

Birds

- 3.1.10 The bird nesting season typically runs from March through to the end of September. If it is necessary to undertake works to the buildings in the bird nesting period, then a pre-works check for nesting birds should be undertaken by an ecologist. If nesting birds were found, work in that area would need to be delayed until all chicks had fledged. Removal of the trees/shrubs should also be undertaken outside of bird-nesting season.
- 3.1.11 A sparrow terrace is to be installed on the northern elevation of the new swimming pool building. The sparrow terrace should be installed facing away from direct sunlight and the prevailing wind (refer to Figure 4 and Annexe 1).

Other species

- 3.1.12 No impact on other protected/notable species are predicted.

3.2 *Conclusions*

- 3.2.1 The proposed development would protect, maintain and enhance biodiversity in accordance with policies concerning the conservation of biodiversity in the National Planning Policy Framework (2018), the Cornwall Local Plan 2010-2030 (Adopted 2016) and the Climate Emergency Development Plan Document (Adopted February 2023).

4. References and bibliography

Collins, J. (Ed) 2016. *Bat surveys good practice guidelines – 3rd edition*. BCT, London.

CIEEM, 2018. *Ecological impact assessment guidelines – 3rd edition*.

CIEEM, 2019. Advice note on the lifespan of ecological reports and surveys.

Institute of Environmental Assessment (1995) *Guidelines for Baseline Ecological Assessment*. E & FN Spon. London.

Mitchell-Jones, A. J. (2004). *Bat Mitigation Guidelines*. Natural England/English Nature, Peterborough.

Figure 1: Site Location plan

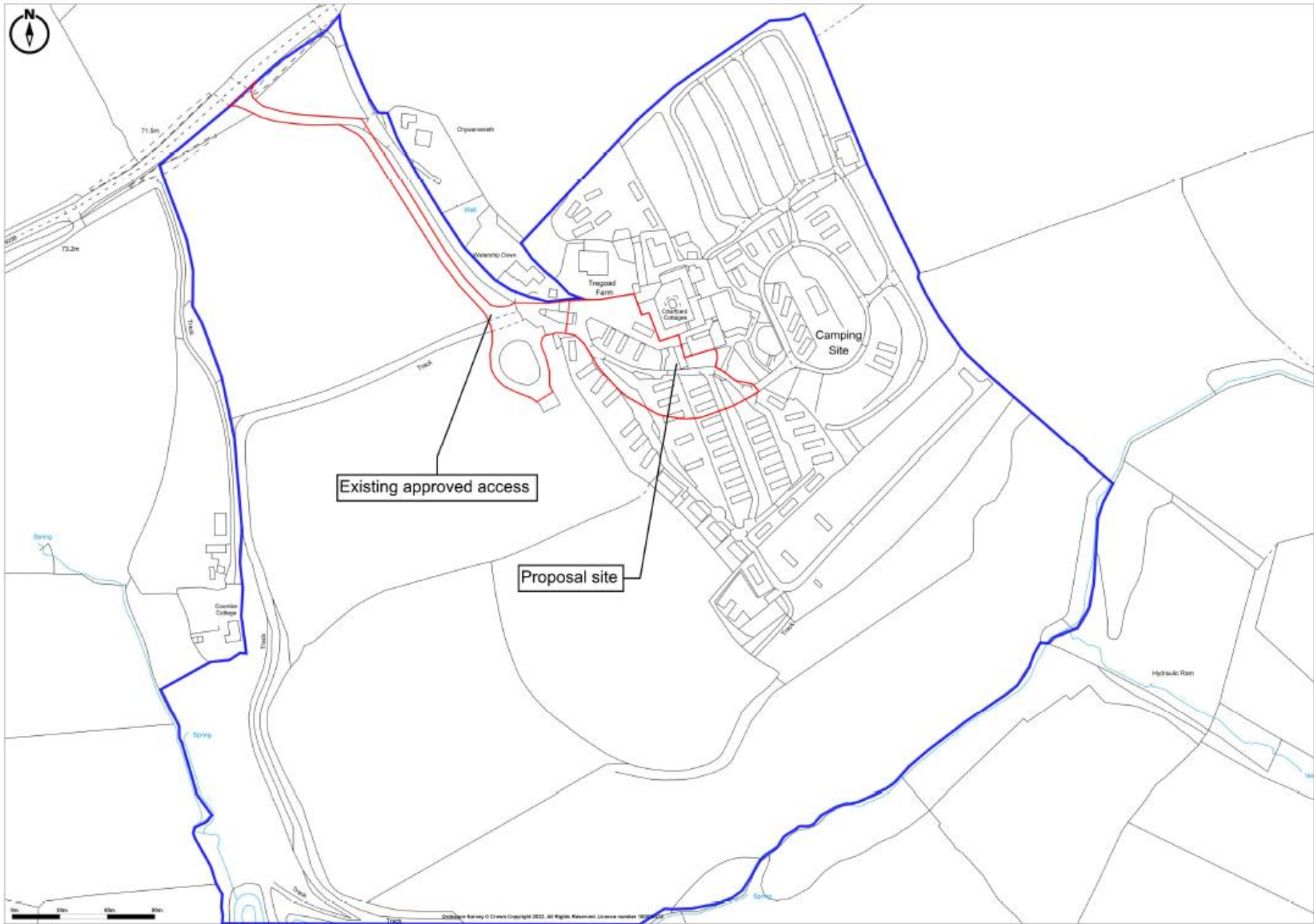


Figure 2: Habitats Plan



- Key**
-  Site boundary
 -  Developed land, sealed surface
 -  Modified grassland
 -  Buildings
 -  Native scrub
 -  Broadleaved tree
 -  Target Note
 -  Introduced scrub



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Figure: Habitats Plan Pre-Development
 Site: Proposed Swimming Pool
 Client: Tregoad Holiday Park
 Date: 23/08.23

Figure 3: Proposed Development Plan



NOTES
 THE CONTRACTOR IS RESPONSIBLE FOR CHECKING ALL DIMENSIONS AND NOTIFYING ALL DISCREPANCIES TO THE DESIGNER.
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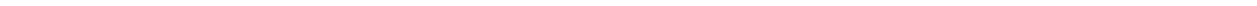
REV	DESCRIPTION	DATE
E	PLANT ROOM AND PERGOLA CHANGES:	27.07.23
	NAS	
D	GENERAL UPDATES:	25.07.23
	NAS	
C	DRAINAGE REMOVED:	04.07.23
	NAS	
B	UPDATED TO SUITE FLOOR PLAN. DRAINAGE ADDED:	30.06.23
	NAS	
A	DISABLED ACCESS CHANGED TO REAR. LEVELS ALTERED. BUILDING SHIFTED. TERRACE ADDED. EXTERNAL PLANT ROOM REDUCED. GROUND LEVELS ADDED:	22.06.23
	NAS	

REV DESCRIPTION DATE	
AMENDMENTS	
CLIENT	WATERSIDE HOLIDAY PARKS
JOB	TREGOAD HOLIDAY PARK PROPOSED INDOOR SWIMMING POOL
DRAWING	SITE PLAN
JOB NO.	2944-04
DRAWING NO.	12 E
SCALE	1:200 @ A1
DRAWN BY	NAS
DATE	JUNE 2023



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Figure 4: Proposed Planting and Biodiversity Net Gain Plan



Annexe 1: Bird Boxes

Vivara Pro WoodStone House Sparrow Nest Box

https://www.nhbs.com/4/practical-conservation-equipment?q=&hPP=60&idx=titles&p=0&fR%5Bhide%5D%5B0%5D=false&fR%5Bhide%5D%5B1%5D=false&fR%5Blive%5D%5B0%5D=true&fR%5Blive%5D%5B1%5D=true&fR%5Bshops.id%5D%5B0%5D=4&fR%5Bshops.id%5D%5B1%5D=4&hFR%5Bsubjects_equipment.lv1%5D%5B0%5D=Bird%20Boxes&qtview=195281



Annexe 2: Conservation Status and Legal Protection of Bats and Birds

Birds

The bird breeding season generally lasts from March to early September for most species. All birds are protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act (1981) (as amended) and the Countryside & Rights of Way (CROW) Act 2000. This legislation makes it illegal, both intentionally and recklessly, to:

- kill, injure or take any wild bird;
- take, damage or destroy the nest of any wild bird while it is being built or in use;
- take or destroy the eggs of any wild bird

Furthermore, birds listed on Schedule 1 of the Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) are protected against intentional or reckless disturbance whilst nest building and when at or near a nest containing eggs or young. Dependent young of Schedule 1 species are also protected against disturbance.

In addition to this legal protection, the leading governmental and non-governmental conservation organisations in the UK have reviewed the population status of the birds regularly found here and produced a list of birds of conservation concern. Of the 247 species assessed, 67 were placed on the Red List of high conservation concern, 96 on the Amber List of medium conservation concern and 81 on the Green List of low conservation concern:

- Red list species are those that are Globally Threatened according to IUCN criteria; those whose population or range has declined rapidly in recent years; and those that have declined historically and not shown a substantial recent recovery.
- Amber list species are those with an unfavourable conservation status in Europe; those whose population or range has declined moderately in recent years; and those with internationally important or localised populations.

Bats

There are 18 species of bats found in the UK, 17 of which are known to breed here. The conservation status of these species is summarised in the table below:

Common name	Scientific name	IUCN Red List*	Priority Species
Greater horseshoe	<i>Rhinolophus ferrumequinum</i>	LC	Yes
Lesser horseshoe	<i>Rhinolophus hipposideros</i>	LC	Yes
Daubenton's	<i>Myotis daubentonii</i>	LC	No
Brandt's	<i>Myotis brandtii</i>	LC	No
Whiskered	<i>Myotis mystacinus</i>	LC	No
Natterer's	<i>Myotis nattereri</i>	LC	No
Bechstein's	<i>Myotis bechsteinii</i>	NT	Yes
Alcathoe bat	<i>Myotis alcathoe</i>	DD	No
Greater mouse-eared	<i>Myotis myotis</i>	LC	No
Common pipistrelle	<i>Pipistrellus pipistrellus</i>	LC	No
Soprano pipistrelle	<i>Pipistrellus pygmaeus</i>	LC	Yes
Nathusius's pipistrelle	<i>Pipistrellus nathusii</i>	LC	No
Serotine	<i>Eptesicus serotinus</i>	LC	No
Noctule	<i>Nyctalus noctula</i>	LC	Yes
Leisler's	<i>Nyctalus leisleri</i>	LC	No
Barbastelle	<i>Barbastella barbastellus</i>	NT	Yes
Brown long-eared	<i>Plectorus auritus</i>	LC	Yes
Grey long-eared	<i>Plectorus austriacus</i>	LC	No

*IUCN categories: LC Least Concern, NT Near Threatened, DD Data Deficient

All bat species are afforded full protection under UK and European legislation, including the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) and the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended). Together, this legislation makes it illegal to:

- Deliberately capture, injure or kill a bat.
- Damage or destroy a bat roost; or intentionally or recklessly obstruct access to bat roosts.
- Deliberately, intentionally or recklessly disturb, a bat, including in particular any disturbance which is likely:
 - to impair their ability to survive, to breed or reproduce, or to rear or nurture their young, or
 - in the case of animals of a hibernating or migratory species, to hibernate or migrate; or
 - to affect significantly the local distribution or abundance of the species to which they belong.

A bat roost is defined in the legislation as “any structure or place which a bat uses for shelter or protection”. Roosts are protected whether or not bats are present at the time.

Annexe 3: Small Sites Metric (refer to separate excel spreadsheet)