

PURE ECOLOGY

Castle Farm,
Pitchcombe, Shurdington,
Gloucestershire
GL6 6LU

Ecological Assessment



July 2023

PURE ECOLOGY



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1 Introduction

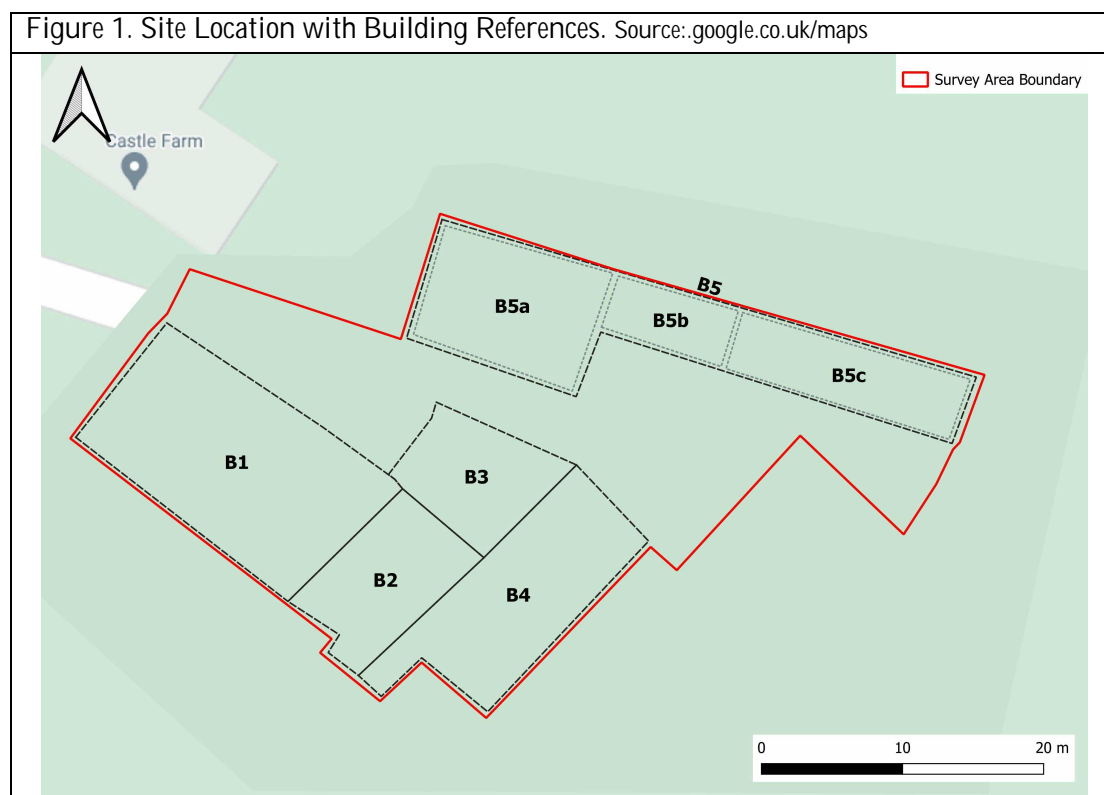
1.1 Background

A Preliminary Ecological Appraisal Report (PEAR) was prepared for Castle Farm in October 2022. The current report is an update of the PEAR to include the results of nocturnal bat surveys carried out during summer 2023. The additional survey has been undertaken to determine the presence or likely absence of bat roosts as part of the protected species appraisal for an Ecological Assessment Report (EAR).

1.2 The Application Site

Castle Farm is located at Ordnance Survey Grid Reference SO 85354 08579, approximately 0.5km north-east of Pitchcombe in Gloucestershire. The survey Site is an area of the farmyard to the south-east of the main house at Castle Farm. It comprises three blocks of interconnected agricultural buildings. For descriptive purposes, the buildings are labelled B1 – B5 as shown in Figure 1.

B1, B3, B4 and B5 are single-storey and have a simple construction with single-skin breezeblock walls and metal and/ or asbestos clad covered roofs, their main purpose is as agricultural equipment and livestock storage. B2 is a stone walled barn with a modern timber frame and asbestos cover. The buildings are set in a yard surfaced with hardcore, with small areas of grassland and weedy growth.



1.3 Proposed Scheme

A planning application is being prepared to convert the stone barn (B2) at Castle Farm to a dwelling. B1, B3 and B4 will be removed to make way for the garden of the newly converted dwelling. B5 will be partially removed, with only B5a retained and converted to a garage/ washing facilities. Existing access via the farm driveway off Wragg Castle Lane will be utilized.

The design proposals are provided in Appendix 1.

1.4 Scope of the Study

This report provides an ecological assessment of the development proposals at Castle Farm. Details are given of the survey methodologies used to gather baseline information and the relevant legislation and policies that have guided the assessment. The objectives of the study are to:

Provide an appropriate ecological baseline to evaluate the nature conservation interest of the Site and identify features of ecological importance.

Assess the impacts of development against the ecological baseline and any effects on important ecological features (including habitats, species and ecosystem functions and processes).

Incorporate mitigation and compensation measures within the scheme to avoid, reduce, and counter negative ecological impacts and their effects on wildlife, and ecological enhancement to deliver biodiversity gain through the planning system.

2 Planning Context

2.1 National

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), July 2021, requires that the planning system should conserve and enhance the natural environment (Section 15) by, inter alia, 'protecting and enhancing sites of biodiversity value' and 'minimising impacts and providing net gains for biodiversity' (para 174).

Scheme plans should 'promote the conservation, restoration and enhancement of priority habitats, ecological networks and the protection and recovery of priority species' and 'identify and pursue opportunities for securing measurable net gains for biodiversity' (para 179).

Local planning authorities should aim to protect and enhance biodiversity by applying the following principles (para 180):

- a) If significant harm to biodiversity resulting from a development cannot be avoided (through locating on an alternative site with less harmful impacts), adequately mitigated, or, as a last resort, compensated for, then planning permission should be refused;

- b) Development on land within or outside a Site of Special Scientific Interest, and which is likely to have an adverse effect on it (either individually or in combination with other developments), should not normally be permitted. The only exception is where the benefits of the development in the location proposed clearly outweigh both its likely impact on the features of the site that make it of special scientific interest, and any border impacts on the national network of Sites of Special Scientific Interest;
- c) Development resulting in the loss or deterioration of irreplaceable habitats (such as ancient woodland or ancient or veteran trees) should be refused, unless there are wholly exceptional reasons and a suitable compensation strategy exists; and
- d) Development whose primary objective is to conserve or enhance biodiversity should be supported; while opportunities to incorporate biodiversity improvements in and around developments should be integrated as part of their design, especially where this can secure measurable net gains for biodiversity or enhance public access to nature where this is appropriate.

2.2 Stroud District Local Plan (2015)

Policy ES6: Providing for biodiversity and geodiversity

European Sites

Development will safeguard and protect all sites of European and Global importance, designated as Special Area of Conservation (SAC), Special Protection Area (SPA) and Ramsar sites.

Development must not result in significant adverse effects on these internationally important nature conservation sites, either alone or in combination with other projects and plans. The Council will expect development proposals to demonstrate and contribute to appropriate mitigation and management measures to maintain the ecological integrity of the relevant European site(s). With specific regard to recreational impacts, the Council will use core catchment zones that identify potential impact areas which extend beyond the relevant European site itself. Development proposals within such areas will take account of any relevant published findings and recommendations. There will be further assessment work on the Severn Estuary SPA and SAC that shall include recreational pressure.

National Sites

Nationally important sites, including Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) and National Nature Reserves (NNR), will be safeguarded from development, unless the benefits of the development can be demonstrated to outweigh the identified national importance of the nature conservation interest or scientific interest of the site.

Local Sites

Local sites, including Local Nature Reserves (LNR), Key Wildlife Sites (KWS) and Regionally Important Geological and Geomorphological Sites (RIGS) will be safeguarded from development, unless the benefits of the development outweigh the nature conservation or scientific interest of the site. Where development is considered necessary, adequate mitigation measures or, exceptionally, compensatory measures, will be required, with the aim of providing an overall improvement in local biodiversity and/ or geodiversity. Opportunities will be sought to access and enhance the value of such sites for educational purposes, particularly in relation to promoting public awareness as well as appreciation of their historic and aesthetic value.

New Development and the Natural Environment

All new development will be required to conserve and enhance the natural environment, including all sites of biodiversity or geodiversity value (whether or not they have statutory protection) and all legally protected or priority habitats and species. The Council will support development that enhances existing sites and features of nature conservation value (including wildlife corridors and geological exposures) that contribute to the priorities established through the Local Nature Partnership. Consideration of the ecological networks in the District that may be affected by development should take account of the Gloucestershire Nature Map, river systems and any locally agreed Nature Improvement Areas, which represent priority places for the conservation and enhancement of the natural environment. In this respect, all developments should also enable and not reduce species' ability to move through the environment in response to predicted climate change, and to prevent isolation of significant populations of species.

The District will have a number of undesignated sites, which may nevertheless have rare species or valuable habitats. Where a site is indicated to have such an interest, the applicant should observe the precautionary principle and the Council will seek to ensure that the intrinsic value of the site for biodiversity and any community interest is enhanced or, at least, maintained. Where an impact cannot be avoided or mitigated (including post-development management and monitoring), compensatory measures will be sought. The Council may, in exceptional circumstances, allow for biodiversity offsets, to prevent loss of biodiversity at the District level.

Protected Species

Development proposals that would adversely affect European Protected Species (EPS) or Nationally Protected Species will not be supported, unless appropriate safeguarding measures can be provided (which may include brownfield or previously developed land (PDL) that can support priority habitats and/ or be of value to protected species).

3 Methodology

3.1 Desk Study

A request was submitted to the Gloucestershire Centre for Environmental Records (GCER) in August 2022 for details of non-statutory designated sites for nature conservation, and records of protected species within a 1km radius of the Site.

The Multi-Agency Geographic Information for the Countryside (www.magic.gov.uk) was used to obtain information regarding:

Internationally protected Special Protected Areas (SPA), Special Areas of Conservation (SAC) and Ramsar sites within 5km of the Site.

Nationally protected Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) within 1km of the Site.

Other relevant contextual data such as the Ancient Woodland Inventory.

Online mapping and aerial photograph resources such as GoogleEarth and Bing Maps (www.bingmaps.com) were also consulted for contextual information.

3.2 Field Survey

3.2.1 Phase 1 Habitat Survey

A Phase 1 habitat survey was undertaken on 22nd July 2022 of the land within the red line boundary in which the buildings B1 – B5 are situated. This involved a Site walkover to record the habitats using standard classifications to describe the vegetation (JNCC, 2010). The walkover survey included an examination of the Site for evidence of, and potential for protected and otherwise notable species.

3.2.2 Buildings Inspection

Of particular concern for the study was the potential use of the buildings on Site by roosting bats. During the Phase 1 habitat survey on 22nd July 2022, a daytime inspection of buildings B1 – B5 was undertaken to look for evidence of bats and to assess the potential of the buildings to provide shelter for bats. The inspection for bats included a search for field signs such as droppings, animal carcasses or skeletal remains that could indicate previous use of the buildings by bats. The survey was carried out in accordance with good practice guidelines published by the Bat Conservation Trust (Collins, 2016).

A powerful Clulite torch with a 500m spot beam, ladder and binoculars were used to examine the building exteriors and interiors.

The suitability of the buildings to support roosting bats was assessed according to the following categories:

1. Negligible potential/not a roost: no suitable features
2. Low potential: one or more suitable features that could be used by individual, or very low numbers of bats opportunistically
3. Moderate potential: one or more suitable features that could be regularly used by bats, but sub-optimal conditions may limit the potential for breeding or hibernating bats
4. High potential: one or more roost features that are suitable for use by a colony of bats on a regular basis and may support a maternity or hibernation site
5. Confirmed roost: evidence of current/ recent bat occupation.

3.2.3 Bat Activity Survey

The PEAR recommended that further nocturnal surveys of building B2 should be carried out to confirm the presence, or likely absence of bat roosts within the building. Guidance set out by the Bat Conservation Trust (Collins, 2016) recommends a proportionate level of survey according to the likelihood of bats. B2 was evaluated as moderate potential (Category 3), because it includes more than one feature that could be utilized by roosting bats and is set within a landscape favourable to bats. Applying the Bat Conservation Trust guidelines, to have adequate confidence in a negative result (i.e. confirm absence of bat roosts in the buildings), the bat roost assessment should include two dusk or dawn surveys in the period May – September, with at least one between May – August.

Two dusk surveys were subsequently carried out in May and June 2023. The surveys involved two surveyors, positioned to provide visual coverage of potential roost features and bat access points in B2 as shown on Figure 2 below. Table 1 gives details of survey timings and weather conditions.

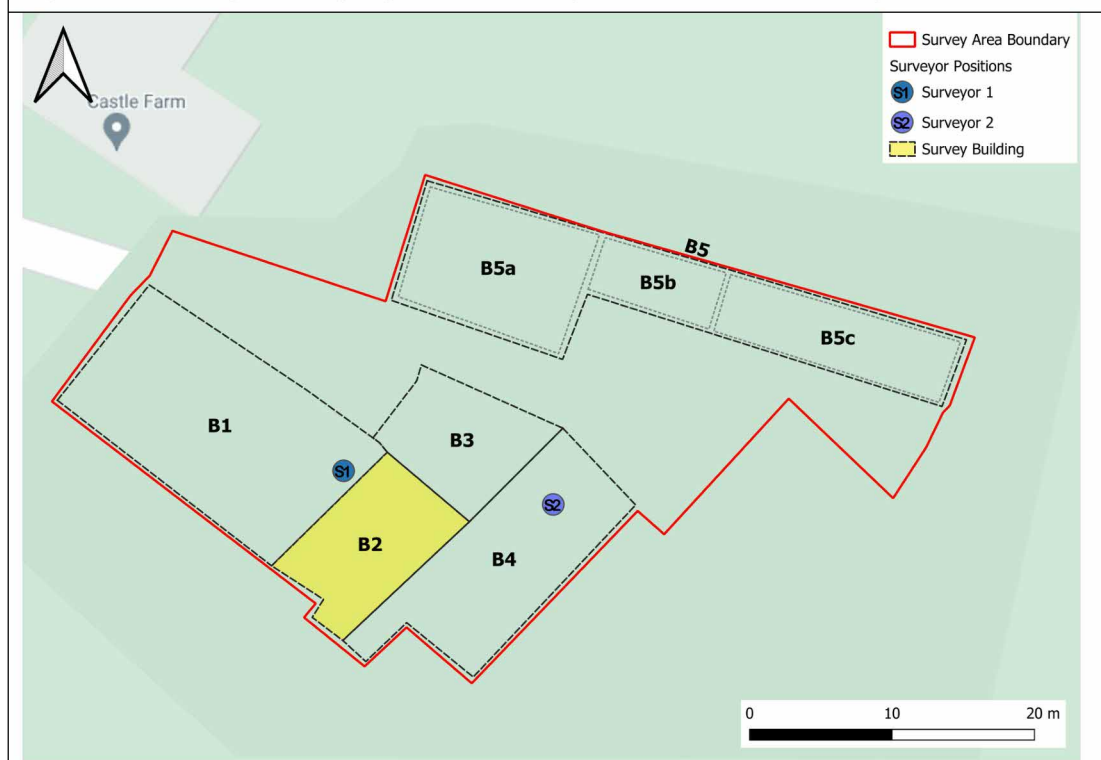
Table 1. Timings and Weather Conditions for Dusk Bat Activity Surveys of B2 at Castle Farm

Date	Survey Period (hrs)	Sunset (hrs)	Weather
17/ 05/ 2023	20:45 – 22:30	20:58	60% cloud, 12°C, Wind BF 1 Mostly dry, but with occasional very light drizzle
12/ 06/ 2023	21:15 – 23:00	21:30	<5% cloud, 22°C, Wind BF 1 Dry

BF – Beaufort Scale

The surveyors were equipped with Elekon BatloggerM bat detectors that record bat echolocation calls in full spectrum output on to an internal SD card in the unit. The recorded bat calls can be analyzed with BatExplorer software to aide species identification. Surveyors also used a Canon XA II IR camcorder as a night vision aid.

Figure 2. Building B2 is highlighted and Surveyor Locations are shown by the Red Asterixks



3.3 Personnel

The Phase 1 habitat assessment, the building inspection and the dusk surveys were carried out by [REDACTED] an ecologist with seven years' experience and holder of Natural England Licence ref. 2016 23830 CLS CLS, and [REDACTED] an ecologist with eight years' bat survey experience.

3.4 Study Constraints, Limitations and Deviations

There were no significant study constraints. The surveys were carried out at an optimal time of year, and access was possible to the entire Site. The bat surveys comply with industry standards (Collins, 2016) and weather conditions were suitable for bat activity, despite a light drizzle of rain during the survey in May. The target building (B2) for the bat survey is enclosed by adjoining barns which meant the exterior of the pitched roof was not visible. There was no potential bat roost opportunities in the roof however, as B2 has a sheet cover with no concealed voids or crevices. The bat roost resource in B2 is associated with stone wall crevices, that could be surveyed from the surveyors' Site locations.

4 Results

4.1 Designated Sites

4.1.1 Statutory Designated Sites

There is one nationally designated Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) within 1km of the Site. Edge Common Site SSSI is approximately 0.54km to the northwest of the Site and is designated for its calcareous grassland habitat.

There are two internationally designated Special Areas of Conservation (SAC) located within 5km of the Site. These are:

Cotswold Beechwoods SAC, which is approximately 3km to the northeast of the Site. It is designated for its Annex 1 Asperulo-Fagetum beech forests habitats.

Rodborough Common SAC which is approximately 4.5km to the south of the Site. It is designated for its Annex 1 Bromus erectus – Brachypodium pinnatum grassland.

The Site at Castle Farm falls within an “Impact Risk Zone” (IRZ) for a Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI).

IRZ’s are a tool developed by Natural England to make a rapid initial assessment of the potential risks to SSSIs within define zones, which reflect the particular sensitivities of the features for which the SSSI is notified and indicate the types of development proposal which could potentially have adverse impacts. The IRZ covering Castle Farm states:

“New residential/tourist accommodation in this area requires a [Habitat Regulations Assessment] HRA to consider recreational disturbance on Cotswold Beechwoods.”

4.1.2 Non-statutory Designated Sites

There are three locally-designated non-statutory Local Wildlife Sites (LWS) within 1km of the Site, as shown on Table 2 below and in Appendix 4.

Table 2. Non-statutory designated sites within 1km of the Site

LWS	Description	Proximity
Pitchcombe Wood	Ancient woodland	c.0.57km W
Paradise, Manor	Semi-natural grassland	c. 0.59km W
Scottsquar & Halliday's Woods	Ancient woodland	c. 0.98km NW

4.2 Habitats

The following description of habitats should be read with reference to the Phase 1 Habitat Plan and Target Notes (TN) in Appendix 2.

The Site consists of a portion of a larger farmyard. Vegetation within the Site boundary is minimal with the ground primarily composed of concrete or hardcore with some ephemeral and short perennial weedy vegetation growing through it, such as dandelion *Taraxacum officinale* agg. docks *Rumex* spp. and common bent *Agrostis capillaris*. At the eastern edge of the Site there is a small area of amenity grassland (TN1). This is unmanaged vegetation that forms the margin of the track leading through the yard. It includes species such as cock's foot *Dactylis glomerata*, perennial rye grass *Lolium perenne* and nettle *Urtica dioica*. Off-site, immediately to the north and east is pasture. The remainder of the farm and other development lie to the south and west.

4.3 Bats

4.3.1 Summary of Survey Results

The suite of surveys carried out at Castle Farm have confirmed that the Site does not support roosting bats as summarized below.

The preliminary ecological appraisal did not find any evidence of bats in any of the buildings, and B1, B3, B4 and B5 all are of modern construction and have Negligible potential to support roosting bats (Category 1).

Building B2 is an old stone barn in a state of semi-dereliction. During the building inspection it was assessed as having Moderate potential to support roosting bats (Category 3). Subsequent bat activity surveys confirmed likely absence of roosting bats in the building.

There are no trees within the Site boundary, or other structures that could support roosting bats.

The Site does not include any features (such as hedgerows or tree lines) that would provide navigational features for commuting bats, and foraging opportunities within the Site are minimal.

A description of each of the buildings is provided in Section 4.3.3 below.

4.3.2 Desk Study

GCER provided 16 records of bats from four locations within the search area, these consisted of the following species:

- Brown long-eared - *Plecotus auritus*
- Common pipistrelle - *Pipistrellus pipistrellus*
- Soprano pipistrelle - *Pipistrellus pygmaeus*
- Whiskered bat - *Myotis mystacinus*
- Natterer's – *Myotis nattereri*
- Daubenton's – *Myotis daubentonii*
- Lesser horseshoe– *Rhinolophus hipposideros*
- Noctule - *Nyctalus noctule*
- Serotine - *Eptesicus serotinus*

The closest group of three records date from 2018 and are of three species (Myotis sp. serotine and an unidentified species) recording roosting at St John the Baptist Church c.0.4km south-west of the Site.



The next closest group of four records (of Daubentons, Natterer’s, brown long-eared and whiskered bats) date from 2014 and are located c. 0.5km to the south-east. They relate to small roosts (1 -2 animals).

Also c. 0.5km to the south, is a single record of a lesser horseshoe bat roost dating from 2018.

A group of seven records is located c.0.7km to the north-east. These relate to emergence records of common and soprano pipistrelle, lesser horseshoe, brown long-eared, noctule, serotine and Myotis sp bats in 2016.

The final record is c0.9km south-west and is a common pipistrelle roost dating from 2003.

4.3.3 *Building Descriptions*

	<p>B1 is wooden framed with corrugated metal walls and roof and concrete floor. It is simply constructed with open walls on all sides.</p> <p>No evidence of bats was found. There are no sheltered internal spaces for free-hanging bats to roost, and no crevices that could conceal a crevice-dwelling bat.</p> <p>The building has Negligible potential to support roosting bats.</p>
	

B2 is a stone barn that has been modified over the years and is currently in a state of disrepair. It has a modern timber framed roof with an asbestos cover. It is open to the roof but has a partial mezzanine floor.

There are several window holes allowing access to the interior for bats and flooding it with natural light. B3 abuts the entrance on the northern elevation, creating a sheltered opening.

The roof does not provide any opportunities for roosting bats, but there are numerous gaps in the stonework that could potentially provide roost locations for crevice-dwelling bats. Those gaps that were accessible (up to c. 3m by ladder) were closely inspected, but no evidence of bats was found anywhere in the building.

There are numerous inaccessible gaps in the stonework that could not be inspected so the presence of bats cannot be ruled out.

The building has Moderate potential to support roosting bats.





B3 and B4 are attached to the north and east elevations of B2. They are of similar construction with asbestos and metal sheet roofs. The walls are breezeblock and are partially open and partially wooden-slatted.

There are no sheltered internal spaces for free-hanging bats to roost, and no crevices that could conceal a crevice-dwelling bat.

The buildings have Negligible potential to support roosting bats.

B5 is an 'L' shaped block of open-fronted sheds that are used to house livestock and agricultural equipment. The basic structure is a metal frame with block-built walls. The walls and roof are clad with corrugated metal and asbestos.

There are no sheltered internal spaces for free-hanging bats to roost, and no crevices that could conceal a crevice-dwelling bat.

The building has Negligible potential to support roosting bats.



4.4 Other Protected Species

4.4.1 *Great Crested Newt*

GCER does not hold any records of great crested newts *Triturus cristatus* from within the 1km search area and there are no ponds within 250m of the Site.

There is no breeding habitat for great crested newts in the vicinity of the Site, and the Site itself has no suitable terrestrial habitat for the species. It is concluded that great crested newts are absent from the Site.

4.4.2 *Reptiles*

GCER provided four records of reptiles from within the 1km search area: two records of slow-worm *Anguis fragilis* and two records of common lizard *Zootoca vivipara*. The records date between 2013 and 2021 and all originate from the Edge Common SSSI c. 0.5km to the north-west of the Site.

The farmyard environment provides an unsuitable habitat for reptiles and it is concluded that these species are absent from the Site.

4.4.3 *Breeding Birds*

No evidence of nesting birds (including species such as swallow *Hirundo rustica* and barn owl *Tyto alba* that can occur in agricultural buildings) were noted during the survey.

5 Assessment

5.1 Legislation and Policy

Appendix 3 details the legislation and policy relevant to this study. The protection afforded to key habitats and species by the legislation identified above has informed the scope of the ecological studies undertaken to determine baseline conditions and guided measures that will protect and benefit valued ecological resources associated with the site.

5.2 Assessment of Potential Ecological Impacts

5.2.1 *Designated Sites*

Under the European Union (Withdrawal) Act 2018, EU-derived domestic legislation, such as existing environmental regulations that implement EU Directives, and Direct EU legislation (such as The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017) which were in force immediately prior to the end of the transition period continue to form part of UK domestic law. Special Areas of Conservation (SAC) are designated under The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017. The regulations provide for the designation and protection of European Sites, the protection of European protected species and the adaptation of planning and other controls for the protection of European Sites.

SSSI are notified and protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended). These sites are notified for nature conservation purposes as they support the best examples of the UK's habitats, flora and/ or fauna.

The small scale-nature of the development and its situation within an existing farmyard mean that it is unlikely that any impacts on habitats beyond the immediate curtilage of the affected buildings would occur. All designated sites are at least 0.5km from the development Site, a distance at which it is considered unlikely that any negative impacts would occur.

There are no predicted impacts on Cotswold Beechwoods SAC/ SSSI. Although the Site is within the SSSI IRZ the woodlands are 3km from Castle Farm and provision of a single dwelling will not have a measurable adverse effect on the designated wildlife site. There are no pollution risks because there are no ecological pathways connecting the Site to Cotswold Beechwoods SAC/ SSSI and the new development is not predicted to increase visitor pressure on the SAC.

This report provides information to enable the local planning authority, as the Competent Authority, to undertake a Stage 1 Habitat Regulations Assessment 'Test of Likely Significance' under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017.

5.2.2 Habitats

Under the NERC Act 2006, certain habitats of conservation concern should be conserved and enhanced through Public Body (i.e. Local Planning Authority) decision making processes, where reasonably possible. These habitats are listed under Section 41 of the NERC Act 2006, and are known as Habitats of Principal Importance. Habitats of Principal Importance are afforded protection under National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and applicable Local Policies.

There are no Habitats of Principal Importance on the Site, and all the habitats on the Site have low intrinsic ecological value, being composed mostly of hardstanding.

The proposed development will include the creation of a garden where B1 and B4 currently stand. This will result in an increase in the area of semi-natural habitat on the Site, and as such will have a net positive impact with respect to habitats.

5.2.3 Bats

Bats are protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended by the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000) and under The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017. All species of bat are present on Schedule 2 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 and are subject to the provisions of Regulation 41 of those Regulations. Taken together, these protect bats from disturbance, injury or killing and make it an offence to damage, destroy or obstruct a breeding site or resting place they use.

This study concludes with reasonable certainty that bats are not predicted to be roosting at the Site. Buildings B1, B3, B4 and B5 are all modern agricultural buildings of a structure and composition unsuitable to support roosting bats. No evidence of bats was found in these buildings, and it is concluded that they have negligible value to bats and that bats can be assumed to be absent. Building B2, was initially assessed as having Moderate potential, but subsequent dusk emergence surveys have confirmed that bats are absent from the building.

On this basis, it can be concluded that the proposed development of the farm buildings is not predicted to result in any significant impacts on bats or the places that they use for breeding, shelter and/ or protection (roosts) and no specific mitigation is required. In addition, since no significant impacts on bats are predicted under The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017, a European Protected Species (bat) licence should not be required for the proposed works to proceed.

5.2.4 Breeding Birds

Breeding birds 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 or take, damage or destroy its nest whilst in use or being built, or take or destroy its eggs. The nesting season for most species is between mid-March and August inclusive.

No active birds' nests were noted during the building inspection, so the proposed development is not predicted to result in any disturbance to breeding birds.

6 Recommendations

6.1 Further Bat Surveys

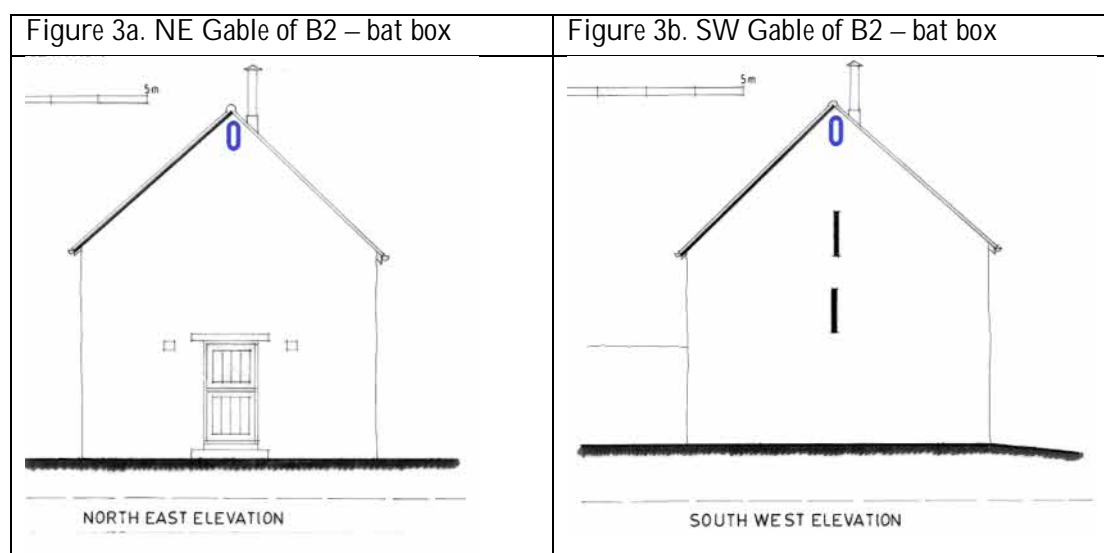
No further ecological survey is required to support a planning application. The daytime inspection and nocturnal bat surveys are considered adequate to provide a suitable level of confidence that bats are absent from buildings on the Site. This advice is consistent with nationally published good practice guidelines (Collins 2016), which advocates a level of survey that is proportionate to the likelihood of bats being present.

6.2 Biodiversity Enhancement

The Site has negligible ecological value, so no mitigation is required. The following measures will provide a net biodiversity enhancement to the Site.

6.2.1 Bat Boxes

Two bat boxes will be erected on the gable walls of the newly converted barn. Locations as shown on Figure 3a and b. There is a large variety of suitable boxes, but a durable model should be chosen such as the 'Large Multichamber WoodStone Bat Box' or the 'Vivara Pro WoodStone Bat Box'.



6.3 Bird Boxes

The proposed scheme provides an opportunity to create nesting habitat for species that depend highly on buildings, such as house sparrow which are on the list of 'species of principal importance' published NERC Act and barn swallows that nest inside open agricultural buildings.



House Sparrows

There are various manufacturers and models of house sparrow nest boxes that are suitable for installation on buildings and could be used on this scheme, but a 'sparrow nest terrace' such as the design produced by the RSPB (Figure 4a) can be fitted under

the eaves of the newly converted B2 and will provide three separate nest compartments.

Barn Swallows

Swallows usually nest within buildings and artificial nest cups (Figure 4b) could be installed within a retained agricultural building within the farm.

Figure 4a. Sparrow Terrace	Figure 3b Swallow cup
	

6.3.1 Wildlife-friendly Landscaping

The provision of two new areas of garden within the Site on the footprint of B1 and B4 (see Appendix 1) presents the opportunity to create new areas of semi-natural habitat that enhance the biodiversity of the farmyard. Where lawns are planned, these areas could be created using a species-rich lawn mix such as Emorsgate Flowering Lawn Mixture EL1, to provide nectar resources for invertebrates. Berry and nectar-rich shrubs such as berberis and privet could be planted, along with a good range of nectar-rich herbaceous species. Ground cover species could include aubretia; bellflower *Campanula carpatica*, wood anemone *Anemone nemorosa*, and bugle *Adjuaga reptans*. Taller species good for invertebrates include fleabane *Erigeron* sp., golden marguerite *Anthemis tinctoria*, and red valerian. The new planting should aim to create structure diversity that will provide cover for birds and ground dwelling species such as hedgehog.

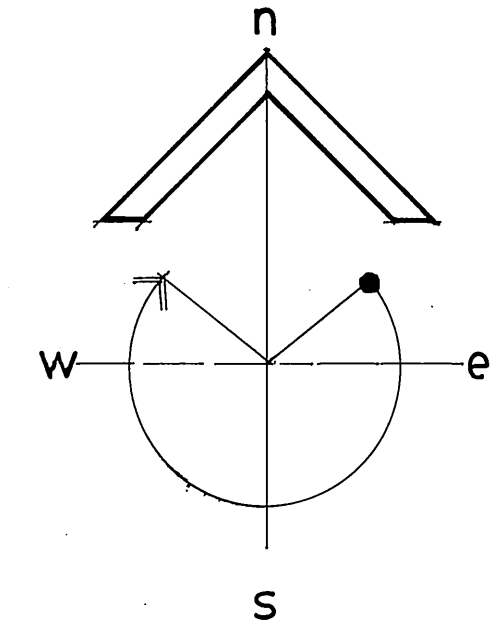
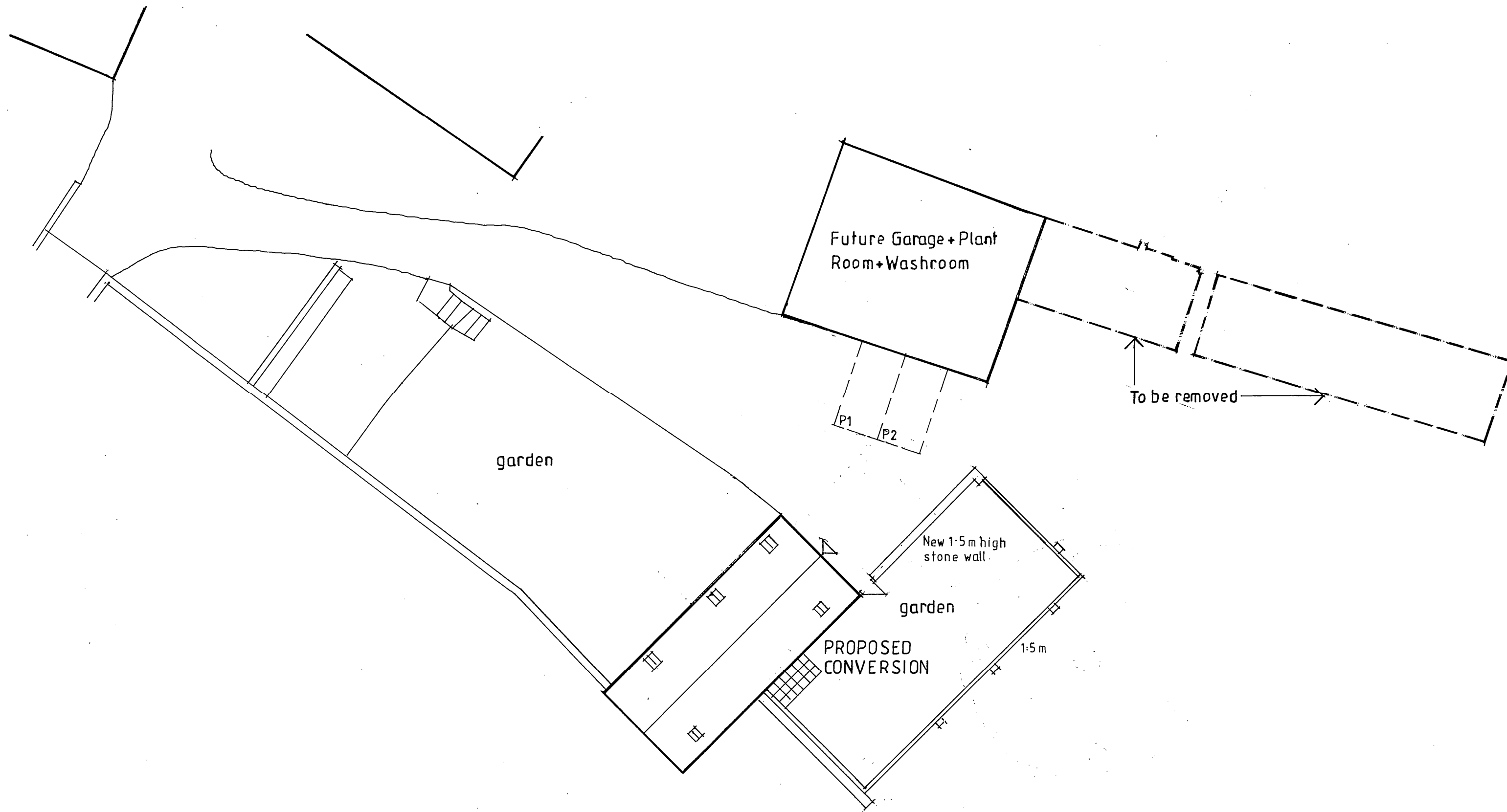
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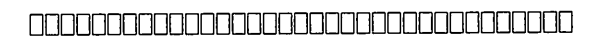
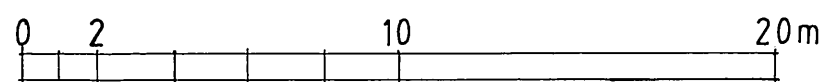
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Appendix 1. Proposed Layout



SITE LAYOUT PLAN

1:200



lpc

Planning Consultants
Tel : 01285 841433



Client : Dr and Mr Brown

Project : Proposed Conversion
Castle Farm
Pitchcombe

Drawing : SKETCH DESIGN 1
Site Layout Plan

Date : May 2017

Scale : 1:200

Drawing Number : LPC/4134/SD1/14/C



Appendix 2. Phase 1 Habitat Plan



Target Notes

TN 1	Small area of amenity grassland that is unmanaged.
TN 2	Bare ground with some compacted hardcore and ephemeral vegetation.
TN 3	Concrete and compacted ground hardstanding.

Appendix 3. Legislative Context

Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017

In relation to wildlife and nature conservation, two key Directives have been adopted by the European Community. These are (i) Directive 2009/ 147/ EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 30 November 2009 on the conservation of wild birds (“The Birds Directive” formerly 79/ 409/ EEC); and (ii) Council Directive 92/ 43/ EEC of 21 May 1992 on the conservation of natural habitats and of wild fauna and flora (“The Habitats Directive”). These Directives provide for the protection of animal and plant species of European importance and the habitats which support them, particularly through the establishment of a network of protected sites.

The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 comes into force from the 30th November 2017 and consolidate and update the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010. The regulations provide for the designation and protection of European Sites, the protection of European protected species and the adaptation of planning and other controls for the protection of European Sites.

Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended)

The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) (WCA) consolidated and amended existing national legislation to implement the Convention of the Conservation of European Wildlife and Natural Habitats (The Bern Convention) and the Birds Directive. There have been various amendments since the original enactment. Schedules 1 and 5 of the Act identify species of bird and other animal in relation to which the Act makes killing, injury, taking and disturbance an offence while Schedule 8 to the Act lists species of plant in relation to which the Act makes it an offence to intentionally pick, uproot or destroy.

Bats

Bats are protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended by the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000) and under The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017. They are ‘European Protected Species’ (EPS). Taken together, these make it an offence to:

- (a) Deliberately capture or intentionally take an EPS
- (b) Deliberately or intentionally kill or injure a EPS
- (c) To be in possession or control of any live or dead wild animal or any part of, or anything derived from an animal
- (d) Damage or destroy a breeding site or resting place of such an animal or intentionally or recklessly damage, destroy or obstruct access to any place that a wild great crested newt or bat uses for shelter or protection
- (e) Intentionally or recklessly disturb any wild EPS while it is occupying a structure or place that it uses for shelter or protection.
- (f) Deliberately disturb EPS, in particular any disturbance which is likely

- to impair their ability;
- (i) to survive, breed, reproduce or to rear or nurture their young; or
- (ii) in the case of hibernating or migratory species, to hibernate or migrate; or
- to affect significantly the local distribution or abundance of the species to which they belong

Although the law provides strict protection to EPS, it also allows this protection to be set aside (derogation) under The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 through the issuing of licences. These licences in England are currently determined by Natural England (NE) for development works.

Where a lawful operation is required to be carried out but which is likely to result in one of the above offences, a licence may be obtained from NE to allow the operation to proceed. However, in accordance with the requirements of The Regulations, a licence can only be issued where the following requirements are satisfied:

The proposal is necessary 'to preserve public health or public safety or other imperative reasons of overriding public interest including those of a social or economic nature and beneficial consequences of primary importance for the environment';

'There is no satisfactory alternative';

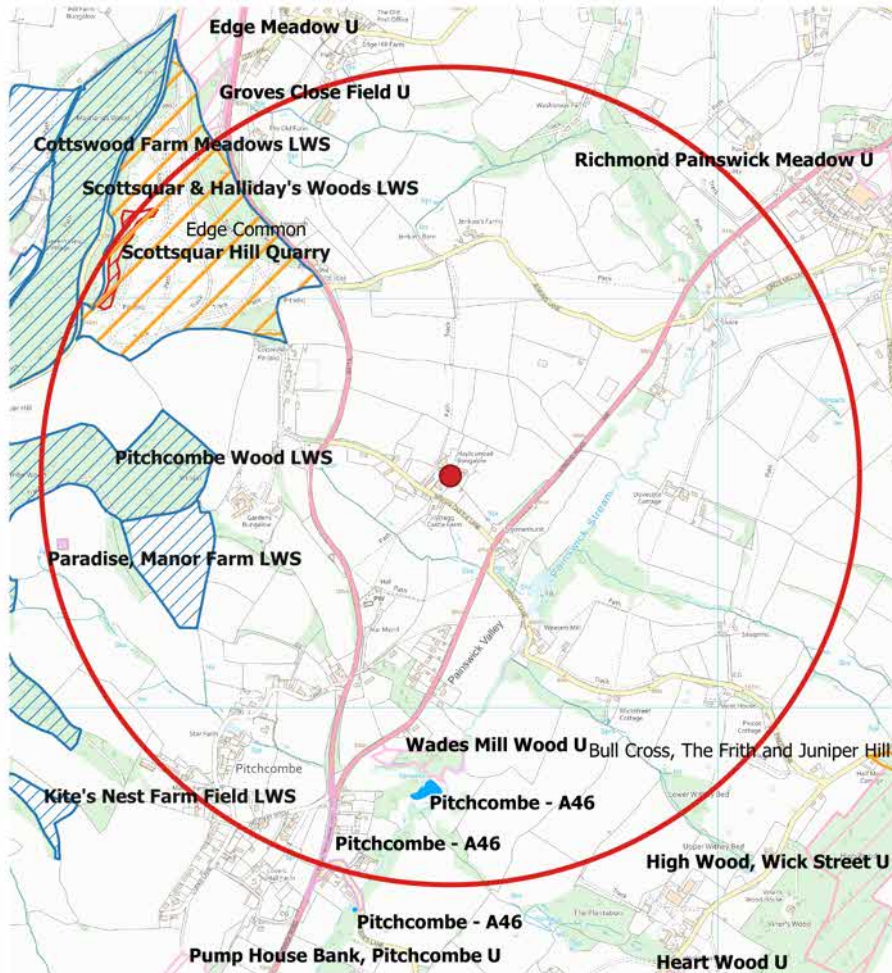
The proposals 'will not be detrimental to the maintenance of the population of the species concerned at a favourable conservation status in their natural range'.

The Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006

The Natural Environmental and Rural Communities Act 2006 (NERC) introduced changes intended to benefit rural communities and the environment. Section 40 of the Act creates a duty on public bodies to have due regard for habitats and species of principal importance for biodiversity in England when exercising their duties; Section 41 requires the Secretary of State to maintain a list of such habitats and species. This is important in the context of planning decisions as the National Planning Policy Framework (paragraph 117) affords planning policy protection to the habitats of species listed by virtue of Section 41.

Appendix 4. Designated Sites

Overview of sites mapped within 1km



Key

Wildlife Sites Local Wildlife Sites Undesignated local sites

NNRs Local Wildlife Site Potential LWS

SSSIs RIGS, SSSI, NNR Unconfirmed

Unconfirmed - point only

None

Amphibian breeding pond- potential

Toad patrol location

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