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# Ampney Park Venue Project

Ecological Impact  
Assessment

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# 1. Introduction

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- 1.1.1 Seasons Ecology has produced this Ecological Impact Assessment (EclA) for the proposed Venue Project at Ampney Park, London Road, Ampney Crucis, Cirencester, GL7 5RY (central grid reference: SP 06477 01916). The EclA is required to inform the planning application for various works across the estate to provide a wedding venue location.
- 1.1.2 The EclA is informed by surveys undertaken across the estate between 2021 and 2023 to inform the proposal. A summary of these surveys is provided in the subsequent Section 2.0 below. The EclA has been written with reference to best practice including the British Standard on Biodiversity (BSBI, 2013) and Guidelines for Ecological Impact Assessment in the United Kingdom (CIEEM, 2016).
- 1.1.3 The EclA has been prepared by Kate Hayward, Director and Principal Ecologist of Seasons Ecology, with input from other Seasons Ecology consultants. Kate has over 20 years' experience in ecology and is a full member of the Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (MCIEEM).

## 2. Surveys, Habitats and Species

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### 2.1 Surveys

- 2.1.1 Seasons Ecology has undertaken the following surveys to inform the Venue Project planning application:
- Preliminary Ecology Appraisal in May 2021 (report reference SEB2428\_01)
  - Bat Survey of the Stables and Grooms Flat in August 2021 (report reference SEB2429\_02b)
  - Bat Surveys of the Indoor Horse Arena in July to September 2021 (report reference SEB2429\_02d)
  - Preliminary Bat Roost Assessment of the Pump Houses, Stone Wall and Trees in April 2023 (report reference SEB2428\_05)
  - Bat Surveys of the Stone Wall in May to July 2023 (report reference SEB2428\_05b)
  - Water Vole and Otter Survey in May 2022 (report reference SEB2428\_04)
  - Great Crested Newt Presence/Absence Survey in May 2022 (report reference SEB2428\_04b)
  - Dormouse Survey in June to November 2022 (report reference SEB2428\_05)
- 2.1.2 There were no limitations to the above surveys. Surveys were undertaken in accordance with best practice and during the recommended survey periods. The surveys were led by Principal Ecologist, Kate Hayward MCIEEM, licensed bat and great crested newt surveyor.

### 2.2 Statutory and Non-Statutory Designations

- 2.2.1 There are no statutory site designations within 2km of the site, the closest being Barnsley Warren Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), located approximately 2.8km to the north of the site.
- 2.2.2 There are no statutory site designations for bats within 4km of the site.



- 2.2.3 The site itself is not covered by any designations, but it does lie within Impact Risk Zones (IRZs) for nearby SSSIs. This requires the Local Planning Authority to consult with Natural England on certain types of development proposals. In this case, the IRZs relate to aviation, livestock and general combustion processes; therefore, consultation for this IRZ is not required.
- 2.2.4 Ampney Park lies approximately 7.5km to the north-east of North Meadow and Clattinger Farm Special Area of Conservation (SAC) at Cricklade. Therefore, Ampney Park is within the Outer Zone of Influence (4.2km to 9.4km) for this SAC. All new relevant development within the Outer Zone of Influence will be expected to provide mitigation at North Meadow towards Strategic Access Management and Monitoring (SAMM) to mitigate increased effects from recreational use of North Meadow SAC<sup>1</sup>.
- 2.2.5 Ampney Park lies approximately 18km to the south-east of Cotswold Beechwoods SAC. Therefore, Ampney Park is outside of the 15.4km Zone of Influence for this SAC.

## 2.3 Habitats

- 2.3.1 Ampney Park is approximately 23 hectares in size and contains buildings/structures, grassland, including sheep-grazed and former horse-grazed pastures and amenity grassland, formal gardens, woodland, scattered mature trees and water bodies. Water bodies include the Ampney Brook and connecting streams and four ponds/lakes. The grounds also contain a tennis court and outdoor horse arena, gravelled vehicle parking areas and tarmac access roads through the grounds.
- 2.3.2 The Ampney Brook on site fulfils the criteria of the Rivers and Stream habitat via its habitat type, characterised by its geology of Great Oolite limestone and association with an abundance of *Ranunculus* species and *Callitriche* species. Furthermore, the presence of bullhead *Cottus gobio* and brook lamprey *Lampetra planeri* have been recorded along the Ampney Brook in 2004, which are two species cited under Annex II of the EC Habitat and Species Directive (92/43/EEC).
- 2.3.3 The general site fulfils the criteria for the Wood-Pasture and Parkland habitat owing to the presence of large, mature trees which have significant hollows and decaying or dead timber, consisting of oak, beech, alder, birch, hazel, sweet chestnut and Scot's Pine; long established presence of grazing livestock; open grassland; designed landscapes; and the presence of hole nesting birds and woodpecker.
- 2.3.4 Two woodlands (referred to as Woodlands W2 and W3 in the Preliminary Ecology Appraisal report) fulfil the criteria for Lowland Mixed Deciduous Woodland, owing to the sub-communities present within the habitat comprising National Vegetation Classification W10a, oak/birch woods with hazel and horse chestnut and a shrub understorey of hazel and alder with bramble and bracken; and W10c, oak with beech and ash with a hazel understorey and ivy ground layer.

## 2.4 Species

- 2.4.1 Phase 2 surveys were undertaken, as listed in Section 2.1 above, which recorded the following wildlife receptors:

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<sup>1</sup> Gallagher, M; Hobson, D; Jones, R; Price, S; Squirrell, N (2023) 'North Meadow and Clattinger Farm Special Area of Conservation Interim Recreation Mitigation Strategy 2023 – 2028'. Cotswold District Council, Natural England, Swindon Borough Council, Wiltshire Council.



- **Bats** – The Indoor Horse Arena and section of Stone Wall to be removed were found to support roosting bats. The Indoor Horse Arena supports a day and night roost for brown long-eared bat *Plecotus auritus* with a maximum three individuals recorded inside the barn. The Stone Wall supports day roosts for three bat species, common pipistrelle *Pipistrellus pipistrellus*, whiskered *Myotis mystacinus* and Brandt’s bat *Myotis brandtii* (one individual of each species recorded). No bats have been recorded roosting in the Stables and Grooms Flat or the Pump Houses.

There are 40 trees across the estate, which are proposed for felling, three of which offer *Low* suitability to roosting bats, and one mature sycamore, assessed as *Moderate* suitability to roosting bats, is the subject of tree works to reduce the crown. A number of mature trees across the wider estate offer suitability to roosting bats.

The habitats across the site support high-quality bat foraging and commuting habitats, which are well-connected to the surrounding habitats of pastoral fields and patches of woodland. Ten species have been recorded locally and across the estate, based on desk study and bat surveys of other buildings within the estate (not forming part of the Venue Project), including lesser horseshoe *Rhinolophus hipposideros*, common pipistrelle, soprano pipistrelle *Pipistrellus pygmaeus*, brown long-eared, serotine *Eptesicus serotinus*, noctule *Nyctalus noctula*, Daubenton’s bat *Myotis daubentonii*, whiskered, Natterer’s bat *Myotis nattereri* and Brandt’s bat. These species will use the habitats within the estate for foraging and commuting.

- **Water Vole and Otter** - The Ampney Brook and associated streams, and ponds/lakes on site supports suitable habitats for water vole and otter. Surveys recorded possible evidence of water vole feeding along one of the lake edges, but there were no burrows recorded. Signs of otter were found, including one otter print and several spraint. Therefore, it was concluded that water vole may use the water bodies on site occasionally for foraging and commuting, and otter uses the water bodies regularly with holts located outside the survey area, such as further along the Ampney Brook towards the River Thames. The Ampney Brook is a tributary of the River Thames, where an established population of otter is known.
- **Reptiles and Amphibians** - The habitats across the site, particularly along the woodland edges, within the Formal Gardens where there are gaps and cracks within the retaining stone walls and stone paving, the piles of brash, compost and logs, and the bounding drystone walls, provide suitable refuge and foraging habitats for common and widespread species of reptiles and amphibians.
- **Nesting Birds** - The habitats across the estate provide a large area of high-quality nesting and foraging resources for birds.

2.4.2 Great crested newt, dormouse and badgers were not found to be present on site.

2.4.3 A Phase 1 Habitat Survey Plan of the site (produced in May 2021) is provided at Annex 1 along with a summary of the results of Phase 2 surveys.

## 2.5 Evaluation of Features

2.5.1 Ecological features, including habitats and species populations, if known, within the site boundary (or zone of influence) are considered in terms of a number of characteristics, including naturalness, rarity (either internationally, nationally or locally), diversity,



connectivity and declining status, to assess whether they are important and therefore potentially affected by the proposal. Identified important ecological features are then considered within a defined geographical context using the following frame of reference (CIEEM, 2018<sup>15</sup>):

- International and European;
- National;
- Regional;
- Metropolitan, County, vice-county or other local authority-wide area; and
- Local.

2.5.2 Site importance (within the site boundary only) and negligible importance are also assigned to ecological features, where identified as lower than Local importance.

2.5.3 Table 1 below provides an evaluation of features.

Table 1. Ecological Evaluation of Features

Feature	Value	Reason for Valuation
North Meadow and Clattinger Farm SAC	International	Of international importance as a traditionally managed hay meadow with a rich flora which includes the largest British population of snakeshead fritillary.
Ampney Brook	Cotswold District	Fulfils criteria of Priority Habitat Rivers and Streams. Presence of bullhead and brook lamprey recorded in 2004.
Wood-pasture and Parkland	Cotswold District	Fulfils criteria of Priority Habitat Wood-pasture and Parkland.
Woodland	Cotswold District	Fulfils criteria of Priority Habitats Lowland Mixed Deciduous Woodland.
Bats	Local	Roosting – The Indoor Horse Arena supports a day roost for brown long-eared bat. The Stone Wall supports three day roosts for common pipistrelle, whiskered and Brandt’s bat.  Mature trees across the site offer suitability to roosting bats, including three trees to be removed and one tree subject to crown reduction.  Ampney Park offers a range of habitats, including woodland, grassland and water bodies, which offer high-quality foraging and commuting habitats to bats.
Water Vole	Local	Possible feeding signs along the Ampney brook but no burrows identified. Ampney Brook may be used occasionally by water vole for foraging and commuting.



Feature	Value	Reason for Valuation
Otter	Local	Prints and spraint identified along the Ampney Brook, but no holts identified. Ampney Brook is used regularly by otters for foraging and commuting.
Common and widespread reptiles and amphibians	Site	The woodland edges, formal gardens with stone walls and paving, and boundary stone walls offer refuge, foraging and basking habitats for reptiles and refuge and foraging for amphibians.
Common and widespread small mammals	Site	The woodland edges, formal gardens and grassland offer foraging and refuge for small mammals.
Nesting birds	Site	Woodlands, trees and ornamental planting across the site offer extensive areas of suitable nesting habitat for birds.

## 2.6 Invasive, Non-native Plant Species

- 2.6.1 At least one non-native, invasive species has been identified on site. Western skunk cabbage *Lysichiton americanus* has been identified within one woodland (referred to as Woodland W3 in the Preliminary Ecology Appraisal report) and while it is not listed on Schedule 9 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 for England and Wales, it is banned for sale in the UK and large efforts to remove the invasive species from UK woodlands have been undertaken.
- 2.6.2 A cotoneaster species has been identified within one woodland (referred to as Woodland W1 in the Preliminary Ecology Appraisal report). Several cotoneaster species are considered to be invasive in the UK. Schedule 9 of the Wildlife & Countryside Act aims to control the spread of specific cotoneaster species, making it illegal to distribute, or allow their spread into the wild.

## 3. The Development Proposal

- 3.1.1 The Venue Project provides a venue for events and weddings at Ampney Park. New guest accommodation will be provided for up to 30 guests within the existing Stables and Grooms Flat. The indoor Horse Arena will be replaced with a landscaped car park, the two existing stables buildings, yard and hard tennis court will be replaced with a venue building, courtyard, landscaped forecourt, service yard and ceremony pergola. The existing all-weather manege paddock and perimeter holly hedge will be re-landscaped with meadow and planting, including a water feature. The grassland to the west and south of the new venue building will be enhanced to create wildflower meadow grassland. The existing grounds building will be replaced with an Outdoor Ceremony Space. The Pump Houses will be restored.





## 4. Impacts and Effects

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### 4.1 Assessment and Evaluation of Effects

4.1.1 An assessment of effects on ecological features was undertaken. Effects identified on features of less than Local value were not considered to be 'Significant' and as such have not been detailed. Potential effects were characterised in accordance with the CIEEM (2018) criteria:

- Positive or negative;
- Magnitude;
- Extent;
- Duration;
- Reversibility; and
- Timing and frequency

4.1.2 Refer to Annex 2 for on-site impacts.

### 4.2 North Meadow and Clattinger Farm SAC

4.2.1 This SAC lies approximately 7.5km to the south-west of Ampney Park, Ampney Park lying within the Outer Zone of Influence for this SAC. Construction phase impacts on this designation are not expected owing to the distance of Ampney Park from the SAC and the relatively small-scale of the works.

- **Construction Phase Impacts on North Meadow and Clattinger Farm SAC – Negligible.**

4.2.2 During the operational phase, the wedding venue will accommodate up to 30 guests resulting in a net increase in overnight accommodation, increasing visitor numbers to the area on a regular, permanent basis. Low numbers of wedding guests could visit the SAC during their journey and to and from the wedding venue. The average number of wedding guests to UK weddings is between 82 and 103<sup>2</sup>, with Ampney Park accommodating 30 guests. It is very unlikely that all guests would visit the SAC and visitors to the SAC is likely to be much lower. Visits would largely be confined to the spring and summer months, including the flowering period of snakeshead fritillary, which is March to May.

4.2.3 Recreational pressures are primarily from trampling of the meadow, nutrient enrichment from dog faeces, littering, interference of the traditional management of the hay meadow and picking of wildflowers.

4.2.4 Visitor surveys were undertaken in 2022<sup>3</sup> which found that the majority of visitors travel from home to visit the SAC, the majority travel within a 1km radius of the site and that dog walkers are the most frequent visitors to the site. Wedding guests are unlikely to bring their pet dogs to the venue.

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<sup>2</sup> [www.hitched.co.uk](http://www.hitched.co.uk) Accessed on 25<sup>th</sup> July 2023.

<sup>3</sup> Gallagher, M; Hobson, D; Jones, R; Price, S; Squirrell, N (2023) 'North Meadow and Clattinger Farm Special Area of Conservation Interim Recreation Mitigation Strategy 2023 – 2028'. Cotswold District Council, Natural England, Swindon Borough Council, Wiltshire Council



- **Operational Phase Impacts on North Meadow and Clattinger Farm SAC – Negative, minor, long-term, permanent, low frequency, reversible effect.**

### **4.3 Ampney Brook**

- 4.3.1 Potentially significant effects on the Ampney Brook during the construction phase have been identified. These are habitat degradation through dust, hydrological changes and pollution incidences and disturbance through noise, vibration, lighting and construction activities.
- 4.3.2 The development will not result in the loss or fragmentation of this habitat; therefore, no adverse effect is anticipated from habitat loss and fragmentation.
- 4.3.3 Ampney Brook flows through Ampney Park from south to north along approximately 1km of its length. At its closest point, Ampney Brook lies approximately 170m from the main works area (new venue buildings). The Outdoor Ceremony Space is located approximately 15m from the brook and the Pump Houses are located adjacent to the brook. Considering the length of the brook through the estate, the extent and magnitude of the impacts are low for disturbance, potentially affecting only the lower quarter of the watercourse through the estate. Habitat degradation through hydrological changes and pollution incidences has a potentially larger extent and magnitude, affecting a larger section of the watercourse downstream. Fish previously recorded in the brook, bulhead and brook lamprey, have the potential to be impacted by habitat degradation.
- 4.3.4 Habitat degradation and disturbance impacts are lowered due to the distance of the majority of the works to the brook (175m away), with two small-scale works located nearby; the Outdoor Ceremony Space (15m away) and Pump Houses (adjacent).
- **Construction Phase Impacts on Ampney Brook – Negative, minor, short-term, temporary and reversible effect.**
- 4.3.5 The operational phase of the development will bring elevated levels of disturbance to Ampney Brook from increased human presence, noise and lighting, which would reduce the quality of this watercourse to wildlife. The Outdoor Ceremony Space will be used for weddings during the daytime only and for short duration, with the main wedding venue located 165m from the brook, lowering the magnitude of the impact.
- **Operational Phase Impacts on Ampney Brook – Negative, minor, long-term, permanent and irreversible effect.**

### **4.4 Wood-pasture and Parkland and Woodland**

- 4.4.1 Potentially significant effects on Wood-pasture and Parkland and Woodland during the construction phase have been identified. These are habitat degradation through dust, hydrological changes and pollution incidences and disturbance through noise, vibration, lighting and construction activities.
- 4.4.2 41 trees are identified for removal. These are located around and near to the existing buildings on site (Indoor Horse Arena and stables) and paddocks. These trees do not form part of the wood-pasture and parkland or the woodlands on site, which are located across the wider grounds to the north, south and west. Therefore, there will be no habitat loss or fragmentation effects on wood-pasture and parkland and woodland habitats.
- 4.4.3 The construction phase does not increase the risk of spread of invasive species identified within the woodlands on site, the works being located away from the woodlands.
- 4.4.4 The woodlands within Ampney Park amount to approximately 6 hectares, all located along the southern and western boundaries of the estate, following the course of the Ampney Brook.



There is moderate potential for low magnitude and extent of habitat degradation through dust, hydrological changes and pollution incidences, and disturbance to wood-pasture and parkland and woodland habitats through elevated levels of noise and vibration. This effect is lowered due to the distance of the majority of this habitat to the works; reducing the extent and magnitude of the impact.

- **Construction Phase Impacts on Wood-pasture and Parkland and Woodland – Negative, minor, short-term, temporary and reversible effect.**

4.4.5 The operational phase of the development will bring elevated levels of disturbance to Wood-pasture and Parkland from increased human presence, noise and lighting.

- **Operational Phase Impacts on Wood-pasture and Parkland and Woodland – Negative, minor, long-term, permanent and irreversible effect.**

## 4.5 Bats

4.5.1 Potentially significant effects during the construction phase on roosting, foraging and commuting bats have been identified, including habitat loss and fragmentation, and disturbance through elevated levels of noise, vibration and lighting.

### Roosting Bats

4.5.2 During the construction phase, the Indoor Horse Arena will be demolished to allow for the construction of a car park. This will result in the permanent loss of a brown long-eared day roost (maximum three bats) and risk of injury/killing of three bats without protection measures in place.

4.5.3 During the construction phase, the Stone Wall will be removed to allow for improvement works to the main entrance to Ampney Park. This will result in the permanent loss of one common pipistrelle day roost, one whiskered day roost and one Brandt's bat day roost (maximum three bats) and risk of injury/killing of three bats without protection measures in place. Four trees are suitable to roosting bats, three of which will be removed, and one will undergo management works (crown reduction).

4.5.4 There are a total of 41 trees identified for removal. These are located around and near to the existing buildings on site (Indoor Horse Arena and stables) and paddocks, away from the high-quality habitats identified on site, which will be used by bats for foraging and commuting. Therefore, there will be no habitat loss or fragmentation effects on foraging and commuting habitats for bats.

### Foraging and Commuting Bats

4.5.5 There is low potential for low magnitude and extent of disturbance to foraging and commuting habitats through elevated levels of noise, vibration and lighting. This effect is lowered due to the distance of the majority of these habitats to the works, lowering the magnitude and extent of effects.

- **Construction Phase Impacts on Bats – Negative, minor, short-term, permanent and reversible effect.**

4.5.6 The operational phase of the development will bring elevated levels of disturbance to bats from increased human presence, noise and lighting. This will impact on roosting, foraging and commuting habitats for bats.

- **Operational Phase Impacts on Bats – Negative, minor, long-term, permanent and irreversible effect.**



## 4.6 Water Vole

- 4.6.1 Potentially significant effects on the Ampney Brook during the construction phase have been identified, which would impact on water vole, when occasionally using the watercourse. These are habitat degradation through dust, hydrological changes and pollution incidences and disturbance through noise, vibration, lighting and construction activities.
- 4.6.2 The development will not result in the loss or fragmentation of the Ampney Brook; therefore, no adverse effect is anticipated on water vole from habitat loss and fragmentation.
- 4.6.3 Ampney Brook flows through Ampney Park from south to north along approximately 1km of its length. At its closest point, Ampney Brook lies approximately 170m from the main works area (new venue buildings). The Outdoor Ceremony Space is located approximately 15m from the brook and the Pump Houses are located adjacent to the brook. Considering the length of the brook through the estate, the extent and magnitude of the impacts are low for disturbance, potentially affecting only the lower quarter of the watercourse through the estate and any water vole present at the time. Habitat degradation through hydrological changes and pollution incidences has a potentially larger extent and magnitude, affecting a larger section of the watercourse downstream and has higher potential for impacts on water vole as a result. The assessed low probable level of use of the watercourse by water vole further lowers this impact.
- **Construction Phase Impacts on Water Vole – Negative, minor, short-term, temporary and reversible effect.**
- 4.6.4 The operational phase of the development will bring elevated levels of disturbance to water vole if using the watercourse from increased human presence, noise and lighting.
- **Operational Phase Impacts on Water Vole – Negative, minor, long-term, permanent and irreversible effect.**

## 4.7 Otter

- 4.7.1 Potentially significant effects on the Ampney Brook during the construction phase have been identified, which would impact on otter, which may regularly use the watercourse. These are habitat degradation through dust, hydrological changes and pollution incidences and disturbance through noise, vibration, lighting and construction activities.
- 4.7.2 The development will not result in the loss or fragmentation of this habitat; therefore, no adverse effect is anticipated on otter from habitat loss and fragmentation.
- 4.7.3 Ampney Brook flows through Ampney Park from south to north along approximately 1km of its length. At its closest point, Ampney Brook lies approximately 170m from the main works area (new venue buildings). The Outdoor Ceremony Space is located approximately 15m from the brook and the Pump Houses are located adjacent to the brook. Considering the length of the brook through the estate, the extent and magnitude of the impacts are low for disturbance, potentially affecting only the lower quarter of the watercourse through the estate and any otters present at the time. Habitat degradation through hydrological changes and pollution incidences has a potentially larger extent and magnitude, affecting a larger section of the watercourse downstream and has higher potential for impacts on otter as a result. The assessed low probable level of use of the watercourse by otter further lowers this impact.
- **Construction Phase Impacts on Otter – Negative, minor, short-term, temporary and reversible effect.**



- 4.7.4 The operational phase of the development will bring elevated levels of disturbance to otter if using the watercourse from increased human presence, noise and lighting.
- **Operational Phase Impacts on Otter – Negative, moderate, long-term, permanent and irreversible effect.**

## 5. Mitigation, Compensation and Enhancement

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### 5.1 North Meadow and Clattinger Farm SAC

- 5.1.1 All new relevant development within the Outer Zone of Influence of North Meadow and Clattinger Farm SAC will be expected to provide mitigation at North Meadow towards SAMM to mitigate increased effects from recreational use of North Meadow SAC<sup>4</sup>. The Venue Project will accommodate up to 30 guests, resulting in a net increase in overnight accommodation. Consultation will be required for any contribution towards SAMM at North Meadow SAC, to mitigate for the negative, minor, long-term effects on the SAC.
- 5.1.2 Mitigation for on site features are provided below and shown on the plan at Annex 3.

### 5.2 Ampney Brook

- 5.2.1 Construction phase impacts on Ampney Brook have been assessed as negative, minor, short-term, temporary and reversible. The majority of the works are located away from the brook, with only minor works proposed nearby, including the Outdoor Ceremony Space and restoration of the Pump Houses.
- 5.2.2 A Construction Environmental Management Plan should be written detailing protection measures for the construction phase to minimise disturbance from noise, vibration, lighting and general construction activities during the works and to prevent habitat degradation from dust, hydrological changes and pollution incidences. Good construction working practices and pollution prevention measures near to watercourses should be detailed.
- 5.2.3 Operational phase impacts from increased human presence, noise and lighting have been identified and assessed as negative, minor, long-term, permanent and irreversible. However, mitigation measures can be implemented, which would reduce disturbance during the operational phase.
- 5.2.4 A Landscape Ecological Management Plan should be written detailing enhancement works along the brook in the vicinity of the Outdoor Ceremony Space, to include screen planting and planting to provide cover and refuge for wildlife. Plug planting of lush bankside and marginal vegetation (sedges and rushes) will enhance resources for wildlife and provide additional cover. Management prescriptions should be aimed at maintaining and enhancing the watercourse habitat and ensuring refuge, cover and resources for wildlife.

### 5.3 Wood-pasture and Parkland and Woodland

- 5.3.1 Construction phase impacts on these habitats have been identified, including potential for habitat degradation and disturbance, assessed as negative, minor, short-term, temporary and

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<sup>4</sup> Gallagher, M; Hobson, D; Jones, R; Price, S; Squirrell, N (2023) 'North Meadow and Clattinger Farm Special Area of Conservation Interim Recreation Mitigation Strategy 2023 – 2028'. Cotswold District Council, Natural England, Swindon Borough Council, Wiltshire Council.



reversible, the majority of works being located away from these habitats, with no habitat loss or fragmentation effects.

- 5.3.2 A Construction Environmental Management Plan should be written detailing protection measures for the construction phase to minimise disturbance from noise, vibration, lighting and general construction activities during the works and to prevent habitat degradation from dust, hydrological changes and pollution incidences. The Plan should detail tree protection fencing across the site to prevent damage to these trees.
- 5.3.3 Operational phase impacts from increased human presence, noise and lighting have been identified and assessed as negative, minor, long-term, permanent and irreversible. However, mitigation measures can be implemented, which would reduce disturbance during the operational phase.
- 5.3.4 A Landscape Ecological Management Plan should be written detailing enhancement works within the woodlands, including new tree planting to extend parkland habitat, the removal of invasive species, identification of areas of limited or no access by guests, and long-term appropriate management of these habitats.

## **5.4 Bats**

- 5.4.1 Construction phase impacts on bats have been assessed as negative, minor, short-term, permanent and reversible, owing to habitat loss (loss of two roosts), and disturbance impacts, but no fragmentation impacts (no loss of watercourses, wood-pasture and parkland and woodland).
- 5.4.2 Four bat roosts will be destroyed as a result of the works, located within the Indoor Horse Arena and the Stone Wall. These are day roosts for brown long-eared bat (maximum three bats), common pipistrelle (one bat), whiskered (one bat) and Brandt's bat (one bat). Prior to works commencing on the Indoor Horse Arena, update bat surveys will be undertaken to inform a European Protected Species Licence for both the Indoor Horse Arena and the Stone Wall to ensure compliance with the legislation protecting roosting bats. On receipt of the licence, replacement roosting habitat will be provided in the form of three bat boxes on each of two nearby trees and restoration of the Pump Houses will provide a suitably dark void for brown long-eared bat. Pre-works checks and supervision during the demolition/removal works (soft demolition of suitable features on the Indoor Horse Arena and hand removal of the Stone Wall) will be undertaken by the Named Ecologist with any bats found relocated to a bat box. There are no monitoring requirements due to the species and status of the roosts.
- 5.4.3 A Landscape Ecological Management Plan should be written detailing enhancement works to the watercourse (and associated features), woodlands and grassland, which will be enhanced as wildflower meadow, and long-term appropriate management of these habitats. This will enhance bat foraging and commuting habitat on site for bats.
- 5.4.4 A sensitive lighting scheme will be designed that will avoid light spill onto the important habitats for bats and new roosts.

## **5.5 Water Vole and Otter**

- 5.5.1 Construction phase impacts on water vole and otter have been assessed as negative, minor, short-term, temporary and reversible, with potential for habitat degradation and disturbance, but no habitat loss or fragmentation impacts will occur.
- 5.5.2 Six weeks prior to the commencement of works near to Ampney Brook (Outdoor Ceremony Space and restoration of the Pump Houses), an update water vole and otter survey will be undertaken of the Ampney Brook (and associated water bodies) (concurrent with the survey,



a survey of badger activity will also be undertaken, not previously identified on site). The survey will identify activity by these species, including the presence of water vole burrows and otter holts (not previously recorded on site). The results of the update survey will inform protection measures to be detailed in a Construction Environmental Management Plan. The update surveys will ensure compliance with the legislation protecting water vole, otter and badger.

- 5.5.3 A Construction Environmental Management Plan should be written detailing protection measures for the construction phase to minimise disturbance from noise, vibration, lighting and general construction activities during the works and to prevent habitat degradation from dust, hydrological changes and pollution incidences on the brook.
- 5.5.4 Operational phase impacts on water vole and otter have been assessed as negative, minor (water vole) to moderate (otter), long-term, permanent and irreversible due to elevated levels of disturbance along Ampney Brook.
- 5.5.5 A Landscape Ecological Management Plan should be written detailing enhancement works along the brook in the vicinity of the Outdoor Ceremony Space, to include screen planting and planting to provide cover and refuge for wildlife. Plug planting of luscious bankside and marginal vegetation (sedges and rushes) will enhance resources for wildlife, namely water vole, and provide additional cover. Management prescriptions should be aimed at maintaining and enhancing the watercourse habitat and ensuring refuge, cover and resources for wildlife.
- 5.5.6 A sensitive lighting scheme will be designed that will avoid light spill onto the Ampney Brook and associated habitats.
- 5.5.7 The Construction Environmental Management Plan and Landscape Ecological Management Plan recommended in Sections 5.2 to 5.5 should be secured through planning conditions.

## 6. Residual Effects

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- 6.1.1 Table 2 below summarises the identified impacts on features, the mitigation proposed, and assesses the residual effect with mitigation in place.





Table 2. Assessment of Residual Effects

Feature	Value	Effects		Mitigation	Residual Effects
		Construction	Operational		
North Meadow and Clattinger Farm SAC	International	Negligible	Negative, minor, long-term, permanent, low frequency, reversible	Consultation/SAMMS contribution to on site mitigation	Negligible – Not significant
Ampney Brook	Cotswold District	Negative, minor, short-term, temporary, reversible	Negative, minor, long-term, permanent, irreversible	Construction Environmental Management Plan and Landscape Ecological Management Plan Sensitive lighting	Minor beneficial – Not significant
Wood-pasture and Parkland and Woodland	Cotswold District	Negative, minor, short-term, temporary, reversible	Negative, minor, long-term, permanent, irreversible	Construction Environmental Management Plan and Landscape Ecological Management Plan Sensitive lighting	Minor beneficial – Not significant
Bats	Local	Negative, minor, short-term, permanent, reversible	Negative, minor, long-term, permanent, irreversible	European Protected Species Licence, protection measures and replacement roosts Landscape Ecological Management Plan Sensitive lighting	Minor beneficial – Not significant
Water Vole	Local	Negative, minor, short-term, temporary, reversible	Negative, minor, long-term, permanent, irreversible	Update survey Construction Environmental Management Plan Landscape Ecological Management Plan Sensitive lighting	Minor beneficial – Not significant
Otter	Local	Negative, minor, short-term, temporary, reversible	Negative, moderate, long-term, permanent, irreversible	Update survey Construction Environmental Management Plan Landscape Ecological Management Plan Sensitive lighting	Negligible – Not significant



## 7. Cumulative Effects

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- 7.1.1 There are no recent developments evident (Cotswold District Council planning search) within 1km of Ampney Park which could lead to in-combination effects on features (habitats and species) within the estate. The estate lies in a rural location with the village of Ampney Crucis located to the east/north-east and rural habitats to the north, south and west; therefore, there are limited opportunities for development within the existing settlement boundary other than improvements to existing buildings.
- 7.1.2 There are two solar farms within the wider rural landscape, including one approximately 370m to the north-west and one approximately 550m to the south-west. Both farms each occupy five fields and are around 30 hectares in size. The solar farms are located on arable farmland with hedgerow boundaries and are adjacent to patches of woodland. There are no impacts on habitats within Ampney Park anticipated in-combination with the nearby solar farms, which support different habitat types.

### 7.2 North Meadow and Clattinger Farm SAC

- 7.2.1 The Interim Recreational Mitigation Strategy 2023-2028 for North Meadow and Clattinger Farm SAC<sup>5</sup> gives estimates of potential housing growth within the Inner and Outer Zones of Influence (within 9.4km of the SAC) for the period 2023-2028, which is based on existing allocated sites and potential non-allocated sites for development. Combined, Cotswold District Council, Swindon Borough Council and Wiltshire Council estimate a figure of 919 housing units over the 2023-2028 period. The mitigation proposals detailed in the Mitigation Strategy document are designed to be scaleable. The Mitigation Strategy states that the measures detailed would be able to deliver the required levels of mitigation.

## 8. Conclusions

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- 8.1.1 This document provides the baseline conditions at Ampney Park and assesses the value of features (receptors) impacted by the Venue Project. The construction phase impacts identified are potential habitat degradation and disturbance to habitats and species. However, the assessment recognises that the distance of the majority of important habitats (Priority Habitats) to the works, lowers the magnitude and extent of the construction phase impacts. A Construction Environmental Management Plan should be written detailing protection measures, good construction working practices and pollution prevention measures.
- 8.1.2 Operational phase impacts are identified as a result of increased disturbance due to human presence, noise and lighting. However, the assessment recognises that the distance of the majority of important habitats (Priority Habitats) to the main venue buildings, lowers the magnitude and extent of the operational phase impacts. A Landscape Ecological Management Plan should be written detailing habitat creation, enhancement and management, aimed at reducing disturbance and providing enhanced resources for wildlife on site.

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<sup>5</sup> Gallagher, M; Hobson, D; Jones, R; Price, S; Squirrell, N (2023) 'North Meadow and Clattinger Farm Special Area of Conservation Interim Recreation Mitigation Strategy 2023 – 2028'. Cotswold District Council, Natural England, Swindon Borough Council, Wiltshire Council

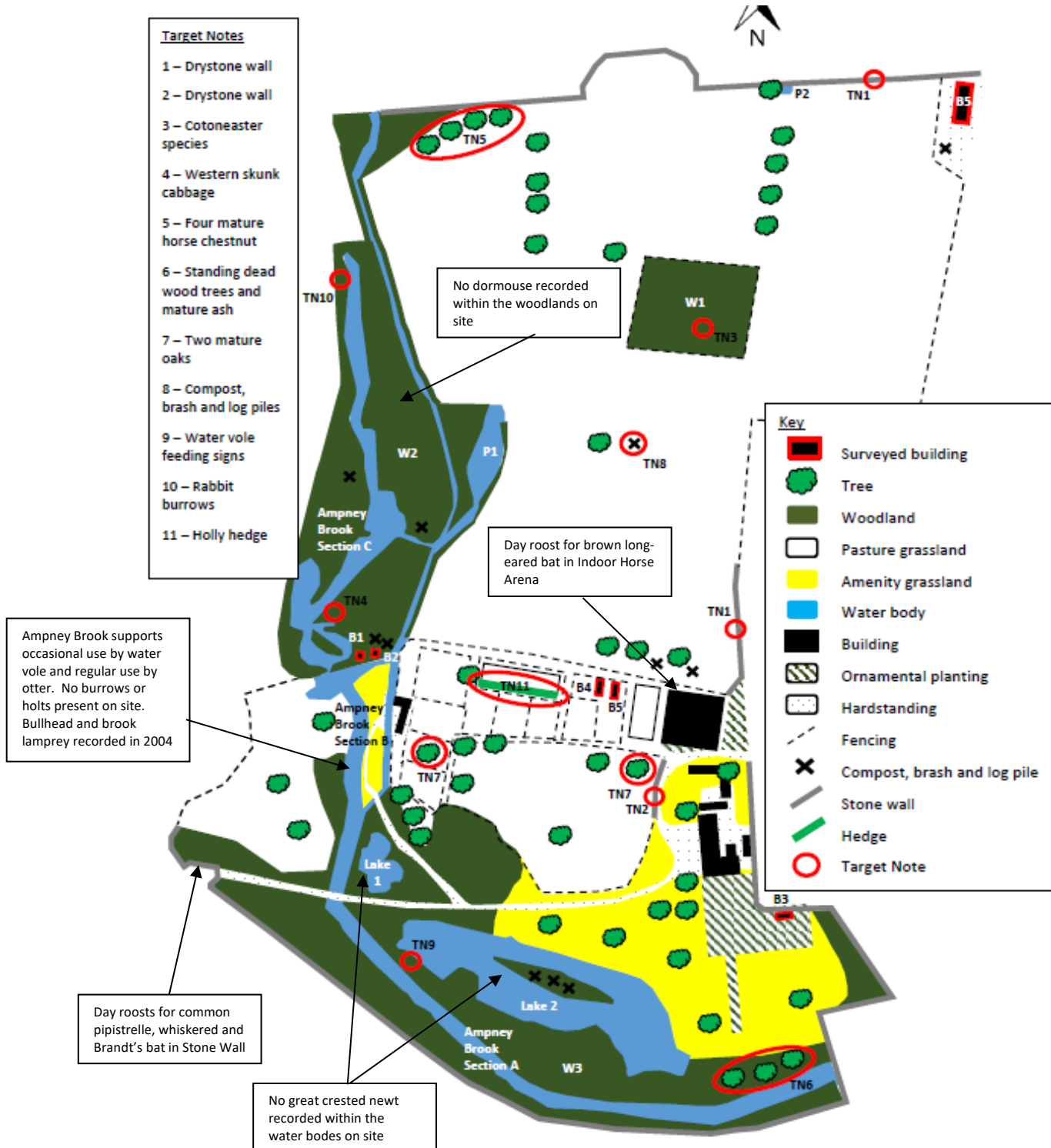


- 8.1.3 Ampney Park lies within the Outer Zone of Influence of North Meadow and Clattinger Farm SAC, requiring mitigation for relevant developments where a net increase in overnight accommodation is provided. Mitigation is required due to the potential for recreational impacts on the SAC. Consultation will be required and a potential contribution to on site mitigation (SAMMS).
- 8.1.4 With protection and mitigation measures in place, the residual effects on features is assessed as not significant (negligible to minor beneficial).

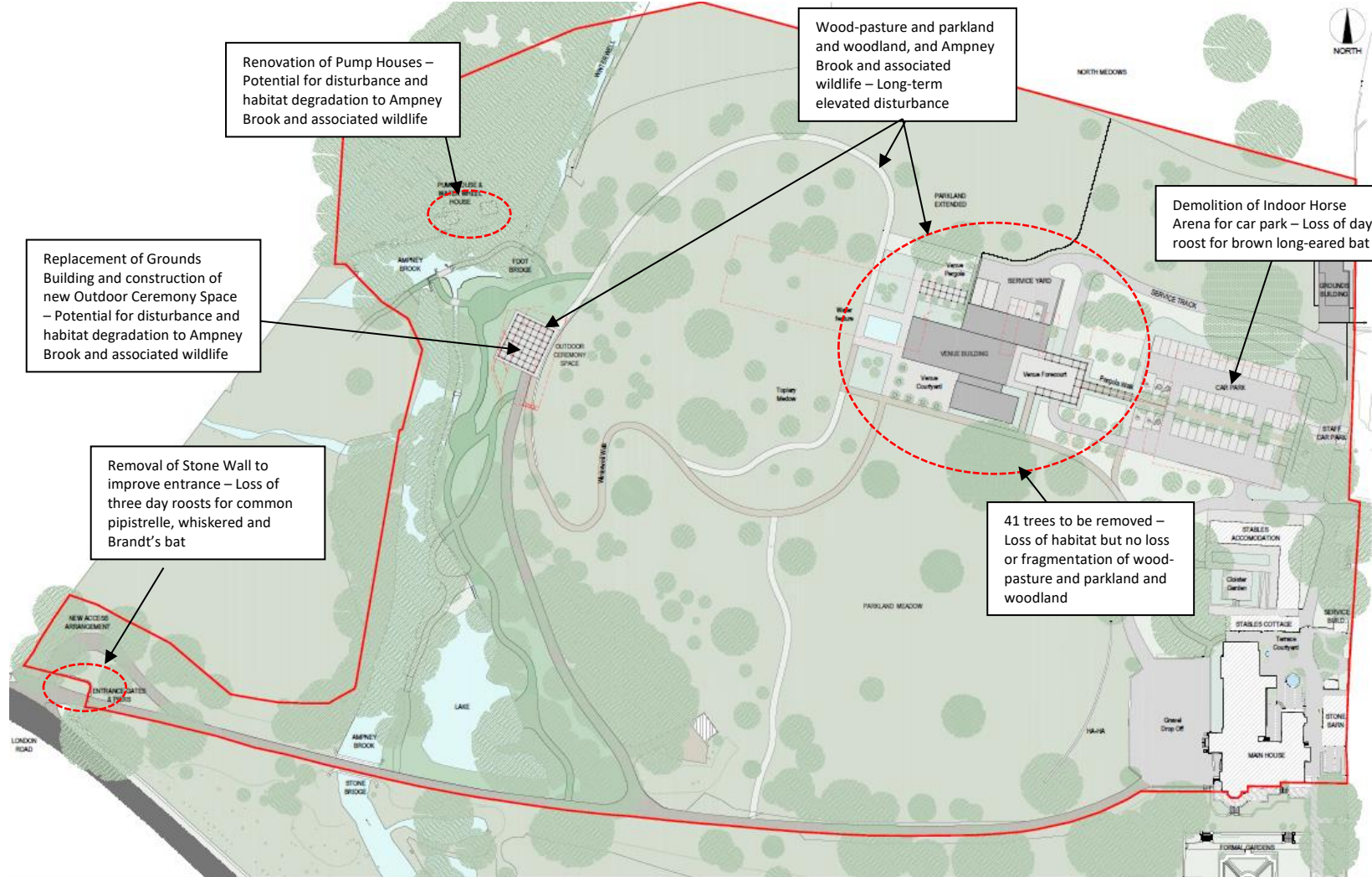


# 9. Annexes

## Annex 1: Phase 1 Habitat Map with Survey Results (2021 - 2023)



## Annex 2: On-Site Impacts (2023, Simon Murray-Jones Architects)





### Annex 3: Mitigation Plan (2023, Simon Morray-Jones Architects)

