



Preliminary Ecological Appraisal
Outbuilding at Willow Tree Cottage
Cotmoor Lane
Halloughton
Southwell
Nottinghamshire
NGR SK66987 50546

Survey by
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Non-Technical Summary

The site surveyed comprises an outbuilding at Willow Tree Cottage, Cotmoor Lane, Halloughton, Southwell, Nottinghamshire, centred at NGR SK66987 50546. An inspection of the site was completed on 25th April 2023. The defined survey area comprises a detached outbuilding previously used as a stable situated close to a residential house and garden. It is a very rural, open location with arable fields to the north, east and west. To the south are the agricultural buildings and house at Bankwood Barn beyond which is a stream and linear woodland identified as Ricketwood in the OS Map.

The survey has identified the following habitat within the site area:

- Timber framed building

An assessment of the survey area has identified the following potential for protected species to be present:

Species	Present within 1km	Suitable habitat on site / evidence of presence	Likelihood of presence on site	Further Survey / Mitigation recommended
Nesting Birds	Yes	Ground nesting unlikely around the building due to lack of cover and predatory cats. Three swallow nests were found within the building interior, at least two of which appeared active.	High likelihood of swallow nesting within the building in the future. Mitigation measures for this species will be required.	Measures to avoid disturbance to any nests will be required.
Reptiles	No	No evidence of reptiles and no suitable habitat in close proximity to the building.	Unlikely to be present in any significant numbers around the building.	No further surveys of specific mitigation measures are recommended.
Amphibians	No	No evidence of reptiles and no suitable habitat in close proximity to the building. Nearby pond is very isolated and sub-optimal for amphibians due to lack of vegetation and presence of wildfowl.	Unlikely to be present in any significant numbers around the building.	No further surveys of specific mitigation measures are recommended.
Bats	Yes	No evidence of bat activity found associated with the building. Minor features present along the roof edges could be fully inspected. Building has negligible roost potential.	No evidence of roosting bats. No further surveys recommended.	No further surveys of specific mitigation measures are recommended.

Constraints:

No significant ecological constraints have been identified during the survey. The following factor should be taken into consideration:

- The interior of the existing building has been used by swallow in the past for nesting purposes and any nests should be checked to ensure these are unoccupied before any work commences to the building.

Conclusion and Recommendations

There are no Statutory or Non-Statutory sites nearby that could be impacted by the mall scale of development being proposed.

The survey area comprises a small timber framed former stable sub-divided internally into three stalls store rooms. The building is surrounded by short amenity grass and gravel areas of negligible biodiversity value. No significant habitat was identified associated with the building surveyed and demolition of this building should not have any significant impact on immediately adjacent land.

The inspection completed in April 2023 did not identify any physical evidence or field signs of protected species within the building and immediately surrounding area except for nesting activity by swallow within the building interior.

The following measures are recommended:

- The existing building should be taken down outside of the bird nesting season when nests will not be occupied. Alternatively, the building should be inspected by an ecological to confirm any nests present are not occupied or in current use before work commences.
- The proposed new building should incorporate at least three artificial nest boxes into the building structure. If possible these should be swallow nest boxes positioned under the eaves and sheltered. However, if this is impractical, swift nest tubes could be used instead as these can be constructed within the walls of the new building and may be utilised by a range of bird species.



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Part 1: Site Details

1. Introduction

1.1 Site Description and Location

The site surveyed comprises an outbuilding at Willow Tree Cottage, Cotmoor Lane, Halloughton, Southwell, Nottinghamshire, centred at NGR SK66987 50546. The location of the site is shown on the plan within **Figure 1** and an aerial photograph has been provided within **Figure 2** to place the site in context.



Figure 1: Site location.

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The Client has requested an ecological survey of the building being considered for demolition to determine whether there is anything of ecological value or any evidence of protected species present. An inspection of the site was completed on 25th April 2023 and details of the survey are provided in the table below. A photographic record of key areas is included alongside target notes within the report and a list of plant species identified in the site during the survey is included within **Appendix 1**.

Date	Time	Location	Weather
25 April 2023	09.15am	Willow Tree Cottage Cotmoor Lane Halloughton NG25 0QR	Clear sky. Wind 9mph from the north. Temperature 7 °C humidity 61% at 1019hPa.
Accessibility	All areas of the building accessible to search for evidence of protected species .		

The defined survey area comprises a detached outbuilding previously used as a stable situated close to a residential house and garden. It is a very rural, open location with arable

fields to the north, east and west. To the south are the agricultural buildings and house at Bankwood Barn beyond which is a stream and linear woodland identified as Ricketwood in the OS Map. A contextual aerial photograph has been provided below.

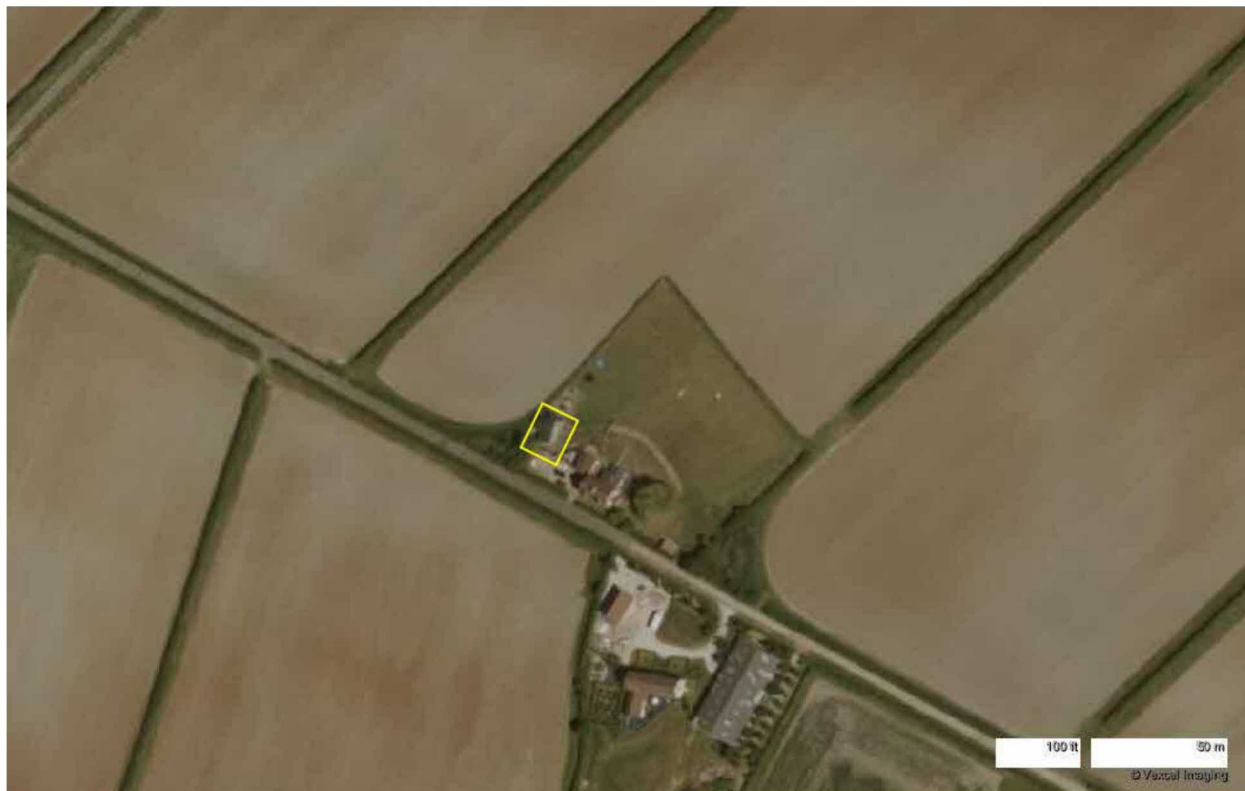


Figure 2: Site Contextual Aerial Photograph

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1.2 Objective of the Report

This report is a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA) of the area identified in yellow within the aerial photograph above. Since the survey comprises an existing timber framed building, a full Extended Phase 1 Habitat assessment was deemed unnecessary. The objective of this ecological appraisal is to identify whether there are any protected species present at the property surveyed. Demolition of the existing building to provide land to construct a new building will require planning approval and this report has been prepared to provide information as part of any future planning application process. To this end the report is required to comply with the recommendations and principles set out in the National Planning Policy Framework 2021 as amended (NPPF). The report contains Biological Records and has been prepared to meet the standard required by BS42020 (British Standard for Biodiversity and Development).

Chapter 11 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) describes the Government's national policies on promoting 'an effective use of land in meeting the need for homes and other uses, while safeguarding and improving the environment.' NPPF is accompanied by Planning Practice Guidance on 'Biodiversity, ecosystems and green infrastructure' (2014) and ODPM Circular 06/2005.

The National Planning Policy Framework 2021 Chapter 15 sets out the Government's objectives for planning in regard to the protection of habitats and biodiversity. The planning objectives in relation to biodiversity and the natural environment are stated within paragraph 170 of the NPPF 2021 and are as follows:

"Planning policies and decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by:

a) protecting and enhancing valued landscapes, sites of biodiversity or geological value and soils (in a manner commensurate with their statutory status or identified quality in the development plan).

b) recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside, and the wider benefits from natural capital and ecosystem services – including the economic and other benefits of the best and most versatile agricultural land, and of trees and woodland.

c) maintaining the character of the undeveloped coast, while improving public access to it where appropriate.

d) minimising impacts on and providing net gains for biodiversity, including by establishing coherent ecological networks that are more resilient to current and future pressures.

e) preventing new and existing development from contributing to, being put at unacceptable risk from, or being adversely affected by, unacceptable levels of soil, air, water or noise pollution or land instability. Development should, wherever possible, help to improve local environmental conditions such as air and water quality, taking into account relevant information such as river basin management plans; and

f) remediating and mitigating despoiled, degraded, derelict, contaminated and unstable land, where appropriate.”

Within the revised NPPF 2021 it is now policy that ‘*permission should be refused for major development applications within National Parks, the Broads and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty other than in exceptional circumstances*’. Planning policy context requires that Planning policies and decisions should be based on up-to-date information about the natural environment and other characteristics of the area including an assessment of existing and potential components of ecological networks (NPPF paragraph 43).

The above approach encapsulates the ‘mitigation hierarchy’ described in British Standard BS 42020:2013 which involves the following stepwise process:

- **Avoidance** – avoiding adverse effects through good design,
- **Mitigation** – where it is unavoidable, mitigation measures should be employed to minimise adverse effects,
- **Compensation** – where residual effects remain after mitigation it may be necessary to provide compensation to offset any harm,
- **Enhancement** – planning decisions often present the opportunity to deliver benefits for biodiversity, which can also be explored alongside the above measures to resolve potential adverse effects.

The measures for avoidance, mitigation, compensation and enhancement should be proportionate to the predicted degree of risk to biodiversity and to the nature and scale of the proposed development (BS 42020:2013, section 5.5).

This ecological appraisal provides information on the existing ecological and biodiversity value of the land on the site and also reports any evidence of protected species or significant habitats present. It has been provided to provide information to the Planning Authority in order to help meet the requirements of the NPPF and enable the Authority to assess the site area in accordance with the Code of Practice within BS42020 and guidelines issued by CIEEM in 2012. The report also identifies any habitats or species present that require more detailed surveys prior to any improvements being undertaken.

Part 2: Survey Methodology and Results

2. Appraisal Methodology

2.1 Baseline Study

Within NPPF it states that there are three dimensions to sustainable development: “economic, social and environmental.” The environmental role includes “contributing to protecting and enhancing our natural, built and historic environment” and, as part of this, helping to improve biodiversity.

Within the NPPF 2021 it states that: “*Great weight should be given to conserving and enhancing landscape and scenic beauty in National Parks, the Broads and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, which have the highest status of protection in relation to these issues. The conservation and enhancement of wildlife and cultural heritage are also important considerations in these areas, and should be given great weight....*” Paragraph 172

Within paragraphs 174 and 175 of NPPF 2021 the principles by which the protection and enhancement of biodiversity and geodiversity within the context of proposed development are described. These principles state in Paragraph 174 that any development proposal should:

- a) **Identify, map and safeguard components of local wildlife-rich habitats and wider ecological networks**, including the hierarchy of international, national and locally designated sites of importance for biodiversity; wildlife corridors and steppingstones that connect them; and areas identified by national and local partnerships for habitat management, enhancement, restoration or creation; and
- b) **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**.

Paragraph 175: When determining planning applications, local planning authorities should apply the following principles:

- 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 broader 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 and 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 encouraged, especially where this can secure measurable net gains for biodiversity.*

The biodiversity of a site area and the potential presence of protected species are factors relevant to all developments irrespective of the size scale and will apply to any development on the site being assessed. In this instance the survey area comprises a small, detached building. Taking into account the principle of proportionality, available information on the presence of protected species within the locality has been obtained from the National Biodiversity Network database and MAGIC database and reviewed.

The aims of this appraisal of information are:

To characterize all the existing available information regarding species that may be present at the site and provide up to date information about the environmental characteristics of the site area.

To identify any habitats potentially present of nature conservation value in terms of local, regional and national context and within the context of local, regional and national policy; and,

To identify any areas of ecological interest in order to either a) make recommendations to minimize the potential impact of any site works, or b) identify the need for a further survey work.

Following the appraisal of the available information, a site inspection has taken place to obtain specific site data at the site.

2.2 Habitat Assessment Methodology

The site was inspected on the morning of 25th April 2023. The inspection was completed in accordance with the Guidelines for Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (2012) issued by the Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (IEEM) and BS42020 (British Standard for Biodiversity and Development).

The survey required a systematic inspection of the existing building and immediately surrounding land looking for evidence of protected species. This method was extended, in line with the Guidelines for Preliminary Ecological Appraisal to record details on the actual or potential presence of any notable or protected species or habitats.

A base map showing the precise location of the building surveyed is included as **Figure 3** within section 3 of this report.

2.3 Protected Species Assessment Methodology

A methodical inspection was carried out to look for any evidence of protected species using the site and to identify any habitats with potential to provide significant shelter or foraging opportunities for these. The survey was carried out by Christopher Barker, an experienced ecological consultant and Chartered Environmentalist holding Class Licenses issued by Natural England.

The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010 consolidates the various amendments that have been made to the Regulations. The original (1994) Regulations transposed the EC Habitats Directive on the Conservation of Natural Habitats and of Wild Fauna and Flora (Council Directive 92/43/EEC) into national law.

“European protected species” are those which are present on Schedule 2 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010. They are subject to the provisions of Regulation 41 of those Regulations. All European Protected Species are also protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended). Taken together, these pieces of legislation make it an offence to:

- a. Intentionally or deliberately capture, injure or kill any wild animal included amongst these species
- b. Possess or control any live or dead specimens or any part of, or anything derived from these species
- c. deliberately disturb wild animals of any such species
- d. deliberately take or destroy the eggs of such an animal, or
- e. intentionally, deliberately or recklessly damage or destroy a breeding site or resting place of such an animal, or obstruct access to such a place

For the purposes of paragraph (c), disturbance of animals includes in particular any disturbance which is likely—

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

Although the law provides strict protection to these species, it also allows this protection to be set aside (derogation) through the issuing of licences. The licences in England are currently determined by Natural England (NE) for development works. In accordance with the requirements of the Regulations (2010), a licence can only be issued where the following requirements are satisfied:

- i) 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'
- ii) 'There is no satisfactory alternative'
- iii) 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.'

General faunal activity, such as mammals or birds observed visually or by call during the course of the surveys was recorded. Specific attention was also paid to the potential presence of any protected, rare or notable species, and specific consideration was given to bats, birds, [REDACTED] amphibians and reptiles as described below.

Breeding Birds: All nesting 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 inspection of the site included a search of hedgerows, ground vegetation and tree canopies looking for evidence of active or former nests.

Bats: All species of Bat within the UK are protected under the Conservation of Habitat and Species Regulations 2010 (Habitat Regulations) that amended and incorporated the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981. These regulations make it an offence to:

- Intentionally kill, injure or take a bat [WCA section 9(1)]
- Possess or control any live or dead specimen or anything derived from a bat [WCA section 9(2)]
- Intentionally or recklessly damage, destroy or obstruct access to any structure or place used for shelter or protection by a bat [WCA section 9(4)(a)]
- Intentionally or recklessly disturb a bat while it is occupying a structure or place which it uses for that purpose [WCA section 9(4)(a)]

Any building or significant trees present within the survey area have been assessed for their suitability to support roosting bats based on the presence of features such as holes, crevices, cracks, splits or loose bark. Potential bat roost locations in relation to buildings are described within this report (taken from Bat Survey Guidelines 2016) as:

Confirmed Roost – a structure with physical evidence confirming the presence of bats or bats visibly seen.

High – a structure with one or more potential roost features that are obviously suitable for use by a large number of bats on a regular basis and which is situated in an area of continuous high-quality foraging habitat suitable for bats.

Moderate – a structure with one or more potential roost features that could be used by bats, but which is unlikely to support a roost of high conservation status and which is in an area of connected habitat suitable for foraging by bats.

Low – a structure with one or more potential roost features that could be used by individual bats opportunistically. However, these potential roost features do not provide sufficient potential to be used by a larger number of bats or on a regular basis and the surrounding habitat is not of high value to foraging bats.

Negligible – a structure with negligible habitat features which is in a poor location making it highly unlikely roosting bats will be present.

Tree assessments were undertaken from ground level, with the aid of a torch and binoculars where required. During the survey features considered to provide suitable roost sites for bats such as the following were sought:

Trunk / branch cavities – significant holes in the trunk caused by rot or injury.

Trunk / branch split – split / fissure in trunk caused by rot or injury.

Branch socket cavity – Where a fallen branch has resulted in the formation of an access point into a cavity.

Woodpecker hole – created by nesting birds suitable for use by roosting bats.

Lifted bark – bark which has rotted / lifted to form suitable access point/roost site for bats.

Trunk hollows – decay in heartwood leading to internal cavity in trunk.

Ivy cover – dense / mature ivy cover where the woody stems could create small cavities / crevices.

Common Reptiles: All species of British reptile are protected by the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended). The common species (adder, grass snake, slow worm and common lizard) are only protected against intentional killing and injuring (but not taking).

The survey included a search of all areas where suitable habitat for reptiles to shelter under or bask may be present, lifting logs and other suitable features to search underneath. The surveyor also maintained a careful watch whilst moving across the site to look for signs of reptiles moving to cover.

Great crested newts are afforded legal protection under European and UK law under the auspices of The Conservation (Natural Habitats &c.) (Amendment) Regulations which came into force on 21 August 2007, superseding the Habitat Regulations 1994. The 2007 amendments have increased the protection afforded to European Protected Species.

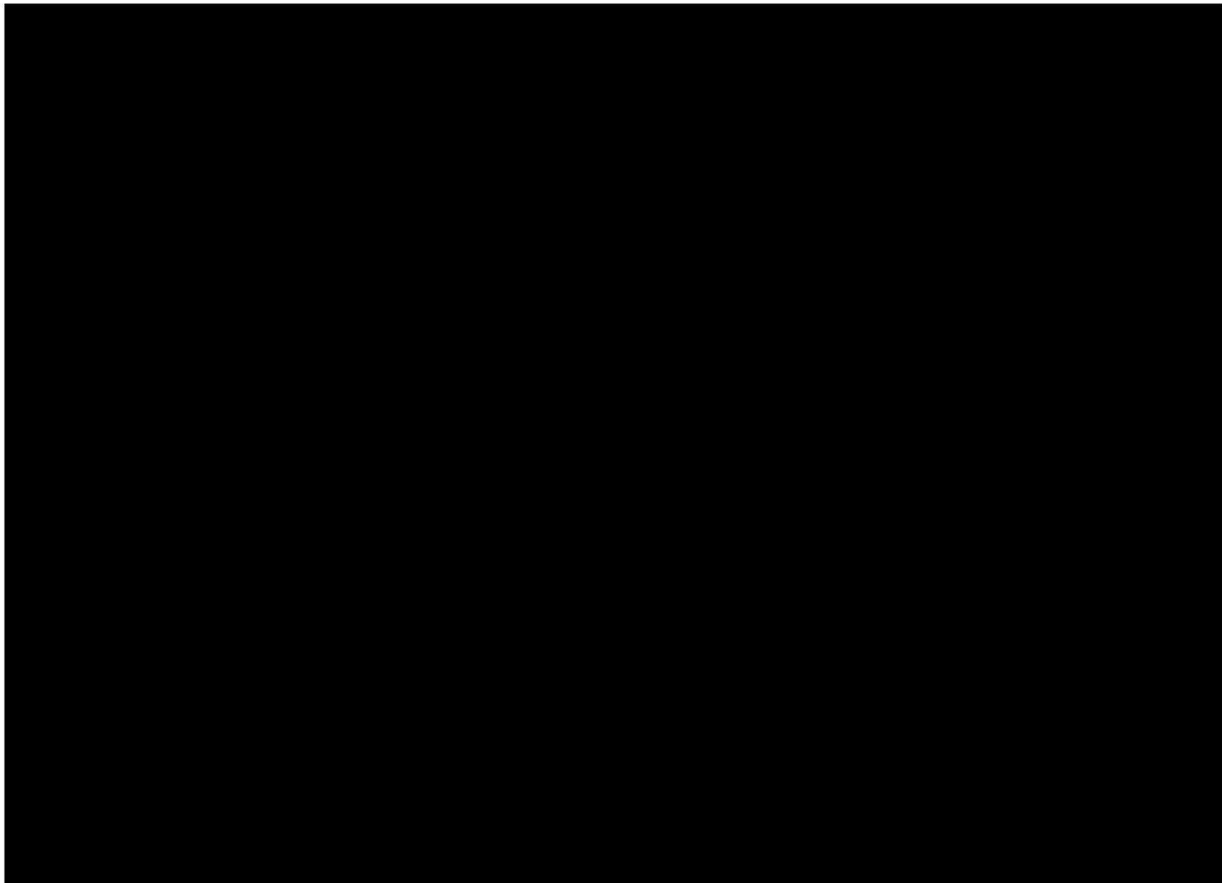
The law provides protection to adults, juveniles, efts (immature GCN) and eggs and it is an offence to intentionally or recklessly or as an incidental result of actions:

Intentionally or deliberately capture, kill, or injure Great Crested Newts

Intentionally or recklessly damage, destroy or obstruct access to any place used for shelter or protection (including resting or breeding places) whether occupied or not

- Deliberately, intentionally or recklessly disturb Great Crested Newts when in a place of shelter
- Possess a Great Crested Newt, or any part of it, unless acquired lawfully
- Sell, barter, exchange or transport or offer for sale Great Crested Newts or any part of them.

The survey included a search of any ponds and wetland areas within the site or immediate surrounding area nearby (where these features were accessible) and an assessment of ponds in the local area using Ordnance Survey Maps and aerial photographs to consider the potential for these species to access the site area.



Invasive Species: Attention was paid to the presence of any invasive species listed under Schedule 9 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended). However, the detectability of such species varies due to a number of factors, e.g. time of year, site management, etc., and hence the absence of invasive species should not be assumed even if no such species were detected during the Phase 1 survey.

A range of invasive non-native plant species are listed in Schedule 9 (Part 2) of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981, which makes it an offence to plant or cause these introduced invasive plants to grow in the wild, effectively making it illegal to spread the plants during development operations.

2.4 Consultations

The evaluation of ecological features and resources is based on professional judgement whilst also drawing on the latest available industry guidance and research. The approach taken in this report is based on that described by the Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (CIEEM, 2016). In evaluating ecological features. The *Geographic Frame of Reference* is a key factor taken into account when assessing the potential ecological value of a site being surveyed. The value of an ecological

feature or resource is determined within a defined geographical context using the following frame of reference:

- International.
- National.
- Regional.
- County (or Metropolitan).
- District (or Unitary Authority, City or Borough).
- Local (or Parish).
- Site level only.

Within this frame of reference, certain sites may carry a statutory ecological designation, e.g. Special Area of Conservation (SAC) for internationally important sites or Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) for sites of national importance. Sites of more localised nature conservation importance do not receive statutory protection but may be designated by Local Planning Authorities or other bodies, e.g. Wildlife Trusts. Such non-statutory designations or 'Local Sites' include Local Wildlife Sites (LWSs) and Sites of Nature Conservation Interest (SNCIs), for example.

A review of the available data confirms that the site is not a Statutory or Non-Statutory site of ecological significance and there are no such sites close to the property being surveyed.

A review of the data for protected species has identified a small number of significant records relating to the immediate vicinity of the site which are summarised within the table below. It is likely, given the character of the landscape, that the absence of records is indicative of an absence of surveys in this location.

Scientific Name	Common Name	Latest Record	Number of Records
<i>Perdix perdix</i>	Grey Partridge	2017	3
<i>Turdus iliacus</i>	Redwing	2018	7
<i>Turdus pilaris</i>	Fieldfare	2018	7
<i>Tyto alba</i>	Barn Owl	2013	1
<i>Pipistrellus pipistrellus</i>	Common Pipistrelle	2017	2

There are no records of **great crested newt (GCN)** or other amphibians within 1km of the building being surveyed. There is a small pond situated on the eastern side of Willow Tree Cottage approximately 70m from the building surveyed and this could support some common amphibians although the local landscape is sub-optimal for these species.

There are no records of any reptiles within 2km of the property surveyed and the local landscape is sub-optimal for these species.

The survey area comprises a building so the presence of birds which nest in building structures is possible.

There are records of roosting and foraging **bats** within the 2km area around the building, particularly to the south where there is a linear woodland and stream providing a commuting and foraging route. There is a record of an EPSL being issued for bats at Bankwood House only 150m to the south of the property. If the building surveyed has suitable structural features it could be used by roosting bats.



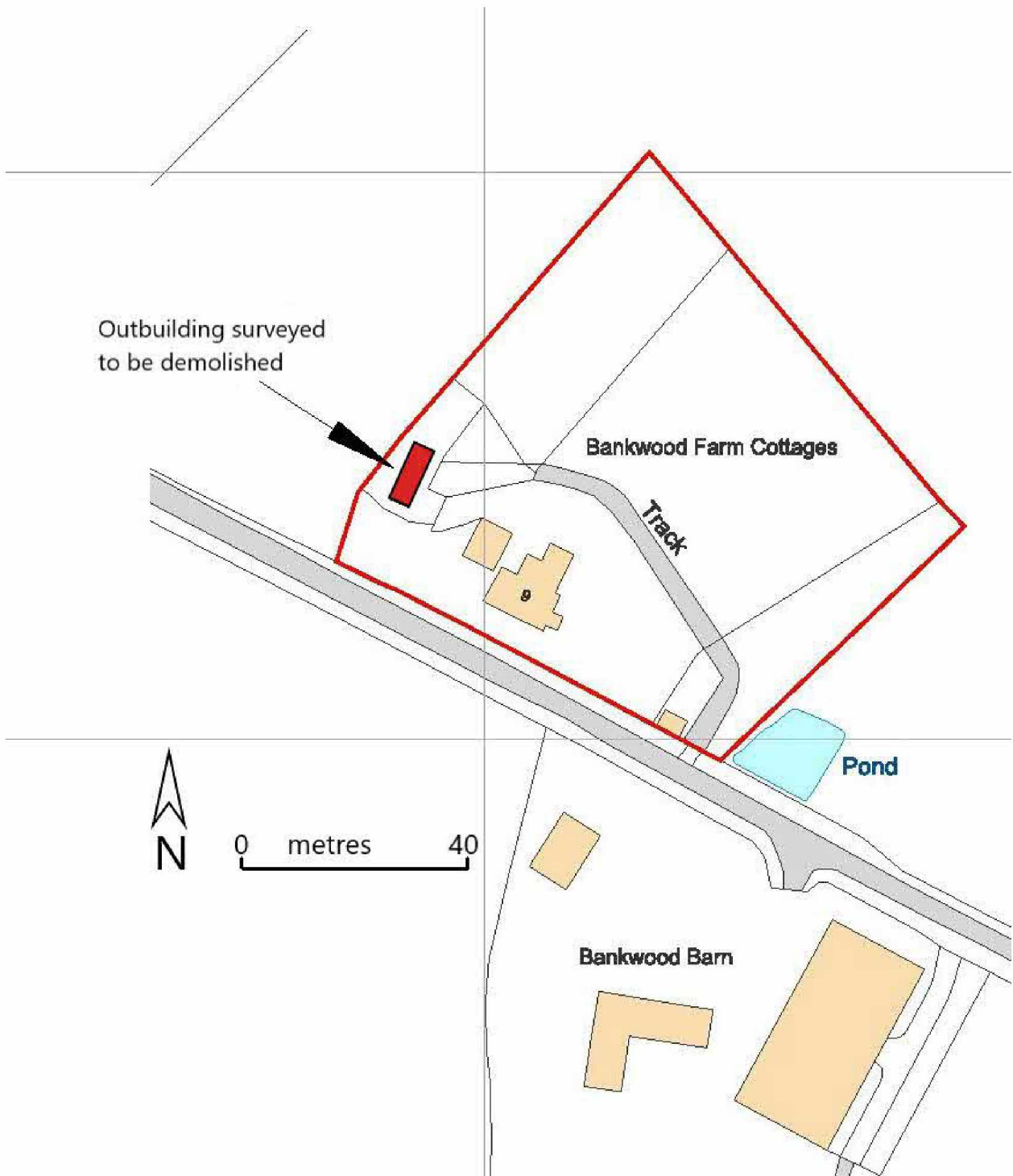


Figure 3 – Building Location

3. Survey Findings

3.1 Building Description

The survey comprises a detached, timber framed, former stable building positioned in open land immediately adjacent to the existing house and residential garden. There are no other habitats present which will be impacted by the proposed demolition and replacement of this structure.

The former stable is a single storey timber framed structure which is internally sub-divided into three separate stalls / storage rooms. It has a timber frame throughout which is clad with a single skin of horizontal timber cladding with no internal lining or boarding. There are timber doors on the east side (front) which are not tightly fitting.

The shallow-sloping pitched roof is constructed from a sheet of corrugated composite material laid directly over timber sheeting. The roof edges are not effectively sealed but there are no enclosed loft spaced or roof voids. The building is situated on a concrete pad. Internally the three stalls / room areas are open and well-ventilated but the building has no windows.



View of front (east) of building



View of rear (west) of building



South facing gable end of the building



Apex of the south gable end



Gap long door top



Unsealed roof edge



Interior stall (south end)



Gap along roof edge (south gable)



Centre stall – next under roof apex



centre stall interior



Interior stall (North end of building)

Internal inspection of all three stall areas was completed and the underside of the roof structure is visible in each. There are entry points into the interior rooms via gaps along the door frames and along the roof edges.

During the inspection, three swallow nests were identified within the internal roof structure of the building, one in the southern stall and two within the central stall.

No field evidence of bat activity was found on or in any part of the building.


3.2 Evidence of Protected Species

During the inspection of the building and immediately adjacent land notes were made on the suitability of habitats for protected species and any sightings or signs of protected species were recorded:

- Any trees with features suitable for roosting bats were noted, such as hollows (e.g. old woodpecker holes), cracks and cavities within trunks and branches, crevices behind loose bark and ivy growth on trunks.
- The building was assessed for potential bat roost locations
- The suitability of habitats was assessed for reptiles such as Grass snake (*Natrix natrix*) and amphibians (including great crested newts - *Triturus cristatus*).
- The suitability of site was assessed for nesting birds.

Surveying in late April is an optimal time for many protected species. An experienced surveyor can make reliable judgements about the quality and composition of habitats and their potential suitability for protected species. Only an initial assessment of the site was made and no stage 2 surveys were carried out. As such, a lack of evidence of a protected species does not necessarily indicate an absence of these species. The table below provides a summary of the potential for protected species to be present within the site.

Species	Present within 2km	Connectivity	Suitable habitat on site / evidence of presence	Likelihood of presence on site
Nesting Birds	Yes	Building is accessible from surrounding open agricultural land	Ground nesting unlikely around the building due to lack of cover and predatory cats. Three swallow nests were found within the building interior, at least two of which appeared active.	High likelihood of swallow nesting within the building in the future. Mitigation measures for this species will be required.
Reptiles	No	Limited by the surrounding landscape which is sub-optimal for reptile species.	No evidence of reptiles and no suitable habitat in close proximity to the building.	Unlikely to be present in any significant numbers around the building.
Amphibians	No	Limited by the surrounding landscape which is sub-optimal for amphibian species.	No evidence of reptiles and no suitable habitat in close proximity to the building. Nearby pond is very isolated and sub-optimal for amphibians due to lack of vegetation and presence of wildfowl.	Unlikely to be present in any significant numbers around the building.
Bats	Yes	Reasonable to the south of the building but restricted by lack of tree cover of suitable foraging habitat in all other directions.	No evidence of bat activity found associated with the building. Minor features present along the roof edges could be fully inspected. Building has negligible roost potential.	No evidence of roosting bats. No further surveys recommended.



Birds: The local area supports a range of bird species which includes some Schedule 1 and red list species. The building displays the swallow nests within the internal roof structure, two of which had fresh guano indicating that may have been occupied. No evidence of any other nesting activity was found associated with the building and the land immediately adjacent to the building is open grassland with a short compact sward and no cover to provide nesting opportunities.

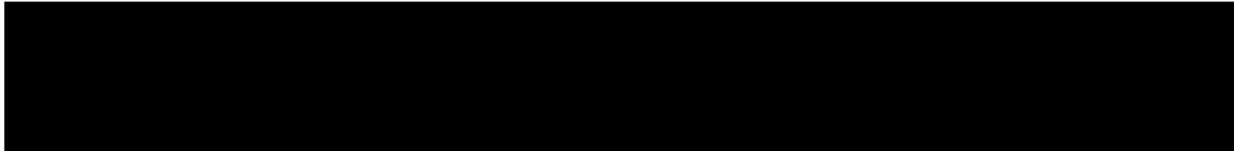
Measures to avoid disturbance to any nests or nesting activity will need to be considered within any development. Work to demolish the existing building should take place outside of the nesting season or be preceded by an inspection carried out by a suitably qualified and experienced ecologist to ensure existing nests are no longer occupied.

Reptiles: The walkover survey of the land around the building was completed on a grid pattern (as far as was possible) looking for evidence or indication of reptiles. No sightings or physical evidence of reptiles was seen during the inspection and the surrounding land is sub-optimal for reptiles. No further surveys for reptiles are recommended.

Amphibians: The presence of significant numbers of amphibians in the area surveyed is considered unlikely and the inspection found no evidence of these species or optimal habitat to support them. Further surveys and specific mitigation measures for amphibians are not recommended. The nearest pond is sub-optimal for amphibians due to the lack of aquatic vegetation and presence of wildfowl.

Chiroptera: The building inspected displays no evidence of roosting bats either internally or externally. The only feature of interest in the building structure is the unsealed roof edges but these are low-lying and could be fully explored using a torch and endoscope looking for evidence of roosting bats. It is concluded that the building has negligible roost potential and further bat surveys are not recommended.

Invertebrates: The area assessed does not appear to support a diverse range of flora. The potential for a significant assemblage of invertebrates to be present within the survey area is quite low at the present time and further invertebrate surveys are not recommended.



3.3 Ecological Constraints and Opportunities

Constraints:

No significant ecological constraints have been identified during the survey. The following factor should be taken into consideration:

- The interior of the existing building has been used by swallow in the past for nesting purposes and any nests should be checked to ensure these are unoccupied before any work commences to the building.

Part 3: Initial Ecological Appraisal

4. Impact of Proposed Site Development

Within the NPPF 2021, guidance on the provision or retention of biodiversity within any proposed areas for development and measures to ensure the safeguarding of protected species are provided. Development should seek to contribute a net gain in biodiversity with an emphasis on improving ecological networks and linkages where possible.

The NPPF para 170 stresses that planning policies and decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by a variety of measures including minimising impacts on and providing net gains for biodiversity. This is reinforced by Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) which identifies that 'a key purpose of this duty is to embed consideration of biodiversity as an integral part of policy and decision making throughout the public sector, which should be seeking to make a significant contribution to the achievement of the commitments made by government in its 25 Year Environment Plan' (PPG natural environment Paragraph: 009 Reference ID: 8- 009-20190721).

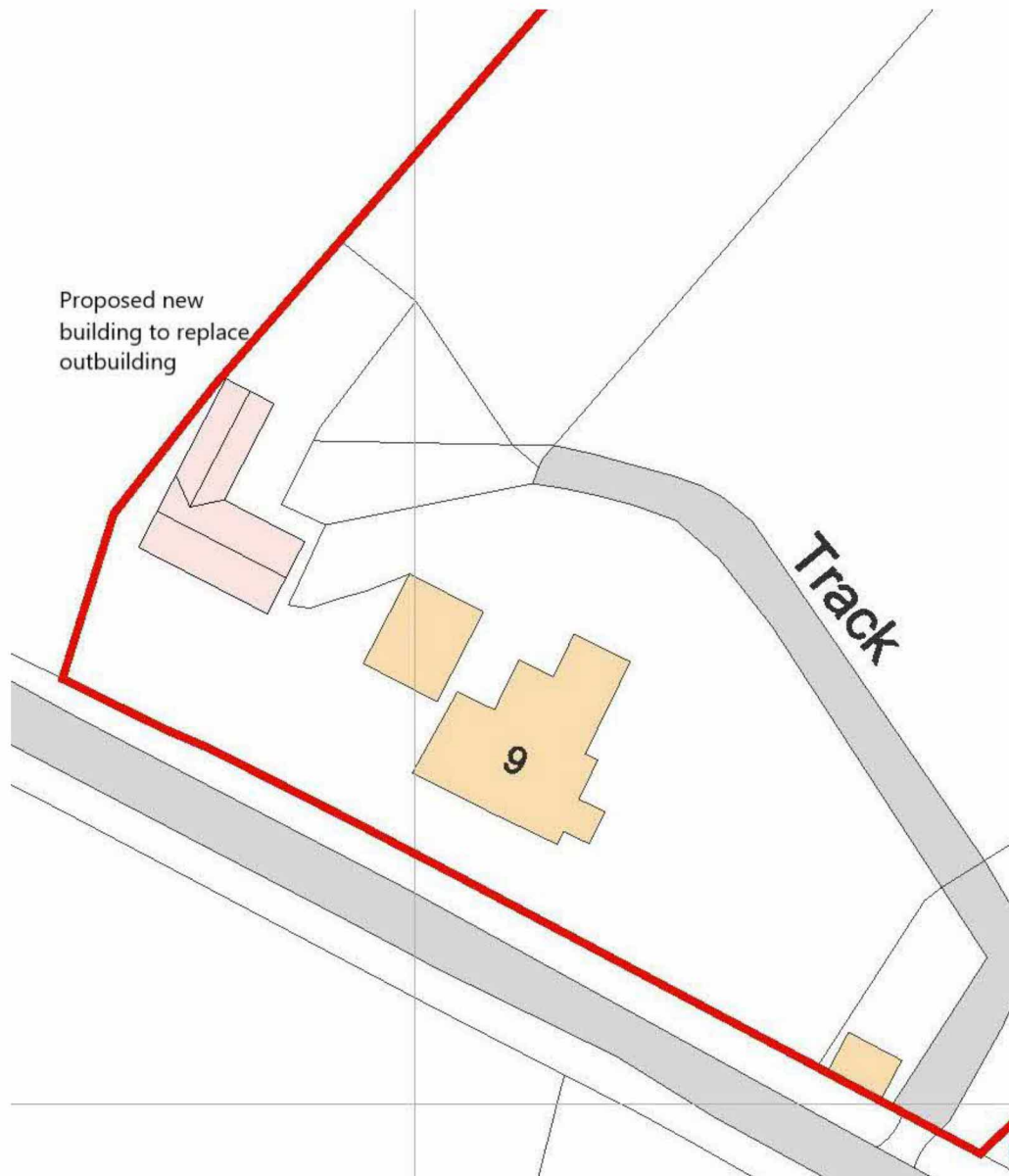


Figure 4 – Conceptual Development Plan

It is understood that the development being proposed is to demolish the existing timber framed former stable building and replace this with a new residential property with a slightly larger footprint as shown within **Figure 4** above.

As noted within this report, the ‘mitigation hierarchy’ described in British Standard BS 42020:2013 should be applied in regard to biodiversity within sites being considered for development which is a stepwise process:

- **Avoidance** – avoiding adverse effects through good design.
- **Mitigation** – where it is unavoidable, mitigation measures should be employed to minimise adverse effects.
- **Compensation** – where residual effects remain after mitigation it may be necessary to provide compensation to offset any harm.
- **Enhancement** – planning decisions often present the opportunity to deliver benefits for biodiversity, which can also be explored alongside the above measures to resolve potential adverse effects.

The measures for avoidance, mitigation, compensation and enhancement should be proportionate to the predicted degree of risk to biodiversity and to the nature and scale of the proposed development (BS 42020:2013, section 5.5).

The table below considers the features present on the site in the context of the hierarchy.

Feature	Ecological Significance	Hierarchy application	Impact of proposed development
Buildings	Negligible	None	The existing building will be removed and replaced with a new structure .
Amenity Grass	Low	Mitigation	The proposed development occupies a larger footprint and a small parcel of species poor amenity grassland will be lost under the new building. This will be replaced by landscaping around the new structure .

4.1 Potential Impact on nearby Statutory and Non-statutory sites

There are no Statutory or Non-Statutory sites nearby that could be impacted by the mall scale of development being proposed.

4.2 Impact of the Proposals on Site Biodiversity

The level of biodiversity within the site being assessed must be a consideration in determining the impact on biodiversity that may arise from any development on the site. Within the NPPF 2021 it states that any development proposal should seek to “*contribute to protecting and enhancing our natural, built and historic environment; including making effective use of land, helping to improve biodiversity, using natural resources prudently, minimising waste and pollution, and mitigating and adapting to climate change.....*”

Within the Guidance it specifically states that “*Planning.... decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by.....protecting and enhancing valued landscapes, sites of biodiversity or geological value and soils.....recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside, and the wider benefits from natural capital and ecosystem services – including the economic and other benefits of the best and most versatile agricultural land, and of trees and woodland.*”

The survey area comprises a small timber framed former stable sub-divided internally into three stalls store rooms. The building is surrounded by short amenity grass and gravel areas of negligible biodiversity value. No significant habitat was identified associated with the building surveyed and demolition of this building should not have any significant impact on immediately adjacent land.

4.3 Impact of the Proposals on Protected Species

The requirements of Part IV of ODPM / Defra Circular 06/2005 in regard to the protection of certain species are still applicable under NPPF. The presence of protected species at the site must be taken into consideration. Under the requirements of the NPPF provision in relation to the presence of protected species on, or making use of, a site proposed for any development must be taken into account. The presumption in favour of sustainable development does not apply where development requiring appropriate assessment under the Birds or Habitats Directives is being considered, planned or determined or where the impact on protected species is considered to outweigh the benefit of development.

The inspection completed in April 2023 did not identify any physical evidence or field signs of protected species within the building and immediately surrounding area except for nesting activity by swallow within the building interior.

The following measures are recommended:

- The existing building should be taken down outside of the bird nesting season when nests will not be occupied. Alternatively, the building should be inspected by an ecological to confirm any nests present are not occupied or in current use before work commences.
- The proposed new building should incorporate at least three artificial nest boxes into the building structure. If possible these should be swallow nest boxes positioned under the eaves and sheltered. However, if this is impractical, swift nest tubes could be used instead as these can be constructed within the walls of the new building and may be utilised by a range of bird species.



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