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Preliminary Ecological Appraisal Including a Protected Species Assessment of a Building and Land at: The Noel Arms, Langham, Oakham

On Behalf Of:

Gold Leaf Property Investments

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Skilled Ecology Consultancy Ltd.

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0 SUMMARY

- 0.1 Skilled Ecology Consultancy Ltd. was commissioned by Gold Leaf Property Investments to undertake a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal including a Protected Species Assessment of a building and hardstanding land at The Noel Arms, 2 Bridge Street, Langham, Oakham, LE15 7HU. The report is required to accompany a planning application for residential development following demolition of the existing disused public house.
- 0.2 The survey was conducted on 30th October 2023 by experienced ecologist Tommy Root BSc (Hons) ACIEEM (licensed to survey for great crested newts *Triturus cristatus* and licenced to survey for bats - level 2). The survey consisted of an inspection for preferred habitat types and signs and evidence of protected and priority species, such as for bats, great crested newts, reptiles, badgers *Meles meles* and nesting birds following Natural England (English Nature) Guidelines. A local record search was undertaken.
- 0.3 The site consisted of a disused, double-storey, brick pubic house with single-storey brick extensions and hardstanding parking area with small number of planters. No greenspace (other than planters) will be affected.
- 0.4 The site is positioned within a residential area centrally in the village of Langham.
- 0.5 The site was considered very low in ecological value with negligible potential to support protected, priority or rare species. No signs or evidence of such were discovered during the survey visit.
- 0.6 Further ecological surveys or mitigation were considered unnecessary. However, to minimise any residual risk of impact to protected, priority or rare species and valuable habitats, precautionary measures, detailed later in the report, should be followed.
- 0.7 With the recommendations followed as described, development could proceed with a minimal risk of harm or impact to local ecological value or to protected, priority or rare species.
- 0.8 Biodiversity enhancement recommendations are also included in the report in accordance with national planning policy.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

- 1.1.1 Skilled Ecology Consultancy Ltd. was commissioned by Gold Leaf Property Investments to undertake a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal including a Protected Species Assessment of a building and hardstanding land at The Noel Arms, 2 Bridge Street, Langham, Oakham, LE15 7HU. The report is required to accompany a planning application for residential development following demolition of the existing disused public house.
- 1.1.2 Wildlife such as nesting birds, bats, reptiles and great crested newts *Triturus cristatus* are protected by law. Protected and priority species and habitats, are also a material consideration for individual planning decisions under the National Planning Policy Framework, 2023 (NPPF) (MHCLG, 2023).
- 1.1.3 This study and report complies with the Chartered Institute for Ecology and Environmental Management (CIEEM) 2017 Guidelines for Preliminary Ecological Appraisal.
- 1.1.4 CIEEM guidelines indicate that ecological surveying typically remains valid for between 12 – 18 months.

2 METHODOLOGY

2.1 Desk Study

- 2.1.1 A local biological record search was undertaken on behalf of Skilled Ecology through the Leicestershire & Rutland Environmental Records Centre (LRERC).
- 2.1.2 A search of the Multi-agency Geographical Information for the Countryside (MAGIC) was also conducted, to check for statutory nature conservation sites.
- 2.1.3 The record search results were then combined with the findings of the site survey to assess the risk of bat issues, relevant to planning, occurring on the site.

2.2 Study Limitations

- 2.2.1 The site and surrounds were assessed based on their condition at the time of the survey visit.
- 2.2.2 The survey was conducted in late autumn, early season flowering plants might no longer be evident at this point.

2.3 Initial Site Survey

Habitats and Surroundings

- 2.3.1 The site was visited on the 30th October 2023 by experienced ecologist Tommy Root BSc (Hons) ACIEEM to survey for ecology issues. This included the following:

Noting the suitability of habitats present on the site, regarding protected, priority and rare species; including plants, amphibians, reptiles, mammals, nesting birds, invertebrates and protected, priority or red-listed Birds of Conservation Concern (BoCC);

Assessing the habitats surrounding the site and in the local area;

Direct survey for evidence of protected species as far as possible, e.g. for bats, reptiles, great crested newts, badgers *Meles meles*, and nesting birds;

Checking for invasive species such as Japanese knotweed *Fallopia japonica* and giant hogweed *Heracleum mantegazzianum*

Bat Inspection

- 2.3.2 The assessment for bats was conducted by experienced ecologists, licensed by Natural England to disturb and take bats for science and education. Buildings and trees were inspected externally for bat activity, suitability and potential for roosting following English Nature Bat Mitigation Guidelines (English Nature, 2004) and Bat Conservation Trust Best Practice Guidelines, therefore considerations were:

the availability of access to roosts for bats;

the presence and suitability of cracks, crevices, gaps, fissures, ivy growth and other places as roosts;

signs of bat activity or presence, such as; the bats themselves, droppings, grease marks, scratch marks, urine spatter and prey remains.

- 2.3.3 Equipment available for use during the survey included a ladder, high powered torch, digital camera and binoculars.

- 2.3.4 The availability of access to roosts was assessed based upon the presence of holes large enough to allow entry to bats and lack of cobwebs and dirt.

- 2.3.5 The outside and inside of buildings and outside of trees were inspected for gaps, cavities, access points and crevices, and any signs of bats (droppings, staining, urine spatter), in accordance with Natural England (English Nature) guidelines (English Nature, 2004).

Reptiles & Amphibians

- 2.3.6 The site was inspected for potentially suitable terrestrial habitats for foraging, sheltering or dispersing amphibians and foraging, sheltering, breeding and basking habitat for reptiles. High quality terrestrial refuges searched for, included:

Log piles & rockeries,
Thick leaf litter,
Compost & manure heaps,
Mammal burrows,
Deep ground cracks;
Refuse suitable for shelter;
Tussock grassland;
Hedgerows and any other potential habitats.

Badgers & Other Mammals

- 2.3.7 Signs and evidence of badgers, and other protected, priority and rare mammal activity searched for included the following:

Setts, holes and burrows;
Foraging holes and other diggings;
Latrines, droppings, spraints and scats;
Mammal hairs;
Paw prints and other tracks;
Feeding remains;
Scratch marks, bedding material and other signs.

3 RESULTS AND RISK

3.1 Site Description & Location

- 3.1.1 The site consisted of a disused, double-storey, brick pubic house with single-storey brick extensions and hardstanding parking area with small number of planters. No greenspace (other than planters) will be affected.
- 3.1.2 The site is positioned within a residential area centrally in the village of Langham.

3.1.3 Construction zone boundaries were:

North & west – north side of building, then local road

East – no physical boundary, then local road

South – no physical boundary, then neighbouring buildings

West – west side of building, then neighbouring properties

3.1.4 The broader landscape was the quiet residential area of the village of Langham with medium/low density housing and local roads.

3.1.5 The nearest local pond (surface area 30m²) is located approximately 330m southwest of the site (Ordnance Survey Map, 2023). There were numerous residential properties and roads separating the pond from the site acting as amphibian dispersal obstacles.

3.2 Nature Conservation Sites

3.2.1 Priority Habitat inventory Woodland is located approximately 225m southeast of the site. One other such area was present within 0.5km of the site (MAGIC, 2023).

3.2.2 A local river, Langham Brook, was present approximately 50m to the north.

3.2.3 The nearest designated wildlife site is Burley & Rushpit Woods Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) located approximately 3.8km southeast. This site is designated for its ancient oak/ash woodland habitats (MAGIC, 2023).

3.3 Data Search

3.3.1 The biological records data search conducted on behalf of Skilled Ecology by LRERC is summarised in Table 1 below.

Table 1: Summary of local biological records

Species	Approximate Location	Year
Mammals: Bats		
Bandt's (EU & UK protected)	360m	2020
Common pipistrelle (EU & UK protected)	470m	2021
Barbastelle (EU & UK protected, UK priority)	470m	2021
Soprano pipistrelle (EU & UK protected, UK priority)	Within 1km	2018
Brown long eared (EU & UK protected, UK priority)	Within 1km	2018
Noctule (EU & UK protected, UK priority)	470m	2020
Mammals: Other		
Badger (UK protected)	Within 1km	2022
Otter (UK protected)	145m northeast	2022
Herpetofauna		
Great crested newt (EU & UK protected)	Within 1km	2017
Common toad (UK priority)	Within 1km	2018
Grass snake (UK priority)	Within 1km	2021
Birds		
Fieldfare (red-listed, Schedule 1)	585m	2016
Redwing (red-listed, Schedule 1)	285m	2018
Barn owl	285m	2016

3.4 Protected, Priority & Rare Species

Vegetation & Habitats

- 3.4.1 Habitats on site included tarmac hardstanding.
- 3.4.2 Vegetation found scattered around the site out of hardstanding etc. included:
- Hardstanding herbaceous plants – red valerian *Centranthus ruber*, purple toadflax *Linaria purpurea*, opium poppy *Papaver somniferum*, pellitory-of-the-wall *Parietaria judaica*, yarrow *Achillea millefolium*, groundsel *Senecio vulgaris*, dandelion *Taraxacum officinale* agg, spear thistle *Cirsium vulgare*, smooth sow thistle *Sonchus oleraceus*, petty spurge *Euphorbia peplus*, pearlwort *Sagina procumbens*, ash *Fraxinus excelsior* (very small sapling), sycamore *Acer pseudoplatanus* (small sapling).
- 3.4.3 Planters with common garden species were present.
- 3.4.4 No Schedule 9 Invasive, protected or priority plant species were observed. No UK priority habitat were present.

Bats

- 3.4.5 The all parts of the public house (loft, cellar, ceilings, building exterior etc.) was inspected for bats as part of the survey.
- 3.4.6 No evidence of individual bats, droppings or urine stains etc. were found.
- 3.4.7 No mature trees with suitable features were present within the construction zone.
- 3.4.8 The site was considered negligible in suitability or potential for roosting bats. All tiles etc. were well-sealed to bats.
- 3.4.9 The immediate surrounding habitats were likely, at best, to produce low quantities of flying insects for feeding bats and shelter for commuting bats. Artificial light was a significant limiting factor in the suitability of the site and surrounds for foraging bats.

Other Protected & UK Priority Mammals

- 3.4.10 The construction zone is small in area and negligible in suitability for foraging by badgers *Meles meles*, if present locally.
- 3.4.11 The construction zone was completely unsuitable for aquatic mammals such as otter *Lutra lutra* or water vole *Arvicola amphibius*.
- 3.4.12 The site was considered negligible in suitability for hedgehogs *Erinaceus europaeus*, though it could not be discounted that the occasional hedgehog may cross the site.
- 3.4.13 No signs or evidence of ground dwelling protected, priority or rare mammals were observed.

Birds

- 3.4.14 The following bird species were observed or heard on or close to the site during the survey: wood pigeon *Columba palumbus*, carrion crow *Corvus corone* and jackdaw *Corvus monedula*. Jackdaw were observed in around the chimney area of the pub.
- 3.4.15 Wood pigeon is an amber-listed BoCC species. All other bird species recorded were common, widespread green-listed BoCC species.
- 3.4.16 It was considered likely that, on occasions, low numbers of protected, UK priority birds, red listed BoCC species such as song thrush etc. may forage over the site occasionally. Significant nesting or foraging by such species was considered highly unlikely. Occasional nesting in the chimney by jackdaw was considered possible.
- 3.4.17 The BoCC ratings are summarised as follows:

Red-listed - highest conservation concern;

Amber-listed - moderate conservation concern;

Green-listed - least conservation concern.

Great Crested Newts & Other Amphibians

- 3.4.18 Due to a complete lack of ground cover, the site considered negligible in suitability or potential as a terrestrial habitat for amphibians.
- 3.4.19 The nearest pond (330m southwest of the site) was separated from the site by amphibian dispersal obstacles.
- 3.4.20 Amphibians were not observed during the survey visit.

Reptiles

- 3.4.21 The site was considered negligible in suitability or potential for reptiles with negligible safe basking, foraging or breeding habitat present.
- 3.4.22 Reptiles were not observed during the survey visit.

Invertebrates

- 3.4.23 The construction zone was negligible in diversity of habitats, size and diversity of flora necessary to support a significant assemblage of invertebrates of conservation concern. It is deemed highly unlikely but not impossible that the very occasional priority species may visit the site, though significant use by such species was considered highly unlikely.
- 3.4.24 No protected or priority invertebrates were observed during the survey visit.
- 3.4.25 No areas of deadwood or rotting tree stumps were present for breeding stag beetles.

Other Protected, Priority or Rare Species

- 3.4.26 No signs or evidence of any other protected or priority species were observed on the site. The risk of presence of such was considered negligible.

4 DISCUSSION OF RISK AND LEGISLATION

4.1 Protected Species

Bats

- 4.1.1 Bats are protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 as amended by the Countryside Rights of Way Act 2000 and under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017. Some bats are also UK priority species. A summary of the offences likely to be relevant to development are:

Intentionally or deliberately kill, injure or take a bat;

Intentionally or recklessly damage, destroy or obstruct access to any place that a bat uses for shelter or protection, whether bats are present or not;

Damage or destroy a breeding site or resting place of any bat;

Intentionally or recklessly disturb a bat while it is occupying a structure or place that it uses for shelter or protection;

Deliberately disturb a bat anywhere.

- 4.1.2 Local records of bats were present (LRERC, 2023) and it is likely that on occasions bats may commute through the site and temporarily forage over the site. However, the building was considered negligible in suitability or potential for roosting bats with negligible opportunities for roosting or access into the building found.
- 4.1.3 No signs or evidence of bats were found.
- 4.1.4 Therefore, the risk of significant impact or harm to bats, bat roosts or local bat conservation was considered negligible.
- 4.1.5 Further bat surveys or mitigation were considered unnecessary.
- 4.1.6 However, to minimise any residual risk of harm or impact to bats, impact avoidance precautionary measures, detailed below, should be followed.

Birds

- 4.1.7 Wild birds are protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 and, with certain exceptions (e.g. pest species) in certain situations, it is an offence to intentionally:

Kill or injure any wild bird;

Take, damage or destroy the nest of any wild bird while it is in use or being built;

Take or destroy the egg of any wild bird.

- 4.1.8 Some bird species (such as barn owls) are also specially protected under Schedule 1 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 and others are UK priority species.
- 4.1.9 Protected birds and UK priority bird species have been recorded locally (LRERC, 2023).
- 4.1.10 It was unlikely but not impossible that, on occasions, very low numbers of protected or UK priority birds might forage near the site occasionally, though significant foraging or nesting by such species was considered unlikely.
- 4.1.11 It was considered possible that the chimney might be used local jackdaws for nesting.
- 4.1.12 Further bird surveys or mitigation were considered unnecessary.
- 4.1.13 However, to minimise any residual risk of impact to birds, precautionary measures, detailed later in the report, should be followed.

Other Protected, Priority & Rare Mammals

- 4.1.14 The site was considered low in suitability for any other protected, priority or rare mammals. No signs or evidence of such were observed on the site or adjacent to the site. It could not be discounted that the very occasional hedgehog might visit the site, though significant use by many hedgehogs was considered unlikely.
- 4.1.15 Further surveys for any other protected, priority or rare mammals was considered unnecessary. However, to minimise any residual risk of impact to hedgehogs, precautionary measures, detailed later in the report, should be followed.

Great Crested Newts & Other Amphibians

- 4.1.16 Great crested newts are protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 as amended by the Countryside Rights of Way Act 2000, and the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017. Great crested newts are also UK priority species. A summary of the offences likely to be relevant to development are:

Intentionally or deliberately capture or kill;

Intentionally injure;

Deliberately disturb, or intentionally or recklessly disturb in a place of shelter or protection;

Damage or destroy a breeding site or resting place;

Intentionally or recklessly damage, destroy or obstruct access to a place used for shelter or protection.

- 4.1.17 Habitats present were negligible in suitability for great crested newts or other amphibians. The nearest pond was a significant distance away and separated by amphibian dispersal obstacles.
- 4.1.18 Therefore, the risk of significant impact or harm to amphibians of any species was considered negligible.
- 4.1.19 Further amphibian surveys or mitigation were considered unnecessary.

Plants

- 4.1.20 No Schedule 9 Invasive plant species or rare, protected or priority species were present.
- 4.1.21 No UK priority habitats are proposed for impact.
- 4.1.22 Further botanical surveys or mitigation were considered unnecessary.

Reptiles

- 4.1.23 Widespread reptile species including, grass snake, adder, slow worm and common lizard, are protected from intentional killing and injuring under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981. They are also UK priority species.
- 3.4.27 The site was considered negligible in suitability or potential for reptiles. No reptiles were observed during the survey visit.
- 4.1.24 Therefore, the risk of presence and potential for impact was considered negligible. Further reptile surveys or mitigation were considered unnecessary.

Invertebrates

- 4.1.25 Habitats proposed for impact were unlikely to support an assemblage of rare invertebrates of conservation concern. The risk of presence or significant impact to such species was very low.
- 4.1.26 Further invertebrate surveys or mitigation were considered unnecessary.

Other Protected & Priority species

- 4.1.27 No signs or evidence of other protected, priority or rare species were observed on the site and it was considered that there was a low risk of such species occurring on the site or being impacted by the proposed development.

4.2 Other Issues

Sensitive Habitats

- 4.2.1 The site is small and positioned a significant distance from statutorily designated nature conservation sites. The site also supports common and widespread habitats very low in ecological value. Therefore, the risk of significant impact (direct or indirect) to any locally designated nature conservation site or wildlife within such sites was considered very low.
- 4.2.2 Consequently, further surveys or mitigation were deemed unnecessary for the protection of designated nature conservation sites.

5 RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Precautionary Measures

Bats

- 5.1.1 To minimise any residual risk of impact to bats, the following precautionary measure should be undertaken:

Roof tiles should be removed by hand during demolition. If at any point bats or evidence of bats (droppings) are found works should stop and an ecologist called for advice.

Any new proposed external lighting should be minimised. Where external lighting is required it should be warm white LED lamps (<3000k) with glass glazing, rather than plastic, as these produce the least amount of UV light possible, minimising the attraction effects on insects and minimising disturbance to local bats;

Any new external lighting proposed for the development should be aimed carefully, to minimise illumination of boundary habitats and avoid light spillage into the sky, or horizontally out from any buildings, by using hoods or directional lighting;

External security lighting should be set on short timers and be sensitive to large moving objects only, to prevent any passing bats switching them on.

Birds

- 5.1.2 Demolition of pub should commence outside of the main bird nesting season (March- end of August).
- 5.1.3 If this is not possible then an ecologist should survey the site for active bird nests and provide advice accordingly.
- 5.1.4 If an active bird nest was found, it would be necessary to protect the nest from harm or disturbance until the bird had finished nesting.

Hedgehogs

- 5.1.5 The risk of impact to hedgehogs was considered very low. To minimise any residual risk of impact or harm, the following precautionary measures should be undertaken:

During development, waste material should be removed off site immediately and construction materials should be stored on hardstanding or off the ground on pallets, to prevent wildlife from sheltering in the materials and being harmed by movement of the materials;

Any excavations for the development should be covered at night or have a roughly sawn plank placed in them to facilitate escape for any wildlife which may fall in;

No construction/demolition works at night when hedgehogs are mostly active;

In the unlikely event that a hedgehog is observed on the site during development, activities in that area should cease and the animal should be allowed to disperse of its own accord. If rescuing is required and ecologist should be called for advice.

5.2 Enhancements

- 5.2.1 By following the below biodiversity enhancements, the development will improve the site for local wildlife and provide a net-gain in accordance with national planning policy (NPPF, 2023).
- 5.2.2 The following bat and bird boxes could be installed on the site as biodiversity enhancement. The boxes will all be installed on the new buildings.
- 3 x Schwegler 1SP house sparrow terraces (or similar)
- 2 x Eco Integrated Bat Boxes (or similar)
- 5.2.3 The bird and bat boxes will be installed high on new buildings (just below the roof). The bird boxes will be installed facing a northerly direction or out of direct sunlight. The bat boxes will be facing a southerly direction.
- 5.2.4 Any new grass areas can be created using a wildflower meadow mixture such as EM1 from Emorsgate Seeds;
- 5.2.5 Any new soft landscaping will include native and or wildlife attracting species only.
- 5.2.6 The addition of native trees & shrubs within boundary areas will enhance local biodiversity in accordance with biodiversity net gain.

6 CONCLUSION

- 6.1 The site was considered very low in ecological value with common and widespread habitats present. The risk of presence and significant impact to protected, priority or rare species or notable habitats was negligible.
- 6.2 Further ecological surveys or mitigation were considered unnecessary for the development to proceed.
- 6.3 To minimise any residual risk of impact, recommendations for birds, hedgehogs and bats are included in the report and should be followed.
- 6.4 With the recommendations followed as described in the report, the proposed development could proceed with a minimal risk of impact to protected, priority or rare species or habitats.
- 6.5 Furthermore, by following the biodiversity enhancements, the development would be enhanced even further for the benefit of local wildlife in accordance with national planning policy.

7 REFERENCES

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8 APPENDICES

8.1 Appendix 1: Figures

Figure 1: Habitat map - Noel Arms Pub, Langham. 30th October 2023.

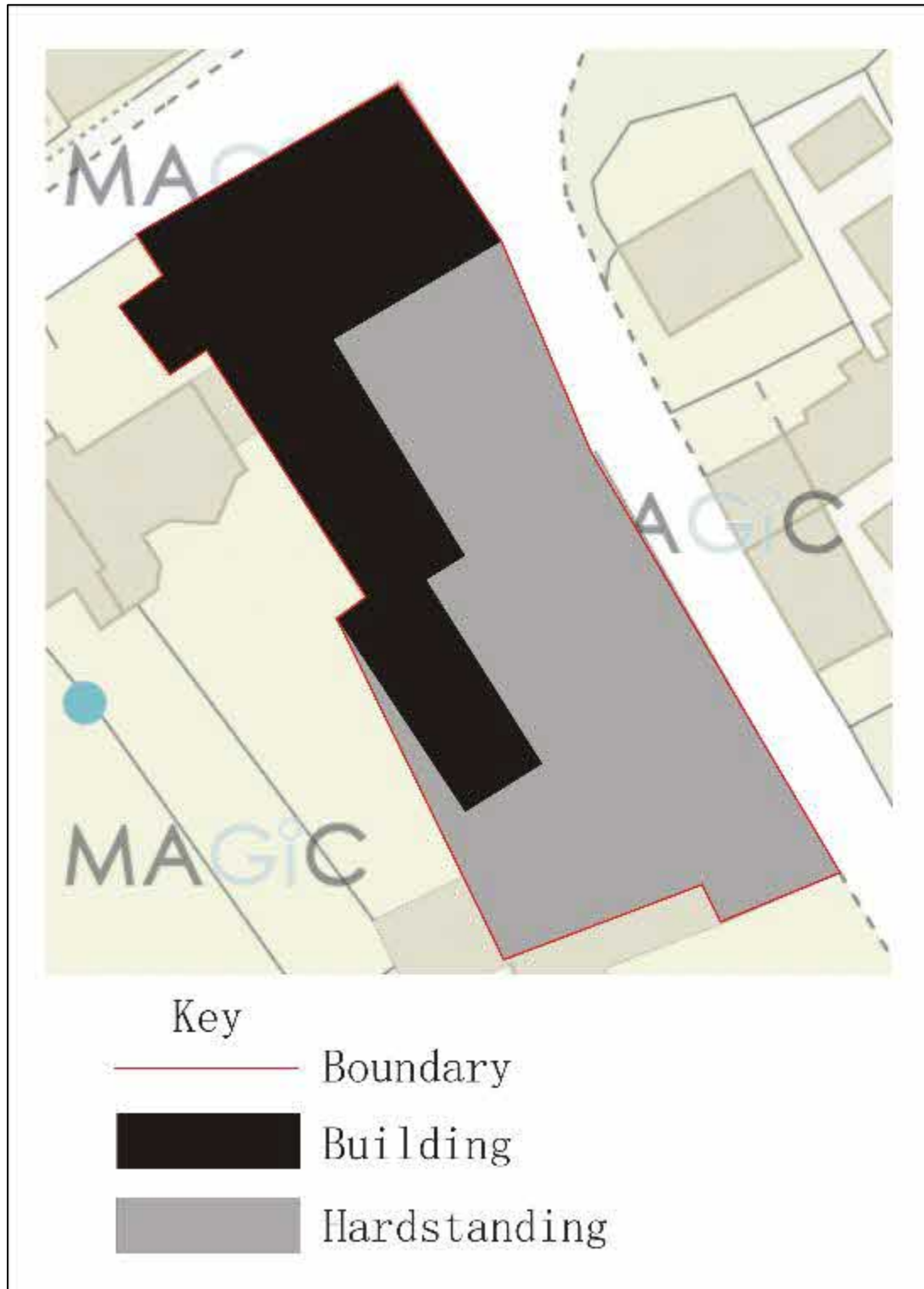
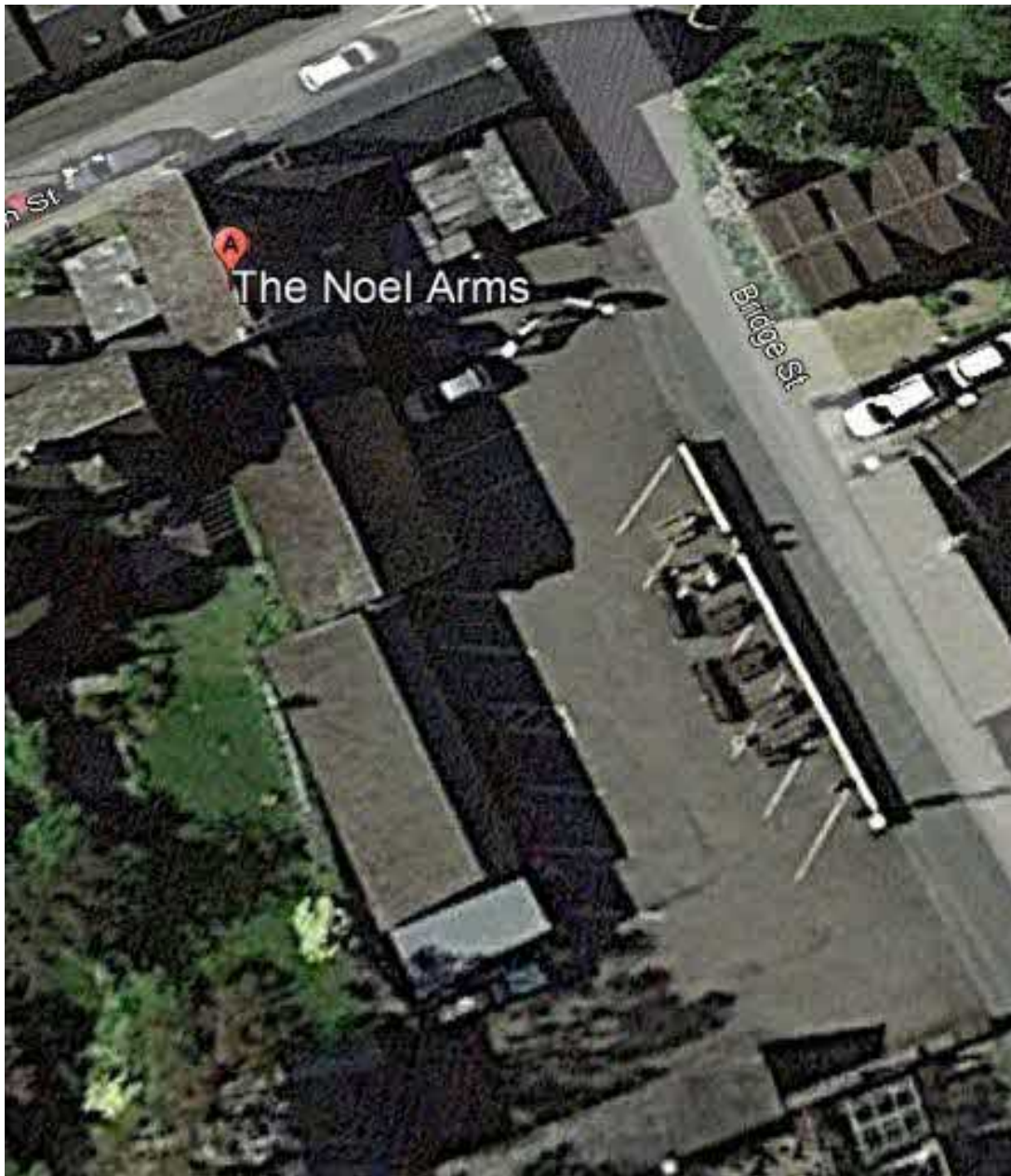


Figure 2: Ariel view of site - Noel Arms Pub, Langham. 30th October 2023.



8.2 Appendix 2: Photographs

Photograph 1: The site at the Noel Arms, Langham. 30th October 2023.



Photograph by Tommy Root 2023

Photograph 2: North & northwest elevations at the Noel Arms, Langham. 30th October 2023.



Photograph by Tommy Root 2023

Photograph 3: North & northeast elevation at the Noel Arms, Langham. 30th October 2023.



Photograph by Tommy Root 2023

Photograph 4: Northern area at the Noel Arms, Langham. 30th October 2023.



Photograph by Tommy Root 2023

Photograph 5: Southeast exterior at the Noel Arms, Langham. 30th October 2023.



Photograph by Tommy Root 2023

Photograph 6: Roof close up at the Noel Arms, Langham. 30th October 2023.



Photograph by Tommy Root 2023

Photograph 7: The eaves at the Noel Arms, Langham. 30th October 2023.



Photograph by Tommy Root 2023

Photograph 8: Northern part of pub – a lower floor room at the Noel Arms, Langham. 30th October 2023.



Photograph by Tommy Root 2023

Photograph 9: Northern area at the Noel Arms, Langham. 30th October 2023.



Photograph by Tommy Root 2023

Photograph 10: Northern area – loft space at the Noel Arms, Langham. 30th October 2023.



Photograph by Tommy Root 2023

Photograph 11: Northern area – cellar at the Noel Arms, Langham. 30th October 2023.



Photograph by Tommy Root 2023

Photograph 12: Southern extension – interior at the Noel Arms, Langham. 30th October 2023.



Photograph by Tommy Root 2023

8.3 Appendix 3: Recommended plant species

Table 2: Selected UK native trees and shrubs.

Common Name	Scientific Name
Beech (H)	<i>Fagus sylvatica</i>
Bird Cherry	<i>Prunus padus</i>
Box (H)	<i>Buxus sempervirens</i>
Dogwood (H)	<i>Cornus sanguinea</i>
Elder (H)	<i>Sambucus nigra</i>
Field Maple (H)	<i>Acer campestre</i>
Goat Willow	<i>Salix caprea</i>
Guelder Rose (H)	<i>Viburnum opulus</i>
Hawthorn (H)	<i>Crataegus monogyna</i>
Hazel (H)	<i>Corylus avellana</i>
Holly (H)	<i>Ilex aquifolium</i>
Hornbeam (H)	<i>Carpinus betulus</i>
Juniper	<i>Juniperus communis</i>
Large-leaved Lime	<i>Tilia platyphyllos</i>
Oak	<i>Quercus robur</i>
Privet (H)	<i>Ligustrum vulgare</i>
Silver Birch	<i>Betula pendula</i>
Small-leaved Lime	<i>Tilia cordata</i>
Spindle (H)	<i>Euonymus europaeus</i>
Spurge Laurel	<i>Daphne laureola</i>
Wayfaring Tree	<i>Viburnum lantana</i>
White willow	<i>Salix alba</i>
Whitebeam	<i>Sorbus aria</i>
Wild Apple	<i>Malus sylvestris</i>
Wild Cherry (H)	<i>Prunus avium</i>
Wild Service-tree	<i>Sorbus torminalis</i>
Yew (H)	<i>Taxus baccata</i>

(H) Common native hedging plants.

8.4 Appendix 4: Bat Droppings Information Sheet

Bat Droppings

Bats and their roosts are protected by law. Even if a building has been surveyed and seems likely to be free of bats, there is always a chance that other people may encounter evidence of bats when working on a site, particularly if parts of a site have been inaccessible to the surveyor.

Bats may use a roost all year round, so the easiest way for most people to become aware of a bat roost is through the presence of their distinctive droppings.

Where to Pay Particular Attention

Places to particularly look out for bat droppings in a building already surveyed are as follows:

- under ridge tiles and adjacent tiles/slates;
- in the area of the barge board and soffit;
- on the floor of roof spaces that a bat surveyor has not accessed;
- in wall cavities,

What to Look for

Bat droppings resemble mouse droppings, being small, black or brown, elongated ovals. However, they differ in a critical way:

If rubbed between forefinger and thumb (wear gloves for this), bat droppings, even fresh ones, crumble to a fine powder / dust. Mouse droppings are pasty when fresh, and go very hard when old.



If you find bat droppings or bats, cease working in that area and notify the site owner / site manager.

If you find a bat do not attempt to handle it. Not only is it illegal, but some bats in the UK carry a rabies-like virus which may be fatal to humans bitten by an infected bat.