

Mr Jon Cormack

9th December 2020

Dear Jon,

**Ecological Appraisal Update
Land east of Maltings Bridge, Broxted, Essex.**

INTRODUCTION

A Preliminary Ecological Assessment ('PEA') was conducted and issued by T4 ECOLOGY Ltd. in January 2018 for a development on land east of Maltings Bridge, Broxted, Essex CM6 2EJ (grid reference: TL 58356 26579).

This letter provides an updated Ecological Appraisal following a walkover of the site on 9th December 2020 by Miranda Proctor, an independent, qualified and experienced ecologist. Planning permission is required to construct a single-storey agricultural barn.

FIELD STUDY

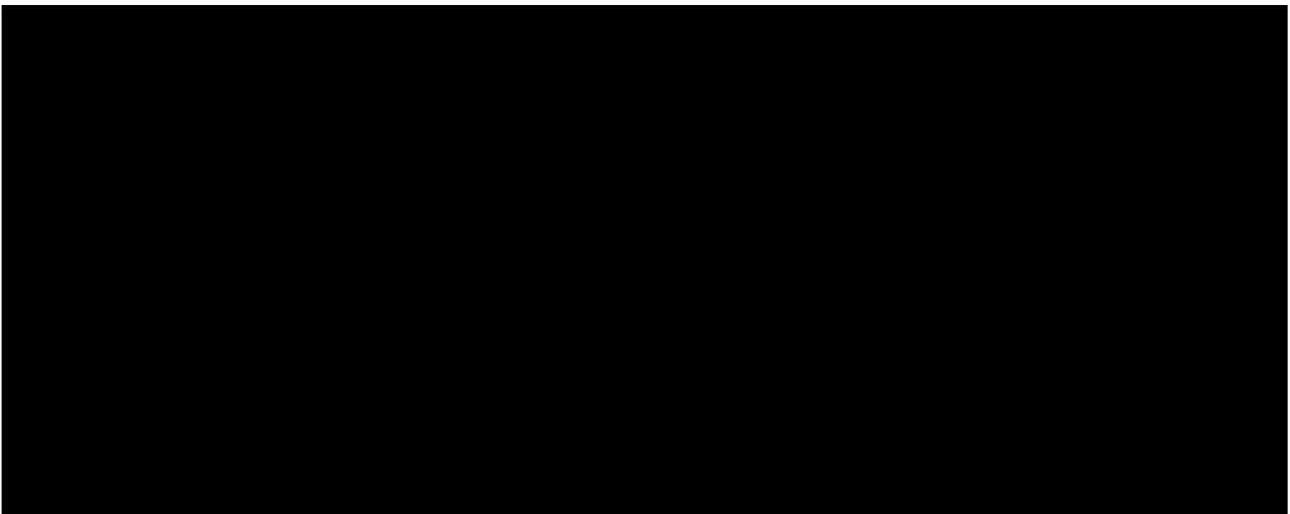
Habitats

The habitats on site remain the same as those described in the 2018 PEA comprising predominantly of semi-improved grassland with a hardstanding drive and stable block. Hedgerows, treelines, a flowing water course and wet ditch occur on the site boundaries. The site continues to be regularly managed and used as grazing paddocks.

Bats

There is an existing stable block on site and various trees along the hedgerows and treelines. The stable block and trees on site will not be removed as part of the proposed works. The site offers **moderate** value foraging and commuting habitat for bats along the boundary hedgerows and treelines and along the flowing water course north of the site.

A considerate lighting scheme which complies with Bat Conservation Trust and CIE 150:2003 guidance is advised for the construction and completed phases.



Birds

No signs of nesting birds were observed on site, but nesting opportunities are present within trees and hedgerows. Hedgerows and trees are not scheduled for removal as part of the works.

Enhancement can be provided through the provision of bird nest boxes installed on appropriate trees on site or in the local vicinity,

Reptiles

The site is considered predominantly unsuitable for reptiles consisting of managed semi-improved grassland and hardstanding. The base of hedgerows along site boundaries could be used as commuting and foraging habitat for reptiles, however, these will not be removed as part of the proposed works. The flowing water course to the north, the wet ditch to the south and the arable fields surrounding the site act as habitat barriers ecologically separating the site from suitable habitat in the local vicinity.

It is recommended vegetation is managed to discourage reptiles, if present in the area, from using the site.

Great crested newts

There are no ponds located on site and no further ponds located within 250m of the site. The flowing water course north of the site and the arable fields surrounding the site act as habitat barriers ecologically separating the site from ponds in the local vicinity. Additionally, the area where the agricultural building is proposed is comprised of unsuitable GCN habitat (managed semi-improved grassland and hardstanding).

It is recommended vegetation is managed to discourage GCN, if present in the area, from using the site.

Water vole & Otter

No suitable habitat is present on site; the flowing water course north of the site provides suitable habitat for water voles and otter. The water course is considered a sufficient distance from the proposed works site boundary to cause no adverse effects.

DISCUSSION

As the habitats on site remain predominantly unchanged, we consider the PEA issued in 2018 to still be relevant. The mitigation and enhancements recommended in the 2018 PEA will remain sufficient for the development.

Mitigation measures prior to and during construction

- A pre-construction walkover of the site is required to be conducted 30 days or less prior to commencement of works to ensure badger setts have not been created within 30m of the proposed works site boundary.
- Heras fencing to be erected around proposed works site boundary.
- Lighting schemes should follow guidance from the Bat Conservation Trust and CIE 150:2003. Warm-white (long wavelength) lights with UV filters should be fitted as close to the ground as possible. Lighting units should be angled below 70° and equipped with movement sensors, baffles, hoods, louvres and horizontal cut off units at 90°.
- The vegetation on site within the proposed area of works should be cut and maintained short (maximum height of 10cm) until the start of works, to discourage animals from using these areas.
- During construction, lighting of the site at night should be minimised as far as practicable, to reduce the risk of possible disruption to nocturnal animals [REDACTED]
- During construction, all materials must be stored on pallets to prevent animals seeking refuge in these areas.
- During construction, any trenches or pits must be backfilled or covered overnight to prevent animals from becoming trapped.

Enhancements.

The proposed development will lead to a loss in habitats of low ecological value.

A net gain for biodiversity is encouraged by the National Planning Policy Framework. As enhancements, we recommend the installation of two bird boxes and two standalone bat boxes on appropriate trees on site or in the local vicinity.

Drafted by:

Miranda Proctor B.Sc. (Hons).

Reviewed by:

Etienne Swarts B. Compt (Hons), F. Deg. Sc., ACIEEM.

Appendix A

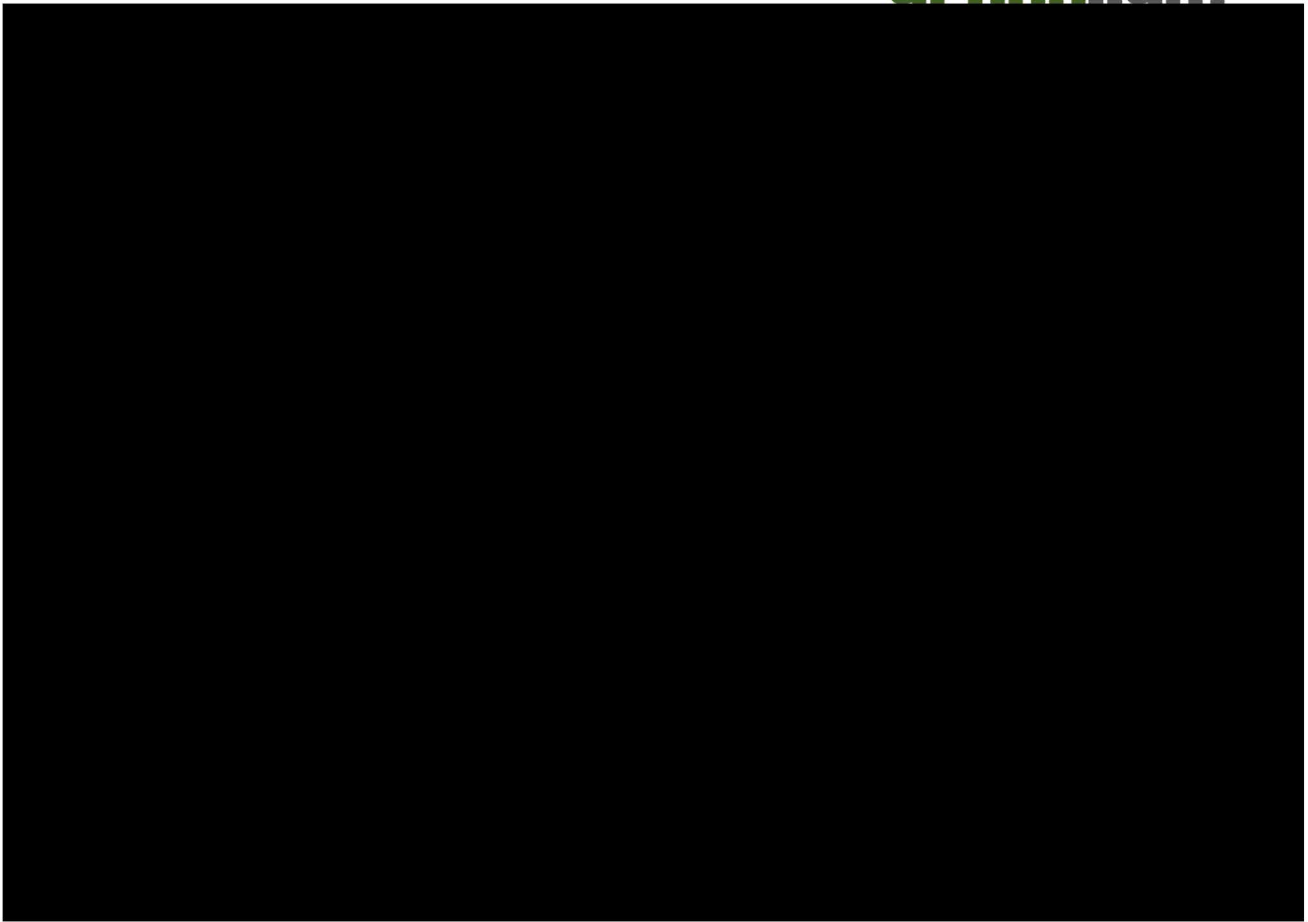
Updated Photographs



Photo 1, looking north across proposed works site area. Hardstanding and semi-improved grassland habitats present.



Photo 2, looking west toward the site and across adjacent land which is predominantly semi-improved grassland with hedgerows and treelines along site peripheries.



Appendix B Site Location



Figure 1, an aerial image of the site.
Red line indicates proposed works site boundary.
Blue line indicates land owned by J Cormack.