



## Boundary Farm, Framsdon

# Preliminary Ecological Appraisal

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Appendix 1: Proposed Site Layout

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Appendix 3: Great Crested Newt Precautionary Method Statement

Figure 1A: Site Location Plan

Figure 1B: Survey Boundary and Site Boundary



## 1.0 SUMMARY

- 1.1 The site (located at central grid ref: TM 18603 60822) was found to comprise a small, single storey wooden framed storage building on a concrete pad, adjoined by ruderal vegetation, sparse scrub and neutral grassland. Class Q planning permission is being sought to convert the building into a single residential dwelling, accessed via the existing site entrance.
- 1.2 The building was assessed as being of 'negligible' suitability for roosting bats, with no evidence of the presence of bats recorded, and no further surveys deemed necessary. As a precaution it is recommended that the corrugated onduline (or similar) roof sheets are removed by hand and with care under the supervision of an ecologist. In the unlikely event that a bat, or evidence of bats, is discovered at any point during the works, all works must cease and an ecologist contacted for further advice if not already present on site.
- 1.3 There is very low potential for great crested newts to be present along the margins of ruderal vegetation and scrub present along the northern and southern building boundaries. The potential for great crested newts to be disturbed or harmed during works can be further reduced by following the Precautionary Method Statement provided in Appendix 3. Subject to all measures in the PMS being followed, no further survey or mitigation is required with respect to great crested newts. In the event that a great crested newt is discovered on site at any time during construction, all works must cease and an ecologist contacted for further advice.
- 1.4 The building and to a lesser degree the sparse scrub adjacent to the building provides potential habitat for nesting birds. Ideally any works to the building and scrub would commence during September to February inclusive to avoid the bird nesting season, however where this is not possible, immediately prior to commencement of works a check for nesting birds should be undertaken by a suitably experienced ecologist. Any active nests will need to be left in situ until the young have left the nest.
- 1.5 The site is not deemed suitable for any other protected species and no further survey or mitigation is required with respect to protected species.
- 1.6 The enhancement measures detailed in section 6.0 should result in a minor enhancement for roosting bats and house sparrow at the site scale.



## 2.0 INTRODUCTION

### Instruction

- 2.1 This report has been prepared by Liz Lord following instruction by Ms B Spall of Peter Wells Architects to carry out an ecological appraisal of a building immediately to the north of Boundary Farm, Framsdan, Suffolk IP14 6LH.

### Site Proposals

- 2.2 Planning permission is being sought to convert the building into a single residential dwelling, accessed via the existing site entrance.

### Site Description

- 2.3 The building lies between the villages of Framsdan and Winston, approximately 2.3km to the south of Debenham, Suffolk. It is located immediately adjacent to the A1120 road between Stowmarket and Framlingham, and is surrounded to the north and east by horse pastures. To the west is a small area of scrub and developing woodland. Beyond the here, the surrounding landscape is a mosaic of arable fields, pasture and young woodland, connected via hedgerows and trees.
- 2.4 Aerial site location plans are provided below and overleaf.



Fig 1A: Site location, as indicated by red arrow. Aerial photograph sourced from Google Earth Pro



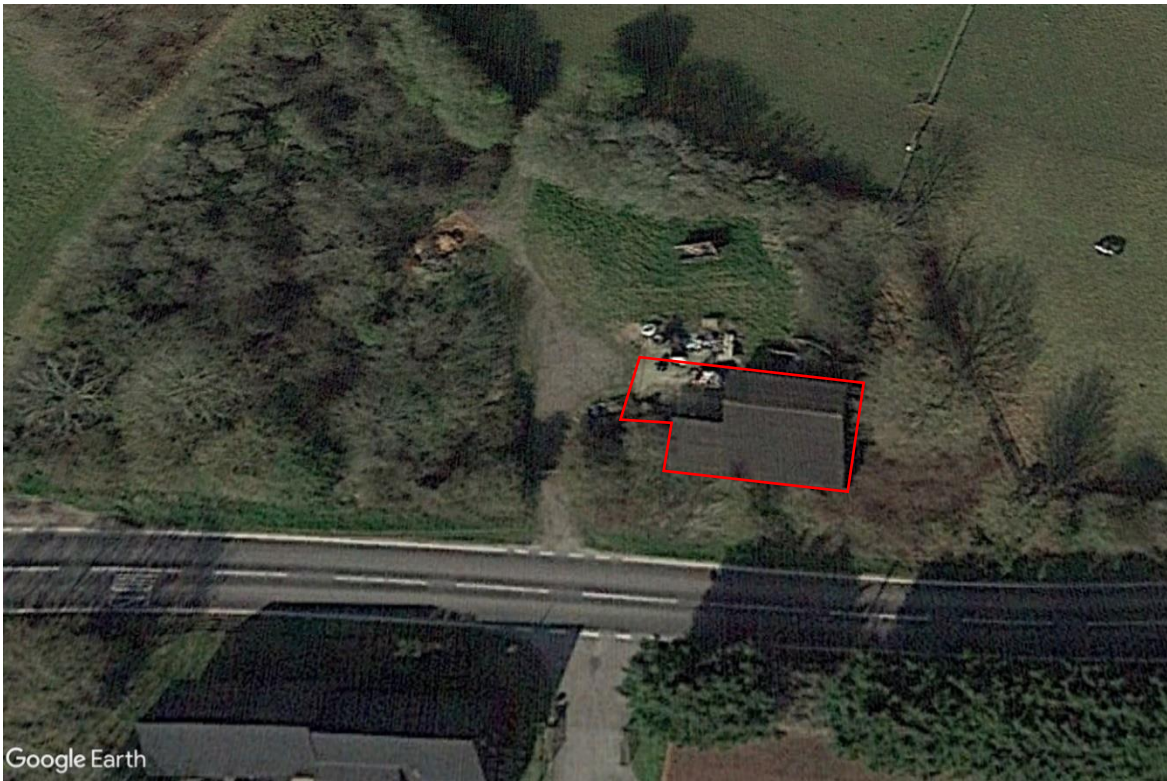


Fig 1B: Proposed site boundary highlighted red. Aerial photograph sourced from Google Earth Pro

## Objectives

- 2.5 This report has been written broadly in accordance with the report writing guidelines produced by the Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (CIEEM) (CIEEM 2018, 2017a, 2017b). In accordance with the client brief, this survey and report aims to:
  - 2.5.1 Where possible, identify and describe all potentially significant ecological effects on protected and notable species / sites associated with the proposals;
  - 2.5.2 Where possible, set out the mitigation measures required to ensure compliance with nature conservation legislation and address any potentially significant ecological effects;
  - 2.5.3 Identify how mitigation measures will / could be secured;
  - 2.5.4 Provide an assessment of the significance of any residual effects;
  - 2.5.5 Identify appropriate enhancement measures; and
  - 2.5.6 Where deemed necessary, set out the requirements for post construction monitoring.
- 2.6 This survey and report is intended to inform, as necessary, the layout and design of the proposals, future landscape design and management on site, and where required the methodology and timing of development works.



### **Timescales**

- 2.7 The construction period is expected to be around 12-18 months following the granting of relevant permissions.
- 2.8 This report is valid for a period of 18 months from the date of survey. Beyond this time, changes to the building and vegetation may have occurred which could require re-assessment and potentially further survey to re-determine the presence / likely absence of protected species.

### **Relevant Documents**

- 2.9 The site assessment was based upon drawing number PW1285\_PL02 Rev B dated September 2022 by Peter Wells Architects, as shown in Appendix 1. Note that any minor amendments to the overall scheme are unlikely to alter the conclusions and recommendations of this report.
- 2.10 Recommendations included within this report are the professional opinion of an experienced ecologist based on the client's proposals for the site, the site surveys, the results of the desk study, and features present in the surrounding environment.





## 3.0 METHODOLOGY

### Desk Study

- 3.1 The Multi Agency Geographic Information for the Countryside (MAGIC) website was consulted on 30<sup>th</sup> November 2023 to determine the presence of any nationally and internationally designated sites such as Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), Special Areas of Conservation (SACs), Special Protection Areas (SPAs) and Ramsar sites within influencing distance of the proposals.
- 3.2 The MAGIC website was also used to search for any records of European Protected Species Mitigation (EPSM) licences that have been approved by Natural England within a 5km radius of the application site since late 2008 (last updated January 2022). The website was checked for any data from Natural England's great crested newt eDNA Habitat Suitability Index pond surveys for District Level Licensing 2017-2019 (last updated August 2022); and data from Natural England great crested newt Class Survey Licence returns within a 5km radius of the site (last updated August 2022).
- 3.3 Due to the small size of the proposals, the low ecological value of the habitats present, the very limited potential for protected or notable species to be present onsite, and the very limited potential for the site or any land within the potential Zone of Influence to form part of a County Wildlife Site, a records search with the Suffolk Biodiversity Information Service (SBIS) was not undertaken. This is not considered to be a limitation to the conclusions and recommendations of this report.

### Site Survey

- 3.4 A daytime site survey and detailed building inspection was carried out on 17<sup>th</sup> November 2023. The survey was based upon the standard methodology for Extended Phase 1 Habitat Surveys (JNCC 2010) and the UK Habitat Classification system (UKHab Ltd 2023). The relative abundance of individual plant species was recorded, and habitats were classified according to the abundance of plant species present. Any evidence of invasive species such as Japanese knotweed was noted.
- 3.5 The survey encompassed all land within the red line boundary as shown in Figure 1B, plus land immediately adjacent to the site, where accessible or visible.
- 3.6 The survey also included an assessment of the site's potential to support any legally protected species; or Species and Habitats of Principal Importance, as identified by Section 41 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006. Where best practice guidelines exist, these have been used to assess the likelihood that individual species will be present, for example Bat Surveys: Good Practice Guidelines (Collins, J. 2023) and Habitat Suitability Index for Great Crested Newt (Oldham *et al*, 2000).



- 3.7 Using criteria provided in best practice guidelines, habitats have been assessed for their potential to support protected species; notably bats, barn owls *Tyto alba*, badgers *Meles meles*, great crested newts *Triturus cristatus*, reptiles, water voles *Arvicola amphibius*, dormice *Muscardinus avellanarius* and otters *Lutra lutra*.
- 3.8 Where methodologies, classification or recommendations deviate from best practice guidelines, this report provides ecological justification for such changes.

### **Building Inspection**

- 3.9 The building was surveyed and assessed in accordance with criteria outlined in Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines (Collins, J. 2023).
- 3.10 The internal and external inspections of the building were carried out using – as necessary – a powerful torch, a ladder, a pair of Nikon 12 x 50 binoculars and an Easyview 8mm digital recording endoscope to inspect gaps and crevices for bats and evidence of bats.
- 3.11 Floors, walls and storage surfaces beneath all possible access points or crevices which may be used for roosting were checked for droppings, scratching and urine or fur staining, and particular attention was paid to the areas beneath tie beams from which bats may hang or rest.
- 3.12 The beams, barge boards and door / window frames of the building were specifically checked for scratching and staining, as well as roosting bats. Particular attention was paid to any gaps in and around structural beams, roofs and walls; and the walls, ledges and ground area below.
- 3.13 The floor surfaces comprised relatively clean concrete, supporting a number of stored items. At the time of the building inspection the floors did not appear to have been recently swept or cleared.

### **Habitat Suitability Index (HSI) assessment**

- 3.14 For each accessible water body located within potential influencing distance of the construction zone boundary (generally <250m in this case), a Habitat Suitability Index (HSI) assessment was carried out, following methods described in Oldham R.S. *et al*, (2000).
- 3.15 Features such as shading, water quality, terrestrial habitat, fish and fowl presence were noted during the survey. These features were used in the HSI to assess the potential of the ponds to support great crested newts. Following the survey, the HSI field scores are inserted into a table to calculate a score for each pond, with pond suitability for great crested newts assessed on the following scale:





HSI Score	Pond Suitability
< 0.5	Poor
0.5 – 0.59	Below Average
0.6 – 0.69	Average
0.7 – 0.79	Good
>0.8	Excellent

### Surveyors

- 3.16 The survey was carried out by Liz Lord. Liz has been a professional ecologist since 2005, and holds current Natural England licences to survey bats - Class Licence Reg. No. 2015-13305-CLS-CLS; great crested newts - Class Licence Reg. No. 2020-44816-CLS-CLS; and barn owls - Class Licence Reg. No. CL29/00160. Liz is a full member of CIEEM.
- 3.17 The weather at the time of the survey was sunny with a temperature of 10°C and light breeze (BF 1-2).

### Zone of Influence

- 3.18 The potential impacts of a development are not always limited to the boundaries of the site concerned, such as where there are ecological or hydrological links beyond the site boundaries. In order for the proposed works to have an impact on habitats and species outside of the site boundaries, there needs to be a source of impact, a pathway and a receptor for that impact.
- 3.19 The Zone of Influence will vary for different habitats and species depending on their sensitivity to predicted impacts, the distribution and status of the relevant species, whether a species is mobile, migratory, and whether its presence and activity varies according to the seasons.
- 3.20 An assessment of the Zone of Influence has been made based on the site boundaries shown in Figure 1B, and where necessary recommendations to avoid any significant adverse impacts beyond the site boundaries have been provided in section 5.0.

### Limitations

- 3.21 The conclusions in this report are based on the best information available during the reported period of survey.



- 3.22 Ecological surveys provide only a 'snapshot' of the site in time, and many species, such as bats and badgers, are capable of colonising a site in a very short space of time. Lack of evidence of a species at the time of survey can only allow conclusion of the *likely* absence of this species, since no level of survey effort is capable of proving absence beyond doubt.
- 3.23 Whilst best efforts have been made to identify all water bodies within 250m of the site, it is not always possible to record all garden ponds using Ordnance Survey maps and aerial photography. Additional search effort with respect to garden ponds is likely to be disproportionate, as many garden ponds have limited suitability for great crested newts, and it is a common constraint associated with all Ecological Assessments.
- 3.24 The survey was undertaken at a time of year when some plant species are not present above ground, or are simply not easily recorded; however an overall assessment of the flora communities present at the time of survey has been used to assess the likelihood of the unrecorded presence of any plant species of conservation importance. In addition, very little vegetation was present within the red line boundary.

### **Geographic Context**

- 3.25 Where applicable, the importance of each ecological feature has been considered in a geographic context as follows:
- International and European
  - National
  - Regional
  - Metropolitan, County, vice-county or other local authority-wide area
  - River Basin District
  - Estuarine system/Coastal cell
  - Local (further categorized into District, Borough or Parish)
  - Site

### **Assessment of Impacts and Effects**

- 3.26 The following definitions are used for the terms 'impact' and 'effect' in accordance with CIEEM (2018) guidelines:
- Impact – actions resulting in changes to an ecological feature
  - Effect – outcome to an ecological feature from an impact
- 3.27 The importance of any ecological feature has been determined via the site surveys detailed in this report. Note that species and habitats afforded legal protection are, by default, always considered within the EclA assessment process to be 'important'.



- 3.28 Potential impacts of the proposals on any such features have been assessed based on the client proposals for the site, and following a review of all phases of the project. Impacts are assessed through consideration of the extent, magnitude, duration, reversibility, timing and frequency of works which may result in likely 'significant' impacts to any ecological features present. The route through which impacts may occur (direct, indirect, secondary or cumulative) has also been considered. Positive impacts are assessed as well as negative.
- 3.29 The results of the surveys have been used to identify any potentially significant impacts in the absence of any avoidance, mitigation or compensation measures. Any such appropriate measures have then been proposed where necessary.

### **Characterisation of Ecological Impacts**

- 3.30 When considering ecological impacts and effects, the following characteristics have been considered:
- positive or negative
  - extent
  - magnitude
  - duration
  - frequency and timing
  - reversibility
- 3.31 Where various characteristics have not been specifically referred to in this report, they have been considered insignificant or irrelevant to that specific feature.
- 3.32 A 'significant effect' is defined within the current CIEEM guidelines (2018) as: *"an effect that either supports or undermines biodiversity conservation objectives for 'important ecological features' or for biodiversity in general. Conservation objectives may be specific (e.g. for a designated site) or broad (e.g. national/local nature conservation policy) or more wide-ranging (enhancement of biodiversity). Effects can be considered significant at a wide range of scales from international to local."*
- 3.33 Where a significant effect is predicted, this requires assessment and reporting in order to provide the decision maker with sufficient information to determine the environmental consequences of a project. A significant effect can be either positive or negative, and its extent will determine the requirement of conditions, restrictions or monitoring works.
- 3.34 The current CIEEM guidelines (2018) also state that: *"After assessing the impacts of the proposal, all attempts should be made to avoid and mitigate ecological impacts. Once measures to avoid and mitigate ecological impacts have been finalised, assessment of the residual impacts should be undertaken to determine the significance of their effects on ecological features. Any residual impacts that will result in effects that are significant, and*



*the proposed compensatory measures, will be the factors considered against ecological objectives (legislation and policy) in determining the outcome of the application.”*

3.35 This report has taken into account the factors detailed above for each important ecological feature in the absence of mitigation. Recommendations have then been made with respect to avoidance / mitigation / compensation / enhancement as necessary, and an assessment of the residual impacts after such measures has been made.

### **Mitigation Hierarchy**

3.36 In order to minimise the likelihood of any significant negative residual effects on environmental features, this assessment has followed the mitigation hierarchy (listed below in order of preference):

- Avoidance – measures that avoid harm to ecological features, both spatially and temporally;
- Mitigation – avoidance or minimisation of negative effects through appropriate timing of works, or the provision of mitigation measures within the scheme design which can be guaranteed by condition or similar;
- Compensation – measures taken to offset residual effects which result in the loss of, or permanent damage to, ecological features despite mitigation;
- Enhancement – measures to provide net benefits for biodiversity, either by improved management of existing features, or the provision of new features, and over and above that which is required to mitigate / compensate for an impact. Delivery should be secured via planning condition or similar.

### **Legislation and Policy**

3.37 Specific reference has been made to the individual legal protection of the species detailed within this report, however additional information with respect to other relevant legislation and planning policy is provided in section 8.0.

3.38 The legislation of particular relevance within the body of this report is the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended) and the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended). The former confers legal protection to ‘European’ Protected Species against both disturbance and harm, and extends to the full protection of their habitats. This legislation also provides legal protection for a number of internationally designated sites within the UK, and remains in place following Brexit.

3.39 The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) is UK specific, and generally only provides protection against direct harm to individuals of a species.



## 4.0 RESULTS (*Baseline Conditions*)

### Site Summary

- 4.1 The site comprises a small, single storey wooden framed storage building on a concrete pad, adjoined by ruderal vegetation, scrub and neutral grassland.

### Desk Study: Statutory Designated Sites

- 4.2 The MAGIC website indicates that there are no statutory designated sites of national or international importance within potential influencing distance of the site.
- 4.3 The site is not located within any Impact Risk Zones with respect to recreational pressures on internationally designated sites, and no contributions towards the Suffolk Recreational Disturbance Avoidance and Mitigation Strategy (RAMS) will be required.

### Desk Study: Non-Statutory Designated Sites

- 4.4 It is very unlikely that there are any County Wildlife Sites located within direct influencing distance of the site.

### Habitats

#### Invasive species

- 4.5 No aerial evidence of Japanese knotweed *Fallopia japonica* was recorded within the site or the immediately adjacent areas at the time of survey.

#### Hard standing / sealed surface (u1b)

- 4.6 An area of concrete hard standing extends to the west of the building, covering an area similar to that of the building itself. The concrete is in good condition, with very few cracks or crevices, and is used in part to store small collections of building materials and occasional farm equipment raised on wooden pallets. A low retaining wall runs along the northern boundary of the hard standing, separating it from an area of slightly raised mown neutral grassland offsite to the north.

#### Buildings (u1b5)

- 4.7 The building is constructed almost entirely of wood, with modern, closely fitting wooden beams supporting a shallow pitched roof and weatherboarded walls with a plyboard lining. The weatherboarding is in good condition, and barge boards are either closely fitting with no gaps beneath, or are a significant (<50mm) distance from the walls. There is no cavity between the plyboard sheets and external weatherboarding.



- 4.8 The building is in two sections – the main section to the east, and a smaller additional adjoining the south western corner of the main building. Both are of the same construction.
- 4.9 The roof of the main building consists of plyboard sheets covered with corrugated black onduline (or similar) bitumen roofing sheets. No ridge beam is present, and since the roof sheets do not meet at the ridge, where a small length of ridge covering is missing from the centre of the roof there is direct open access into the building. Open access is also possible via the eaves, with the roof sheets extending slightly over the building walls. Internally both the roof and wall linings are in good condition. Numerous stored items were present inside the building, which had not been recently swept or tidied.
- 4.10 No potential roosting crevices were recorded, no evidence of the presence of bats, and no evidence of use by nesting birds. Both mouse and rat droppings were recorded in places.

Willow scrub (h3j) and tall forbs (g3,16, 10)

- 4.11 Along the northern wall of the barn is a small collection of old farm equipment, partially covered by nettles *Urtica dioica* and sparse bramble *Rubus fruticosus* agg. growth. Immediately beyond here offsite to the north is an unmanaged hedge of predominantly goat willow *Salix caprea* and cherry plum *Prunus cerasifera*.
- 4.12 Along the southern edge of the building is a slightly raised roadside embankment, supporting patchy scrub including elder *Sambucus nigra*, and ruderal vegetation dominated by nettle and umbellifers.

Trees

- 4.13 No trees are present on site. A semi-mature oak *Quercus robur* tree is located immediately offsite to the north east. It is understood that this tree will be retained as part of the proposals.



Photo 1: Western facade of the main building, northern façade of the smaller building section



Photo 2: Closely fitting barge boards across weatherboarding, which is in good condition







Photo 3: Internal view of the smaller south western addition to the main building



Photo 4: Internal view of main building – a modern wooden frame covered with plyboard and weatherboarding



Photo 5: Internal view of main building section



Photo 6: Missing ridge covering on main building section



Photo 7: North eastern elevations of the building



Photo 8: View of site from southern side of A1120, with patchy scrub and ruderal vegetation along road verge







Photo 9: Old farm equipment stored against the northern wall of the building, partially overgrown with bramble and goat willow



Photo 10: Long grass and patches of bramble immediately to the east of the building



Photo 11: Building materials stored on raised pallets



Photo 12: Mown grass immediately offsite to north

### Water bodies

4.14 No water bodies are present on site. Aerial photographs and Ordnance Survey maps at 1:10,000 scale highlighted the presence of three water bodies within 250m of the site boundaries. All were accessible and were subject to HSI assessments, with the results detailed in Table 1, below. Full results of the HSI assessments are provided in Appendix 2.

**Table 1: Waterbodies within 250m of site**

Water body	Distance & direction from site	HSI score	Suitability for great crested newts
WB1	50m south west	0.83	Excellent
WB2	78m south	0.75	Good
WB3	105m south east	0.81	Excellent



4.15 All of the ponds are separated from the site by the A1120, which is one of the main roads between Stowmarket and Framlingham, and one of the main routes into and across mid-Suffolk. Whilst the road is unlikely to serve as an impermeable barrier to the dispersal of great crested newts, it is likely to have some adverse impact upon amphibian migration between the ponds and land to the north. Beyond the site offsite to the north is a notable expanse of scrub and woodland habitats, covering an area of approximately 7ha, however a further c.3ha exists to the south west of the site, on the southern side of the A1120, with direct connectivity to WB1.

## Animals

### Bats

4.16 The MAGIC data search identified three bat EPSM licences within 5km of the site, as detailed in the table below.

4.17 The author is also aware of the presence of common pipistrelle *Pipistrellus pipistrellus*, soprano pipistrelle *P. pygmaeus*, daubenton's *Myotis daubentonii*, barbastelle *Barbastella barbastellus*, natterer's *M. nattereri*, noctule *Nyctalus noctula*, serotine *Eptesicus serotinus*, leisler's *Nyctalus leisleri* and brown long-eared bat *Plecotus auritus* around the nearby village of Helmingham.

**Table 1: Bat EPSM licences within 5km of site – distance, direction, year of issue, species & roost type**

Licence location	Year	Species	Roost type
1.8km south	2020	Common pipistrelle, soprano pipistrelle, brown long-eared	Non-breeding
4.4km south east	2018	Common pipistrelle, brown long-eared	Non-breeding
4.7km north east	2019	Common pipistrelle, brown long-eared	Non-breeding

### **Bats - roosting**

4.18 The building was assessed as being of 'negligible' suitability for roosting bats, with no typical potential roosting crevices noted, and no evidence of the presence of bats recorded. Whilst it is noted that the corrugated black onduline (or similar) bitumen roof sheets are openly accessible on both the southern and northern facades, the sheeting provides poor quality potential roosting habitat. The space beneath the sheets is likely to be subject to extreme changes in temperature, and is also likely to be draughty due openings at both the open eaves and the ridge, since the sheets do not meet at the ridge and are also missing a ridge covering in some sections.



## **Bats – commuting / foraging**

- 4.19 The site provides very small areas of potential bat foraging or commuting habitat, and is very unlikely to be used to any significant degree by bats for this purpose. However, the wider surroundings provide a significant area of moderate to high quality potential bat foraging habitat, and are likely to be used by a wide range of bat species for both foraging and commuting.

## Reptiles

- 4.20 The site provides very little potential reptile habitat. The northern boundary ruderal vegetation and sparse scrub is uniformly shaded, and limited in extent. A small area of long grass is present immediately to the east of the building, and the southern boundary also supports tall ruderal and scrub vegetation. Whilst neither are directly connected to any areas of offsite potential reptile habitat, both could be used by small numbers of transient reptiles – most notably slow worm *Anguis fragilis* – for commuting purposes.

## Amphibians

- 4.21 As part of the MAGIC search, three distinct groups of records were returned for great crested newt (GCN) within 5km of the site. The first is a collection of four negative pond data records, from Framsdon village at c.1.6km to the south east of the site. Just beyond here, at c.2.7km to the south east of the site is a large collection of eight positive pond data records, which the author is aware relates to a 'medium' sized population of GCN. A third collection of GCN records, at 4.6km to the north of the site, was generated by the author and relates to a 'medium' population of GCN across a collection of around six ponds. A single GCN EPSM licence was also identified c.4.7km to the south east of the site.
- 4.22 Due to the 'excellent' and 'good' suitability of all three of the nearby ponds, and when considering the relative abundance of great crested newts in the surrounding landscape, the potential for this species to be present in at least one of the ponds is very high.
- 4.23 However, it is also noted that none of the ponds have any direct habitat connectivity to the site, and WB2 and WB3 are separated from the site by large farm buildings and open areas of amenity grassland and hardstanding. For all three of the ponds, there are significant areas of immediately adjoining moderate and high quality grassland, scrub and woodland habitats. This does not entirely remove the potential for GCN to be present on site, but greatly reduces the likelihood of GCN commuting towards the woodland habitats beyond the site to the north. An absence of ponds beyond the site to the north further reduces the likelihood of GCN commuting in the direction of the site.



4.24 The vast majority of the site does not provide potential terrestrial habitat for GCN, consisting of concrete hard standing and a building. Some stored building materials are present across part of the hard standing, but with the majority stored above ground level on wooden pallets. Whilst a margin of scrub and ruderal vegetation is present along the southern boundary, most of this comprises the road verge, and will be retained and unaffected by the works. A small length of sparse scrub and bramble is present to the north of the building, with a significant proportion of this area taken up with small stored machinery / equipment.

4.25 It is therefore considered that in the event of GCN presence in any the three offsite ponds, the proposals are very unlikely to have any adverse impacts upon the Favourable Conservation Status of any local GCN population. The likelihood of GCN being present on site and adversely affected by the works is very low due to the very small areas of potential GCN habitat to be removed / disturbed. As result there is very low potential for the proposals to result in an offence under the relevant legislation, with the opportunity to further reduce this risk via a Precautionary Method Statement.

#### Birds

4.26 The building and to a lesser degree the adjacent scrub has potential to support nesting birds of common and widespread species. No evidence of the presence of barn owl was recorded on site, with very poor potential nesting opportunities inside the building.

#### Badger

4.27 No evidence of badger was recorded on or within 30m of the site. No setts, footprints, hairs, latrines, snuffle holes or scratching indicative of the presence of badgers was recorded.

#### Water Vole and Otter

4.28 There are no features on or immediately adjacent the site which provide suitable habitat for otter or water vole.

#### Dormice

4.29 The site supports a very small area of poor quality potential dormouse habitat limited to the sparse bramble and goat willow growth adjoining the northern boundary of the building. The southern road verge does not provide continuous scrub cover, and large areas are dominated by ruderal vegetation.





4.30 Approximately 6-7ha of young woodlands lies immediately offsite to the north, linked to the site by mature hedgerows and trees. Historical Google Earth aerial imagery shows that these areas of woodland were created around 2000, at a similar time to the creation of c.15ha of new woodland across land to the south of the site, interconnected by mature hedgerows and trees. Given the lack of any areas of significant woodland within the surrounding landscape prior to this woodland creation, the potential for dormice to have since colonised these young woodlands is very low. Dormice are therefore unlikely to be present on site.

#### Invertebrates

4.31 The site is considered likely to support common and widespread invertebrate species typical of the habitats present.

#### Other Legally Protected Species

4.32 Due to a lack of suitable habitats the site is not considered likely to support any other legally protected species.

#### Species of Principal Importance

4.33 The overgrown vegetation along the edge of the building provides small areas of suitable habitat for foraging and sheltering hedgehog *Erinaceus europaeus* and toad *Bufo bufo*, both of which are SPIE.





## 5.0 CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

### Designated Sites

- 5.1 The proposals are very unlikely to have an adverse impact upon any statutory designated sites of national or international importance. No further works are required in this regard.
- 5.2 No adverse impacts on County Wildlife Sites are predicted.

### Habitats

- 5.3 There are no Priority habitats present on site or within the potential Zone of Influence.

### Bats

- 5.4 All species of bat are protected under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended) and by the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended). In summary, this makes it an offence to harm or disturb a bat; damage or destroy a roost; and obstruct access to a roost (whether or not bats are present at the time).
- 5.5 Potential effects on roosting bats: negligible.
- 5.6 Mitigation measures for roosting bats: no further surveys are required, however as a precaution it is recommended that the corrugated onduline (or similar) roof sheets are removed by hand and with care under the supervision of an ecologist. In the unlikely event that a bat, or evidence of bats, is discovered at any point during the works, all works must cease and an ecologist contacted for further advice if not already present on site.
- 5.7 Potential effects on commuting / foraging bats: in the absence of mitigation negligible impacts are predicted with respect to foraging and commuting bats due to the small size of the site and the overall lack of such habitat on site. A large area of potential foraging habitat is present offsite to the north and west, and in the absence of mitigation there is potential for small numbers of commuting and foraging bats to be adversely affected by artificial illumination of these offsite habitats.
- 5.8 Mitigation measures for commuting / foraging bats: a bat friendly lighting scheme will be implemented to avoid lighting the wider site or any bat enhancement features at night. Lighting will be minimal – ideally limited to small front porch lights only, located as close to the ground as possible and using LED bulbs. To avoid any adverse impacts upon foraging and commuting bats, the LEDs should also be warm white (<3000K), ideally be motion sensitive and either be entirely downward facing or use hoods, cowls, louvres and shields to direct light to the ground.



5.9 Residual effects: a minor enhancement at the site level for roosting bats could be achieved via the installation of an artificial roosting feature built in or fixed to the external walls of the house, as detailed in Section 6.0.

### **Amphibians**

5.10 Great crested newts (GCNs) and their habitats are fully protected under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended), and by the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended).

5.11 Potential effects: there is very little potential GCN habitat within the construction zone – limited to margins around the base of the building amounting to approximately 75m<sup>2</sup>, which is less than the 100m<sup>2</sup> of lost / damaged habitat for which Natural England's rapid risk assessment tool (Natural England, 2015) indicates would be unlikely to result in an offence i.e. the notional probability of an offence is Green i.e. 'unlikely'.

5.12 Avoidance measures can also be taken to further reduce the likelihood of GCN presence within the proposed construction zone, resulting in negligible risk of GCN being adversely affected by the proposals. Even in the absence of the PMS provided in Appendix 3, no adverse impact upon the Favourable Conservation Status of any local GCN population is predicted.

5.13 Mitigation measures: it is recommended that the Precautionary Method Statement (PMS) in Appendix 3 is followed during all stages of works to the building. This will adequately reduce the risk of GCN presence or harm such that further survey or an EPSM licence is not required. Such works are considered to be disproportionate when the potential for an offence under the relevant legislation is likely to be negligible and there is no predicted adverse impact on the Favourable Conservation Status of GCNs.

5.14 Residual effects: negligible.

### **Reptiles**

5.15 All Suffolk reptile species are protected against harm under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended).

5.16 Potential effects: in the absence of mitigation there is very low potential for small numbers of reptiles to be harmed during the clearing of the vegetated margins around the base of the building.

5.17 Mitigation measures: the precautionary methods of working detailed in the PMS with respect to great crested newts will ensure that these margins are also cleared in a reptile friendly manner. Any reptiles which are discovered during clearance works will be relocated to the area of long grass, ruderals and scrub offsite to the north.



5.18 Residual effects: negligible.

### **Birds**

5.19 Breeding birds and their nests are protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended).

5.20 Potential effects: the building and to a lesser degree the sparse boundary scrub provide potential nesting habitat for a small number of bird species, and the disturbance and destruction of an active nest could have a negative effect on some bird species at the site level.

5.21 Mitigation measures: ideally building and vegetation clearance works would commence during October to February inclusive to avoid the bird nesting season. Where this is not possible, immediately prior to commencement of works a check for nesting birds should be undertaken by a suitably experienced ecologist. Any active nests will need to be left in situ until the young have left the nest.

5.22 Residual effects: following implementation of the mitigation and enhancement measures detailed in section 6.0 – the provision of three nest boxes for house sparrow – no significant adverse effect is predicted on bird species at any level in the medium to long term, and a minor enhancement may result for house sparrow.

### **Badger**

5.23 Badgers and their setts are afforded protection under the Protection of Badgers Act 1992 (as amended). This legislation includes protection against damage to badger setts and against interference and disturbance of badgers whilst they are occupying a sett.

5.24 Potential effects: negligible.

5.25 Mitigation measures: none.

5.26 Residual effects: negligible.

### **Otters & Water Voles**

5.27 Otters and their habitats are fully protected under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended) and by the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended). Water voles and their habitats are fully protected by the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended).

5.28 Potential effects: negligible.

5.29 Mitigation measures: none.



5.30 Residual effects: negligible.

### **Dormice**

5.31 Dormice and their habitats are fully protected under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended) and by the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended).

5.32 Potential effects: negligible.

5.33 Mitigation measures: none.

5.34 Residual effects: negligible.

### **Invertebrates**

5.35 Potential effects: negligible.

5.36 Mitigation measures: none.

5.37 Residual effects: negligible.

### **Other Legally Protected or Notable Species**

5.38 The working measures detailed in the PMS for great crested newts will ensure that the northern, southern and eastern vegetated boundaries are cleared in a manner which avoids harm to both hedgehogs and toads. Any such individuals discovered during works will be relocated to long vegetation and scrub offsite to the north.

5.39 The proposed development is not anticipated to impact on any other legally protected species, therefore no mitigation measures are recommended.

5.40 Enhancement measures will provide artificial roosting opportunities for crevice dwelling bats (many of which are SPIE) and new nesting opportunities for house sparrows, also a SPIE.



## 6.0 ENHANCEMENT MEASURES

- 6.1 **1 no. bat box** taken from any of the designs detailed below will be built in or fixed externally to the western elevation of the newly converted building. The box will be located immediately beneath the eaves, at a height of 3m, with an unobstructed clear drop beneath the box entrance. The box will be located well away from sources of artificial lighting.



*Vivara Pro woodstone build in bat tube* – to be built in to a wall and covered externally with render or weather boarding



*Lela bat box* – for external installation on buildings



### Bat Box

To fit in to the outside skin of 75mm / 3" brickwork course; or **can be supplied without brick facings for incorporation into a weatherboarded wall**

Available from [birdbrickhouses.co.uk](http://birdbrickhouses.co.uk)



*Beaumaris woodstone bat box midi* – for external installation on buildings



*Chillon woodstone bat box* – for external installation on buildings



6.2 **3 no. bird boxes suitable for house sparrows** will be fixed to / built in to a northern or eastern elevation of the converted building.

The boxes will each have a 32mm diameter access hole (suitable for use by house sparrows). If not already in double / triple format, the boxes will be positioned as close as possible (at least within 300mm) to one another, and at least 3m high or beneath the eaves of the building.

Boxes with 32mm wide entrance holes are widely available online or from garden centres. More discrete built in options are also available, and detailed below.



'Travis' style wooden nest box with 32mm diameter hole and predator-proof metal plate.

Available from CJ Wildlife



Habibat House Sparrow Terrace Box

Made of concrete, to be integrated into buildings during construction. Can be supplied with various brick facings, or without brick facings for incorporation into a rendered or weatherboarded wall.

440 x 215 x 150mm

Available from [habibat.co.uk](http://habibat.co.uk)



Woodstone Estella House Sparrow Box

Made of long lasting woodstone; can be built-in or fixed externally

Available from CJ Wildlife

Dimensions 29 x 16 x 21cm, weight 6kg





## 7.0 REFERENCES

CIEEM (2018) *Guidelines for Ecological Impact Assessment in the UK and Ireland: Terrestrial, Freshwater, Coastal and Marine Version 1.1*. Chartered Institute for Ecology and Environmental Management, Winchester.

CIEEM (2017a) *Guidelines for Preliminary Ecological Appraisal, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition*. Chartered Institute for Ecology and Environmental Management, Winchester.

CIEEM (2017b) *Guidelines for Ecological Report Writing*. Chartered Institute for Ecology and Environmental Management, Winchester.

Collins, J. (ed.) (2023) *Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines (4th edn)* The Bat Conservation Trust, London.

Joint Nature Conservation Committee (2010). *Handbook for Phase 1 Habitat Survey - a Technique for Environmental Audit*. Revised print, JNCC, Peterborough.

Institution of Lighting Professionals (2023) *Guidance Note 08/23: Bats and Artificial Lighting at Night*. Institution of Lighting Professionals and Bat Conservation Trust.

Mitchell-Jones, A.J (2004) *Bat Mitigation Guidelines*, English Nature, Peterborough.

Multi-agency Geographic Information for the Countryside (MAGIC) Interactive Map. Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs.

Natural England (2015) *Template for Method Statement to support application for licence under Regulation 53(2)e of The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010 (as amended) in respect of great crested newts Triturus cristatus. Form WML-A14-2 (Version December 2015)*

Oldham, R.S., Keeble, J., Swan, M.J.S. & Jeffcote, M., (2000). Evaluating the suitability of habitat for the great crested newt (*Triturus cristatus*). *Herpetological Journal*, 10, pp. 143-155.

UKHab Ltd (2023) *UK Habitat Classification Version 2.0* (at <http://www.ukhab.org>)



## 8.0 LEGISLATION

### **The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended)**

- 8.1 The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended) will soon become the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations (Amendment) (EU Exit) Regulations 2019). These regulations will continue to provide safeguards for European Protected Sites and Species as listed in the Habitats Directive. As a result, the same provisions remain in place for European protected species, licensing requirements and protected areas after Brexit.
- 8.2 Species protected by the former European legislation includes great crested newt, all UK bat species, dormice and otter. A number of other plant and animal species are also included such as sand lizard, smooth snake and natterjack toad, however these additional species are rare, with restricted geographical ranges and specific habitat types.
- 8.3 Under The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended) it is an offence to:
- Damage, destroy or obstruct access to an EPS breeding or resting place;
  - Deliberately capture, injure or kill an EPS (including their eggs);
  - Deliberately disturb an EPS, in particular any actions which may impair an animals ability to survive, breed or nurture their young; or their ability to hibernate or migrate; or which may significantly affect the local distribution or abundance of the species to which they belong.
- 8.4 The legislation applies to all stages of amphibian life cycles (eggs, larvae and adult), and to active bat roosts even when they are not occupied at that particular time of year.
- 8.5 Natural England can, under certain circumstances, grant a licence to permit actions which would otherwise be unlawful, subject to the species concerned being maintained at a Favourable Conservation Status and there being a true need for the proposed works to take place.
- 8.6 Special Protection Areas (SPAs) and Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) are also afforded protection under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended). Ramsar sites, which are designated under the Convention on Wetlands of International Importance (1971), are afforded the same level of protection as SPAs and SACs via national planning policy.



### **The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended)**

- 8.7 The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) provides varied levels of protection for a range of species including those already listed above. Water vole are one of the species not listed under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended), but are afforded the highest level of protection under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended).
- 8.8 It is an offence to intentionally kill, injure or take a water vole, to intentionally or recklessly damage or destroy a structure or place used for shelter and/or protection, to disturb a water vole whilst occupying a structure and/or place used for shelter and protection, or to obstruct access to any structure and/or place used for shelter or protection.
- 8.9 Other species, such as common lizard, slow worm, adder and grass snake, are afforded less protection. For these species it is an offence to intentionally or recklessly kill or injure animals.
- 8.10 All active bird nests, eggs and young are protected against intentional destruction. Schedule 1 listed birds e.g. barn owls, kingfishers, are further protected from intentional and reckless disturbance whilst breeding.
- 8.11 Schedule 9 of The Wildlife and Countryside Act lists plant species for which it is an offence for a person to plant, or otherwise cause to grow in the wild. This includes Japanese Knotweed which, under the Environment Protection Act 1990 (as amended) is classed as 'controlled waste'. If any parts of the plant including stems, leaves and rhizomes are taken off-site they must be disposed of safely at a landfill site licensed to deal with such contaminated waste.
- 8.12 Sites of Species Scientific Interest (SSSI) are afforded protection by the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended).

### **The Protection of Badgers Act 1992 (as amended)**

- 8.13 The Protection of Badgers Act (1992) makes it an offence to wilfully kill, injure, take, possess or cruelly ill-treat a badger, or to attempt to do so, and to intentionally or recklessly interfere with a sett.

### **The Protection of Mammals Act 1996 (as amended)**

- 8.14 The Act protects all wild mammals against actions which have the intention of causing unnecessary suffering, including crushing and asphyxiation.



### **The Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006 (as amended)**

- 8.15 Under sections 40 and 41 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act (NERC) 2006 local authorities have an obligation to have regard to the purpose of conserving biodiversity in carrying out their duties. The majority of UK legally protected species are listed under Section 41 the NERC Act.
- 8.16 Section 41 (S41) of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act (2006) also requires the Secretary of State to publish a list of habitats and species which are of 'principal importance for the conservation of biodiversity' in England (Species of Principal Importance in England – SPIE). The S41 list is used to guide decision-makers, including local and regional authorities, in implementing their duty under Section 40 of the act to have regard to the conservation of biodiversity in England when carrying out their normal functions.

### **Statutory Designated Sites**

- 8.17 Under the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949 (as amended), statutory conservation agencies were able to establish National Nature Reserves (NNRs), with provisions for these areas strengthened by the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended). They are managed to conserve their habitats or to provide special opportunities for scientific study of the habitats communities and species represented within them.
- 8.18 Local Nature Reserves (LNRs) can be declared by local authorities after consultation with the relevant statutory nature conservation agency under the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949 (as amended). LNRs are not subject to legal protection, but are afforded protection against damaging operations via byelaws, and against development via local planning policies.

### **Non-Statutory Designated Sites**

- 8.19 Local Wildlife Sites (LWS), Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINCs), Sites of Nature Conservation Importance (SNCIs) and County Wildlife Sites (CWS) are often designated by the local Wildlife Trust. They are not usually afforded any legal protection, but are recognised in the planning system and given some protection through planning policy.

### **National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)**

- 8.20 The National Planning Policy Framework (2019) sets out the Government's planning policies for England and how these should be applied. The NPPF must be taken into account when preparing a Local Authority's development plan, and is also a material consideration in planning decisions.



8.21 As well as highlighting the importance of protecting ecologically valuable sites and habitats, the NPPF highlights the duty of local planning authorities (LPA's) to deliver net gains for biodiversity within the planning system. Planning policies and decisions should, as per Paragraph 170d, contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by:

*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'*

8.22 To protect and enhance biodiversity, policies and plans should, as per Paragraph 174b:

*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.'*

8.23 When determining planning applications, LPA's should apply principles which avoid an adverse effect on natural environments and notable species:

*d) '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;'*



**Appendix 1:**  
**Proposed Site Layout**





PROPOSED FRONT ELEVATION

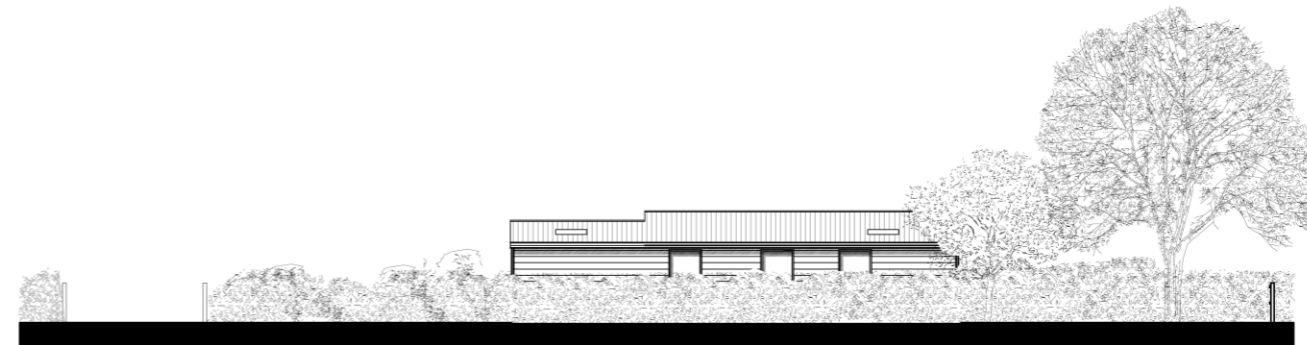


PROPOSED SIDE ELEVATION

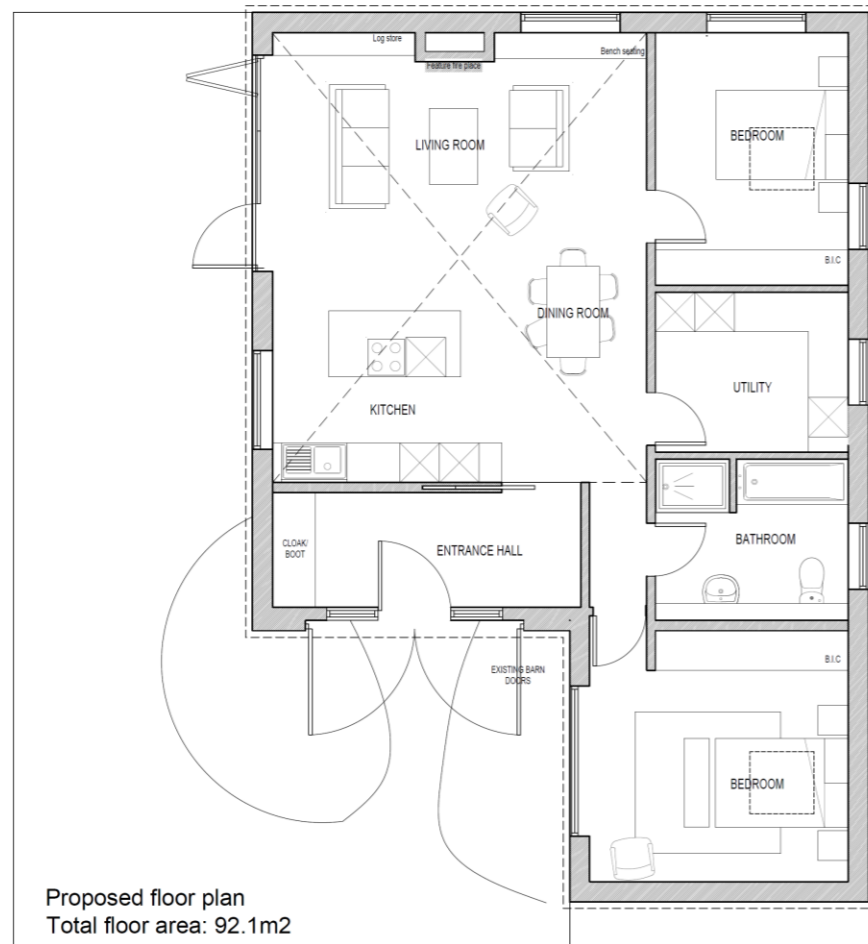


PROPOSED REAR ELEVATION

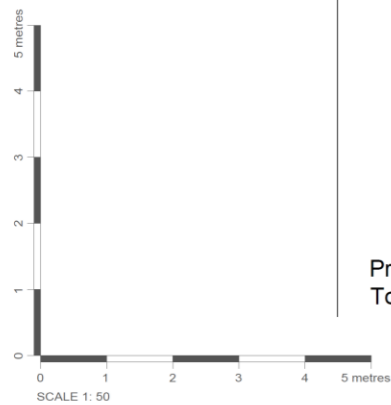
SCALE 1:100



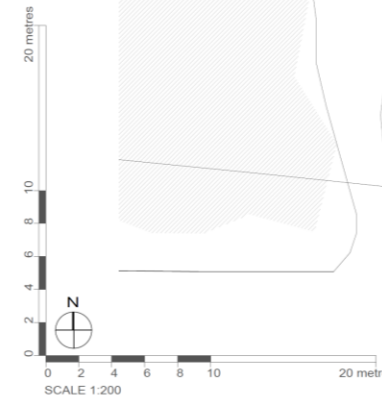
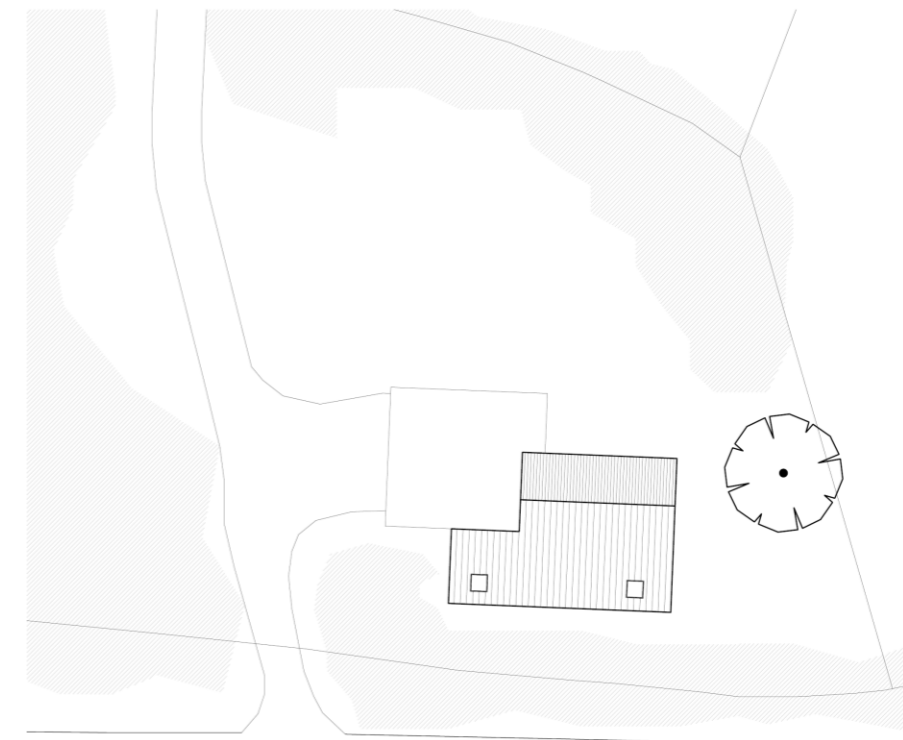
PROPOSED SIDE ELEVATION



Proposed floor plan  
Total floor area: 92.1m<sup>2</sup>



SCALE 1:50



SCALE 1:200

5/12/21 B File plan attached RT  
 07/10/22 A Changes as to client meeting 06/10/22 RT  
 Date Revision Description Drawn Checked

**peterwellsarchitects**  
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Project: Boundary Farm Barn, Boundary Farm, Framsdon, Suffolk, IP14 6LH  
 Client: Mr Jack Rogers

Day Title: Proposed plans, elevations & block plan	Prog. Status: Planning	Drawn by: RT
Date: SEPT 22	Scale: 1:100, 1:50 & 1:200 @ A1	Prog. No.: PW1285_PL02
		Revision: B

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**Appendix 2:**  
**HSI Assessment Results**

HSI Assessment results

Table 2: WB1

Habitat Suitability Index			SI value
SI1. Map location	<b>A/B/C</b>	A	1.00
SI2. Surface area	<b>rectangle/ellipse/irregular</b> length (m) width (m) OR estimate (m <sup>2</sup> ) if irregular	irregular	
		316	
		area (m <sup>2</sup> ) = 316	0.63
SI3. Dessication rate	<b>never/rarely/sometimes/frequently</b>	rarely	1.00
SI4. Water quality	<b>good/moderate/poor/bad</b>	good	1.00
SI5. Shade	% of margin shaded 1m from bank	30	1.00
SI6. Waterfowl	<b>absent/major/minor</b>	minor	0.67
SI7. Fish population	<b>absent/possible/minor/major</b>	absent	1.00
SI8. Pond density	number of ponds within 1km	4.7	1.00
SI9. Terrestrial habitat	<b>good/moderate/poor/isolated</b>	good	1.00
SI10. Macrophyte cover	%	15	0.46
			<b>HSI = 0.85</b>
<i>Use provisional HSI value if above 0.75</i>			provisional HSI = 0.83
			Date undertaken 17.11.23

Table 3: WB2

Habitat Suitability Index			SI value
SI1. Map location	<b>A/B/C</b>	A	1.00
SI2. Surface area	<b>rectangle/ellipse/irregular</b> length (m) width (m) OR estimate (m <sup>2</sup> ) if irregular	irregular	
		595	
		area (m <sup>2</sup> ) = 595	1.00
SI3. Dessication rate	<b>never/rarely/sometimes/frequently</b>	rarely	1.00
SI4. Water quality	<b>good/moderate/poor/bad</b>	good	1.00
SI5. Shade	% of margin shaded 1m from bank	90	0.40
SI6. Waterfowl	<b>absent/major/minor</b>	minor	0.67
SI7. Fish population	<b>absent/possible/minor/major</b>	absent	1.00
SI8. Pond density	number of ponds within 1km	4.7	1.00
SI9. Terrestrial habitat	<b>good/moderate/poor/isolated</b>	moderate	0.67
SI10. Macrophyte cover	%	10	0.41
			<b>HSI = 0.77</b>
<i>Use provisional HSI value if above 0.75</i>			provisional HSI = 0.75
			Date undertaken 17.11.23

Table 4: WB3

Habitat Suitability Index			SI value
SI1.	Map location	<b>A/B/C</b>	A 1.00
SI2.	Surface area	<b>rectangle/ellipse/irregular</b> length (m) width (m) OR estimate (m <sup>2</sup> ) if irregular	rectangle 53 6  area (m <sup>2</sup> ) = 318 0.64
SI3.	Dessication rate	<b>never/rarely/sometimes/frequently</b>	rarely 1.00
SI4.	Water quality	<b>good/moderate/poor/bad</b>	good 1.00
SI5.	Shade	% of margin shaded 1m from bank	35 1.00
SI6.	Waterfowl	<b>absent/major/minor</b>	minor 0.67
SI7.	Fish population	<b>absent/possible/minor/major</b>	absent 1.00
SI8.	Pond density	number of ponds within 1km	4.7 1.00
SI9.	Terrestrial habitat	<b>good/moderate/poor/isolated</b>	moderate 0.67
SI10.	Macrophyte cover	%	20 0.51
			<b>HSI = 0.82</b>
<i>Use provisional HSI value if above 0.75</i>			provisional HSI = 0.81
			Date undertaken 17.11.23

**Appendix 3:**

**Great Crested Newt Non-Licensed  
Precautionary Method Statement**

# Non-Licensed Precautionary Method Statement

## 1.0 Timing of Works

Works to the areas of potential GCN habitat (margins of long grass, nettles, brambles and goat willow) will be carried out between April and end-October inclusive to avoid the amphibian hibernation period (and the reptile hibernation period).

No ground works will take place during temperatures of below 5°C, and no works will take place at night.

## 2.0 Toolbox Talk

Every contractor and site worker will be briefed by an experienced ecologist in possession of a Natural England GCN Survey Licence prior to commencement of works. They will be made aware of the legal protection of GCN, the reasons for this Method Statement, how to identify a GCN, and what to do if a GCN is found during works. All site contractors will be provided with a copy of this Method Statement, which includes an ID sheet for reference purposes.

## 3.0 Ground Vegetation, Top Soil and Debris Removal

All vegetated areas will be subject to a staged fingertip search by the licensed ecologist, with the vegetation strimmed to 150mm height before being searched. Upon completion of each stage, all vegetation and topsoil – where required – will be slowly and carefully stripped - either mechanically or using hand tools. Arisings will be removed from the working area or stored in skips.

All stored materials and debris, where not stored in a container or on a pallet, will be lifted by hand and with care under the supervision of the ecologist, and checked beneath for both newts and reptiles. Where it is necessary for machinery to assist with lifting of materials, the materials must be lifted clear of the ground, and not pushed across the ground to avoid harm to newts (or reptiles) which may be sheltering beneath. All materials and debris will be removed from the working area, or stored on pallets or in skips.

## 4.0 Construction Methodology

During works the following measures will be followed at all times:

- No building materials (rubble, wood, tiles etc) or excavated material (rubble, unconsolidated spoil) will be stored on site to avoid use of the piles by sheltering GCN/reptiles. All such materials will be removed or stored in skips or on raised pallets;
- Wherever possible trenches or similar will not be left open overnight. Any trenches which are left open overnight will contain an angled plank of wood to ensure any GCN which may use the site do not fall in and become trapped. The trenches will always be checked the following morning for GCN;
- All areas of wet cement will be covered and / or obstructed at night to prevent access by GCN.



## 5.0 Delays to Works

Wherever possible, works will proceed quickly and without delay, to minimise the duration of ground disturbance. If any delay is predicted following commencement of works, the site will always be left in a condition that is unsuitable for GCN i.e. following the measures detailed in section 4.0.

## 6.0 Discovery of GCN during works

If a GCN is found on site at any point during construction, all works will cease. An ecologist will be contacted for further advice, if not already present on site. Natural England will be informed, and works will not re-commence until either a development (EPSM) licence has been secured or other provisions have been agreed with Natural England.

## 7.0 Great Crested Newt ID

*Great crested newts*: these newts are **noticeably black to very dark brown** in colour, with a warty texture to their skin. Some of the warts are white, accentuating the warty and slightly speckled appearance. In spring male newts have a white stripe along the centre of their tail, and females have an orange stripe at the bottom of their tail. The bright orange-yellow belly colouring extends fully to join with the dark upper skin tone.

By contrast, *common and palmate newts* are a lighter brown-green colour and are significantly smaller (up to 9cm in length, whilst great crested newts may be up to 15cm in length). **Both common and great crested newts have an orange-yellow belly with black spots**; however the orange colouring fades towards the edges of the belly of common newts. Males of all species have crests in the spring.



Female Great Crested Newt



Female Common Newt



Female Great Crested Newt & Smooth Newt



Male Great Crested Newt



Liz Lord Ecology

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