

Elmswell Tavern

Preliminary Ecological Appraisal and Ecological Assessment Report



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1. Introduction

1.1 Background and Summary of Findings

Connected Ecology has been commissioned by Peter Dow on behalf of Elmswell Parish Council to undertake a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA) and ecological assessment in support of the extension and renovation of The Railway Tavern Public House (Appendix A: Drawings). The proposal is hereinafter referred to as the proposed Scheme.

The proposal is located at The Railway Tavern Public House, School Road, Elmswell, Suffolk, IP30 9EE. The proposal centres on Ordnance Survey Grid Reference TL 98763 63856 (Appendix B: Figure 1. PEA overview). Its premises are currently used as a food bank serving the local community.

The proposed Scheme involves the complete renovation of the tavern complex including the re-roofing of some of its buildings. One of the extensions at the rear of the property will also be demolished, and will make way for a modern extension to provide kitchen and toilet facilities. The renovated tavern will provide a restaurant area along with a traditional pub area with improved facilities.

On 17 September 2023, a walkover survey was undertaken of the tavern and the wider area to observe, assess, and record any ecological features present or potentially present that could be affected by the proposed Scheme.

The proposed Scheme and associated works will involve the demolition, extension and modification of buildings which will affect suitability for bats. The impacts on bats will be reported on separately in a dedicated preliminary bat roost assessment report.

The proposed Scheme will not affect any statutory designated sites. Furthermore, there will be no loss of habitats that are of Principal Importance under section 41 of the NERC Act 2006. No trees will be affected or lost as a result of the proposed Scheme.

There will be a permanent loss of approximately 450m² of grassland, which has no significant ecological value. There will be additional temporary impacts on approximately 150m² of grassland to enable the demolition and construction works to take place. Other suitable habitats for wildlife including a dense stand of ivy will be lost as part of the demolition works.

The survey results determined that without mitigation, the proposed Scheme could result in disturbance, injury or killing of wildlife. Pre-construction checks and sensitive timing of works are recommended to reduce the risk of harm to any wildlife present. It is recommended that construction materials are stored off the ground on pallets and waste materials in skips.

Amongst other proposed mitigation measures, installation of five bird boxes is recommended to mitigate the impact of the proposed Scheme due to the loss of vegetation and reduced suitability of buildings for birds. The installation of three bird boxes should compensate for the temporary loss of suitable nesting habitat. The placement of a further two bird boxes designed for swifts would provide a conservation gain for birds. A bug hotel has also been recommended.

Due to presence of suitable terrestrial habitat for great crested newt and reptiles immediately adjacent to the proposed Scheme, and the uncertainty as to whether the great crested newt are present in the pond approximately 85m away, works have to be covered by the Precautionary Working Method Statement (PWMS) as detailed within this report.

Provided that the recommendations are fulfilled, it is considered there will be no net loss in conservation gain as a result of the proposed Scheme.

1.2 Objectives

The objectives of the PEA are these:

- Identify the likely ecological constraints associated with the proposed Scheme; and
- Identify any mitigation measures required, following the mitigation hierarchy; and

- Identify any additional surveys required to inform an Ecological Impact Assessment (EclA); and
- Identify the opportunities offered by the project to deliver ecological enhancement.

2. Methodology

2.1 Zone of Influence

The Zone of Influence (Zol) is defined by the CIEEM Guidelines for Ecological Impact Assessment¹ as: “area(s) over which ecological features may be affected by the biophysical changes caused by the proposed project and associated activities.” The Zol of the proposed activities may be different from the boundary of the proposed Scheme.

2.2 Desk Study

Initial scoping was carried out to assess buildings and habitats present and their potential to support species of conservation importance within the Zol, and to identify likely impacts the proposed Scheme would have on them. The exercise was conducted using a combination of aerial imagery, Ordnance Survey (OS) maps and Geographical Information Systems (GIS) to identify suitable features.

The purpose of a desktop study is to identify any statutory designated sites within 2km of the proposed Scheme, using Defra Magic Map Application².

A review of the Defra Magic Map Application was also completed to identify any other previously issued Natural England European Protected Species (EPS) Licences and priority habitats within 2km of the proposed Scheme.

2.3 Surveyor’s Experience

Lee Rudd is a principal ecologist with over 14 years of ecology consultancy experience. He is a full member of the Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (MCIEEM) and a full member of the Association of Environmental & Ecological Clerks of Works (MAEECoW). Lee holds Natural England licences for bats (2023-11646-CL17-BAT & 2023-65470-SCI-SCI), barn owl (2023-11488-CL29-OWL), great crested newt (2021-53591-CLS-CLS) and water vole (CL31/2017/00017). He has also been an accredited agent on various development licences for great crested newt, water vole and badger.

2.4 Field Surveys

On 17 September 2023, Lee Rudd carried out a walkover survey of the proposed Scheme to observe, assess and record any habitats or species of conservation importance within the Zol and to identify the likely impacts of the proposed Scheme. The results are set out in the Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA) in accordance with the latest professional guidance published by the Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (CIEEM)³. Habitats on site were recorded in line with the UK habitat classification system⁴. Habitats and species recorded or species potentially present on site were checked against the list of priority habitats and species under the NERC Act 2006⁵.

2.5 Survey Timing

The walkover survey took place on 17 September 2023. The weather conditions were 20°C, no precipitation, cloudy and moderate wind from the east. There had been light rain within the previous 24 hours.

¹ CIEEM Guidelines for Ecological Impact Assessment in the UK and Ireland. <https://cieem.net/resource/guidelines-for-ecological-impact-assessment-ecia/> (Accessed on 13 November 2023).

² Defra Magic Map Application: <https://magic.defra.gov.uk/MagicMap.aspx> (Accessed on 13 November 2023).

³ CIEEM Guidelines for Preliminary Ecological Appraisal in the UK and Ireland. [Guidelines-for-Preliminary-Ecological-Appraisal-Jan2018-typo-edit.pdf \(cieem.net\)](#) (Accessed on 13 November 2023).

⁴ UK Habitat Classification System. [ukhab – UK Habitat Classification](#) (Accessed on 13 November 2023).

⁵ NERC Act 2006 Habitats and Species of principal importance in England. [Habitats and species of principal importance in England - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#) (Accessed on 13 November 2023).

2.6 Deviations, Constraints and Limitations

There are no known deviations, constraints or limitations recorded within this PEA and ecological assessment. The walkover was carried out in line with the latest professional guidance. There was full access to the footprint of the proposed Scheme and wider site, which allowed data gathering as per survey guidance.

3. Results

3.1 Local Context

The survey covered the extent of the proposed Scheme and the wider area within the boundary of the land ownership, as shown in Appendix B: Figure 1-2.

The proposed Scheme currently has access from School Road – a residential street with commercial premises adjacent to the entrance to the site. The immediate area is generally well-developed with very little open green space. The village of Elmswell is set within an agricultural setting with occasional blocks of woodland.

3.2 Desktop Survey Results

3.2.1 Protected Sites

There are no statutory designated sites of ecological interest within 1km of the proposed Scheme. There is one designated site approximately 1.4km to the west of the proposed Scheme².

The designated site is Norton Wood a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI). It is approximately 24 hectares in extent and comprises of ancient woodland. The structure of the woodland is predominantly coppice-with-standards with a large proportion of the wood containing semi-natural stands.

The woodland is primarily acid pedunculate oak (*Quercus robur*), hazel (*Corylus avellana*), common ash (*Fraxinus excelsior*) woodland with abundant birch (*Betula pendula*). There are also areas of wet woodland, which include common ash, maple (*Acer campestre*) pedunculate oak and hornbeam (*Carpinus betulus*).

The ground flora is rich and includes Ramsons (*Allium ursinum*), Herb Paris (*Paris quadrifolia*) and Nettle-leaved Bellflower (*Campanula trachelium*). Oxlip (*Primula elatior*), a scarce species at the edge of its range, is locally abundant. The rides have recently been widened and the waterlogged soils provide suitable conditions for a number of wetland plants including Devil's-bit Scabious (*Succisa pratensis*), Skullcap (*Scutellaria galericulata*), Meadowsweet *Filipendula ulmaria* and Marsh Thistle (*Cirsium palustre*).

The majority of the woodland was assessed by Natural England in 2010 to be in a favourable condition, but high threat risk of decline.

Due to the location of the site and its designation, it is not considered that the proposed Scheme would influence the condition of the SSSI. Therefore, the proposed Scheme will not influence any designated sites, and will not be considered any further within this report.

3.2.2 Habitats

There are no priority habitats identified on Magic Map within the extent of the PEA walkover or immediately adjacent to the walkover.

3.2.3 Species

The site falls within the Amber Risk Zone⁶ for the likely presence of great crested newt (GCN: *Triturus cristatus*), which is classified as “containing main population centres for GCN and comprise important connecting habitat that aids natural dispersal”.

There is one case reference for European Protected Species (EPS) Licence within 2km of the proposed Scheme within the past 10 years, which covered the great crested newt (GCN). The licence was submitted in 2017 and is located approximately 1.3km to the south-east along Wetherden Road, Wetherden.

⁶ Great crested newts risk zones Norfolk and Suffolk [GCN Risk Zones \(Norfolk and Suffolk\) | GCN Risk Zones \(Norfolk and Suffolk\) | Natural England Open Data Geoportail \(arcgis.com\)](#) (Accessed on 13 November 2023).

No GCN ponds were identified within 2km as part of the Natural England Pond Surveys 2017-2019 initiative.

3.3 Field Results

Figure 1 & 2 outline the habitats that were recorded during the walkover on 17 September 2023, while photographs are provided within Appendix C.

Habitats

Habitats are presented within Figure 2: PEA habitats. The primary habitats recorded on site are presented below along with their UK Habitat Classification code⁴.

3.3.1 Buildings (u1b5)

The tavern has been extended multiple times over the years. The tavern complex has been divided into five main sections for the purpose of referencing and accounting for the ecological value of each section within this report (see Table 1 & Appendix B: Figure 2 & 3).

Table 1. Elmswell Tavern building references and descriptions

Building #	Description	Comments
B1	A single storey brick built building with a pitched roof which is covered with clay pantiles. There is felt underlay.	Modern timber work. The roof space is in good condition, with no sagging underlay. The soffit/fascia are in a state of decay. Lifted lead flashing.
B2	Two storey brick built building with a pitched roof covered with clay pantiles (ref B2A). To the east there is a single storey extension, with is covered in slate tile (ref B2B). There is felt underlay in both buildings.	B2A: There are slipped pan tiles and lifted lead flashing. The soffit/fascia are in a state of decay. Areas of damaged underlay. Evidence of squirrel/rat damage. B2B: Roof is in good condition. The roof void is very cluttered with timber work and stored belongings. The ceiling has been lowered in recent years.
B3	Two storey brick built building with a pitched roof covered in clay pantiles (B3A). There is a sarking under the pan tiles. There is a single storey extension with a flat roof, covered in bitumen felt (ref B3B). There is a cellar in the basement, where there is current access to the west from the carpark.	B3A: There are slipped pantiles and lifted lead flashing. The soffit/fascia are in a state of decay. Evidence of squirrel/rat damage. B3B: Appears in good order.
B4	A single storey brick built building with a corrugated cement roof. Possible low grade asbestos. There is no felt underlay.	Timber cladding on south and west face of building. Very dense ivy growth on majority of building. Ivy has also taken over the roof space.
B5	A single storey brick building with a pitched roof, covered in clay pan tiles. There is timber cladding on the southern aspect of the building.	Slipped pan tiles and damaged ridge tile.

The proposed Scheme will involve replacing the pantile roof on buildings 1 and 2 on a like for like basis. The underfelt will also be replaced. Building 4 will be demolished to make way for an extension of building 3.

Building 5 will be renovated, which will include some external brick work and improvements to the roof. A large door and porchway will be added to the north face of building 5 to improve access to the bar and restaurant.

Across all the buildings the soffits, fascia and barge boards will also be replaced as required. The roof spaces will also benefit from being insulated.

3.3.2 Other developed land (u1b6)

There are significant areas of land laid to tarmac, hard standing, concrete and gravel, which serve the driveways, parking areas, pathways and seating areas. There is also a timber pergola and patio to the east of building 5.

3.3.3 Built linear features (u1e)

The boundaries of the site are primarily identified by brick walls. The brick walls along the front of the site, to the north, are approximately 100cm in height. The remainder of the boundaries are marked by 1.8-2.1m high walls and fences.

There is a 1.8m high brick wall at the rear of the property, which divides the site in two and provides an enclosed seating area. There is also a wooden gate that provides access between the two areas.

There is an old wooden gate in a state of disrepair that could provide vehicle access to the site, along the southern boundary.

3.3.4 Modified grassland (g4)

There are significant areas of grassland across the site, which are all mowed to a sward height of ≤5cm (ref G1-G4). They provide very little ecological value due to the species present and management regime. The areas are very similar in nature to one another and they are dominated by perennial ryegrass (*Lolium perenne*) and Yorkshire fog (*Holcus lanatus*) grasses, with broadleaf species including; common daisy (*Bellis perennis*), dandelion (*Taraxacum officinale*), broadleaf plantain (*Plantago major*), spear thistle (*Cirsium vulgare*) and bristly oxtongue (*Helminthotheca echioides*), common bird-foot-trefoil (*Lotus corniculatus*), yarrow (*Achillea millefolium*), ground ivy (*Glechoma herderacea*) and geranium spp.

Impacts on the grassland habitats have been detailed within table 2, see below. There will be a mixture of temporary disturbance works and permanent losses of grassland as a result of the proposed Scheme.

Table 2. Elmswell Tavern grassland areas and potential impacts

Grassland area #	Proposed Scheme	Impacts
G1	This area of grassland will be converted to a hard surfaced parking area.	Permanent loss.
G2	This area falls within the footprint of building extension works.	Permanent loss.
G3	This area will remain as the beer garden.	Temporary disturbance during construction works.

Grassland area #	Proposed Scheme	Impacts
G4	This area will see temporary disturbance to facilitate building works.	Temporary disturbance during construction works.
Adjacent grassland area to south	This area will be unaffected by the proposed Scheme.	No impact.

None of the grassland areas are considered habitats of Principal Importance under section 41 of the NERC Act 2006.

3.3.5 Ornamental shrubs and overgrown areas

The majority of the site is well managed with very little cover for wildlife, with exception of some habitats around the boundaries of the site.

These habitats include an isolated area of fewer than five square metres and located along the eastern boundary to the rear of the site (ref TN1). Species present include bramble (*Rubus fruticosus*), common nettle (*Urtica dioica*), and common sowthistle (*Sonchus oleraceus*). This area appears “unmanaged” and has a vegetation height greater than 50cm.

There is an extensive stand of common ivy (*Hedera helix*) present alongside the brick wall at the rear of the property (ref TN2), which has sprawled onto the roof of building 4.

Cotoneaster *spp.* is present along the eastern boundary of the site, where it is growing up against the brick wall adjacent to grassland area 1 (ref TN3). It appears as if it has been recently planted.

The landscaping plan has not been agreed upon at present, but it is likely an unmanaged area (ref TN1). The dense ivy stand (ref TN2) will be lost during the process of the demolition of building 4. At present, it is assumed that the cotoneaster (ref TN3) will remain intact and undisturbed. The area of grassland (ref G1) will be lost to facilitate additional parking, but a verge of grassland will remain in place along the eastern boundary.

3.3.6 Scattered trees (secondary code 11)

There are two established hazel coppice stools along the southern boundary of the site (ref T1 & T2). These are the only trees present within the boundary of the walkover. These will not be affected by the proposed Scheme.

Other trees of note immediately adjacent to the site boundary include a pedunculate oak (ref T3), which is a semi mature tree alongside the north eastern boundary of the site. Along the western boundary of the site at the rear of the neighbouring garden is a small collection of ornamental and fruit trees. Further away from the site is a relatively large area of trees and grassland habitats to the south of the site, which will be unaffected by the proposed Scheme. All of these trees are more than 10m from the boundary of the proposed Scheme.

Therefore, no trees will be affected by the proposed Scheme.

3.3.7 Amphibians including great crested newt

The site falls within the Amber Risk Zone⁶ for the likely presence of great crested newt (GCN, *Triturus cristatus*), which is classified as “containing main population centres for GCN and comprise important connecting habitat that aids natural dispersal”. There is one record of GCN, which dates back to 2017 and is located approximately 1.3km to the south-east of the proposed Scheme, along Wetherden Road, Wetherden.

No ponds were identified during the PEA walkover (see Figure 2), and following a review of the Magic Ma information services², there are no ponds within 75m of the proposed Scheme. There are three ponds within 250m of the proposed Scheme, with the nearest one being approximately 100m to the south within an area of grassland, scrub and trees at the rear of residential properties. It was not possible to carry out a survey of the pond, so its suitability for GCN can not be confirmed, and nor can their absence be confirmed.

The suitability of habitats for GCN on site within the area of the walkover is negligible on account of the current management regime, where the grass is managed at a short sward $\leq 5\text{cm}$ and extensive areas of hard standing and degree of isolation from suitable habitats. The exception is grassland area 4, which is immediately adjacent to suitable habitat to the south of the site. There will be disturbance to grassland area 4 as a result of the demolition works of building 4 and during the building of the extension. These impacts should be limited to temporary impacts, as the footprint of the proposed Scheme building works falls outside of the grassland area.

Suitable terrestrial habitat was identified during the walkover within land immediately adjacent to the proposed Scheme, that could support amphibians including GCN and common toad (*Bufo bufo*).

Therefore, works within the proposed Scheme pose a risk of potential harm to amphibians on site that could be killed, injured or disturbed if no mitigation measures were in place prior to works. Recommendations are provided in Section 4 to manage the risks of causing harm.

GCN and common toad are Species of Principal Importance under section 41 of the NERC Act 2006.

3.3.8 Bats

Any works within 10m of roosting features or confirmed bat roosts could cause loss of a roost and/or disturbance to bats.

An assessment of the buildings has been undertaken including an internal inspection on the day of the PEA walkover. The findings will be reported separately in a dedicated preliminary bat roost assessment (PRA) report. A summary of the findings is provided below.

There was no evidence of bats recorded within the buildings or trees, but there are features suitable to support roosting bats within the buildings. Suitable features include voids between clay pantiles and underfelt/sarking, general cracks and holes in timbers, voids in blockwork and voids between the blockwork, cladding and internal walls. Overall, the tavern complex of buildings was assessed as having moderate suitability for roosting bats.

There are no trees with suitable roosting features within 10m of the proposed Scheme.

The buildings are set within moderate quality habitat that has continuous habitat connected with the wider landscape. The site itself provides low suitability for commuting and foraging bats on account of the limited habitat covered on site, which is limited to trees.

Recommendations will be provided within the dedicated PRA report to manage the risks of causing harm to bats.

3.3.9 Birds

There is suitable habitat for breeding birds within or immediately adjacent to the proposed Scheme in the form of grassland, overgrown area (ref TN1), dense stand of ivy (ref TN2), trees (including ref T1-T3) and buildings.

Wren (*Troglodytes troglodytes*) and wood pigeon (*Columba palumbus*) were the only birds recorded during the walkover survey on the day.

No evidence of barn owl (*Tyto alba*) or suitable nesting sites were recorded on site that day.

Overall, there is a risk of causing disturbance or destruction of a nest due to the proposed works. Recommendations on how to mitigate the risks posed to bird nests on site are provided in Section 4 of this report.

3.3.10 Reptiles

The suitability of habitats for reptiles on site is negligible (i.e. short sward $\leq 5\text{cm}$). However, there are suitable areas of habitat for reptiles immediately adjacent to the proposed Scheme (i.e. to the south), which include areas of grassland with cover ($\geq 15\text{cm}$) and areas of scrub. The habitats adjacent to the site may support common reptile species, including common lizard (*Zootoca vivipara*), grass snake (*Natrix helvetica*) and slow-worm (*Anguis fragilis*). It is not considered that there is suitable habitat on site for adder (*Viper berus*) due to the nature of habitats and degree of isolation to suitable habitats.

Due to presence of suitable vegetation immediately adjacent to the footprint of the proposed Scheme, albeit limited in extent, there is a risk of a low number of reptiles being present, in particular if the vegetation on site is allowed to grow.

Considerations on the vegetation management and storage of materials are outlined as recommendations in Section 4 and will be required to ensure that reptiles are not affected.

The habitats on site and the immediately adjacent areas are not suitable for either of the rarer reptiles, which include sand lizard (*Lacerta agilis*) and smooth snake (*Coronella austriaca*).

All species of reptiles are listed as Species of Principal Importance under section 41 of the NERC Act 2006.

3.3.11 Other mammals - priority species

The suitable habitat for hedgehog (*Erinaceus europaeus*) has been identified on site at the base of trees, but none of these suitable features will be directly affected. They could also inhabit within and under building materials if stored directly on the ground.

Hedgehog is a Species of Principal Importance under section 41 of the NERC Act 2006. Considerations will be required for hedgehog as outlined in the recommendations in Section 4.

It is also considered that the suitability of habitats within the proposed Scheme is not suitable for badger (*Meles meles*). Therefore, badger is not considered any further within this report.

3.3.12 Other

The habitats on site were not suitable for water vole (*Arvicola amphibius*), otter (*Lutra lutra*) or white-clawed crayfish (*Austropotamobius pallipes*) at the time of the survey. Therefore, no further surveys or need for mitigation is detailed within this report.

4. Discussions and Recommendations

4.1.1 Habitats

The proposed Scheme and associated works will involve the permanent loss of approximately 450m² of grassland, which has no significant ecological value (ref G1 & G2). However, it has higher ecological value than the hard impermeable surfaces that will be installed, along with increased surface runoff. There will be additional temporary impacts on approximately 150m² of grassland from the delivery of demolition and construction works to the south of the property (i.e., ref B4).

No trees will be affected or lost as a result of the proposed Scheme.

The limited area of undisturbed habitat on site will likely be lost as a result of landscaping works (TN1). The dense ivy stand (ref TN2) will be lost as it covers building 4, which will be demolished as a result of the proposed Scheme.

There will be no loss of habitats that are of Principal Importance under section 41 of the NERC Act 2006.

To compensate and enhance the site, trees should be installed along the boundary walls of the site. This would provide more suitable nesting habitat for birds. In addition this would provide more cover and improve foraging and commuting habitats for bats.

4.1.2 Amphibians and Reptiles

The suitability of habitats on site is considered negligible for amphibians and reptiles. However, there is suitable habitat immediately adjacent to the proposed Scheme, which is alongside the southern boundary of grassland area 4, where disturbance works will take place. There are no suitable habitats to the north of the proposed Scheme where roads, residential and commercial properties are present. Therefore, it is very unlikely amphibians or reptiles would use the site as a means of passage between suitable habitats.

The risk of great crested newt (GCN) and other amphibians and reptiles being present on site is unlikely at present. Due to the suitability of habitats to the south and the presence of a pond approximately 85m from the proposed Scheme, there is a risk that GCN could enter the site, if the management regime of the grassland habitat on site changed.

Therefore, there is a risk of disturbance, injury or killing of GCN (including other amphibians and reptiles) as a result of the proposed Scheme due to the presence of suitable habitat immediately adjacent to the proposed Scheme, if no mitigation measures were in place prior to works. It is considered that the precautionary approach should be adopted if GCN, other amphibians and reptiles are not confirmed as likely absent in the adjacent habitats.

The works are considered to be of low impact on nature in respect to GCN and other amphibians (i.e. involve the temporary disturbance of grassland areas >75m from the nearest pond). It is considered that a precautionary approach should be adopted and that works are undertaken under a Precautionary Working Method Statement.

If GCN surveys were carried out in accordance with best practice^{Error! Bookmark not defined.} and likely absence was confirmed, the PWMS would not need to be undertaken by a licenced GCN surveyor.

All amphibians and reptiles are protected by law. It is an offence to cause injury, kill and in some cases, such as GCN, cause disturbance (see Appendix D: Legislation).

Therefore, a precautionary approach will be undertaken, which will be described within the PWMS in Section 4.2.

4.1.3 Bats

No evidence of bats was recorded during the survey, the buildings provide moderate suitability for roosting bats.

Recommendations will be provided within the dedicated PRA report to manage the risks of causing harm to bats.

4.1.4 Birds

Without mitigation, there would be a permanent loss of suitable nesting habitat for birds on site due to the loss of the dense ivy stand (ref TN2), loss of limited area of undisturbed habitat (ref TN1) and building renovation works, which will reduce suitability and likelihood birds will be able to enter the buildings and make nests. The loss of suitable nesting habitat will be compensated through the provision of three bird boxes.

There will be approximately 450m² of grassland (ref G1 & G2), which will be lost as a result of the proposed Scheme. There will be additional grassland habitat (ref G4) on site that will be temporarily affected by the proposed works to facilitate the construction works. This will include machinery access, sorting and storage area. The approximate amount of grassland that will be affected is 150m².

Without mitigation, a nest could be disturbed or destroyed during works. Vegetation clearance should be undertaken outside of the main bird nesting season, which is March - August inclusive, where possible.

If clearance works are undertaken during the nesting period, a check by a competent person will be required for nesting birds in advance of any vegetation clearance. If an active nest is recorded, all works must cease within 5m of the nest, until the young have fledged.

It is advised to remove any cut vegetation from the area of proposed works as this could provide suitable nesting bird habitat, as well as suitable habitat for other species, including hedgehog. The recommendation is to either chip the woody material or cut it to manageable lengths and create habitat piles in the wider site where animals will not be disturbed. The least disturbed area is in the southern corner at the base of the wall and hazel coppice stools (ref T1 & T2).

The installation of three bird boxes would compensate for the loss of suitable nesting habitat. Boxes should be installed 1-3m from the ground in a sheltered position away from prevailing wind, rain and strong sunlight (avoid south facing). The ideal locations would be on the property itself, upon completion of works.

A further two bird boxes should be installed, which are suitable for swifts and should be installed approximately 5m from the ground. These would be considered a conservation gain. An example of a swift box is a WoodStone swift box provided by NHBS can be viewed on their website⁷.

4.1.5 Hedgehog

Hedgehog is likely to be present on site and within proximity to the proposed works. Without care, potential harm could come to these animals.

All excavations should be covered up overnight or means of escape provided. Means of escape could include the provision of an earth ramp or the placement of a plank of rough-sawn timber. Night lighting should be minimised as far as possible in line with that identified for bats above.

Construction materials must be stored off the ground on pallets and waste materials in skips.

⁷ NHBS [Vivara Pro WoodStone Swift Nest Box | NHBS Practical Conservation Equipment](#) (Accessed on 13 November 2023).

4.1.6 Invertebrates

Invertebrates are also likely to be affected as a result of the loss of vegetation. Therefore, it is recommended that wildlife hotel is installed. The most suitable location would be to the rear of the site, along the northern boundary between the two hazel copied stools (ref T1 & T2). The Wildlife Trust⁸ and RSPB⁹ provide advice on bug hotels, which could be modified to incorporate a hedgehog box at the base. This could be a great opportunity for a community project.

4.2 Amphibian and Reptile Precautionary Working Method Statement

A PWMS approach is taken for works that are considered to be of low impact in nature in respect to GCN (i.e. involve the removal of very small areas of terrestrial habitat >75m from the nearest known GCN ponds).

Measures include:

- A check for reptiles and amphibians by a suitably qualified ecologist (i.e. licenced GCN ecologist) is required ahead of any vegetation clearance works and demolition works where the vegetation is in excess of 15cm.
- Should a great crested newt be identified during the works, all works **must stop** immediately, and Natural England must be consulted prior to works re-commencing.
- Following a check, confirming no great crested newt will be disturbed and the removal of any other reptile or amphibian, above ground disturbance works including vegetation cutting and demolition works should take place within 48 hours.
- All areas within the proposed Scheme should be maintained as unsuitable with no stored materials on the ground or vegetation cover in excess of ≤ 5 cm.
- Where vegetation is allowed to grow above 15cm, a suitability qualified ecologist (i.e. licenced GCN ecologist) must undertake a check prior to any vegetation cutting.
- At least 48 hours should be allowed between vegetation clearance and the commencement of ground-breaking works for any reptiles or amphibians to disperse.
- Otherwise, following vegetation clearance, carrying out destructive searches under the supervision of a licenced great crested newt surveyor.
- If materials are temporarily stored on any adjacent areas of grassland, those areas must be maintained below ≤ 5 cm sward height, to reduce their suitability for reptiles and/or amphibians. Where vegetation is above 15cm, the above approach should be undertaken.
- Construction materials will have to be stored off the ground on pallets and waste materials in skips.

⁸ Wildlife Trust. How to build a bug mansion. [How to build a bug mansion | The Wildlife Trusts](#) (Accessed on 13 November 2023).

⁹ RSPB Helping Nature Series <https://www.rspb.org.uk/helping-nature/what-you-can-do/activities/build-a-bug-hotel> (Accessed on 13 November 2023).

4.3 Conclusions

The proposed Scheme will not affect any statutory designated sites. Furthermore, there will be no loss of habitats that are of Principal Importance under section 41 of the NERC Act 2006. No trees will be affected or lost as a result of the proposed Scheme.

The proposed Scheme and associated works will involve the demolition, extension and modification of buildings which will affect suitability for bats. The impacts on bats will be reported on separately in a dedicated preliminary bat roost assessment report.

There will be a permanent loss of approximately 450m² of grassland, which has no significant ecological value (ref G1 & G2). There will be additional temporary impacts on approximately 150m² of grassland to enable the demolition and construction works to the south of the property (i.e. ref B4). There will also be a loss of a limited area of undisturbed habitat on site (TN1). The dense ivy stand (ref TN2) will also be lost as it covers building 4, which will be demolished.

These impacts without mitigation in place could affect wildlife including amphibians, bats, birds, hedgehogs and reptiles. There will also be a loss of suitable nesting and roosting habitats for birds and bats.

If clearance works are undertaken during the nesting period, a check by a competent person will be required to undertake a nesting bird check in advance of vegetation clearance and building works. If an active nest is recorded, then works must cease within 5m of the nest, until the young have fledged.

The installation of three bird boxes would compensate for the temporary loss of suitable nesting habitat. The addition of two swift boxes would provide a conservation gain for birds.

The planting of occasional trees along the boundary features of the entire site would compensate for the loss of natural habitats on site and provide improved habitats for birds and bats along with other wildlife.

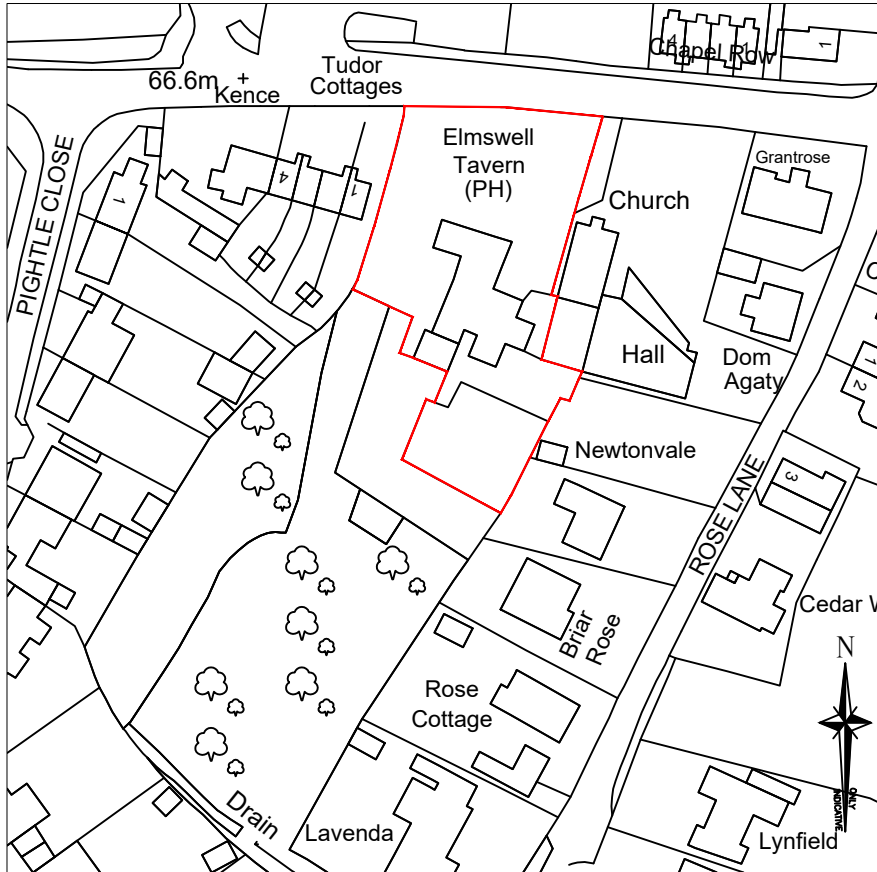
All excavations should be covered up overnight or means of escape provided. Means of escape could include the provision of an earth ramp or the placement of a plank of rough-sawn timber.

Material storage and construction waste management should be carried out in line with the recommendations identified within the precautionary working method statement (PWMS) in Section 4.2.

The risk of harm to wildlife posed by the proposed works is negligible if the above recommendations are followed. If any wildlife is uncovered, it must be safely relocated to a suitable habitat that will not be disturbed.

Recommendations will be provided within a dedicated PRA report to manage the risks of causing harm to bats.

Appendix A. Drawings



Site Location Plan (1:1250)



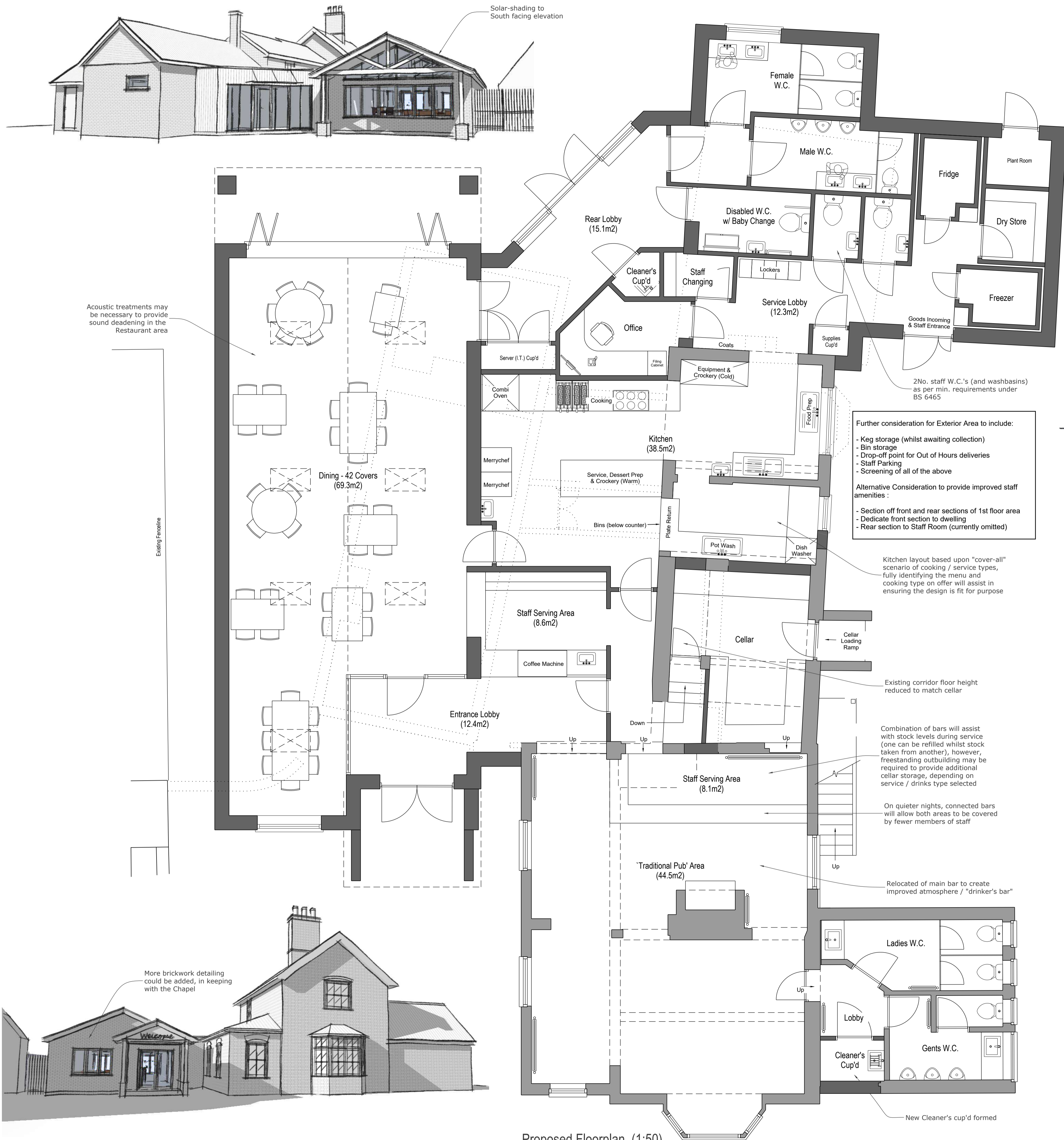
CLIENT
Elmswell Parish Council

PROJECT
The Tavern Public House,
School Road, Elmswell, IP30 9EE

REF	DESCRIPTION	DATE	BY	AUTH
-	-	-	-	-

TITLE
Site Location Plan

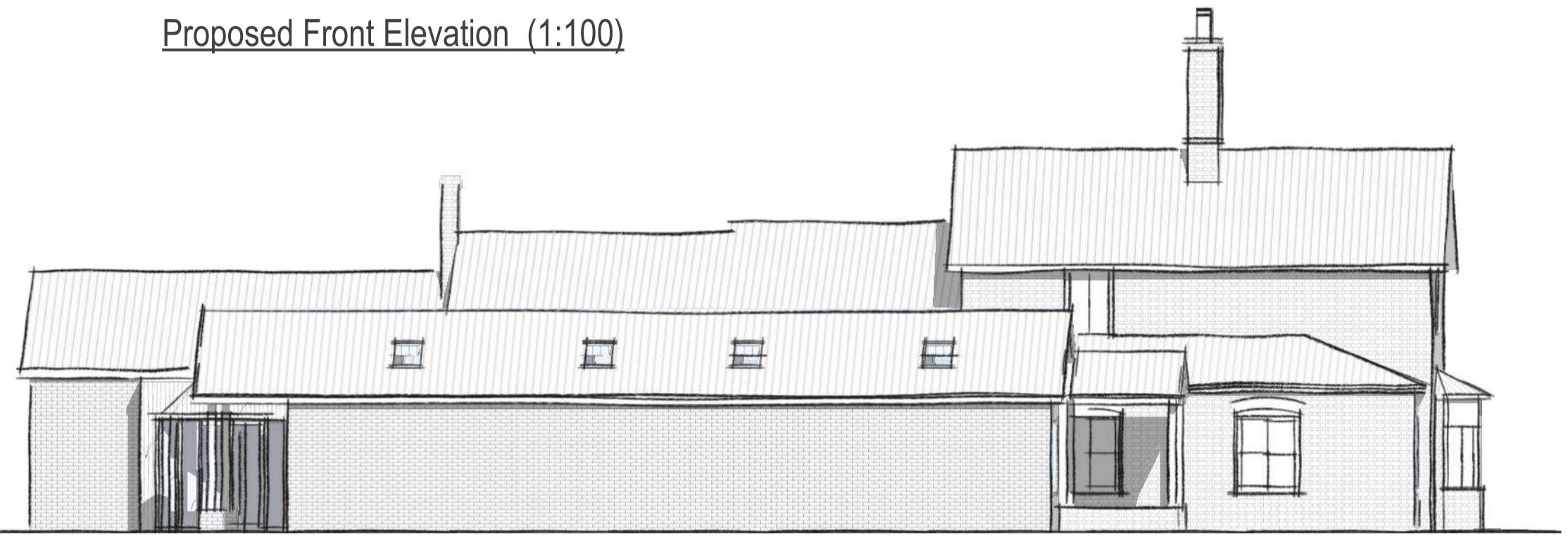
DRG NO. 23-007-Plans	SCALE As Shown	REV P1	RED BRICK CHURCH ROAD, BEYTON BURY ST EDMUNDS IP30 9AL	
DRAWN DM	AUTH DM	DATE 04.07.2023	T. 01284 723000 E. info@donani.design W. www.donani.design	



Proposed Floorplan (1:50)



Proposed Front Elevation (1:100)



Proposed Left Flank Elevation (1:100)



Proposed Rear Elevation (1:100)



Proposed Right Flank Elevation (1:100)

PRELIMINARY DRAWING
THIS DRAWING IS FOR PRELIMINARY PURPOSES ONLY AND MUST BE READ AS A CONSTRUCTION ISSUE. IT INDICATES DESIGN INTENT ONLY AND IS SUBJECT TO AMENDMENT DURING FINAL DESIGN DEVELOPMENT.



CLIENT
Elmswell Parish Council

PROJECT
The Railway Tavern Public House,
School Road, Elmswell, IP30 9EE

REF	DESCRIPTION	DATE	BY	AUTH
P1	Discussion Only	10.06.23	DM	DM

TITLE
Initial Ground Floor Plan and Elevation Concepts - Alternative C

DRG NO.	SCALE	REV
23-007-SK04	As Shown	P1

DRAWN	AUTH	DATE
DM	DM	10.06.2023



All drawings are to be read with other relevant drawings & documents. Any discrepancies are to be reported to the Designer immediately.

Do not scale information - ask.

Drawing revisions marked with a 'T' are preliminary issue & should not be used for construction.

Appendix B. Figures



Key
 Redline boundary
 PEA extent

Document title: Preliminary Ecological Appraisal overview of the Elmwell Tavern, School Rd, Elmwell, Bury Saint Edmunds IP30 9EE

Revision: 1.1

Date: 18/11/2023

Client's name: John Putman Architects

Originator: Gintare Daunoraviciute
 Checker: Lee Rudd
 Reviewer: Lee Rudd
 Approved: Lee Rudd

Connected Ecology
 24 Wilby Road, Norwich, NR1 2NJ
 Email: lee.rudd@connected-ecology.co.uk
 Tel: 07368157215





- ### Key
- Redline boundary
 - PEA extent
 - Building #
 - Cellar
 - Hardstanding
 - Patio
 - Pavers
 - Tarmac paving
 - Storage tank
 - Storage container
 - Gravel track
 - Footpath
 - Gateway
 - 7ft wall
 - 6ft wall
 - 5ft panel fence
 - 4ft wall
 - Herris fencing
 - Grass area #
 - Ivy growth
 - Planted bed
 - Grassland, scrub and trees
 - Ornamental and fruit trees
 - Tree #
 - Target Note #

Document title: Preliminary Ecological Appraisal of the Elmswell Tavern, School Rd, Elmswell, Bury Saint Edmunds IP30 9EE

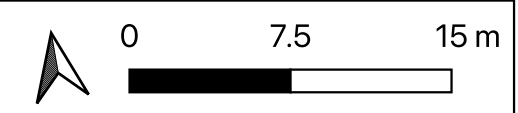
Revision: 1.1

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 Tel: 07368157215



Appendix C. Photographs



Photo 1. Building 1 as outlined in red. North east aspect.



Photo 2. Building 1. Rear of building, adjoining to building 2 (ref B2A).



Photo 3. Interface between building 1 and building 2. Gap under lead flashing. Shows most of gaps under pantiles as being infilled with mortar. All gaps here, were cobwebbed.



Photo 4. Interface between building 1 and building 2. Gap under lead flashing and damaged barge board. Evidence that this section of the building was recently overed in a climbing plant.



Photo 4. Internal view of building 1. Lobby to toilets.



Photo 5. Building 1. Shows access hatch to roof space, within ladies toilets.

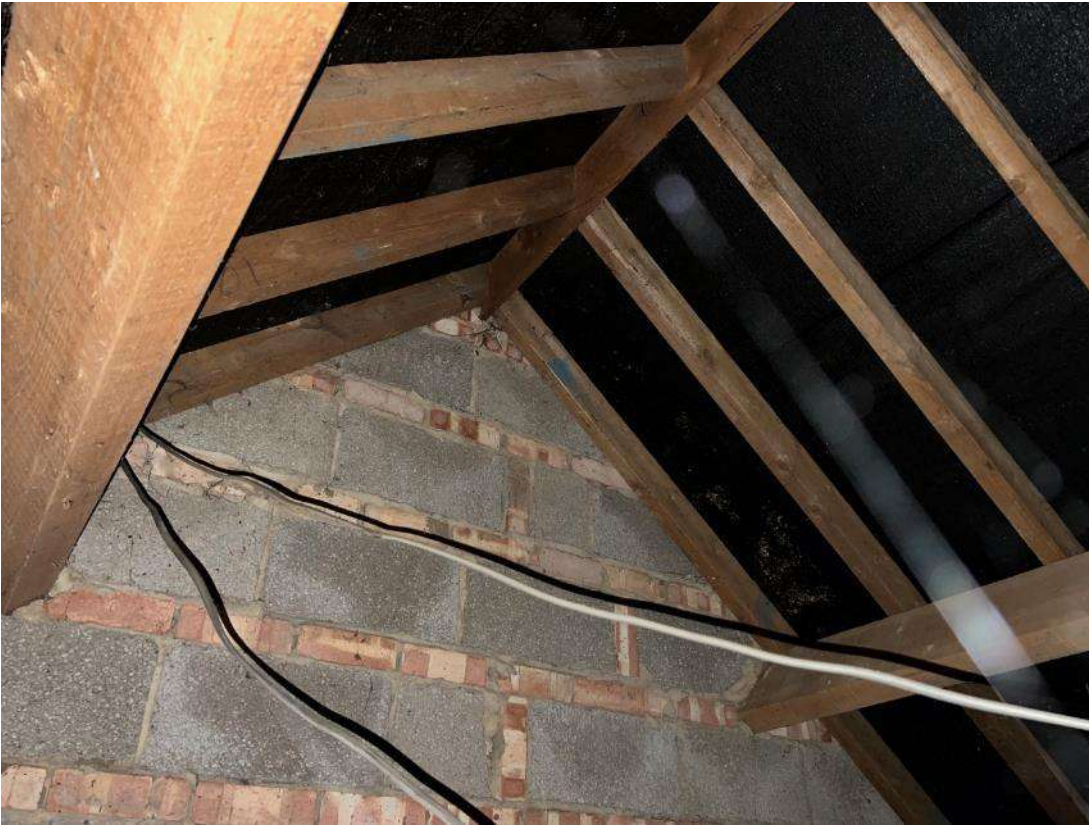


Photo 6. Building 1. Shows modern timber work, block work and roof lined with felt. North end of roof space.



Photo 7. Building 1. South end of roof space. No access points between building 1 and 2.



Photo 8. Building 2 (ref B2A). Shows some slipped pan tiles as outlined in red. Evidence that this part of the building was covered with a climbing plant. This has caused damage to the fascia, soffit and under felt.



Photo 9. Building 2 (ref B2A). Close up of roof as shown in photo 8. Shows missing mortar under ridge tiles as shown in red.



Photo 10. Building 2 (ref B2A and B2B). Shows evidence of climbing plant on side of building B2A. Building B2B is identified by the red outline.



Photo 11. Building 2 (ref B2A and B2B). Building B2A is outlined in red.



Photo 12. Building 2 (ref B2A). Interval view of roof space. Shows damaged under felt and fire wall between building B2A and B3A. Taken from loft hatch.

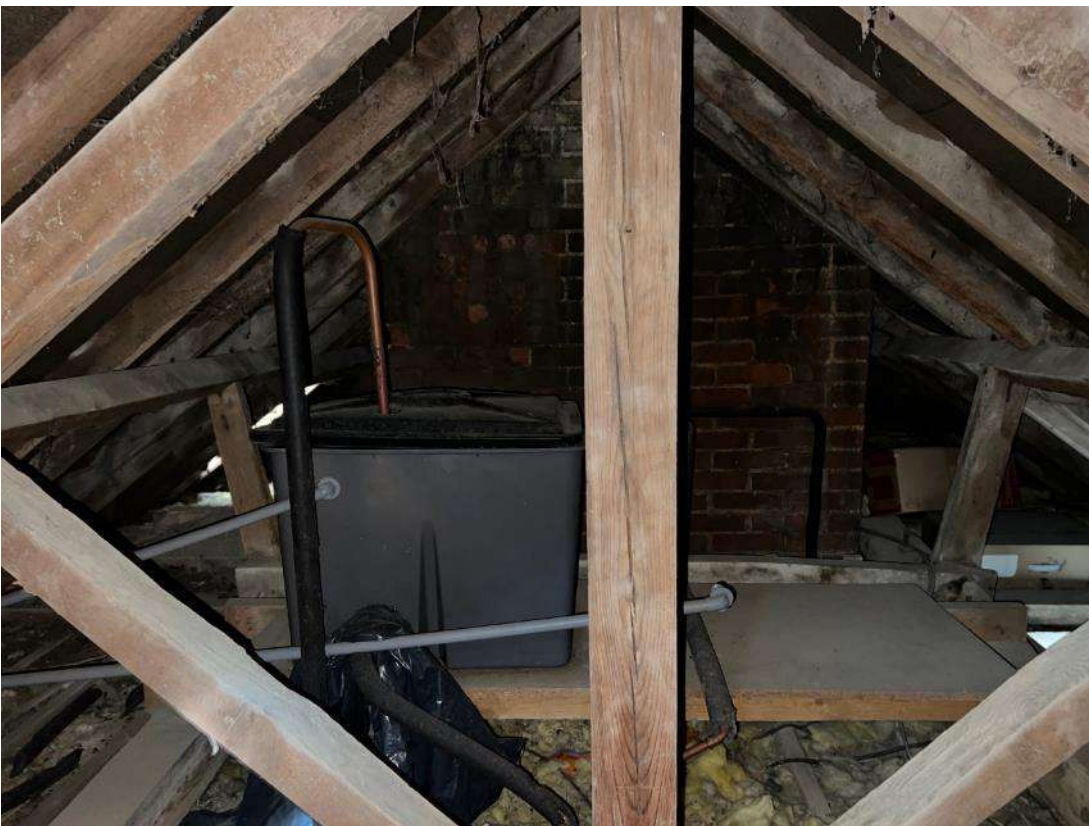


Photo 13. Building 2 (ref B2A). Shows north end of roof space behind chimney stack.



Photo 14. Building 2 (ref B2A). Likely evidence of squirrel damage. A squirrel has been seen to enter the roof space of building 3 on multiple occasions during the survey visits.



Photo 15. Building 3 (ref B3A). East aspect of building.



Photo 15. Building 3 (ref B3A). West aspect of building. Extent of building 3 is outline in red. Cellar hatch and loading ramp is identified in blue.



Photo 16. Building 3 (ref B3A). Shows gap under lead flashing where building B3A adjoins building B2A as identified by red circle. Most of the gaps beneath the pan tiles are all mortar filled. West aspect.



Photo 17. Building 3 (ref B3A) adjoining building B2A. East aspect.



Photo 18. Building 3 (ref B3A). Roof space. Shows old timber work and sarking underlay.

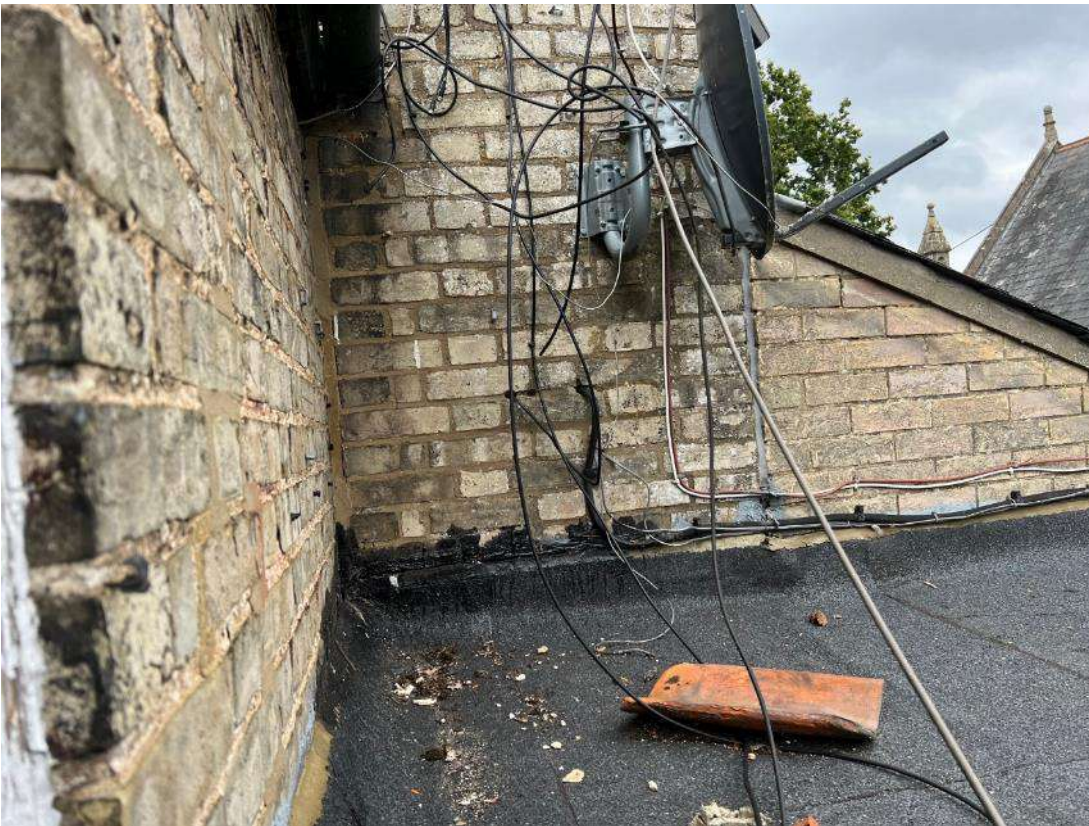


Photo 19. Building 3 (ref B3B). Shows flat roof of building B3B adjoining eastern aspect of building B3A.



Photo 20. Building 3 (ref B3B). Shows flat roof of building B3B adjoining building 5 (ref B5).



Photo 21. Building 4 (ref B4). Outline of building shown in red. Shows western access point and timber cladding. There is a corrugated cement roof.



Photo 22. Building 4 (ref B4). Shows building 4 built up to building B3A. Most of the roof is covered in dense ivy growth.



Photo 23. Building 4 (ref B4). Shows gaps between roofing material and brick work. There are also gaps under corrugated ridge.



Photo 24. Building 4 (ref B4). Internal view, looking towards western access point. Shows no underlay material.



Photo 25. Building 4 (ref B4). Internal view, looking towards southern gable. Shows dense ivy growth within roof space and exposed corrugated sheeted roof.



Photo 25. Building 5. Shows eastern and southern aspect of building. Taken from within gravelled and seating area.



Photo 26. Building 5. Shows eastern aspect of building along with pergola and patio area. Red circle outlines damaged ridge tile.



Photo 27. Building 5. Shows close up of damaged ridge tile identified in photo 26.



Photo 28. Building 5. Shows northern gable end.



Photo 29. Building 3 and building 5. Shows building 5 slated roof as outlined in red.



Photo 30. Cellar at base of building 3. Looking north.



Photo 31. Cellar at base of building 3. Looking south.



Photo 32. Pergola and patio area adjacent to building 5. Also shows 6ft fence alongside grassland area 2 (ref G2).



Photo 33. Shows gravelled area with benches to the rear of the site. Grassland area 3 (ref G3), hazel stools (T1 & T2) along southern brick wall and eastern brick wall are also shown.



Photo 34. Shows concrete pathway along the front of the tavern (ref B2A), alongside grassland area 1 (ref G1).



Photo 35. Shows grassland area (ref G4) in foreground, with extensive area of tarmac providing vehicle access and parking for the tavern. Looking north.



Photo 36. Taken from the road, looking at extensive area of tarmac, providing access and parking for the tavern. Grassland area 1 along with metal railings are also shown. Building 1 is shown in red, building B2A is shown in blue and building B2B is shown in purple.



Photo 37. Shows brick wall along north west corner of site alongside road.



Photo 38. Shows adjacent residential properties, brick wall along western boundary and tarmac driveway.



Photo 39. Shows brick wall alongside road and grassland area 1. The oak tree (T3) on the adjacent land is also shown.



Photo 40. Grassland area 1. Shows brick wall along eastern boundary of site, with church on the adjacent land. Cotoneaster spp. are also shown (ref T3) as outlined in red.



Photo 41. As per photo 40. Shows oak tree (T3) and evidence the play area is well used.



Photo 42. Shows south eastern corner, where ancient hazel stool (T1) exists alongside brick wall boundary. Also shows short grass sward in grassland area 3.



Photo 43. Taken alongside internal brick wall boundary to south of garden. Shows dense ivy growth at rear of building 4 (ref TN2).



Photo 44. Shows grassland area 4 along with storage containers, brick walls and corner of building 4.



Photo 45. Shows grassland area 4, along with Heras panels identifying boundary of site. Beyond panels shows overground grassland area, scrubland and tree area.



Photo 46. Shows close up of grassland, scrub and tree area to south of proposed Scheme.



Photo 47. Shows limited area of overgrown vegetation alongside eastern boundary of site (ref TN1).

Appendix D. Legislation

Statutory designated sites

Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) are protected areas in the UK, designated under:

- the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended) in England and Wales (including the adjacent territorial sea), and
- the Conservation of Offshore Marine Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 in the UK offshore area.

Under these Regulations, the UK Government and devolved administrations are required to establish a network of important high-quality conservation sites that will make a significant contribution to conserving the habitats and species identified in Annexes I and II, respectively, of European Council Directive 92/43/EEC on the conservation of natural habitats and of wild fauna and flora, known as the Habitats Directive. The listed habitat types and species are those considered to be most in need of conservation at a European level (excluding birds). Of the Annex I habitat types, 78 are believed to occur in the UK. Of the Annex II species, 43 are native to, and normally resident in, the UK.

Special Protection Areas (SPAs) are protected areas for birds in the UK. They are protected through the same regulations as SACs as detailed above.

Ramsar Sites are wetlands of international importance designated under the Ramsar Convention. Sites proposed for selection are advised by the relevant statutory nature conservation body (or bodies) within the UK. The designation of UK Ramsar Sites has generally been underpinned through prior notification of these areas as Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs). Accordingly, these receive statutory protection under the Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981 (as amended). Government have also issued policy statements relating to Ramsar Sites which extend to them the same protection at a policy level as Special Areas of Conservation and Special Protection Areas.

Protected species

All birds, their nests and eggs are protected by The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981, where it outlines it is an offence to intentionally kill, injure or take any wild bird. It is also against the law to damage or destroy the nest of any wild bird whilst it is in use or being built. It is also against the law to take, destroy the egg of any wild bird. There is additional protection for schedule 1 species, such as barn owl.

The Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) provides enhanced protection for **barn owls** and other schedule 1 species. The enhanced protection for schedule 1 species is that they can not be disturbed whilst nesting.

In Britain, **all bat species** and their roosts are legally protected by both domestic and international legislation. They are protected under both Wildlife and Countryside Act (1981) (as amended) and the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations (2017) (as amended).

Great crested newts are fully protected under the UK and European legislation. They are protected under both the Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) and The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended).

White-clawed crayfish is listed under Annex II of the habitats directive, while the areas are designated as Special Areas of Conservation to protect this species. Outside of these, a licence is required to capture this species. It is listed as a priority species under the Biodiversity Action Plan and is a Species of Principal Importance under section 41 of the NERC Act 2006.

Reptiles, such as common lizard, slow worm, grass snake or adder, are protected under the Wildlife & Countryside Act (1981) as amended. The legislation makes it illegal to deliberately or recklessly kill or injure any native reptile. This protection therefore requires that reasonable effort be made to avoid harm to reptiles.

Otters are protected through the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) and revised by the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2004, making it an offence to:

- Intentionally kill, injure or take an otter; and/or
- Possess or control any (live or dead) otter, or any part of or anything derived from an otter; and/or
- Intentionally or recklessly damage or destroy or obstruct access to any structure or place used for shelter or protection by an otter; and/or
- Intentionally or recklessly disturb an otter while it is occupying a structure or place for that purpose; and/or
- Sell, offer for sale, possess or transport for the purpose of sale any (live or dead) otter or part or
- Derivative of an otter; and/or
- To advertise for buying and selling such things.

Furthermore, otters are included on Schedule 2 of the Conservation (Habitats &c.) Regulations (1994), making it an offence to:

- Deliberately to capture or kill a wild animal of a European protected species; and/or
- Deliberately to disturb any such animal; and/or
- Deliberately to take or destroy the eggs of such an animal; and/or
- Damage or destroy a breeding site or resting place of such an animal.

Otters are also listed as a priority species.

Water vole are protected through the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended), receiving full protection since 2008. The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981, together with amending legislation, lists the following offences:

- Intentionally killing, taking or injuring a water vole; and/or
- Possessing or controlling any live or dead water vole, or any part or derivative; and/or
- Intentionally or recklessly damaging or destroying a water vole's place of shelter or protection; and/or
- Intentionally or recklessly disturbing a water vole whilst it is occupying a structure or place which it uses for shelter or protection; and/or
- Intentionally or recklessly obstructing access to a water vole's place of shelter or protection; and/or
- Selling, offering for sale, or possessing or transporting for the purposes of sale, any live or dead water vole, or any part or derivative, or advertising any of these for buying or selling.

Water vole are also listed as a priority species.

Protection of Badgers Act 1992 lists both badgers and their setts as protected. A licence may be obtained from Natural England if disturbance of badgers in their sett cannot be avoided or their sett is to be damaged.

Other protection

The Hedgerows Regulation 1997 aims to protect important hedgerows in the countryside. They make it illegal to remove most countryside hedges without first notifying the local planning authority and provide protection for "important hedgerows".

The Animal Welfare Act 2006 is the principal law relating to animal welfare. Animal cruelty includes causing unnecessary suffering to an animal and poisoning an animal. The 2006 Act applies to all vertebrate animals, including badgers, bats, foxes and rabbits (this is not an exhaustive list).

National Planning Policy - National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). Section 15 of the National Planning Policy Framework. Planning policies and decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by "... minimising impacts on and providing net gains for biodiversity... 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."

Natural England Licensing - EPS Mitigation Licensing

Licences can be obtained from the Wildlife Management and Licensing Service at Natural England to allow certain activities that would otherwise constitute an offence for the purposes of development (e.g. destruction of a bat roost, loss of great crested newt aquatic and terrestrial habitat, etc).