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& environmental services

**1 Shorefield Way, Milford on Sea,
SO41 0RX**

Ecological Appraisal

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Contents

	Page
1.0 Summary	1
2.0 Introduction	2
3.0 Methodology	3
4.0 Results and Analysis	4
5.0 Requirements and Recommendations	8

Appendices

Appendix A: Site location

Appendix B: Existing site plan

Appendix C: Proposed Site Plan

Appendix D: Protected sites, habitats and species data from MAGIC database

Appendix E: Protected species legislation

1.0 Summary

The proposals are to demolish the current residence and construct a new building with a similar footprint further to the North of the property. The resulting development would have a negligible impact on the local ecology and with appropriate mitigation would provide a net gain for biodiversity. During the development there is potential for disturbance of protected species and further survey efforts need to occur to assess their presence and appropriate mitigation strategies for the works.

The building was checked for signs of bats and birds. Evidence of previously nesting birds was observed. No direct evidence for the presence of bats was recorded but inspection of the loft space was limited. There were many crevices and gaps on different elevations creating access points for bats and birds into cavities and voids where they would remain unseen, along with any evidence. The building was deemed to have medium roosting potential with the immediate surrounding habitat also deemed to have medium potential for commuting and foraging bats.

It is recommended that two bat emergence/re-entry surveys are carried out at the site between May and August/September in order to determine the bat roosting status of the site so that appropriate mitigation can be designed. At least one of these surveys needs to take place before the end of August.

2.0 Introduction

Background

- 2.1 Peach Ecology was instructed in May 2023 to carry out a preliminary ecological appraisal of 1 Shorefield Way, Milford on Sea, SO41 0RX (central Grid Reference: SZ 28400 92374) with an emphasis on checking for bats and birds. The site location is shown in **Appendix A**, with the existing plans shown in **Appendix B**. This report has been produced to support the planning application to New Forest District Council for permission to relocate the existing garage and convert the remaining loft including extending the current dormer windows, as shown in **Appendix C**.
- 2.2 This report describes the existing ecology relevant to bats and birds based on the findings of a site visit, a protected species data search and a review of local and national policies.

Description of site and surrounding area

- 2.3 The site is situated to the Northwest of Milford on Sea, in a suburban housing estate surrounded by similar detached houses. The estate is bounded on the South and West by Milford on Sea Local Nature Reserve, predominantly broad-leaf woodland. To the North are areas of scrub, cropland and lines of mature trees.
- 2.4 The property is a 1970s brick-built detached bungalow with a pitched roof covered in concrete tiles and two gable ends. There is a small single-story extension on the north of the property with a pitched roof and gable end also covered with concrete tiles and hanging tiles respectively. The roof has flat dormer windows on both the North and South elevations which are also covered with flat hanging tiles and sealed with lead flashing.
- 2.5 The front garden is mainly comprised of modified grassland with a few ornamental plants and a senior species of Acer. The rear garden has a small patch of modified grassland with a large number of ornamental plants and is shaded by a large oak in the neighbours garden to the west.

Brief

- 2.6 To carry out an Ecological Assessment of the site and inform the clients of any ecological implications associated with the current proposals.

3.0 Methodology

Desk Study

- 3.1 This involved gathering ecological data relating to statutory nature conservation sites from within 2km, the results of which are shown in **Appendix D**. A search was undertaken using Multi-Agency Geographic Information for the Countryside (MAGIC), a DEFRA run website, to check for European Protected Species licences nearby. Ordnance Survey maps and aerial images were assessed to check for other relevant data on notable habitats and species nearby including ponds and wildlife corridors where the site connects into the surrounding area.

Site Assessment

- 3.2 The site was originally assessed on the 31st of May 2023 by Angus Layton. The initial survey employed techniques based on standard Phase I Habitat Survey (JNCC) methodology and the CIEEM Guidelines for Ecological Impact Assessment (ECIA: CIEEM, 2016). Habitat types on and adjacent to the site were identified according to standard habitat definitions. The collection of botanical information focused on the dominant and key indicator species for each habitat type. The site survey included an assessment of the habitats immediately adjacent to the site, where possible, to look at the value of the site within the local landscape and to see whether these sites supported protected species. Indicative methodologies for the most likely protected and notable species that could occur on-site and be impacted by the proposals are set out below.

Bats

- 3.3 Buildings and trees within the footprint of the site and any areas potentially impacted by the proposals were inspected in accordance with current survey guidance (BCT, 2016) for potential access points and roosting features which could support bats. Trees were checked for ivy cover, crevices and rotten sections from ground level and using a ladder and binoculars where necessary. Buildings were checked internally and externally for any signs of roosting bats or bat activity including droppings, insect feeding remains, worn entrances and staining. Ladders were used to check areas externally along with an endoscope.

Birds

- 3.4 The exterior and interior of the buildings were surveyed for signs of breeding birds and any nesting activity was noted along with birds in the area. Signs looked for included nesting material, droppings, pellets and streaking.

4.0 Results and Discussion

Desk study

4.1 The statutory protected sites within 2km:

- **Solent & Southampton Water** (Ramsar, SPA, SAC) - The site is comprised of estuaries and adjacent coastal habitats including intertidal flats, saline lagoons, shingle beaches, reefs, saltmarsh, and reedbeds, damp woodland, and grazing marsh.
- **HIGHCLIFFE TO MILFORD CLIFFS** (SSSI) - is designated for its exposures of fossil rich Barton Beds and Headon Beds. This unit is in favourable condition as it is one of only three undefended, naturally eroding sections of cliff within the SSSI with good geological exposures. There is some grassy vegetation present on the lower parts of slumped cliffs but most of the cliff frontage is fully exposed with no vegetation encroachment.
- **Hurst Castle And Lymington River Estuary** (SSSI) - This site extends along nine kilometers of the northwest Solent shore and embraces a wide range of coastal habitats of limited distribution on the south coast which are of biological and geomorphological importance. The SSSI below the seawall comprises the estuaries of three substantial streams, intertidal muds, cord-grass *Spartina anglica*, marshes and high-level mixed saltmarsh whilst behind the sea wall is a belt of fresh and brackish marsh including a series of fresh to saline lagoons.
- **Milford On Sea** (LNR) - The area is an ancient woodland with a large meadow in the Western corner and follows the Danestream.
- **Sturt Pond** (LNR) - lies just East from Milford on Sea beach at the start of Hurst Spit. The pond is a haven for swans, ducks, Brent geese, mallard, teal, shelduck & grebes. Two wooden bridges cross the stream which runs from Sturt Pond to the salt marshes. A hidden sanctuary for bird watchers which is the Bird Hide that overlooks the Sturt Pond area of the extensive Keyhaven nature reserve.

4.2 Due to the relatively small scale and extent of the proposals it is unlikely that the development will impact upon any site of importance to nature conservation. It is important however that the proposals follow appropriate pollution prevention and drainage guidelines. The habitats and flora associated with waterways and ground water are sensitive to changes cumulatively, from different impacts locally so every development should consider and mitigate for their own impact with regards drainage and pollution.

Bats

4.3 Two European Protected Species license for bats have been granted within 2km of the site, indicating the importance of the local area to these species:

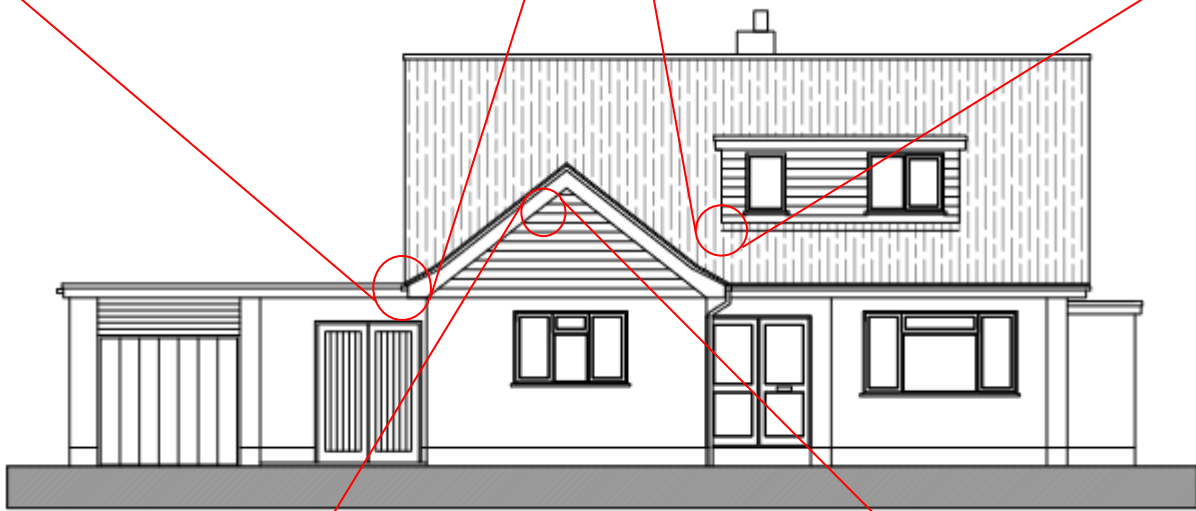
Case reference of granted application	Species on the licence	Licence Start Date	Licence End Date
2018-37117-EPS-MIT	BLE C-PIP	17/09/2018	30/09/2019
2017-29815-EPS-MIT	BLE C-PIP	15/06/2017	31/12/2017

4.4 The local area has value to a range of bat species and therefore it is important that no new external lighting is provided with the proposals as this has been shown to disturb

and disrupt bats. The habitats will be maintained on-site so there is no loss in biodiversity.

Site Assessment

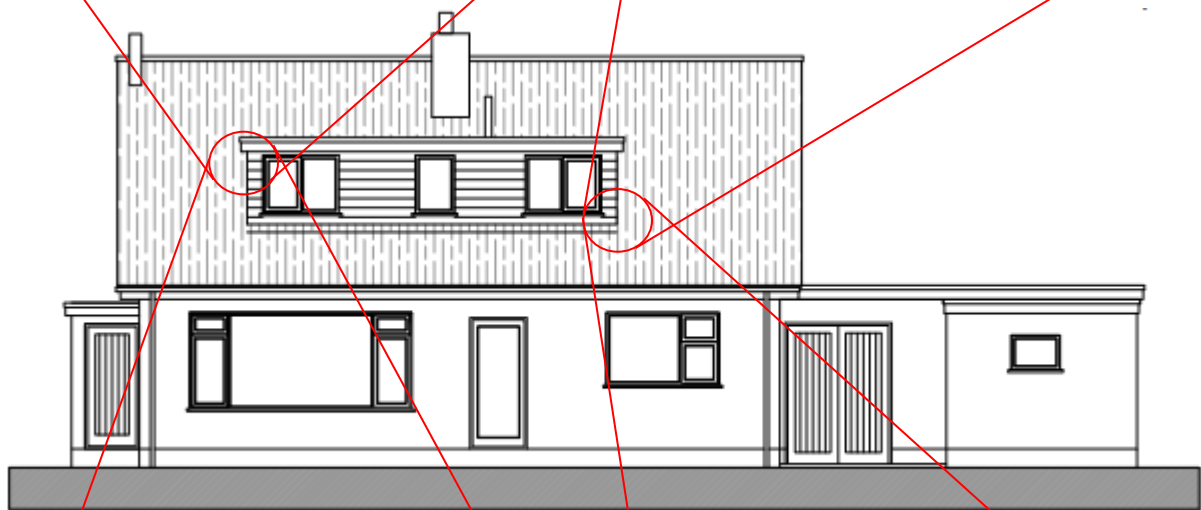
- 4.5 The site is situated in the Northwest of Milford on Sea, in a suburban housing estate surrounded by similar detached houses. The estate is bounded on the South and West by Milford on Sea Local Nature Reserve, predominantly broad-leaf woodland. To the North are areas of scrub, cropland and lines of mature trees.
- 4.6 The front garden is mainly comprised of modified grassland with a few ornamental plants and a senior species of Acer. The rear garden has a small patch of modified grassland with a large number of ornamental plants and is shaded by a large oak in the neighbour to the Wests garden.
- 4.7 The North and South sides of the building showed potential gaps that could be utilised by bats and birds but no other evidence of bats such as; live or dead specimens, droppings, staining and/or squeaking noises were recorded. Sometimes bats leave no visible sign of their presence on the outside of a building (and even when they do, wet weather can wash evidence away).
- 4.8 A previous year's birds nest was found in the covered car parking area, see the top left of **Photo 1**
- 4.9 Internally, the second floor extends and takes up the majority of potential attic space leaving eave storage along the South and North. There is a larger portion of attic space above the single-story extension but this is used as storage regularly by the homeowners, there is also a window into this space creating a large amount of light. At the very apex of the roof is a small attic space that runs the length of the building and was not accessible at the time, it's potential for supporting bats in need of attic space is limited but not negligible. No evidence of bats was found.



north elevation



(Photo 1: Shows some of the potential roosting and access opportunities on the North elevation including elevated tiles and other appropriate gaps)



south elevation



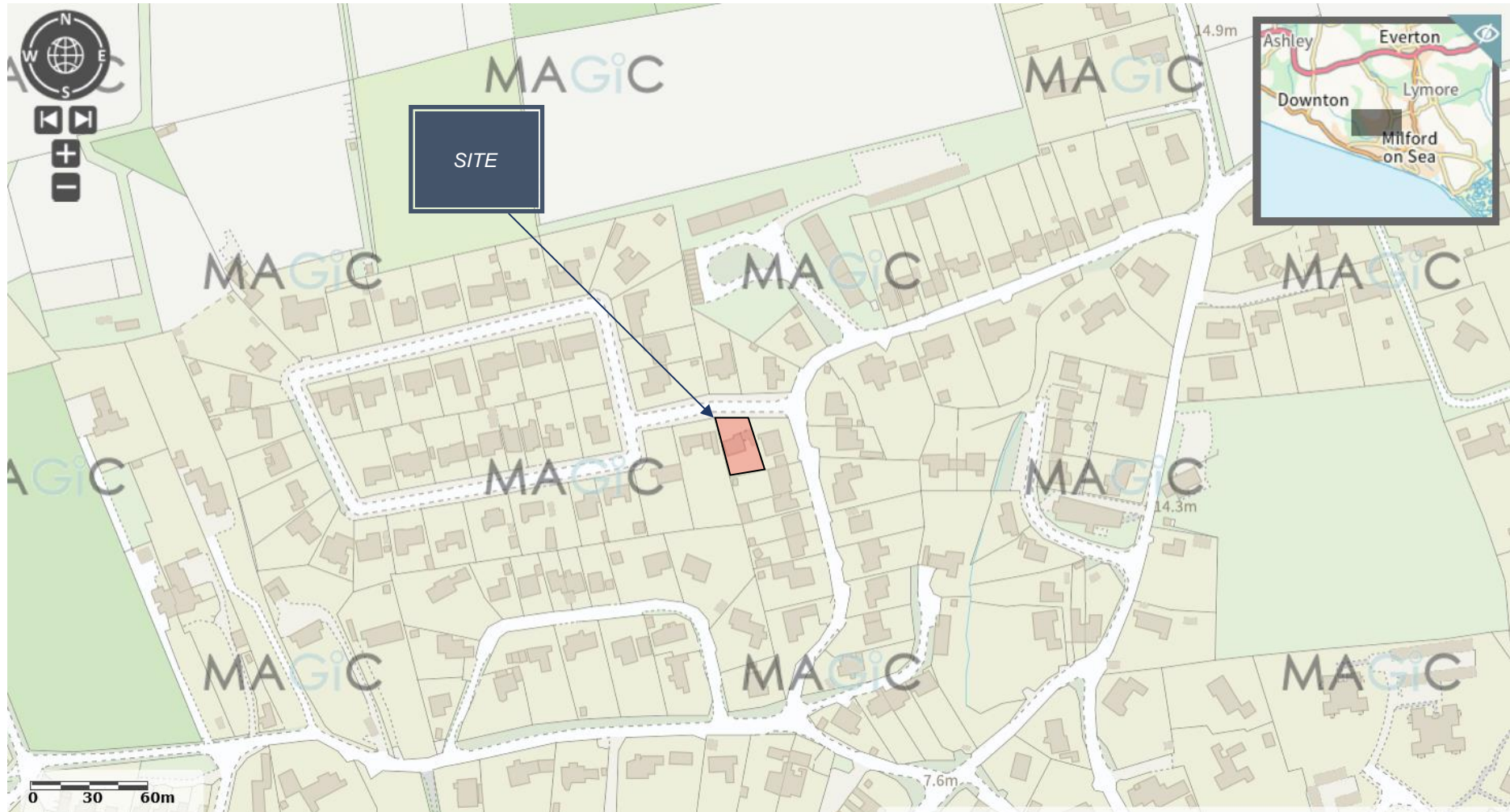
(Photo 2: Shows some of the potential roosting and access opportunities on the South elevation including elevated tiles and other appropriate gaps)

5.0 Requirements and Recommendations

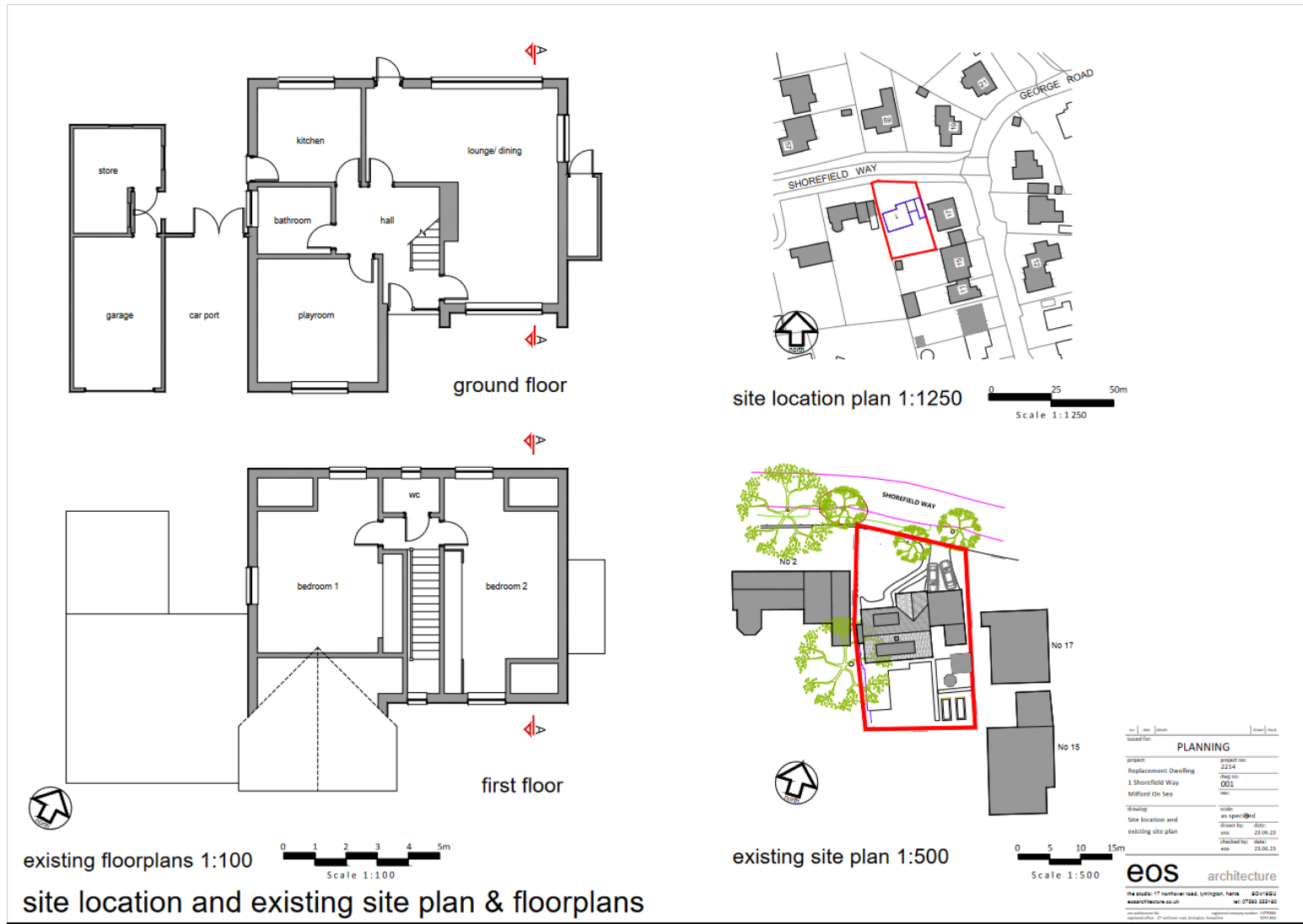
- 5.1 There are numerous gaps and lifted tiles that could be utilised by bats and birds. The habitat surrounding the housing estate is of high importance to commuting and foraging bats. The building will require at least two bat emergence/re-entry surveys carried out between May and September in order to determine the roosting status of the site. At least one of these must be undertaken before the end of August.
- 5.2 Works on the existing roof will need to be undertaken under ecological supervision and these works will need to avoid commencing during the bat hibernation season (which runs from the end of November to February, inclusive). Any bats found can be moved to a bat box provided on site. The completed proposals will have new crevices built in for crevice roosting bats.
- 5.3 New features for roosting bats and nesting birds will be incorporated into the fabric of the new replacement dwelling to ensure there is a net gain for biodiversity, this will include features for crevice roosting bats and for birds like house sparrows and swifts.

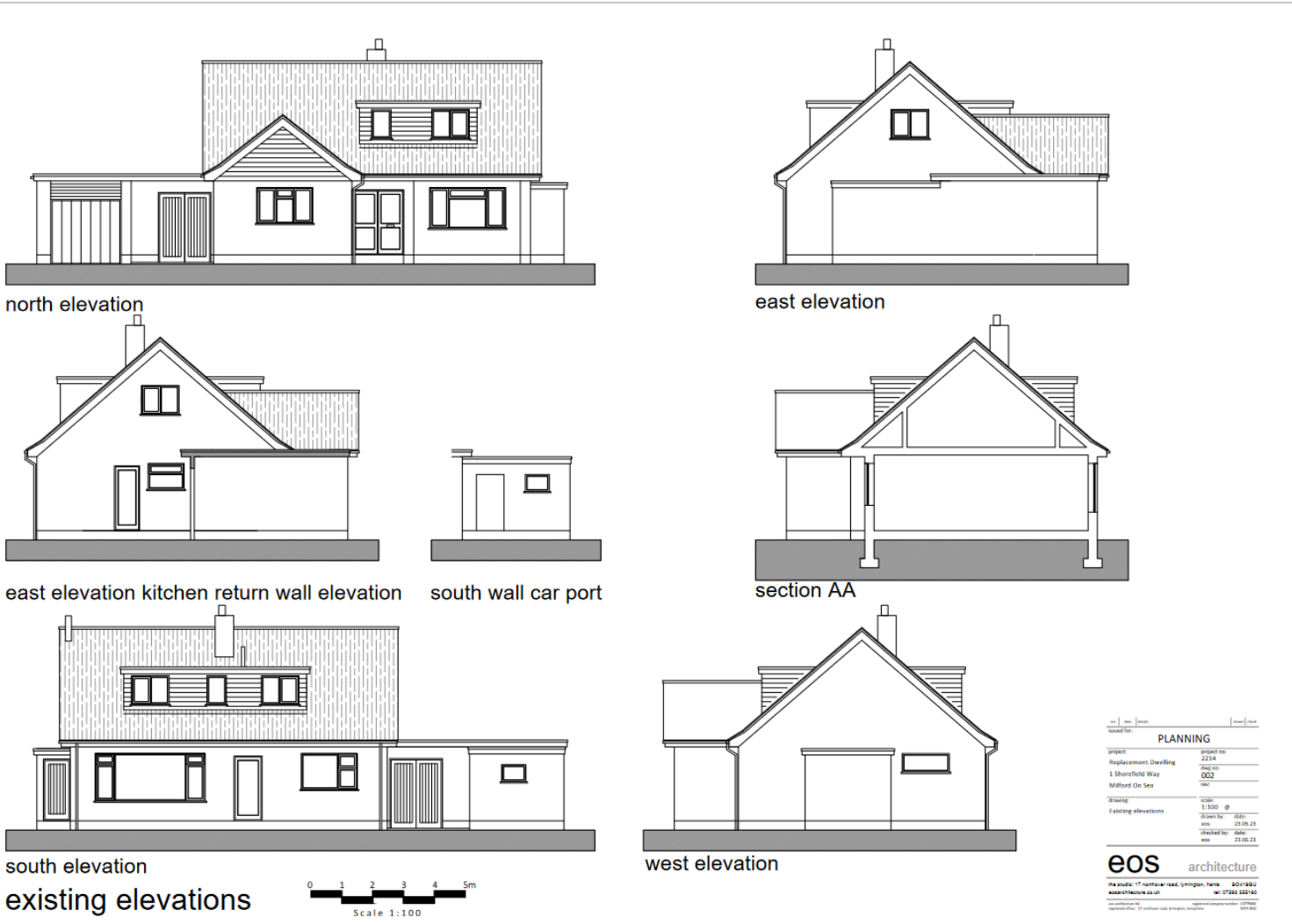
New

Appendix A: Site location

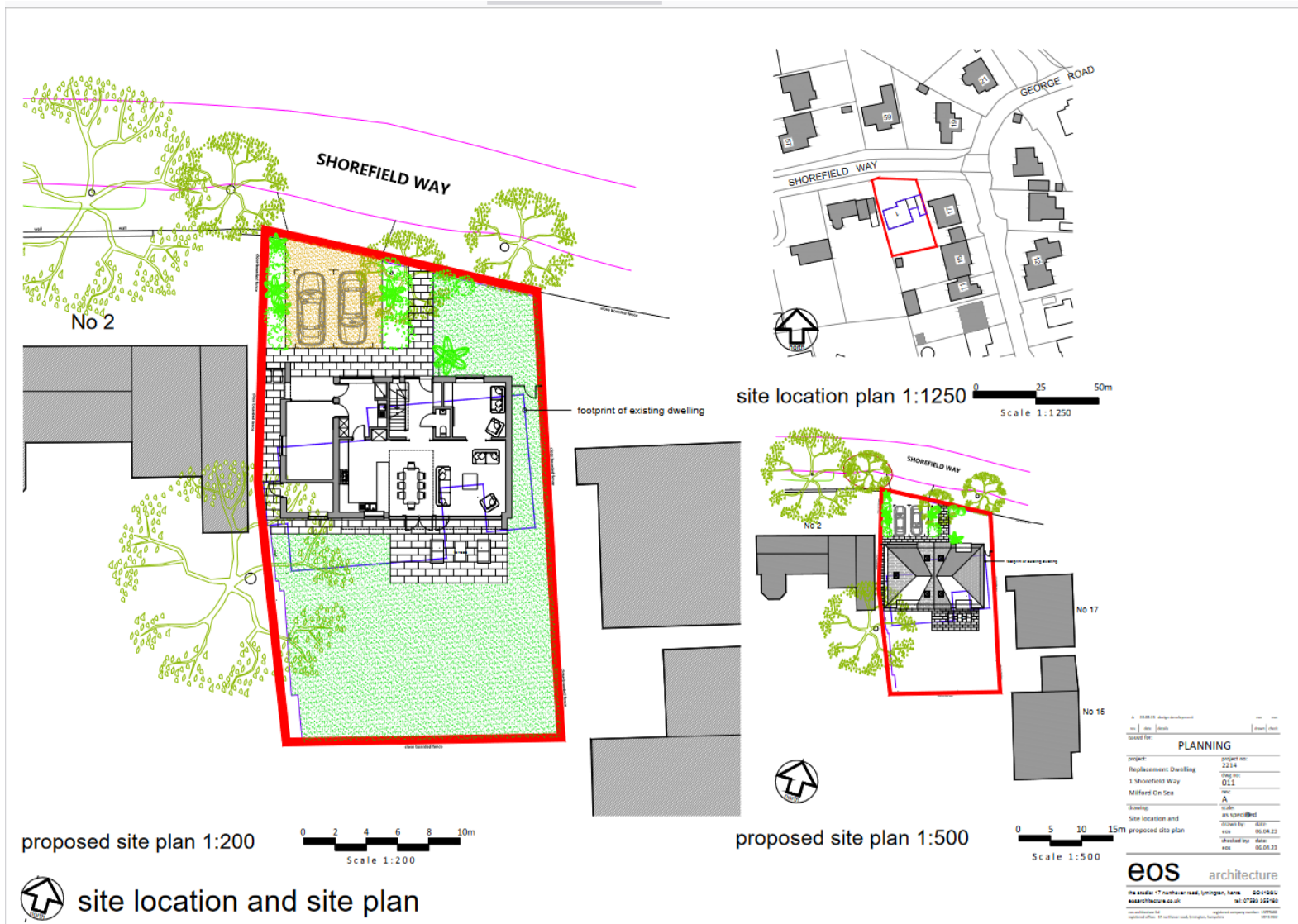


Appendix B: Current Site Plan and Elevations

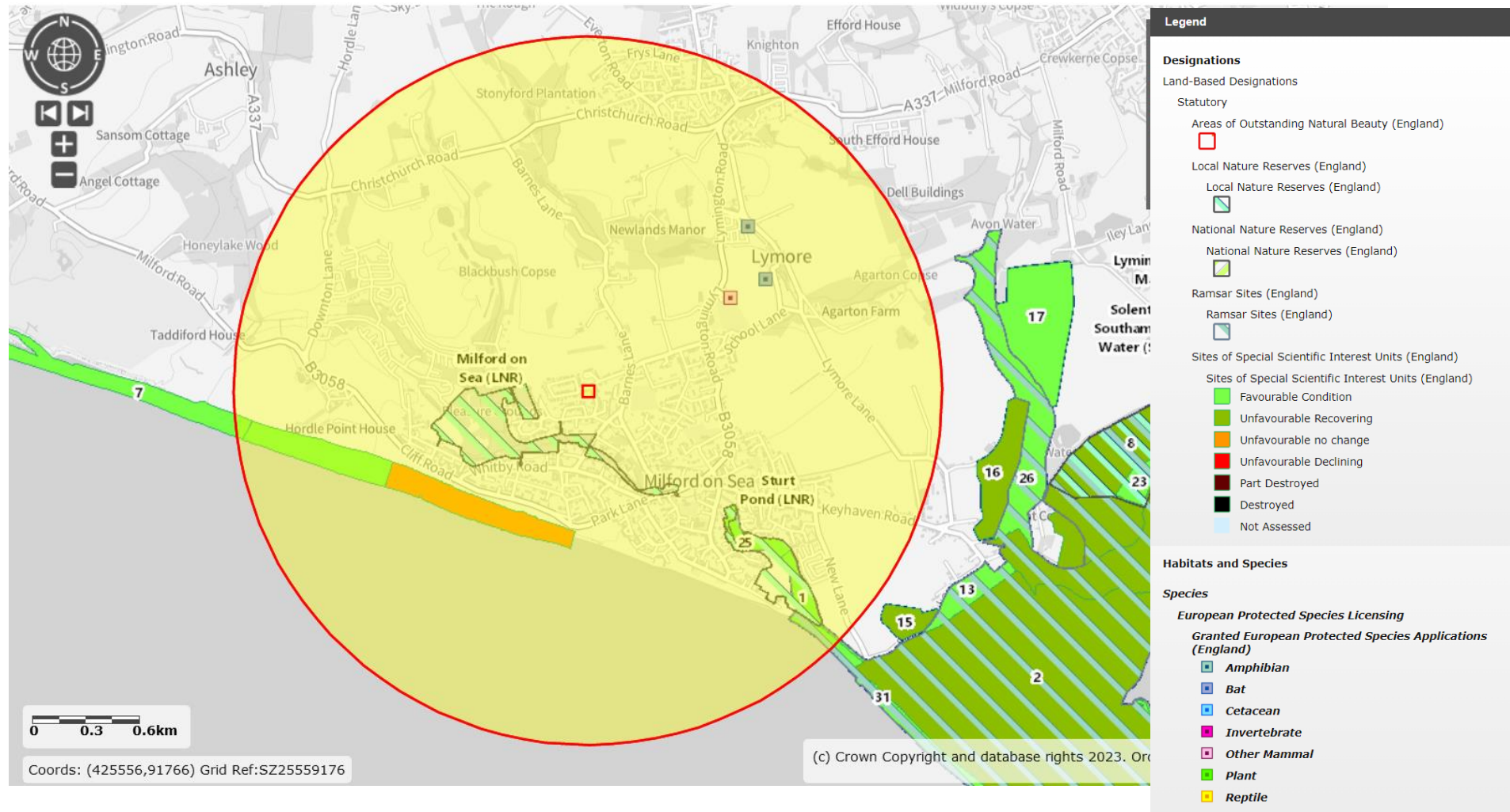




Appendix C: Proposed Site Plan



Appendix D: Protected sites, habitats and species data from MAGiC database within 2km



Appendix E: Protected species legislation

European Protected Species

Bats

These species are listed in Schedule 5 of the *Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981* (as amended) and Schedule 2 of the *Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010*. They are afforded full protection under Section 9(4) of the Act and Regulation 41 of the Regulations. These make it an offence, *inter alia*, to:

- deliberately capture, injure or kill any such animal;
- deliberately disturb any such animal, including in particular any disturbance which is likely:
 - to impair its ability to survive, breed, or rear or nurture their young;
 - to impair its ability to hibernate or migrate;
 - to affect significantly the local distribution or abundance of that species; or
- damage or destroy a breeding site or resting place of any such animal; or
- intentionally or recklessly disturb any of these animals while it is occupying a structure or place that it uses for shelter or protection; or
- intentionally or recklessly obstruct access to any place that any of these animals uses for shelter or protection.

In addition, five British bat species are listed on Annex II of the Habitats Directive. These are:

- Greater horseshoe bat (*Rhinolophus ferrumequinum*);
- Lesser horseshoe bat (*Rhinolophus hipposideros*);
- Bechstein's bat (*Myotis bechsteinii*);
- Barbastelle (*Barbastella barbastellus*);
- Greater mouse-eared bat (*Myotis myotis*).

In certain circumstances where these species are found the Directive requires the designation of Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) by EC member states to ensure that their populations are maintained at a favorable conservation status. Outside SACs, the level of legal protection that these species receive is the same as for other bat species.

Nationally Protected Species

Breeding Birds

With certain exceptions¹, all wild birds, their nests and eggs are protected by section 1 of the *Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981* (as amended). Therefore, it is an offence, *inter alia*, to:

- intentionally kill, injure or take any wild bird;
- intentionally take, damage or destroy the nest of any wild bird while it is in use or being built; or
- intentionally take or destroy the egg of any wild bird.

These offences do not apply to hunting of birds listed in Schedule 2 subject to various controls.

Bird species listed on Schedule 1 of the Act receive further protection, thus for these species it is also an offence to:

- intentionally or recklessly disturb any bird while it is nest building, or is at a nest containing eggs or young; or
- intentionally or recklessly disturb the dependent young of any such bird.

¹ Some species, such as game birds, are exempt in certain circumstances