

**Baseline Ecological Survey  
Storey Lodge  
Holmes Lane  
Hanbury Worcestershire**

**August 2023**

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## **BASELINE ECOLOGICAL SURVEY – STOREY LODGE – HOLMES LANE – HANBURY - WORCESTERSHIRE**

### **1. INTRODUCTION**

This report presents the results of a baseline ecological survey of Storey Lodge, Holmes Lane, Hanbury, Worcestershire, B60 4HQ.

It is proposed that the existing temporary dwelling will be replaced with a permanent dwelling, a bungalow on a similar footprint.

It is proposed that a field gate, to the south of the existing access will be used to access the new dwelling because of highways considerations.

The report includes a habitat description and an assessment of the potential of the area to contain protected species. The results of this survey are presented below with recommendations for mitigation and enhancement.

Site photographs are included in appendix 1.

### **2. METHODOLOGY**

The baseline ecological survey used the extended Phase 1 habitat survey methodology. This is based on the Phase 1 habitat survey methodology developed by the former Nature Conservancy Council (1990), a nationally accepted standard method for baseline ecological survey. Phase 1 habitat survey codes are used to classify habitats in the text below.

The baseline survey of the site was carried out on the 18<sup>th</sup> of July 2023 by Elizabeth McKay an Ecologist of 30 years standing. Also an experienced licenced bat worker and great crested newt surveyor.

### **3. SITE DESCRIPTION**

J1.2 Amenity Grassland / J1.4 Introduced Shrubs / A3.3 Mixed Scattered Trees / J2.3 Hedgerow and Trees

The site is located in a rural situation to the north-east of Hanbury. The context is arable and pasture with a network of hedgerows, some stream corridors and a number of ponds in the surrounding area.

It is intended that the existing flat roofed static caravan is demolished and replaced with a bungalow on a similar footprint.

Vehicle access will be via a field gate to south of the existing access.

Immediately surrounding the caravan are garden areas consisting of mown lawn and ornamental trees. These included Norway Maple *Acer platanoides*, Cherry *Prunus sp.*, Leyland Cypress *Cupressus x leylandii*, Hawthorn

*Crataegus monogyna*, Norway Spruce *Picea abies*, Silver Birch *Betula pendula* and Damson.

There are also two small wooden sheds and a summer house in the garden of the property as well as a wooden stable block.

The western boundary consists of a hedgerow with trees including, Crack Willow *Salix fragilis*, Holly *Ilex aquifolium*, Goat Willow *Salix caprea* and Ash *Fraxinus excelsior*. The ground flora consists of Nettle *Urtica dioica*. There is a lack of marginal vegetation within the ditch running alongside the hedgerow. This is unaffected by the proposals.

The northern boundary of the site consists of Leyland Cypress and ornamental shrubs and the southern boundary consists of a wooden stock fence.

The eastern boundary consists of a native hedgerow comprising Hawthorn, English Elm *Ulmus procera*, Blackthorn *Prunus spinosa*, Field Maple *Acer campestre* and mature Pedunculate Oak *Quercus robur* further to the south.

Immediately to the south of the existing access to the site is a small area of fruit trees including Apple *Malus domestica* and Pear *Pyrus communis*. These trees are recommended for retention.

There is a wide grass verge immediately east of the hedgerow between this and the lane. Grass species include False Oat-grass *Arrhenatherum elatius*, Perennial Rye-grass *Lolium perenne*, Yorkshire Fog *Holcus lanatus* and Red Fescue *Festuca rubra*.

Other flowering plants include White Clover *Trifolium repens*, Broad Leaved Dock *Rumex obtusifolius*, Creeping Buttercup *Ranunculus repens*, Ox-eye Daisy *Leucanthemum vulgare*, Common Mallow *Malva sylvestris*, Yarrow *Achillea millefolium* Ribwort Plantain *Plantago lanceolata*, Red Clover *Trifolium pratense*, Dandelion *Taraxacum officinale*, Common Mouse-ear *Cerastium fontanum*, Silverweed *Potentilla anserina*, Cut Leaved Cranesbill *Geranium dissectum*, Creeping Thistle *Cirsium arvense*, Nettle *Urtica dioica* and Bramble *Rubus fruticosus*.

#### **4. ASSESSMENT OF THE POTENTIAL FOR PROTECTED SPECIES**

The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) and the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulation 2017 (as amended) provides protection for the following species against killing, injury, disturbance or sale. It also protects their places of shelter, protection, breeding and resting sites.

##### **Bats**

The static caravan to be demolished is flat roofed so there are no enclosed roof voids. There are wooden barge boards and soffits externally. However

these were found to be in good condition and well sealed. Therefore the building was not found to be suitable for roosting bats.

Likewise the wooden outbuildings and structures in the garden areas were assessed but suitable opportunities for roosting bats were found to be lacking. There were occasional opportunities under weather boarding but these were found to be too near to the ground to be suitable. Bats preferring to drop from their roost locations. No evidence was found.

The trees and shrubs in the garden areas were found to be of insufficient age to contain suitable cavities for roosting bats.

Recommendations with regard to lighting have however been made below as foraging bats using this rural location are deterred by bright lighting.

### **Birds**

It is likely some limited shrub removal will be necessary in order to facilitate the redevelopment of the property as well as removal of some of the wooden structures within the garden areas. No evidence of nesting birds was found in the latter at the time of the survey.

However nesting bird checks will be necessary if removal of trees, shrubs, wooden structures occurs during the nesting season as detailed below. Winter shrub removal is recommended if possible.

In order to compensate for the loss of garden shrubs it is recommended that native hedgerow planting takes place along the southern boundary of the site as detailed below.

### **Badgers**

- Badgers are protected under the protection of Badgers act 1992.

The site, was thoroughly searched for evidence of badger setts, latrines, prints and trails.

No evidence of badger setts or activity was found. However given the rural location it remains possible they will pass through.

### **Great Crested Newts**

According to studies of large scale ordnance survey maps and aerial photographs and studies on the ground, there are no ponds within a 250m radius of the site.

Two ponds one to the east and one to the south shown on ordnance survey maps are no longer in evidence on the ground.

Whilst ponds existing in the wider radius it is not considered that there is any

particular reason why GCN would use terrestrial habitats on the site as the site is not located on a likely commuting route between ponds.

There is a pond approximately 275m to the south of the site but this is small, shallow, shaded and lacking in any marginal vegetation. This scored as below average in terms of its suitability according to a Habitat Suitability Index assessment.

Therefore no further recommendations have been made.

### **Other Protected Species**

Given the nature of the habitats present it is considered unlikely that other protected species would be affected by the proposals.

## **5. CONCLUDING SUMMARY**

It is proposed that a static caravan is replaced with a bungalow on a similar footprint at Storey Lodge, Holmes Lane, Hanbury, Worcestershire.

A new vehicle access point will also be added to the south of the existing access using an existing field gate.

The site is located in a rural situation. The surrounding context is arable and pasture with a network of hedgerows, some stream corridors and a number of ponds in the surrounding area.

The static caravan is flat roofed and lacking in any void. It was inspected for external opportunities for roosting bats but no suitable opportunities for roosting were noted. External woodwork was found to be well sealed and in good condition.

Trees within garden areas were also inspected but none were of sufficient maturity to contain cavities suitable for roosting bats. However hedgerows and garden areas are likely to be used by foraging bats.

Trees and shrubs within the garden areas are also suitable for nesting birds as well as the hedgerows surrounding the garden.

As detailed below, it is recommended that loss of trees and shrubs and the eastern boundary hedgerow to facilitate access is minimised.

It is also recommended that fruit trees immediately to the south of the existing access are retained as these have value for invertebrate species and birds.

Otherwise tree and shrub species comprise ornamental non-native trees as well as Hawthorn, Silver Birch and Damson.

There is a native hedgerow alongside the eastern boundary which will need some limited pruning to allow vehicle access but loss of hedgerow species will be minimal.

As a mitigation / compensatory measure for loss of any trees shrubs / hedgerow species it is recommended that native hedgerow / fruit tree planting takes place alongside the southern boundary where there is currently a stock fence and alongside the eastern boundary immediately north of the existing entrance as detailed below.

Given the close proximity of the hedgerows and trees within the garden areas recommendations with regard to lighting have been made below because nesting birds and foraging bats which are likely to be using these habitat features are deterred by bright lighting.

Otherwise the garden consists of closely mown lawn areas.

There are also wooden sheds, wooden summer houses within the garden areas and a small stable block in the south-western corner of the garden.

All were inspected for evidence of roosting bats and nesting birds but none found. These structures were considered to have very low suitability for roosting bats and suitable cavities were lacking.

The western boundary is lined with trees and shrubs and a drainage ditch. This will be unaffected by the proposals.

The garden areas were searched for evidence of Badger activity but none found. No further recommendations have been made.

According to studies of large scale ordnance survey maps and aerial photographs and studies on the ground, there are no ponds within a 250m radius of the site.

Two ponds one to the east and one to the south shown on ordnance survey maps are no longer in evidence on the ground.

Whilst ponds existing in the wider radius it is not considered that there is any particular reason why GCN would use terrestrial habitats on the site as the site is not located on a likely commuting route between ponds.

There is a pond approximately 275m to the south of the site but this is small, shallow, shaded and lacking in any marginal vegetation. This scored as below average in terms of its suitability according to a Habitat Suitability Index assessment.

Therefore no further recommendations have been made.

It is not considered likely that other protected or notable species would be affected by the proposals given the nature of habitats present.

Biodiversity enhancement is a requirement of any planning application. It is considered that the recommendations for native hedgerow, shrub and fruit tree planting along the eastern and southern boundaries would fulfil this requirement. This will be beneficial for nesting and feeding birds, as well as invertebrates, foraging bats other wildlife in the longer term.

## 6. RECOMMENDATIONS

1. The new vehicular access point to the property will be via an existing field gate to the south of the current access point. Some limited pruning of the existing hedge will be necessary to facilitate this access point. Also there will be some limited loss of ornamental trees and shrubs within the garden area including possible loss of a Damson tree. It is recommended that loss of hedgerow shrubs is minimised and likewise loss of garden trees.
2. The western boundary hedgerow and trees will be unaffected by the proposals.
3. It is recommended that any trees and shrubs, wooden structures to be lost are removed between September 1<sup>st</sup> and 28<sup>th</sup> February to avoid impacting nesting birds which receive legal protection. If tree / shrub removal is undertaken between 1<sup>st</sup> of March and 31<sup>st</sup> of August a nesting bird check would need to be undertaken prior to removal.
4. It is recommended that in order to provide compensatory mitigation for the loss of trees / biodiversity enhancement, a native hedgerow is planted along the southern boundary of the site. Recommended native species would be Hawthorn, Blackthorn, Hazel, Holly and Field Maple.
5. The Apple and Pear trees immediately to the south of the existing entrance should be retained. Fruit trees are known to provide valuable habitats for invertebrates and in turn are of value to other wildlife including birds and foraging bats.
6. As biodiversity enhancement is a requirement as part of any planning application it is also recommended that native hedgerow planting / gapping up takes place immediately to the north of the existing site entrance, or this area might be planted with further apple and pear trees. Or planting of fruit trees could take place adjacent to the new hedgerow on the southern boundary. Four – six fruit trees are recommended.
7. It will also be ensured that the nearby drainage ditch to the west of the construction area will not be polluted during or after the construction process.
8. Because nesting birds and foraging bats using the hedgerows, trees, shrubs gardens around the property are negatively impacted by bright



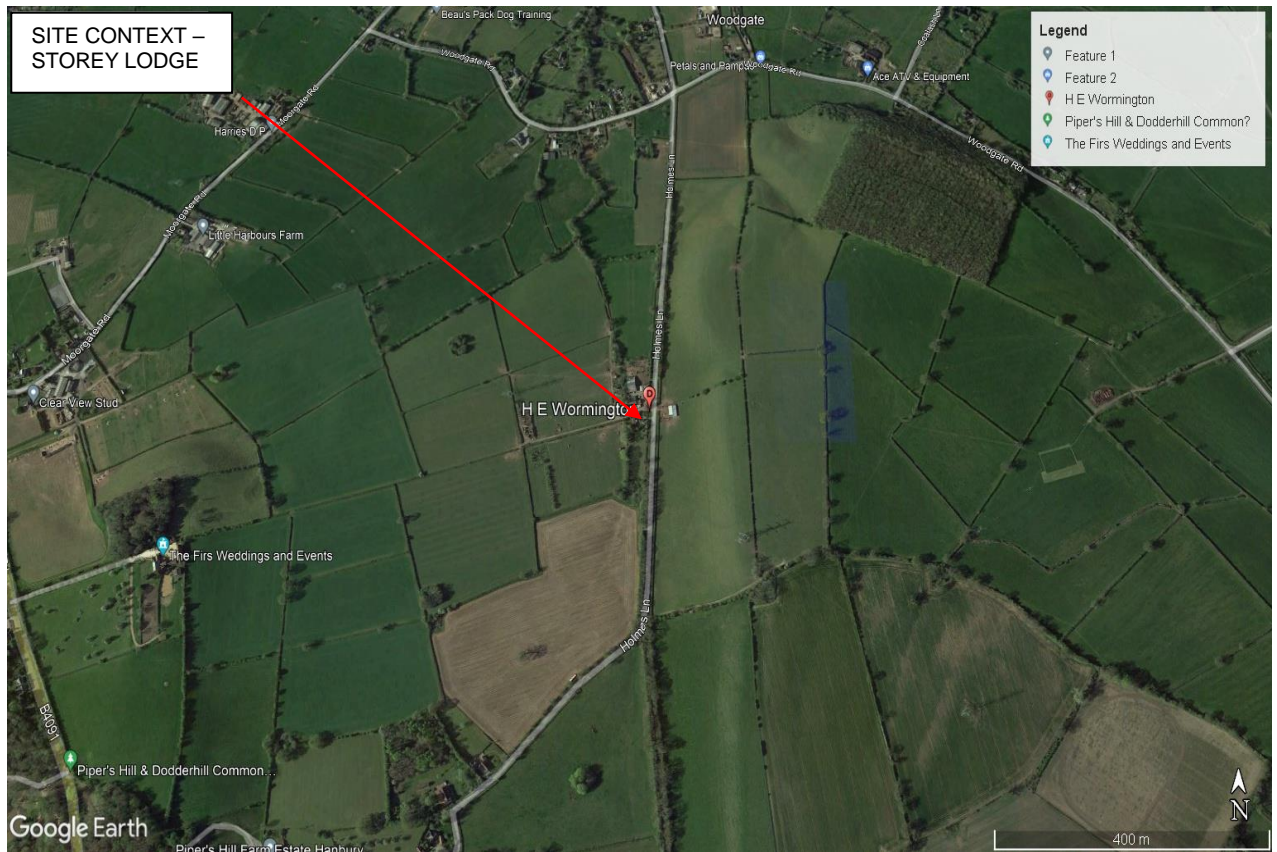
lighting it will be ensured that any lighting added to the exterior of the new property is minimised.

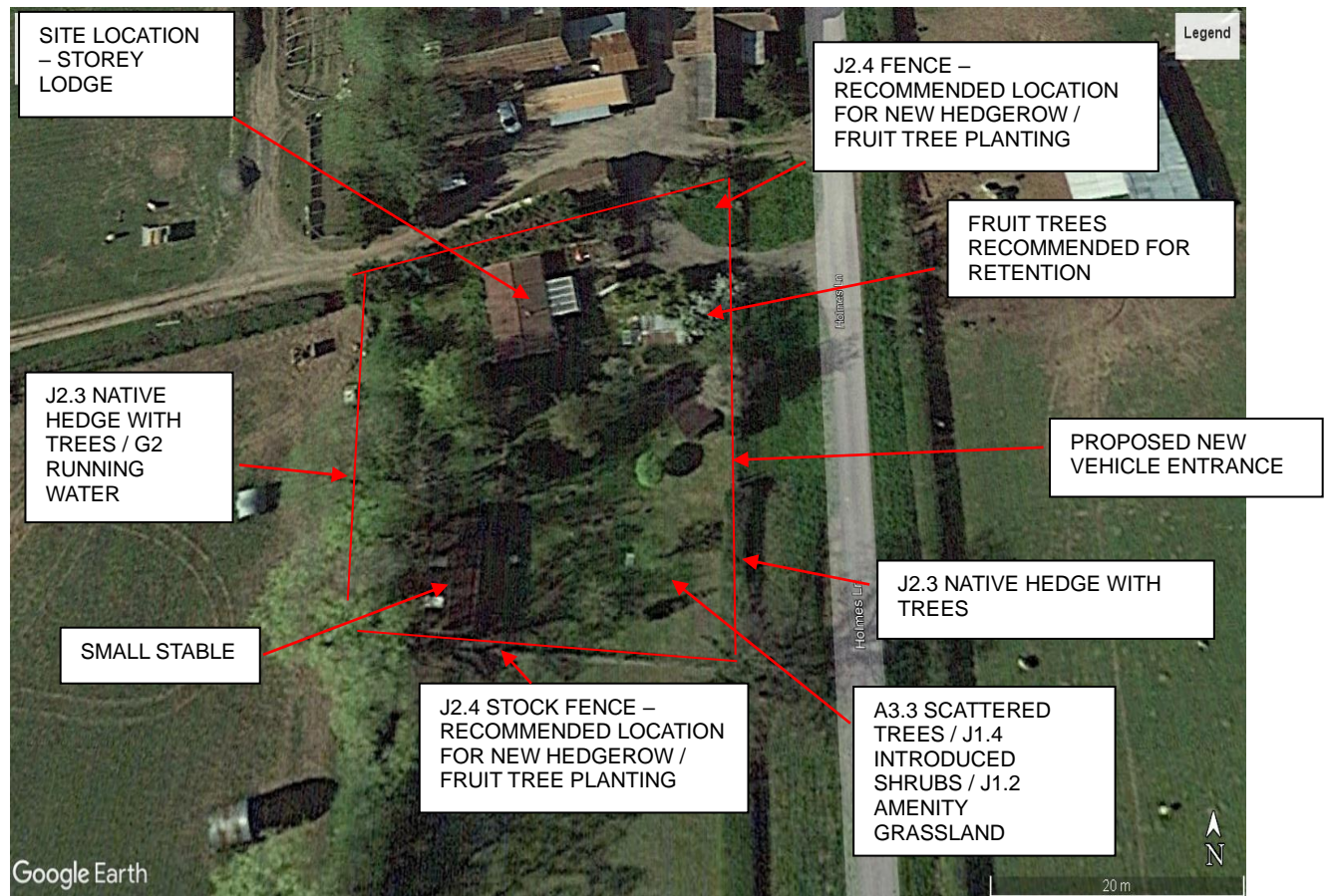
9. Any lighting which is added should be at low level with lux levels no more than lux level 1 to avoid light pollution to the surrounding landscape.

## **7. REFERENCES**

JNCC (1993). *Handbook for Phase 1 Habitat Survey*. English Nature, Peterborough, UK.

### APPENDIX 1 – SITE PHOTOGRAPHS





**PHOTO 1 – STOREY LODGE FROM SOUTH-EAST**

**PHOTO 2 – STOREY LODGE FROM WEST SIDE**



**PHOTO 3 – REAR OF STOREY LODGE – NORTH-WEST CORNER OF GARDEN  
– LOOKING NORTH**

**PHOTO 4 – FRUIT TREES IMMEDIATELY SOUTH OF EXISTING ENTRANCE**



**PHOTO 5 – EASTERN BOUNDARY – LOOKING NORTH**

**PHOTO 6 – FIELD GATE PART WAY ALONG EASTERN BOUNDARY –  
PROPOSED NEW VEHICLE ACCESS POINT – LOOKING WEST**



**PHOTO 7 – EASTERN BOUNDARY HEDGEROW AND FRUIT TREES –  
BETWEEN PROPOSED NEW ACCESS AND EXISTING – LOOKING NORTH**

**PHOTO 8 – EASTERN BOUNDARY LOOKING SOUTH**



**PHOTO 9 – EASTERN BOUNDARY INCLUDING FRUIT TREES**



**PHOTO 10 – EASTERN BOUNDARY INCLUDING FRUIT TREES**



**PHOTO 11 – EASTERN BOUNDARY IMMEDIATELY NORTH OF EXISTING ENTRANCE – WHERE NEW HEDGEROW / FRUIT TREE PLANTING IS RECOMMENDED**



**PHOTO 12 – EXISTING SITE ENTRANCE**



**PHOTO 13 – WOODEN SHED CLOSE TO EXISTING SITE ENTRANCE**

**PHOTO 14 – WOODEN SHEDS – CLOSE TO EXISTING SITE ENTRANCE**



**PHOTO 15 – WOODEN SHED AND GREENHOUSE CLOSE TO SITE ENTRANCE**

**PHOTO 16 – SUMMER HOUSE – ADJACENT TO EASTERN BOUNDARY**



**PHOTO 17 – CENTRAL PART OF GARDEN LOOKING NORTH**



**PHOTO 18 – CENTRAL PART OF GARDEN LOOKING EAST**



**PHOTO 19 – EASTERN BOUNDARY HEDGEROW LOOKING SOUTH**

**PHOTO 20 – LOOKING SOUTH ACROSS GARDEN**



**PHOTO 21 – LOOKING SOUTH-WEST ACROSS GARDEN**



**PHOTO 22 – LOOKING SOUTH-EAST ACROSS GARDEN**



**PHOTO 23 – STABLE IN SOUTH-WEST CORNER OF GARDEN**



**PHOTOS 24 & 25 – WESTERN BOUNDARY AND DITCH**





**PHOTO 26 – WESTERN BOUNDARY AND DITCH**



**PHOTO 27 – GARDEN LOOKING SOUTH**



**PHOTO 28 – POND 275 METRES TO SOUTH OF SITE**

