



HYBRID ECOLOGY LTD

*joined up thinking*

## Low Impact EclA:

Wychwood, Hill Farm Lane,  
Chelmondiston,  
Suffolk  
IP9 1JU

## On behalf of:

Trish Wrinch and Shelagh Pope

Prepared by:

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## Summary

Wychwood, Hill Lane, Chelmondiston, Suffolk was visited on 18<sup>th</sup> October 2023 in connection with a proposal for a replacement house. This report supports a planning application to Babergh and Mid Suffolk District Council.

This report provides the results of a survey and makes recommendations for precautionary measures, mitigation and enhancements as appropriate in the context of the proposal, referring to planning policy and best practice guidance where appropriate.

The report is required to inform design, and to provide the Local Planning Authority with certainty on impacts to designated sites, Priority Habitats, and legally protected species.

### Designated sites and Priority Habitats

The site is within the Zone of Influence for Suffolk coastal sites, including the Stour and Orwell Estuaries (SPA, Ramsar, SSSI) which is internationally designated for its important habitat and species assemblages. Such a residential site would ordinarily fall within the scope of the Suffolk Coast Recreational Avoidance and Mitigation Strategy. As the proposal is for a replacement house, a financial contribution should not be required as there is not a net-increase in residential dwellings and therefore no increase in recreational pressures.

### Habitats and species

General: The site contains a bungalow with maintained gardens to the front and rear. Scattered trees exist around the site. Whilst there are no veteran or otherwise ecologically significant trees on the site, all retained boundary trees will be protected in accordance with arboricultural best practice.

Legally protected species: The bungalow has negligible bat roost suitability (BCT, 2023). There is no loft void. No evidence of bats was found externally and there are no suitable voids or crevices that could reasonably support roosting. Further survey for bats is not required.

Nesting birds: There is potential for nesting birds in boundary trees and shrubs, and a low risk of nesting birds around the bungalow. Therefore, tree work and vegetation removal will be programmed between October and February inclusive to avoid impacts to active nests. Building demolition will also be restricted to October-February, unless an ecologist has confirmed absence of active nests.

### Enhancement proposal

The site could be enhanced through a wildlife friendly soft landscaping design which incorporates native tree, hedgerow and shrub planting, along with the planting of wildflower seed mixes of known benefit to pollinators, and other measures including habitat boxes for bats, birds, and invertebrates. Ultimately these measures will contribute to Government aims under Paragraph 174(d) of the National Planning Policy Framework 2021 and Local Plan policies which encourage all development to demonstrate biodiversity net-gain.

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## 1.0 Introduction

### Personnel

- 1.1 This report has been prepared by Gemma Holmes; Consultant Ecologist at Hybrid Ecology Ltd. Gemma is a qualified ecologist with 17 years' experience in professional survey work and is an Associate member of the Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (CIEEM). Gemma holds licences to survey for great crested newt and bats in the UK (Licence numbers 2015-19096-CLS-CLS and 2016-27305-CLS-CLS respectively).

### Brief

- 1.1 Trish Winch and Shelagh Pope instructed Hybrid Ecology to produce a Low Impact EclA for land at Wychwood, Hill Lane, Chelmondiston, Suffolk (central grid reference TM 20721 37318. The proposal involves the demolition of the existing bungalow and construction of a replacement house. A location plan is provided in Figure 1 and the survey boundary is provided in Figure 2. The proposed site plan issued by the client is provided in Appendix 1.

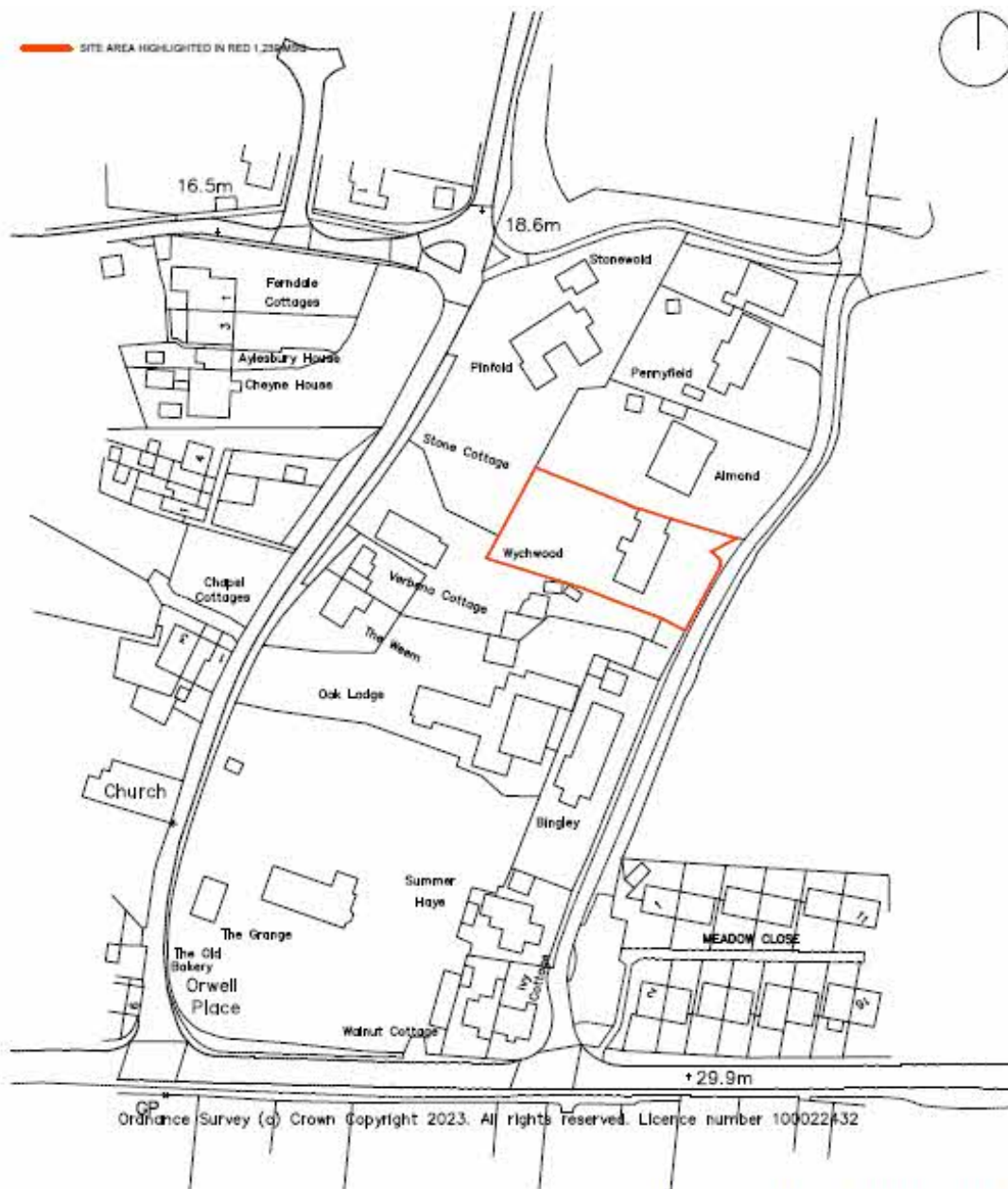
### Aims

- 1.1 This report aims to advise the client/developer and relevant members of the project team as to the key ecological constraints and opportunities associated with this project and any necessary mitigation requirements to ensure legal obligations in respect of protected species, designated sites and habitats are met.

### Limitations

- 1.4 Whilst every effort has been made to provide a comprehensive description of the site, no investigation could ensure the complete characterisation and prediction of the natural environment. Wildlife is transient and mobile, and results of a survey can reasonably vary from one day to the next or across the seasons.
- 1.1 The protected species assessment provides a view of the likelihood of protected species occurring on the site based on the known distribution of species in the local area and the suitability of the habitat. However, it should not be taken as providing a full and definitive survey of any protected species/group.
- 1.4 In accordance with CIEEM Report Writing Guidelines (December 2017), this report is valid for 18 months from the survey date. Beyond this, habitats are reasonably expected to have changed to warrant an updated survey. Beyond 18 months, this report should not be accepted in support of a planning application.

Figure 1. Location plan



EXISTING SITE PLAN @ 1:1250 SCALE

CLIENT T&P Wilson & Stratton Pipers	PROJECT NO. 2023074	DRAWING No. 001	PROJECT Wychwood, Hill Farm Lane, Chesham, Bucks, HP8 1LJ	DESCRIPTION All Existing Site Plan	SCALE 1:1250 @ A4	DATE 01.08.2023	DRAWN BY GP	ROW PRINCE ARCHITECTS 10000000 0223 025 Tel: 01494 454545 Fax: 01494 454546 www.rowprince.com
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Site Location outlined in red, taken from Promap OS map

Figure 2. Survey boundary (approximate)





## 2.0 Planning Policy and Legislation

National Planning Policy Framework (2021): Conserving and Enhancing the Natural Environment

Please note the below policies have been taken directly from the National Planning Policy Framework, which can be found here: [National Planning Policy Framework - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/policies/national-planning-policy-framework)

Paragraph 174

1.4 Planning policies and decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by:

- a) Protecting and enhancing valued landscapes, sites of biodiversity or geological value and soils (in a manner commensurate with their statutory status or identified quality in the development plan);
- b) Recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside, and the wider benefits from natural capital and ecosystem services – including the economic and other benefits of the best and most versatile agricultural land, and of trees and woodland;
- c) Maintaining the character of the undeveloped coast, while improving public access to it where appropriate;
- 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;
- e) Preventing new and existing development from contributing to, being put at unacceptable risk from, or being adversely affected by, unacceptable levels of soil, air, water or noise pollution or land instability. Development should, wherever possible, help to improve local environmental conditions such as air and water quality, taking into account relevant information such as river basin management plans.

Paragraph 179

1.4 To protect and enhance biodiversity and geodiversity, plans should:

- a) Identify, map and safeguard components of local wildlife-rich habitats and wider ecological networks, including the hierarchy of international, national and locally designated sites of importance for biodiversity wildlife corridors and stepping stones that connect them; and areas identified by national and local partnerships for habitat management, enhancement, restoration or creation; and
- 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.

#### Paragraph 180

1.4 When determining planning applications, local planning authorities should apply the following principles:

- a) 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;
- b) development on land within or outside a Site of Special Scientific Interest, and which is likely to have an adverse effect on it (either individually or in combination with other developments), should not normally be permitted. The only exception is where the benefits of the development in the location proposed clearly outweigh both its likely impact on the features of the site that make it of special scientific interest, and any broader impacts on the national network of Sites of Special Scientific Interest;
- c) development resulting in the loss or deterioration of irreplaceable habitats (such as ancient woodland and ancient or veteran trees) should be refused, unless there are wholly exceptional reasons and a suitable compensation strategy exists; and
- d) development whose primary objective is to conserve or enhance biodiversity should be supported; while opportunities to improve biodiversity in and around developments should be integrated as part of their design, especially where this can secure measurable net gains for biodiversity or enhance public access to nature where this is appropriate.

#### Paragraph 181

2.4 The following should be given the same protection as habitats sites:

- a) potential Special Protection Areas and possible Special Areas of Conservation;
- b) listed or proposed Ramsar sites; and
- c) sites identified, or required, as compensatory measures for adverse effects on habitats sites, potential Special Protection Areas, possible Special Areas of Conservation, and listed or proposed Ramsar sites.

#### Paragraph 182

1.4 The presumption in favour of sustainable development does not apply where the plan or project is likely to have a significant effect on a habitats site (either alone or in combination with other plans or projects), unless an appropriate assessment has concluded that the plan or project will not adversely affect the integrity of the habitats site.



## Legislation: Protection of Designated Sites, Habitats and Species

Please note this section is a summary of legislation only and should not be taken as a definitive interpretation of any wildlife law. UK wildlife legislation can be found here: [Legislation.gov.uk](https://www.legislation.gov.uk)

### Designated sites

#### RAMSAR

- 2.4 Ramsar sites are designated under the Convention on Wetlands of International Importance especially as Waterfowl Habitat. Wetlands are designated, protected and promoted in order to stem the progressive encroachment on and loss of wetlands, which are broadly defined to include marsh, fen, peatland and water.

#### Special Areas of Conservation (SAC)

- 2.4 Special Areas of Conservation are sites designated by Member States under the EC Habitats Directive. The aim is to establish a network of important high quality conservation sites that will make a significant contribution to conserving habitats and species considered to be most in need of conservation at an international level.

#### Special Protection Areas (SPA)

- 2.4 Special Protection Areas are designated under the EC Birds Directive, to conserve the habitat of certain rare or vulnerable birds and regularly occurring migratory birds. Any significant pollution or disturbance to or deterioration of these sites has to be avoided.

#### National Nature Reserves (NNR)

- 1.4 National Nature Reserves are statutory reserves established for the nation under the Wildlife and Countryside Act, 1981. NNRs may be owned by relevant national body (e.g. Natural England in England) or established by agreement; a few are owned and managed by non-statutory bodies. NNRs cover a selection of the most important sites for nature conservation in the UK.

#### Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)

- 2.10 Sites of Special Scientific Interest are areas notified under the Wildlife and Countryside Act, 1981, as being of 'special interest for nature conservation'. They represent the finest sites for wildlife and natural features in Great Britain supporting many characteristic, rare and endangered species, habitats and natural features. Notification as a SSSI is primarily a legal mechanism organised by Natural England and selected according to specific criteria.

#### Local Nature Reserves (LNR)

- 2.11 Land owned, leased or managed by Local Authorities and designated under the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act. A site of some nature conservation value managed for educational objectives – no need for SSSI status. Some reserves are managed by a non-statutory body.

## Local Wildlife Site / Wildlife Sites

- 2.11 Local Wildlife Sites (LoWS) are non-statutory sites designated at a county level as being of conservation importance and often recognised in Local authority development plans. The aim of this identification is to protect such sites from land management changes, which may lessen their nature conservation interest, and to encourage sensitive management to maintain and enhance their importance. Although LoWS have no statutory protection, they are a material consideration in the planning process.

## Regionally Important Geological / Geomorphological Site (RIGS)

- 2.11 Regionally Important Geological/Geomorphological Sites are non-statutory earth science sites. The RIGS networks are locally based voluntary groups drawing on both professional and interest groups identifying sites using a methodical and rational approach. RIGS are analogous to non-statutory biological sites – they are not a second tier but sites of regional or local importance in their own right.

## Legally protected and Priority Species

- 2.10 The two principal wildlife statutes, directly related to the NPPF and local planning policy, are the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations (The Habitats Regulations, 2019, EU Exit as amended) that deals with internationally important sites and species, and the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) (from here on referred to as WCA, 1981) that deals with nationally important sites.
- 2.11 Certain habitats and species are protected as SSSI under the WCA (1981). Some of these are more strictly protected as proposed or designated SPA, SAC and Ramsar Sites under the Habitats Regulations (2019). These designations protect features and resources listed as being of international importance from both direct and indirect effects arising from a range of issues including proposed development.
- 2.10 Certain species listed on Schedule 5 of the WCA (1981), including all bat species, great crested newt, hazel dormouse and otter are also protected under Schedule 2 of the Habitats Regulations (2019) making them European Protected Species (EPS). Taken together it is illegal to:
- Deliberately kill, injure or capture any wild animal of EPS;
  - Deliberately disturb wild animals of any EPS in such a way to be likely to significantly affect:
    - The ability of any significant groups of animals of that species to survive, breed, rear or nurture their young; or
    - The local distribution of that species.
  - Recklessly disturb a EPS or obstruct access to their place of rest;
  - Damage or destroy breeding sites or resting places of such animals;
  - Deliberately take or destroy the eggs of such an animal;
  - Possess or transport any part of a EPS, unless acquired legally; and/or
  - Sell, barter or exchange any part of an EPS.
- 2.10 A range of species other than birds, including water vole is protected from disturbance and destruction under the WCA (1981) through inclusion on Schedule 5.

- 2.10 All breeding birds are protected from deliberate destruction under the WCA (1981). Certain species are further protected from disturbance at their nest sites being listed on Schedule 1 of the WCA (1981).
- 2.11 Common reptiles including common lizard, slow-worm, grass snake and adder are protected under the WCA (1981), they are listed as Schedule 5 species, therefore part of Section 9(1) and section 9(5) apply; the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 (CRoW) also strengthens their protection.
- 2.10 Badger is protected from sett disturbance and destruction under the Protection of Badgers Act (1992).
- 2.11 Section 40 of the NERC Act 2006 places a legal duty on local authorities to conserve biodiversity. Section 41 (S41) sets out a list of species and habitats of principal importance. These species are known as Priority Species and are those identified as requiring action under the former UK Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) and which continue to be regarded as conservation priorities under the UK Post-2010 Biodiversity Framework.
- 2.11 Native, species-rich hedgerows are protected as being 'important' under the Hedgerow Regulations (1997).
- 2.11 Japanese Knotweed *Fallopia japonica*, along with a number of other introduced and invasive species, are listed under Schedule 9 of the WCA (1981). Japanese knotweed is highly invasive and its rhizomes cause damage to built structures. Hence it is also classed as controlled waste under the Environment Protection Act (1990) and has therefore either to be removed and disposed of in a licensed landfill or the rhizomes buried to a depth of at least 5m.

## 2.0 Methodology: Desktop Study

### Mapping exercise

1.4 Aerial imagery (Google Earth Pro, 2023) was used to examine the landscape context of the site in relation to significant ecological assets such as woodland, established hedgerows, grassland and any naturalised features that would allow wildlife use and dispersal.

1.4 Multi-Agency Geographical Information for the Countryside (MAGIC) mapping was used to:

Determine whether the site is within the scope of the Suffolk Coast Recreational Avoidance and Mitigation Strategy (Suffolk County Council). The “Suffolk coast RAMS” or “The Strategy” aims to deliver the mitigation necessary to avoid significant adverse effects from ‘in-combination’ impacts of residential development that is anticipated; thus protecting the Habitats (European) sites on the coast from adverse effect on site integrity. All new residential developments within the evidenced Zone of Influence where there is a net increase in dwelling numbers are included in the RAMS.

Determine the proximity to international, national and locally designated sites and whether the site lies within the Zone of Influence/Impact Risk Zone, as appropriate.

Identify any areas of land mapped by Natural England as Priority Habitat within 250 metres of the site.

Identify any European Protected Species (EPS) mitigation licenses granted by Natural England for great crested newt or bats within a 2km radius of the site that could be relevant to this development.

### Biological Records Search

1.4 A biological records search from Suffolk Biological Information Service (SBIS) was ordered in December 2023. The report contains records of legally protected and Priority Species within 2km of the site along with designated sites.

## 4.0 Methodology: Habitats and Species

### Phase 1 Habitat Survey

- 4.1 An ecological walkover survey was carried out on 18<sup>th</sup> October 2023 by ecologist Gemma Holmes (BSc Hons). The survey included all land shown in Figure 2. The survey was undertaken broadly in accordance with the Handbook for Phase 1 Habitat Survey (JNCC 2010). This is a standard technique for obtaining baseline ecological information for areas of land, including proposed development sites.

### Protected/priority species scoping

- 4.2 The survey also included an assessment of the site's potential to support any legally protected species; or Species and Habitats of Principal Importance (Priority Species), as identified by Section 41 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act (2006).
- 4.3 The site was assessed for its suitability for the protected animals that are likely to occur in the area. Considering the results of the desk study, the location and habitats on site, a scoping assessment was carried out for:
- Bats (roosting, foraging and commuting)
  - Great crested newts *Triturus cristatus* (GCN) – terrestrial only
  - Hazel dormice
  - Otter and water vole
  - [REDACTED]
  - Birds (including breeding and wintering birds)
  - Invertebrates
  - Reptiles
  - Rare and notable plant species
  - Invasive non-native plant and animal species
  - Other notable species.
- 4.4 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 (BCT 2016) and Habitat Suitability Index for Great Crested Newt (Oldham et al, 2000).
- 4.5 In accordance with BCT, 2023, the suitability of habitats on the site for bats was assessed via a Daytime Bat Walkover (DBW) in accordance with Figure 3. The bungalow was inspected externally and evidence of bats or potential crevices or voids that bats could reasonably roost in or use to gain access.
- 4.6 The DBW included a ground-level assessment of trees on and adjacent to the site for features that bats could reasonably use – including cavities, bark lesions, woodpecker holes, fluting, hazard beams, along with any external evidence such as droppings (note droppings decay quickly on trees) and staining/rub marks on the stem/limb.

Figure 3. Guidelines for assessing potential suitability of development sites for bats (BCT, 2023)

**Table 4.1. Guidelines for assessing the potential suitability of proposed development sites for bats, based on the presence of habitat features within the landscape, to be applied using professional judgement.**

Potential suitability	Description	
	Roosting habitats in structures	Potential flight-paths and foraging habitats
None	No habitat features on site likely to be used by any roosting bats at any time of the year (i.e. a complete absence of crevices/suitable shelter at all ground/underground levels).	No habitat features on site likely to be used by any commuting or foraging bats at any time of the year (i.e. no habitats that provide continuous lines of shade/protection for flight-lines, or generate/shelter insect populations available to foraging bats).
Negligible <sup>a</sup>	No obvious habitat features on site likely to be used by roosting bats; however, a small element of uncertainty remains as bats can use small and apparently unsuitable features on occasion.	No obvious habitat features on site likely to be used as flight-paths or by foraging bats; however, a small element of uncertainty remains in order to account for non-standard bat behaviour.
Low	A structure with one or more potential roost sites that could be used by individual bats opportunistically at any time of the year. However, these potential roost sites do not provide enough space, shelter, protection, appropriate conditions <sup>a</sup> and/or suitable surrounding habitat to be used on a regular basis or by larger numbers of bats (i.e. unlikely to be suitable for maternity and not a classic cool/stable hibernation site, but could be used by individual hibernating bats <sup>a</sup> ).	Habitat that could be used by small numbers of bats as flight-paths such as a gappy hedgerow or unvegetated stream, but isolated, i.e. not very well connected to the surrounding landscape by other habitat.  Suitable, but isolated habitat that could be used by small numbers of foraging bats such as a lone tree (not in a parkland situation) or a patch of scrub.
Moderate	A structure with one or more potential roost sites that could be used by bats due to their size, shelter, protection, conditions <sup>a</sup> and surrounding habitat but unlikely to support a roost of high conservation status (with respect to roost type only, such as maternity and hibernation – the categorisation described in this table is made irrespective of species conservation status, which is established after presence is confirmed).	Continuous habitat connected to the wider landscape that could be used by bats for flight-paths such as lines of trees and scrub or linked back gardens.  Habitat that is connected to the wider landscape that could be used by bats for foraging such as trees, scrub, grassland or water.
High	A structure with one or more potential roost sites that are obviously suitable for use by larger numbers of bats on a more regular basis and potentially for longer periods of time due to their size, shelter, protection, conditions <sup>a</sup> and surrounding habitat. These structures have the potential to support high conservation status roosts, e.g. maternity or classic cool/stable hibernation site.	Continuous, high-quality habitat that is well connected to the wider landscape that is likely to be used regularly by bats for flight-paths such as river valleys, streams, hedgerows, lines of trees and woodland edge.  High-quality habitat that is well connected to the wider landscape that is likely to be used regularly by foraging bats such as broadleaved woodland, tree-lined watercourses and grazed parkland.  Site is close to and connected to known roosts.



## The Mitigation Hierarchy

- 4.7 All development is expected to meet the highest planning standards and follow the Mitigation Hierarchy of avoid, mitigate, compensate and enhance to ensure that significant natural environment impacts are avoided.

Avoid - Avoiding any loss of or damage to wildlife sites or to protected / Priority species – development must not damage or destroy important national and Local Wildlife Sites.

Mitigate - Impacts considered unavoidable should be mitigated at the site where the impact occurs, if at all possible.

Compensate - Any remaining significant biodiversity loss should be compensated for, as close to the area of loss as possible.

Enhance - Improve degraded ecosystems/return an area to original ecosystem including creating new habitat - habitat creation should be a standard feature of all new development, wherever it is.

## Evaluation criteria

- 4.7 Ecological features (designated sites, habitats, and species) were evaluated where possible in relation to a geographical context (i.e. International, National, Regional, Metropolitan, County, District, Borough, Local and Site), in accordance with CIEEM Ecological Impact Assessment Guidelines (2016). Criteria include designations, quality of habitat in relation to the site context, ability to support notable assemblages of species, contribution to habitat connectivity, dispersal opportunities or providing intrinsic ecological value.

## 5.0 Results: Desktop Study

### Landscape context

- 1.4 The site is a rectangular shaped plot covering approximately 0.13 hectares. The site is accessed from Hill Farm Lane on the south-eastern boundary. The site is bordered to the north, south and west by residential properties/gardens. Arable land extends to the east. The wider landscape includes residential housing and arable land, with grazing paddocks further to the north-west and habitats associated with the Stour and Orwell Estuaries approximately 650 metres to the north.

### Designated sites/Priority Habitats

- 1.4 The site is not the subject of a conservation designation.
- 1.4 The Stour and Orwell Estuaries and associated habitats are approximately 650 metres to the north at their closest point. The site is a residential property with garden and is bordered by similar land-use. Given the distance to the designation and the disconnect in habitat connectivity there is no reason this small-scale development would impact the designation. As the development involves a replacement property, there is no increase in recreational pressure and therefore no requirement to provide a financial contribution in compliance with the Suffolk Coast RAMS.
- 2.4 The site lies within the Suffolk Coast and Heaths or Dedham Vale AONB. There is no expected impact given the site lies on a lane with other residential properties.
- 1.4 There are no other relevant conservation designations local to the site that need to be considered in connection with this development proposal.

### Natural England EPS licences

- 2.4 One EPS licence granted for bats was identified within 2km. Given the distance (1.7km) and position beyond arable land this is not considered to be relevant to this development. The details are below for interest only:

Site Check Report Report generated on Wed Dec 13 2023  
You selected the location: Centroid Grid Ref: TM22393679  
The following features have been found in your search area:

Granted European Protected Species Applications (England)	
Case reference of granted application	2016-25859-EPS-MIT
Species group to which licence relates	Bat
Species on the licence	BLE,C-PIP,NATT,S-PIP
Site county of licence	Suffolk
Licence Start Date	14/10/2016
Licence End Date	31/10/2021
Does licence impact on a breeding site	N
Does licence allow damage of breeding site	N
Does licence allow damage of a resting place	Y
Does licence allow destruction of breeding site	N
Does licence allow destruction of a resting place	Y
Does licence impact on a hibernation site	Unknown

## 2.0 Results: Habitat Survey

A plan with annotated target notes is provided in Figure 4. Photographs from the site visit are provided in Figure 5. For full details on legally protected species, please refer to Section 7. Latin names appear in the text once.

### Buildings

- 1.4 The bungalow is situated to the centre/east of the plot and comprises rendered walls with felt roof. There is no loft void. There are various extensions including a conservatory to the south. Window frames are a mix of timber and uPVC. Timber soffit boxes are rotten in places.
- 1.4 There are various timber sheds to the north and west of the rear garden.

### Individual trees

- 1.4 There are various trees around the site, including:
- Cherry *Prunus* sp., sycamore *Acer pseudoplatanus* and hawthorn *Crataegus monogyna* to the north-east.
  - A mature conifer tree to the south-east.
  - A row of beech *Fagus sylvatica* and Norway maple *Acer platanoides* along the southern boundary.
  - Mature silver birch *Betula pendula* and Norway maple to the south-west.
  - Apple *Malus* sp. trees, holly *Ilex aquifolium*, and hazel *Corylus avellana* along the western boundary.
- 2.4 None of the trees on site are of veteran status or are otherwise ecologically significant. Mature trees should be protected in accordance with arboricultural best practice wherever possible.

### Ornamental planting

- 1.4 The site is a typical domestic garden with maintained areas of shrub planting around the front and rear gardens. Species include mahonia, choisya, rose, cherry laurel, lilac, holly, smoke bush and honeysuckle.

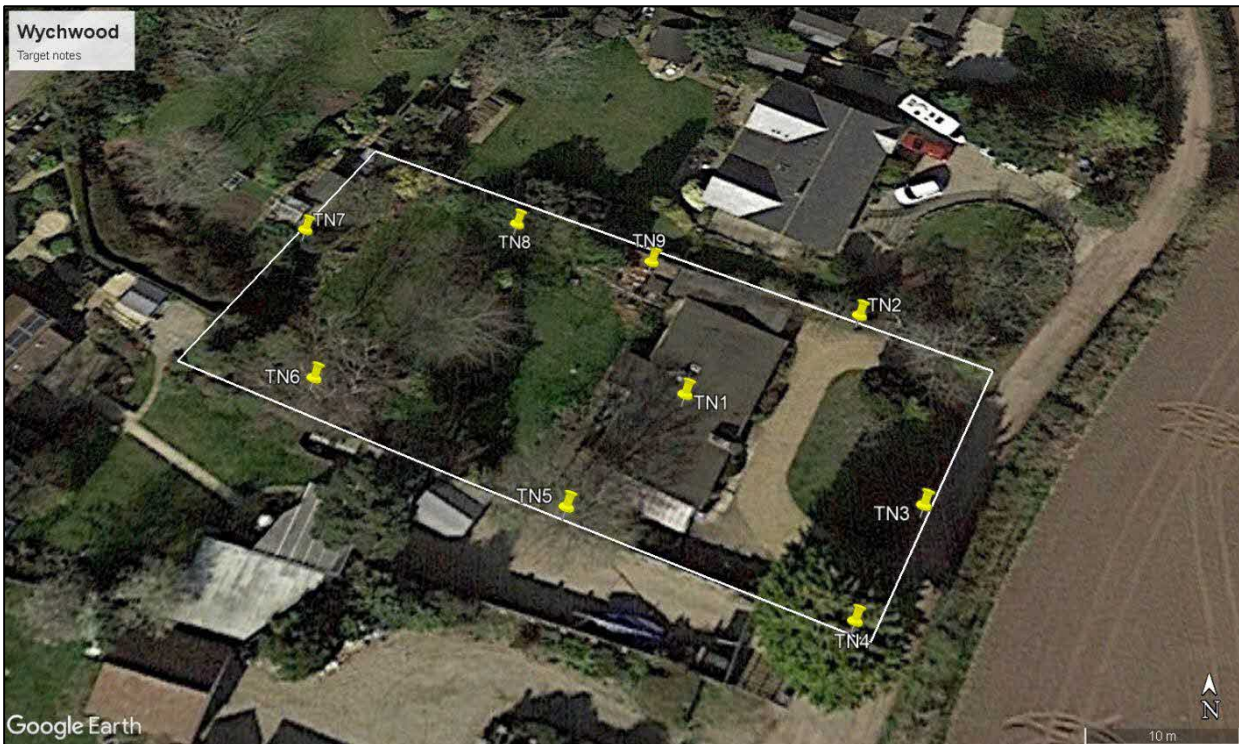
### Amenity lawn

- 2.4 There are front and rear lawns on the site, both are well maintained (mown).

#### Habitats evaluation:

The site is assessed as being of low ecological value containing common, widespread habitats, significant at Site Level only. All retained garden trees should be protected in accordance with arboricultural best practice.

Figure 4. Target notes



Target note	Description
1	Bungalow, to be demolished. Rendered walls. Various extensions including conservatory to south. In declining condition with rotten soffits.
2	Row of cherry, sycamore, hawthorn trees and shrubs. Silver birch tree overhangs from adjacent front garden.
3	Viburnum hedge.
4	Mature conifer tree.
5	Snowberry, hawthorn, cherry. Beech, cherry laurel, Norway maple.
6	Mature silver birch and mature Norway maple trees.
7	Apple, hazel, holly trees. Small shed.
8	Shrub bed with lilac, holly, smoke bush, honeysuckle, conifer.
9	Various small timber sheds and lean-to.



Figure 5. Photographs



a) Western aspect of bungalow.



b) Eastern aspect of bungalow.



c) Southern aspect of bungalow.



d) South-western corner of garden.



e) Southern boundary vegetation.



## 2.0 Results: Protected/Priority Species Scoping

This section includes data search results, habitat requirements for species/species groups and an assessment in the context of the proposal.

### Bats

Data search:

- 1.4 Several bat species have been recorded within a 2km radius. They included Daubentons, Natterer's, Nathusius's pipistrelle, soprano pipistrelle, common pipistrelle, serotine, brown long-eared bat and barbastelle.

Habitat requirements:

- 1.4 In buildings, bats are found inside loft voids, under hanging tile cladding, weatherboards, inside soffit boxes and any sheltered, dry crevice. Bats typically hibernate in cellars, cavity walls and bunkers. In trees, bats are typically found in woodpecker holes, behind flaking bark, or in wounds and hazard beams. The largest roosts are found close to foraging resources such as woodland and waterbodies.

Assessment:

- 1.4 The bungalow is generally in fair condition, with areas of rotten/damaged cladding including rotten soffits. Damaged cladding was inspected with a high-powered torch (and endoscope, where applicable) all possible crevices were damp and exposed to prevailing weather. Bat evidence was not identified on any areas of the roof, external cladding or windowsills. There is no enclosed loft void. There were no other suitable crevices that could reasonably be used by bats either externally or internally. The bungalow has negligible bat roost suitability.
- 2.4 The sheds have negligible bat roost suitability.
- 1.4 There are no trees on the site with potential roost features.
- 2.4 The site provides moderate-quality foraging habitat for bats, with boundary woodland adjoining back gardens and associated vegetation providing sheltered conditions for foraging, however there is no woodland, water or significant linear habitats that could feasibly be used by larger numbers of bats dispersing through the landscape. The development is likely to retain all established boundary vegetation.
- 2.4 For these reasons we consider the development will have negligible impact on roosting, foraging or commuting bats and further survey is not necessary.

### Requirements for further survey, avoidance, mitigation, compensation and enhancement

Further survey requirement	None
Avoidance	None
Mitigation	In the unlikely event that bats are encountered during demolition, work will cease, the feature will be re-instated and an ecologist will be contacted immediately.
Compensation	None
Enhancement	Three bat boxes on a retained garden tree. At least one integrated bat roost feature on the new property.

#### Great crested newt (GCN)

##### Data search

2.4 There are no great crested newt records within 2km of the site.

##### Habitat requirements:

- 1.4 Great crested newts can be found in rural, urban and post-industrial settings, with populations less able to thrive where there are high degrees of fragmentation. The connectivity of the landscape is important, since great crested newts often occur in metapopulations that encompass a cluster of several or many ponds.
- 2.10 Breeding sites are mainly medium-sized ponds, though ditches and other waterbody types may also be used less frequently. Ponds with ample aquatic vegetation (which is used for egg-laying) seem to be favoured. Great crested newts do not require very high water quality but are normally found in ponds with a circum-neutral pH. Broad habitat type varies greatly, the most frequent being pastoral and arable farmland, woodland, scrub, and grassland. There are also populations in coastal dunes and shingle structures.
- 2.11 Between July and February (approximately) great crested newt are in terrestrial habitats. They are most often encountered within 250 metres of a breeding pond. However, Cresswell (2004) found that the most comprehensive mitigation, in relation to avoiding disturbance, killing or injury to great crested newt is appropriate within 50m of a breeding pond.
- 2.11 Regarding mitigation, Cresswell's research found that it will also almost always be necessary to actively capture newts 50-100m away. However, at distances greater than 100m, it was discovered that attempts to capture newts may not be necessary or the most effective option to avoid incidental mortality.
- 2.11 At distances greater than 200-250m, Cresswell found that capture operations will hardly ever be appropriate.

Assessment:

- 2.10 There are no ponds on the site. There is one pond associated with the farm to the north. The pond is approximately 215 metres away. Given the distance, the lack of further ponds within 250 metres and the intervening habitats (extensive sealed surfaces and disturbance associated with the farm) GCN is unlikely to be present and affected.

Requirements for further survey, avoidance, mitigation, compensation and enhancement

Further survey requirement	None
Avoidance	None
Mitigation	None
Compensation	None
Enhancement	None

Dormouse

Data search

- 2.11 No dormouse records were returned.

Habitat requirements:

- 2.10 The hazel dormouse requires wooded habitats, usually semi-natural woodland containing hazel coppice and oak, and a rich understorey cover through which to disperse safely between trees (English Nature 2006).

Assessment:

- 2.10 The site provides unsuitable habitat for dormice, as it is dominated by maintained garden habitats, including extensive mown lawn and tidy, maintained boundary shrubs and trees. There is no ancient woodland, no species rich hedgerows and no adjoining habitat that could reasonably support dispersal. There is not a reasonable likelihood that dormouse would disperse onto the site based on the obvious lack of suitable habitat.

Requirements for further survey, avoidance, mitigation, compensation and enhancement

Further survey requirement	None
Avoidance	None
Mitigation	None
Compensation	NA
Enhancement	None

## Otter and water vole

Data search

2.10 Both species have been recorded within 2km.

Habitat requirements:

2.11 Both species require flowing water, deep enough to support foraging behaviour and with connectivity into the wider landscape.

Assessment:

2.10 There is no aquatic habitat on or adjacent to the site.

Requirements for further survey, avoidance, mitigation, compensation and enhancement

Further survey requirement	None
Avoidance	None
Mitigation	None
Compensation	NA
Enhancement	NA

## Reptiles

Data search

2.11 Grass snake and common lizard have been recorded within 2km.

Habitat requirements:

2.11 Common lizard, slow worm, grass snake and adder require mosaic habitats with features in which to bask, forage and shelter. These habitats need to have onward connectivity for dispersal. Suitable habitats include grassland with scrub edges or small woodland coppices (Edgar et al. 2010).

Assessment:

2.11 The site contains only a small areas of sub-optimal reptile habitat in the form of managed amenity grassland and boundary shrubs. Presence of low numbers of reptiles, particularly slow worm can never be ruled out in garden situations. However, there are no log piles, compost heaps or buried rubble that could reasonably support shelter or hibernation, therefore any reptile presence is likely to be along the edges of the garden and transient at best.

2.10 Assuming the site continues to be maintained, we consider the risk of colonisation to be very low.

Requirements for further survey, avoidance, mitigation, compensation and enhancement

Further survey requirement	None
Avoidance	The grass will be maintained to discourage colonisation.
Mitigation	None
Compensation	NA
Enhancement	None

Legally protected plants/invertebrates

Data search

2.11 There are no records of protected plants or invertebrates in the immediate search area.

Assessment:

2.10 The site is a small residential plot comprising a bungalow and garden with limited natural habitats. Given the small size of the site and the limited diversity of habitats present, the site is unlikely to support any legally protected plants or invertebrates.

Requirements for further survey, avoidance, mitigation, compensation and enhancement

Further survey requirement	None
Avoidance	None
Mitigation	None
Compensation	None
Enhancement	Planting of shrubs and flowers of known benefit to pollinators. Installation of two solitary bee hives.

Birds

Data search

2.10 There are records of bird species protected under Schedule 1 of the WCA (1981) within the search area, including barn owl, redwing, fieldfare and hobby.

2.10 The site does not provide suitable nesting habitat for these species. Priority species recorded locally include spotted flycatcher and house sparrow.

**Habitat requirements:**

7.29 Nesting birds can be found in scrub, trees and buildings between March and September inclusive (note some species, including pigeon, will nest all year round). Nesting birds may also use areas of the bungalow including rotten soffits.

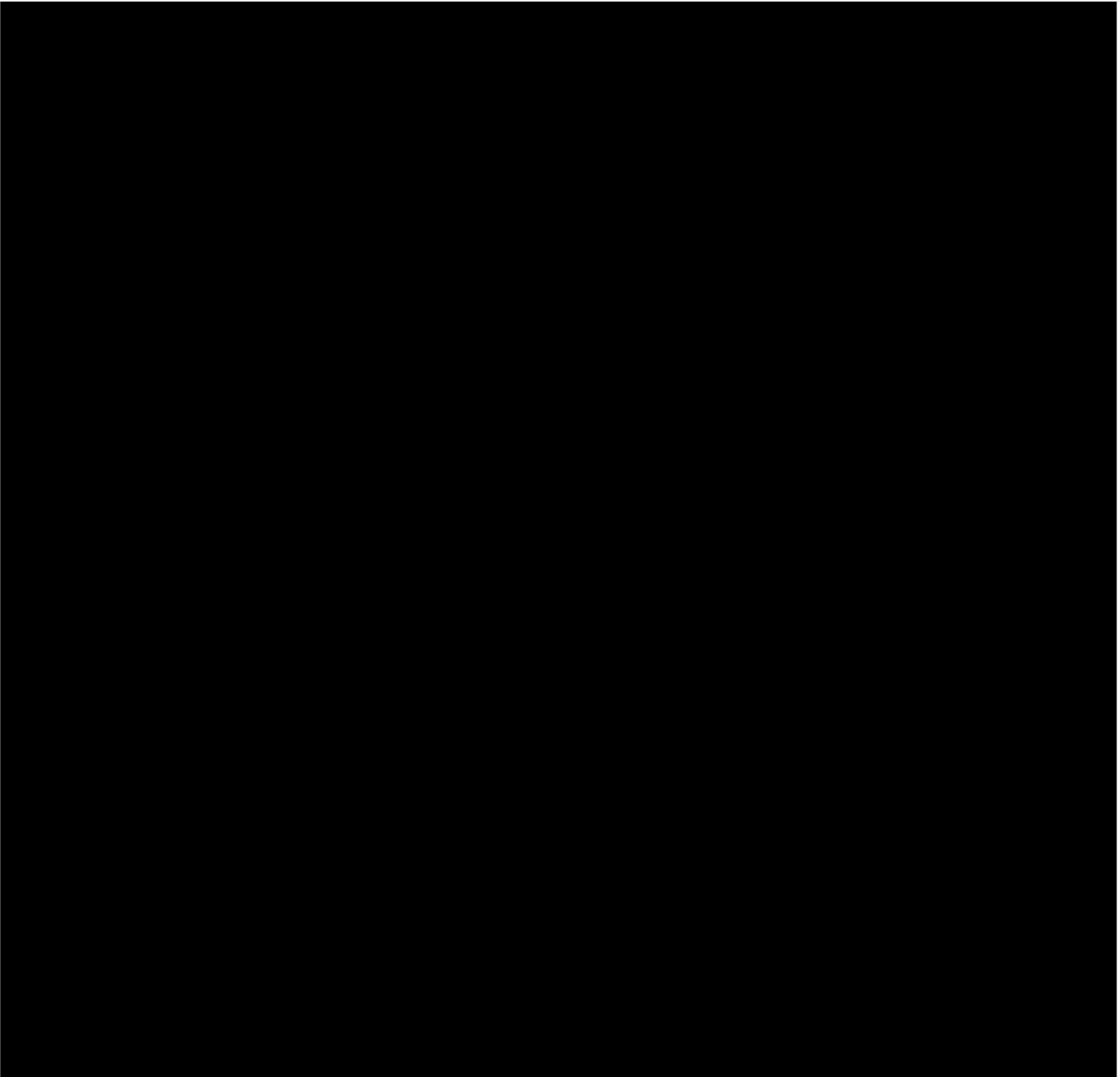
**Assessment:**

7.30 The site provides nesting habitat for generalist garden birds in trees, and potentially the bungalow itself. No evidence of nesting birds (e.g. derelict nests) was found around the bungalow.

**Requirements for further survey, avoidance, mitigation, compensation and enhancement**

<b>Further survey requirement</b>	None
<b>Avoidance</b>	Carry out all vegetation clearance between October and February to avoid the nesting season. If this conflicts with the work programme, an ecologist will undertake a check for active nests the day before work is planned. Ideally demolition will be carried out between October and February inclusive.
<b>Mitigation</b>	If active nests are found during demolition/site clearance, all works must cease in the area and the nest left undisturbed with a species-appropriate buffer (advised by project ecologist) until the young have fledged.
<b>Compensation</b>	None
<b>Enhancement</b>	There is scope to install a variety of bird boxes on retained trees and on the new house. Planting of mixed native hedgerows (at least six different species) is also recommended where possible to provide enhanced nesting and foraging habitat for a variety of species.





## 8.0 Ecological Constraints and Opportunities

Constraints:

### Birds

- 2.4 Demolition and required tree clearance works to be undertaken between October and February inclusive to avoid the main nesting season, or immediately after an ecologist has confirmed the absence of nesting birds if works are required during the main nesting season.

### Reptiles

- 2.4 The garden will be maintained through mowing until development commences to discourage colonisation.

Opportunities:

- 2.4 Biodiversity net-gain is now encouraged under Paragraph 174(d) of the National Planning Policy Framework (2021). The following recommendations are reasonable and proportionate and would contribute to net-gain. They could be secured by condition, such as a Biodiversity Enhancement Strategy or similar, where required:

Planting for pollinators: Areas of the site should be enhanced through planting shrubs that are wildlife friendly and will attract pollinating insects. A list of suitable shrubs for pollinators are provided in Appendix 2.

Integrated bat roost feature: One bat roost feature such as tube, tile or brick is recommended on either the house, ideally facing south and above eaves height.

Integrated bird nest boxes on houses: One integrated bird nest feature is recommended on the house or an outbuilding, facing north or east and above eaves height.

Bat boxes on trees: It is recommended that three bat boxes are installed on a retained tree on the site. Boxes will be installed above 3 metres and face south, south-east and south-west.

Solitary bee hives: At least one solitary beehive is recommended in a sunny position on the site.

Suitable habitat boxes for the site are provided in Appendix 3.

## 2.0 Conclusions

- 2.4 Hybrid Ecology was instructed to carry out an ecological assessment in relation to a proposed development in Chelmondiston, Suffolk.
- 2.4 A mapping exercise and desk study were undertaken to determine constraints relating to designated sites, Priority Habitats and protected species. A survey was carried out in October 2023 to map habitats and identify any potential for/evidence of legally protected species. The survey also identified opportunities for ecological enhancement.
- 2.4 The site is of low ecological value and contains common, widespread habitats. The site is suitable for nesting birds only. Further survey is not required. Boundary trees will be retained and protected in accordance with arboricultural best practice.
- 4.7 Provided all avoidance and enhancement measures detailed in this report are complied with, it is considered that the proposal can be made acceptable with minimal impact to local biodiversity.

### Enhancement opportunities

- 2.4 The development proposal should include significant biodiversity enhancements. They include planting for pollinators, native hedgerow and shrub planting, and habitat boxes/features for bats, nesting birds and solitary bees. These measures will contribute to biodiversity net-gain in accordance with Paragraph 174(d) of the NPPF (2021). The design, maintenance and management could be secured by a condition.

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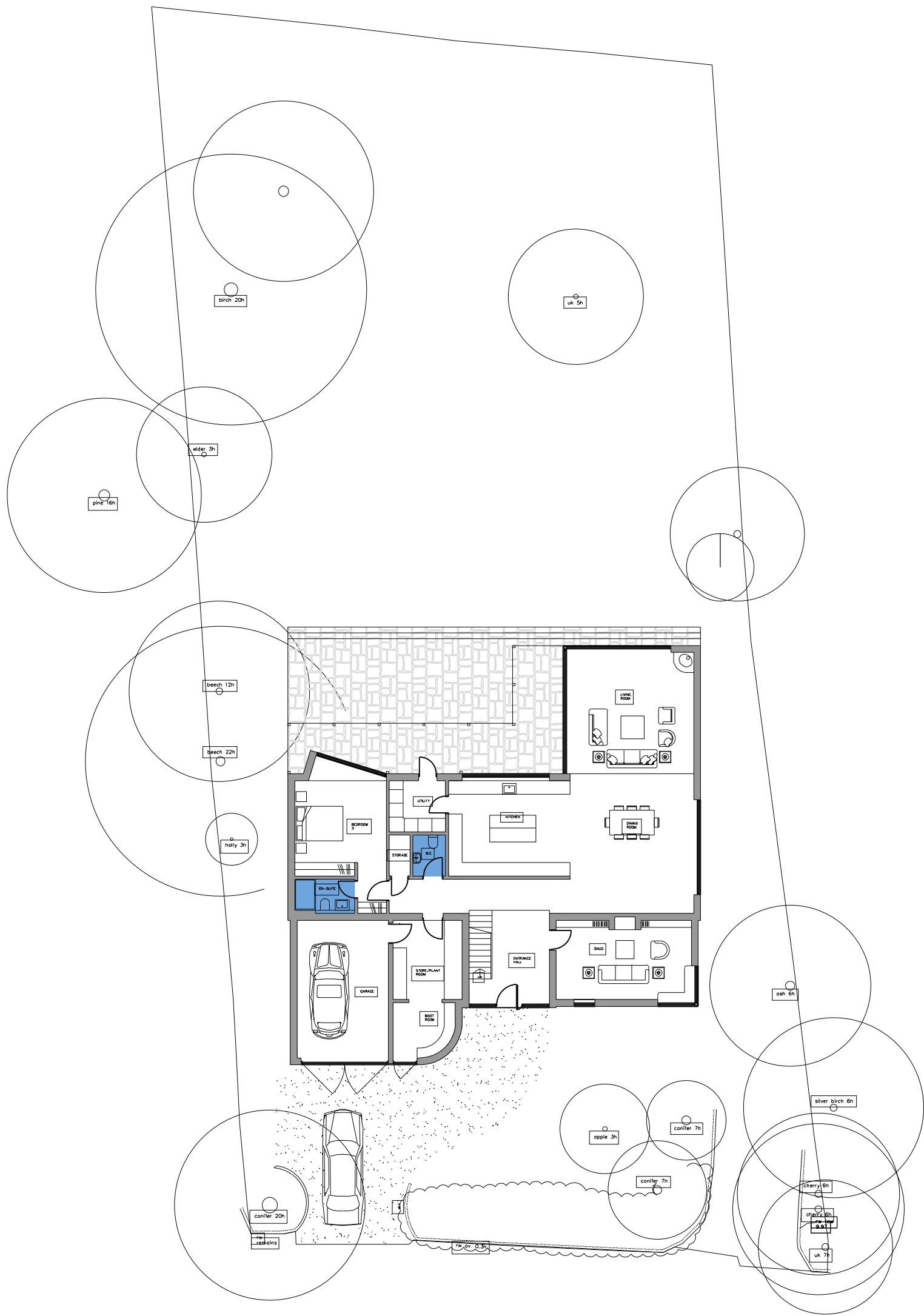
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Appendix 1. Proposed site plan



PROPOSED SITE PLAN @ 1:200 SCALE



<p>CLIENT Trish Winch &amp; Shelagh Pope</p>	<p>PROJECT NO. 2022/014</p>	<p>DRAWING No. 004</p>	<p>PROJECT Wychwood, Hill Farm Lane, Chelmondiston, Suffolk, IP9 1JU</p>	<p>DESCRIPTION Proposed Site Plan</p>	<p>SCALE 1:200 @ A3</p>	<p>DATE 06.06.2023</p>	<p>DRAWN BY RP</p>	<p><b>ROB PEARCE ARCHITECTS</b> Rob Pearce Architects The Old Post Office East Soham Suffolk SP13 7JL Tel: 01728 685887 Email: rob.pearce@framroadband.com Website: www.robpearcearchitect</p>
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## Appendix 2. Planting for pollinators

### Flowers for bees

#### Allium species

Bird's foot trefoil (Lotus corniculatus)

Clovers (Trifolium species, for example red clover and white clover)

Cornflower (Centaurea cyanus)

Cranesbill (Geranium species)

#### Crocus species

Devil's bit scabious (Succisa pratensis)

Heliotrope (Heliotropium cultivars)

Hemp agrimony (Eupatorium cannabinum)

Honesty (Lunaria annua)

Lavender (Lavandula species)

Love-in-a-mist (Nigella damascena)

Marjoram (Origanum species)

Michaelmas daisies (Aster species)

Types of single-flowered rose species (Rosa species)

Rosemary (Rosmarinus officinalis)

Rosebay willowherb (Chamaenerion angustifolium)

Scabious (Scabiosa species)

Snowdrops (Galanthus species)

Sunflower (Helianthus annuus)

Teasel (Dipsacus fullonum)

Thyme (Thymus species)

### Flowers for butterflies

Alyssum (Lobularia maritima)

Aubretia (Aubrieta deltoidea)

Blackberry (Rubus fruticosus)

Bugle (Ajuga reptans)

Candytuft (Iberis amara)

Catmint (Nepeta x faassenii)

Dandelion (Taraxacum officinale)

Globe thistle (Echinops species)

Heather (Calluna vulgaris)

Hebe species

Ice plant (Sedum spectabile) – not dark red cultivars

Knapweeds (Centaurea species)

Marigold (Calendula officinalis)

Mignonette (Reseda odorata)

Thistle (Cirsium species and Carduus species)

Verbena bonariensis

Verbena rigida

### Appendix 3. Recommended habitat boxes and specifications

“Habibat” integrated bird and bat box designs

Available here: <https://www.habibat.co.uk/bat-boxes>



The Habibat Bat Box is a large, solid box made of insulating concrete with an internal roost space, which can be incorporated into the fabric of a building as it is built or renovated.

A variety of facings can be fitted to suit any existing brick, wood, stonework or rendered finish, rendering the box unobtrusive and aesthetically pleasing.

The Habibat box is suitable for species which are most commonly found roosting in buildings in the UK, such as Pipistrelle, Natterer's, Whiskered, and Brandt's bats.

All boxes in the Habibat Bat Range, are available in the following finishes:

- Unfaced for use with Render or Cladding Systems

- Standard Smooth Red, Blue, Buff

- Bespoke, to suit the product you are using on site

- As a Bat Maternity Box

- Coursed to suit existing brick or blockwork. This includes, English, Flemish, Stack or Stretcher.

- Speak to our Design Team to discuss which would be suitable to complete your build.





### Integrated Eco Bat Box for buildings

Available here: <https://www.nhbs.com/integrated-eco-bat-box>

Materials: Recycled LDPE plastic outer with internal FSC OSB roost chamber  
Construction: Outer panels welded, internal chamber formed from stapled panels  
Finish: Black carcass with red, green or black front panels  
Dimensions: 44cm x 21.5cm x 11.1cm  
Entrance: 1.7cm wide  
Internal (Cavity): Open roost chamber, 6cm wide  
Internal (Crevice): Two crevices, 2.2cm wide  
Weight: 3kg  
Access: No access once fitted, self-cleaning, droppings fall out of entrance slot  
Fixing: Held in brickwork by mortar/sealant

### THREE CREVICE BAT BOX



£72

Individually Handmade - Specifications are in cm and approximate.  
External: 43 high x 21.5 wide x 13.5 deep  
Internal: 41 x 16.5 x 1.8 crevices @ 3  
Weight approx. 8.5kg  
Designed for larger groups of crevice dwelling bat species, such as Common and Soprano Pipistrelles.

### Greenwoods Eco Habitats 3 crevice bat boxes

Available here: <https://www.greenwoodsecohabitats.co.uk/>



Vivara Pro 32mm woodstone bird box

Dimensions (mm): 205 x 200 x 310

Entrance hole: 28

Weight (kg): 4.2

Species: Tree sparrows, great tits, crested tits, nuthatches, coal tits and pied flycatchers

Siting: Fix to a tree with an aluminium nail. These boxes are robust and do not rust, therefore reduce damage to the tree.



Vivara Pro open-fronted woodstone bird box

Dimensions: 24cm x 19cm x 17.5cm (H x W x L)

Entrance hole: Open

Species: Suitable for wrens, robins, spotted flycatchers, pied and grey wagtails, song thrushes and blackbirds.

Siting: Open fronted nest boxes should be sited in undergrowth such as ivy to provide cover for the nest. These nest boxes have a removable front panel for easy cleaning.

All Vivara Pro boxes can be found here - <https://www.wildcare.co.uk>



Solitary bee hive

Specification: 200mm x 180mm x 160mm

Available here: <https://www.vinehousefarm.co.uk/solitary-bee-hive>