

Report by: KJF Consultancy Ltd

Title: Preliminary Ecological Appraisal Report (PEAR)

Reason for the Report: Supporting information for a proposed development on Land adjacent to Hill View, Ringwood Road, Sopley BH23 7BE

Proposal: Construction of dwelling

Local Planning Authority (LPA): New Forest District Council

LPA Ref: Not known at the time of this report

Clients: Gillian Wells, Patricia Mitchell, Linda Cooper, Raymond Blandford


Author: K J Forkasiewicz MCIOB, CEnv, ACIEEM

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Declaration of compliance with professional code of conduct: "The information contained within this report which I have prepared and provided is true and has been prepared and provided in accordance with the Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management's Code of Professional Conduct. I confirm that the opinions expressed are my true and professional bona fide opinions."

Quality Assurance

Report title	Preliminary Ecological Appraisal Report (PEAR)
Version	2
Report ref	PEAR.La.HV.RR.S
Date produced	15.02.24
Report checked by	Jan Forkasiewicz BA (Hons) 
Date checked	15.02.24
Report validation	Given the findings are unlikely to change for the foreseeable future; this report is considered valid for 2-years.

Distribution List

Clients	Gillian Wells, Patricia Mitchell, Linda Cooper, Raymond Blandford
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Previous Reports (Not Applicable)

Report title	Preliminary Ecological Appraisal Report (PEAR)
Version	1
Report ref	PEAR.La.HV.RR.S
Date produced	03.02.21

Validation Statement for LPA Registration

This Preliminary Ecological Appraisal Report (PEAR) follows an initial PEAR produced 03.02.21 that was produced as supporting information for the proposed development on Land adjacent to Hill View, Ringwood Road, Sopley BH23 7BE. This report is an updated version of the report that has also been produced as supporting information for a proposed development. The proposed development is; Construction of dwelling.

The report contains the following information:-

- The findings of a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal;
- A discussion regarding any potential adverse impacts; and
- Recommendations.

No further surveys are required and no mitigation or compensation measures are required. If planning permission is granted there will be no adverse impact on any protected habitats or protected species. The proposed development provides an opportunity to achieve a **biodiversity net gain**^{[1] [2]} within the site that can be achieved through the recommendations contained within this report.

[1] The Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act (2006) states that a public authority must "*in exercising its functions, have regard, so far as is consistent with the proper exercise of those functions, to the purpose of conserving biodiversity; conserving biodiversity includes, in relation to a living organism or type of habitat, restoring or enhancing a population or habitat.*"

[2] Section 15, Paragraph 174(b) of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF 2019) states "*plans should... 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.*"

Table of contents:

1.	Summary	Page 1
2.	PEA methodology	Page 2
3.	PEA findings	Page 2
4.	Limitations	Page 4
5.	Discussion regarding any potential adverse impacts	Page 4
6.	Recommendations	Page 5

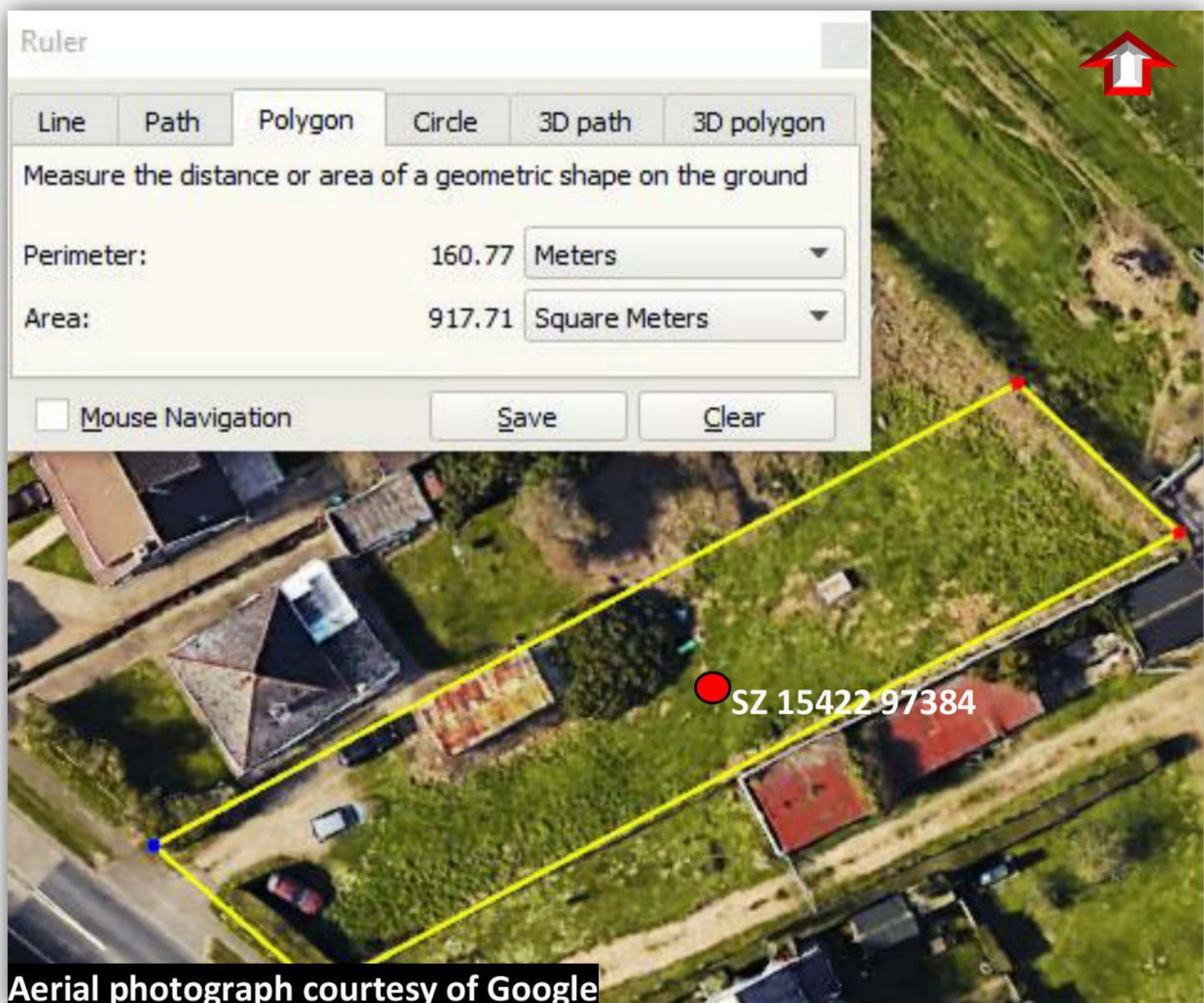
References.

Appendices:

Appendix 1. Author's credentials.

Appendix 2. Relevant photographs.

1. Summary
 - 1.1 **Site address and grid reference:** Land adjacent to Hill View, Ringwood Road, Sopley BH23 7BE. The grid reference at the centre of the site is SZ 15422 97384.
 - 1.2 **Proposed development:** construction of dwelling.
 - 1.3 **LPA and planning application details:** the LPA is New Forest District Council; the planning application reference is not known at the time of this report.
 - 1.4 **Information received and date of site visit:** a proposed site layout plan was not provided. The client emailed me the details of the planning application and discussed the proposed development with me during my visit made 08.02.24; it was raining at the time of my visit, however, visibility was good.
 - 1.5 **Site area and orientation:** the site and site boundaries are shown within the aerial photograph below. I measured the site area using Google Earth; as shown below, I found it to be $\approx 918\text{m}^2$ (0.0918ha). The site is orientated northeast to southwest.



Aerial photograph courtesy of Google

Illustration 1. The site and site boundaries (not to scale).

- 1.6 **Instruction received:** I was instructed to carry out a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal of the site and provide a report as supporting information for the proposed development.
- 1.6.1 I carried out a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA) in accordance with **good practice guidelines**^[3]. The PEA methodology is given at 2; the PEA findings are given at 3 and any limitations on the PEA are given at 4.
- 1.6.2 A discussion regarding any potential adverse impacts is given at 5 and my recommendations are given at 6. My credentials are attached at appendix 1.
2. **PEA methodology**
- 2.1 PEA is the term used to describe a rapid assessment of a site, in relation to a specific project (usually a proposed development). The key objectives of a PEA are to:-
- identify any further surveys required and if an Ecological Impact Assessment (EclA) is required; or
 - identify any required mitigation and compensation measures; and
 - identify opportunities for a biodiversity net gain.
- 2.1.1 Where further surveys are required, these must be carried out before any mitigation and compensations measures can be given.
- 2.1.2 Where mitigation measures are required, these are based on the mitigation hierarchy set out in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 2019. The hierarchy is: **Avoid** impacts where possible; **Mitigate** against impacts if they cannot be avoided; and **Compensate** where mitigation is not possible.
- 2.1.3 A PEA normally comprises a desk study and a site survey (the survey). The desk study is carried out to find details of any known protected species within a site through online research. The survey is carried out to enable a general description of the site and any buildings to be given but mainly to look for any protected habitats and protected species within a site.
3. **PEA findings**
- 3.1 **Desk study findings**^[4]
- 3.1.1 There are no known records of any protected species within the site or within 100m of the site. A data request (a request for known records of protected species) was not made to the Local Environmental Records Centre (LERC) as this would be disproportionate to the circumstances.

[3] **Good practice guidelines**; CIEEM (2017) Guidelines for Preliminary Ecological Appraisal. Second Edition. The Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management.

[4] **PEA - desk study findings**; online research was carried out referring to nbnatlas.org.

3.2 Survey findings

3.2.1 The site is the former garden of the adjacent property (Hill View) and consists of a small area of bare ground at the entrance that leads to a closely mown lawn that covers the majority of the site with low hawthorn (*Crataegus monogyna*) hedges growing along the front and rear boundaries. The lawn is dominated by cock's-foot (*Dactylis glomerata*) with the following plants being present (the common names of the plants are in alphabetical order):-

Bramble	(<i>Rubus fruticosus</i> agg.);
Broad-leaved dock	(<i>Rumex obtusifolius</i>);
Buck's horn plantain	(<i>Plantago coronopus</i>);
Cleavers	(<i>Galium aparine</i>);
Common fleabane	(<i>Pulica dysinterica</i>);
Common nettle	(<i>Urtica dioica</i>);
Creeping buttercup	(<i>Ranunculus reptans</i>);
Cow parsley	(<i>Anthriscus sylvestris</i>);
Dogwood	(<i>Cornus</i> sp.)
Dove's-foot Crane's-bill	(<i>Geranium molle</i>);
Hedge bedstraw	(<i>Galium saxatile</i>);
Herb robert	(<i>Geranium robertianum</i>);
Ribwort plantain	(<i>Plantago lanceolate</i>);
Spear thistle	(<i>Cirsium vulgare</i>);
Spear thistle	(<i>Cirsium vulgare</i>);
Sweet violet	(<i>Viola odorata</i>);
Sorrel	(<i>Oxalis</i> sp.);
Yarrow	(<i>Achillea millefolium</i>).

3.2.2 A narrow closely mown grass verge is adjacent to the hedge growing along the front boundary and Ivy (*Hedera ilex*) is growing within the hedge. There are small areas of bare ground within the lawn and an area of dogwood (*Cornus* sp.) is growing adjacent to the rear of a shed (discussed below).

3.2.3 The only building on site is a dilapidated corrugated iron shed (discussed further below).

3.2.4 My observations^[5] regarding protected habitats and protected species within the site are below.

[5] Observations were made regarding habitats and protected species/EPS - afforded protection under The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981, Protection of Badgers Act 1992 and The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended by The Conservation of Habitats and Species (Amendment) (EU Exit) Regulations 2019).

1. **Amphibians:** no ponds or other suitable habitats are within the site.
 2. **Bats:** the shed does not contain any features used by bats and no evidence of bat activity (bat droppings/feeding remains) was found inside the shed. Bats forage for insects above grassland, hedgerows, around trees and above water (foraging habitats). There are no foraging habitats for bats within the site or within 25m of the site; bats will not forage above the site.
 3. **Badgers:** no evidence of badger activity was found within the site.
 4. **Dormouse:** no suitable habitats are within the site.
 5. **Nesting birds:** the site survey was not carried out during the bird nesting season (1st March to 31st August); however, no old bird nests were noted in the hedges growing along the front and rear boundaries or on/in the shed. There will be a very low population of birds associated with the site.
 6. **Reptiles:** no suitable habitats are within the site; the grass within the site is kept closely mown.
- 3.2.5 No further surveys are required and an EclA is not required. Relevant photographs (taken at the time of the site survey) are attached at appendix 2.
4. **Limitations**
 - 4.1 There following are considered limitations on the PEA:-
 1. Carrying out a site survey in February only; and
 2. Not requesting data from the LERC.
 - 4.1.1 However, in my opinion, although other plants will undoubtedly be present, the survey findings are unlikely to change significantly if a site survey was carried out during the optimal survey period for compiling species lists (May to September). Requesting data from LERC would be disproportionate to the circumstances.
 - 4.1.2 The differing activity patterns of protected species are acknowledged.
 5. **Discussion regarding any potential adverse impacts**
 - 5.1 If planning permission is granted, there will be no adverse impacts on any protected habitats or protected species.
 - 5.2 No mitigation or compensation measures are required. However, the proposed development provides an opportunity to achieve a biodiversity net gain within the site that can be achieved through the recommended enhancements below that are appropriate for the site.
 - 5.3 In my opinion, reasonable survey effort has been made that was proportionate to the circumstances.

6. Recommendations

1. This report should be forwarded to the LPA as supporting information for the proposed development.
2. If planning permission is granted, the LPA should attach a condition to the decision notice requiring the enhancements contained below to be placed e.g. *On completion/prior to occupancy, the enhancements contained within the report by KJF Consultancy Ltd dated 15.02.24 must be put in place.*

Enhancements

Bees: 2 bee bricks (shown below) should be built into a wall of the new dwelling; the bricks should be at least 1m above ground level.



Birds: to provide a nesting opportunity for house sparrows (a species in significant decline), a 1SP Schwegler Sparrow Terrace (shown below), or suitable alternative, should be built into a wall of the new dwelling. To avoid predation by cats, the box should be placed as high as possible.



Hedgehogs: to allow hedgehogs to forage within the site and pass through the site, 150mm x 150mm gaps will be placed every 10m within gravel boards of any new boundary fencing. To provide a nesting opportunity for hedgehogs (a species in significant decline), a hedgehog nest box (shown below) should be placed at the base of the hedge that is growing along the rear boundary.



3. On completion/prior to occupancy, an Ecologist will be instructed to make a post compliance site visit. The Ecologist will verify that the above enhancement measures have been put in place; the Ecologist will take relevant photographs and email them to the LPA Case Officer.

(the above can be obtained from www.nhbs.com and other suppliers)

References (alphabetical order):

Collins, J. (ed.) (2023) Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines (4th edition). Bat Conservation Trust, London. ISBN-978-1-7395126-0-6 (<https://www.bats.org.uk/resources/guidance-for-professionals/bat-surveys-for-professional-ecologists-good-practice-guidelines-4th-edition>).

CIEEM (2017) Guidelines for Preliminary Ecological Appraisal. Second Edition. The Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (<https://cieem.net/resource/guidance-on-preliminary-ecological-appraisal-gpea>)

Natural England Standing Advice on protected species/EPS.
(<https://naturalengland.blog.gov.uk/2022/01/24/updates-to-planning-guidance-to-help-safeguard-englands-protected-species-and-ancient-woodland-ancient-and-veteran-trees/>)

nbn.org.uk
(<https://nbnatlas.org/>)

The Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act (2006)
(<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2006/16/contents>)

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF 2019).
(<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-planning-policy-framework--2>)

The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017.
(<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2017/1012/contents/made>)

The Conservation of Habitats and Species (Amendment) (EU Exit) Regulations (2019).
(<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2019/579/contents/made?view=plain>)

Appendix 1. Author's credentials.

- Professional Member of The Chartered Institute of Building (MCI OB);
- Chartered Environmentalist (CEnv);
- Professional Member of The Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (ACIEEM);
- Licenced to disturb and handle bats (Level 2 Bat Survey Class Licence CL18);
- 9 years' experience as a Local Authority Woodland Conservation Officer;
- 10 years' experience as an Ecological Consultant.

Details of the authors' Insurance and Continual Professional Development for the last 2 years,' can be provided on request. If requested, some of the details may be redacted to comply with the Data Protection Act.

Appendix 2. Relevant photographs.



No foraging habitats for bats are within 25m of the site.



Front boundary of the site.



Closely mown lawn, hedge along rear boundary and dogwood rear of shed.



Dilapidated corrugated iron shed.



Inside of shed.

