

T4 ECOLOGY LTD

ECOLOGY CONSULTANCY SERVICES, MALDON, ESSEX



Preliminary Ecological Appraisal Incorporating Bat Survey Inspection

Onehouse Hall

Lower Road

Onehouse

Stowmarket

Suffolk

IP14 3BY

Prepared for:

Mr D. Withers

August 2022

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1. Survey Finding and Recommendations Summary

In summary, the proposed application area comprises managed lawn, garden and hardstanding situated within the context of a managed, maintained private residential dwelling. As such, the site and surrounds are subject to management and disturbance as would be reasonably expected in such a land use context.

The designation search undertaken as part of the desk study identified that the site is not situated within nor bounding any statutory or non-statutory designated locations. It is not considered reasonably likely that the proposal would have any adverse impact upon statutory or non-statutory designated locations.

The buildings are considered to offer at most a negligible level of bat roosting potential. Further surveys are neither necessary nor appropriate in respect of the buildings. The trees that are likely to be subject to loss as a result of the proposal offer 'No' roosting potential. Again, no further surveys are advised.

Small numbers of bats may commute and forage across the wider site. Vegetation losses are very small scale and therefore it is reasonable to conclude that any such behaviours would continue post development. It is not considered that the proposal would have any adverse impact upon the local bat population.

Small scale, proportionate ecological enhancement recommendations for the project including new/replacement/re-planting, low impact lighting during the demolition, construction and completed phase and use of bat boxes have been provided in section 5.2.

It is not considered reasonably likely reptile or great crested newt species would be adversely affected by the development proposals. However, given the proximity of a moat to the proposed driveway enlargement, appropriate, proportionate precautionary actions for the construction phase have been provided in section 5.2, and should be fully adhered to.

No active or inactive badger setts were found, and no surveys have been advised. However, general appropriate precautionary measures for the construction phase have been advised in section 5.2.

Appropriate recommendations in respect of due diligence relating to nesting birds and ecological enhancements have been made in section 5.2 of the report.

It is considered and concluded that the proposal can proceed without adverse impacts upon legally protected/priority species provided the specific mitigatory guidance and enhancement recommendations identified within section 5.2 are fully adhered to. Where necessary, appropriately worded conditions should be placed upon any consent granted in order to ensure appropriate measures are followed.

Contents

1. Survey Finding and Recommendations Summary.....	3
2. Introduction.....	6
2.1. Phase 1 Brief.....	6
2.2. Bat Survey Brief.....	6
2.3. Development Proposals & Planning Context.....	6
2.4. Scope of Survey.....	6
3. Methodology.....	8
3.1. Survey.....	8
3.1.1. Survey Timings and Conditions.....	8
3.2. Desktop Study & Records Search.....	9
3.2.1. Historical Protected Species Data.....	9
3.2.2. Designations.....	9
3.2.3. Additional Information.....	9
3.3. Bat Survey Methodology.....	9
3.3.1. External/Internal Inspection.....	10
4. Results.....	11
4.1. Desk study Results.....	11
4.1.1. Magic-Statutory Designations.....	11
4.1.2. Local Wildlife Sites-Non-Statutory Designations.....	11
4.1.3. Biological Records.....	12
4.2. Survey Results & Analysis.....	14
4.2.1. Site & Surroundings Description & Habitats.....	14
4.3. Potential for Protected Species Impact with Proposals.....	15
4.3.1. Bats & Internal/External Inspections.....	15
4.3.2. Badgers/Transitory Mammals.....	16
4.3.3. Nesting Birds.....	16
4.3.4. Reptiles.....	17
4.3.5. Great Crested Newt.....	17
4.3.6. Hazel Dormouse.....	17
4.3.7. Other Species.....	18
4.3.8. Invertebrates/Plant life.....	19
4.3.9. General Wildlife & Biodiversity.....	19

5.	Conclusion & Recommendations	20
5.1	Conclusion	20
5.2	Recommendations and Further Action	21
1.	Annex 1 – Legislation & Planning Policy.....	24
1.1.	Habitat Regulations.....	24
1.2.	Wildlife & Countryside Act	24
1.3.	Natural Environment & Rural Communities Act	24
1.4.	National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)	24
1.5.	Biodiversity Action Plans.....	24
1.6.	Local Development Plans.....	25
1.7.	Natural England Standing Advice	25
2.	Annex 2 – Photographs.....	27
3.	Annex 3 – Site Plan.....	37
4.	Annex 4 – Recommended Enhancements	39

2. Introduction

2.1. Phase 1 Brief

T4 Ecology Ltd was commissioned by Mr D. Withers to undertake an ecological assessment at Onehouse Hall, Onehouse, Stowmarket, Suffolk.

This report contains the findings of a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal-PEA. The purpose of a PEA is to identify the potential for presence of protected species on a site, in line with UK law and the requirements of The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)(2021). The brief of the ecological survey was to assess the habitats found on site and identify the potential for presence on site of protected species.

The site-based element is supported by a desktop study undertaken to identify presence of Statutory/National/Local designations or protected species within the vicinity (up to a 5KM radius) of the site. The final part of the project brief was to identify and make recommendations as appropriate for any further surveys required to determine presence/absence of protected species on site if the survey determined that presence of a protected species on site was considered to be reasonably likely.

2.2. Bat Survey Brief

In addition, this report also contains the results of a Preliminary Roost Assessment (PRA) undertaken at the same time as the PEA, comprising an internal/external inspection of the existing building/s. Bats are a strictly protected species under European Legislation. In this regard, given presence of buildings where demolition/alteration works are proposed, the inspection was undertaken in order to meet the specific requirements of the legislation to inform design, mitigation and if appropriate, European Protected Species License Applications.

2.3. Development Proposals & Planning

2.3. Development Proposals & Planning Context

Proposals are for the construction of a single storey kitchen extension, construction of an entrance porch, cart lodge, new entrance gate and alterations to the driveway. Electricity cables shall also be buried as part of the proposal. Proposal plans by Kay Pilsbury Thomas Architects have been viewed as part of the assessment.

Given availability of proposal plans, it was possible to undertake an assessment of any potential impacts resultant from the proposal and recommend further works/appropriate mitigation as appropriate in section 5.2 of this report.

2.4. Scope of Survey

The purpose of this report is to provide an independent opinion of the likely presence of protected species on a site to inform the client of their obligations, and to assist the Local Planning Authority (LPA) in their determination of a planning application.

It should be noted that 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. This PEA does not constitute a full

botanical survey or a Phase 2 preconstruction survey for Japanese Knotweed. In this regard, this survey provides a preliminary view of the likelihood of protected species occurring on site, based on the suitability of the habitat and any direct evidence on site. Additional surveys may be required if it is considered reasonably likely a protected species may be present.

The survey presents a snapshot in time, and therefore makes an assessment purely of what was seen at the time the survey was undertaken. The PEA does not therefore make any retrospective analyses.

This report has a maximum validity of 18 months from the date which the survey was undertaken. Beyond 18 months, it is unsuitable for use in planning and should be rejected by the Local Planning Authority.

3. Methodology

3.1. Survey

Habitats on site were recorded in accordance with the general principles and methods provided in the Handbook for Phase 1 Habitat Survey, JNCC 1993. The survey methodology involves undertaking a site visit to gain an understanding of the site ecology and surrounding characteristics. During the site visit the recording and mapping of habitat types and ecological features present on site is undertaken, including the identification of the main species present. The potential for presence of protected species is assessed as part of the overall methodology, and further advice/surveys recommended as considered appropriate based on the evidence obtained.

The survey works were undertaken in accordance with Guidelines for Preliminary Ecological Appraisal produced by the Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (CIEEM) in December 2017.

Methods are also in accordance to the general principles contained within British Standards Institute (BSI) BS42020 – Biodiversity-Code of Practice for Planning & Development.

A habitat plan is included as Annex 3. Photographs are included within Annex 2.

3.1.1. Survey Timings and Conditions

The survey was undertaken by Consultant Ecologist Peter Harris BSc (hons) MCIEEM FRGS on the 17th August 2022. Weather conditions were dry with 100% cloud cover, and an ambient air temperature of 19°C.

Peter Harris is a full member of the Chartered Institute of Ecology & Environmental Management (CIEEM) and a Fellow of The Royal Geographical Society (FRGS). The surveyor is licenced by Natural England for surveying great crested newts. The surveyor is an ecologist with over 14 years of experience, and has been involved in a wide range of projects from single dwelling developments to large strategic urban renewal schemes subject to full Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA).

As an ecologist for over 14 years, Peter has obtained significant experience in respect of a wide range of protected and priority species. Species worked with include reptiles (surveys/mitigation), great crested newt (surveys/mitigation), badger (surveys/mitigation/licencing), dormouse (surveys) and bat, encompassing a wide range of survey and monitoring techniques. These include internal/external inspections/Preliminary Roost Assessment (PRA), in addition to involvement with successful bat mitigation license applications working in conjunction with specialist organisations.

3.2. Desktop Study & Records Search

To gain an understanding of any designations on/around the site in addition to the historical presence of protected species, desktop data has been obtained from the following sources:

3.2.1. Historical Protected Species Data

Records in respect of protected and priority species within a 2km radius of the site were provided by Suffolk Biodiversity Information Services (SBIS).

SBIS also provided information in respect of non-statutory designated locations within the search radius.

In addition, the Natural England Open Data Portal was accessed for information in respect of protected amphibian species and Great Crested Newt District Licencing Zones.

Use of data is in accordance with CIEEM Guidelines for Accessing & Using Biodiversity Data, March 2016.

3.2.2. Designations

A desktop study was undertaken through MAGIC (Multi-Agency Geographic Information System for Countryside). The search looked to identify the presence of statutory designated sites within a 5km radius (e.g. Special Areas of Conservation (SACs), Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), National Nature Reserves (NNR) and Local Nature Reserves (LNR).

3.2.3 Additional Information

Freely available on-line mapping information and Ordnance Survey Maps were consulted as part of the background assessment.

3.3. Bat Survey Methodology

The PRA was undertaken employing methods based on the guidance described in the Bat Workers' Manual, English Nature's Bat Mitigation Guidelines and updated Bat Conservation Trust Bat Surveys Guidelines for Professional Ecologists (2016).

However, the first page of all three editions includes the following:

'The guidelines should be interpreted and adapted on a case-by-case basis according to site-specific factors and the professional judgement of an experienced ecologist. Where examples are used in the guidelines, they are descriptive rather than prescriptive'.

Surveyors are expected to make judgements in respect of methodology appropriate to the survey conditions/evidence noted, and make conclusions based upon experience.

3.3.1 Inspection

The survey involved an external inspection of the external surfaces of the buildings to identify any features that could be potentially be utilised by bats for roosting purposes. Such features may include small gaps and openings in brick work/roof structure, broken or missing tiles, or gaps in the soffits. During the external inspection, the buildings were also examined for key indicators of bat activity, such as droppings/staining in areas such as window ledges, walls other suitable external structural features.

Trees

Preliminary Roosting Assessment (PRA) from ground level was made of any trees where removal is required to implement the proposal, in accordance with Bat Conservation Trust Guidelines (2016), section 6.2:

A preliminary ground level roost assessment of a tree comprises a detailed inspection of the exterior of the tree from ground level to look for features that bats could use for roosting. The aim of this survey is to determine the actual or potential presence of bats and the need for further survey and/or mitigation. As part of the inspection, trees are graded in terms of their roosting suitability (High, Moderate and Low/No potential).

Where suitable roosting habitat (moderate or high suitability) or evidence of bats is found during a preliminary ground level roost assessment then further surveys (such as further inspection surveys, presence/absence surveys or roost characterisation surveys are likely to be necessary if impacts on the roosting habitat or the bats using it are predicted.

If no or low suitability for bats are found then further surveys are not necessary. Where there is low suitability, precautionary measures may be appropriate during felling or pruning activities.

Equipment utilised comprised close focus binoculars. No intrusive methods (i.e. Torch/Endoscope) were used nor considered appropriate in the survey. A preliminary ground level roost assessment of trees is unlikely to result in disturbance to bats unless the ecologist intends to investigate with a torch or endoscope. If disturbance to bats is a possibility, then a survey licence is required.

4. Results

4.1. Desk study Results.

Site Details

- The site is located at Central Grid Reference: TM 01759 59173
- Postcode: IP14 3BY

4.1.1. Magic-Statutory Designations

The search identified that the site is neither situated within nor bounding a statutory designated location.

The following statutory designations are situated within a 5km radius of the site:

- Combs Wood Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) – Approx. 4.7km south east.
- Church Meadow Local Nature Reserve (LNR) – Approx. 4.1km south east.

Impact Assessment

The site is not situated within nor bounding a statutory designated location. Given the small scale of the proposal within the context of a managed, maintained residential dwelling location (see section 4.2), it is not considered reasonably likely that the proposal would have any adverse impact upon statutory designated locations.

4.1.2. County Wildlife Sites-Non-Statutory Designations

County Wildlife Sites (CWS) are used in the planning system to protect areas that have substantive nature conservation value at a local level. The site is not situated within, nor bounds an CWS locations. There are no CWS designations situated within a 500m radius of the site.

Impact Assessment

The site is not situated within nor bounding a non-statutory designated location. Given the small scale of the proposal within the context of a managed, maintained residential dwelling location (see section 4.2), it is not considered reasonably likely that the proposal would have any adverse impact upon non-statutory designated locations.

4.1.3. Biological Records

The records have been analysed as part of the desk research and considered as part of the conclusions and subsequent recommendations of this report. A summary of records pertinent to the site is provided below:

Terrestrial Mammal

Bats

Species	No. of Records	Date Range
Natterers	1	2015
Common pip	6	2014-2016
Brown Long Eared	5	2013-2016

Western Hedgehog

The search identified 148 records for the species within the search radius, dating from 2004 to 2021.

Badger

The search identified 9 records of the species between 2002-2020.

Water Vole

4 records were available between 2009-2018.

Brown Hare

3 records were identified between 2014-2021.

Polecat

5 records were available dating from between 2018-2021.

Amphibian/Reptile

Great Crested Newt

The search identified 6 records in respect of great crested newt. The records date over a period of between 2016-2020. There are no records of the species within a 1km radius of the site.

Smooth Newt

1 record was identified from 2016.

Common Frog

1 record was identified from 2016.

Grass Snake

2 record of grass snake were identified within the search radius, dating from 2002 and 2012. No records were available within a 1km radius of the site.

Avian

Species recorded in the search radius comprise sparrowhawk, skylark, meadow pipit, swift, common buzzard, heron, rook, moorhen, house sparrow and starling.

4.2. Survey Results & Analysis

4.2.1 Site & Surroundings Description & Habitats

Onehouse Hall is situated approximately 2.2km to the west of Stowmarket.

To the north and east, the site is bounded by neighbouring dwellings and associated established gardens/grounds. Arable land and pasture are situated to the south and west.

The site is entered via an access driveway which links to Lower Road, situated approximately 200m to the south.

Within the survey boundary, the site comprises a managed, maintained residential dwelling with associated gardens and grounds. The main house is located on the north west of the site, with managed maintained lawn, garden and planting beds located to the south.

The proposed extension (kitchen and porch) would link to the existing house on the eastern elevation. This area of the house is described and considered in section 4.3.1.

To the east of the house, the proposed development area comprises hard standing driveway and short mown, managed amenity garden lawn. The lawn is punctuated by small trees and shrub planting, with a small young orchard area located in the central north of the site, with 4 brick pillars located to the north.

The main driveway and parking area is situated to the south of the lawn, with further lawn and garden located to the south. A moat is situated approx. 25m to the south of the existing driveway, located adjacent to the proposed new driveway entrance.

In summary, the proposed application area comprises managed lawn, garden and hardstanding situated within the context of a managed, maintained private residential dwelling. As such, the site and surrounds are subject to management and disturbance as would be reasonably expected in such a land use context.

4.3. Potential for Protected Species Impact with Proposals

The site was assessed for the potential presence of protected species that may have a material impact upon the development proposals.

The ecological value of the site in respect of the potential presence of and impact upon protected species is considered further in the following sections:

4.3.1. Bats & Internal/External Inspections

All bat species are strictly protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 and the Conservation Regulations (Habitat Regulations).

Photographs are included in Annex 2, with a site plan included in Annex 3.

House and Proposed Extension Location

The proposed extensions would be situated on the eastern wing of the existing house. The eastern wing of the house comprises a 2-storey brick building with hipped, slate tile roof.

Inspection identified that the building presents in a maintained, tight sealed condition. The slate roof is modern and well maintained, with no gaps or lifting present. Similarly, a wooden soffit forms a tight seal around the building, and there are no gaps in or around doors or windows. A small porch located on the northern side of the building and single storey lean-to on the southern side of the wing are similarly maintained.

No evidence of bats was identified. In addition, the proposed extension would have no impact upon existing roof spaces in of single storey construction.

The building presents a negligible level of roosting potential. Further surveys are considered to be neither necessary nor appropriate.

The brick pillars that would be removed to implement the cart lodge proposal are exposed and do not present potentially suitable structural features for roosting, and no evidence that would suggest otherwise was identified.

Vegetation/Foraging/Commuting

The proposal shall require the removal of the following trees (photographs provided in Annex 2):

- Small fruit trees (small enough to be successfully re-planted) and managed privet hedge in the central north of site;
- Small cherry and silver birch tree located in the footprint of proposed driveway extension/alteration;
- 2x small silver birch located in proposed new entrance to the driveway.

The trees to be removed/replanted were subject to ground up inspection. The trees were not found to be of an age, size or condition that would afford potential bat

roosting habitat. As such, they provide 'No' roosting potential. Further surveys are considered to be neither necessary nor appropriate.

Small numbers of bats may commute and forage across the wider site.

Impact Assessment

The buildings are considered to offer at most a negligible level of bat roosting potential. Further surveys are neither necessary nor appropriate in respect of the buildings. The trees that are likely to be subject to loss as a result of the proposal offer 'No' roosting potential. Again, no further surveys are advised.

Small numbers of bats may commute and forage across the wider site. Vegetation losses are very small scale and therefore it is reasonable to conclude that any such behaviours would continue post development. It is not considered that the proposal would have any adverse impact upon the local bat population.

Small scale, proportionate ecological enhancement recommendations for the project including new/replacement/re-planting, low impact lighting during the demolition, construction and completed phase and use of bat boxes have been provided in section 5.2.

4.3.2. Badgers/Transitory Mammals

Badgers and active setts are afforded protection under the Protection of Badgers Act 1992.

No evidence of any active or inactive setts or latrines were identified in the proposed development area, or wider areas bounding site within a 30m radius. It is reasonably likely that the species would may have a transitory presence in the wider area, along with other transitory species including hedgehog, deer and fox.

Impact Assessment

No active or inactive setts were found, with no evidence of badger activity identified in any location.

No further surveys are considered necessary or appropriate. However, general precautions in respect of the construction phases have been provided in section 5.2 given the possibility of transitory presence of the species and other transitory mammal species.

4.3.3. Nesting Birds

Nesting birds and their eggs are protected under the Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981.

As general best practice guidance, the bird breeding season is from March to September. If works to buildings/vegetation is proposed during the season, a check should be made for nests prior to works commencing. If nests are present, they should be left intact and undisturbed until the young have fledged.

Impact Assessment

Provided works are undertaken during appropriate seasonality/due diligence as recommended above, the proposals would not have any direct impact upon nesting birds.

In addition to planting of new tree/hedgerows/re-planting as part of the proposal, it is advised that tree mounted bird boxes should be installed to enhance nesting provision and opportunities for nesting. Enhancement recommendations have been included in section 5.2.

4.3.4. Reptiles

Reptiles are afforded protection under the Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981, with smooth snake and sand lizard afforded full protection under the same act and the Conservation Regulations (Habitat Regulations).

As described in section 4.1, the site comprises a managed, maintained dwelling, associated garden and hardstanding. As such, the proposed development area is not considered to provide potentially suitable habitat and the proposal would not affect potentially suitable reptile habitat.

Impact Assessment

As identified above, the proposed development area is not considered to provide potentially suitable reptile habitat as a result of existing land/surrounding land uses and management regimes. Based upon the evidence above, it is not considered reasonably likely that reptile species are present on site given lack of suitable habitat on site/connectivity to suitable offsite habitats. Therefore, the risk of potential impact of the proposals upon the conservation status of reptile is negligible. The risk of potential impact of the proposals upon individual reptiles is also considered to be negligible. No further surveys are necessary in respect of reptile species.

4.3.5. Great Crested Newt

Great crested newt is strictly protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 and the Conservation Regulations (Habitat Regulations). The site is situated within a Natural England District Level Licencing Amber Zone.

No ponds or water bodies are situated directly within the application area, nor would be lost to or affected by proposal. Given the ongoing context of the site as a managed, maintained residential location, the application area is not considered likely to provide nor form a constituent part of a wider terrestrial dispersal network.

Distance from a potentially suitable water body and intervening land use is a critical factor in determining suitability for the species. As such, a search using mapping data was undertaken to identify ponds within a 250m radius. A moat is situated within the wider grounds, and comprises an established garden feature. The moat would not be affected by the proposal. Two lakes are situated on private land approximately 130m west of the site, with a further pond located approx. 100m north east, also on

private land. The offsite lakes and pond could not be accessed. No records of the species were available within a 1km radius based upon data obtained from SBIS.

Whilst it is acknowledged that small numbers of GCN have been known to range significant distances (1km) to colonise new ponds, sometimes over a number of years if connective habitat is suitable, research undertaken by English Nature¹ (now Natural England) indicates that it is most common to encounter them within 50m of a breeding pond, with few moving further than 100m unless significant linear features or suitable terrestrial habitat is involved, when great crested newts can be encountered at distances of between 150m – 200m. At distances greater than 200-250m great crested newts are hardly ever encountered. This valuation of habitats according to distance from great crested newt breeding ponds has also been adopted as part of Natural England's European Protected Species application form, with specific reference to the guidance provided by Natural England in WMLa14-2.

Impact Assessment

In consideration of the above, whilst it is acknowledged that the site is situated within a Natural England District Level Licencing Amber Zone, it is not considered that District Level Licencing nor presence / absence surveys of ponds would represent an appropriate nor proportionate response to the low level of risk. Similarly, identification of presence/absence would not further inform the findings and conclusions of this report given the condition of the site and small scale of the proposal in the context of a managed private residential dwelling as described. However, in order to reduce risks to a negligible level, it is considered that the construction phase should be appropriately managed. Consequently, in order to manage risk to GCN and control the construction phases, it is concluded that the precautionary methods identified in section 5.2 should be fully adhered to during the development phase. The methods identified in section are simple to implement, proportionate and appropriate in the context of existing land use, level of risk and small scale of the development proposal.

4.3.6 Hazel Dormouse

Hazel dormouse is strictly protected under the European Habitat Regulations and the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981.

The site does not have connectivity to locations where the species has been previously recorded. No potentially suitable habitat would be lost to the proposal, with only very small-scale vegetation removal required as previously described.

Impact Assessment

It is not considered reasonably likely that the proposal would result in adverse impact upon the species. No further surveys are considered necessary or appropriate.

4.3.7 Other Species

The site is not situated in a location, nor provides potentially suitable habitat where other protected species such as, water vole and otter would be considered at risk. No further surveys/precautions are considered necessary or appropriate.

4.3.8 Invertebrates/Plant life

Given the existing and surrounding land uses, the site is not considered to provide habitat for protected, priority or notable species. No further surveys are considered to be necessary or appropriate.

However, installation of new landscape planting within the future proposal would provide invertebrate habitat on the site post-development. Night scented plant species such as evening primrose, honeysuckle and jasmine would also attract moths in the evening, which would in turn attract foraging bats.

Recommended enhancements are identified in section 5.2.

4.3.9 General Wildlife & Biodiversity

It is acknowledged that the wider site and development area may be utilised by a range of transitory wildlife species including deer, rabbit, fox, hedgehog etc. The boundaries of the development area and wider site are currently relatively open and as such animals are able to forage across the site to other surrounding areas.

Impact Assessment

As part of appropriate due diligence, it is advised that the full range of recommendations identified in section 5.2 be fully implemented, and all reasonable enhancements incorporated into a development proposal such that biodiversity is maximised as part of the development.

In addition, to enable wildlife to continue using the development area post development, it is advised that boundaries remain relatively open as per the current situation such that wildlife can continue to radiate in the area. This includes the use of permeable boundaries such as tree lines and hedgerows, in addition to leaving hedgehog gaps in any new fencing proposals.

5. Conclusion & Recommendations

5.1 Conclusion

In summary, the proposed application area comprises managed lawn, garden and hardstanding situated within the context of a managed, maintained private residential dwelling. As such, the site and surrounds are subject to management and disturbance as would be reasonably expected in such a land use context.

The designation search undertaken as part of the desk study identified that the site is not situated within nor bounding any statutory or non-statutory designated locations. It is not considered reasonably likely that the proposal would have any adverse impact upon statutory or non-statutory designated locations.

The buildings are considered to offer at most a negligible level of bat roosting potential. Further surveys are neither necessary nor appropriate in respect of the buildings. The trees that are likely to be subject to loss as a result of the proposal offer 'No' roosting potential. Again, no further surveys are advised.

Small numbers of bats may commute and forage across the wider site. Vegetation losses are very small scale and therefore it is reasonable to conclude that any such behaviours would continue post development. It is not considered that the proposal would have any adverse impact upon the local bat population.

Small scale, proportionate ecological enhancement recommendations for the project including new/replacement/re-planting, low impact lighting during the demolition, construction and completed phase and use of bat boxes have been provided in section 5.2.

It is not considered reasonably likely reptile or great crested newt species would be adversely affected by the development proposals. However, given the proximity of a moat to the proposed driveway enlargement, appropriate, proportionate precautionary actions for the construction phase have been provided in section 5.2, and should be fully adhered to.

No active or inactive badger setts were found, and no surveys have been advised. However, general appropriate precautionary measures for the construction phase have been advised in section 5.2.

Appropriate recommendations in respect of due diligence relating to nesting birds and ecological enhancements have been made in section 5.2 of the report.

It is considered and concluded that the proposal can proceed without adverse impacts upon legally protected/priority species provided the specific mitigatory guidance and enhancement recommendations identified within section 5.2 are fully adhered to. Where necessary, appropriately worded conditions should be placed upon any consent granted in order to ensure appropriate measures are followed.

5.2 Recommendations and Further Action

Following the survey, the following recommendations have been made to ensure obligations in respect of protected species are met/the site is enhanced for the benefit of biodiversity if developed. The recommendations are considered to be appropriate and in context with the size of the proposals, and based upon the findings of the impact assessment section of the report (4.3.1 – 4.3.9).

Precautionary Method Statement-GCN

- As an appropriate precautionary action, in line with the existing and established management regimes, the vegetation on site, with particular regard to the application area should continue to be maintained and kept short through mowing/strimming management up to prevent potential foraging/terrestrial dispersal habitat developing through neglect of the grass/vegetation.
- Prior to any works commencing, the construction zone, parking and compound shall be defined by way of heras fencing. The areas suitable for this land use comprise the existing hardstanding areas located to the east of the house and surrounding managed lawn locations, in addition to the existing hardstanding located adjacent to the site entrance driveway.
- Materials should be stored on bare ground, hardstanding, or stored off the ground on pallets if located on any vegetated areas.
- Open excavations should be inspected by site operatives for amphibians prior to filling.
- Footings and slabs should be poured in the morning. This is to ensure that concrete has hardened off prior to evening to reduce risk of animals coming into contact with wet concrete. Similarly for the same reason, any hand mixed concrete should be made and stored on a ply board and covered with a tarpaulin at night.
- Any trenches will be covered over with wooden sheeting at night. In the event a trench cannot be adequately covered, scaffold planks will be left in the extraction to provide a means of escape.
- Service pipes stored on site will be checked for sheltering amphibians prior to installation.
- Given that no GCN habitat would be affected, it is considered unlikely the GCN would be encountered. Therefore, an ongoing watching brief by way of Ecological Clerk of Works (ECoW) is not considered appropriate or proportionate in the context of this proposal.

- Nonetheless, during the works, all site operatives should be made aware of the levels of protection afforded to great crested newt. In the highly unlikely event of a Great Crested Newt being found on the site, work must stop in this area and an ecologist contacted.

Construction Phase Precautions

- To protect any radiating mammals, it is recommended that any trenches be covered over with wooden sheeting at night and fencing off the demolition/construction zone and associated compounds would be advisable during the demolition/construction phase.

Nesting Birds

- As general guidance, the bird breeding season is from March to September. If works to vegetation is proposed during the season, a check should be made for nests prior to works commencing. If nests are present, they should be left intact and undisturbed until the young have fledged.

Bats & Lighting

- In order to minimise risk of disturbance to potential features that may provide bat commuting and foraging habitat during the construction phase and as part of the completed development, a low impact lighting scheme is advised:
 - a) Brightness of lights should be as low as possible, and in accordance with British Standard Institute (BSI) and Bat Conservation Trust (BCT) guidance. Where possible, low pressure sodium lights are advised.
 - b) Lighting should not be directed at features that may be utilised by bats such as woodland, tree lines, hedgerows and water bodies/water courses.
 - c) Directional lighting and/or fittings with hoods and cowls should be utilised.
 - d) Where possible, security lighting should be motion sensitive and timers to minimise the amount of time that lights are on.
 - e) Where possible, directional low impact solar bollard lighting should be used to illuminate roads, paths and parking areas.

Enhancements

- The following ecological enhancements are recommended:
 - 2x bird boxes (tree or building mounted);
 - 3x bat boxes (tree or building mounted);
 - 2x tree mounted bird and bat boxes;
 - Replacement/re-planting of trees;

- New tree and hedgerow planting as appropriate; and
 - Inclusion of native/wildlife friendly planting in landscape scheme;
- To enable wildlife to continue using the development area post development, it is advised that boundaries remain relatively open such that wildlife can continue to radiate in the area. This includes the use of permeable boundaries such as tree lines and hedgerows, in addition to leaving hedgehog gaps in any new fencing proposals.

1. Annex 1 – Legislation & Planning Policy

1.1. Habitat Regulations

The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations transpose Council Directive 92/43/EEC on the Conservation of Natural Habitats and Wild Flora and Fauna (Habitats Directive) into English law, making it an offence to deliberately capture, kill or disturb wild animals listed under Schedule 2 of the Regulations. It is also an offence to damage or destroy a breeding site or resting place of such an animal (even if the animal is not present at the time).

1.2. Wildlife & Countryside Act

The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981, as amended by the Countryside and Rights of Way Act (CROW) 2000 and the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act (NERC) 2006, consolidates and amends existing national legislation to implement the Convention on the Conservation of European Wildlife and Natural Habitats (Bern Convention) and Council Directive 79/409/EEC on the Conservation of Wild Birds (Birds Directive), making it an offence to:

- Intentionally kill, injure or take any wild bird or their eggs or nests (with certain exceptions) and disturb any bird species listed under Schedule 1 to the Act, (which includes Cirl Bunting) or its dependent young while it is nesting;
- Intentionally kill, injure or take any wild animal listed under Schedule 5 to the Act; intentionally or recklessly damage, destroy or obstruct any place used for shelter or protection by any wild animal listed under Schedule 5 to the Act; intentionally or recklessly disturb certain Schedule 5 animal species while they occupy a place used for shelter or protection;
- Pick or uproot any wild plant listed under Schedule 8 of the Act.

Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) are designated under this Act.

Special Protection Areas (SPA) are strictly protected sites, designated under the Birds Directive, for rare and vulnerable birds and for regularly occurring migratory species.

1.3. Natural Environment & Rural Communities Act

The NERC 2006 places a duty on authorities to have due regard for biodiversity and nature conservation during the course of their operations.

1.4. National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

The NPPF 2021 is specific in respect of conservation and biodiversity. ODPM 06/2005 remains in place. NPPF places a duty on planners to make material consideration to the effect of a development on legally protected species when considering planning applications, with a focus upon sustainable development and biodiversity net-gain.

1.5. Biodiversity Action Plans

The UK Biodiversity Action Plan (UKBAP) (Anon, 1995) was organised to fulfil the Rio Convention on Biological Diversity in 1992, to which the UK is a signatory. A list of national priority species and habitats has been produced with all listed

species/habitats having specific action plans defining the measures required to ensure their conservation. Regional and local BAPs have also been organised to develop plans for species/habitats of nature conservation importance at regional and local levels.

1.6. Local Development Plans

County, District and Local Councils have Development Plans and other policy documents that include targets and policies which aim to maintain and enhance biodiversity. These are used by Planning Authorities to inform planning decisions.

1.7. Natural England Standing Advice

Natural England has adopted national standing advice for protected species. It provides a consistent level of basic advice which can be applied to any planning application that could affect protected species. It replaces some of the individual comments that Natural England has provided in the past to local authorities.

1.8. Bats

All species of bat found in the UK are protected by law and are designated as a protected species. Paragraph 98 of Circular 06/2005 states that *'the presence of a protected species is a **material consideration** when a planning authority is considering a development proposal that, if carried out, would be likely to result in harm to the species or its habitat.'*

Bats are protected under UK legislation under The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 through inclusion on Schedule 5 -Protected bat species in Britain. On a European basis, bats are subject to protection under the Conservation (Natural Habitats &c.) Regulations.

The November 2017 the Conservation (Natural Habitats &c.) Regulations make it an offence to:

- Intentionally or deliberately kill, injure or capture (take) bats.
- Intentionally or recklessly damage or destroy bat roosts or disturb bats.

A bat roost is defined as 'any structure or place which is used for shelter or protection', whether or not the bats are utilising the roost at the time. European protected animal species and their breeding sites or resting places are protected by the Habitat Regulations.

In this regard, it is an offence for anyone to deliberately capture, injure or kill any such animal or to deliberately take or destroy their young/eggs as applicable. It is also an offence to damage or destroy a breeding or resting place of a European Protected Species and it is an offence to possess a European Protected Species.

The threshold above which a person will commit the offence of deliberately disturbing a wild animal of a European protected species has been raised. A person will commit

an offence only if he deliberately disturbs such animals in a way as to be likely to significantly affect:

- The ability of any significant groups of animals of that species to survive, breed, or rear or nurture their young, or;
- The local distribution of abundance of that species.

The existing offences such as obstruction of a bat roost, low-level disturbance, and sale which cover European Protected Species under the Wildlife and Countryside Act (1981) continue to apply.

2. Annex 2 – Photographs



Eastern elevation – Proposed extension location



Tight seal between brickwork and soffit



Small porch on northern elevation of eastern wing



Tight seal between soffit and brickwork on porch



South eastern side of eastern wing



Tight seal between wall and tiles on south eastern corner



Proposed cart lodge location looking west



Brick pillars to be removed



Fruit tree in proposed footprint. Trees are small enough to be re-planted elsewhere on site



Managed privet hedge bounding fruit trees



Existing driveway/parking area looking west



Existing driveway/parking area looking north west



View of north eastern corner of site looking south



Small cherry tree to be removed for driveway alterations



Small silver birch to be removed for driveway alterations



2x silver birch to be removed for driveway alterations



Proposed new entry location



Proposed driveway route looking north

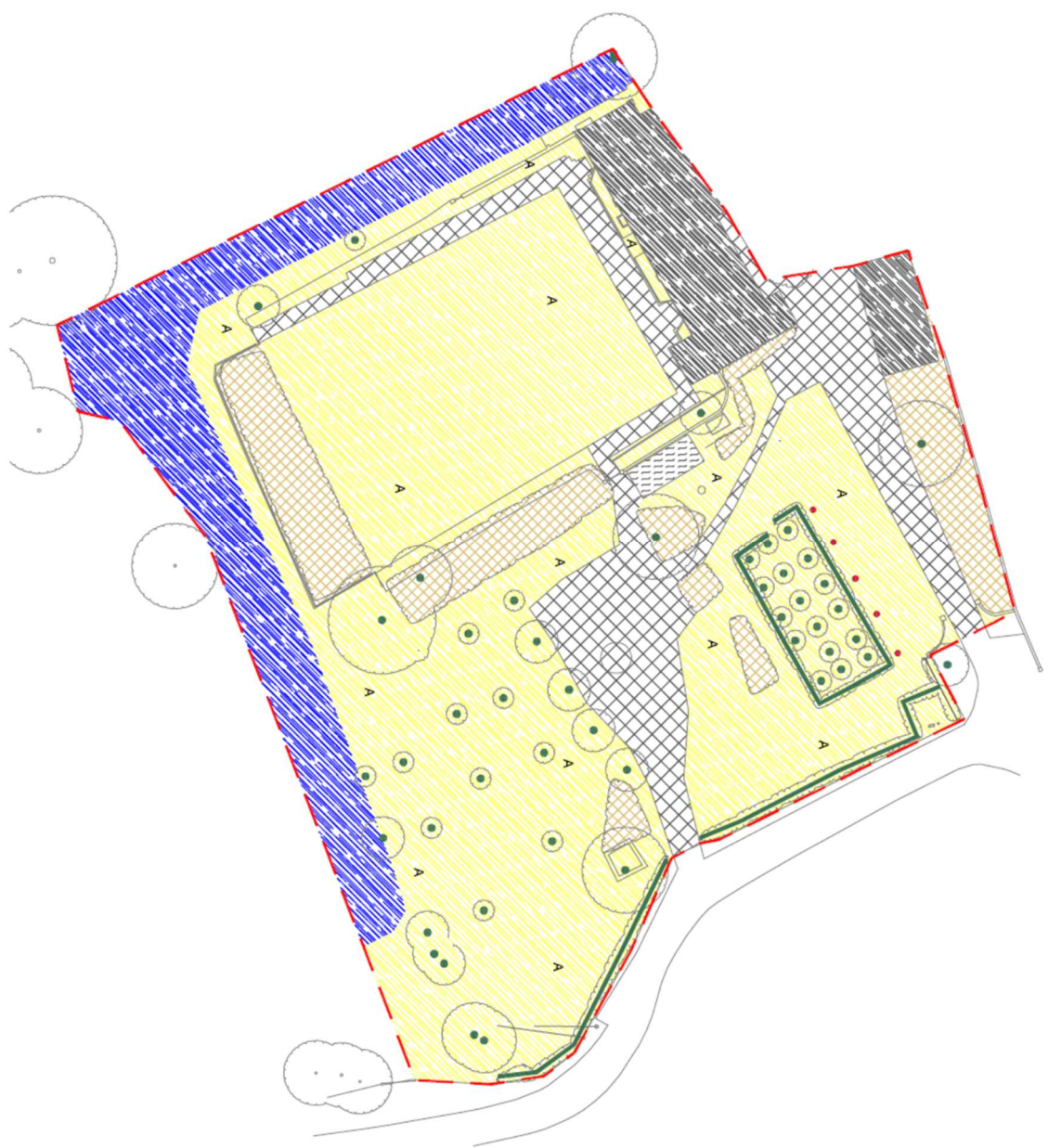


Proposed driveway route looking north



Moat, looking west

3. Annex 3 – Site Plan



- KEY**
- Survey boundary
 - Broad-leaved tree
 - Standing water
 - Amenity grassland
 - Introduced shrub
 - Species poor / intact hedge
 - Brick pillar
 - Concrete / gravel handstanding
 - Shed
 - Building

sh Extended Phase 1 Habitat Survey
 sh Onehouse Hall

ref: MH1489-01
 scale: 1:500 @A4
 date: Aug 2022

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4. Annex 4 – Recommended Enhancements

The following hedgerows/shrub and smaller tree species could be utilised accordingly:

- Hawthorn *Crataegus monogyna*
- Ash *Fraxinus excelsior*
- English Elm *Ulmus procera*
- Field Maple *Acer campestre*
- Hazel *Corylus avellana*
- Dog Rose *Rosa canina*
- Elderberry *Sambucus nigra*
- Holly *Illex aquifolium*
- Blackthorn *Prunus spinosa*
- Rowan *Sorbus aucuparia*
- Guelder Rose *Viburnum opulus*
- Silver Birch *Betula pendula*
- Alder *Alnus glutinosa*
- Cotoneaster spp.
- Spindle *Euonymus europaeus*

The following species could also be considered within the landscaping scheme as appropriate, given their wildlife friendly/native characteristics:

- *Viburnum* sp.
- Californian Lilac *Ceanothus* sp.
- Lavander *Lavandula angustifolia*
- Hebe Sp.
- Privet *Ligustrum vulgare*
- Dogwood *Cornus sanguinea*

In addition, vertical areas on sides of buildings and/or boundary fences could be utilised to provide additional habitat. Suitable species to grow on vertical habitats could include:

- Ivy *Hedera helix*
- Clematis *vitalba*
- Honeysuckle *Lonicera periclymenum*

Bulbs and small, wildlife friendly annuals and biennials can also be utilised within wildlife friendly and garden planting where considered appropriate by the landscape architect. Suitable species could include:

- *Hypericum perforatum*
- Wood Anemone *nemorosa*
- Tustan *Hypericum androsaemum*
- Foxglove *Digitalis grandiflora*
- Bluebell *Hyacinthoides non-scripta*

Dependant on soil condition, British Seed House RE1 mix (or similar product) is recommended for installation of the species rich grass areas where required. Alternatively, turf already seeded with wild flower seed could be utilised.

Recommend species are likely to include:

- Slender Creeping Red Fescue *Festuca rubra ssp litoralis*
- Crested Dogs Tail *Cynosurus cristatus*
- Common Bent *Agrostis capillaris*
- Cocksfoot *Dactylis glomerata*
- Meadow Fescue *Festuca pratensis*
- Golden Oat Grass *Trisetum Flavascence*
- Sweet Vernal Grass *Anthoxanthum odoratum*
- Ribwort Plantain *Plantago lanceolata*
- Yarrow *Achillea millefolium*
- Common Knapweed *Centaurea nigra*
- Meadow Sweet *Filipendula ulmaria*
- Lady's Bedstraw *Galium verum*
- Ox eye daisy *Leucanthemum vulgare*
- Self Heal *Prunella vulgaris*
- Meadow Buttercup *Ranunculus acris*
- Bulbous Buttercup *Ranunculus bulbosus*
- Agrimony *Agrimona eupatorium*
- Rough Hawkbit *Leontodon hispidus*
- Yellow Rattle *Rhinanthus minor*
- Common Birdsfoot Trefoil *Lotus corniculatus*
- Salad Burnett *Sanguisorba minor*
- Harebell *Campanula rotundifolia*
- Cowslip *Primula deorum*
- Field Poppy *Papaver Rhoeas*
- Wild Thyme *Thymus Serpyllum*
- Quaking Grass *Briza Media*
- Pignut *Conopodium majus*

Using Seeds

Seed Bed Preparation

Whilst seeds can be sown at any time, the best time to prepare the meadow bed is summer. The top grass, and top inch of top soil should be removed if possible. The most important factor is to ensure that the seed bed is weed free, and level using roller/rake. Also, remove stones in areas of seedbed. Wildflower meadows from seed are most successful when soil fertility is low and weeds can be less vigorous.

Sowing Seed

The best time to sow the seeds is in spring or early autumn. Spread seeds in a sand mix using a spreader for even distribution at a density of approx. 4 grams per sq. metre.

Using Plugs

Use of wildflower plugs is generally more reliable, and gives quicker results than using seed. However, over large areas, density of plugs can be reduced, with 1 or 2 plugs per square metre. Generally, plugs can be installed at any time but spring/autumn are optimum months.

Using Turf Impregnated with seeds

Use of turf less dependent on soil conditions as the seed are already in place. This enables more variety of species. However, to be successful, it should be installed in free draining areas that do not become water logged.

Wildflower Plugs and seeds are available from a number of online suppliers:

www.wigglywigglers.co.uk

www.bostonseeds.co.uk

www.wildflowershop.co.uk

www.reallywildflowers.co.uk

www.wildflower.org.uk

www.meadowmania.co.uk

Sections of turf already seeded are also available from the following suppliers:

www.meadowmat.co.uk

www.wildflowerturf.co.uk

www.wigglywigglers.co.uk