

West Bradley  
Landscape Guidelines



Urquhart & Hunt Landscape Design  
2024

The property and surrounding landscape of West Bradley possess a unique combination of location, heritage and ecology, embedded in an agricultural context and surrounded by beautiful countryside.

As such, it is of utmost importance that we treat this land with careful and considerate attention to all these aspects. Our clients, and therefore this proposal, aim to create a landscape that is in harmony with the environment and community, while being sensitive to existing ecologies.

Our approach is to design and maintain the landscape so that it serves both environmental and social purposes at the highest level possible. This will involve the use of naturalistic perennial planting, meadow restoration, care and restoration of waterways, new tree and shrub planting as well as other hard landscape elements which will reflect the local vernacular.

The proposed landscape design is highly sensitive to the native flora and fauna of the area – in many areas, the wider landscape will be managed less intensively, allowing natural systems to proliferate. The gardens will be planted for both ecological and aesthetic value, and the wider areas of the site will be allowed to establish as native meadows where possible, with local native seeds and bulbs seeded in to enhance the meadows.

Our planting ethos for perennials, shrubs and trees aims to naturalise the house within the surrounding landscape, as well as enhance the biodiversity of the local ecosystem by attracting pollinators and other invertebrates, providing shelter and food for a number of different native birds, reptiles and other mammals. We will use native shrubs and trees throughout the site to provide and enhance the existing habitats; creating a mosaic that supports a wide range of local wildlife species.

New naturalistic planting will aid in the sustainable management of water on site by slowing down its movement as it makes its way down towards the brook, as well as assisting with water filtration and infiltration. We will keep hard landscaping to a functional minimum to aid with natural drainage on site, and the landscaping materials will be permeable as far as possible and in keeping with the local vernacular.

In summary, our proposed garden at West Bradley is a landscape design that is sensitive to the existing ecologies, working in harmony with the environment and community. We will use naturalistic planting, riparian restoration, meadow restoration, and biodiversity-sensitive management strategies to enhance the biodiversity of the local ecosystem, while providing a space for the inhabitants to enjoy and connect with the unique landscape of West Bradley.







## Bats

Several bat roosts have been identified on and around the site, including roosts for common and soprano pipistrelles, and greater and lesser horseshoe bats. The presence of horseshoe bats is particularly notable, as their British population is scant and largely confined to southwest England.

Measures will be taken to protect and expand existing habitat by creating additional roosting areas and suitable environments for forage by expanding existing areas of scrub with an eye to providing for nocturnal pollinators



## Dormice

The stream bank is designated prime habitat for dormice, and measures will be taken to ensure its continued suitability. Dormice are especially fond of hazel nuts, which form a critical piece of their autumn forage and are present in the stream corridor in significant numbers.

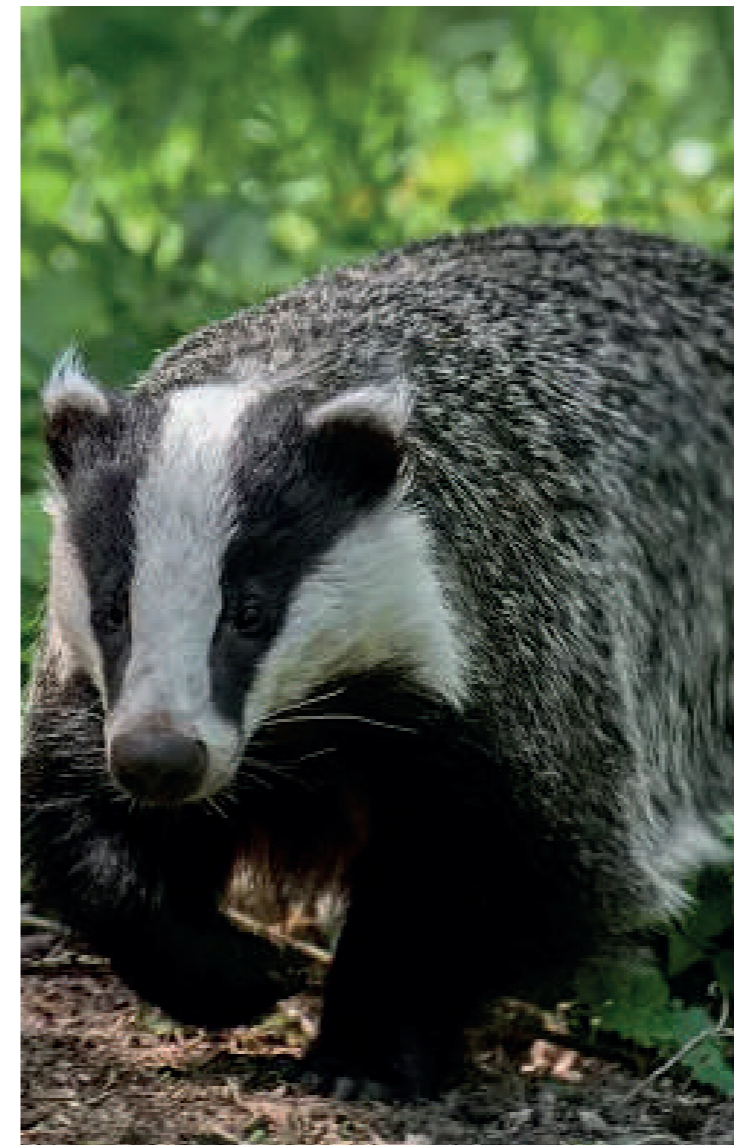
Clearance along the stream corridor will be largely limited to the removal of non-beneficial invasive species such as cherry laurel (*Prunus laurocerasus*) to retain opportunities for nesting. Where suitable, additional hazel may be introduced. The creekside scrub will also be encouraged to expand into targeted areas of the existing meadow to expand habitat opportunities.



## Badgers

Badgers make their den, known as a 'sett', in areas of woodland, farmland or orchard, and two setts have been identified on site. The badger is England's largest land predator feeding on small mammals, birds' eggs, worms, fruit and plants. Badgers can be provided for on site through encouraging biodiversity and installing wildlife sensitive outdoor lighting.

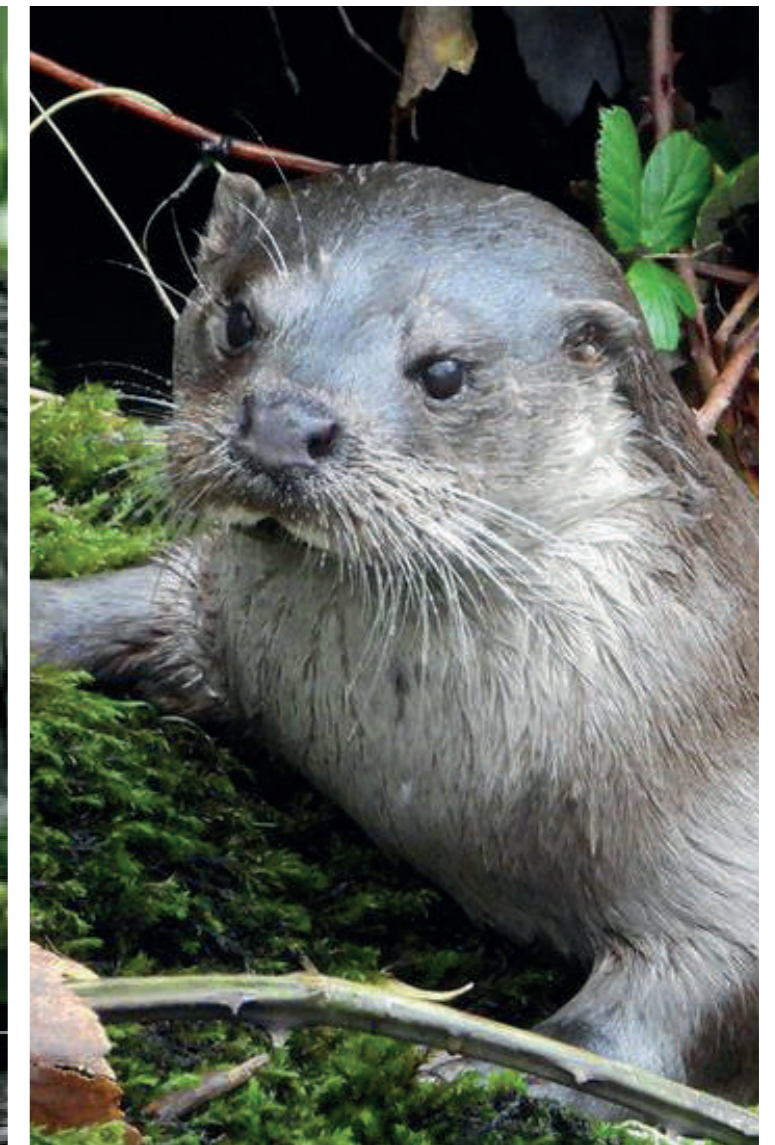
All works on site will maintain a clearance area of the existing badger setts and the stream corridor will be kept unbroken to allow unobstructed access to all areas in the badger territory.



## Otters

There is reliable evidence of otters regularly visiting all bodies of water present on site. Primarily nocturnal, European otters can occupy a vast territory which they utilize to hunt fish, which form the key part of their diet.

Minimal changes are required to maintain West Bradley's favourability as otter habitat, although measures will be taken to increase habitat suitability to amphibians and no lighting will be installed along the water bodies.



## Bat Roosts

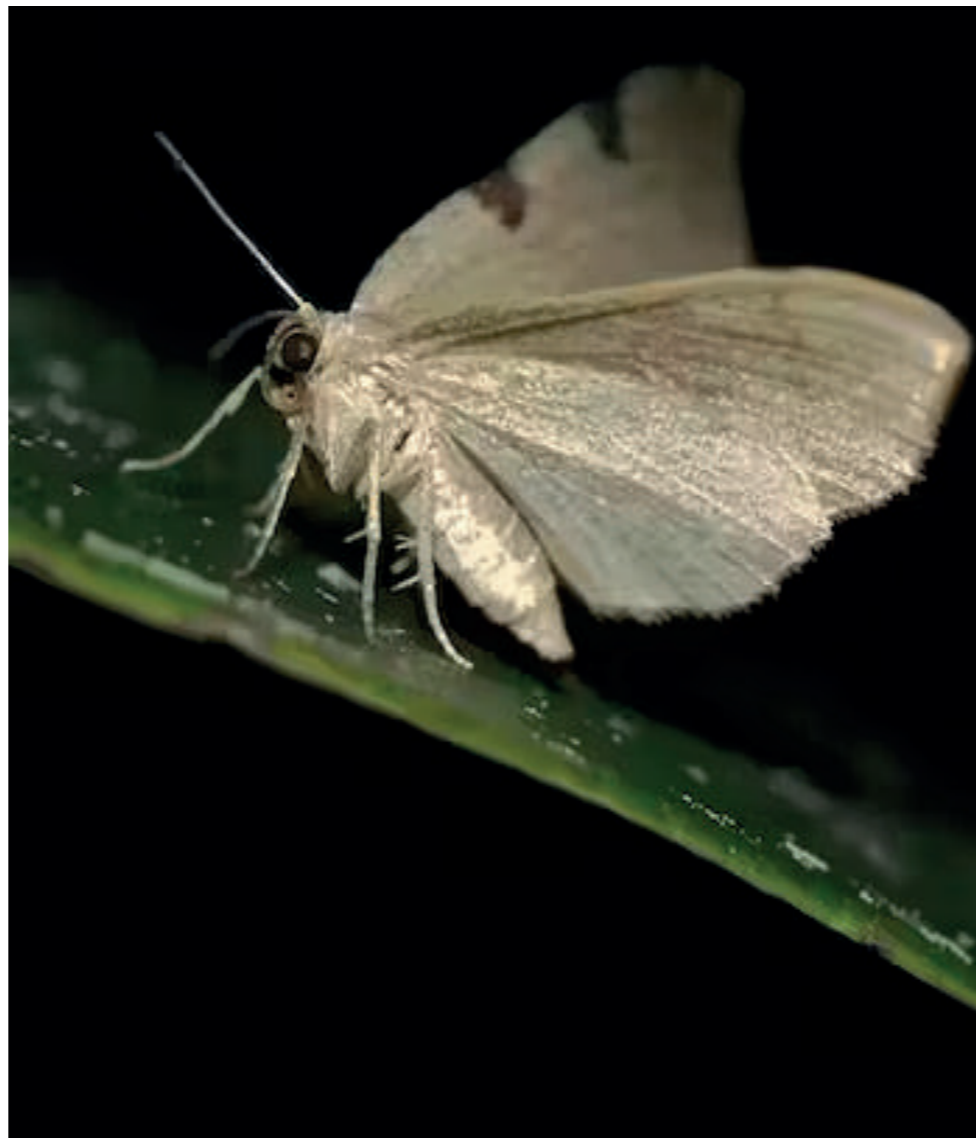
The site is already home to a number of bat roosts, and appropriate efforts will be made to preserve them. These roosts are often seasonally inhabited, especially in the case of horseshoe bats. A number of bat boxes will also be installed at a minimum height of 4m to retain any roosts altered during building renovations.



Bat roosts mounted to nearby trees

## Bat Forage Zone and Food Sources

Both pipistrelles and horseshoe bats have a typical forage radius of 5km from their roost and are highly dependant on landmarks such as scrub and buildings for navigation. The existing matrix of scrub, orchard, and meadows already provides ideal forage area, and will be enhanced to better accommodate nocturnal insects such as moths and certain dung beetles.



Moths are a food source for bats

## Planting for Night Pollinators

Nocturnal pollinators are not only a critical bat food source, but often pollinate a distinct set of plants which are not as frequently visited by their diurnal counterparts. Many moths are more critical pollinators than bees. Creating habitat for night-blooming plants such as native honeysuckle (*Lonicera periclymenum*) and larval foodplants such as yarrow (*Achillea*) will support a robust nocturnal pollinator population.



Nicotiana sylvestris is a food source for moths

## Insect Habitat

Along with supporting a diverse ecosystem of native fungi, dead wood is a critical habitat for insects including solitary bees and beetles. When possible, dead wood will be left standing and allowed to naturally degrade on site. Targeted portions of meadow will also be left uncut, which allows for leaf cutter bees and certain mining bees to overwinter within intact hollow stems. Additionally, wildflowers and planting will be selected with an eye to pollen production and desired butterfly and moth larval foodplants.



## Bird Habitat

The vast majority of British bird species, including priority species such as lapwings, are omnivorous, primarily eating a combination of invertebrates, seeds, and berries. As such, the most vigorous bird populations are found in prime insect habitat: wetland and marginal environments where scrub meets meadows.

Great care will be taken to preserve and expand the already existing marginal areas at West Bradley by expanding the current hazel population and enhancing existing meadows with careful management and targeted seed laying.



## Amphibian Habitat

Amphibians such as the great crested newt are heavily reliant on riparian areas for survival. Vegetated banks of ponds or slow moving streams, both of which are present on site already, are key spring spawning grounds for frogs, newts, and slow worms. These areas of aquatic vegetation will be preserved and expanded.

Most British amphibians spend the majority of their time terrestrially hunting for invertebrates in woodlands and tussocky grassland. Several species, including most newts, are nocturnal and rely on nooks between rocks and roots, which will be preserved whenever possible, for day-time shelter.



## Lapwing

The UK has two distinct populations of lapwings: the migratory population and the resident one. The resident lapwing population is worryingly low and continuing to dwindle, in large part due to lack of habitat and an over-abundance of predators such as foxes.

In recent history, there were breeding populations of Lapwing in the Somerset Levels and it remains an important stopover for migratory birds. These ground nesting birds rely on bare, wet ground for nests and a ready population of invertebrates. Both will be present on site.



## Curlew

Like the lapwings, curlews have a migratory population and a minimal British resident population. Unlike curlews, they nest on dry open grasslands well away from trees or other scrub, which may conceal predators.

Winter curlew populations primarily feed on semi aquatic invertebrates such as crabs, but summer populations are dependant on insect larvae, which will be present on site in large numbers after careful environment interventions.



## Grey Partridge

Grey partridge are a high priority native partridge species which nest in dense scrub and forage in open grassland. They additionally utilize areas of bare earth for occasional dust baths. All three of these environmental factors will be carefully monitored and allowed to flourish at West Bradley in order to provide ideal habitat for these local birds.





## Minimal Lighting

Garden lighting can be disruptive for nocturnal wildlife who rely on darkness to hunt their prey. Scientific evidence suggests that artificial light at night has negative and deadly effects on many creatures including amphibians, birds, mammals, insects, and plants. Glare from artificial lights can also impact wetland habitats that are home to amphibians such as frogs and toads, whose night time croaking is part of the breeding ritual. Artificial lights disrupt this nocturnal activity, interfering with reproduction and reducing populations.



## Selective Lighting in Key Navigation Areas

Where garden lighting is used, it should be installed at a low level and be of a low (warm white) color temperature. Uplighting will be avoided to prevent glare from disrupting nocturnal fliers.



## Widened Stream Corridor

The corridor of vegetation along the Bradley Brook will be carefully cleared of all invasive species, largely cherry laurel (*Prunus laurocerasus*), and allowed to naturally infill with native species and introduced hazels. The corridor will also be allowed expand and grow out into selected areas of previously managed grassland to increase habitat.



Withial Combe Nature Reservation - Aspiration for brook

## Native Aquatic & Riparian Plants

Native wildflowers which thrive in damp conditions will be given space to flourish and may be planted along the brook and historic canals to re-establish the riparian meadows that thrive along waterways.



Riparian banks



*Geum rivale*



*Myosotis scorpiodes*



*Ranunculus lingua*

The benefits of established wildflower meadows for wildlife are considerable when accompanied by appropriate caterpillar forage plants, native shrubs and trees. Providing both shelter and food to insects, meadows establish and improve upon local biodiversity.

The existing grassland on this site are already healthy and has ecological benefit. To further increase habitat on-site a light hand approach will be taken to the management of these areas to increase the diversity of plant species. With mowing only at seasonally appropriate times and targeted application of a local wildflower seed mix only when deemed necessary. To prevent existing rough grasses from overtaking wildflowers, yellow rattle will be seeded in key areas to better balance the ecosystem.



## Managing Existing Trees on Site

The proposed landscape design embodies a deep respect for the existing flora and fauna, seamlessly integrating with the site's mature trees and shrubs. We've undertaken a meticulous assessment of the estate's significant trees, followed by the implementation of a comprehensive plan aimed at conserving and invigorating these specimens.

The site features numerous plantings of various productive species of trees, such as a walnut grove and three large apple orchards. Also present are numerous other fruit tree species such as pear, as well as ornamental trees and large parkland trees such as black walnut and oak.



Walnut groves on site



Apple orchards



Davidia involucrata

## New Tree Planting

New tree planting will look to increase the number of native and ornamental species on the site and within the garden. Trees will be selected for their ecological value as well as their form and seasonal interest.



Crataegus monogyna



Sorbus torminalis



Prunus yedoensis



Blackthorn - *Prunus spinosa*



Maidenhair spleenwort



Southern marsh orchid



Harebell



Wild service tree



Spindle



Water crowfoot



Cheddar pink

Habitat will be designed to encourage growth of a number of key local species.



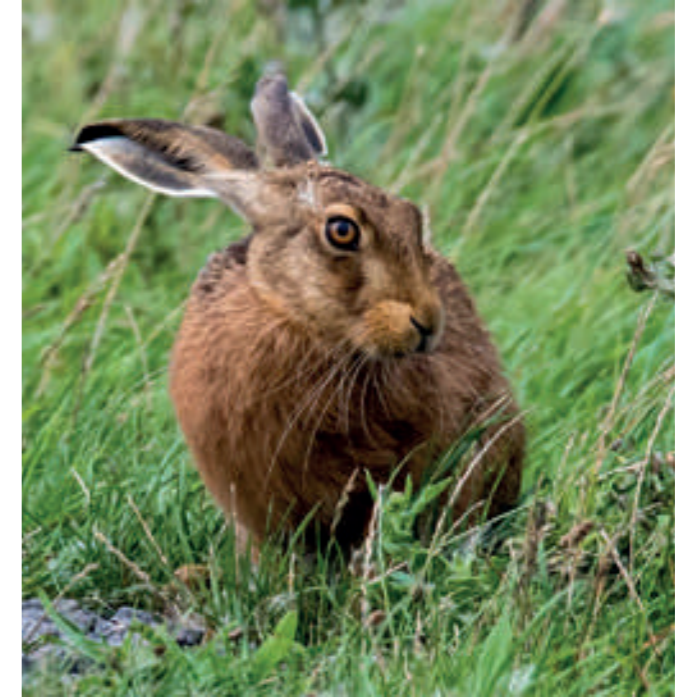
Water vole



Cuckoo



Marsh fritillary



Brown hare



Emerald damselfly



Nightingale



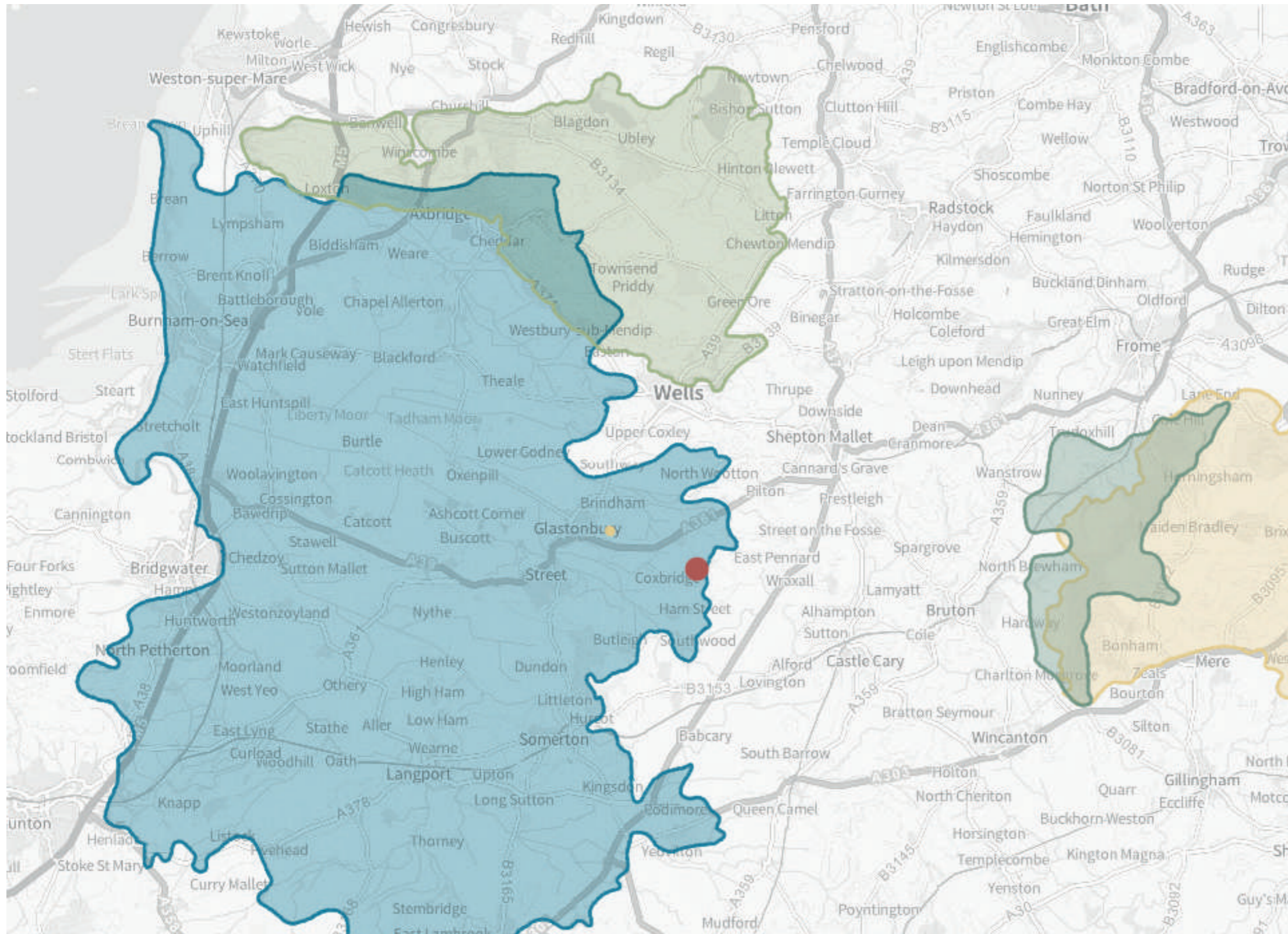
Wood white


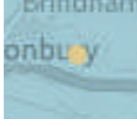






White-clawed crayfish

Habitat will be designed to support a number of key local wildlife species.

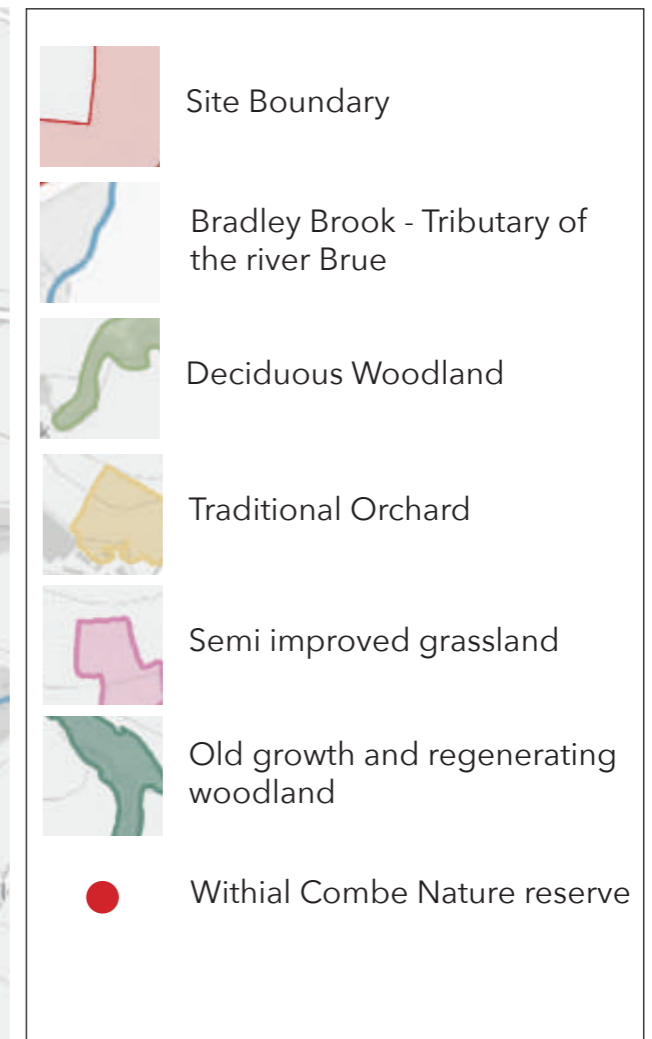
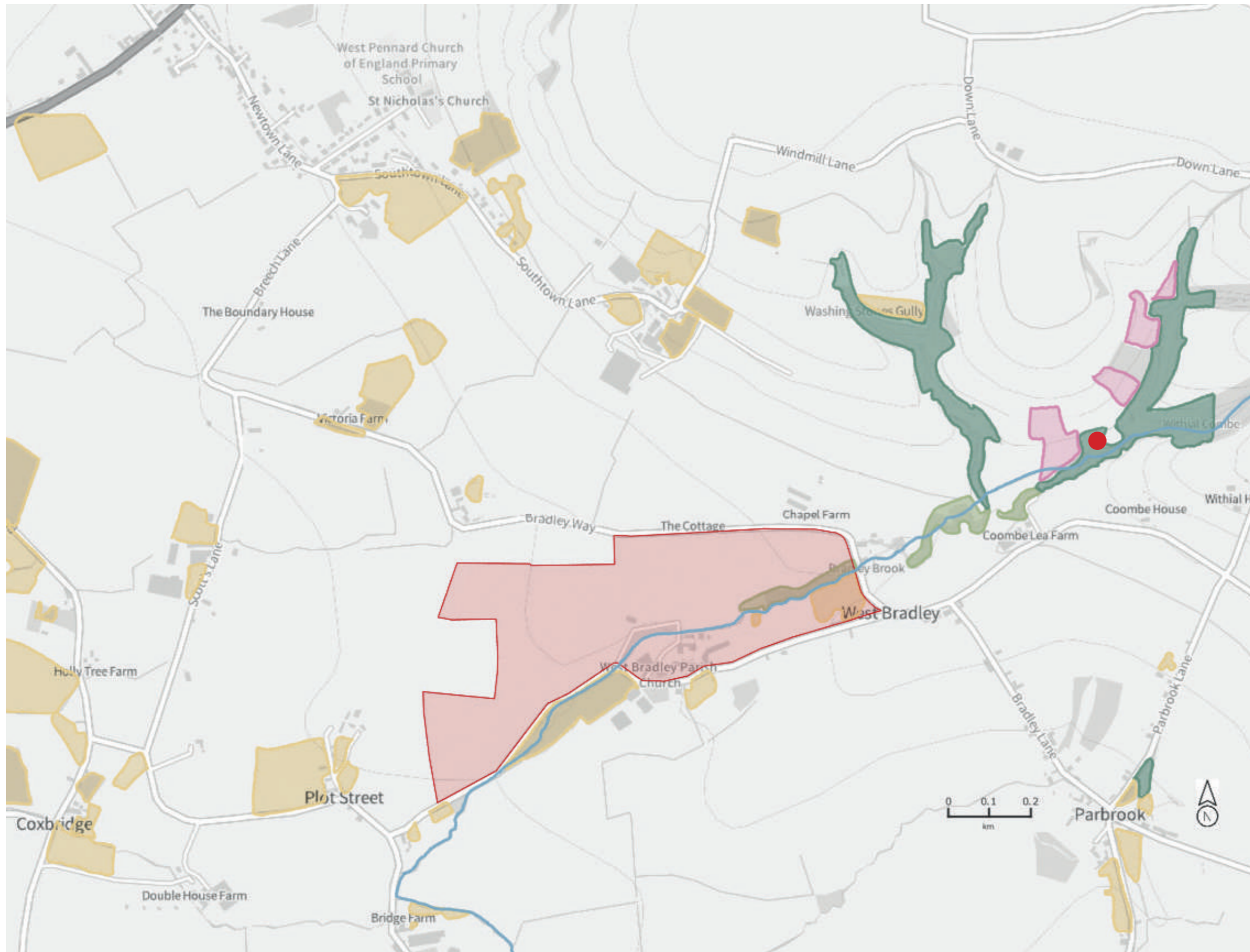
## Mapping & Designations



-  West Bradley House
-  Glastonbury Tor
-  Mendip Hills
-  Somerset Levels
-  Cranborne Chase
-  Forest of Selwood












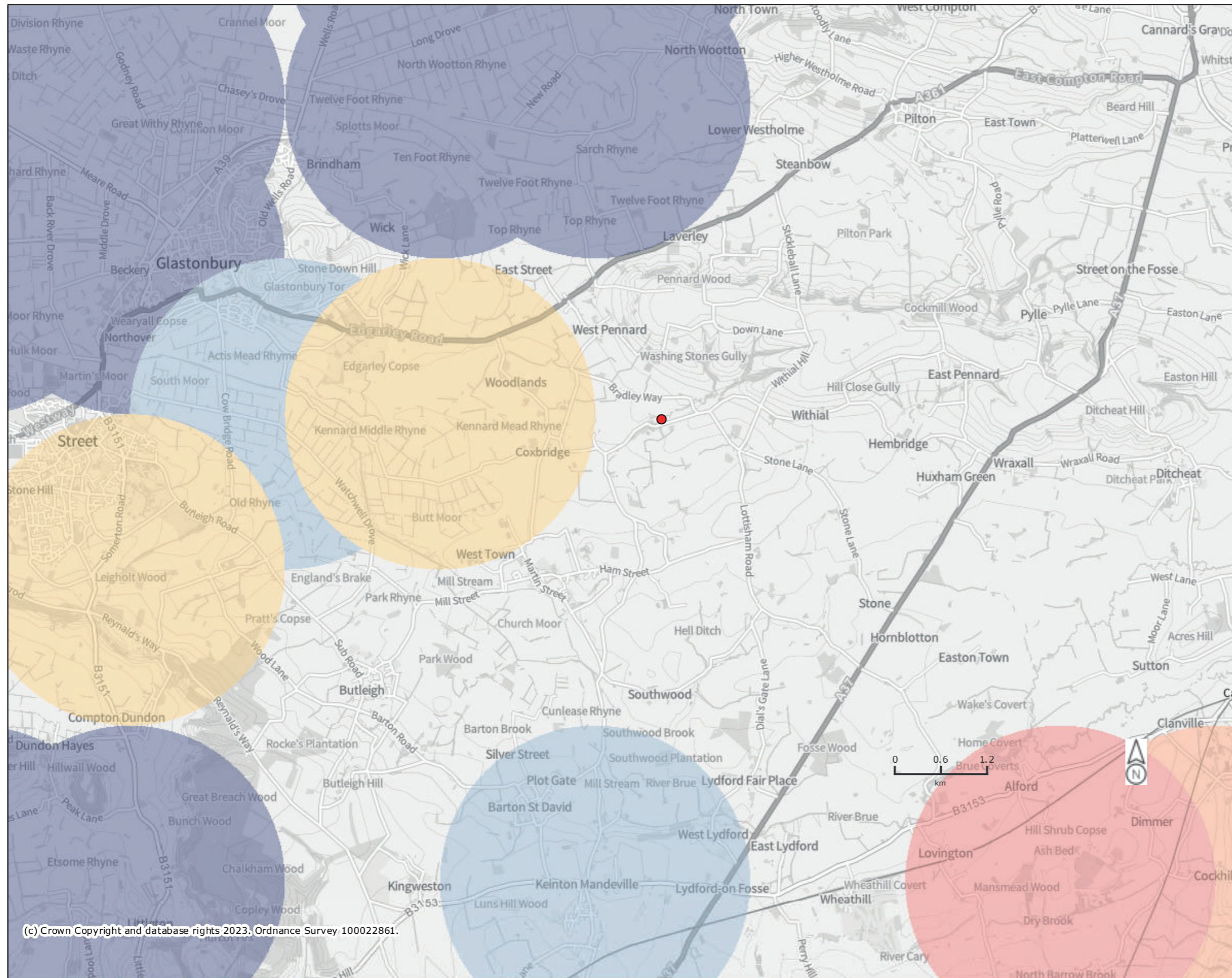
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### Legend Ancient Woodland (England)

-  Ancient and Semi-Natural Woodland
-  Ancient Replanted Woodland
-  Priority Habitat Inventory - Traditional Orchards (England)

Projection = OSGB36  
 xmin = 354000  
 ymin = 136100  
 xmax = 357500  
 ymax = 138100

Map produced by MAGIC on 4 April, 2023.  
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### Legend

- Corn Bunting (England)
- Curlew (England)
- Grey Partridge (England)
- Lapwing (England)
- Redshank (England)
- Snipe (England)
- Tree Sparrow (England)

Projection = OSGB36  
 xmin = 339700  
 ymin = 127300  
 xmax = 371000  
 ymax = 144600

Map produced by MAGIC on 5 April, 2023.  
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Urquhart & Hunt is a landscape design studio which specialises in garden design as well as ecological restoration. Our practice is dedicated to horticulture, plants, people and ecology, with a carefully considered design and fulfilment process that attempts to hold these things in balance. Based in Bruton, Somerset, and Cork, Ireland, the practice has worked on a wide range of projects both locally and internationally.

Our practice specialises in contemporary restorations of historic gardens and their wider landscapes, introducing vibrancy and biodiversity by means of carefully considered planting strategies that aim to create joy for people while sustaining and sheltering wildlife. Our vision is that gardens are a part of ecological restoration and our practice strives towards a more nuanced and reciprocal relationship with the land. Focusing on organic principles, we use native plants wherever possible to increase biodiversity and bolster natural habitats. Local materials and craftsmanship are brought into projects as far as possible, owing to sensitivity to cultural history and interest in vernacular design and land management traditions.

