



EXTENDED PHASE 1 ECOLOGICAL AND BAT ROOST ASSESSMENT

YOUNGS FARM, KENTON'S LANE, UPPER CULHAM, RG10 8NX

FINAL REPORT

September 2026

Report conditions

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Executive Summary

- This extended phase 1 ecological assessment report has been prepared in order to support a planning application for the proposed demolition works at Youngs Farm, Upper Culham.
- An extended phase 1 ecological assessment of the application site was undertaken on the 4th August 2025 by Connor Hill of Phillips Ecology.
- The survey area comprised the entire site within the redline boundary including the existing house, outbuilding, three stable blocks and their immediate surrounds. A data search extended to a 2km radius for designated sites and a 1km radius for notable habitats and protected species.
- The site is considered to support opportunities for protected and priority species including bats, breeding birds, reptiles, badgers and hedgehogs. The preliminary roost assessment confirmed the presence of moderate suitability roosting features on the house and three stable buildings including lifted roof and ridge tiles and gaps under the external wooden cladding. Evidence of roosting bats in form of scattered droppings were recorded inside the roof void of the house, inside the southern and northern stables and were adhered to the exterior of the western stable.
- Regarding the current application, in order to confirm the presence/absence of roosting bats, characterise any bat roosts, assess the extent that they may be affected by the proposed demolition works and develop a proportionate and appropriate mitigation strategy, further survey work in accordance with Natural England standing advice and the Bat Conservation Trust's (BCT) Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines (4th edition) was undertaken for the house and three stable buildings. The recommended survey effort for structures with moderate roost suitability is two presence/absence surveys.
- Two presence/absence surveys for the house and the three stable buildings comprising dusk emergence surveys were undertaken during August and September 2025. An updating emergence survey of the house was conducted in August 2026.
- The surveys confirmed several day roosts across the site, including multiple common and soprano pipistrelle day roosts within the main house and northern stable block, as well as brown long-eared day roosts within the southern and northern stable blocks. A small pipistrelle day roost was also evidenced in the western stable block.
- As the proposed works include demolition of the main house, the confirmed roosts within the house will be directly affected. A Natural England mitigation licence will therefore be required prior to commencement of works.
- No further survey work is required for the northern outbuilding which supports negligible suitability for roosting bats.
- Native tree planting is required on site to offset the three trees to be removed as a result of the proposed landscaping works.
- With the implementation of precautionary construction avoidance measures, impacts on designated sites and other protected species will be avoided.

- Information regarding the length of time the findings of this report are valid for can be found in section 14.

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1. Introduction

1.1 Report purpose

This report has been prepared in order to present the extended phase 1 ecological and bat roost assessment undertaken for Youngs Farm, Upper Culham (central grid reference: SU 78897 81485).

1.2 Description of proposal

The current proposals comprise the demolition of the existing main house and northern outbuilding. These structures will be replaced by a new house and wellness building which are to be constructed on the grassland in the northeast of the site.

1.3 Report context

Holland Green have prepared a planning application on behalf of their client Mr R Somauroo for proposed works at Youngs Farm. Phillips Ecology has been instructed by the applicant to undertake an ecological assessment which is to be submitted to Wokingham Borough Council.

1.4 Scope of assessment

An extended phase 1 ecological assessment was carried out on the 4th August 2025. The survey comprised a field survey and desktop study in order to identify notable or protected sites, habitats or species potentially affected by the proposal under consideration. Following this, during 2025, two bat emergence surveys were undertaken for the house and three stable buildings. An updating emergence survey of the house was carried out during 2026. No emergence surveys were completed for the north outbuilding which was considered to support negligible suitability for roosting bats.

1.5 Survey area

The survey area comprised the house, three stable buildings and northern outbuilding and their immediate surrounds. A data search extended to a 2km radius for designated sites and a 1km radius for notable habitats.

1.6 Weather conditions

Weather during the extended phase 1 ecological assessment survey can be described as: Dry, 20% cloud cover, light wind and 19°C. The weather conditions did not hinder the ecologists' ability to carry out the survey effectively.

1.7 Limitations

Limitations which are specific to each phase of the assessment are given in the relevant sections, below.

2. Data search

2.1 Methodology

A desk-based assessment was undertaken by Phillips Ecology on the 29th August 2025 with Multi-Agency Geographic Information for the Countryside (MAGIC). The MAGIC database was consulted for records of statutory designated sites within a 2km radius of the site and priority habitats and protected species within a 1km radius.

2.2 Limitations

The data search results are bound by the following statement contained within MAGICs general disclaimer: "The materials contained on this website are of a general, informational, nature. We have used reasonable endeavours to ensure the accuracy and completeness of the contents of the pages on this site but the information does not constitute advice and must not be relied on as such."

2.3 Results

2.3.1 Statutory designated sites

The data search revealed there are no statutory designated sites located within a 2km radius of the application site.

2.3.2 Ancient woodlands

A total of nine compartments of non-statutory ancient woodland are located within a 1km radius of the application site. The compartments are detailed in table 1, below.

Table 1 Ancient woodlands within 1km of the application site

Woodland Name	Approx. distance and direction from the site	Reason for designation
Pit Clump	156m W	This 0.2ha site is designated for its ancient and semi-natural woodland.
Violets Wood	175m S	This 0.4ha site is designated for its ancient and semi-natural woodland.
Long Close	236m S	This 0.4ha site is designated for its ancient and semi-natural woodland.
Pond Clump	361m SW	This 0.5ha site is designated for its ancient and semi-natural woodland.
Fairman's Wood	767m S	This 0.7ha site is designated for its ancient and semi-natural woodland.
Fairman's Wood	780m S	This 0.3ha site is designated for its ancient and semi-natural woodland.

Woodland Name	Approx. distance and direction from the site	Reason for designation
Fairman's Wood	815m S	This 2.0ha site is designated for its ancient and semi-natural woodland.
Little Fairman's Wood	933m SE	This 0.3ha site is designated for its ancient and semi-natural woodland.
Little Fairman's Wood	962m SE	This 0.7ha site is designated for its ancient and semi-natural woodland.

2.3.3 Priority habitats

The data search revealed the following priority habitats within 1km of the application site:

- Lowland calcareous grassland (942m W)
- Lowland fens (958m SW)
- Deciduous woodland (101m W, nearest)
- Traditional orchards (139m S, nearest)
- Woodpasture and Parkland (10m W, nearest)

2.3.4 Protected Species

The data search revealed records of the following protected species with a 1km radius of the site. These records relate to EPSM licences that have been issued by Natural England (the date of licence issue is included in brackets) and licence returns resulting from ecological surveys.

- Bats – Common pipistrelle *Pipistrellus pipistrellus* – 493m W (2011 – 2012) – EPSM2011-2958.
- Bats – Common pipistrelle, soprano pipistrelle *Pipistrellus pygmaeus*, brown long-eared *Plecotus auritus*, whiskered bat *Myotis mystacinus* – 721m W (2011 – 2013) – EPSM2011-2915.

3. Habitats

3.1 Methodology

A field survey was carried out on the 4th August 2025 by Connor Hill of Phillips Ecology. During the survey, all broad habitat types were identified, and a list was compiled of characteristic plant species within each habitat type. These habitats are described below in accordance with UKHabs terminology.

3.2 Limitations

No limitations were encountered when surveying the on-site habitats during the survey.

3.3 Existing records

The data search revealed that priority habitats associated with the local landscape within 1km of the site comprise lowland calcareous grassland, lowland fens, broadleaved woodland, traditional orchards and woodpasture and parkland.

3.4 Results

The site is residential in nature with a house located in the north-western corner of property. An outbuilding is located to the north of the house adjoining the northern site boundary. Three stable outbuildings are located to the immediate south of the house positioned to form a courtyard between them. A driveway extends from the south-western boundary extending northeast and terminating to the east of the house by forming a turning circle. Scattered trees are planted along the sides of the driveway. The northern, western and southern boundaries are formed by native hedgerows, the eastern boundary by a fence line. Much of the site to the east of the dwelling is managed modified grassland. The grassland to the south of the stables is of higher quality due to less intensive management practices.

The site is located in a rural landscape between the villages of Hennerton, Cockpole Green and Remenham Hill. Other residential properties are situated to the north and south of Youngs Farm. Kenton's lane forms the western boundary. Further afield the landscape is characterised by arable farmland, permanent pasture, mature hedgerows, blocks of woodland, estate grounds, and scattered properties.

The following UKHabs habitat types were recorded within the application site.

3.4.1 *Modified grassland g4 230*

The majority of the grassland on site is maintained to a short sward including the lawns to the rear and east of the house. Due to these areas being intensively managed for extended periods of time, the species within the sward are limited.

The species mix recorded within a 1x1m quadrat of the lawns to the rear of the house included perennial rye-grass *Lolium perenne*, cock's-foot *Dactylis glomerata* and yarrow *Achillea millefolium*. Other species distributed more sparsely within the sward included clover sp. *Trifolium* sp., greater plantain *Plantago major*, dandelion sp. *Taraxacum* sp.,

dove's-foot crane's-bill *Geranium molle*, cut-leaved crane's-bill *Geranium dissectum*, daisy *Bellis perennis* and a non-native sorrel sp. *Oxalis* sp.

The eastern lawn featured the same aforementioned species but with additional species also present. The additional species within the 1x1m sample quadrat included Yorkshire fog *Holcus lanatus* and common ragwort *Senecio jacobaea*. Other more sparsely distributed species included rough meadow-grass *Poa trivialis*, false-oat-grass *Arrhenatherum elatius*, sweet vernal-grass *Anthoxanthum odoratum*, lady's bedstraw *Galium verum*, ribwort plantain *Plantago lanceolata*, self-heal *Prunella vulgaris* and red clover *Trifolium pratense*.



Figure 1 – Lawn to the northwest of the house.



Figure 2 – Lawn to the west of the house.



Figure 3 – Grassland to the east of the house looking south.



Figure 4 – Grassland to the east of the house looking north.

3.4.2 Other neutral grassland g3c

The grassland located to the south of the stable buildings is less intensively managed with a taller sward height and a greater diversity of species present. The recorded species within a 1x1m quadrat included, Yorkshire fog, perennial rye-grass, cock's-foot, Timothy *Phleum pratense*, annual meadow-grass *Poa annua*, sweet vernal-grass, creeping bent *Agrostis stolonifera*, red clover, common ragwort, self-heal and dandelion. Other species recorded scattered amongst the sward included rough meadow-grass, broad-leaved dock *Rumex obtusifolius*, scentless mayweed *Tripleurospermum inodorum*, yarrow, ribwort plantain, common nettle *Urtica dioica*, spear thistle *Cirsium vulgare*, creeping buttercup *Ranunculus repens*, feverfew *Tanacetum parthenium*, great mullein *Verbascum thapsus*, ground-ivy *Glechoma hederacea* and vetch sp. *Vicia* sp.



Figure 5 – Grassland to the south of the stables.

3.4.3 *Scattered trees g4 11*

Two lines of young, planted whitebeam *Sorbus aria* trees extend along both sides of the driveway between the south-eastern entrance and stables. Young beech *Fagus sylvatica* trees are planted in the north-eastern corner of the site. Scattered fruit trees and a willow sp. *Salix* sp. are located in the north-western garden to the rear of the house.



Figure 6 – Whitebeam trees along the driveway.



Figure 7 – fruit and willow trees in the rear garden.

3.4.4 *Ruderal/ephemeral u1c 17*

Ruderal and scrub species have begun to establish on the exposed soil beneath the scattered trees in the north-western garden. The species recorded in these areas included wood avens *Geum urbanum*, elder *Sambucus nigra*, common sorrel *Rumex acetosa*, broad-leaved dock, hedge bindweed *Calystegia sepium*, garlic mustard *Alliaria petiolate*, hoary willowherb *Epilobium parviflorum*, hedgerow crane's-bill *Geranium pyrenaicum*, black medick *Medicago lupulina*, common ivy *Hedera helix*, dandelion sp., ground ivy, sow-thistle sp. *Sonchus* sp. and a rose sp., *Rosa* sp.



Figure 8 – Establishing ruderals under trees in garden.

3.4.5 *Native hedgerow with trees h2a 190 and native hedgerow h2a*

Native hedgerows extend along three of the site boundaries. The northern boundary is formed by an intensively managed hawthorn *Crataegus monogyna* hedgerow and adjoining beech hedgerow. The western and southern boundaries are formed by better quality species rich hedgerows with interspersed trees within. The species recorded along these boundaries included hawthorn, elder, beech, field maple *Acer campestre*, dogwood *Cornus sanguinea*, dog-rose *Rosa canina* and wild cherry *Prunus avium*.



Figure 9 – Native hedgerow with trees along the western boundary.

3.4.6 *Buildings u1b5*

The application site contains multiple structures including the main house, northern outbuilding and three stable buildings. These are all discussed further in section 5.

3.4.7 *Other developed land u1b6*

A gravel driveway extends from the south-western boundary through the site and terminates to the east of the house. A small courtyard area is situated between the three stable buildings.



Figure 10 – Driveway turning circle east of house.



Figure 11 – Driveway adjoining the stable courtyard.

3.5 **Assessment**

The site supports a mosaic of habitats within the red line boundary. The modified grassland present is of low distinctiveness, reflecting its limited species diversity and management intensity. Areas of other neutral grassland are assessed as being of medium distinctiveness, supporting greater structural and botanical diversity. The Priority hedgerows, associated with the western and southern boundaries, are of very high distinctiveness.

Habitats of medium distinctiveness or above should be prioritised for retention wherever possible, as they typically support greater ecological value and contribute more significantly to local biodiversity. Retaining these features not only safeguards existing ecological networks but also reduces the scale of compensation or creation required to deliver Biodiversity Net Gain. In contrast, habitats of very low or low distinctiveness, such as hardstanding or modified grassland, contribute little to biodiversity and are therefore more suitable for development impacts where necessary. It is currently anticipated that only hardstanding, modified grassland and three trees will be directly impacted by the current works.

4. Protected and notable species assessment

The scope of works, data search and habitat assessment have informed the scope of the protected and notable species assessment. On this basis, the following protected and priority species have been considered further within this report:

- Bats
- Badger
- Hazel dormouse
- Hedgehog
- Reptiles
- Amphibians

- Breeding birds

The surveyed site has been assessed for its potential to support the above- named protected species based upon the criteria in Table 2.

Table 2 Protected species grading criteria

<i>Grading criteria</i>	<i>Justification</i>
<i>Negligible</i>	Site is entirely unsuitable for species. Presence of species highly unlikely.
<i>Low Potential</i>	Minimal suitable habitat present or, if present, highly degraded/fragmented. Minimal linkage to suitable habitat beyond site. Presence of species unlikely.
<i>Moderate</i>	Presence of some suitable habitat features for species. Surveyed site within/close to known range or known occurrence but factors such as isolation/fragmentation may reduce potential. Presence of species is more likely than not.
<i>High</i>	Presence of optimal habitat features for species. Surveyed site within known range/close to known occurrence. Excellent connectivity to optimal habitat. No justification for discounting presence of species.
<i>Confirmed presence</i>	Species confirmed on site through direct sighting, presence of field signs (e.g. scat, hair, prints, nest, eggs, habitation etc.) or through desk-based assessment.

5. Preliminary bat roost assessment

5.1 Methodology

5.1.1 Surveyor/s

The survey was carried out by Connor Hill of Phillips Ecology.

5.1.2 Survey area

The survey area comprised the main house, northern outbuilding and three stable blocks. The survey area extended to all areas of the structures which will be modified by the proposed works in such a way that bats or their roosts could be impacted (directly or indirectly). Therefore, the survey included the entirety of all the structures.

5.1.3 Survey date

The survey was carried out during the daytime on the 4th August 2025.

5.1.4 Survey description

The survey did not depart from the Bat Conservation Trust's (BCT) Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines (4th edition) which states that "A preliminary roost inspection survey is a detailed inspection of the exterior and interior of a structure to look for features that bats could use for entry/exit and roosting and to search for signs of bats".

The external features of the buildings which will be modified by the proposed works in such a way that bats or their roosts could be impacted (directly or indirectly) if present, were systematically inspected in detail to compile information on potential and actual bat access points and roosting places such as lifted or broken tiles, loose brickwork and open eaves. This included a thorough search for evidence of bat activity such as bat droppings, urine splashes and fur staining.

The interiors of the buildings, where possible, were inspected in order to identify potential or actual access points and roosting places and to record any evidence of bat activity or bats themselves.

5.1.5 *Survey equipment*

Survey equipment comprised:

- High-powered torch
- Ladders
- Camera
- Binoculars

5.1.6 *Limitations*

No limitations were encountered during the course of the survey.

5.1.7 *Assessment methodology*

The suitability of the buildings for supporting bat roosts will be assessed against the guidelines within Table 3 which have been adapted from the BCT Good Practice Guidelines.

Table 3 *Suitability assessment guidelines*

<i>Suitability</i>	<i>Description of Roosting Habitats</i>
<i>Negligible</i>	Structure has no reasonable likelihood of supporting roosting bats i.e. no suitable roosting features present.
<i>Low</i>	A structure which could be used opportunistically by individual bats i.e. one or more potential roost sites which do not provide sufficient space, shelter, protection, appropriate conditions (e.g. temperature, light, humidity) and/or suitable surrounding habitat to be used on a regular basis or by larger numbers of bats.
<i>Moderate</i>	A structure which could be used by bats but is not likely to support a roost of high conservation status (e.g. maternity roost). This structure would support features which exhibit suitable size, shelter, protection, conditions and surrounding habitat for roosting bats.
<i>High</i>	A structure which is obviously suitable for supporting larger numbers of bats, on a regular basis and for longer periods of time.

The suitability of the trees for supporting bat roosts will be assessed against the guidelines within Table 4 which have been adapted from the BCT Good Practice Guidelines.

Table 4 Suitability assessment guidelines – trees

Suitability	Description of Roosting Habitats
<i>Negligible</i>	Tree has no reasonable likelihood of supporting roosting bats i.e. no suitable roosting features present.
<i>Low</i>	A tree of sufficient size and age to contain potential roost features but with none seen from the ground or features seen with only very limited roost potential.
<i>Moderate</i>	A tree which could be used by bats but is not likely to support a roost of high conservation status (e.g. maternity roost). This structure would support features which exhibit suitable size, shelter, protection, conditions and surrounding habitat for roosting bats.
<i>High</i>	A tree which is obviously suitable for supporting larger numbers of bats, on a regular basis and for longer periods of time.

5.2 Results

5.2.1 Building description relevant to bats and their roosts

The site supports multiple structures. The main house, northern outbuilding and three stable blocks were all included in the survey. Table 5, below, provides the individual building assessments in view of the criteria set out in Table 3.



Figure 12 – Youngs Farm buildings layout. 1 = main house, 2 = northern outbuilding, 3 = southern stable block, 4 = western stable block, 5 = northern stable block.

Table 5 Building assessments

Building	Description	Photographs	Access/egress and roost suitability notes	Evidence	Suitability
The main house (Building 1)	The house is a three-storey brick and stone-built structure with a half hipped and pitched roof design. The building is oriented southeast to northwest. Multiple extensions protrude from the house including two, single storey lean-to extensions on the south-western and north-eastern sides and a two-storey hipped extension on the south-eastern elevation. Additionally, a total of six dormer windows are present, including three which are metal framed and glass built on the north-western roof face, and three which are hipped, clay tiled and clad with wooden boarding on the south-eastern roof face. The eaves are infilled with wooden boards and underboards in places. Two brick-built chimneys are located on the house, one at the north-eastern end and one at the south-western end. The top three quarters of all the elevations are clad with wooden boarding. The windows and doors are set in wooden frames. Internally, ceilings are primarily vaulted. A single roof void is located along the side eaves of the north-western roof face. The roof of the void is lined with	 Figure 13 – South-eastern elevation of the house.  Figure 14 – North-western elevation of the house.	The following access/egress, roosting or relevant features were recorded: - Multiple gaps are present under the roof tiles on the building. - Mortar has fallen away from some of the pan tiles at the roof hips. - Some gaps are present at the eaves above the wooden board infills. - Gaps are present under the exterior wooden cladding on the house. - Light spill was recorded inside the roof void at eaves height indicating potential access/egress opportunities for bats.	The following evidence of bat activity was recorded during the survey: - A total of three pipistrelle type bat droppings were recorded scattered inside the roof void of the house during the survey. - Although no droppings were recorded externally during the survey, it was difficult to identify if droppings were present due to the black staining of the wooden cladding.	Moderate

Building	Description	Photographs	Access/egress and roost suitability notes	Evidence	Suitability
	bitumen felt and the floor features rockwool insulation.	 Figure 15 – Interior roof void along north-western side eaves of the house.			
Northern outbuilding (Building 2)	The outbuilding consists of a single storey, brick-built structure which rises to a pitched and hipped roof clad with clay roof tiles. The building is oriented south to north. The eaves remain exposed with bitumen lining visible however the gaps between the rafters are infilled with wooden boards. Two Velux windows are situated on the southern roof face. The southern elevation features multiple windows set in wooden frames. Internally, the building is mostly vaulted however there is a small roof void present at the western end of the building. The roof is	 Figure 16 – southern elevation of the northern outbuilding.	The following access/egress, roosting or relevant features were recorded: - A small amount of mortar was recorded missing from under a single ridge tile however upon further inspection it was observed that the crevice formed was deemed too shallow to support roosting bats.	No evidence of bat activity was recorded during the survey.	Negligible

Building	Description	Photographs	Access/egress and roost suitability notes	Evidence	Suitability
	lined with bitumen felt and the floor is boarded. There was heavy cobwebbing present throughout the space.	 Figure 17 – Interior of the northern outbuilding.			

Southern stable block (Building 3)	The stable building comprises a single storey pitched and hipped structure clad with clay roof tiles. The building is oriented northeast to southwest. The eaves are exposed with the wooden rafters and bitumen lining visible but are infilled with wooden boarding. Two Velux windows are situated on the north-eastern roof face. In total four wooden doors and an open bay carport are present on the north-eastern elevation of the building. The upper halves of all elevations are clad with wooden boarding. Internally, there are no roof voids present. A mezzanine floor is located at the south-eastern end of the building. The roof space at the north-western end of the building has been converted into a living space.	 Figure 18 – North-eastern elevation of the southern stable block.  Figure 19 – Western corner of the southern stable block.	The following access/egress, roosting or relevant features were recorded during the survey. - Continuous access/egress is possible via the open carport entrance. - Gaps were recorded around the eaves of the building. - Gaps are present under the exterior wooden cladding on the building.	The following evidence of activity was recorded during the survey: - A large number (hundreds) of long-eared bat type droppings were recorded scattered inside the carport and on top of the mezzanine floor. Additionally, droppings were also found in lesser quantities in the converted roof space. - Scattered pipistrelle bat type droppings (tens) were also recorded within the carport of the building.	Moderate
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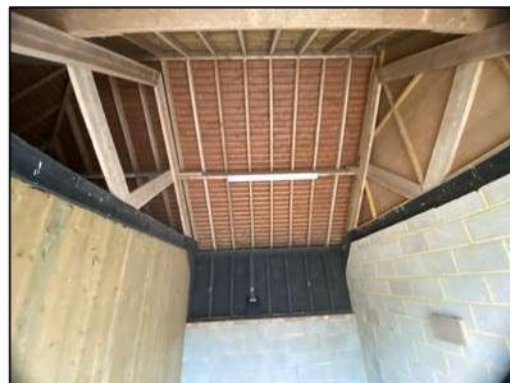


Figure 20 – Interior carport of the southern stable block.



Figure 21 – Interior converted living space inside the southern stable block.

Building	Description	Photographs	Access/egress and roost suitability notes	Evidence	Suitability
Western stable block (Building 4)	The western stable building is single storey, brick and stone-built, rising to a hipped and pitched roof design clad with clay roof tiles. The structure is oriented southeast to northwest. The rafters and bitumen felt lining are exposed at the eaves with wooden infilling present. A roof overhang and four wooden doors are present on the south-eastern elevation. The top halves of all elevations are clad with wooden boarding. Internally, there are no roof voids. Three disused stables divided by half height block-built walls are present. The roof remains unlined with the undersides of the clay tiles exposed. Moderate levels of cobwebbing were recorded throughout the space.	 Figure 22 – South-eastern elevation of the western stable block.  Figure 23 – Interior of the western stable block.	The following access/egress, roosting or relevant features were recorded: - Some gaps are present around the eaves of the building. - Gaps were recorded between the exterior wooden cladding.	The following evidence of roosting activity was recorded during the survey: - A total of three pipistrelle type droppings were recorded adhered to one of the exterior doors on the building.	Moderate

Northern stable block (Building 5)	The northern stable building consists of a single-storey brick and stone-built structure with a hipped and pitched roof clad with clay roof tiles. The building is oriented southwest to northeast with the southwestern elevation remaining open and resembling a carport. Internally, no roof voids are present. The underside of the roof is not lined and the tiles are visible.	 Figure 24 – South-western elevation of the north stable block.  Figure 25 – Interior of the northern stable block.	The following access/egress, roosting or relevant features were recorded: - The open south-western elevation allows for continuous interior access/egress. - There is a suitable ridge board and joins in the rafters for bats to roost.	The following evidence of roosting activity was recorded during the survey: - A concentration of hundreds of long-eared type bat droppings was recorded inside the building underneath the ridge board. Additional droppings from the same species were recorded scattered around the interior of the building.	Moderate
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5.2.2 *Site grounds relevant to bats*

The site grounds that will be directly impacted by the proposed works include managed grassland, hardstanding and three trees. The grassland and hardstanding habitats offer little in the way of foraging resource for bats.

Three trees, consisting of two ornamental fruit trees and a willow are to be removed in the north of the site where the new entrance driveway is to be constructed. These were assessed for any Potential Roosting Features (PRFs) present according to the BCT Guidelines (4th edition).

The nearby mature trees along Kenton's Lane and the blocks of woodland in the wider landscape are considered to be suitable for foraging and commuting bats. Due to this, it is likely that bats will commute and forage through the site as a part of their wider foraging range.

5.3 **Assessment**

When considered in view of the criteria set out in Table 3:

The house and three stable buildings are considered to support moderate suitability for roosting bats - i.e., structures which could be used by bats but are not likely to support a roost of high conservation status (e.g. maternity roost). This assessment is based on the different roosting features identified externally and internally on the buildings and the evidence of roosting activity in the form of bat droppings recorded both on and within the buildings.

The northern outbuilding is considered to support negligible suitability for roosting bats - i.e., a structure which has no reasonable likelihood of supporting roosting bats. This assessment is based on the lack of features identified and lack of evidence recorded during the survey.

When considered in the view of criteria set out in Table 4:

The three trees to be removed were found to not contain any PRFs for bats. As a result, the trees were assessed as having negligible suitability for roosting bats. i.e. trees which have no reasonable likelihood of supporting roosting bats.

In the context of the wider landscape, the habitats within the footprint of the proposal are considered unexceptional for foraging and commuting bats. They are, nevertheless, suitable for commuting and foraging bats and it is likely that bats will commute and forage through the site as a compartment of their wider foraging range.

6. Bat Emergence Survey

6.1 **Methodology**

The emergence surveys were undertaken in accordance Bat Conservation Trust's (BCT) Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines (4th edition). Six surveyors for the main house and four surveyors each for the stables buildings, were positioned in order to provide sufficient coverage of the identified suitable roost features

on the respective buildings when stationary. All emergences, re-entries and general activity were recorded during the course of the surveys. Recordings were later analysed using Kaleidoscope bat call analysis software to confirm species identification.

6.2 Surveyor/s

The surveys were led by Duncan Gilmartin a suitably experienced bat surveyors and supported by suitably experienced bat surveyors Alana Raihan, Ben Wilke, Dan Parker, Greg Catchell, Hetty Wakefield and Jackie Kirby.

6.3 Survey area

The survey area comprised all elevations of the house and stables at Youngs Farm. This enabled survey coverage of all suitable access/egress and roosting features which were recorded during the preliminary bat roost assessment and will be affected by the proposal.

6.4 Survey date

The date and timings of the emergence survey are presented in Table 6. The emergence survey commenced 15 minutes prior to sunset and continued for at least 1.5 hours after sunset.

Table 6 survey date and timings for

Survey type	Date	Start	Finish	Sunset/sunrise
Emergence – Main House	12/08/2025	20:16	22:01	20:31
Emergence – Main House	07/09/2025	19:21	21:06	19:36
Emergence – south and west stable blocks	10/08/2025	20:22	22:07	20:37
Emergence – north stable block	13/08/2025	20:06	21:59	20:28
Emergence – south stable block	08/09/2025	19:18	21:03	19:33
Emergence – west stable blocks	09/09/2025	19:11	21:01	19:31
Emergence – north stable block	14/09/2025	19:05	20:50	19:20
Emergence – Main House	28/08/2026	19:43	21:28	19:58

6.5 Survey equipment

Survey equipment comprised:

- Anabat Walkabout
- Echometer Touch Pro 2
- Sony FDR-AX53 cameras (nightshot mode)
- Infrared illuminators

6.6 Weather conditions

Weather conditions during the surveys are provided in Table 7:

Table 6 emergence and re-entry weather conditions

Survey	Date	Precipitation		Temperature		Wind		Cloud Cover	
		Start	Finish	Start	Finish	Start	Finish	Start	Finish
Emergence – Main house	12/08/2025	Nil	Nil	26.0°C	23.0°C	Bf 0	Bf 0	0%	0%
Emergence – Main house	07/09/2025	Nil	Nil	20.0°C	18.0°C	Bf 1	Bf 1	50%	0%
Emergence –south and west stable blocks	10/08/2025	Nil	Nil	22.0°C	19.0°C	BF 2	BF 1	5%	5%
Emergence – north stable block	13/08/2025	Nil	Nil	21.0°C	20.0°C	BF 2	BF 2	100%	80%
Emergence – south stable block	08/09/2025	Nil	Nil	16.0°C	14.0°C	BF 1	BF 1	90%	20%
Emergence – west stable blocks	09/09/2025	Nil	Nil	16.0°C	15.0°C	BF 1	BF 1	80%	20%
Emergence – north stable block	14/09/2025	Nil	Nil	18.0°C	16.0°C	BF 3	BF 3	100%	100%
Emergence – Main house	28/08/2026	Nil	Nil	18.0°C	17.0°C	BF 2	BF 0	100%	40%

6.7 Results

6.7.1 Main House

Visit 1 – 12th August 2025 – Dusk Emergence Survey

During the course of the emergence survey carried out on the 12th August 2025 14 bats were recorded emerging from the main house. These comprised 11 soprano pipistrelle *Pipistrellus pygmaeus* bats and three common pipistrelle *Pipistrellus pipistrellus* bats. The first bat to emerge comprised a soprano pipistrelle which emerged from weatherboarding on the rear elevation of the house (TN1, Figure 26) at 20:31. This was followed by a soprano pipistrelle which emerged from the roof of a dormer window on the front elevation at 20:39 (TN2) and a second at 20:44. At 20:45 and 20:49, two soprano pipistrelle bats emerged from weather boarding at the apex of the north elevation (TN3). A further soprano pipistrelle emerged from TN1 at 21:07 and at the same time, another soprano pipistrelle bat emerged from weatherboarding on the northern face of the western two-storey hipped extension (TN4). At 21:09, a soprano pipistrelle emerged from the same location (TN4) at 21:14. At 21:09, a soprano pipistrelle emerged from a roof tile beneath a dormer window on the western elevation (TN5). At 21:11, a soprano pipistrelle emerged from weatherboarding where it joined the main house on the northern elevation of the western two-storey extension (TN6). At 21:14, a common pipistrelle emerged from the southern face of the same extension (TN7). Also at 21:14, a soprano pipistrelle emerged from weatherboarding above a window on the eastern elevation (TN8). A second soprano pipistrelle emerged from the same location at 21:23. At 21:22, a common pipistrelle emerged from an additional area of weatherboarding on the eastern elevation.

During the August survey, the first foraging passes were recorded shortly after sunset, with regular activity from approximately 20:39 onwards. Soprano pipistrelles were the most frequently encountered species, with repeated brief foraging loops and passes along the front elevation of the building and within the garden area.

Activity was concentrated around the southern and western aspects of the house, where bats were observed making tight foraging circuits and moving back and forth across the garden space. Occasional brown long-eared bat *Plecotus auritus* registrations were also recorded, although these consisted mainly of light foraging close to vegetation features. Foraging activity continued at a low to moderate level throughout the survey period.

Visit 2 – 7th September 2025 – Emergence Survey

During the course of the emergence survey carried out on the 7th September 2025, six bats were recorded emerging from the main house. These comprised four soprano pipistrelle bats and two common pipistrelle bats. The first bat to emerge comprised a soprano pipistrelle which emerged from weatherboarding on the eastern elevation of the house, close to the northern end (TN10) at 19:57. At 19:58, a soprano pipistrelle emerged from weatherboarding on the northern corner of the eastern elevation (TN11). Two common pipistrelle bats and a further soprano pipistrelle bat emerged from the same location at 20:02 and 20:05, respectively. At 21:59, a soprano pipistrelle bat emerged from above the northernmost window on the southern elevation (TN12).

The September survey recorded a similar pattern of activity, with repeated passes and foraging behaviour throughout the survey window. Common and soprano pipistrelles were recorded commuting along the building façade and undertaking short foraging loops near the surveyor positions. Brown long-eared bats were again detected undertaking brief foraging near vegetation.

Noctule *Nyctalus noctula* activity was recorded high above the site, consistent with commuting or high-altitude foraging. Social calls from pipistrelles were also recorded later in the survey period.

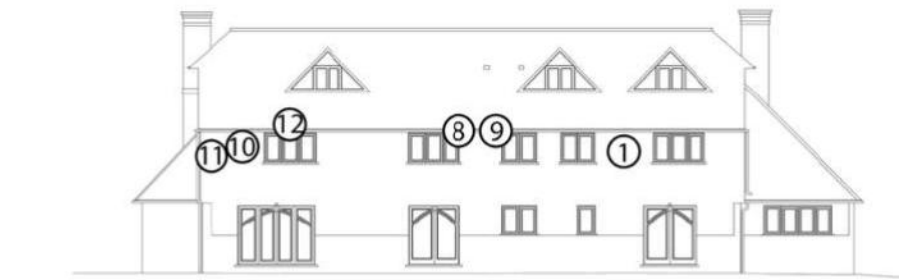
Visit 3 – 28th August 2026 – Dusk Emergence Survey

During the course of the emergence survey carried out on the 28th August 2026 four bats were recorded emerging from the main house. These comprised two common pipistrelle bats and two soprano pipistrelle bats. The first bat to emerge comprised a soprano pipistrelle which emerged from the eave area on the southern corner of the eastern elevation at 20:06 (TN13). At 20:07, a soprano pipistrelle emerged from TN11. The second common pipistrelle emerged from TN9 at 20:19 and the second common pipistrelle emerged from the southern-most end of the eastern elevation at 20:20.

Bat activity was recorded throughout the survey period, with soprano pipistrelle accounting for the majority of registrations. Soprano pipistrelle activity was first recorded at 20:17, with subsequent foraging and commuting activity recorded regularly between approximately 20:18 and 20:43. This included activity behind the stable area, within the courtyard and repeated passes along similar flight paths around the building.

Common pipistrelle activity was also recorded during the survey, including a registration at approximately 20:19 and a further registration at 21:25. A number of registrations were heard but not seen (HNS), representing bats active within the wider site grounds in the vicinity of the building but which could not be visually observed by the surveyor.

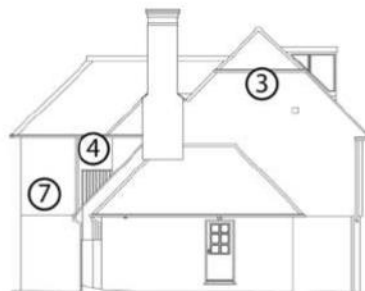
Activity from other species was more occasional. A noctule was recorded at approximately 20:51, with further noctule activity noted at 21:22, while a long-eared bat registration was recorded at approximately 21:01. Both were heard but not seen.



Main House Existing North West Elevation
1:100



Main House Existing South East Elevation
1:100



Main House Existing North East Elevation
1:100



Main House Existing South West Elevation
1:100

Figure 26 – emergence locations from the main house, Youngs Farm.

6.7.2 *Southern stable block*

Visit 1 – 10th August 2025 – Dusk Emergence Survey

During the course of the emergence survey carried out on the 10th August 2025, no bats were recorded emerging from the southern stable block.

Bat activity was recorded from shortly after sunset, with the first foraging passes by a soprano pipistrelle at 20:39. Activity increased steadily from 20:54 onwards, with repeated feeding buzzes and close foraging passes recorded between 20:52 and 21:03.

Commuting and foraging activity by common pipistrelle was also noted at 20:53, with bats moving back and forth along the façade. Noctule activity was recorded at 21:13, with a bat recorded foraging high over the site. Brown long-eared bat activity comprised several brief passes between 21:39 and 22:05. Overall, this survey recorded consistent foraging by pipistrelle species centred on the front elevation, with intermittent high-level commuting by noctule and sporadic brown long-eared bat passes.

Visit 2 – 8th September 2025 – Dusk Emergence Survey

During the course of the emergence survey carried out on the 8th September 2025, no bats were recorded emerging from the southern stable block.

Foraging activity began shortly after sunset with soprano pipistrelle passes recorded at 19:38. Repeated passes by soprano pipistrelle were recorded at 19:58-20:14, with bats circling and returning along the boundary vegetation. From 20:17 to 20:28, both common pipistrelle and soprano pipistrelle undertook repeated low passes along the building frontage.

Brown long-eared bat passes were also recorded at 20:37, 20:47, 20:55, and 21:01, all indicative of commuting rather than focused foraging. A Daubenton's/*Myotis*-type pass was recorded at 20:18, consistent with commuting behaviour through the site. Activity was moderate but continuous throughout the dusk period, centred on vegetation features at the western end of the building.

6.7.3 *Western stable block*

Visit 1 – 10th August 2025 – Dusk Emergence Survey

During the course of the emergence survey carried out on the 10th August 2025, no bats were recorded emerging from the western stable block.

Bat activity began shortly after sunset and remained consistent throughout the survey period, with multiple species recorded foraging and commuting around the stable buildings and adjacent tree lines. The earliest registration was at 20:56, when a common pipistrelle was recorded making a brief pass followed by further activity at 21:15, 21:16, 21:23, 21:24, 21:33, 21:44, 21:53, 21:58, and 22:03. These registrations indicate repeated use of the stables area by individual pipistrelles for foraging.

Brown long-eared bat activity was recorded intermittently, beginning at 20:57, with additional registrations at 21:32, 21:36, 21:56, 21:59, 22:00 and 22:05. All were faint or brief and consistent with low-level foraging passes rather than emergence behaviour.

Noctule bats were recorded commuting high over the site at 21:09, 21:17, and 21:39, with flight paths suggesting straight, purposeful flight paths across the survey area rather than local foraging. These were short, overhead registrations with no evidence of lingering activity.

Soprano pipistrelles were also present, with registrations including a feeding buzz at 20:58, and further passes at 21:16, 21:18, 21:39, and 21:45. Activity from this species typically involved foraging flights around the courtyard and adjacent vegetation.

Visit 2 – 9th September 2025 – Dusk Emergence Survey

During the course of the emergence survey carried out on the 9th September 2025, no bats were recorded emerging from the western stable block.

Bat activity during the survey was generally low but steady, with records dominated by common pipistrelle, soprano pipistrelle, and occasional noctule. Activity began shortly after sunset, with the first registration at 19:40, when a soprano pipistrelle was detected commuting past the building. Additional soprano pipistrelle activity was recorded at 19:51, again commuting. At 19:51, a soprano pipistrelle was recorded foraging within the nearby treeline.

At 19:57-19:58, noctule passes were recorded by all surveyors, with a bat recorded foraging high over the site.

From 19:58 to 20:20, common pipistrelle and soprano pipistrelle activity increased slightly, with several short foraging passes recorded within and around the courtyard. Notable registrations occurred at 20:00, 20:17, and 20:18, with bats following a consistent east–west flight line and briefly circling within sheltered areas.

Later in the survey period, additional noctule activity was recorded at 19:58 and again faintly overhead at approximately 20:12, recorded as a high commuting pass. A brown long-eared bat was detected at 20:35, 20:38, 20:43 and 20:55, but these were brief, faint passes consistent with distant foraging.

6.7.4 *Northern stable block*

Visit 1 – 13th August 2025 – Dusk Emergence Survey

During the course of the emergence survey carried out on the 13th August 2025, no bats were recorded emerging from the northern stable block.

Bat activity was recorded intermittently throughout the survey period, with several species using the area around the stable building and adjacent treeline for both commuting and light foraging.

The first registrations occurred at 20:34, when a common pipistrelle was recorded near the stable, followed shortly by additional common pipistrelle passes at 20:38 and 20:44. These early registrations were associated with brief foraging and commuting movements, with bats flying back and forth between the treeline to the east and the open areas surrounding the building.

At 20:54, a soprano pipistrelle was observed foraging in short loops around the stable, with the same bat (or another individual) continuing similar behaviour several minutes later. This was followed by an additional soprano pipistrelle registration at 21:01.

A serotine pass was recorded at 21:28, flying at height near the roofline. Additional common pipistrelle passes occurred throughout the latter part of the survey, including registrations at 21:12, 21:20 and 21:53.

Visit 2 – 14th September 2025 – Dusk Emergence Survey

During the course of the emergence survey carried out on the 14th September 2025, two bats were recorded emerging from the northern stable block. These comprised one common pipistrelle and one soprano pipistrelle. The common pipistrelle emerged from the open side of the stables at 19:39, whilst the soprano pipistrelle emerged from the eave area on the rear of the building at 19:34.

The first registration occurred at 19:36, when a common pipistrelle was recorded commuting east-west along the building. This was followed at 19:38 by a soprano pipistrelle pass, and a further pass at 19:38 involving social calling behaviour near the stable façade.

A noctule pass was recorded at 19:51, travelling high over the building. This was followed by further noctule activity between 20:16-20:18, though calls were faint.

Additional common pipistrelle social calls were recorded at 20:25, and a potential brown long-eared bat brief call was registered at 20:48. No further activity was recorded during the course of the survey.

6.8 Assessment

The surveys confirmed the presence of multiple bat roosts across the site, associated primarily with pipistrelle species and brown long-eared bat. All roosts identified comprise day roosts, with no evidence of maternity or hibernation roosts recorded. A summary of roost presence by building is provided below.

Main House (Building 1)

Both dusk emergence surveys recorded bats emerging from numerous locations around the building, confirming the presence of multiple day roosts of both soprano pipistrelle and common pipistrelle. A total of 14 emergences were recorded in August 2025, six emergences were recorded in September 2025 and four emergences were recorded in August 2026 from a range of features including weatherboarding, roof tiles and dormer interfaces.

Internal inspection also recorded several pipistrelle-type droppings within the roof void. On this basis, the main house supports at least ten discrete pipistrelle day roosts, used by both soprano pipistrelle and common pipistrelle.

Southern Stable Block

Within the southern stable block (Building 3), hundreds of long-eared bat type droppings were recorded in the carport and mezzanine, with additional smaller quantities within the converted roof space, together with scattered pipistrelle-type droppings. Although no bats were observed emerging from this building during the activity surveys, the volume and distribution of droppings confirm the presence of at least one brown long-eared bat day roost and one pipistrelle day roost within the structure. These are likely to be used by small numbers of bats on an intermittent basis. The quantity of long-eared droppings suggests the roost has been in use for a number of years but the quantities are not indicative of a maternity roost of this species.

Western Stable Block (Building 4)

No emergences were recorded during either survey of the western stable block, however, a small number of pipistrelle-type droppings adhered to an external door indicate that it is used intermittently by pipistrelles. In the absence of higher levels of activity or emergences, this evidence is consistent with a single pipistrelle day roost of low importance within Building 4.

Northern Stable Block (Building 5)

Two emergences were recorded during the September survey of the northern stable block (Building 5), comprising one common pipistrelle and one soprano pipistrelle. A concentrated accumulation of long-eared bat type droppings was present beneath the ridge board during the preliminary roost assessment, with additional droppings of the same type scattered throughout the interior. This level of evidence is characteristic of a brown long-eared bat day roost.

Although no brown long-eared bats were observed emerging during either emergence survey visit, this is not unusual for day roosts, which may be used intermittently.

Based on the volume and distribution of droppings and the emergences recorded during the activity surveys, the northern stable block is assessed as supporting a brown long-eared bat day roost, a common pipistrelle day roost and a soprano pipistrelle day roost within the roof of the structure.

Foraging and commuting activity

Across the wider site, commuting and foraging activity by common and soprano pipistrelle, brown long-eared bat, noctule and occasional serotine and *Myotis*/Daubenton's-type bats was recorded around the buildings, treelines and garden habitats. This activity is considered typical of a semi-rural property set within a connected landscape.

7. Badgers

7.1 Methodology

The survey involved a detailed investigation of the site to identify evidence of badger residence, foraging or territorial activity. This includes badger setts, latrine sites, dung

piles, well-used trails, prints and hairs. Particular emphasis was placed on locating badger setts, paths and signs of territorial activity such as dung piles and latrines.

7.2 Limitations

Limitations were not encountered during the course of the survey.

7.3 Results

No evidence of mammal foraging activity was recorded on site. Furthermore, no evidence of a badger sett was recorded, [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

7.4 Assessment

Badger setts are considered to be absent from the site, [REDACTED]

8. Dormice

8.1 Methodology

An assessment was made of the suitability of habitat on site to support hazel dormice. Key habitats are woodland, scrub and hedgerows, particularly where these offer dense vegetation within which to nest/hibernate and key resources such as hazel nuts, fruiting/nectar-rich plants (e.g. hawthorn, bramble) to provide a continuum of food resources throughout the active season and honeysuckle *Lonicera periclymenum* (for nesting material). Landscape-scale habitat linkages such as hedgerows are fundamental for dormouse presence where small scale or sub-optimal habitats are recorded within a site.

8.2 Limitations

Limitations were not encountered during the course of the survey.

8.3 Results

The hardstanding, buildings and grassland habitats are not considered suitable for supporting populations of dormice. The native hedgerow with trees along the western and southern boundaries of the site contain a species mix and structural density to be considered suitable for supporting both foraging and nesting dormice. However, this habitat is currently not anticipated to be directly impacted by the current proposals. The single tree to be removed remains isolated from other trees and scrub on site including the western hedgerow and lacks a structural density to be considered capable of supporting dormice.

8.4 **Assessment**

Overall, the habitats recorded on site which are anticipated to be directly impacted by the works are considered to offer negligible suitability for hazel dormice. The western and southern hedgerows with trees are considered to be suitable for the species but currently remain outside the remit of the proposals.

9. Hedgehogs

9.1 **Methodology**

The site was assessed for its suitability to support hedgehogs. Hedgehogs are most abundant within gardens, parks and amenity land close to or within human settlements. They are generally scarce in areas of coniferous woodland, marshes and moorland, probably because of a lack of suitable sites and materials for the construction of winter nests (Morris, 2006). Any evidence of hedgehog activity such as prints or droppings was recorded.

9.2 **Limitations**

Low detection rates are associated with evidence of hedgehog activity; therefore, absence of evidence does not confirm the absence of hedgehogs. For this reason, the assessment of the likely presence/absence of hedgehogs has largely been informed by the species' local distribution and the habitats within the site and local area.

9.3 **Results**

No evidence of hedgehog activity was directly recorded during the survey. Most of the grassland on site is intensively managed and maintained to short sward which whilst offering good foraging opportunities for the species, offers limited sheltering potential. The tall grassland in the west of the site and the hedgerows along the northern, western and southern boundaries all provide sheltering opportunity for hedgehogs. It is currently understood that only the managed grassland and hardstanding will be directly impacted by the works.

9.4 **Assessment**

There is considered to be high potential for hedgehog to occur on site. However, this is only in a foraging capacity in the areas of the site that will be directly impacted by the works.

10. Reptiles

10.1 **Methodology**

An assessment was made of the site's suitability to support reptile populations. Key habitat features for reptiles include: tussocky/patchy grassland; scrub edge; linear watercourses; ponds; compost heaps; brash piles and rubble/soil heaps. Linkage to suitable habitat within the surrounding landscape will increase the potential for reptiles to

occur, although populations can occur within isolated/fragmented habitats even within urban areas.

10.2 Limitations

Limitations were not encountered during the course of the survey.

10.3 Results

The majority of the habitats on site are considered to be unsuitable for reptiles. This is due to the managed grassland and hardstanding habitats lacking suitable prey biomass to sustain a reptile population and lacking sufficient sheltering opportunities for reptiles to reside safely without being heavily predated.

The parcel of tall grassland in the west of the site is considered to be suitable for more widespread reptiles such as slow worm *Anguis fragilis*, common lizard *Zootoca vivipara* and grass snake *Natrix helvetica* but is limited in size and is not currently anticipated to be impacted by the current proposals.

10.4 Assessment

The managed grassland and hardstanding are considered to support negligible suitability for reptiles. The western parcel of grassland is considered to support low suitability, and it is not anticipated to be directly impacted by the works. There is also considered to be a low suitability for transient reptiles to be present given the site's connectivity to the surrounding rural landscape.

11. Great Crested Newts

11.1 Methodology

Great crested newts are only present in their breeding ponds during the spring and early summer – for the rest of the year, they will be dispersed across the surrounding area, generally in grassland, scrub, woodland and hedgerows, although they may be found in gardens and brownfield sites. They can travel some distance from their breeding ponds, and as a general rule, developments within 500m of such a pond may have the potential to have an impact on GCN, although to a certain extent, this does depend on any intervening habitat or barriers to dispersal.

An assessment was made of any waterbodies and terrestrial habitat within the site for their suitability to support populations of amphibians. Suitable waterbodies will generally be characterised by the presence of good quality water, diverse macrophyte cover and an absence of fish. For the European-protected great crested newt, each waterbody is normally assessed using the Habitat Suitability Index (HSI) system (Oldham et al., 2000) and assigned a grading score between zero (poor suitability) and 1 (excellent suitability).

11.2 Limitations

The HSI for great crested newts is a measure of habitat suitability. In general, ponds with high HSI scores are more likely to support great crested newts than those with low scores. However, in isolation, the system is not sufficiently precise to allow the conclusion that

any particular pond with a high score will support newts, or that any pond with a low score will not do so (Oldham et al., 2000).

11.3 Results

The desktop survey has revealed that five waterbodies are located within 500m of the application site. The first waterbody is located 136m SE comprising a small lake in an adjacent field to the site. The remaining ponds are located 275m SE, 411m SW, 479m NW and 489m W. The furthest four waterbodies are disconnected from the site via Worleys Lane and Kenton's Lane which may prevent any potential GCN from disbursing onto site, however given the lack of traffic using these roads this cannot be stated definitively.

The hardstanding, buildings and managed grassland habitats within the redline boundary are considered to lack suitability for GCN due to the limited sheltering opportunities present. The parcel of grassland in the west of the site and the surrounding hedgerows offer some suitability for GCN to reside although are not currently anticipated to be impacted by the current works.

11.4 Assessment

The western tall grassland and hedgerows are considered to offer low suitability for GCN to reside. The remaining habitats on site are considered to offer negligible suitability for GCN to reside. Nevertheless, there is still a low potential for GCN to traverse the site during the terrestrial phase of their life given the nearby network of waterbodies.

12. Breeding birds

12.1 Methodology

An assessment was made of the site's suitability to support breeding bird species. Nesting birds will utilise a broad range of habitats, including: built structures, trees, scrub, isolated shrubs, dense herbaceous vegetation (terrestrial and aquatic) and open grassland. All bird species and evidence of breeding activity (active or inactive) observed on site were recorded.

12.2 Limitations

Limitations were not encountered during the course of the survey.

12.3 Results

The following bird species were recorded within or close to the application site during the course of the survey: Robin *Erithacus rubecula*, wood pigeon *Columba palumbus*, carrion crow *Corvus corone*, red kite *Milvus milvus*, swallow *Hirundo rustica*, Amber list: bullfinch *Pyrrhula pyrrhula*. Non-native: ring-necked parakeet *Psittacula krameri*, Egyptian goose *Alopochen aegyptiaca*.

Evidence of nesting birds in the form of inactive nests were recorded inside the southern and northern stable buildings. The nests recorded appeared to predominantly belong to swallows.

All buildings within the redline boundary in addition to the scattered trees, hedgerows and ornamental scrub within the garden all offer nesting opportunities for birds. This includes the three tree to be removed, although no nests were recorded in these during the survey.

12.4 **Assessment**

Overall, the site is considered to support moderate potential for breeding birds. Whilst the scattered trees on site are suitable, they remain isolated with some having sparse canopies. As such it is more likely birds will utilise the woodlands, hedgerows and scrub in the wider landscape.

13. Discussion and Assessment of Impacts

13.1 Relevant legislation and policy

Circular 06/2005 identifies that applicants should not be required to provide information on protected species unless there is a reasonable likelihood that they will be present and affected by the proposed development. The site is considered to support habitats with suitability and potential for protected species and these may be affected by the proposed development. Therefore, the proposal triggers 'reasonable likelihood' under the Circular.

The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) and the Habitats Regulations may apply should protected species be confirmed on site.

In the case that a European protected species is found to be present and impacted by the proposal, the local planning authority will be required to engage with the Habitat Regulations. Permission will be granted unless:

- a) the development is likely to result in a breach of the Habitats Regulations, and
- b) is unlikely to be granted an EPS licence from Natural England to allow the development to proceed under a derogation from the law (under licence).

When considering whether Natural England would not be unlikely to grant a licence for the identified impact, the local planning authority must consider the three tests which are set out in the Habitat Regulations:

1. the consented operation must be for 'preserving public health or public safety or other imperative reasons of overriding public interest including those of a social or economic nature and beneficial consequences of primary importance for the environment'; (Regulation 53(2)(e))
2. there must be 'no satisfactory alternative' (Regulation 53(9)(a)); and
3. the action authorised 'will not be detrimental to the maintenance of the population of the species concerned at a favourable conservation status in their natural range' (Regulation 53(9)(b)).

Natural England will grant a licence if the development proposal is able to meet the three tests.

13.2 Habitats

The main habitats within the redline boundary of the current proposals which are anticipated to be directly impacted are hardstanding, built structures, and managed grassland. As this vegetation to be removed is easily replicable and of low botanical value, it is considered that there will be no impact to habitats of ecological importance such as priority habitats as a result of its loss.

Two ornamental fruit trees and a single willow tree are to be removed as a part of the landscaping proposals for the new driveway entrance to be constructed. The uncompensated removal of these trees will result in a net loss in biodiversity on the site

which would be contrary to NPPF. These trees will need to be replaced in the wider site to offset their removal.

13.3 Bats

The preliminary roost assessment confirmed that the main house and three stable buildings support moderate suitability for roosting bats. Therefore, there was considered to be a reasonable likelihood that bats would be present and affected by demolition works which will impact the features detailed in Table 4.

Subsequent emergence surveys and internal inspections confirmed bat roosts in several of these structures.

Main House (Building 1) - Emergence surveys recorded multiple day roosts of common and soprano pipistrelle, with bats emerging from numerous locations around the building. In addition, occasional brown long-eared activity was recorded internally. The main house will be demolished, and therefore these roosts will be directly affected by the proposed works.

Northern Outbuilding (Building 2) - No evidence of use was recorded, and the building was considered to support negligible suitability for roosting bats. Works to this structure therefore poses no reasonable risk to roosting bats.

Southern Stable Block (Building 3) - No bats emerged from this building during either survey; however, hundreds of brown long-eared bat droppings were recorded inside the structure, concentrated beneath the ridge board and scattered throughout the interior. This is consistent with a brown long-eared day roost. No works are proposed to this structure; therefore, no direct or indirect impacts on the recorded bat roosts are anticipated as a result of the proposed development.

Western Stable Block (Building 4) - A small number of pipistrelle-type droppings were recorded on an external door. No emergences were recorded, but the physical evidence is consistent with a pipistrelle day roost. No works are proposed to this structure; therefore, no direct or indirect impacts on the recorded bat roosts are anticipated as a result of the proposed development.

Northern Stable Block (Building 5) – Emergence surveys confirmed the presence of common pipistrelle and soprano pipistrelle day roosts. Although no brown long-eared bats were recorded emerging, the preliminary roost assessment documented a concentration of brown long-eared droppings beneath the ridge board and scatterings throughout the interior. This confirms a brown long-eared day roost within the building. No works are proposed to this structure; therefore, no direct or indirect impacts on the recorded bat roosts are anticipated as a result of the proposed development.

Demolition of the main house will therefore result in impacts to confirmed bat roosts. These works cannot proceed without a Natural England mitigation licence.

Across the wider site, foraging activity by common pipistrelle, soprano pipistrelle, brown long-eared bat, noctule and serotine was recorded. These species utilise the treelines and open areas around the buildings for commuting and foraging. While foraging bats will not

be directly affected by the proposed works, increased artificial lighting associated with the new buildings has the potential to reduce habitat quality and indirectly affect bat behaviour. A sensitive lighting strategy will therefore be required.

13.4

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

13.5 **Hazel dormouse**

No habitats which are considered to support potential for hazel dormice are to be impacted as a result of the current proposals. As such, no further impacts on hazel dormice are currently anticipated.

13.6 **Hedgehog**

The site supports high suitability for foraging hedgehog. Therefore, impacts to hedgehogs could occur during construction if construction trenches are left open.

13.7 **Reptiles**

The proposal will result in the loss of habitat which is considered to support low potential for transient reptiles. Precautionary avoidance measures are proposed for the construction phase given the potential for transient reptiles to be present.

13.8 **Great crested newts**

The proposed works will not result in the loss of habitat which is considered to support suitability for great crested newts. Nevertheless, given the network of waterbodies within the local landscape, precautionary avoidance measures are proposed for the construction phase to reduce the risk of harm occurring to potential transient GCN.

13.9 **Breeding birds**

The proposal will result in the loss of suitable breeding bird habitat. The removal of this habitat has the potential to damage or destroy active bird nests if carried out during the breeding bird season which is generally seen as extending from March to the end of August, although may extend longer depending on local conditions. Swallows in particular frequently nest into September. The proposal will also result in a net loss of bird nesting opportunities at the site. The demolition of the house and northern outbuilding will likely result in the removal of building features that provide suitable nesting opportunities for barn swallows. Furthermore, the removal of the three trees on site will result in reduced nesting opportunities.

14. Requirement for further surveys

Further surveys are required where there is a reasonable likelihood that a protected species will be present and impacted by the proposed development. An assessment into the requirement for further surveys is presented below, however in summary, all further surveys considered necessary have been undertaken.

It is important that planning decisions are informed by current ecological survey data. Due to this, there is a limited time frame that phase 1 and phase 2 surveys are valid before becoming outdated. This time frame can vary depending on any changes in project circumstances or plans but it is generally considered that phase 1 ecological surveys are valid for a period of 18 months (CIEEM, 2019). Projects that take place over periods longer than 18 months might be required to carry out further ecological surveys to ensure planning authorities have the necessary up-to-date information to make well informed, evidence-based decisions.

14.1 **Designated sites**

No further surveys are considered necessary.

14.2 **Habitats**

No further surveys are considered necessary.

14.3 **Bats**

In order to provide robust confirmation on the presence and status of bat roosts and the extent that they may be affected by the proposed development as required by Circular 06/2005, further survey work in accordance with Natural England's standing advice and the BCT Good Practice Guidelines was undertaken for the house and three stable buildings.

In accordance with these guidelines, further survey effort took the form of dusk emergence surveys undertaken during the bat active season. No further surveys in respect of roosting bats are considered necessary.

Given the scale of the proposal, further survey is considered unnecessary for understanding impacts on foraging and commuting bats subject to precautionary avoidance measures including a sensitive lighting scheme.

No further surveys are required for the northern outbuilding which supports negligible suitability for roosting bats.

14.4 **Badgers**

Subject to the precautionary mitigation measures set out in Section 15, no further surveys are considered necessary.

14.5 Hazel dormice

As impacts on dormice are not anticipated within the current proposals, no further recommendations relating to dormice are considered necessary. If plans change and the western and southern hedgerows are to be impacted by the works further surveys will be necessary.

14.6 Hedgehog

Subject to the precautionary mitigation measures set out in Section 15, no further surveys are considered necessary.

14.7 Reptiles

Subject to the precautionary mitigation measures set out in Section 15, no further surveys are considered necessary due to the low level of suitability for this species within the footprint of the proposals.

14.8 Great crested newts

Subject to the precautionary mitigation measures set out in Section 15, no further surveys are considered necessary.

14.9 Breeding birds

Subject to the precautionary mitigation and enhancement measures set out in Section 15, no further surveys are considered necessary in respect of breeding birds.

15. Mitigation recommendations

15.1 Introduction

The overarching aim of the ecological survey and assessment work carried out at the site is to inform the planning proposals in order to demonstrate how the development can proceed whilst avoiding or mitigating impacts to designated sites and protected or notable species and habitats. The 'mitigation hierarchy' is an accepted approach which guides this process. The first consideration should always be to design a scheme that avoids the identified impact. Where this is not possible the next step should be to mitigate any impacts that cannot be avoided. The third, which should be used as a last resort, is compensation: this should only be used to off-set any unavoidable impacts.

The following mitigation regards the current proposal only. Future proposals will require further mitigation recommendations.

15.2 Habitats

Native Tree Planting

Compensation for the loss of trees on site is required. New native trees will be planted across the site. Suitable species for the local landscape would include rowan *Sorbus aucuparia*, English oak *Quercus robur*, hawthorn, wild cherry, hazel *Corylus avellana*, silver birch *Betula pendula* and field maple.

15.3 Bats

15.3.1 *Licensing*

As this work will result in the loss of the identified bat roosts within the main house, an EPSM licence will need to be obtained from Natural England before the proposed demolition (main house) works commence. A licence can be applied for once consent has been obtained for the proposed works. Provided the development can pass the three 'derogation' tests discussed above Natural England will grant the relevant licence to allow the developer to legally carry out the work that would otherwise be illegal – i.e. to destroy a bat roost and disturb / take bats.

15.3.2 *Destructive search mitigation strategy*

- The destructive search will be carried out during the active season i.e. April to late-October. A toolbox talk will be given to contractors prior to the roof tile and weatherboarding stripping works commencing. The toolbox talk will provide an introduction to the legal protection afforded to bats, the status of bats at the site including likely species and roosting locations, evidence to look out for and the protocol which will be followed if a roosting bat is identified. Appropriate signage will be provided and displayed on site to inform contractors of the required protocol when working where a bat roost has been recorded.
- The destructive search works will be led by a licensed bat worker, accompanied by construction contractors. There will be no disturbance of identified roost features without the supervision of a bat worker. This is because during the

proposed tile and weatherboard stripping period bats, if present, may be very difficult to locate and easily be overlooked by contractors.

- Immediately prior to the weatherboard and roof tile stripping works commencing, inspections of the roof voids, tiles and weatherboards will be carried out by a licensed bat worker, using an endoscope where required, to check for the presence of roosting bats. Any bats encountered and accessible will immediately be transferred to a holding bag before being placed within the previously erected bat boxes within the site grounds.
- Following this, the materials will be carefully removed by/under the supervision of the licensed bat worker using hand tools. The works will be carried out from a suitably erected scaffold or mobile elevated work platform.
- Any bats which are found during the destructive search works will be captured by the licenced bat worker with the use of thin gloves or a hand net. The bat will immediately be transferred to a holding bag before being placed within the previously erected bat box within the site grounds. Any injured bats will immediately be taken into care.
- Once the licensed bat worker is satisfied that bats are absent from the works area, the contractors can complete the demolition works.
- If a bat is found during unsupervised works, all works will cease and the supervising bat worker will be contacted immediately.

15.3.3 *Provision of new roosting sites*

Two Schwegler 2F bat boxes or similar will be installed within the site. These will provide temporary alternative roost sites whilst the proposed works are undertaken and will be retained as enhancement post development.

- Modified roof tiles - A roosting void beneath eight roof tiles will be created on the new house to provide additional crevice roost features. Access to the voids beneath the tiles will be created by inserting a wooden peg or piece of mortar at the base of the tile to lift it upwards by 35mm in order to create a gap of sufficient size.
- Modified ridge tile - A roosting void beneath four ridge tiles will be created on the new house to provide additional crevice roost features. Access to the void will be created by leaving a gap in the mortar line below the ridge tiles. A batten measuring at least 20mm high by 50mm long will be inserted into the wet mortar and removed in order to create a gap of sufficient size.
- Traditional roof membrane - modern breathable membranes can be extremely harmful to bats, causing them to become entangled and die, while the bats make the membrane ineffective as they damage it. Traditional bitumen membrane should be used instead. Natural England will refuse bat licence applications where modern breathable membranes are proposed. See <https://www.bats.org.uk/our-work/buildings-planning-and-development/non->

bitumen-coated-roofing-membranes for more information on the current research into this.

15.3.4 *Advisory notes:*

External lighting should be limited to only that which is absolutely necessary for safety purposes, both during the construction phase and once the proposals are complete. Lighting to the buildings and site should be as low brightness as possible, kept at a low level and directed away from all structures and boundaries. Lighting on sensors should not be so sensitive that foraging bats trigger them. All lighting must follow the Bat Conservation Trusts and Institute of Lighting Professionals guidance on bats and artificial lighting (BCT/ILP, 2023)

15.4 **Badger**

In order to avoid harm to badgers during the construction works, any trenches will either be covered at night or fitted with a soil or plank ramp to enable any badgers which fall in to leave on their own accord.

15.5 **Hedgehog**

In order to avoid harm to hedgehogs during the construction works the following precautionary measures will be employed:

- Any trenches will either be covered at night or fitted with a soil or plank ramp to enable any hedgehogs that fall in to leave of their own accord.
- Any vegetation waste piles will be dismantled by hand in a sensitive and careful manner.
- No bonfires will be made or lit on site.

15.6 **Reptiles**

Care should be taken that the development does not kill/injure reptiles. Key habitat features for reptiles include brash piles and rubble/soil heaps. Linkage to suitable habitat within the surrounding landscape will increase the potential for reptiles to occur, although populations can occur within isolated/fragmented habitats even within urban areas. Any potential refugia affected by the works, such as logs, rubble, stones, tall/rough grassland or other debris, will be carefully dismantled by hand under ecological supervision. Where reptiles are encountered, works in the immediate area will cease and the ecologist will determine the appropriate course of action. Animals will be allowed to disperse into adjacent retained habitat where practicable; where necessary, they will be carefully moved by the ecologist to suitable retained habitat immediately adjacent to the works.

Following clearance, affected areas will be maintained in a short condition and/or stripped promptly so that suitable reptile habitat does not re-establish before construction. Retained habitat around the site margins will be protected throughout the works.. All waste shall be placed directly into a skip so that rubble piles and therefore potential hibernation areas are not created in areas which will subsequently be disturbed by site works.

15.7 **Great Crested Newts**

Given the limited potential for GCN to be present and the absence of suitable terrestrial habitat it is not considered necessary to carry out further detailed surveys. However, it is recommended that a precautionary approach to the construction phase is adopted.

- All waste shall be placed directly into a skip so that rubble piles and therefore potential hibernation or terrestrial resting areas are not created in areas which will subsequently be disturbed by site works.
- Piles of loose sand or other granular materials into which GCN could bury are not to be left around the site. All such materials will ideally be delivered in bags and kept in such bags until required for use. Bags should be stored on pallets. If it is essential that they are delivered loose, they should only be dug into by hand.
- Any accumulations of brash will be removed by hand in a sensitive and careful manner.
- All trenches will be left covered at night. They must be checked in the morning before they are filled in.
- No bonfires will be made or lit on site.
- If during the clearance works a GCN is found all works must stop and the supervising ecologist contacted, who will contact the Natural England licensing team.

15.8 **Breeding birds**

Care should be taken that the development does not disturb breeding birds. The bird nesting season is taken to be March to August inclusive however swallows often nest into September. Any removal of suitable nest habitat will either need to be undertaken outside of this period or else checked by an experienced ecologist to ensure that no nesting birds are present. If occupied nests are present then the nest must not be removed, and clearance can only recommence once the nest becomes unoccupied of its own accord.

The development will result in the loss of nest sites. Therefore, in order to avoid an overall loss of nesting opportunities within the site and provide a valuable enhancement, three swallow nest cups will be installed around the exterior eaves of the wellness building in a sheltered location and a single small hole fronted nest box will be installed on an existing tree.

16. Enhancements

The delivery of biodiversity enhancement on development sites is promoted by the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and Section 40 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006.

Where opportunities exist it is best practice to provide enhancement features which encourage greater biodiversity within development sites in accordance with the NPPF and Local Planning Authority's responsibilities under the NERC Act.

Opportunities for enhancement which are proportionate to the scale of the development include:

- Bird nesting opportunities, in the form of two swift boxes or bricks. These could be installed on the newly built house or integrated into the construction using swift bricks depending on the design. The boxes should be added at least 2m above ground level.
- Bat roost features will be installed to deliver ecological enhancement. This will likely take the form of bat boxes which will be installed on the new buildings or scattered trees, at least 3m high.
- In addition to the required tree planting, further planting around the wider site would help to enhance the biodiversity of the site and provide nesting and foraging opportunities for birds.
- The introduction of invertebrate boxes and the sowing of native wildflower meadows would provide a significant benefit to invertebrates and other wildlife on site. Soils for England and Wales identified the grounds of the site as freely draining, slightly acid but base-rich soil. The texture of this soil type is loamy. As such, the EM5F Wild Flowers for Loamy Soils seed mix is recommended for the site.

17. Conclusion

The extended phase 1 ecological assessment confirmed that the site supports opportunities for a range of protected species including bats, badger, hedgehog and breeding birds.

The preliminary roost assessment confirmed that the main house and three stable buildings support moderate suitability for roosting bats. Therefore, further survey effort was undertaken for these buildings to confirm the presence/absence of roosts, characterise any bat roost/s, assess the extent bats may be affected by the proposed demolition works. In accordance with Natural England standing advice and BCT Good Practice Guidelines, two presence/absence surveys for the house and stable buildings were undertaken during August and September 2025; and an updating emergence survey of the house was carried out in August 2026.

The subsequent survey work confirmed that several buildings on site support bat roosts. The main house (Building 1) contains multiple day roosts of common pipistrelle and soprano pipistrelle, and occasional internal activity consistent with the use of the building by brown long-eared bats. This structure is proposed for demolition and the roosts present will therefore be directly affected.

No evidence of bat roosting was recorded from the northern outbuilding (Building 2), which is assessed as having negligible suitability. Demolition of this structure is therefore not anticipated to result in impacts to roosting bats.

The southern stable block (Building 3) contains a confirmed brown long-eared bat day roost, evidenced by a substantial accumulation of droppings beneath the ridge board and scattered throughout the building. This building has now been excluded from the proposed works and will remain unaffected by the development. As such, no impacts on the confirmed roost are anticipated.

The western stable block (Building 4) contains a pipistrelle day roost, based on pipistrelle-type droppings recorded externally. This building has also been excluded from the proposed works and will remain unaffected, and therefore no impacts on the recorded roost are anticipated.

The northern stable block (Building 5) supports confirmed common pipistrelle and soprano pipistrelle day roosts, with emergence locations recorded during the activity surveys. Evidence of a brown long-eared bat day roost was also identified during the preliminary roost assessment. Building 5 has now been excluded from the proposed works and will remain unaffected by the development. Consequently, no impacts on these confirmed roosts are anticipated.

As demolition of the main house will result in impacts to confirmed bat roosts, the works cannot proceed without a Natural England mitigation licence secured prior to commencement.

No further survey work is required for the northern outbuilding which is considered to support negligible suitability for roosting bats.

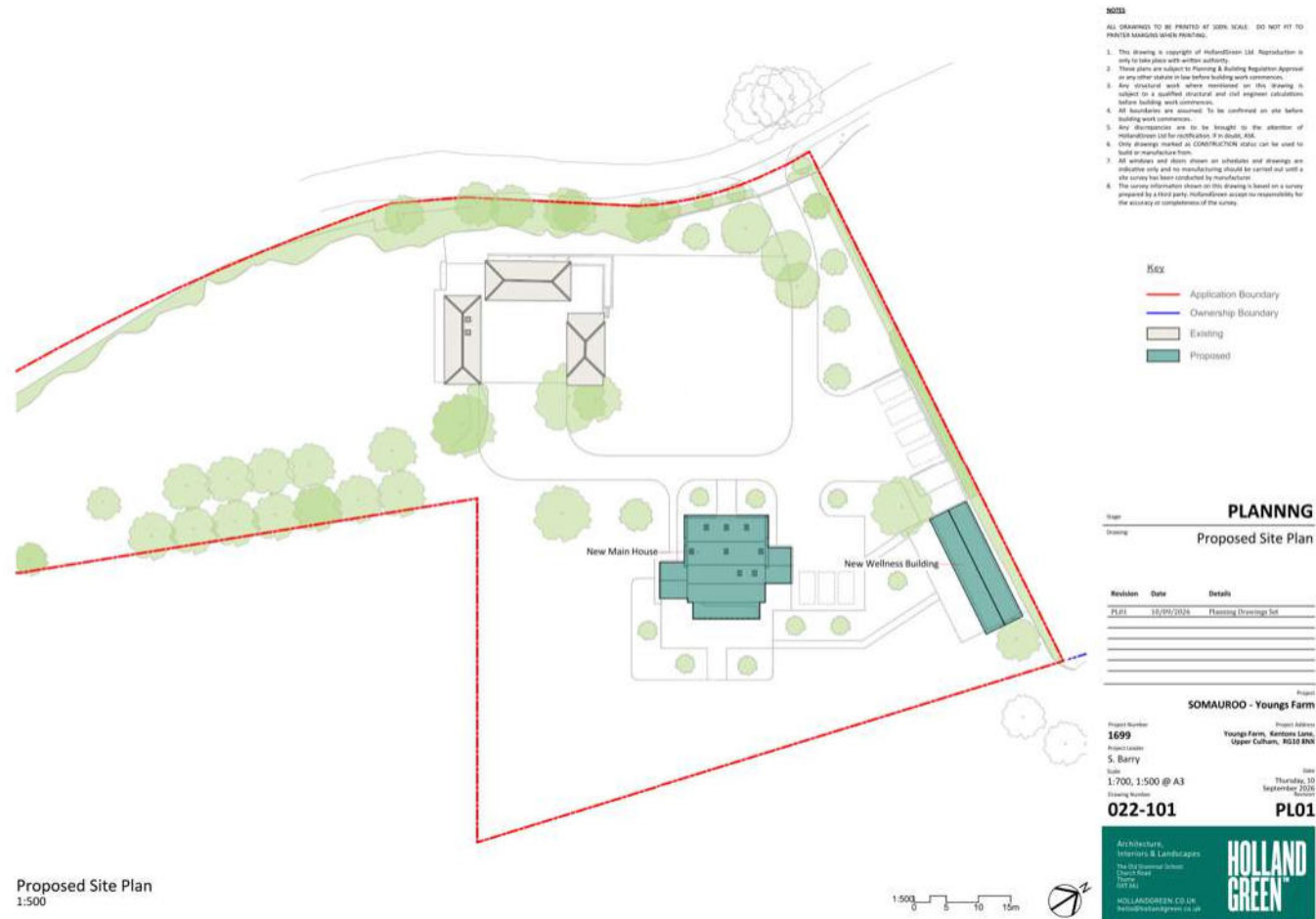
The three trees to be removed as a part of the landscaping works will need to be replaced with native species in the wider site.

Given the scale of the proposal, it is possible to deliver the scheme with a range of measures which avoid impacts on the majority of the other identified protected and priority species. These include sensitive timing of the works, careful vegetation removal and sensitive lighting.

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Appendix 1 – Proposed Site Plan





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