Ecological Appraisal
House at 36 Main Street
Stoke Golding
Leicestershire
NGR SP 39531 97273

Survey by
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Non-Technical Summary
The site surveyed comprises an existing residential house situated at 36 Main Street, Stoke Golding, Hinckley and Bosworth centred at NGR SP39531 97273. An initial stage 1 inspection of the site was completed on 08th March 2023 with a follow up bat activity survey completed on 04th June 2023.

The defined site area comprises an existing house situated within a large, well-maintained, residential garden situated on the north western edge of the village of Stoke Golding. The property is bounded to the south and east by residential houses with the garden boundaries defined by fencing and hedgerows. To the north the garden extends to the reach open agricultural grazing land To the west the garden of the property extends across the driveway and lawn to meet the fence of the adjacent residential house and open grazing land.

The survey area is an existing residential house and small parts of the surrounding garden and driveway. As such, there is no need for a full Habitat Survey to be completed as the entire survey area will be considered to be 'developed land'. The survey instead focussed on the potential presence of protected species.

An assessment of the survey area has identified the following potential for protected species to be present:

Species	Suitable habitat on site / evidence of presence	Likelihood of presence on site	Further Survey / Mitigation recommended
Nesting Birds	Ground nesting very unlikely. No evidence of nesting on or within the internal roof of the property to be extended was identified during the inspection.	Low likelihood of nesting based on the inspection completed.	No further surveys of specific mitigation measures recommended.
Reptiles	Open and intensively managed garden around the house is sub-optimal habitat for reptiles and no evidence of these species was identified.	Negligible potential for reptiles to be present in the area immediately surrounding the house.	No further surveys of specific mitigation measures recommended.
Amphibians	Open and intensively managed garden around the house is sub-optimal habitat for amphibians and no evidence of these species was identified.	Negligible potential for amphibians to be present in the area immediately surrounding the house.	No further surveys of specific mitigation measures recommended.
Bats	No field signs of bats was noted on or within the interior of the house. Foraging around the garden confirmed by the activity survey but no bats were identified roosting within the structure of the house	Low likelihood of roosting bats colonising the property for roosting purposes in the future.	Design any new lighting to avoid increase in light levels around the exterior of the house.
Badger and larger mammals	An annex sett was identified with 5 entrances in the north eastern corner of the property around 60m from the garden area being assessed.	Occasional foraging considered highly likely in the garden around the house and to the north of this.	Construction methods to avoid harm to badgers will be required.

Constraints:
No significant ecological constraints have been identified associated with the house and garden immediately surrounding this during the survey. However, the following should be taken into consideration when planning works to the house:

- The badger activity to the north of the house could extend around the garden area and badger could forage close to the house in the areas where work is being proposed.
- There is potential for hedgehogs to be present within the site, particularly around the garden boundaries.
- There are features within the roof structure of the house that may be of interest to roosting bats and it is always possible for these to be utilised by one or more bats in the future.

Conclusion and Recommendations
There are no Statutory of Non-Statutory sites nearby that could potentially be impacted by the proposed extension of this property.

The survey area comprises a detached residential house situated in a larger garden on the edge of the village of Stoke Golding. The building and surrounding garden contains no significant ecological features and no evidence of any significant locally rare plants or plant communities was found during the survey.

The proposal to extending the existing house at the front (west) and side (north) will impact the existing driveway and parking area and a very small parcel of lawn / rockery. It is considered likely that development of the site area surveyed could be carried out in a manner that does not have any significant impact on local biodiversity.

The inspections completed in March and June 2023 did not identify any physical evidence or field signs of protected species within the house of garden area immediately adjacent to this where works may take place. However, after inspection of the wider garden area a small badger sett has been identified in the north eastern corner of the garden approximately 50m from the house and foraging activity by bats was noted throughout the garden and close to the house to be extended.

The following precautionary measures are advised:

Bats: No evidence of roosting bats was found during the stage 1 inspection of follow up stage 2 activity survey completed. However, there after features associated within the Swithland Slate roof that could be of interest to roosting bats in the future. It would therefore be advisable to carry out any works to the roof structure outside of the bat activity season, or have the building inspected again immediately before any works starts as a precaution.

Badger: The presence of this species foraging in the garden area around the house is quite likely given the proximity of the badger set in the north eastern corner of the garden. No disturbance to the sett area should take place whilst works to extend the property are a carried out and the sett area is effectively screened by outbuildings and vegetation. However, measures to protect these species from harm during construction activities will be required as detailed in Section 3.2 of this report.

Recommendations: It is recommended that prior to any groundwork commencing the working area should be marked out clearly and then inspected by an ecologist to confirm that protected species are absent and that the proposed work does not put at risk the nearby badger sett.

It is also recommended that one bat roost tube and two swift nest boxes / tubes are integrated into the existing building where practical in suitable positions.

[redacted]

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Part 1: Site Details

1. Introduction

1.1 Site Description and Location

The site surveyed comprises an existing residential house situated at 36 Main Street, Stoke Golding, Hinckley and Bosworth centred at NGR SP39531 97273. The location of the site is shown on the plan within **Figure 1** and an aerial photograph has been provided within **Figure 2** to place the site in context.

Figure 1: Site location.

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The Client has requested an ecological survey of the house to determine whether there is anything of ecological value or any evidence of protected species present. An initial stage 1 inspection of the house was completed on 08th March 2023 with a follow up stage 2 activity survey on 04th June 2023 and details of the surveys are provided in the table below. A photographic record of key parts of the property is included alongside target notes within the report.

Date	Time	Location	Weather
08th March 2023	15.45 – 16.30	36 Main Street Stoke Golding CV13 6HP	Overcast. 13 degrees C, breeze 5mph from the north west. Humidity 68% at 1019hPa
04th June 2023	21.00 – 23.00		Clear sky. 15 degrees C, breeze 11mph from the east. Humidity 52% at 1024hPa

The defined site area comprises an existing house situated within a large, well-maintained, residential garden situated on the north western edge of the village of Stoke Golding. The property is bounded to the south and east by residential houses with the garden boundaries defined by fencing and hedgerows. To the north the garden extends to the reach open agricultural grazing land To the west the garden of the property extends across the driveway and lawn to meet the fence of the adjacent residential house and open grazing land. A contextual aerial photograph has been provided below.

Figure 2: Site Contextual Aerial Photograph Image Copyright Microsoft Mapping 2023

1.2 Objective of the Report

This report is a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal of the area identified in yellow within the aerial photograph above. The objective of the ecological appraisal is to identify the habitat(s) present on, and surrounding, the site area being assessed and the potential for protected species to be present. Work to extend the existing property will require planning approval and this report has been prepared to provide information as part of any future planning application process.

To this end the report is required to comply with the recommendations and principles set out in the National Planning Policy Framework 2021 as amended (NPPF). The report contains Biological Records and has been prepared to meet the standard required by BS42020 (British Standard for Biodiversity and Development).

Chapter 11 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) describes the Government's national policies on promoting 'an effective use of land in meeting the need for homes and other uses, while safeguarding and improving the environment.' NPPF is accompanied by Planning Practice Guidance on 'Biodiversity, ecosystems and green infrastructure' (2014) and ODPM Circular 06/2005.

The National Planning Policy Framework 2021 Chapter 15 sets out the Government's objectives for planning in regard to the protection of habitats and biodiversity. The planning

objectives in relation to biodiversity and the natural environment are stated within paragraph 170 of the NPPF 2021 and are as follows:

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

a) protecting and enhancing valued landscapes, sites of biodiversity or geological value and soils (in a manner commensurate with their statutory status or identified quality in the development plan).

b) recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside, and the wider benefits from natural capital and ecosystem services – including the economic and other benefits of the best and most versatile agricultural land, and of trees and woodland.

c) maintaining the character of the undeveloped coast, while improving public access to it where appropriate.

d) minimising impacts on and providing net gains for biodiversity, including by establishing coherent ecological networks that are more resilient to current and future pressures.

e) preventing new and existing development from contributing to, being put at unacceptable risk from, or being adversely affected by, unacceptable levels of soil, air, water or noise pollution or land instability. Development should, wherever possible, help to improve local environmental conditions such as air and water quality, taking into account relevant information such as river basin management plans; and

f) remediating and mitigating despoiled, degraded, derelict, contaminated and unstable land, where appropriate."

Within the revised NPPF 2021 it is now policy that '*permission should be refused for major development applications within National Parks, the Broads and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty other than in exceptional circumstances'.* Planning policy context requires that Planning policies and decisions should be based on up-to-date information about the natural environment and other characteristics of the area including an assessment of existing and potential components of ecological networks (NPPF paragraph 43).

The above approach encapsulates the 'mitigation hierarchy' described in British Standard BS 42020:2013 which involves the following stepwise process:

• **Avoidance** – avoiding adverse effects through good design,
• **Mitigation** – where it is unavoidable, mitigation measures should be employed to minimise adverse effects,
• **Compensation** – where residual effects remain after mitigation it may be necessary to provide compensation to offset any harm,
• **Enhancement** – planning decisions often present the opportunity to deliver benefits for biodiversity, which can also be explored alongside the above measures to resolve potential adverse effects.

The measures for avoidance, mitigation, compensation and enhancement should be proportionate to the predicted degree of risk to biodiversity and to the nature and scale of the proposed development (BS 42020:2013, section 5.5).

This ecological appraisal provides information on the existing ecological and biodiversity value of the land on the site and also reports any evidence of protected species or

significant habitats present. It has been provided to provide information to the Planning Authority in order to help meet the requirements of the NPPF and enable the Authority to assess the site area in accordance with the Code of Practice within BS42020 and guidelines issued by CIEEM in 2012. The report also identifies any habitats or species present that require more detailed surveys prior to any improvements being undertaken.

Part 2: Survey Methodology and Results

2. Appraisal Methodology

2.1 Baseline Study

Within NPPF it states that there are three dimensions to sustainable development: "economic, social and environmental." The environmental role includes "contributing to protecting and enhancing our natural, built and historic environment" and, as part of this, helping to improve biodiversity.

Within the NPPF 2021 it states that: *"Great weight should be given to conserving and enhancing landscape and scenic beauty in National Parks, the Broads and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, which have the highest status of protection in relation to these issues. The conservation and enhancement of wildlife and cultural heritage are also important considerations in these areas, and should be given great weight…." Paragraph 172*

Within paragraphs 174 and 175 of NPPF 2021 the principles by which the protection and enhancement of biodiversity and geodiversity within the context of proposed development are described. These principles state in Paragraph 174 that any development proposal should:

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

*b) **promote the conservation, restoration and enhancement** of priority habitats, ecological networks and the protection and recovery of priority species; and identify and pursue opportunities for **securing measurable net gains for biodiversity**.*

Paragraph 175: When determining planning applications, local planning authorities should apply the following principles:

a) *if significant harm to biodiversity resulting from a development cannot be avoided (through locating on an alternative site with less harmful impacts), adequately mitigated, or, as a last resort, compensated for, then planning permission should be refused.*

b) *development on land within or outside a Site of Special Scientific Interest, and which is likely to have an adverse effect on it (either individually or in combination with other developments), should not normally be permitted. The only exception is where the benefits of the development in the location proposed clearly outweigh both its likely impact on the features of the site that make it of special scientific interest, and any broader impacts on the national network of Sites of Special Scientific Interest.*

c) *development resulting in the loss or deterioration of irreplaceable habitats (such as ancient woodland and ancient or veteran trees) should be refused, unless there are wholly exceptional reasons and a suitable compensation strategy exists; and*

d) *development whose primary objective is to conserve or enhance biodiversity should be supported; while opportunities to incorporate biodiversity improvements in and around developments should be encouraged, especially where this can secure measurable net gains for biodiversity.*

The biodiversity of a site area and the potential presence of protected species are factors relevant to all developments irrespective of the size scale and will apply to any development on the site being assessed. Available information on the baseline ecology of the site and the presence of protected species within the locality has been obtained from the local biological records centre and reviewed (**Appendix 2)** and the records obtained are provided as separate appendices.

These data sources have been reviewed and the character and nature conservation value of habitats and species assessed. The aims of this appraisal of information are:

- To characterize all the existing available information regarding habitats and species that may be present at the site and provide up to date information about the environmental characteristics of the site area.
- To identify any habitats potentially present of nature conservation value in terms of local, regional and national context and within the context of local, regional and national policy; and,
- To identify any areas of ecological interest in order to either a) make recommendations to minimize the potential impact of any site works, or b) identify the need for a further survey work.

Following the appraisal of the available information, a site inspection has taken place to obtain specific site data at the site.

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Following the appraisal of the available information, a site inspection has taken place to obtain specific site data at the site.

2.2 Habitat Assessment Methodology

The site was initially inspected on the afternoon of 08th March 2023 with a follow up inspection on the early evening of 04th June 2023 to complete a bat activity survey. The inspections used the extended Phase 1 Habitat Assessment methodology as adopted by Natural England (Joint Nature Conservation Committee 1993) and in accordance with the Guidelines for Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (2012) issued by the Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (IEEM) and BS42020 (British Standard for Biodiversity and Development).

The survey required a systematic inspection of the house to search for evidence of protected species, particularly roosting bats and nesting birds, and a walkover of the surrounding garden ad driveway looking for evidence of any sensitive habitats or protected species. A plan of the property had been prepared and included as **Figure 3** within section 3 of this report.

2.3 Protected Species Assessment Methodology

A methodical inspection was carried out to look for any evidence of protected species using the site and to identify any habitats with potential to provide significant shelter or foraging opportunities for these. The survey was carried out by Christopher Barker, an experienced ecological consultant and Chartered Environmentalist holding Class Licenses issued by Natural England.

The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010 consolidates the various amendments that have been made to the Regulations. The original (1994) Regulations transposed the EC Habitats Directive on the Conservation of Natural Habitats and of Wild Fauna and Flora (Council Directive 92/43/EEC) into national law.

"European protected species" are those which are present on Schedule 2 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010. They are subject to the provisions of Regulation 41 of those Regulations. All European Protected Species are also protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended). Taken together, these pieces of legislation make it an offence to:

a. Intentionally or deliberately capture, injure or kill any wild animal included amongst these species

b. Possess or control any live or dead specimens or any part of, or anything derived from these species

c. deliberately disturb wild animals of any such species

d. deliberately take or destroy the eggs of such an animal, or

e. intentionally, deliberately or recklessly damage or destroy a breeding site or resting place of such an animal, or obstruct access to such a place

For the purposes of paragraph (c), disturbance of animals includes in particular any disturbance which is likely—

a. to impair their ability—
i. to survive, to breed or reproduce, or to rear or nurture their young, or

ii. in the case of animals of a hibernating or migratory species, to hibernate or migrate; or,
b. to affect significantly the local distribution or abundance of the species to which they belong.

Although the law provides strict protection to these species, it also allows this protection to be set aside (derogation) through the issuing of licences. The licences in England are currently determined by Natural England (NE) for development works. In accordance with the requirements of the Regulations (2010), a licence can only be issued where the following requirements are satisfied:

i) The proposal is necessary 'to preserve 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'

ii) 'There is no satisfactory alternative'

iii|) The proposals 'will not be detrimental to the maintenance of the population of the species concerned at a favourable conservation status in their natural range.

General faunal activity, such as mammals or birds observed visually or by call during the course of the surveys was recorded. Specific attention was also paid to the potential presence of any protected, rare or notable species, and specific consideration was given to bats, birds, badgers, amphibians and reptiles as described below.

Breeding Birds: All nesting birds are protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) which makes it an offence to intentionally kill, injure or take any wild bird or take, damage or destroy its nest whilst in use or being built, or take or destroy its eggs. The inspection of the site included a search of hedgerows, ground vegetation and tree canopies looking for evidence of active or former nests.

Bats: All species of Bat within the UK are protected under the Conservation of Habitat and Species Regulations 2010 (Habitat Regulations) that amended and incorporated the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981. These regulations make it an offence to:

- Intentionally kill, injure or take a bat [WCA section 9(1)]
- Possess or control any live or dead specimen or anything derived from a bat [WCA section 9(2)]
- Intentionally or recklessly damage, destroy or obstruct access to any structure or place used for shelter or protection by a bat [WCA section 9(4)(a)]
- Intentionally or recklessly disturb a bat while it is occupying a structure or place which it uses for that purpose [WCA section 9(4)(a)]

Any building or significant trees present within the survey area have been assessed for their suitability to support roosting bats based on the presence of features such as holes, crevices, cracks, splits or loose bark. Potential bat roost locations in relation to buildings are described within this report (taken from Bat Survey Guidelines 2016) as:

Confirmed Roost – a structure with physical evidence confirming the presence of bats or bats visibly seen.
High – a structure with one or more potential roost features that are obviously suitable for use by a large number of bats on a regular basis and which is situated in an area of continuous high-quality foraging habitat suitable for bats.
Moderate – a structure with one or more potential roost features that could be used by bats, but which is unlikely to support a roost of high conservation status and which is in an area of connected habitat suitable for foraging by bats.
Low – a structure with one or more potential roost features that could be used by individual bats opportunistically. However, these potential roost features do not provide sufficient potential to be used by a larger number of bats or on a regular basis and the surrounding habitat is not of high value to foraging bats.
Negligible – a structure with negligible habitat features which is in a poor location making it highly unlikely roosting bats will be present.

Tree assessments were undertaken from ground level, with the aid of a torch and binoculars where required. During the survey features considered to provide suitable roost sites for bats such as the following were sought:

- Trunk / branch cavities – significant holes in the trunk caused by rot or injury.
- Trunk / branch split – split / fissure in trunk caused by rot or injury.
- Branch socket cavity – Where a fallen branch has resulted in the formation of an access point into a cavity.
- Woodpecker hole – created by nesting birds suitable for use by roosting bats.

- Lifted bark – bark which has rotted / lifted to form suitable access point/roost site for bats.
- Trunk hollows – decay in heartwood leading to internal cavity in trunk.
- Ivy cover – dense / mature ivy cover where the woody stems could create small cavities / crevices.

Common Reptiles: All species of British reptile are protected by the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended). The common species (adder, grass snake, slow worm and common lizard) are only protected against intentional killing and injuring (but not taking).

The survey included a search of all areas where suitable habitat for reptiles to shelter under or bask may be present, lifting logs and other suitable features to search underneath. The surveyor also maintained a careful watch whilst moving across the site to look for signs of reptiles moving to cover.

Great crested newts are afforded legal protection under European and UK law under the auspices of The Conservation (Natural Habitats &c.) (Amendment) Regulations which came into force on 21 August 2007, superseding the Habitat Regulations 1994. The 2007 amendments have increased the protection afforded to European Protected Species.

The law provides protection to adults, juveniles, efts (immature GCN) and eggs and it is an offence to intentionally or recklessly or as an incidental result of actions:

- Intentionally or deliberately capture, kill, or injure Great Crested Newts
- Intentionally or recklessly damage, destroy or obstruct access to any place used for shelter or protection (including resting or breeding places) whether occupied or not
- Deliberately, intentionally or recklessly disturb Great Crested Newts when in a place of shelter
- Possess a Great Crested Newt, or any part of it, unless acquired lawfully
- Sell, barter, exchange or transport or offer for sale Great Crested Newts or any part of them.

The survey included a search of any ponds and wetland areas within the site or immediate surrounding area nearby (where these features were accessible) and an assessment of ponds in the local area using Ordnance Survey Maps and aerial photographs to consider the potential for these species to access the site area.

Badger: Badgers are protected under the Protection of Badgers Act 1992. This makes it an offence to wilfully kill, injure, take, possess or cruelly ill-treat a badger, or to attempt to do so; or to intentionally or recklessly interfere with a sett. Sett interference includes disturbing badgers whilst they are occupying a sett, as well as damaging or destroying a sett or obstructing access to it. A badger sett is defined in the legislation as "*a structure or place, which displays signs indicating current use by a badger*".

The survey searching for evidence of badger activity comprised two main elements. The first element involved searching for evidence of Badger setts. For any setts that were encountered, each sett entrance was noted and mapped. The following information was recorded:

- Number and location of well used / active entrances; these are clear from any debris or vegetation and are obviously in regular use and may, or may not, have been excavated recently.
- Number and location of inactive entrances; these are not in regular use and have debris such as leaves and twigs in the entrance or have plants growing in or around the edge of the entrance.

- Number of disused entrances; these have not been in use for some time, are partly or completely blocked and cannot be used without considerable clearance. If the
- entrance has been disused for some time all that may be visible is a depression in the ground where the hole used to be and the remains of the spoil heap.

The second element of the survey involved searching for signs of Badger activity such as well-worn paths and push-throughs, snagged hair, footprints, latrines and foraging signs, so as to build up a picture of any use of the site by Badger.

Invasive Species: Attention was paid to the presence of any invasive species listed under Schedule 9 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended). However, the detectability of such species varies due to a number of factors, e.g. time of year, site management, etc., and hence the absence of invasive species should not be assumed even if no such species were detected during the Phase 1 survey.

A range of invasive non-native plant species are listed in Schedule 9 (Part 2) of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981, which makes it an offence to plant or cause these introduced invasive plants to grow in the wild, effectively making it illegal to spread the plants during development operations.

2.4 Consultations

The evaluation of ecological features and resources is based on professional judgement whilst also drawing on the latest available industry guidance and research. The approach taken in this report is based on that described by the Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (CIEEM, 2016). In evaluating ecological features. The *Geographic Frame of Reference* is a key factor taken into account when assessing the potential ecological value of a site being surveyed. The value of an ecological feature or resource is determined within a defined geographical context using the following frame of reference:

- International.
- National.
- Regional.
- County (or Metropolitan).
- District (or Unitary Authority, City or Borough).
- Local (or Parish).
- Site level only.

Within this frame of reference, certain sites may carry a statutory ecological designation, e.g. Special Area of Conservation (SAC) for internationally important sites or Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) for sites of national importance. Sites of more localised nature conservation importance do not receive statutory protection but may be designated by Local Planning Authorities or other bodies, e.g. Wildlife Trusts. Such non-statutory designations or 'Local Sites' include Local Wildlife Sites (LWSs) and Sites of Nature Conservation Interest (SNCIs), for example.

A review of the available data confirms that the house is not within a Statutory or Non-Statutory site of ecological significance. There is one site of national importance and a number of LWS and potential LWS sites within 1km and these are summarised within the table below.

Site Name and Reference	Designation	Distance from survey site
Kendall's Meadow	National	784
Stoke Golding, Basin Bridge Farm hedges - 91373	LWS	878
Stoke Golding, mature trees north of Wykin Road - 91915	LWS	895
Ashby Canal, Bridge 23 to Stoke Golding Moorings – 91288	LWS	276

Crown Hill Grassland – 91279	LWS	212
Mature Ash – 92107	LWS	276
Hedgerow E of Higham Lane & 4 Mature Trees – 91280	LWS	684
Ashby Canal – 90113	LWS	783
Wykin Lane Oak – 91274	LWS	499
Meadow and Pond, Brook Farm – 58178	LWS	560
Wykin Lane Hedgerow and Ash – 91277	LWS	865
Hinckley Road Oak – 91278	LWS	589
Upton Lane Ash – 90122	LWS	522
Stoke Golding Old Cemetery – 91266	LWS	462
Stoke Golding New Cemetery – 91275	LWS	652
Higham Lane Ash -91289	LWS	207
Playing Field Oak – 91267	LWS	789
Ashby Canal & Sutton Wharf Grassland – 11241	LWS	665
Stoke Lane Hedgerow - 91492	LWS	563

Works to extend the existing house will all be contained within the existing garden area close to the property and therefore the nearest ecological sites which are still over 200m from the house are unlikely to be impacted in any way by the works being proposed.

A review of the data for protected species has identified a small number of significant records relating to the immediate vicinity of the site which are summarised within the table below.

Scientific Name	Common Name	Latest Record	Number of Records
Bufo bufo	Common Toad	2009	2
Lissotriton vulgaris	Smooth Newt	2009	2
Rana temporaria	Common Frog	2009	2
Triturus cristatus	Great Crested Newt	2020	9
Alcedo atthis	Kingfisher	2010	10
Falco peregrinus	Peregrine	2010	5
Falco subbuteo	Hobby	2021	7
Fringilla montifringilla	Brambling	2010	4
Milvus milvus	Red Kite	2013	4
Turdus iliacus	Redwing	2010	8
Turdus pilaris	Fieldfare	2010	18
Tyto alba	Barn Owl	2010	30
Hyacinthoides non-scripta	Bluebell	2017	1
Arvicola amphibius	Water Vole	2022	7
Chiroptera	Bat	2017	11
Lutra lutra	Otter	2020	4
Meles meles	Badger	2021	12
Myotis	Myotis Bat species	2009	1
Myotis daubentonii	Daubenton's Bat	2022	2
Myotis nattereri	Natterer's Bat	2022	2
Nyctalus noctula	Noctule Bat	2022	3
Pipistrellus	Pipistrelle Bat species	2002	2
Pipistrellus pipistrellus	Common Pipistrelle	2022	9
Pipistrellus pygmaeus	Soprano Pipistrelle	2022	2
Plecotus auritus	Brown Long-eared Bat	2022	4

There are records of ***great crested newt (GCN)*** and other amphibians within 1km of the house. The nearest GCN record is for a small pond situated 325m to the south east on the edge of the village and this particular pond has connectivity to other ponds to the south and east of the village. There are roads and houses providing a partial barrier to commuting GCN between the nearest pond population and the house being assessed which will be sub-optimal habitat for these species. The likelihood of GCN being present is considered to be very low.

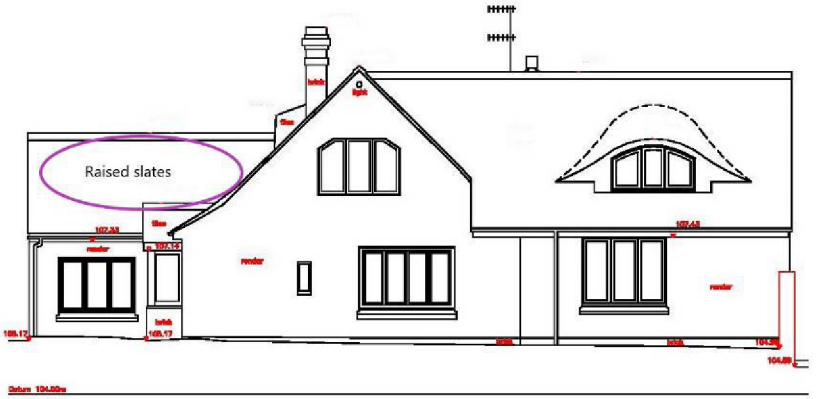
There are no records of any reptiles within 1km of the property. The surrounding landscape is predominantly sub-optimal for reptiles but it is likely there are a small number of individual species such as Grass Snake and Slow Worm in this area. The likelihood of a significant reptile population being present in the garden surrounding the existing house is very low.

The majority of the garden surrounding the house is open mown lawn with negligible cover for ground nesting birds and the predatory cat population makes ground nesting unlikely in this location. There may be ***potential for nesting within the structure of the house if there are suitable features present.***

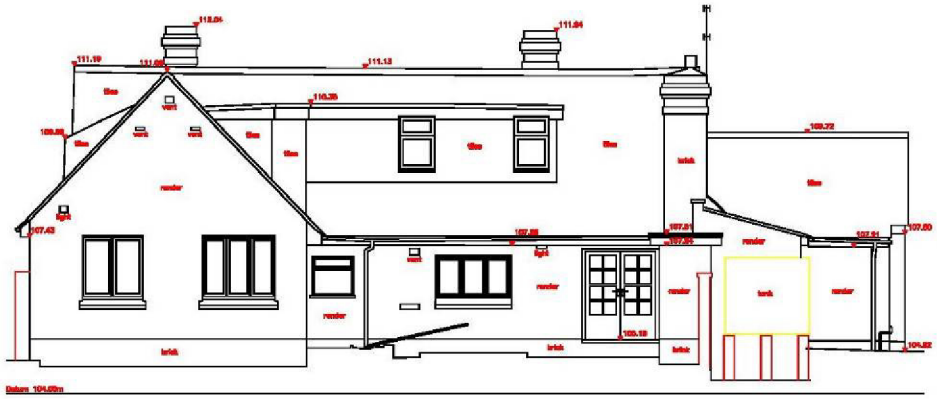
There are records of roosting and foraging ***bats*** in this area with two species of Pipistrelle, Brown Long-eared, Noctule and Myotid bats being recorded within the local area. There are Pipistrelle roosts located in suitable buildings approximately 200m to the east within the village and significant bat activity around the village margins. ***The existing house could present features of potential interest to roosting bats.***

There are records of ***badger*** activity in this area with an active sett located in land to the north of the property with open agricultural land in between. There are also records of badger activity along the village margin to the south. Given the records of activity and the good accessibility of the site area from surrounding agricultural grazing land, ***the potential use of the garden area close to the house by foraging by badger is possible.***

FRONT ELEVATION



SIDE ELEVATION



REAR ELEVATION

SIDE ELEVATION

Figure 3 – Property Elevations

3. Survey Findings

3.1 Habitat Classifications and Target Notes

The survey area is an existing residential house and small parts of the surrounding garden and driveway. As such, there is no need for a full Habitat Survey to be completed as the entire survey area will be considered to be 'developed land'. The survey instead focussed on the potential presence of protected species.

Building and Hardstanding
The property is a detached dormer bungalow with bedrooms in the interior roof structures and minimal areas of enclose loft space. It is of traditional construction with brick / block being externally rendered throughout and painted white. The rendered walls are in excellent condition with no holes, cracks, bubbling or cavities present associated with the rendering.

The house has white uPVC windows and doors throughout and the roof edges are sealed with white uPVC soffits. These appear tightly fitting throughout with no gaps or holes of potential interest to roosting bats or nesting birds.

The pitched roof is constructed from Swithland slates with bituminous felt lining over a timber roof frame. Swithland slates are typically not tightly fitting and there are small gaps throughout the roof structure sufficient to allow a small crevice dwelling bat such as Pipistrelle access to any cavity between the slate and the felt lining underneath. The roof edge and ridge tile rendering is generally in place but there are small gaps visible along the southern end of the ridge and along the roof edges on the north side of the property marked in **Figure 3**.

Front (west face) of property

Front (west face) of property.

Front (west face of property)

Front (west face) of property

North face of property

North face of property

Close up of uPVC roof edge

Gaps along roof edge north side of house

The small internal loft areas of the property were access to search for evidence of bats and birds. These enclosed areas are very small but of sufficient size to be of interest to roosting bats. The underside of the roof struts are exposed and the felting in the roof structure is in good condition with no tears or holes visible.

Small loft interior (south end of roof)

Small loft interior (south end of roof)

Small loft in north western roof

Small loft in north western roof

On completion of the external and internal inspection, no field signs of roosting bats or nesting birds were found in any location.

However, the property is on the edge of the village facing open agricultural land and the surrounding gardens support significant tree canopy cover. This is potentially a good location for foraging bats. The property also has some minor features present which could be interest to roosting bats so whilst no physical evidence of bat activity was found, the property is considered to have ***low roost potential*** and a further activity survey is therefore recommended to comply with the bat survey guidelines.

Garden and Driveway

On the north side of the property there is an extensive driveway and parking area of hardstanding. This contains no significant ecological features at all and there are no areas of soil of vegetation present. To the west side of the property is the access / driveway.

There is a small garden area directly in front of the house with lawn, gravel and a small rockery but this is a very exposed area with little significant vegetation or cover. On the opposite side of the driveway to the west of the house is an area of open lawn. There is a copse of broadleaved trees to the north of the property behind the existing garage and outbuildings. This is dominated by Ash with some Spruce, Willow and Sycamore present. There are mature trees in this area.

North side of house parking / drive

Driveway and lawn to the west

Lawn to the north west side of the house

Small front garden area

3.2 Evidence of Protected Species

During the inspection of the site notes were made on the suitability of habitats for protected species and any sightings or signs of protected species were recorded:

- The suitability of habitats for badger (*Meles meles*) was recorded and any evidence of badgers including setts, dung pits, badger paths, hairs, bedding, footprints and scratching trees was noted.
- Structural features suitable for roosting bats were noted, such as loft cavities, holes in brickwork, gaps behind render and gaps under roof slates.
- The suitability of habitats was assessed for reptiles such as Grass snake (*Natrix natrix*) and amphibians (including great crested newts - *Triturus cristatus*).
- The suitability of site was assessed for nesting birds.

Surveying in March is a sub-optimal period for roosting bats but ideal for many other protected species but a further inspection was completed ahead of the June activity survey which is within the optimum survey period for bat and bird species. An experienced surveyor can make reliable judgements about the quality and composition of habitats and their potential suitability for protected species. Only an initial assessment of the site was made and no stage 2 surveys were carried out. As such, a lack of evidence of a protected species does not necessarily indicate an absence of these species. The table below provides a summary of the potential for protected species to be present within the site.

Species	Present within 1km	Connectivity	Suitable habitat on site / evidence of presence	Likelihood of presence on site
Nesting Birds	Yes	Good via hedgerows and surrounding agricultural land.	Ground nesting very unlikely. No evidence of nesting on or within the internal roof of the property to be extended was identified during the inspection.	Low likelihood of nesting based on the inspection completed.
Reptiles	No	Poor due to management of use of the surrounding agricultural grazing land and lack of optimal habitat.	Open and intensively managed garden around the house is sub-optimal habitat for reptiles and no evidence of these species was identified.	Negligible potential for reptiles to be present in the area immediately surrounding the house.
Amphibians	Yes	Limited due to management of use of	Open and intensively managed garden around	Negligible potential for

		surrounding agricultural grazing land and lack of optimal habitat	the house is sub-optimal habitat for amphibians and no evidence of these species was identified.	amphibians to be present in the area immediately surrounding the house.
Bats	Yes	Reasonable due to the presence of mature in local gardens and along the village margin.	No field signs of bats was noted on or within the interior of the house. Foraging around the garden confirmed by the activity survey but no bats were identified roosting within the structure of the house	Low likelihood of roosting bats colonising the property for roosting purposes in the future.
Badger and larger mammals	Yes	Good accessibility from open agricultural land to the north and west.	An annex sett was identified with 5 entrances in the north eastern corner of the property around 60m from the garden area being assessed.	Occasional foraging considered highly likely in the garden around the house and to the north of this.

Birds: The local area supports a range of bird species which includes some Schedule 1 species. During the inspection of the property and open garden areas immediately adjacent to this no evidence of nesting birds was found. The small copse of trees to the north of the house contains mature trees that provide significant canopy cover that would be of interest to nesting birds but the open lawns and small ground cover plants in the garden close to the house are unsuitable ground nesting birds.

No activity or evidence of Schedule 1 bird species was seen during the site inspection and there was no evidence of nesting activity associated with any part of the building inspected.

Reptiles: The walkover survey of the garden area surrounding the house was completed on a grid pattern (as far as was possible) looking for evidence or indication of reptiles. No sightings or physical evidence of reptiles was seen during the inspections completed in March or June which are within the optimum survey period for these species. The survey area is considered sub-optimal habitat for reptiles and further surveys are not recommended.

Amphibians: The presence of small breeding populations of GCN and other amphibians within pond to the south east around 300m from the property is noted but there are no links from the property to this pond.

The walkover survey of the garden area surrounding the house was completed on a grid pattern (as far as was possible) looking for evidence or indication of amphibians. No sightings or physical evidence of amphibians was seen during the inspections completed in March or June which are within the optimum survey period for these species. The survey area is considered sub-optimal habitat for amphibians and further surveys are not recommended.

Chiroptera: Whilst no field signs of roosting bats were found during the inspection of the building, this is considered to have low roost potential due to the location of this and the presence of small structural features associated with the roof of the building – specifically gaps between the Swithland slates which are lined, and gaps along the roof edges where cement render is missing. As a result a stage 2 bat activity survey has been recommended for this building and this has subsequently been completed and reported in section 3.3 below.

There are no significant trees close to the property to provide roosting locations for local bats but the wider garden area does contain trees and will potentially be an area used by foraging bats.

Invertebrates: The building and immediately surrounding garden area does not appear to support a diverse range of flora. It is not a location with a high density of nectar producing plants is present in the surrounding landscape that will support a significant range of invertebrates. The potential for a significant assemblage of invertebrates to be present within the survey area is quite low at the present time and further invertebrate surveys are not recommended.

Mammals: During the inspection of the house and immediately surrounding garden area a thorough search for evidence of badger was completed. No significant established tracks or trails indicative of badger activity were found within this area immediately adjacent to the house.

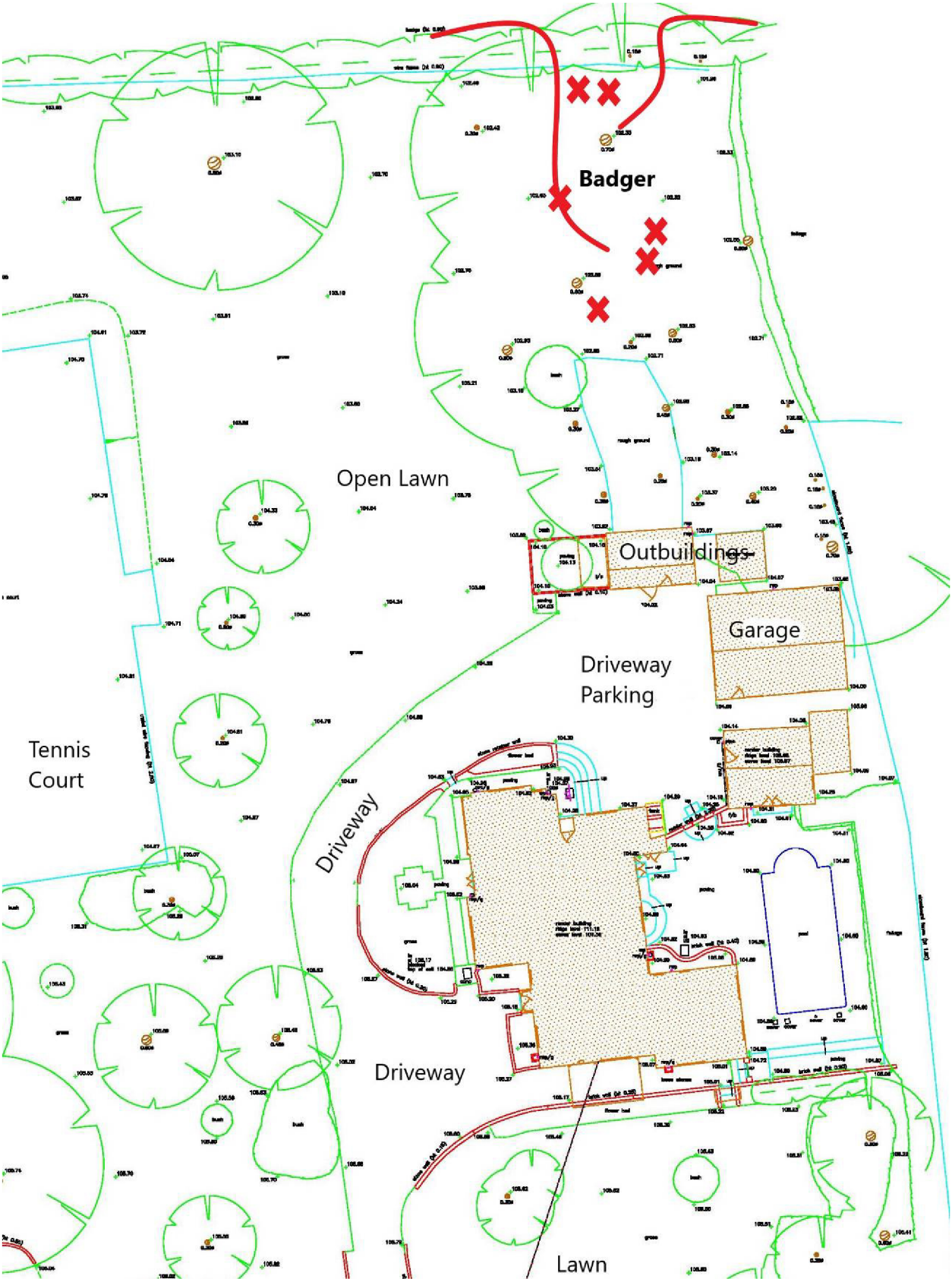
However, approximately 40m to the north in the north eastern corner of the property there is an active badger sett located on the garden boundary immediately adjacent to open agricultural grazing land. This sett is separated from the house and parking areas by an existing garage and outbuildings. There is no evidence of any badger activity in the area surveyed where development is being proposed, but given the activity in the area by badger identified in the northern part of the property, occasional foraging by badger across the specific area surveyed is assumed to be likely and measures will be required to protect this species.

Sett entrance in garden

Sett entrance in garden

Sett entrance in garden

Area where sett is located in garden



Location of Badger setts and activity

A further survey for badger is not recommended as there is no evidence of a sett being present in the specific area around the house where work is being proposed and the nearest sett entrance if over 30m distance and screened by the existing outbuildings and garage which are not being disturbed.

However, it is recommended that a construction methodology to protect badgers from accidental harm is applied to any development work that may be approved within this site as a precautionary measure. The methodology should incorporate the following measures:

- The covering of excavations overnight to prevent animals falling in, or the provision of an escape ramp (e.g. secured scaffold boards) allowing animals to climb out.
- Secure storage of all materials, fuels, wire fencing etc, that may harm badgers and other animals.
- Restricting access by site personnel to any adjoining buffer zones of trees and scrub to the west of the development area.
- The eastern boundary hedge should be fenced with heras fencing on the side of the construction zone.
- Keeping works at night-time to a minimum will minimise disturbance to commuting and foraging badgers at the site. Where works after dark are necessary, lighting should be as low as possible and directed away from boundary features such as hedgerows and trees.
- A toolbox talk from a suitably experienced ecologist to all site workers will be given prior to construction works detailing the procedures to be followed if a badger is found within the construction zone during works.
- If a badger is found within the construction zone during works, all works must stop and a suitably experienced ecologist be contacted immediately. Their advice should be followed precisely.

The potential presence of Hedgehog (*Erinaceus europaeus*) is considered quite likely as there are local records of this species being seen within the surrounding 1km area. Measures to protect hedgehogs should be taken and this should include an inspection of any vegetation by an ecologist ahead of clearance work being carried out. Any found should be moved to a temporary refugia located in a suitable position within hedgerow on the western boundary outside of the area of disturbance. Measures to protect badger will also be effective in protecting hedgehog.

3.3 Stage 2 Bat Activity Survey

The full details of the dusk and dawn surveys completed are provided in the tables within **Appendix 1** and this appendix also contain photographs and plan showing the bat activity identified. The time and conditions of the survey are summarised in the table below.

Date of Survey	Survey Time	Temperature and weather	Survey conditions
04th June 2023	21.00 – 23.00	Clear sky. 15 degrees C, breeze 11mph from the east. Humidity 52% at 1024hPa	Suitable surveying conditions for bat foraging. Sunset 9.21pm.

The stage 1 inspection of the buildings found no evidence of bat activity and prior to the stage 2 activity survey in June a further inspection was carried out and no field evidence to indicate the presence of bats was found.

For the dusk survey three surveyors, each equipped with Echometer detectors showing real-time sonograph analysis were positioned to keep the house under surveillance and locations were as follows:

Surveyor 1 – positioned on the northern side of the building to watch the roof and roof edges in the area where an extension is being proposed into the existing parking area and monitor any activity between the house and the tree canopy area to the north.

Surveyor 2 – positioned in the garden on the western side of the house to watch the roof in the area on the north western side of the property where the proposed extension work is to be carried out and monitor activity in the northern and western parts of the open garden area.

Surveyor 3 – positioned in the garden to the south west of the house to watch the west facing roof and south gable end of the building and monitor any activity in the open garden area to the south of the house.

During the survey, detectors confirmed presence of five species of bat foraging in the garden around the property to be extended. The majority of the recorded bat flights were of Common Pipistrelle but occasional passed by Soprano Pipistrelle, Leislers, Natterers and Brown Long-eared bats were noted foraging within the local area in the vicinity of the buildings under observation.

During the dusk survey of May 2023 a total of 90 bat passes were picked up in the three external survey locations and 84 of these were passes by solitary Common Pipistrelle across the garden area. mostly to the north and west of the house. Activity by the other species identified was of individual flights across the garden. Activity in the area was of low intensity and it is likely that there is significant double counting of individual Common Pipistrelle bats being picked up at two or three survey points. Plans of the survey positions and flight patterns is shown within **Appendix 1.**

Species identified at Dusk	Number of flights In all locations	Time of first record	Roosting confirmed
Common Pipistrelle	84	9.40	None
Soprano Pipistrelle	1	9.56	None
Myotid (Natterers)	2	10.10	None
Leislers	1	9.21	None
Brown Long-eared	2	9.41	None

3.3 Ecological Constraints and Opportunities

Constraints:
No significant ecological constraints have been identified associated with the house and garden immediately surrounding this during the survey. However, the following should be taken into consideration when planning works to the house:

- The badger activity to the north of the house could extend around the garden area and badger could forage close to the house in the areas where work is being proposed.
- There is potential for hedgehogs to be present within the site, particularly around the garden boundaries.
- There are features within the roof structure of the house that may be of interest to roosting bats and it is always possible for these to be utilised by one or more bats in the future.

Part 3: Initial Ecological Appraisal

4. Impact of Proposed Site Development

The level of biodiversity within the site being assessed must be a consideration in determining the impact on biodiversity that may arise from any development on the site. Within the NPPF 2021 it states that any development proposal should seek to "*contribute to protecting and enhancing our natural, built and historic environment; including making effective use of land, helping to improve biodiversity, using natural resources prudently, minimising waste and pollution, and mitigating and adapting to climate change…….*"

Within the Guidance it specifically states that "*Planning…. decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by……protecting and enhancing valued landscapes, sites of biodiversity or geological value and soils……..recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside, and the wider benefits from natural capital and ecosystem services – including the economic and other benefits of the best and most versatile agricultural land, and of trees and woodland.*"

The proposal is for the existing house to be extended on the northern and western sides into the immediately surrounding garden areas where there is hardstanding used for parking and a small front garden area with no significant ecological features present.

As noted within this report, the 'mitigation hierarchy' described in British Standard BS 42020:2013 should be applied in regard to biodiversity within sites being considered for development which is a stepwise process:

• **Avoidance** – avoiding adverse effects through good design.
• **Mitigation** – where it is unavoidable, mitigation measures should be employed to minimise adverse effects.
• **Compensation** – where residual effects remain after mitigation it may be necessary to provide compensation to offset any harm.
• **Enhancement** – planning decisions often present the opportunity to deliver benefits for biodiversity, which can also be explored alongside the above measures to resolve potential adverse effects.

The measures for avoidance, mitigation, compensation and enhancement should be proportionate to the predicted degree of risk to biodiversity and to the nature and scale of the proposed development (BS 42020:2013, section 5.5).

The table below considers the features present on the site in the context of the hierarchy.

Feature	Ecological Significance	Hierarchy application	Impact of proposed development
Building	Negligible	None	
Hardstanding / Driveway	Negligible	None	
Amenity Garden / Lawn	Low	None	Only a small parcel of sparse lawn and tiny rockery garden features will be impacted and this is of such minimal biodiversity value that no specific mitigation measures will be required.

4.1 Potential Impact on nearby Statutory and Non-statutory sites

There are no Statutory of Non-Statutory sites nearby that could potentially be impacted by the proposed extension of this property.

4.2 Impact of the Proposals on Site Biodiversity

The level of biodiversity within the site being assessed must be a consideration in determining the impact on biodiversity that may arise from any development on the site. Within the NPPF 2019 it states that any development proposal should seek to "*contribute to protecting and enhancing our natural, built and historic environment; including making effective use of land, helping to improve biodiversity, using natural resources prudently, minimising waste and pollution, and mitigating and adapting to climate change…….*"

Within the Guidance it specifically states that "*Planning…. decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by……protecting and enhancing valued landscapes, sites of biodiversity or geological value and soils……..recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside, and the wider benefits from natural capital and ecosystem services – including the economic and other benefits of the best and most versatile agricultural land, and of trees and woodland.*"

The survey area comprises a detached residential house situated in a larger garden on the edge of the village of Stoke Golding. The building and surrounding garden contains no significant ecological features and no evidence of any significant locally rare plants or plant communities was found during the survey.

The proposal to extending the existing house at the front (west) and side (north) will impact the existing driveway and parking area and a very small parcel of lawn / rockery. It is considered likely that development of the site area surveyed could be carried out in a manner that does not have any significant impact on local biodiversity.

4.3 Impact of the Proposals on Protected Species

The requirements of Part IV of ODPM / Defra Circular 06/2005 in regard to the protection of certain species are still applicable under NPPF. The presence of protected species at the site must be taken into consideration. Under the requirements of the NPPF provision in relation to the presence of protected species on, or making use of, a site proposed for any development must be taken into account. The presumption in favour of sustainable development does not apply where development requiring appropriate assessment under the Birds or Habitats Directives is being considered, planned or determined or where the impact on protected species is considered to outweigh the benefit of development.

The inspections completed in March and June 2023 did not identify any physical evidence or field signs of protected species within the house of garden area immediately adjacent to this where works may take place. However, after inspection of the wider garden area a small badger sett has been identified in the north eastern corner of the garden approximately 50m from the house and foraging activity by bats was noted throughout the garden and close to the house to be extended.

The following precautionary measures are advised:

Bats: No evidence of roosting bats was found during the stage 1 inspection of follow up stage 2 activity survey completed. However, there after features associated within the Swithland Slate roof that could be of interest to roosting bats in the future. It would therefore be advisable to carry out any works to the roof structure outside of the bat activity season, or have the building inspected again immediately before any works starts as a precaution.

Badger: The presence of this species foraging in the garden area around the house is quite likely given the proximity of the badger set in the north eastern corner of the garden. No disturbance to the sett area should take place whilst works to extend the property are a carried out and the sett area is effectively screened by outbuildings and vegetation. However, measures to protect these species from harm during construction activities will be required as detailed in Section 3.2 of this report.

Recommendations: It is recommended that prior to any groundwork commencing the working area should be marked out clearly and then inspected by an ecologist to confirm that protected species are absent and that the proposed work does not put at risk the nearby badger sett.

It is also recommended that one bat roost tube and two swift nest boxes / tubes are integrated into the existing building where practical in suitable positions.

Christopher Barker CEnv ACIEEM

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Web references

MAGIC: Designated area data downloaded from URL http://www.magic.gov.uk.html

National Biodiversity Network: Protected species data downloaded from URL http://data.nbn.org/interactive/map

Appendix 1: Activity Survey Records

Date of Survey	Survey Time	Temperature and weather	Comments
04th June 2023	21.00 – 23.00	Clear sky. 15 degrees C, breeze 11mph from the east. Humidity 52% at 1024hPa	Suitable surveying conditions for bat foraging. Sunset 9.21pm.

Flight / Forage activity: Detectors confirmed presence of five species of bat foraging in the garden around the property to be extended. The majority of the recorded bat flights were of Common Pipistrelle but occasional passed by Soprano Pipistrelle, Leislers, Natterers and Brown Long-eared bats were noted foraging within the local area in the vicinity of the buildings under observation.

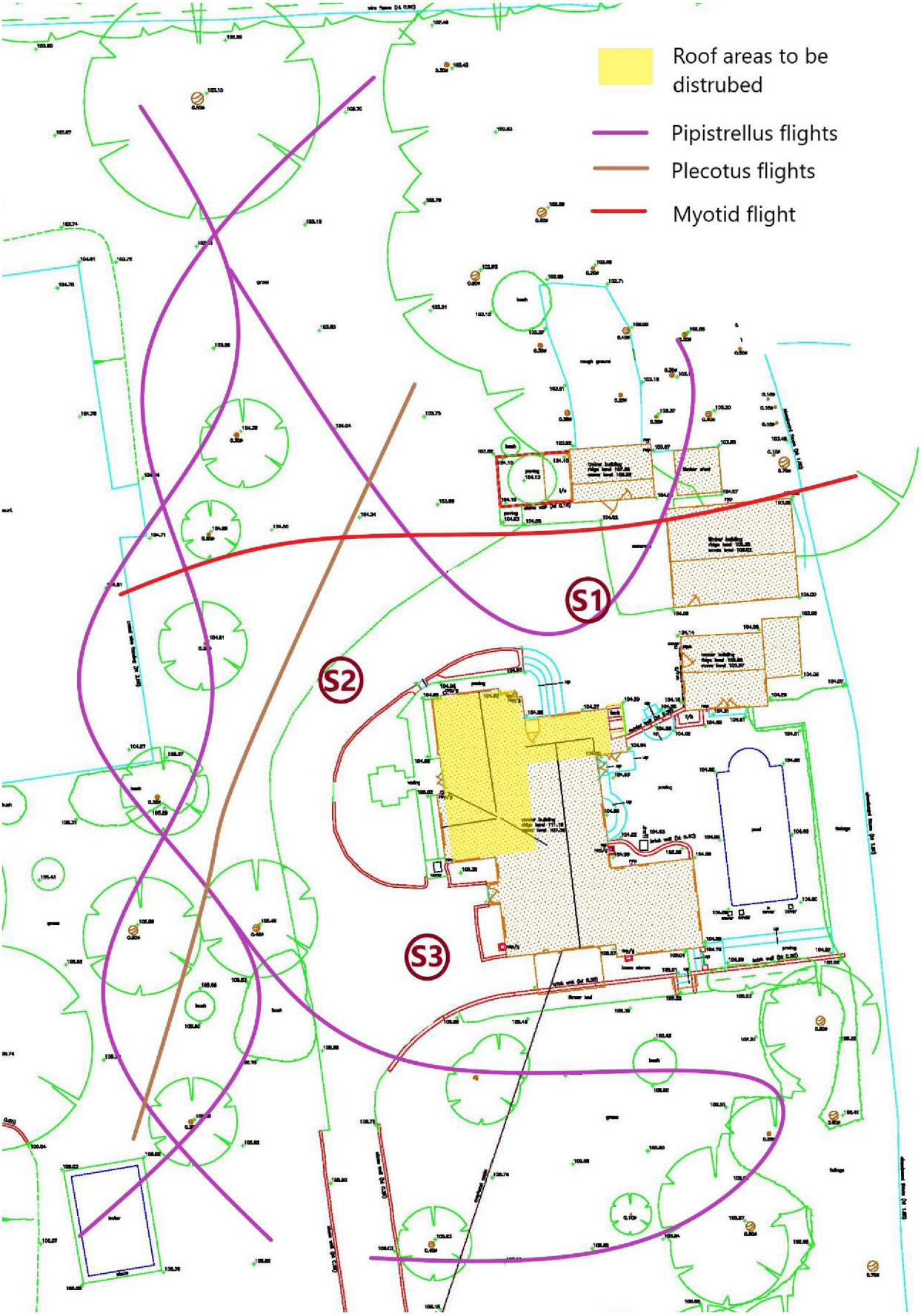
Species	S1 bat passes	S2 bat passes	S3 bat passes	
Common Pipistrelle	26	41	17	
Soprano Pipistrelle	-	1	-	
Natterers	1	1	-	
Leislers	1	-	-	
Brown Long-eared	-	2	1	
Total	**28**	**45**	**18**	

Roosting Activity – No.

Surveyor S1 positioned on the north side of the property to watch the roof structure and roof edge in the area where the proposed extension on the north side of the house into the existing parking area is being proposed. The first bat flight close to the house was at 9.40pm when a Common Pipistrelle was noted foraging close to the trees to the north of the house. A Leisler bat pass was noted at 9.21 and the first Myotid bat pass was a Natterers to the north of the house at 10.30. Significant foraging by individual Common Pipistrelle in the garden to the north and west of the house was noted throughout the survey period but most of the activity was a solitary bat. No bat was seen to leave the building under observation or show any interest in this.

Surveyor S2 positioned on the west side of the house to watch the front where works are proposed to extend the property into the small front garden area. The first bat flight here was at 9.40pm when a Common Pipistrelle was noted foraging in the garden directly behind the survey position doing repeated circuits over the next 20 minutes. A Brown Long-eared bat passe was seen and recorded across the garden to the west of the house at 9.41 with another pass at 9.57pm. A single Soprano Pipistrelle pass across the garden was noted at 9.56 and a solitary Myotid (Natterers) was picked up at 10.10. Foraging by individual Common Pipistrelle in the garden to the west of the house was noted throughout the survey period but most of the activity was a solitary bat. The intensity of foraging activity was relatively low around the building and no bat was seen to leave the building under observation or show any interest in this.

Surveyor S3 positioned on the south eastern corner of the building to watch the front and side roof area of the property. Solitary Common Pipistrelle were noted foraging around the open garden to the south and west of the house. The first Pipistrelle pass was noted at 9.40pm. One Brown Long-eared bat pass was picked up at 9.41 – this individual bat being seen by S2 crossing the garden to the west. The intensity of foraging activity was relatively low around the building and no bat was seen to leave the building under observation or show any interest in this.



Bat Flight Plan and Survey Positions

Appendix 2 – Biological Records

Separate Appendix