
Preliminary Ecological
Appraisal and Day Time
Building Inspection

Bentgate House, Newhey
Road, Newhey, OL16 4JY
Ref: P.2075.24

Date: January 2025
(See revision dates below)

Rev	Date	Details

This document contains sensitive information regarding the location of a badger sett. The report is issued in confidence and on the basis that the material will not enter the public domain.

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Client	Mr D Perkins
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Ascerta has been instructed by **Mr D Perkins** to carry out a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal and Daytime Building Inspection for bats at Bentgate House, Newhey Road, Newhey, OL16 4JY (hereafter referred to as **the site**).

The Preliminary Ecological Appraisal and Daytime Building Inspection for Bats comprised of a desk study and biological records search, as well as a site walkover survey in order to map habitat types. The survey was extended to assess the potential for protected species to use the site. The assessment provides baseline data regarding the current site conditions and where appropriate allows recommendations to be made in respect of further potential work in order to satisfy current UK wildlife legislation.

Assessed against the '*Guidelines for Ecological Impact Assessment in the UK and Ireland*' 2nd edition (2018), the sites habitats range in ecological value from negligible to within the zone of influence

The site provides habitat for nesting birds and hedgehog. All habitats assessed are likely to be lost to the proposals. However, as the habitats to be lost to the proposals are small in area and not of high ecological value, it is considered that their loss can be mitigated for and the proposals will not adversely affect the ecological value of the wider area, provided the recommendations detailed below are followed.

Bat surveys are conducted in accordance with the Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists - Good Practice Guidelines, published 2023 (the Guidelines). Strict adherence to these is not necessary, but where practice deviates from them, clear reasons and rationale are required.

The site was subject to an extended phase one habitat survey and a preliminary bat roost assessment of building (B1). During the survey and following review of historical species records, it is considered that an impact on birds and hedgehog is likely to occur in relation to the proposals for the site. The following recommendations have been made to avoid an impact on these species:

- If works have not begun by September 2026, an updated site visit will be required to assess the habitats within the site;
- Implementation of hedgehog RAMS to avoid any harm to this species during the proposed works;
- Production of an invasive species method statement to avoid the spread of invasive species into the wider landscape during the proposed works;
- Production of a Management Plan to ensure the long-term commitments to manage the planting, protection and enhancement of biodiversity in and around a new development site; and
- Vegetation clearance, pruning or building works should be undertaken outside of the nesting bird season (1st March to 31st August Inclusive) to avoid any impact on breeding birds. Or a nesting bird check undertaken by a suitably experienced ecologist should be undertaken immediately prior to works commencing.

1.0 Introduction

Ascerta has been instructed by **Mr D Perkins** to carry out a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal and Daytime Building Inspection for bats at the site. The site OS grid reference is SD 93318 11609 and the What3Words reference is guard.worry.battle. The extent of the site is displayed in photograph 1.1 below.



Photograph 1.1: Extent of the site.

The site was visited on 26th September 2024 by Liz Kenyon BSc (Hons) when a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal, which includes an assessment of the potential for protected species to be using the site or surroundings, was carried out in accordance with the *Handbook for Phase 1 Habitat Survey: A Technique for Environmental Audit* (JNCC, 2010). The report was prepared following methods detailed in the CIEEM 'Guidelines for Ecological Impact Assessment in the UK and Ireland' (2018) and 'Guidelines for Ecological Report Writing' (2017).

This report presents the results of the survey including evaluation of habitats on site and potential for protected species to be using the site. The report includes recommendations for further actions where applicable, in order to satisfy current UK wildlife legislation and to achieve our client's objectives. Relevant legislation is detailed within Appendix 4.

Our client's objectives are to assess the potential ecological constraints of the proposed development site.

2.0 Objectives

Our client's objectives are to assess the potential ecological constraints of the proposed development site.

Our objectives are as follows:

- Identify and evaluate any features of ecological value and the potential of the site to support protected species based on the walkover survey and biological records search;
- Identify designated sites within 2km of the site;
- Review protected species records within 2km of the site;
- Map the habitats within the site using JNCC (2010) methods;
- Provide recommendations for further species-specific surveys and mitigation measures where current legislation requires;
- Provide recommendations that seek to enhance the ecological value of the site;
- Provide recommendations to assist our clients in achieving their objectives whilst satisfying current UK wildlife legislation.

3.0 Survey Methods

The Preliminary Ecological Appraisal involved the collection and review of data from a desk study and field survey, along with assessment of the value of the habitats following CIEEM guidelines.

3.1 Desk Study

A desk study was undertaken in January 2024 to identify protected and notable habitats and species, and nature conservation designations potentially relevant to the proposed development. The desk study was carried out using the sources detailed in Table 3.1 below.

Table 3.1. Desk Study Data Information

Source	Date Obtained	Data Obtained
Multi-Agency Geographic Information for the Countryside (MAGIC)	2 nd January 2024	• Statutory designated sites within 2km of the site • Protected and Notable habitats within 2km of the site • Ancient woodlands within 2km of the site • European Protected Species Licenses within 2km of the site
Greater Manchester Ecology Unit (GMEU)	3 rd January 2024	• Non-statutory designated sites within 2.km of the site • Protected and notable species records within 2km of the site

3.2 Field Survey

A walkover survey of the site was conducted on 26th September 2024 by Liz Kenyon BSc (Hons). The habitat types and features of ecological interest were identified and mapped in compliance with *the Handbook for Phase 1 Habitat Survey: A Technique for Environmental Audit* (JNCC, 2010). During the survey, weather conditions were recorded to ensure optimal surveying conditions according to guidelines. Any sub-optimal conditions will be discussed in the limitations.

This includes the identification of the main species present and examination of the potential for any protected species. Habitats were mapped (Appendix 1) and target notes (Appendix 2) made for any interesting features.

The surveys particularly focused on the following species and habitat features:

- Mammals (badgers, bats, otter and water vole);
- Birds (including species potentially associated with 'European Sites');
- Amphibians and reptiles;

- Invertebrates (including white-clawed crayfish);
- Hedgerows and boundaries;
- Invasive plant species; and
- Plant communities and trees.

3.3 Bat Survey Methods

The survey methods followed the guidelines set out by the Bat Conservation Trust's *Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists Good Practice Guidelines – 4th Edition* (2023). Habitats, buildings and trees were assessed for suitability for use by bats and categorised independently using table 4.1 page 44 within the Bat Conservation Trust Guidelines (Collins, 2023).

Preliminary Ecological Appraisal for Bats

Habitats on site were assessed for their suitability for bats to use them for roosting, commuting and foraging both on the site and surrounding area. Commuting and foraging habitat suitability was categorised **low** to **high**. Any commuting and foraging habitat valued as **moderate** or above may need further survey effort if lost to the proposals.

Preliminary Roost Assessment Trees

All trees were inspected for Potential Roost Features (PRFs). Features searched for included: Natural or woodpecker holes, cracks/splits in major limbs, loose bark, hollows/cavities, dense epicormic growth, bird and bat boxes. Where such features were found they were investigated for scratches or staining, bat droppings and smoothing of surfaces around entry points. Trees assigned a suitability of **moderate** or above may require further inspection if they are to be lost to the development.

External Inspection of the Building

A daytime external inspection of the building (B1) was carried out during the survey by a suitably experienced ecologist. The building was searched externally looking for signs of bats, including staining on barge boards, soffits and more commonly droppings on flat surfaces i.e., window ledges that would indicate potential roosting sites. Possible bat access points such as loose tiles, cracks and crevices or crawl spaces beneath and/or behind roofing materials such as roofing felt, panelling, soffits and tiles were identified and were also checked for signs of use by bats.

Any buildings on-site are categorised as per Table 3.2 (below). Buildings assigned a suitability of **Low** or above may require further inspection if they are to be lost to the development.

Table 3.2: Guidelines for assessing potential suitability of proposed development sites for bats, based on the presence of habitat features within the landscape, to be applied using professional judgement. Guidelines taken from table 4.1 page 44 of the Bat Conservation Trust Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists Good Practice Guidelines – 4th Edition (2023).

Potential suitability	Description	
	Roosting Habitats in structures	Potential flight-paths and foraging habitats
None	<i>No habitat features on site likely to be used by any roosting bats at any time of the year (i.e. a complete absence of crevices/suitable shelter at all ground/underground levels).</i>	<i>No habitat features on site likely to be used by any commuting or foraging bats at any time of the year (i.e. no habitats that provide continuous lines of shade/protection for flight-lines, or generate/shelter insect populations available to foraging bats).</i>
Negligible^a	<i>No obvious habitat features on site likely to be used by roosting bats; however, a small element of uncertainty remains as bats can use small and apparently unsuitable features on occasion.</i>	<i>No obvious habitat features on site likely to be used as flight-paths or by foraging bats; however, a small element of uncertainty remains in order to account for non-standard bat behaviour.</i>
Low	<i>A structure with one or more potential roost sites that could be used by individual bats opportunistically at any time of the year. However, these potential roost sites do not provide enough space, shelter, protection, appropriate conditions ^b and/or suitable surrounding habitat to be used on a regular basis or by larger numbers of bats (i.e. unlikely to be suitable for maternity and not a classic cool/stable hibernation site, but could be used by individual hibernating bats ^c).</i>	<i>Habitat that could be used by small numbers of bats as flight-paths such as a gappy hedgerow or unvegetated stream, but isolated, i.e. not very well connected to the surrounding landscape by other habitat. Suitable, but isolated habitat that could be used by small numbers of foraging bats such as a lone tree (not in a parkland situation) or a patch of scrub.</i>
Moderate	<i>A structure with one or more potential roost sites that could be used by bats due to their size, shelter, protection, conditions^b and surrounding habitat but unlikely to support a roost of high conservation status (with respect to roost type only, such as maternity or hibernation – the categorisation described in this table is made irrespective of species conservation status, which is established after presence is confirmed).</i>	<i>Continuous habitat connected to the wider landscape that could be used by bats for flight-paths such as lines of trees and scrub or linked back gardens. Habitat that is connected to the wider landscape that could be used by bats for foraging such as trees, scrub, grassland or water.</i>
High	<i>A structure with one or more potential roost sites that are obviously suitable for use by larger numbers of bats on a more regular basis and potentially for longer periods of time due to their size, shelter, protection, conditions ^b and surrounding habitat. These structures have the potential to support high conservation status roosts, e.g. maternity or classic cool/stable hibernation site.</i>	<i>Continuous, high-quality habitat that is well connected to the wider landscape that is likely to be used regularly by bats for flight-paths such as river valleys, streams, hedgerows, lines of trees and woodland edge. High-quality habitat that is well connected to the wider landscape that is likely to be used regularly by foraging bats such as broadleaved woodland, tree-lined watercourses and grazed parkland. Site is close to and connected to known roosts.</i>

^a Negligible is defined as 'so small or unimportant as to be not worth considering, insignificant'. This category may be used where there are places that a bat could roost or forage (due to one attribute) but it is unlikely that they actually would (due to another attribute).

^b For example, in terms of temperature, humidity, height above ground level, light levels or levels of disturbance.

^c Evidence from the Netherlands shows mass swarming events of common pipistrelle bats in the autumn followed by mass hibernation in a diverse range of building types in urban environments (Korsten et al., 2016 and Jansen et al., 2022). Common pipistrelle swarming has been observed in the UK (Bell, 2022 and Tomlinson, 2020) and winter hibernation of this species has been detected at Seaton Delaval Hall in Northumberland (National Trust, 2018). This phenomenon requires some research in the UK, but ecologists should be aware of the potential for larger numbers of this species to be present during the autumn and winter in prominent buildings in the landscape, urban or otherwise.

3.4 Badger Survey Methods

The site was searched for setts and badger field signs including foraging areas, latrines and tracks. Attention was paid to the presence of the following field signs:

- Setts: single holes or a series of holes likely to be interconnected underground;
- Latrines: badgers usually deposit faeces in excavated pits;
- Paths and footprints;
- Scratching posts: at the base of trees;
- Snuffle holes: areas where badgers have searched for insects;
- Day nest: bundles of vegetation where badgers may sleep above ground; and
- Traces of hair.

3.5 Evaluation

Habitats and species on the site were evaluated following the '*Guidelines for Ecological Impact Assessment in the UK and Ireland*' (2018). A geographical frame of reference is assigned to each habitat and species, with **International Value** being most important, then **National, Regional, County, District, Local** and lastly, within the immediate **Zone of Influence (Zoi)** of the proposals only.

Value judgements are based on characteristics that can be used to identify ecological resources or features likely to be important in terms of biodiversity. These include site designations such as SSSIs. For undesignated features, the size, conservation status (locally, nationally or internationally), and the quality of the ecological resource are considered. Ecological resource quality can refer to habitats (for instance if they are particularly diverse, or a good example of a specific habitat type), other features (such as wildlife corridors or mosaics of habitats) or species populations or assemblages.

The recommendations detailed within this report aim to meet requirements of the Environment Act and Statutory Biodiversity Metric as far as possible at this stage.

3.6 Limitations

The site visit was undertaken in late September. Although this within the sub-optimal time of year for phase 1 habitat surveys, sufficient vegetation was present to enable habitat identification. It is not considered a limit to the conclusions of the report based on the habitats found within the site and the works proposed.

Access to carry out an internal inspection of the building was not available. Small gaps under tiles, between stonework and between roof lining could not be fully examined for the presence of bats. These access restrictions are considered within the report conclusions.

The absence of biological records does not necessarily mean the absence of species. This has been considered within the report conclusions.

No ponds or ornamental water features were identified within any residential gardens located adjacent to the Site. However, it should be noted that unidentified ponds / water features may exist in nearby gardens (within 250m of the Site). In general, such water features are usually relatively small in size and are more likely to be used by common amphibians, i.e. smooth newt, and/or palmate newt and/or common frog (albeit GCN and common toad may use them in certain circumstances; for example, if there is a larger waterbody close by that supports either of these species).

The site was visited on only one occasion. This produces a snapshot of habitats and species on the site and others may be present at different times of the day or year. This limitation has been considered within this report.

4.0 Survey Results

4.1 Desk Study

Non-statutory sites

Six non-statutory designated sites were identified within a 2km radius of the proposed development site. These are listed in Table 4.1 below.

Table 4.1 Non-Statutory Designated Sites

Non-Statutory Designated Site	Distance to Proposed Development
Newhey Lodge Site of Biological Interest (SBI)	780m south east
Meadow North of Moss Gate SBI	825m south
Stanny Brook SBI	1km north west
Piethorne Reservoirs & Plantations	1.7km north east
Marsh near Turf Hill SBI	1.8km west
Crompton Moor South SBI	2km south

The full designations for each site are listed within Appendix 5.

The site does not lie within a relevant Natural England SSSI Impact Risk Zone.

Priority Habitats

Numerous areas of Priority Habitat Deciduous Woodland were returned within 2km of the site with the closest area located approximately 450m west of the site.

The site lies within a Conservation Target area for Lapwing, with priority habitat for curlew and redshank within 2km.

Priority Species

Following a review of records held by GMEU, several priority species that have the potential to occur within the vicinity of the proposed development have been identified. These include birds, bats, otter, water vole badger, hedgehog and amphibians. The species records are summarised below, and the detailed records held by GMEU within 2km of the site are displayed within Appendix 5. Protected species legislation can be found within Appendix 4.

No species records were returned by GMEU within the site boundary.

Birds

Two thousand one hundred and eighty records were returned for bird species within 2km of the site. Species returned include starling, song thrush, house sparrow and dunnoek, the majority of the records relate to sighting within Milnrow, 1.9km north. The most recent record is from January 2023 for a kingfisher, approximately 1.8km north east of the site. All species recorded within 2km are displayed within Appendix 5.

Bats

One hundred and nine records for bats were returned within 2km of the site. Bat species include common pipistrelle, soprano pipistrelle, daubenton's bat, myotis species, nathusius's pipistrelle and noctule bat. Within the records three roosts were returned, the most recent dating from 2018, 1.6km south of the site for Bat sp.

Amphibians

Thirteen records for great crested newt were returned within 2km of the site. The closest and most recent of which are from related to a survey effort in 2014, approximately 1.6km north of the site. Seven records of common toad were also returned, the majority of the records are recorded approximately 1.8km north east of the site.

Badger

Several recordings of badger signs and setts were recorded within 2km of the site. The details are within confidential appendix 6.

Otter

One record for otter was returned within 2km of the site, dated June 2020 for a location within the River Beal, approximately 900m south east of the site.

Water vole

Twenty-two records for water vole were returned within 2km of the site. The closest of which was a 2010 record located 1km north west of the site within Stanny Brook SBI.

Other mammals

Numerous records for hedgehog were returned within 2km of the site, the majority of the records relate to sightings in Milnrow, 1.9km north.

European Protected Species Licences

There are no European Protected Species Licence (EPSL) applications within 2km of the site since 2016.

4.2 Habitat Survey

A habitat survey was conducted on the 26th September 2024 by Liz Kenyon BSc (Hons) for the site. The habitat types and features of ecological interest were identified and mapped in compliance with *The Handbook for Phase 1 Habitat Survey: A Technique for Environmental Audit* (JNCC, 2010). A list and a summary description of key habitats identified within the site is tabled below (see Table 4.2). Notes on the presence or potential presence of protected species are provided in Section 4.6. The Phase 1 Habitat map can be found in P.2075.24.E02 *Phase One Habitat Survey*, Appendix 1 and photographs within Appendix 3. The Target Notes (TN) and lists of species recorded during survey are presented in Appendix 2.

Weather conditions during the survey were mild (11°C), dry, with earlier rain showers (6/8 cloud cover) with a F2 (Beaufort Scale) light breeze, therefore appropriate for this type of survey.

The site lies within Newhey and comprises a residential garden with amenity grassland, that is bound by scattered trees and introduced shrubs that form the formal garden. The site is accessed by a hardstanding driveway from Bentgate Close, with parking provision and a garage (B1).

The site is bound by Newhey Road and Bentgate Road to the North with residential dwellings in the immediate and surrounding area.

Table 4.2. Habitats present on site including habitat alphanumeric code references from JNCC (2010).

Habitat Description and JNCC Codes	Site Description
<i>Hard standing (J4)</i>	A hardstanding (gravel) access area is present to the south of the area and adjacent to the existing building (B1), a small area of paving is also present. This habitat is displayed in photograph 2 within Appendix 3.
<i>Building(s) (J3.6)</i>	A single garage (B1) is present within the site. The building is detailed within section 4.3 below. The building is displayed within photographs 1&2 within Appendix 3.
<i>Amenity grassland (J1.2)</i>	The site is dominated by well managed amenity grassland. The grass sward height is approximately 2cm. Red fescue, bent sp., annual meadow grass, Yorkshire fog and white clover are present. Full species lists are detailed within Appendix 2. This habitat is shown in photograph 3 within Appendix 3.
<i>Introduced shrub (J1.4)</i>	Areas of introduced shrubs/ornamental planting are present throughout the boundaries of the site.
<i>Scattered trees (A3.1)</i>	Scattered trees line the site boundaries, species present include lime, horse chestnut, ash and sycamore. Rhododendron (TN1) is also present within tree group G1) Ascerta drawing P.2075.24.T01A Tree Survey, appendix 1). This habitat is displayed in Photograph 4 within Appendix 3.

4.3 Preliminary Bat Roost Assessment of Building (B1)

Table 4.3. Preliminary bat roost assessment of building (B1) within the site

Building B1	Building Description
	Building B1 is a triple garage constructed of blockwork bricks with a pitched tiled roof. Three garage doors are present to the southern elevation.
	The blockwork and roof tiles are in very good condition with no missing mortar between bricks and no lifts or gaps within the tiling. Plastic guttering and soffit boards/facias are also present and in a good condition. Security lighting is also present, and the building will be retained within the proposal.
	Assessment of B1
	The building was assessed to have negligible hibernation potential for crevice and void dwelling bats and negligible potential for day and maternity roosts for crevice dwelling bats and negligible potential for void dwelling bats. Overall, the building is classified as having negligible bat roosting potential.

4.4 Protected and Notable Species

Table 4.4: Habitat suitability for protected and notable species, including evidence, further survey information and reference to photographs/drawings where applicable.

Birds	Habitat suitability
	The introduced shrub, scattered trees and building (B1) within the site provide suitable foraging and nesting opportunities for bird species.
	The site provided no suitable habitat for priority species, including Lapwing as it is a very well-maintained private garden.
	Species seen / Evidence of presence / Features identified
	During the survey magpie and pigeon were identified within the site.
	Further survey required
	For any vegetation removal or building works, a nesting bird survey will be required (section 5.2).
Bats	Habitat suitability
	The building (B1) on site offers negligible potential to support bat roosts as detailed above in section 4.3.
	The trees within the site were subject to a ground level inspection for potential bat features during the survey. No features, such as cracked/split limbs or tear outs were identified.
	The amenity grassland introduced shrubs and scattered trees within the site provide suitability for commuting and foraging bats, with connectivity to the surrounding land use. The majority of the on site habitat will be retained within the proposal, allowing the continued use of the area for bats.
	Species seen / Evidence of presence / Features identified
	Evidence of bats was not identified within the site during the survey.

	Further survey required
	No further surveys required for bats.
Badger	Habitat suitability
	The site provides very limited foraging and shelter habitat for badger.
	Species seen / Evidence of presence / Features identified
	No evidence of badger was identified within the site during the survey.
	Further survey required
	Although numerous records for badger have been returned within 2km of the site the site provides no connectivity for badger to more favourable habitat areas. Badger will not be impacted by the proposals within the site therefore, badger do not require further consideration within this planning application and will not be discussed further within this report.
Water vole	Habitat suitability
	The site and adjacent areas provide no suitable habitats for water vole.
	Species seen / Evidence of presence / Features identified
	No evidence of water vole was identified during the site visit.
	Further survey required
	Water vole will not be impacted by the proposals within the site therefore, water vole do not require further consideration within this planning application and will not be discussed further within this report.
Otter	Habitat suitability
	The site and adjacent areas provide no suitable habitats for otter.
	Species seen / Evidence of presence / Features identified
	No evidence of otter were identified during the site visit.
	Further survey required
Amphibians	Otter will not be impacted by the proposals within the site therefore otter do not require further consideration within this planning application and will not be discussed further within this report.
	Habitat suitability
	No water bodies are present within 500m of the site as mapped on Magic Maps.
	The amenity grassland and introduced shrub provide very limited habitat for amphibians with no connectivity to more favourable habitats where records for GCN relate to. The site is also well managed and subject to human disturbance, limiting its suitability for amphibians.
	Species seen / Evidence of presence / Features identified
	No evidence of amphibians was identified within the site during the survey.
	Further survey required
	Amphibians will not be impacted by the proposals within the site therefore, amphibians do not require further consideration within this planning application and will not be discussed further within this report.
Reptiles	Habitat suitability
	The habitats within the site do not offer suitability to support reptiles. Ecotones are not present within the site and the habitats are scattered across the site with no suitable connectivity. The habitats within the site are prone to high human disturbance.
	Species seen / Evidence of presence / Features identified
	No evidence of reptiles was identified within the site during the survey.

	Further survey required
	No further survey for reptile will be required. Reptiles do not require consideration within this planning application and will not be discussed further.
Invertebrates	Habitat suitability
	The amenity grassland provides some limited habitat for invertebrates, however the area is prone to human disturbance and well maintained.
	Species seen / Evidence of presence / Features identified
	No evidence of invertebrates was identified within the site during the survey.
	Further survey required
	No further survey for invertebrates will be required. Invertebrates do not require consideration within this planning application and will not be discussed further.
Small mammals	Habitat suitability
	The amenity grassland, scattered trees and introduced shrub within the site provide limited foraging and shelter habitat for small mammal species such as hedgehog, with connectivity via the neighbouring private gardens.
	Species seen / Evidence of presence / Features identified
	No evidence of hedgehog was identified within the site during the survey.
	Further survey required
	No further survey effort of other small mammals will be required; however Reasonable Avoidance Measures (RAMS) should be implemented (see section 5.2).

Invasive species

Non-native invasive species rhododendron (TN 1) was identified within the site. The location of the non-native invasive species identified within the site are displayed on plan P.2075.24.E02 within Appendix 1.

5.0 Evaluation and Recommendations

5.1 Designated Sites and Habitats

There are no statutory or non-statutory protected sites within the vicinity of the proposals that are likely to be influenced by the proposals. The non statutory sites are all over 500m from the proposed development site and the proposals are for a single residential dwelling only. It is considered that there will be no impact on any statutory or non-statutory sites in the vicinity as a result of the proposals. The site does not fall within a Natural England SSSI Impact Risk Zone.

Mitigation

The habitats on site comprise hardstanding, amenity grassland, introduced shrub, scattered trees and a building (B1). These habitats are considered to have an ecological value of **within the zone of influence** of the site or lower. The site contains no designated or priority habitats. Overall, the proposals are unlikely to adversely affect the ecological value of the area.

The production of the Defra Metric Biodiversity Net Gain Calculations is recommended to minimise impacts of biodiversity and provide net gains in biodiversity and the production of a Management Plan to ensure the long-term commitments to manage the planting, protection and enhancement of biodiversity in and around the new development site.

5.2 Protected and Notable Species Recommendations

Birds

The scattered trees, building B1 and introduced shrub provide suitable habitat for nesting and foraging bird species. It is recommended that vegetation clearance and building works should be undertaken outside of the nesting bird season (**1st March to 31st August Inclusive**) to avoid any impact on breeding birds. If vegetation clearance cannot be undertaken outside of the breeding bird season, a nesting bird check undertaken by a suitably experienced ecologist should be undertaken immediately prior to works commencing. If an active birds' nest is identified a suitable buffer zone should be implemented where no works are to occur within until the young have fledged the nest.

Invasive species

Rhododendron (TN) has been identified within the site. To avoid the spread (complying with the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981, see Appendix 4) of these species within the site during site clearance, it is recommended that an **invasive species management plan** is produced and adhered to during the works. It is recommended that the management plan details suitable management of these species, biosecurity measures and avoidance measures where possible.

Small mammals

The site provides habitat for small mammals including hedgehog within the amenity grassland, scattered trees and introduced shrub.

These habitats are likely to be impacted by the proposals and therefore, it is recommended that a **Hedgehog Reasonable Avoidance Measures (RAMS) Method Statement** is implemented during the works to avoid harm to this species. The RAMS should include:

1. Vegetation clearance applies to all habitats cleared in daytime air temperatures above 5°C. Works must be avoided in cold temperatures or if prior overnight temperatures have been less than 1°C.
2. The cut material is to be chipped and placed in discrete piles outside the working areas or removed from the site;
3. The cut vegetation should remain at the mown length;
4. Existing tracks should be utilised for vehicle movements where possible;
5. Throughout the works all trenches must be covered at night or ramps provided to prevent hedgehog from getting stuck. Large pipes must also be covered to prevent badger access and risk of these species getting stuck; and
6. Construction material will be stored on pallets to avoid creating habitat for hedgehog.

To enable hedgehog continued use of the site it is advised that gaps of at least 13cm by 13cm are left under any new garden fences to enable hedgehog to roam freely within the area following development.

5.3 Enhancements

In order to meet requirements for biodiversity protection and enhancement outlined within the NPPF, it is recommended that ecological enhancements are included. These could include:

- Provision of one bird boxes (25mm, 28mm or 32mm entrance hole box), attached to or integrated within new buildings on site; and
- Provision of one bat feature (e.g. Vivara bat bricks or '*bird brick houses*' bat boxes) integrated within new buildings.

6.0 Conclusions

The site was subject to an extended phase one habitat survey and a preliminary bat roost assessment of building (B1). During the survey and following review of historical species records, it is considered that an impact on birds and hedgehog is likely to occur in relation to the proposals for the site. The following recommendations have been made to avoid an impact on these species:

- If works have not begun by September 2026, an updated site visit will be required to assess the habitats within the site;
- Implementation of hedgehog RAMS to avoid any harm to this species during the proposed works;
- Production of an invasive species method statement to avoid the spread of invasive species into the wider landscape during the proposed works;
- Production of a Management Plan to ensure the long-term commitments to manage the planting, protection and enhancement of biodiversity in and around a new development site.
- Vegetation clearance, pruning or building works should be undertaken outside of the nesting bird season (1st March to 31st August Inclusive) to avoid any impact on breeding birds. Or a nesting bird check undertaken by a suitably experienced ecologist should be undertaken immediately prior to works commencing.

It is considered that there would be very limited impacts on the local ecology as a result of the proposals, provided the recommendations detailed within section 5.0 above are followed.

7.0 References

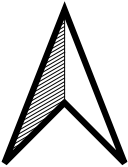
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Appendix 1



Key

- red_line_boundary
- Individual trees
- Introduced shrub
- Building
- Hardstanding
- Amenity grassland



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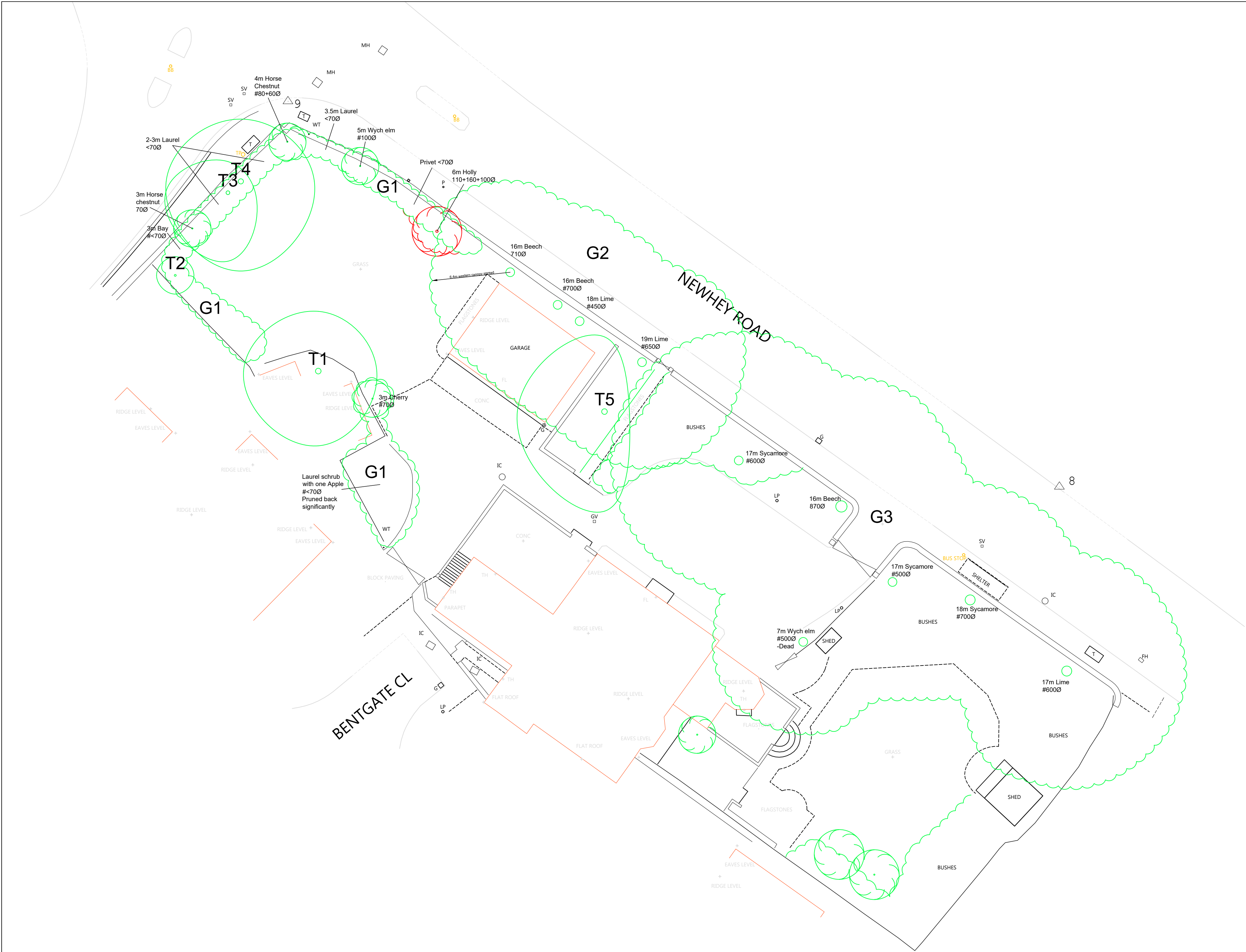
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PROJECT:
Bentgate House

DRAWING TITLE:
Phase One Habitat Survey

SCALE: NTS@A3	DRAWN BY: LK	DRAWING No: P.2075.24.E02
DATE: 02/01/2025	CHKD BY: AR	REV: -



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KEY

Existing tree to be retained

Existing tree to be removed

N

A	Updated proposed layout	05/11/24
REV	DESCRIPTION	DATE

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DRAWING TITLE:

Tree Survey

SCALE:	DRAWN BY:	DRAWING No:	REV:
1:200 @A2	AC		
DATE:	CHKD BY:		
23/09/2022	KP	P.2075.24.T01	A

Appendix 2

Appendix 2: Species Lists and Target Notes

Table 1: Flora Species

English Name	Scientific Name
Annual meadow grass	<i>Poa annua</i>
Apple	<i>Malus sp.</i>
Arrowhead	<i>Sagittaria sagittifolia</i>
Ash	<i>Fraxinus excelsior</i>
Aspen	<i>Populus tremula</i>
Beech	<i>Fagus sylvatica</i>
Cleavers	<i>Galium aparine</i>
Clover	<i>Trifolium sp.</i>
Cock's-foot	<i>Dactylis glomerata</i>
Creeping bent-grass	<i>Agrostis stolonifera</i>
Cypress	<i>Cupressus sp.</i>
Dandelion	<i>Taraxacum agg.</i>
Goat willow	<i>Salix caprea</i>
Holly	<i>Ilex aquifolium</i>
Laurel	<i>Laurus sp.</i>
Lime	<i>Tilia sp.</i>
Perennial ryegrass	<i>Lolium perenne</i>
Privet	<i>Ligustrum vulgare</i>
Red clover	<i>Trifolium pratense</i>
Red fescue	<i>Festuca rubra</i>
Rhododendron *	<i>Rhododendron ponticum</i>
Sycamore	<i>Acer pseudoplatanus</i>
Yew	<i>Taxus sp</i>
Yorkshire fog	<i>Holcus lanatus</i>

* invasive species

Table 2: Target Notes

Target Note Number	Description
TN1	Location of rhododendron

Appendix 3

Appendix 3: Photographs

Table 3: Photographs of the site

	
Photograph 1: Building B1	Photograph 2: Gravel access way to site and building B1
	
Photograph 3: Amenity grassland	Photograph 4: Scattered trees to the site boundaries

Appendix 4

Appendix 4: Relevant Legislation

European Legislation

The following Directives have been adopted by the European Union and provide protection for fauna and flora species of European importance and the habitats which support them:

- Directive 2009/147/EC on the Conservation of Wild Birds (Birds Directive);
- Directive 92/43/EEC of 21 May 1992 on the conservation of natural habitats and of wild fauna and flora (Habitats Directive).

UK Legislation

The Habitats Directive has been transposed into national legislation through the Conservation of Habitats and Species (Amendment) (EU Exit) Regulations 2019 (The Habitats Regulations). This provides for the designation and protection of 'European Sites' (SPAs, SACs and Ramsar Sites, including proposed or potential European Sites) and the protection of 'European Protected Species'.

The key UK legislation relating to nature conservation is the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) (W&C Act). This Act is supplemented, *inter alia*, by provision in the Countryside and Rights of Way (CROW) Act 2000, and the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006 (NERC Act). Additional species and habitat specific UK legislation includes the Protection of Badgers Act 1992 and the Hedgerow Regulations 1997.

The Environment Act sets out how the UK will maintain environmental standards following leaving of the EU. The Bill builds on the vision of the 25 Year Environment Plan, with the ambition from the government to leave the environment in a better state than it was when inherited.

The Defra Statutory Biodiversity Metric has implemented to work alongside the Environment Act. This tool calculates potential biodiversity impacts as a result of development and identifies mitigation and compensation requirements to ensure no net loss of biodiversity. In addition, it identifies measures that can be implemented in order to meet Biodiversity gain as a result of development.

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 2024 has been published to provide further planning guidance. Wildlife, biodiversity and ecological networks are referred to in Section 15 '*Conserving and enhancing the natural environment*'. The NPPF states that the planning system should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by: protecting and enhancing valued landscapes and sites of biodiversity value, recognise the wider benefits from natural capital and ecosystem services and minimising impacts on and provided net gains for biodiversity. Further guidance is provided within Government Circular 06/05: *Biodiversity and Geological Conservation - Statutory Obligations and Their Impact Within the Planning System*.

Species and Habitats of Principal Importance

Species and Habitats of Principal Importance are listed under section 41 of the NERC Act and are a material consideration in planning decisions. Planners require relevant, up to date information from ecological surveys in order to assess the effects of a proposed development on biodiversity as Councils have a statutory obligation under section 40 of the NERC Act to consider biodiversity conservation in the determination of planning applications.

Background information about the lists of priority habitats and species (Species and Habitats of Principal Importance) can be found within the UK Biodiversity Action Plan (UK BAP). Although this has been succeeded by the 'UK Post-2010 Biodiversity Framework', many of UK BAP tools are still relevant. BAPs identify habitats and species of nature conservation priority on a UK (UK BAP) and Local (LBAP) scale. Most BAP priority habitats and species have Habitat Action Plans (HAP) and Species Action Plans (SAP) and there are also "grouped action plans" for groups of related species with similar conservation requirements.

Badgers

The legislation protecting badgers in England and Wales is the Protection of Badgers Act 1992.

Under the Protection of Badgers Act 1992 it is an offence *inter alia* to:

- Wilfully kill, injure or take a badger, or to attempt to do so;
- Cruelly ill-treat a badger; or
- Intentionally or recklessly interfere with a badger sett by (a) damaging a sett or any part of one; (b) destroying a sett; (c) obstructing access to or any entrance of a sett; (d) causing a dog to enter a sett; or (e) disturbing a badger when it is occupying a sett.

The Badger Act 1992 defines a badger's sett as "*any structure or place which displays signs indicating current use by a badger*"

Natural England can issue licences to enable works to continue that may affect a protected species. In relation to disturbance of badgers, Natural England (2009) gives guidelines on disturbance which will require a licence. These includes: "*using very heavy machinery (generally tracked vehicles) within 30 metres of any entrance to an active sett; using lighter machinery (generally wheeled vehicles), particularly for any digging operation, within 20 metres; light work such as hand digging or scrub clearance within 10 metres. There are some activities which may cause disturbance at greater distances (such as using explosives or pile driving) and these should be given individual consideration.*"

Bats

In England, all bats and their roosts are protected under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 and the Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981 (as amended). Several species of bat are also highlighted as Priority Species under the UK Biodiversity Action Plan and within the Local BAP.

Under the current legislation as summarised on pages 9 and 10 of the Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists Good Practice Guidelines – 4th Edition (2023) it is a criminal offence to:

“To kill, capture, injure or take a wild bat;

- To damage or destroy a place used by a bat for breeding or resting. All offences of this nature are identified within the Habitats Regulations. This offence is unique in that it can be committed accidentally. No element of intentional, reckless or deliberate action needs to be evidenced;*
- To disturb bats anywhere (roosts, flight lines or foraging areas) if levels of disturbance can be shown to impair their ability to survive, to breed or reproduce, to rear or nurture their young, to hibernate or migrate or to affect significantly local distribution or abundance;*
- To intentionally or recklessly disturb a bat, whilst it is occupying a place of shelter or protection;*
- To intentionally or recklessly obstruct access to any place used by a bat for shelter or protection; and*
- To be in possession or control of a bat alive or dead (or any part of a bat or anything derived from a bat, although bat droppings are generally considered to be acceptable), or to transport a bat, to sell or exchange a bat or to offer to sell or exchange a bat taken from the wild.”*

Breeding Birds

Breeding Birds are protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act which make it an offence to:

- intentionally kill, injure or take any wild bird or take, damage or destroy the nest of any wild bird whilst it is in use or being built;*
- intentionally take or destroy the egg of any wild bird;*
- have in one's possession or control any wild bird, dead or alive, or any part of a wild bird (including eggs), which has been taken in contravention of the Act or the Protection of Birds Act 1954;*
- intentionally or recklessly disturb any wild bird listed on Schedule 1 while it is nest building, or at a nest containing eggs or young, or disturb the dependent young of such a bird.*

Great Crested Newt

The great crested newt is fully protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act, 1981 (as amended) and the Habitats Regulations, 2017. It is also a Species of Principal Importance. The legislation makes it an offence to:

- Deliberately (or intentionally) kill, injure or capture (or take) a great crested newt, or great crested newt egg or eft;*
- Deliberately (intentionally) damage or destroy any breeding site or resting place (i.e. pond, refuge, hibernaculum);*
- Deliberately or recklessly obstruct access to any breeding site or resting place;*
- Deliberately, intentionally or recklessly disturb a great crested newt, in particular disturbance which is likely to:*
 - impair the ability of the great crested newt to survive, breed, reproduce, or to rear or nurture young;*
 - impair the ability of the great crested newt to hibernate or migrate; or significantly affect the local distribution or abundance of great crested newts*

Invasive Species

It is an offence under Section 14(2) of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 to '*plant or otherwise cause to grow*' in the wild any plant in Schedule 9 Part II.

Water Vole

Water vole are a Species of Principal Importance and also fully protected under Schedule 5 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) which makes it an offence to:

- *intentionally or recklessly damage, destroy or obstruct access to any structure or place used for shelter or protection;*
- *intentionally or recklessly disturb water voles whilst occupying a structure or place used for that purpose;*
- *intentionally kill, injure or take water voles;*
- *possess or control live or dead water voles or derivatives;*
- *sell water voles or offer or expose for sale or transport for sale; and*
- *publish or cause to be published any advertisement which conveys the buying or selling of water voles.*

Otter

Otter and their resting places protected under Schedule 5 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) and under EC Directive (92/43/EEC), listed under Annexes II and IVa.

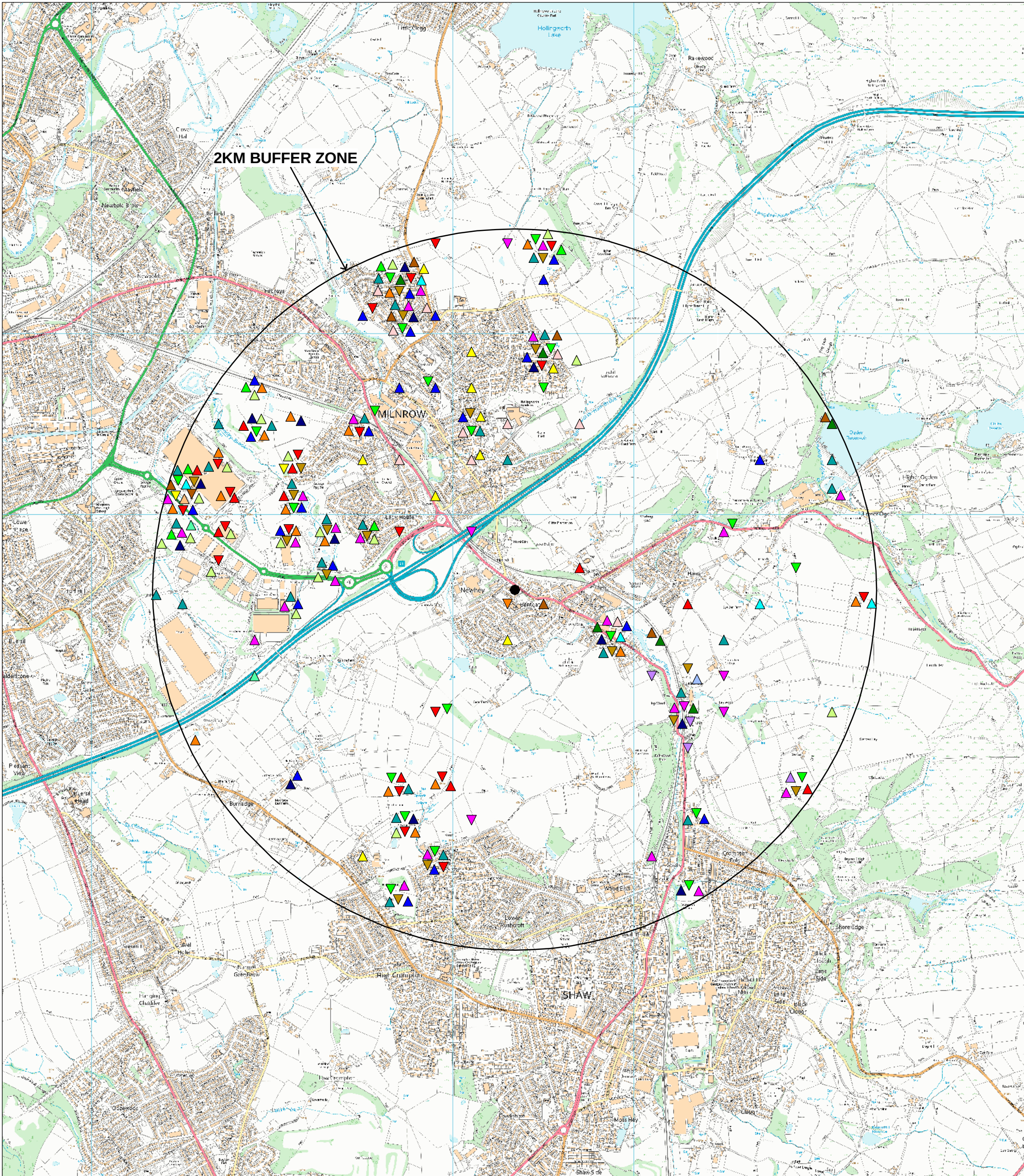
Under European Legislation implemented in Britain under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations, 2019 (as amended) it is an offence to *damage or destroy an otter's place of shelter, whether intentionally or accidentally*. Under this legislation it is also an offence to *deliberately disturb an otter*.

Under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) it is an offence to:

- *'Intentionally' kill, injure or take an otter without a licence;*
- *Damage, destroy or obstruct access to a place used by an otter for shelter*

It is a criminal offence to intentionally, wilfully kill, injure or take any of the aforementioned protected species or to destroy or disturb its habitat.

Appendix 5



KEY

SECTION 41 SPECIES

- | | |
|-----------------------|------------------|
| ▲ BLACK-TAILED GODWIT | ▲ LINNET |
| ▲ BULLFINCH | ▲ MUD SNAIL |
| ▲ COMMON TOAD | ▲ REED BUNTING |
| ▲ CUCKOO | ▲ S41 MOTH |
| ▲ CURLEW | ▲ SKYLARK |
| ▲ DUNNOCK | ▲ SMALL HEATH |
| ▲ GR.HOPPER WARBLER | ▲ SONG THRUSH |
| ▲ GREY PARTRIDGE | ▲ STARLING |
| ▲ HEDGEHOG | ▲ TREE PIPIT |
| ▲ HERRING GULL | ▲ WALL |
| ▲ HOUSE SPARROW | ▲ WL HAIRSTREAK |
| ▲ LAPWING | ▲ YELLOW WAGTAIL |
| ▲ LESSER REDPOLL | |

GREATER MANCHESTER ECOLOGY UNIT ECOLOGICAL SEARCH - SD 9334 1158 BENTGATE HOUSE - MAP 5

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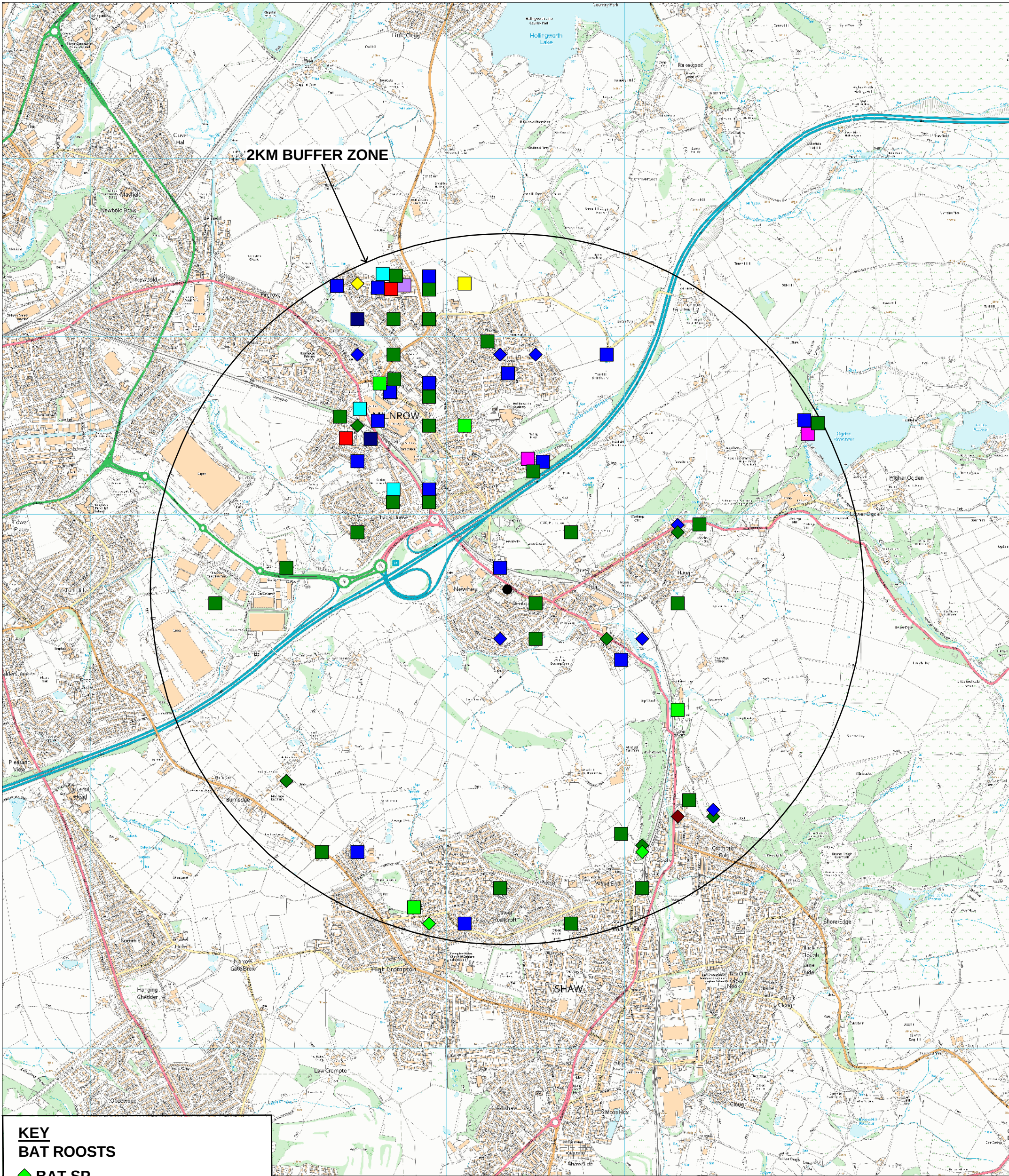
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KEY
BAT ROOSTS

- ◆ BAT SP
- ◆ BROWN LONG-EARED BAT
- ◆ COMMON PIPISTRELLE
- ◆ PIPISTRELLE SP
- ◆ SOPRANO PIPISTRELLE

BATS OTHER SIGNS

- BAT SP
- COMMON PIPISTRELLE
- DAUBENTON'S BAT
- LESSER NOCTULE
- MYOTIS SP
- NATHUSIUS'S PIPISTRELLE
- NOCTULE BAT
- PIPISTRELLE SP
- SOPRANO PIPISTRELLE

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BENTGATE HOUSE - MAP 4

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2KM BUFFER ZONE

KEY

PROTECTED SPECIES

-  GREAT CRESTED NEWT
-  WATER VOLE
-  BROWN HARE
-  BARN OWL
-  FERAL FERRET
-  GREY HERON (HERONRY)
-  HOBBY
-  KINGFISHER
-  LITTLE RINGED PLOVER
-  OTTER
-  PEREGRINE
-  POLECAT

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BENTGATE HOUSE - MAP 2

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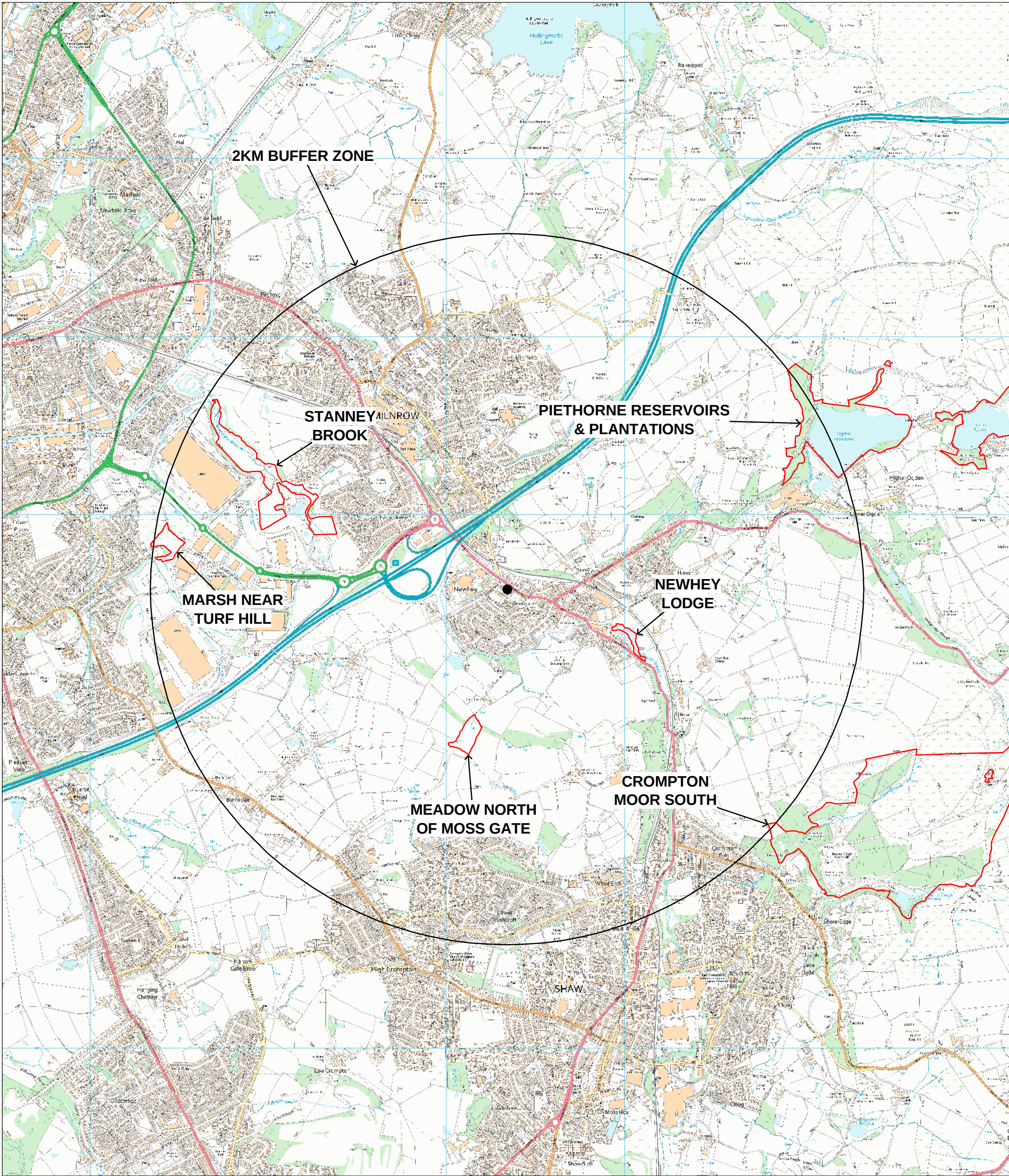
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BENTGATE HOUSE - MAP 1**

KEY
SITE OF BIOLOGICAL IMPORTANCE
 **SBI BOUNDARY**

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