

**PRELIMINARY ECOLOGICAL
APPRAISAL REPORT**

**at
Barn Field Lane
Rochdale
Lancashire
OL12 9PN**

**Client:
Adam Smith**

**Client Address:
Barn Field Lane
Rochdale
OL12 9PN**

**JCA Ref:
23633/RPS**

**Date of Report:
30/01/2026**



JCA Limited
Arboricultural & Ecological Consultants

Quality Assurance

Version	Desktop Survey Completed:		Site Surveyed:		Report Completed:		Checked:	
	Date	Name	Date	Name	Date	Name	Date	Name
001	27/01/26	Rebecca Petch-Smith	26/01/26	Rebecca Petch-Smith	27/01/26	Rebecca Petch-Smith	27/01/26	Kristen Kelly
				Alex Donovan			29/01/26	Alex Donovan

This report has been prepared and provided in accordance with the *British Standard 42020: Biodiversity – Code of practice for planning and development 2018* and the *CIEEM's Code of Professional Conduct*.

This Assessment is only valid for the named client and the project described. JCA Limited. accepts no responsibility or liability for the consequences of this document being used for a purpose other than the purpose for which it was commissioned. If the scope of works or timing of the project are altered the advice given in this report may not be valid. Information and data provided within this report is considered accurate at the time of writing.

Provided no significant changes are made to the proposals or on the site (e.g. significant changes to management practices or habitats present) subsequent to the report's issue; this report can be considered valid for 18 months from the date of issue.

As part of membership to our professional body (CIEEM) and EPS licence reporting we are required to provide our biological results to applicable biological record centres. As such, it is our intention to supply biological data collected as part of this assessment, where recorded, to the relevant BRC. If the project is sensitive in nature, we may be able to delay submitting the records until the project enters the public domain, however, this must be discussed with JCA Limited and agreed in writing.



Summary

A report is required for **Barn Field Lane, Rochdale** to assess the ecological value of the site by documenting the habitat types present and the site's potential for supporting rare and protected species. The development proposed on this site is the sale of the northeastern grazed grassland.

A desktop study was undertaken in order to obtain any relevant ecological records that may be present within a 2km radius of the site, including protected and notable species records and nature conservation designations.

The site was surveyed on the 26th January 2026 by Rebecca Petch-Smith (Graduate Ecologist) and Alex Donovan (Assistant Ecologist). A thorough site assessment was undertaken following the guidelines set out in the UK Habitat Classification System (v2.01, 2023).

Recommendations:

Designated Sites, Priority Habitats and Habitat Network:

- A Construction Environment Management Plan (CEMP) is recommended and consultation with the local council is required to detail mitigation measures of any development to ensure there is no significant detrimental effects on the GMNN, Watergrove Reservoir or priority habitats.

Schedule 9 Plants:

- An invasive species survey is required to determine absence/presence of invasive species on site.

Bats:

- All lighting installed as part of the development will be in line with Guidance Note 08/23 Bats and Artificial Lighting at night.

Birds and Barn Owls

- Prior to any works on the building a suitably qualified ecologist should check potential nesting habitat immediately prior to works. Where nesting birds are encountered works must be postponed until the nestlings have fledged.

A walkover survey by an appropriately licenced ecologist will be required to no more than 10 days prior to building works, to check the site for nesting barn owl presence/absence.

Hedgehogs, Badgers and Other Mammals:

- All excavations must be covered overnight and planks must be placed at a 45 degree angle to allow for safe passage of protected species across the site.



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1. Introduction and Terms of Reference

1.1 Background

- 1.1.1 JCA Limited was instructed by **Adam Smith** to visit the site and conduct a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA) of the site located at **Barn Field Lane, Rochdale, Lancashire, OL12 9PN** hereafter referred to as 'the site' in January 2026. The purpose of the survey is to establish a baseline of ecological information and assess whether the proposed works, hereafter referred to as 'the scheme', have the potential to adversely affect any protected or notable habitats or species.

1.2 Site Description

- 1.2.1 The site is situated to the north of Rochdale at grid reference: SD901173.
- 1.2.2 The site consists of a two-storey barn with a grazed grassland to the northwest and a modified grassland used for storage. Dry stone walls are used to separate fields and are found at the boundaries of the site. The site is bordered to the north, west and east by agricultural grazed grassland, and to the south by Barn Field Lane, residential dwellings and agricultural grassland.
- 1.2.3 The development proposed on this site is the sale of the northeastern grazed grassland.

1.3 Scope of the Report

- 1.3.1 The purpose of the Preliminary Ecology Appraisal (PEA) is to identify habitats currently present within and around the site in order to obtain baseline ecological information for the site. The PEA also assessed the potential of the site to support species which receive legal protection (at a UK Level) and species that are otherwise notable including Species of Principal Importance and Birds of Conservation Concern (BoCC).
- 1.3.2 The PEA comprises two main elements a) a desktop review of the ecology and policy context and b) a field survey of the proposed development site, and where possible, other areas to be affected.
- 1.3.3 Where relevant, legislative and policy considerations are highlighted including:
- The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended);
 - The Wildlife and Countryside Act (WCA) 1981 (as amended);
 - The Countryside and Rights of Way (CROW) Act 2000;
 - The Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006;
 - The Protection of Badgers Act 1992;
 - Hedgerow Regulations 1997;
 - Wild Mammals (Protection) Act 1996;
 - The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (2024); and
 - Rochdale Township Green Infrastructure Action Plan



1.3.4 In addition to the above, biodiversity objectives detailed in the following documents have been considered:

- Biodiversity 2020: A Strategy for England's Wildlife and Ecosystem Services;
- Biodiversity and Geodiversity Supplementary Planning Document (2019); and
- Greater Manchester Nature Recovery Plan
- Greater Manchester Biodiversity Action Plan (GMBAP)



2. Methodology

2.1 Zone of Influence

- 2.1.1 The study area encompassed the Zone of Influence of the Project. The Zone of Influence is defined as "... the area over which ecological features may be impacted by biophysical changes as a result of the proposed project and associated activities" (CIEEM, 2018). Further information regarding classification for the Zone of Influence is provided in Appendix 4.
- 2.1.2 The Zone of Influence and the study area is broadly considered to extend across the site, or just beyond the site boundary in most cases, with the potential for up to or exceeding 5 kilometres with regards to designated sites. A summary of predicted changes is provided in Table 1.

Table 1: Summary of predicted changes and Zone of Influence.

Predicted Change	Zone of Influence
Vegetation/habitat clearance	Site
Generation of dust during site clearance and construction	Site and immediate surrounds (200m)
Acoustic disturbance and vibration from construction activities	Site and immediate surrounds (Typically up to 300m)
Increased traffic related air pollution and potential to impact upon sensitive habitats during both construction and operational phase	Habitats within approximately 200m of affected roads
Lighting (during construction and in long term)	Site and immediate surrounds
Changes to local hydrology; including surface water runoff and groundwater	Likely to include watercourses that receive surface water discharges, and downstream habitats
Landscape planting and habitat creation / green infrastructure creation	Site

2.2 Desktop Study Methodology

- 2.2.1 A desktop study was undertaken in order to obtain any relevant ecological records that may be present within a 2km radius of the site. This includes protected and notable species records, as well as nature conservation designations. For this information, the local ecological records centre was contacted: Greater Manchester Ecology Unit (GMEU) and Lancashire Ecology Unit (LEU).
- 2.2.2 The search buffer of 2km from the central site grid reference is considered to be sufficient in order to cover the potential zone of influence of the proposed development.
- 2.2.3 The Multi-Agency Geographic Information for the Countryside (MAGIC) website was used to locate any designated sites, both statutory and non-statutory, such as Local Nature Reserves (LNRs), Ramsar Sites, Special Areas of Conservation (SACs),



Special Protection Areas (SPAs) or Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs) that may be present within 2km of the survey site.

2.3 Site Assessment Methodology

A thorough site assessment was undertaken on 26/01/2026 by Rebecca Petch-Smith (Graduate Ecologist) and Alex Donovan (Assistant Ecologist).

Habitats

The survey employed techniques based on the UK Habitat Classification System (v2.01, 2023). Botanical information was collected focussing on the dominant and/or key indicator species for each habitat to enable allocation of habitats to hierarchy levels 3 and/or 4, and where relevant to identify any priority habitats which are present on site. The conditions of the habitats on the site were assessed in line with the technical sheets supplied alongside Defra Metric 4.0. This is to inform future Biodiversity Metric Calculations if required. A map of the baseline habitats is provided in Appendix 1.

In the context of this report, rare, protected or notable species are those listed under the following: UK or European legislation, UK Biodiversity Framework Priority Species (including, but not limited to LBAP species), nationally rare or scarce flora/fauna/habitats, Species of Conservation Concern (JNCC Red List, RSPB/BTO Amber Lists).

Non-native, invasive species, as listed under Schedule 9 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act (1981) as amended have been noted and mapped, where present as under the Wildlife and Countryside Act (1981) as amended it is an offence to release or allow to escape into the wild any flora/fauna not ordinarily a resident of the UK, which has been categorised as potential harmful to the UK flora and/or fauna.

Protected Species

Whilst conducting the site walk-over, any features that may be of value to or have the potential to support protected species were noted and photographic evidence taken (please refer to **Appendix 3**). Such protected species include, but are not limited to the following:

2.3.1 Amphibians

Consideration was given to the presence of habitat potentially suitable for supporting amphibians including water bodies (ponds, ditches), woodland, scrub, rough grassland and features such as log piles that might provide hibernation areas. Where appropriate, effort to gather direct evidence of amphibians was undertaken using a preliminary search for eggs by examining vegetation within reach of the margins of water bodies, and for resting animals on land by looking under potential refuges such as stones, wood and rubbish near to water bodies.

Great crested newts are known to forage up to at least 500m from their breeding water bodies and suitable habitats that fall within 250m must be considered even in situations where the breeding site itself will not be affected.



2.3.2 Badgers

Consideration was given to the presence of habitat potentially suitable for supporting badgers including woodland, scrub and grassland. Potential evidence of the presence of badgers was noted including earthworks that might be badger setts, signs such as dung pits, mammal pathways through ground vegetation and under fences and hairs on fences.

2.3.3 Bats

The site was surveyed for foraging, commuting and roosting potential. A detailed search of the buildings/trees on site was conducted during daylight hours in order to identify potential bat roosting sites and look for evidence of bat activity and photographic evidence was taken (please refer to **Appendix 3**).

The survey was conducted by an experienced surveyor using the following equipment to ensure an accurate assessment; a printed site map, camera, a 1 million candlelight torch, binoculars, and ladders.

Signs that bats have previously or are currently using a potential roost site include:

- Droppings, carcasses and/or food remains found around the site.
- Bats observed within the building or tree.

The absence of signs of a potential bat roost cannot be treated as conclusive evidence that bats are not using the buildings/trees.

Buildings

During the bat scoping survey, the building on site was subject to an external and internal survey to establish the suitability of the structure to support roosting bats in accordance with Collins (2023). The criteria for assigning a roost suitability category are presented in Table 2 below:



Table 2: Guidelines used for assessing the bat roosting suitability of buildings (*taken from Collins, 2023*).

Roosting Suitability	Potential Roosting Features (PRFs) Present
None	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).
Negligible	No obvious features on the 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.
Low	A structure with one or more potential roosting opportunities that could be used by individual bats opportunistically. However, these potential roost sites do not provide enough shelter, protection, surrounding habitats, or the appropriate conditions to be used on a regular basis by larger numbers of bats e.g. unlikely to support hibernation or maternity roosts.
Moderate	A structure or tree with one or more potential roost sites that could be used by bats due to the size of the potential roosting feature which is sufficient to provide: shelter, protection, optimal conditions and surrounding habitats. The feature(s) are unlikely to support a roost of high conservation status.
High	A structure or tree with one or more potential roost sites that could be used by bats due to the size of the potential roosting feature which is sufficient to provide: shelter, protection, optimal conditions and high-quality surrounding habitats. The features have the potential to support large colonies of bats (e.g. maternity or hibernation) for long periods of time.
Confirmed roost	Evidence of bat occupation found during initial survey.

Trees

Bats often roost in trees. Features such as old woodpecker holes, splits, cavities and rot holes, loose or flaking bark and ivy creepers can be exploited by bats to roost. Any trees present on site were therefore assessed for their potential to support roosting bats by searching for suitable features. The presence of roosting bats can be spotted through signs such as accumulations of moth or butterfly wings, staining, bat droppings, or bats themselves.

The absence of these cannot, however, be treated as conclusive evidence that bats are not present, and therefore an assessment was made of the potential of the trees to support bats based on the scale presented in Table 3 below, in accordance with Collins (2023).

Table 3: Guidelines used for assessing the bat roosting suitability of trees (*taken from Collins, 2023*).

Roosting Suitability	Potential Roosting Features (PRFs) Present
None	Either no Potential Roosting Features (PRFs) in the tree, or highly unlikely to be any.
FAR	Further assessment required to establish if PRFs are present in the tree.
PRF	A tree with at least one PRF present.



The category of roosting suitability assigned to a building/tree is used to determine what further survey effort is required to ascertain the presence/likely absence of bats within that feature, as shown in Table 4 below:

Table 4: Recommended minimum number of survey visits for presence/likely absence surveys (*taken from Collins, 2023*).

Negligible roost suitability	Low roost suitability	Moderate roost suitability	High roost suitability
No further survey required	One survey visit. One dusk emergence survey, May to August (structures). No further surveys required (trees).	Two separate dusk emergence survey visits. May to September, with at least one survey between May and August.	Three separate dusk emergence survey visits. May to September, with at least two surveys between May and August
September surveys are both weather- and location-dependent. Conditions may become more unsuitable in these months, particularly in more northerly latitudes, which may reduce the length of the survey season. September surveys are likely to miss maternity roosts due to dispersal before this time but may pick up mating roosts. Multiple survey visits should be spread out to sample as much of the recommended survey period as possible; it is recommended that surveys are spaced out at least three weeks apart, preferably more. Survey timings should consider the prevailing conditions in the year of survey, which will vary geographically. In years with a cold spring, the surveys should not be started in early May, or all completed in May. The surveys should maximise the possibility of detecting maternity roosts, which can switch roosts between pregnancy and lactation, and the optimum coverage includes the pre-parturition, post-parturition, and mating periods. Structures that have been categorised as low potential can be problematic, and the number of surveys required should be judged on a case-by-case basis. In some cases, more than one survey may be needed, particularly where there are several buildings in this category.			

Habitats

A preliminary evaluation was also undertaken of the habitat on the site for the quality of potential commuting and foraging habitat for the local bat populations. Bats navigate using linear features in the landscape such as hedgerows and these can be important features for local roosts. The site itself may also provide important foraging habitat and support local bat roosts.

An assessment was therefore made of the potential of the habitat to offer suitable flight paths and foraging habitats based on the scale presented in Table 5 below, adapted from the Survey Guidelines (Collins, 2023):

Table 5: Site suitability for foraging and commuting bats (*taken from Collins, 2023*).

Site Suitability	Habitat features present
High	Continuous, high quality habitat that is well connected to the wider landscape and likely to be regularly used by bats for flight-paths, such as river valleys, streams, hedgerows, lines of trees and woodland edge.



	High quality habitat that is well connect 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 connected to a known roost.
Moderate	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.
Low	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.
Negligible	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.
None	No habitat features on site likely to be used by any commuting or foraging bats at any time of year) i.e. no habitats that provide continuous lines of shade/protection for flight-lines, or generate/shelter insect populations available to foraging bats).

2.3.4 Birds

Any birds seen whilst carrying out the survey were recorded and the type and quality of habitats available for birds was considered, including vegetation suitable for nesting and habitat with the potential to support valued species including breeding and wintering birds.

2.3.5 Dormouse

The habitat on the site was assessed for the potential to support dormice which are found in habitats such as woodlands, scrub and hedgerows with good connectivity and suitable food plants. Satellite images were used to assess the connectivity of any suitable habitat present on the site to other areas of woodland and hedgerow networks.

2.3.6 Reptiles

Habitat considered potentially suitable for supporting reptiles was recorded. This includes areas providing basking and foraging areas, hibernation and breeding sites such as rough grassland and scrub, banks, burrows, rubble piles, compost heaps, hedge banks and water bodies.

2.4 Limitations

2.4.1 Access to some areas of the site were restricted, the northwestern grassland could not be entered due to grazing livestock. However, this limitation should not affect the overall results of the report.

2.4.2 The survey was undertaken outside of the optimal period for habitat assessment when plants have died back for the winter. This will have limited the number of species identified within each habitat.



3. Results

3.1 Designated sites

Statutory Nature Conservation Sites

3.1.1 Internationally important sites

There are **no** statutory internationally important conservation sites within the search area.

3.1.2 Nationally important sites

There are **no** nationally important Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs) within the search area. The site falls outside of any SSSI risk zones.

3.1.3 County important sites

There are **four** Sites of Biological Importance (SBI's), 3 District Wildlife Sites (DWS's) and **two** Biological Heritage Sites (BHS's) within the search area:

- Watergrove Reservoir (SBI) is located approximately 413 m east of the site.
- Brownhouse Wham & Hamer Pastures Reservoirs (SBI) is located approximately 1005 m southwest of the site.
- Hamer Pasture Reservoir (DWS) is located approximately 1240 m south-southwest of the site.
- Rushy Hill (DWS and BHS) is located approximately 1400 m southwest of the site.
- Syke Wood (SBI) is located approximately 1610 m south of the site.
- Buckley Wood (SBI) is located approximately 1670 m south of the site.
- Hallfold Lodge (DWS) is located approximately 1953 m west of the site
- Healey Dell LNR (BHS) is located approximately 2260 m southwest of the site.

The Watergrove Reservoir is considered to be within the Zone of Influence of the Site. Further recommendations have been provided in Section 4.

3.2 Habitats

Descriptions of the habitats recorded on site are given below, a map of the habitats is given as Appendix 1, with site photographs in Appendix 3. There are deciduous woodland and lowland fen priority habitats shown on MAGIC in the zone of influence (Appendix 4, Figure 1).

3.2.1 Strategic Significance

The site is located inside the Opportunity Area of the Greater Manchester Nature Network (GMNN). The site is linked to the wider landscape through grasslands and



the Nature Network. The site is therefore considered to be ecologically desirable.

The site is part of the Opportunity Area of the Greater Manchester Nature Network (GMNN). It is considered to have high strategic significance (Formally identified in local strategy).

UK Habitats

The following habitat types were recorded on site: modified grassland and buildings.

3.2.2 Modified grassland

UKHab code: g4

Secondary code: 101 – cattle grazed; 102 – sheep grazed; 104 – other grazed; 114 - dry-stone wall; 825 – ruined building.

Majority of the site consisted of modified grassland. The northwestern parcel has been heavily grazed by sheep, cattle and donkeys (G1). The grassland providing access to the barn is less managed (G2). All grasslands were separated and surrounded by dry stone walls.

Species could not be identified in the grazed grassland due to time of year, level of grazing and access issues. The species identified in the ungrazed grassland included perennial rye grass *Lolium perenne*, willowherb sp *Epilobium spp.*, thistle sp. *Cirsium spp.*, soft rush *Juncus effusus*, cow parsley *Anthriscus sylvestris* and buttercup *Ranunculus spp.*

3.2.3 Buildings

UKHab code: u1b5

Secondary code: 833 – barn

There was a two-story stone barn with a slate tile single gable roof on site. The roof was not lined and the barn was used for agricultural purposes including animal shelter and storage.

3.3 Protected Species

3.3.1 Plants

There are **15** species records for protected, NERC Act S41 Priority Species or BAP species within the search area.

- **Two** records for Mountain Male fern.
- **One** record of Lily-of-the-valley.
- **One** record of Angular Solomon's-seal.
- **One** record of Almond Willow.



- **One** record of Field Gentian.
- **Five** records of Yellow Birds-nest.
- **Three** records for Bee Orchid.
- **One** record for Floating Water-Plantain.

No protected or notable plant species were recorded on site.

There are Seven species records for invasive species within the search area.

- **Six** records for Himalayan Balsam
- **One** record for Three cornered garlic.

No invasive plant species were recorded on site. However, due to limitations of time of year invasive species may not have been identifiable. As such, further recommendations are provided in Section 4.

3.3.2 Invertebrates

There are **no** records for stag beetle from the search area, and there is **no** habitat suitable for stag beetle larvae on site.

There are **130** species records for protected or NERC Act S41 Priority Species butterflies within the search area.

- **19** records for Cinnabar Moth.
- **86** records for Small Heath Butterfly.
- **22** records for Wall Butterfly.
- **Two** records of Large Skipper Butterfly.
- **One** record of Ringlet Butterfly.

There are grasslands on site, but one is heavily grazed. Due to time of year indicator species were not present. **No** protected invertebrate species were recorded on site. Invertebrate species are not considered further in this assessment.

3.3.3 Amphibians

There are **no** Natural England mitigation licences, class licences or eDNA pond results which appear to be present within the vicinity shown on MAGIC.

There were **25** records for great crested newt/other amphibians within the search area.

- **24** records for Common Toad.
- **One** record of Common Frog.



The site was assessed for its suitability to support great crested newt and other amphibians – in it's current state the site is considered to hold **negligible** potential for amphibians due to the lack of pond habitat within 500m of the site and lack of vegetated cover on site.

Amphibians are **unlikely** to be present on site. As such, amphibians will not be mentioned further in this report.

3.3.4 Reptiles

There were **no** records for reptiles within the search area.

The site was assessed for its suitability to support reptiles – in it's current state the site is considered to hold low suitability for reptiles. The habitat is well connected to the wider landscape. However, due to the heavy grazing of majority of the grassland on site, reptile presence is **unlikely**.

Reptiles will not be considered further in this assessment.

3.3.5 Birds

There were the following records for birds within the search area.

- **48** records of Barn Owls.
- **12** records of Kingfisher.
- **31** records of Little Ringed Plover
- **Four** records for Peregrine.
- **221** records of Bullfinch.
- **Two** records of Common Redpoll.
- **Two** records of Common Scoter.
- **Eight** records of Cuckoo.
- **15** records of Curlew.
- **324** records of Dunnock.
- **19** records of Grasshopper Warbler.
- **Seven** records of Grey Partridge.
- **17** records of Herring Gull.
- **177** records of House Sparrow.
- **104** records of Lapwing.



- **144** records of Lesser Redpoll.
- **85** records of Linnet.
- **One** record of Red Grouse
- **148** records of Reed Bunting.
- **191** records of Skylark.
- **219** records of Song Thrush.
- **Eight** records of Spotted Flycatcher.
- **132** records of Starling.
- **Two** records of Tree Pipit.
- **One** record of Twite.
- **Three** records of Bar-Tailed Godwit.
- **One** record of Black Necked Grebe.
- **120** records of Black-Tailed Godwit.
- **Three** records of Eider.
- **One** record of Golden Plover.
- **One** record of Grey Heron.
- **One** record of Hen Harrier.
- **Two** records of Knot.
- **One** record of Lesser Black-Backed Gull.
- **One** record of Meadow Pipit.
- **Four** records of Oystercatcher.
- **Two** records of Snipe.

The site was assessed for its suitability to provide potential nesting and foraging opportunities for common species of bird in the tree and building habitat present on site.

No signs of barn owls were present on site. However, there is access for barn owls into the building on site, and limited nesting opportunities within the barn. Further recommendations have been provided in Section 4.



There were multiple signs of nesting birds within the building on site. Three pigeon nests were identified alongside multiple smaller bird nests on the lower level of the barn.

Nesting birds may be present in the building and tree on site. Further recommendations have been provided in Section 4.

3.3.6 Badgers

There **were** records for badgers within the search area.

No field signs of badger were recorded on site. There is potential foraging habitat on the site within the grasslands.

Badgers may use the site for commuting. Further recommendations are provided in Section 4.

3.3.7 Bats

There are **no** Natural England mitigation licences which appear to be present within the vicinity shown on MAGIC.

There were **42** records for bats within the search area.

- **12** records of Common Pipistrelle.
- **One** record of Noctule.
- **13** records of Unidentified Pipistrelle.
- **Seven** records of Common Pipistrelle Roosts.
- **Nine** records of Unidentified Pipistrelle Spp. Roosts.

Buildings

The building is a two-story stone wall barn with a single gable slate tile roof. There are broken and open windows/vents across the barn. This is used for agricultural purposes.

PRFs PRESENT: There were multiple missing tiles and gaps across the roof of the barn, there was missing mortar in the bricks of each corner of the building, broken windows on the western side and open vents/holes in the wall of each building face.

Despite the vast roosting access features across the building, the barn has **negligible** bat roost potential due to the lack of lining on the roof, lack of roof and wall cavities, absence of roosting opportunities inside, the climate inside of the building, and the exposed nature of the site. Alternate, more suitable roosting opportunities occurred in the other buildings around the site, including occupied residential dwellings.

Trees



No trees are to be removed or impacted upon by the proposed development. The trees on site have not been surveyed for bat roosting potential as they will not be affected by the proposed development. Should the current development plans change, and the revised plans require the removal (or maintenance) of any trees on site then a BRP survey will be required on these trees prior to removal or maintenance in order to determine the bat roosting potential of these trees.

Foraging and Commuting Habitat

The site does not contain suitable habitat for foraging and commuting bats. The site is well-connected within the wider landscape. Therefore, the habitat present on site is assessed as low quality.

Therefore, the bat assemblage is assessed of **low** importance for nature conservation. Further recommendations regarding lighting impacts are given in Section 4.

3.3.8 Dormice

There were **no** records for dormice within the search area.

The site was assessed for its suitability to support dormice – in its current state the site is considered to hold **negligible** suitability for dormice due to the absence of suitable grassland on site.

Dormice are unlikely to be on site, as such dormice will not be considered further in this report.

3.3.9 Otter

There were **10** records for otter within the search area.

The site was assessed for its suitability to support otter – in its current state the site is considered to hold **low** suitability for otters. There is a watercourse close to site, however, there are no holt opportunities on site.

Otters are unlikely to be on site, as such otters will not be considered further in this report.

3.3.10 Water vole

There were **no** records for water vole within the search area.

The site was assessed for its suitability to support water vole – in its current state the site is considered to hold **no** suitability for water vole due to the absence of watercourses on site.

Water voles are unlikely to be on site, as such water voles will not be considered further in this report.

3.3.11 Other mammals

There were **nine** records for West European Hedgehog within the search area.



Hedgehogs may use the grassland on site for commuting. This species is listed as vulnerable on the IUCN red list and is a species of Principal Importance under Section 41 of the NERC Act.

Records were also returned for Brown Hare, Roe Deer, Fallow Deer, Red Fox, Mole, and Rabbit. There were mammal droppings on site, species could not be identified.



4. Conclusions

This section identifies and characterises potential impacts of the proposed development on each Important Ecological Feature identified in the preceding section. Measures to avoid, mitigate and compensate for these impacts are described, and any further surveys required are outlined below.

4.1.1 Habitats and The Greater Manchester Nature Network

The site is located inside of the GMNN, with deciduous woodland and lowland fen priority habitat within 500 m of the site. A **Construction Environment Management Plan (CEMP)** is recommended and consultation with the local council is required to detail mitigation measures of any development to ensure there is no significant detrimental effects on the GMNN or priority habitats.

4.1.2 Designated sites

Watergrove Reservoir SBI is within the zone of influence of the site. A **Construction Environment Management Plan (CEMP)** is recommended and consultation with the local council is required to detail mitigation measures of any development to ensure there is no significant detrimental effects on the designated site.

4.2 Protected species

4.2.1 Barn Owls and Nesting birds

Impacts

The clearance of the building and tree has the potential to cause killing or injury to nesting birds. A significant permanent negative effect at the site level is possible.

Mitigation

Vegetation clearance should be conducted outside of the nesting bird season to avoid disturbing the birds (the nesting season is considered to run between 1st March and 31st August).

Prior to any works on the building a suitably qualified ecologist should check potential nesting habitat immediately prior to works. Where nesting birds are encountered works must be postponed until the nestlings have fledged.

A walkover survey by an appropriately licenced ecologist will be required to no more than 10 days prior to building works, to check the site for presence/absence of nesting barn owls.

4.2.2 Bat assemblage

As the site has been considered to have a **negligible** potential risk of supporting bat roosting sites, we recommend that the proposed development at **Barn Field Lane**, **should** go ahead, and that no **Bat Mitigation Licence** is required. However, the work should be carried out with care and vigilance.



Should any bats be found during any stage of the development, all work must stop immediately and a qualified ecologist must be contacted. The qualified ecologist will provide advice on the best course of action. It must be stated that this is a legal requirement, and that bats may only be handled and their roost disturbed by an experienced ecologist holding an appropriate licence.

Impacts

Construction activity, noise and lighting would have the potential to disturb commuting and foraging bats and may result in abandonment of roosts or core foraging areas adjacent to the Site.

The significant negative effect of disturbance during the construction phase are likely to be short-term in localised areas, and the bulk of any disturbance from construction work could be expected to take place mainly during daylight hours even in the absence of controls, when bats would not be foraging or commuting.

Therefore, disturbance from operational lighting from the new houses are a possible significant permanent negative effect at the site level.

Mitigation

The production and implementation of a Construction Method Statement (CMS) will be put into place prior to the beginning of the construction phase.

The CMS being implemented will prevent any disturbance impacts to bats during the construction period.

Lighting

All lighting installed as part of the development will be in line with Guidance Note 08/23 Bats and Artificial Lighting at night. The following will be required:

- LED lighting will be used and light levels will be kept as low as possible. Metal halide, fluorescent sources will not be used.
- Lighting will be directed to where it is required.
- Only luminaires with no light output above 90 degrees and/or an upward light ratio of 0% and with good optical control will be used, luminaires will always be mounted on the horizontal, i.e. no upward tilt.
- Any external security lighting will be set on motion-sensors and short (1min) timers.
- Internal lighting within the new rooms will be recessed where installed in proximity to windows to reduce glare and light spill.
- Light sources will emit minimal ultra-violet light, peak higher than 550nm and be of a warm white spectrum (ideally <2700 Kelvin).
- The use of bollard or low-level downward directional luminaires is strongly discouraged.



Providing the Lighting Strategy is adhered to, there will be an insignificant effect on the bat assemblage from lighting during the operational phase.

4.2.3 Hedgehogs, Badgers and Other Mammals.

All excavations must be covered overnight, and planks must be placed at a 45-degree angle to allow for safe passage of protected species across the site.

4.2.4 Schedule 9 plants

Invasive species records were returned, due to time of year invasive species absence/presence could not be accurately determined. Species listed under Schedule 9 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended), Schedule 9 makes it illegal to allow or cause these plants to grow 'in the wild' and they should be removed from site to prevent their spread.

An **Invasive Species Survey** is required to determine absence/ presence of invasive species on site.



5. Enhancements

5.1.1 In line with both local and national planning policy, the opportunity has been taken to design habitat enhancements into the proposed development. These enhancements, described below, will also be of benefit to the Section 41 species (and local BAP species) known to be present within the Zol. A Biodiversity Enhancement Plan (BEP) should be designed pre-construction to be implemented post construction during the landscaping phase of the development. This plan will aim to ensure there is no net loss of habitats on site and to increase biodiversity and opportunities for wildlife on site, due to the result of the proposed development. The biodiversity enhancement plan will aim to provide opportunities for local wildlife to ensure the development does not have a significant detrimental impact on local or national wildlife populations. Measures which may be included within the Biodiversity Enhancement Plan are outlined below.

- The provision of nest boxes for bird species such as swift and house sparrow on the walls of the new building will provide permanent nesting for species in decline. Swift boxes have the added benefit of being used often by other non-target species such as house sparrows.
- Both swift and house sparrows are colonial species and therefore the bricks/boxes will be fitted in groups with a minimum of three within proximity to each other to form colonies. The provision of groups of swift bricks/ boxes on site will enhance the habitat for the local bird population. Swift bricks will be fixed no less than two storeys (4.5-5m) above ground level and nest boxes can be sited on any aspect of a building except the southern side (unless shaded by the eaves) to prevent the young becoming heat stressed.
- The design will include one group of three swift integrated boxes which can be rendered or brick faced per unit. There will also be three integrated bird boxes on other buildings within the scheme.
- Provision of one integrated bat boxes/bricks within each of the new buildings to provide new roosting opportunities for the local bat populations. The box/brick will be fitted on south or west facing walls, as close to the eaves as possible. Bat bricks/boxes should not be fitted above or immediately adjacent to windows. These bat boxes are self contained with only a small entrance slot visible on the external wall and can be rendered over or stone/brick faced.
- Small holes (13 x 13 cm) will be left in any fences separating the garden from adjacent properties to allow hedgehogs to move freely throughout the site.
- Installation of bee bricks within the walls of the new house. Provision of bee bricks can provide excellent alternative habitat for solitary non-stinging bees. Six bee bricks will be incorporated within the design of the site. These bricks will be erected 1 metre above ground level within the stonework.
- Planting of fruit trees within the landscaping. A minimum of one fruit tree will be planted within the landscaping of each unit. This will provide excellent autumn and winter foraging for a number of species particularly birds as well as fruit for the new owners.



- The areas to be planted as flowerbeds should include plants that provide good nectar sources for invertebrates such as bees and attract insects which will provide foraging for birds and attract moths for bats. Species include honeysuckle, jasmine, evening primrose, hebe, sedum, night scented stock, lavender, chives, geranium, foxgloves, aquilegia, wallflower and fuchsia.



6. References

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Appendices



Appendix 1: UKHab Habitat Map





Site name & address

**Barn Field Lane
Rochdale
Lancashire
OL12 9PN**

Key

- - - 114 - dry stone wall

UKHab Habitat -

 g4 - modified grassland

 u1b5 - buildings

Secondary codes-

101 - cattle grazed

102 - sheep grazed

104 - other grazed

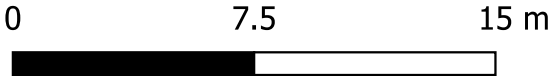
825 - ruined building

 Red Line Boundary

G1 (101, 102, 104)

G2 (825)

Scale



Site
Barn Field Lane

Client
Adam Smith

Project
23633 Preliminary
Ecological Appraisal

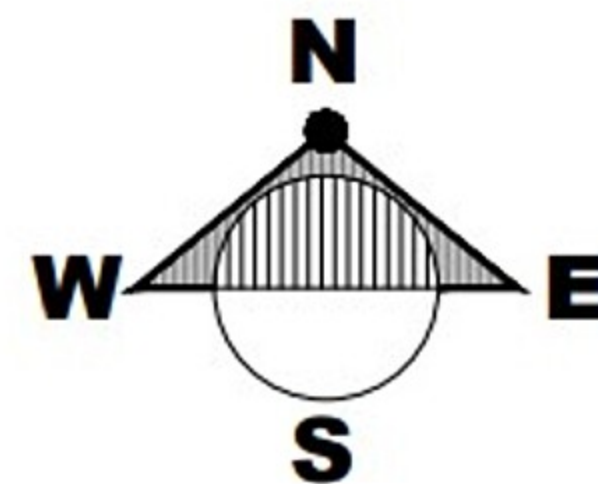
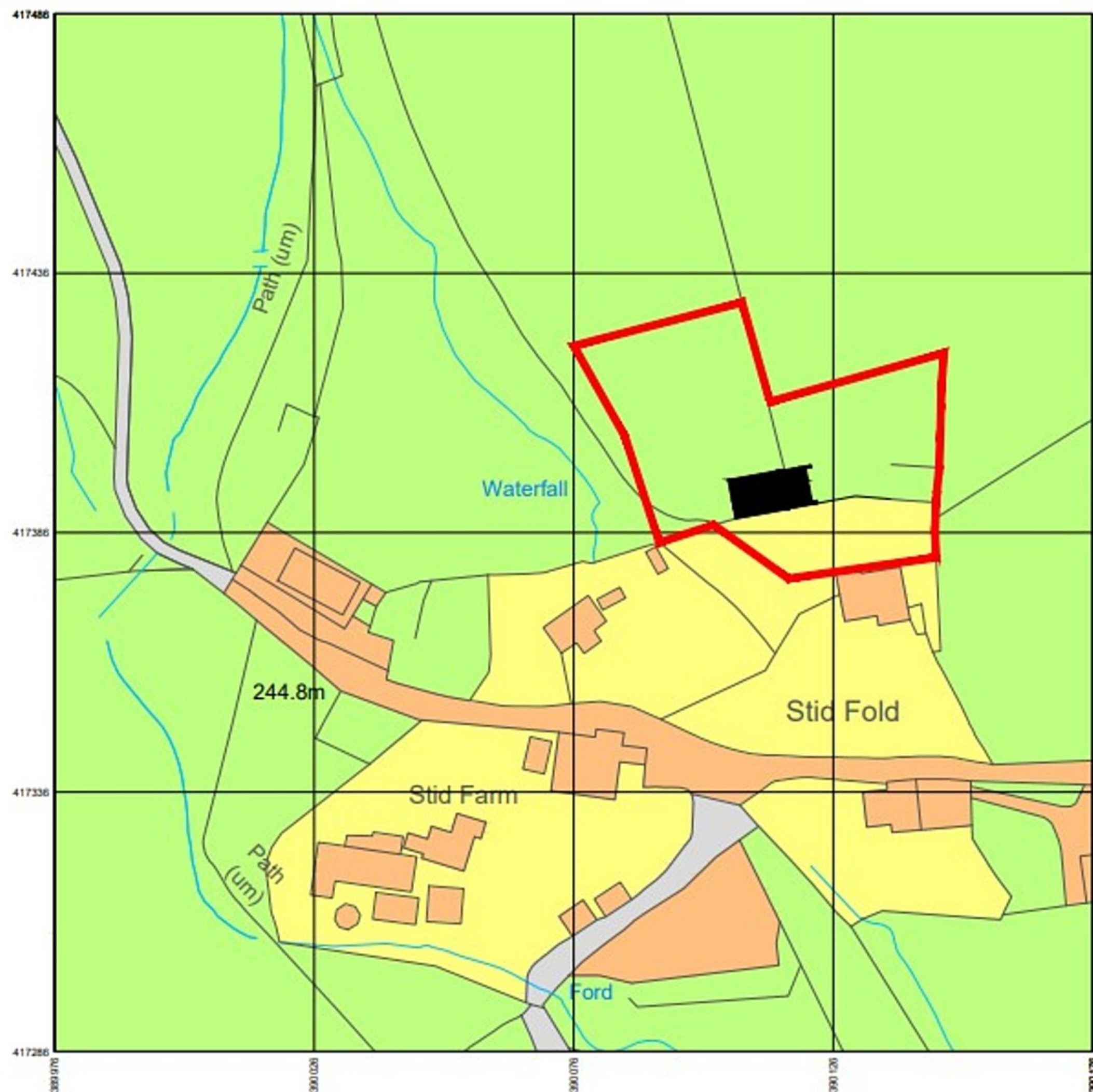
Author
RPS

Plan ref

Revision
0

Appendix 2: Proposed Development Plan





Produced on 25 June 2025 from the Ordnance Survey National Geographic Database and incorporating surveyed revision available at this date.
 This map shows the area bounded by 389976 417286, 390176 417286, 390176 417486, 389976 417486, 389976 417286
 own copyright and database rights 2025 OS 100054135. Supplied by copla ltd trading as UKPlanningMaps.com a licensed Ordnance Survey partner (OS 100054135).
 Data licence expires 25 June 2026. Unique plan reference: v40/1275273/1710471

SITE LOCATION PLAN 1:1250

Appendix 3: Photographic Evidence



Photo 1: South facing side of building 1.



Photo 2: West facing side of building 1.

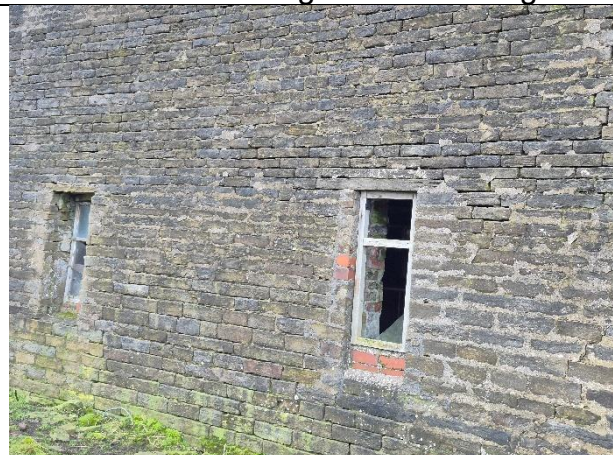


Photo 3: Broken windows on west facing side of building 1.



Photo 4: Hole in the wall of west facing side of building 1.

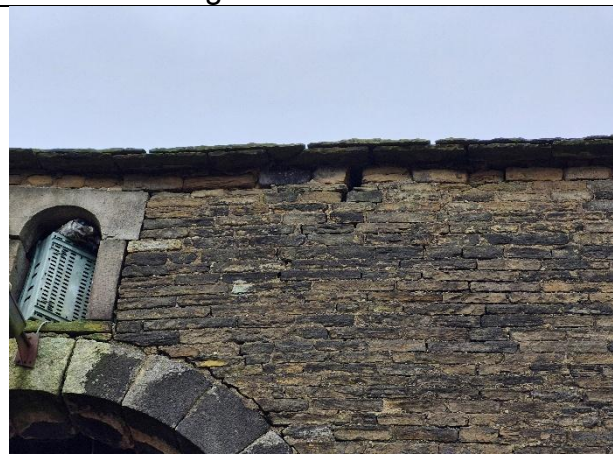


Photo 5: Holes in the wall, missing mortar and gaps in tiles of southern facing side of building 1.



Photo 6: East facing side of building 1.





Photo 7: Missing mortar and gaps in tiles of east facing side.

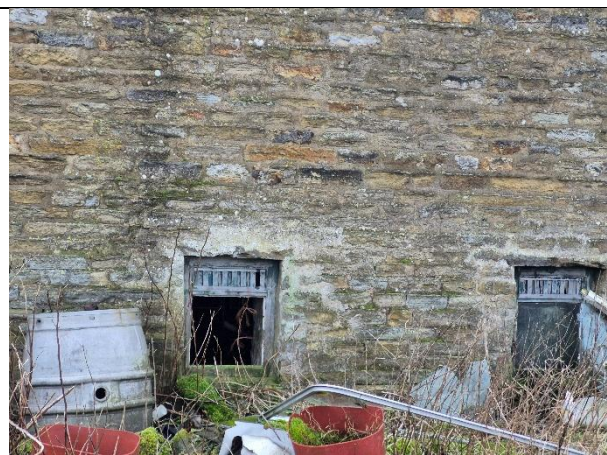


Photo 8: Broken windows on east facing side of building 1.

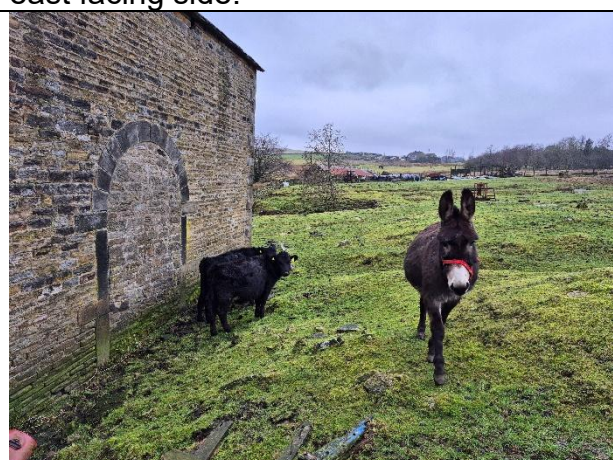


Photo 9: Grassland 1 grazed by donkeys, cattle and sheep.



Photo 10: Hole in the northern facing wall of building 1.



Photo 11: Northern facing side of building 1.



Photo 12: Gaps in tiles on northern facing roof.





Photo 13: Missing tiles on eastern facing side of building 1.



Photo 14: Inside view of tiled roof of building 1.

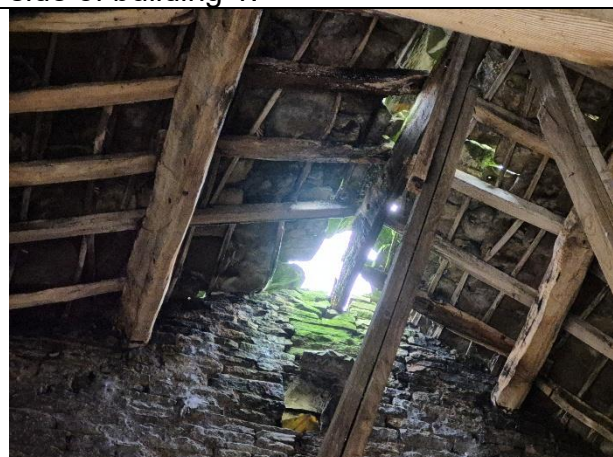


Photo 15: Hole in the roof and wall of building 1.



Photo 16: Lower storey facing east inside building 1.



Photo 17: Holes in the roof of building 1.



Photo 18: View of western side of building 1.





Photo 19: Bird's nest inside building 1



Photo 20: Bird's nest inside building 1.



Photo 21: Western facing view of second story.



Photo 22: Grassland 2.



Photo 23: Grassland 1 and tree 1.



Photo 24: Grassland 2



Appendix 4: Additional Relevant Maps

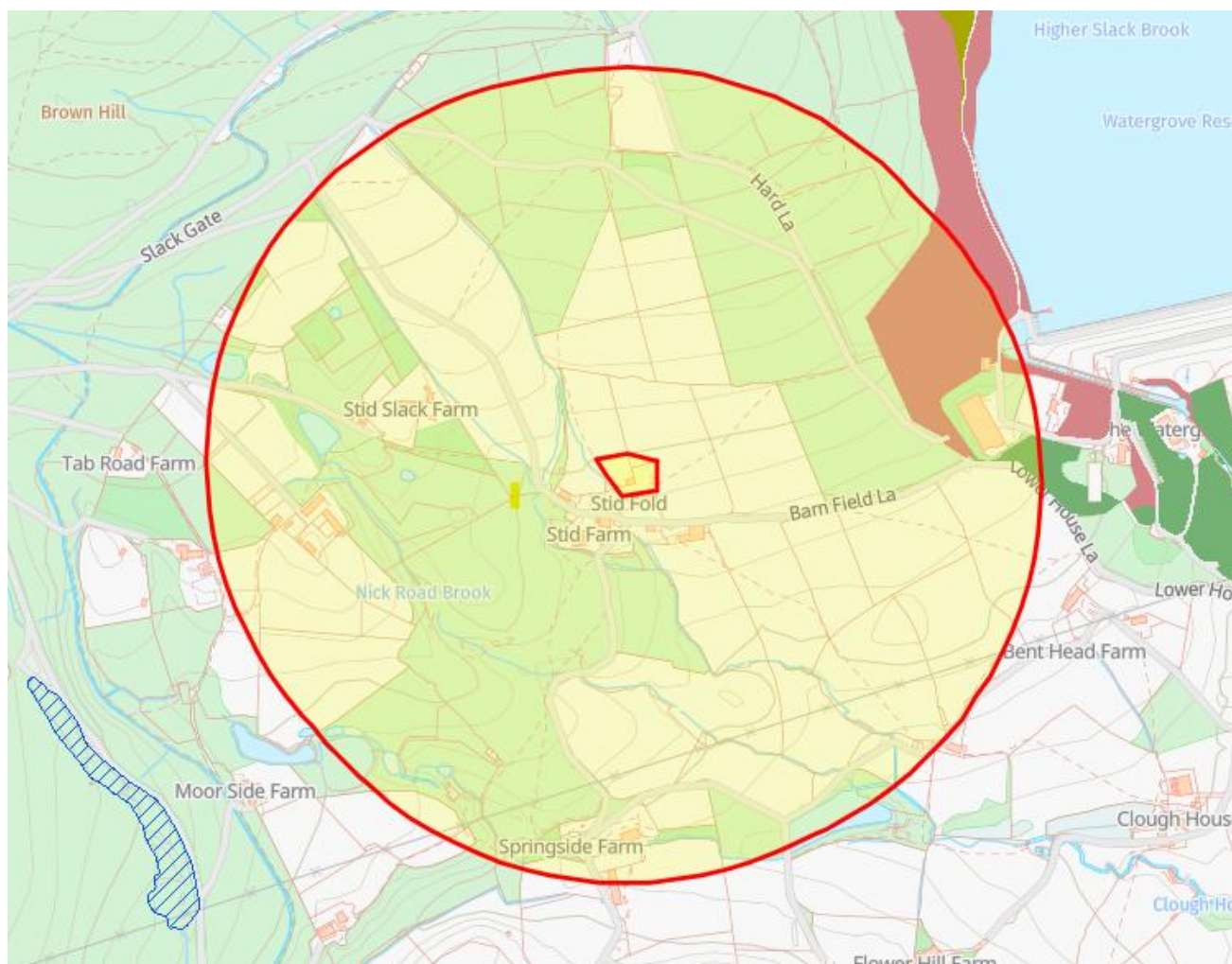


Figure 1: Lowland Fen (Red) and Deciduous Woodland (Green) Priority habitat within the Zone of Influence of the Site.



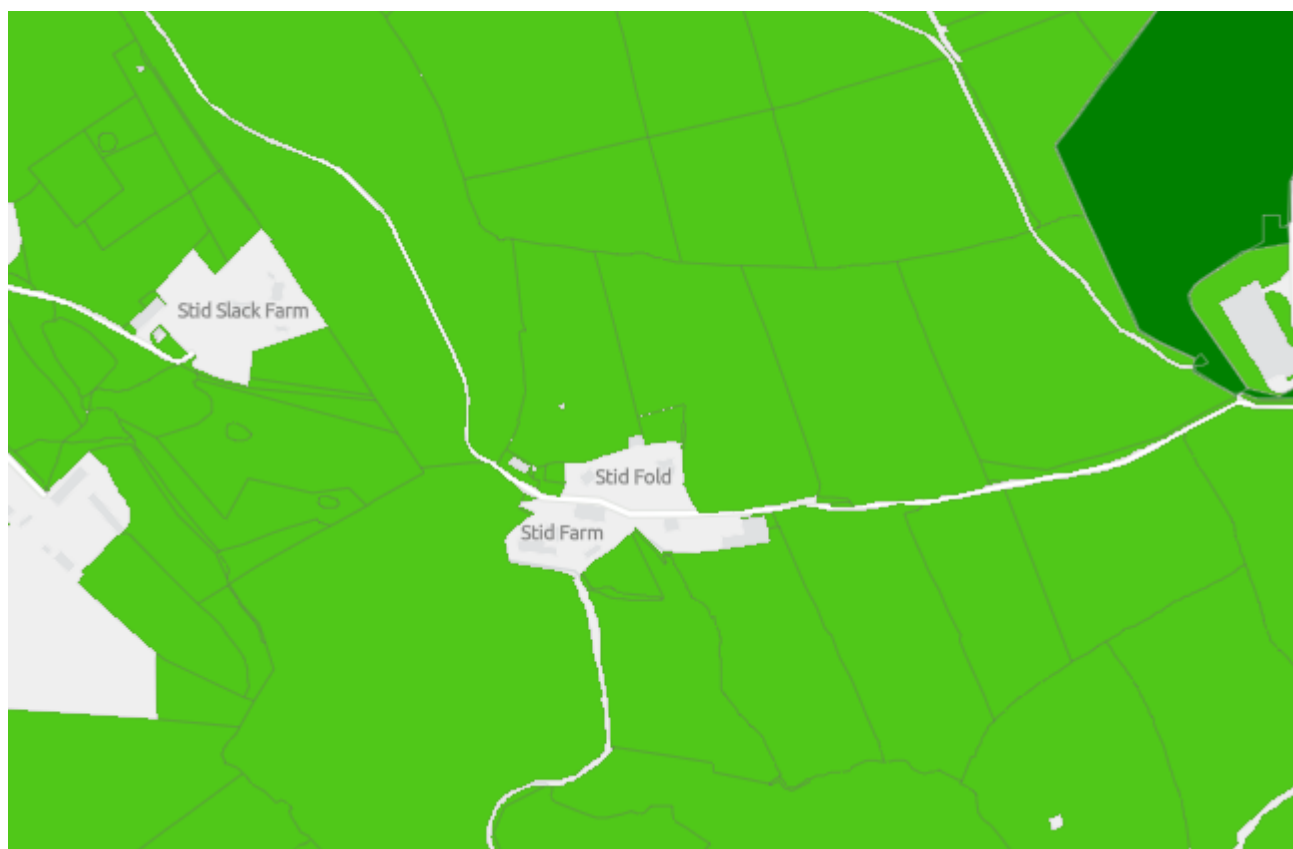


Figure 2: Opportunity Areas (Light green) and Core Local Nature Sites (Dark Green) surrounding and within the vicinity of the site.



Appendix 5: Relevant Nature Conservation Legislation and Policy

This Appendix is intended to provide an overview of the main features of legislation and policy relating to nature conservation in England and the implications for development.

KEY WILDLIFE LEGISLATION

Environment Act 2021

The Environment Act 2021 received royal assent in November 2021 and introduces new environmental protection regimes. This includes the creation of the Office for Environmental Protection who will oversee the framework. The Act includes several measures which impact on the planning application process to provide measures to ensure developments result in a net gain in biodiversity.

The Act provides a timeframe of 2 years from receiving royal assent for the production of the required regulations to implement the mandatory requirement of 10% Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) for new developments. This applies from the 12th February for major applications and 2nd April for small sites. In England, BNG is becoming mandatory under Schedule 7A of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as inserted by Schedule 14 of the Environment Act 2021).

Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended)

The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (known as the "Habitats Regulations") was recently amended by the Conservation of Habitats and Species (Amendment) (EU Exit) Regulations 2019.

The Habitats Regulations provide for the designation of both Special Protection Areas (SPAs) and Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) in the UK. The Regulations also prohibit certain actions relating to European Protected Species (EPS), which include Hazel Dormouse *Muscardinus avellanarius*, Great Crested Newt *Triturus cristatus*, European Otter *Lutra lutra* and all native species of bat.

Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981 (as amended)

The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 is the principal mechanism for the legislative protection of wildlife in Great Britain. Certain species of bird, animal and plant (including all of the European Protected Species listed above) are afforded protection under Schedules 1, 5 and 8 of the Act. The Act also contains measures for the protection of the countryside, National Parks, Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs) and public rights of way as well as preventing the establishment of invasive non-native species that may be detrimental to native wildlife in Schedule 9.

Countryside & Rights of Way Act 2000

Many of the provisions of the Countryside and Rights of Way (CROW) Act 2000 have been incorporated as amendments into the Wildlife and Countryside Act (1981) and some provisions have now been superseded by later legislation such as The Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act (2006).

The most relevant changes provided by the CROW Act include the added protection given to SSSIs and other important sites for nature conservation. Importantly, under the Act it became a criminal offence to "recklessly disturb" Schedule 1 nesting birds and species protected under Schedule 5 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act. It also enabled heavier penalties on conviction of wildlife offences.

The Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006

The Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006 was intended to raise the profile of biodiversity amongst all public authorities and to make biodiversity an integral part of policy and decision-making processes. The NERC Act also improved wildlife protection by amending the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981. Section 40 (S40) of the Act places a 'Biodiversity Duty' on all public bodies to have regard to the conservation of biodiversity when carrying out their normal functions. This includes giving consideration to the restoration and enhancement of species and habitats.

Section 41 (S41) of the Act requires the Secretary of State to publish a list of habitats and species which are of Principal Importance for the conservation of biodiversity in England. This was published in 2007 and is commonly referred to as the "S41 list". Public authorities have a responsibility to give specific consideration to the S41 list when exercising their normal functions.

PLANNING POLICY & GUIDANCE

Listed below is the main planning policy and government guidance that relates to the conservation of nature and development at all levels of government.



National Level

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

The National Planning Policy Framework sets out the Government's planning policies for England and how these should be applied in local-level policy and decision making. The National Planning Framework was re-issued in July 2018 and updated in February 2019, July 2021 and September 2023. Key points relevant to the Natural Environment are given below.

8. Re: Sustainable development. The NPPF recognizes "that the planning system has three overarching objectives, which are interdependent and need to be pursued in mutually supportive ways (so that opportunities can be taken to secure net gains across each of the different objectives).

These are the economic objective, the social objective, and the environmental objective; the full text of paragraph c) relating to this third objective reads as follows:

"to protect and enhance our natural, built and historic environment; including making effective use of land, improving biodiversity, using natural resources prudently, minimising waste and pollution, and mitigating and adapting to climate change, including moving to a low carbon economy."

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

- a) Protecting and enhancing valued landscapes, sites of biodiversity ... (in a manner commensurate with the 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.
- d) minimising impacts on and providing net gains for biodiversity, including establishing coherent ecological networks that are more resilient to current and future pressures.

175. Plans should: distinguish between the hierarchy of international, national and locally designated sites; allocate land with the least environmental or amenity value.

176. 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 in National Parks and the Broads. The scale and extent of development within these designated areas should be limited, while development within their setting should be sensitively located and designed to avoid or minimise adverse impacts on the designated areas.

177. permission should be refused for major development other than in exceptional circumstances, and where it can be demonstrated that the development is in the public interest. Consideration of such applications should include an assessment of:

- a) the need for the development, including in terms of any national considerations, and the impact of permitting it, or refusing it, upon the local economy;
- b) the cost of, and scope for, developing outside the designated area, or meeting the need for it in some other way; and
- c) any detrimental effect on the environment, the landscape and recreational opportunities, and the extent to which that could be moderated.

180. 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 improve biodiversity in and around developments should be integrated as part of their design, especially where this can secure measurable net gains for biodiversity or enhance public access to nature where this is appropriate.

181. The following should be given the same protection as habitats sites:

- a) potential Special Protection Areas and possible Special Areas of Conservation;*
- b) listed or proposed Ramsar sites; and*
- c) sites identified, or required, as compensatory measures for adverse effects on habitats sites, potential Special Protection Areas, possible Special Areas of Conservation, and listed or proposed Ramsar sites.*

182. The presumption in favour of sustainable development does not apply where the plan or project is likely to have a significant effect on a habitats site (either alone or in combination with other plans or projects), unless an appropriate assessment has concluded that the plan or project will not adversely affect the integrity of the habitats site."

Local Level

- *Greater Manchester Nature Recovery Plan*
- *Greater Manchester Biodiversity Action Plan (GMBAP)*

BIODIVERSITY PLANS AND STRATEGIES

An overview of the key biodiversity plans and strategies in the UK, and their implications for development, are set out below.

National level

The UK Biodiversity Action Plan 2007 (UK BAP) has been superseded by the *UK Post-2010 Biodiversity Framework* and individual national biodiversity strategies. The UK framework sets out the overarching vision, strategic goals and priority activities for the UK. The Framework's overall vision is that "by 2050, biodiversity is valued, conserved, restored and wisely used, maintaining ecosystem services, sustaining a healthy planet and delivering benefits essential for all people." In England, *Biodiversity 2020: A strategy for England's wildlife and ecosystem services* is the national biodiversity strategy, which has the stated mission "(...)to halt overall biodiversity loss, support healthy well-functioning ecosystems and establish coherent ecological networks, with more and better places for nature for the benefit of wildlife and people."

Note some local plans and government guidance documents/circulars still refer to the UK BAP and 'UK BAP priority habitats and species'. These habitats and species are listed under Section 41 of the NERC Act, and **remain a material consideration in the planning process**. They are now described as 'Species/Habitats of Principal Importance', though they are also commonly referred to as 'Section 41 Species/Habitats' or simply 'Priority Species/Habitats'. Further guidance is given in the relevant sections below.

Local level

Despite the changes to national level biodiversity policy described above, county and district level BAPs still apply. . Greater Manchester Nature Recovery Plan; Greater Manchester Biodiversity Action Plan (GMBAP) Delivering Biodiversity Opportunities



Where practicable, opportunities should also be sought to achieve a **net gain** (i.e. enhancement) of biodiversity. Support for biodiversity enhancement is provided in the Public Authority 'Biodiversity Duty' under the NERC Act 2006 and in the key principles of the NPPF, as described above.

SITES DESIGNATED FOR THE CONSERVATION OF NATURE

Statutory Sites

Internationally Important Sites

Ramsar Sites, Special Areas of Conservation (SAC) and Special Protection Areas (SPA)

The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended) provide the primary legal basis for the protection of Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) and Special Protection Areas (SPAs) in Great Britain. Ramsar sites are, as a matter of national planning policy, subject to the same strict protection. Any plan or project considered likely to affect a SAC, SPA or Ramsar site must be subject to an assessment.

Ramsar sites are wetlands of international importance. The majority of terrestrial Ramsar sites in England are also notified as SPAs and/or Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs).

SACs are sites which support internationally important habitats and/or species listed as being of Community. SPAs are sites which support internationally important numbers of bird species. Together, SACs and SPAs make up the National Site Network.

Any plan or project considered likely to affect a SAC, SPA or Ramsar site must be subject to a Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA), as set out under Regulation 63 of the Habitats Regulations 2017 (as amended).

The Local Authority (or other 'competent authority') carries out the HRA, but the onus is on the developer to provide the necessary information to inform this process.

Under the Habitats Regulation 2017 (as amended), the competent authority must determine in the first instance whether a proposed development is likely to have a significant effect on the National Site Network site either alone or in combination with other plans and projects. The stage of the HRA is known as 'screening'.

If a likely significant effect cannot be screened out, then an 'Appropriate Assessment' must be undertaken to assess the implications against the site's conservation objectives.

Nationally Important Sites

Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)

The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) and the CROW Act 2000 provide the primary legal basis for the protection of Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI). These sites have been designated to capture the best examples of England's flora, fauna, geological or physiographical diversity.

National Nature Reserve (NNR)

NNRs are declared under the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949 and the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981, as amended by Environmental Protection Act 1990. They are managed to conserve their habitats or to provide special opportunities for scientific study of the habitats communities and species represented within them. NNRs represent the very best parts of England's SSSIs. The majority of NNRs also have European nature conservation designation.

Regionally & Locally Important Sites

Local Nature Reserves

Local Nature Reserves are declared by local authorities under the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949 as living green spaces in towns, cities, villages and countryside. They provide opportunities for research and education, or for simply enjoying and having contact with nature. LNRs are usually protected from development through local planning documents which may be supplemented by local by-laws.

Non-Statutory Sites

Local Wildlife Sites

Local authorities may designate non-statutory sites for their nature conservation value based on important, distinctive and threatened habitats and species within a national, regional and local context. These sites are



not legally protected but are given some protection through the planning system. These sites may be declared as 'County Wildlife Sites', 'Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation' (SINCs), or 'Sites of Nature Conservation Importance' (SNICIs) in local and structure plans. Non-statutory sites are a material consideration when planning applications are being determined.

Nature Conservation in Areas Outside Designated Sites

Various other features exist outside designated sites that are important for the conservation of nature and which are a material consideration in the planning system.

Habitats of Principal Importance in England

Fifty-six habitat types have been identified as Habitats of Principal Importance in England for the conservation of biodiversity under Section 41 of the NERC Act 2006. The NPPF, Government Circular 06/05, good practice guidance and the NERC Act place a clear responsibility on planning authorities to further the conservation of these habitats. They can be a material consideration in planning decisions, and so developers are advised to take reasonable measures to avoid or mitigate impacts to prevent their net loss and to enhance them where possible. Additional guidance to developers is typically provided in local level planning policy.

SPECIES PROTECTION

Legally Protected Species

Mammals

All wild mammals are protected against cruelty under the Wild Mammals (Protection) Act 1996, which makes it an offence to mutilate, kick, beat, nail or otherwise impale, stab, burn, stone, crush, drown, drag or asphyxiate any wild mammal with intent to inflict unnecessary suffering.

The following species of mammal are protected further by law in England:

Bats

There are 18 species of bat in the UK, seven of which are Species of Principal Importance in England. All bats and bat roosts are protected under Schedule 5 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended). Bats are also protected under the Habitat Regulations 2017 as amended by the Conservation of Habitats and Species (Amendment) (EU Exit) Regulations 2019, where protection is retained under UK domestic legislation. It is an offence to:

- Intentionally or deliberately kill, injure or capture bats;
- Intentionally, deliberately or recklessly disturb bats in such a way as to be likely to significantly affect the ability of any significant group of bats to survive, breed, or rear or nurture their young or the local distribution of or abundance of a species of bat;
- Intentionally, or recklessly damage, destroy or obstruct any place used for shelter or protection (i.e. bat roosts) or intentionally or recklessly disturb a bat whilst it is occupying such a place;
- Damage or destroy a breeding site or resting place of a bat; and
- Possess, sell or transport a bat, or anything derived from it.

Development proposals affecting bats or their roosts require a Protected Species licence from Natural England. It should be noted that a licence is enacted under the Habitat Regulations 2017 and will continue to apply in UK Law through the Conservation of Habitats and Species (amendment) (EU Exit) Regulations 2019 and the European Union Withdrawal Act 2018 following the implementation of Brexit.

Dormouse

The Dormouse *Muscardinus avellanarius* is a Species of Principal Importance in England. It is legally protected under Schedule 5 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) and is afforded significant further protection as a European Protected Species under the Habitats Regulations 2017 (as amended). Collectively, this legislation makes it an offence to:

- Intentionally or deliberately kill, injure or capture Dormice;



- Intentionally, deliberately or recklessly disturb Dormice in such a way as to be likely to significantly affect the ability of any significant group of Dormice to survive, breed, or rear or nurture their young or the local distribution of or abundance of the species;
- Intentionally or recklessly damage, destroy or obstruct access to places used by Dormice for shelter or protection (whether occupied or not) or intentionally or recklessly disturb a Dormouse whilst it is occupying such a place;
- Damage or destroy a breeding site or resting place of a Dormouse;
- Possess or transport a Dormouse (or any part thereof) unless under licence; and
- Sell or exchange Dormice.

Development proposals affecting the Dormouse require a European Protected Species licence from Natural England.

Badger

The Protection of Badgers Act 1992 offers considerable protection to both badgers and badger setts. This legislation was enacted to protect the Badger *Meles meles* against baiting and not as a means of species recovery for it is common in England. It is an offence to cruelly treat, kill or take Badgers, but it is also illegal to intentionally or recklessly damage or disturb a badger sett whilst it indicates signs of current use by a Badger.

Natural England has issued guidance to help developers and their proponents avoid sett disturbance and to identify setts that are in current use¹. It is important to maintain adequate foraging territory in development proposals affecting badgers as the destruction or severance of large areas of foraging territory could also be taken to include habitat loss. Licences to disturb Badgers and their setts in respect of development may be issued by Natural England provided provisions are made to minimise disturbance.

Birds

49 species of bird are listed as Species of Principal Importance in England. All birds are protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended), making it an offence, with certain exceptions (e.g. game birds), to intentionally kill, injure or take any wild bird and to take, damage or destroy their nests or eggs.

Schedule 1 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 affords extra protection for a number of species and applies harsher penalties for offences. Any intentional or reckless disturbance of a Schedule 1 bird, whilst it is nesting or rearing dependant young, constitutes an offence.

Regulation 10 of the Habitat Regulations 2017 (as amended) required appropriate authorities and conservation bodies, in the exercise of their functions, to take steps to secure 'the preservation, maintenance and re-establishment of sufficient diversity and area of habitat for wild birds in the United Kingdom, including by means of the upkeep, management and creation of such habitat.'

Reptiles

All four of the widespread British species of reptile, including the Common Lizard *Lacerta vivipara*, Slow-Worm *Anguis fragilis*, Grass Snake *Natrix natrix* and Adder *Vipera berus*, are Species of Principal Importance in England. They are protected under Schedule 5 (Sections 9.1, 9.5a, 9.5b) of the Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) from intentional killing, injury and trade. The habitat of the four widespread reptiles is not legally protected; however the replacement of habitat lost through development may be required through the planning system. Mitigation for these species is not subject to licensing by Natural England but should nonetheless be planned to minimise disturbance.

The Smooth Snake *Coronella austriaca* and the Sand Lizard *Lacerta agilis* are the rarest reptile species in Britain. In addition to the protection that is afforded to the widespread species of reptile listed above, these

¹Natural England (2009). Protection of Badgers Act 1992 (as amended) Interpretation of 'Disturbance' in relation to badgers occupying a sett. Available from:

http://www.naturalengland.org.uk/Images/WMLG16_tcm6-11814.pdf

Natural England (2009). Guidance on 'Current Use' in the definition of a Badger Sett. Available from:

http://www.naturalengland.org.uk/Images/WMLG17_tcm6-11815.pdf



species are protected further under Schedule 5 (Sections 9.4b and 9.4c) of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended). They are also European Protected Species protected under the Habitat Regulations 2017 (as amended). This legislation makes it an offence to:

- Intentionally or deliberately kill, injure or capture Sand Lizards or Smooth Snakes;
- Intentionally, deliberately or recklessly disturb Sand Lizards or Smooth Snakes in such a way as to be likely to significantly affect the ability of any significant group of Sand Lizards or Smooth Snakes to survive, breed, or rear or nurture their young or the local distribution or abundance of either species;
- Intentionally or recklessly damage, destroy or obstruct any place used by Sand Lizards or Smooth Snakes for shelter or protection, or intentionally or recklessly disturb a Sand Lizard or Smooth Snake whilst it is occupying such a place;
- Damage or destroy a breeding site or resting place of a Sand Lizard or Smooth Snake;
- Keep, sell, or exchange Sand Lizards or Smooth Snakes or their eggs; and
- Deliberately take or destroy their eggs

Development proposals affecting Smooth Snake or Sand Lizard require a European Protected Species licence from Natural England.

Great Crested Newt

The Great Crested Newt *Triturus cristatus* is a Species of Principal Importance in England. It is legally protected under Schedule 5 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) and is afforded significant further protection as a European Protected Species under the Habitats Regulations 2017 (as amended). Collectively, this legislation makes it an offence to:

- Intentionally or deliberately kill, injure or capture Great Crested Newts;
- Intentionally, deliberately or recklessly disturb Great Crested Newts in such a way as to be likely to significantly affect the ability of any significant group of Newts to survive, breed, or rear or nurture their young or the local distribution of or abundance the species;
- Intentionally or recklessly damage, destroy or obstruct any place used by Great Crested Newts for shelter or protection, or intentionally or recklessly disturb a Great Crested Newt whilst it is occupying such a place;
- Damage or destroy a breeding site or resting place of a Great Crested Newt; and
- Possess, sell or transport a Great Crested Newt, or anything derived from it.

Development proposals affecting the Great Crested Newt require a European Protected Species licence from Natural England. Intentional or reckless behaviour leading to an offence being committed as detailed above may result in maximum penalties of:

- Up to £5,000 fine per offence committed;
- A custodial sentence of up to six months instead of, or in addition to, a fine; and/or
- Items of equipment involved in committing the offence may be seized and detained.

In addition to the above penalties, it is likely that any European Protected Species mitigation Licence (EPSL) obtained for a site will be revoked whilst any wildlife offence is investigated. This will lead to immediate temporary and, depending on investigation outcomes, possible permanent restrictions on site works, as well as associated cost.

Species of Principal Importance in England



943 species have been identified as being of Principal Importance in England for the conservation of biodiversity under Section 41 (S41) of the NERC Act 2006. This list of species includes species found in England which have been identified as requiring action under the now superseded UK Biodiversity Action Plan 2007 (plus the Hen Harrier). While these species may not be legally protected, there is a clear responsibility on planning authorities to further their conservation. These species can be a material consideration in development control decisions and so developers are advised to take reasonable measures to avoid or mitigate impacts to prevent the net loss of these species and habitats and to enhance them where possible.

Invasive Non-Native Species

There are a number of species not ordinarily resident to the UK. Those which pose a significant threat to our ecology and economy are listed under Schedule 9 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended). For an offence to be committed, a species must be released or allowed to escape into the wild. For example, if a plant listed on Schedule 9 is not adequately controlled by a land owner, once they are aware that it is present, and the species is allowed to spread into adjoining areas, then this could constitute an offence.



Appendix 6: Author Qualifications

Adam West, Principal Ecologist

BSc (Hons) Animal and Wildlife Management, ACIEEM.

Adam joined JCA to lead the expanding ecology department. Having returned to education as a mature student, Adam studied Countryside Management for two years before undertaking a Bachelor's degree in Animal and Wildlife Management, for which he was awarded First Class Honours. Adam has many years' experience in ecological consultancy, working on projects ranging from individual planning applications to national infrastructure projects. Adam holds a Natural England Level 1 great crested newt survey class licence and a Natural England Level 2 bat survey class licence.

Rebecca Petch-Smith, Graduate Ecologist

MBiol (Hons) Zoology

Rebecca joined JCA in 2025 after spending 18 months in the teaching industry. Prior to this she graduated from the University of Leeds with a 2:1 Honours Integrated Master's degree in Zoology. As part of her degree programme, Rebecca spent time in Kenya conducting surveys on African ungulates. Rebecca began assisting on bat emergence surveys in 2024, after which, she gained employment as a Graduate Ecologist at JCA Ltd. She is currently conducting Preliminary Ecological Appraisals, Bat Scope Surveys and Biodiversity Net Gain Assessments and working towards her protected species licence.

Kristen Kelly, Graduate Ecologist

BSc (Hons) Ecology & Conservation, MSc Biodiversity & Conservation

Kristen joined JCA in 2025 after completing her master's degree at the University of Leeds with a distinction in biodiversity and conservation. Prior to this she completed her Bachelors at Edge Hill University with a first in ecology and conservation. She has gained a level 2 FISC qualification in plant identification and is currently gaining experience in Preliminary Ecological Appraisal and UK Habs.

Alex Donovan, Assistant Ecologist

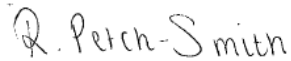
MBiol BSc (Hons) Biology (Industrial), MRSB.

Alex joined JCA in 2023 after graduating from the University of Leeds with a First Class Honours Integrated Master's degree in Biology, including an industrial placement year working in the Uplands Research Department of the Game and Wildlife Conservation Trust. Alex is a Qualifying Member of CIEEM, a Member of the Royal Society of Biology, and a member of the BTO's Bird Ringing Scheme and Nest Record Scheme. Alex holds Natural England licences for barn owls (CL29) and great crested newts (level 1, CL08) and is working towards additional survey licences for bats and white-clawed crayfish.



The information and advice which we have prepared and provided is true and has been prepared and provided in accordance with the CIEEM's Code of Professional Conduct. We confirm that the opinions expressed are our true and bona fide opinions.

Author



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Rebecca Petch-Smith *MBiol BSc (Hons)*

28/01/2026

First review by



.....
Kristen Kelly *MSc, BSc (Hons)*

28/01/2026

Final review by



.....
Alex Donovan *MBiol BSc (Hons), MRSB*

29/01/2026



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ECOLOGICAL SERVICES

Ecological Pre-Planning Services

- Phase 1 Habitat Surveys
- Great Crested Newt eDNA Sampling
- Protected species: Bat, Wintering and Nesting Bird, Badger, Amphibian, Otter, Water Vole, White-Clawed Crayfish, Dormice and Reptile Surveys.
- Preparation for Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA)
- Invasive Species Surveys
- Code for Sustainable Homes
- Butterfly & Insect Surveys

Ecological Post-Planning Services

- Biodiversity Enhancement Plans
- Protected Species Mitigation
- Ecological Management (Bat and Bird box installation and inspection)
- Planting Schemes
- Monitoring of bird or bat boxes.

ARBORICULTURAL SERVICES

Guidance for Architects & Developers

- British Standard 5837 Surveys
- Arboricultural Implications Assessments (AIA)
- Arboricultural Method Statements (AMS)

Advice for Engineers, Loss Adjusters and Insurers

- Tree Surveys for Subsidence
- Heave Assessment
- Tree Root Identification

Advice for Local Authorities and Social Housing

- Tree Safety Surveys
- Specialist Decay Detection
- Landscape and Orchard Design

Tree Advice for the Legal Profession

- Subsidence Litigation
- Personal Injury and Accident Investigation
- Expert Witness, Planning Inquiries and Appeals

Veteran Tree Management

- Ancient Woodland Management
- Veteran Tree Management

Tree Health and Pest and Disease Management

- Pest and Disease Surveys
- Tree Health Checks
- Disease Mitigation and Control



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