Vale cottage, Paxton Hill, Great Paxton, PE19 6RB.



Preliminary Ecological Assessment Report

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JW Biodiversity Management

Executive Summary

JW Biodiversity Management has been commissioned to carry out a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA) of a residential property located near Great Paxton in Cambridgeshire. This report will provide a baseline assessment of the site reporting on the current conditions of the habitats present and the sites potential to support protected and notable species.

Site Description

The site comprises of a relatively large residential property containing a bungalow and several outbuildings. The buildings were mostly located to the east of the site, near Paxton Hill Road, the site sloped down to the west where it bordered a trainline. The site contained large areas of grassland with a relatively large number of trees as well as hedgerows and areas of ornamental planting. The site is located in a row of similar sized properties along Paxton Hill Road.

The site is located in a relatively rural area to the south of Great Paxton. To the west of the site, beyond the rail line, is the River Great Ouse and the Paxton Pits Nature Reserve beyond the river. The wider landscape is dominated with agricultural land, wetlands and woodland.

The site is located in Great Paxton, Cambridgeshire; TL 2063 6007.

Protected and Notable Species

Following the site visit and desktop assessment the site was assessed for its potential to support protected and notable species. The table below summarises the sites potential to support these species.

Species	Sites potential to support
Great Crested Newt (*Triturus cristatus*)	**Low**
Common Amphibians	**Low**
Reptiles	**Low**
Birds	**Moderate**
Bat commuting and foraging	**Moderate**
Bat Roosts Buildings	**Negligible.**
Bat Roost Trees	**PRF-I (Low)**
Hazel dormouse (*Muscardinus avellanarius*)	**Negligible.**
Badgers (*Meles meles)*	**low**
Small mammals	**Moderate**
Invertebrates	**Low.**

Recommendations

A Preliminary Ecological Assessment was undertaken by a qualified ecologist. Recommendations have been made in relation to protected and notable species.

Mitigation/ Further Survey	Enhancements

Protected Areas & priority Habitats
There are priority habitats and protected areas within proximity of the site as well as within the wider landscape. During development works the following measures should be followed to reduce indirect impacts to priority habitats and protected areas.
• All proposed work will proceed with appropriate pollution control measures such as;
  • Dust Suppression: Use water sprays or misters on haul roads and stockpiles, particularly during dry, windy conditions.
  • Vehicle Management: Implement anti-idling policies and use wheel washing systems at site exits to prevent tracking mud onto public roads.
  • Equipment Emissions: Use low-emission plant machinery and retrofit particulate filters/catalyst converters.
  • Material Handling: Cover stockpiles and transport vehicles to prevent materials like sand from becoming airborne.
• Control sources of aquatic pollution, particularly from entering local water courses or ground water.
• Check, clean and dry tools/ vehicles to restrict potential of spreading non-native species.
Retention of the existing trees and hedgerows would help to protect priority habitats and protected areas within proximity of the site. The retained trees should have adequate root and crown protection during construction.
	Planting additional hedgerows and trees would provide an additional buffer.

Biodiversity Net Gain Mandatory Biodiversity Net Gain, as part of the Environment Act (2021), came into effect in early 2024. Under current legislation the development is required to achieve a 10% net gain. This project likely qualifies under the self-build exemption.	Adding habitats to the site would be a benefit for local wildlife.

Amphibian and Reptiles
The site has a potential to support amphibians and reptiles. The small pond will be retianed. The areas that will be directly impacted are unlikely to support reptiles and amphibians.
To avoid impacts to amphibians/ reptiles the following method statement will be used to remove the vegetation:
• In advance of construction starting vegetation, within the work zone, will be managed to reduce suitability for amphibians/ reptiles, to discourage them from areas which will be soon worked on.
  • Move rubble/ log pile carefully from the construction area.
  • Stage 1- The vegetation will need to be reduced to a height 150-200mm using hand tools (e.g. strimmers). It is recommended that cutting works towards retained areas, where there is connectivity to wider habitats.
  • Stage 2- After a period of at least one day has passed a second vegetation cut should be undertaken to ground level. Again, it is recommended that this second-stage cutting works towards the retained areas. All cuttings to be removed from work area. The site can then be completely cleared and worked upon as necessary
• Vegetation management will be undertaken at the appropriate time of the year and in appropriate weather conditions, to avoid killing/injuring reptiles and amphibians.
• During construction the following measures will be undertaken:
	Add native planting and log piles to the site.

Mitigation/ Further Survey	Enhancements
• Machinery, materials etc will be stored on areas of hardstanding or raised off the ground on pallets where possible. • Waste materials will be removed off site immediately or stored in skips • Excavations will be backfilled, covered overnight, or ramps placed in to allow any animals to escape • Excavations and working areas will be managed so as not to create temporary waterbodies which may attract amphibians onto site • Access to and from site will be on existing roads and areas of hardstanding. The pollution control measures will help ensure there are no impacts to potential amphibian/ reptile habitats in the area.	
<u>Bats</u> The buildings on site were not considered as having potential to support a bat roost. It should be noted that bat absence is very difficult to prove definitively due to their mobility and size, and single or small numbers of bats are able to roost in extremely small spaces, such as in gaps between panels. The development work should be undertaken with care, for example with roof tiles lifted rather than dragged. If during development works a bat (or an accumulation of bat droppings) is discovered at any time, work is to temporarily cease whilst an experienced bat ecologist is contacted for guidance and assistance. This can be the Bat Conservation Trust (BCT) helpline (0845 1300 228). Tress will be retained on site. There is potential bat foraging and commuting habitat on site and surrounding the site. This will be retianed. The pollution control measures will help protect potential bat foraging and commuting habitat. Sensitive lighting should also be considered to avoid impacting adjacent habitats and potential bat roosts.	Additional tree/ hedgerow planting on site would help provide additional habitat for bats. Bat boxes could also be added to the site.
<u>Badgers</u> There is a potential for badgers to be present in the local area. During construction the following methodology will be followed: Any uncovered pits or trenches should be secured overnight, or a ramp should be provided to allow any trapped animals, including badgers, to escape. Before work begins each day, any open pits or trenches should be inspected to ensure no badgers are trapped. If any badgers are found trapped, an ecologist experienced in trapping and handling badgers will need to be called upon to safely remove them.	Appropriate planting will benefit badgers,
<u>Small Mammals</u> To prevent harm to small mammals' potential hibernation sites and refuges, such as piles of vegetation and deadwood, should be removed from the development area outside of winter months. During construction, any open excavations should be covered overnight, or a ramp should be provided to enable trapped animals to escape. Any vegetation should be cleared in stages.	Instal hedgehog highway holes in fence lines to allow access for hedgehogs.
<u>Nesting Birds</u> It is recommended that to avoid impacts to nesting birds any vegetation/ building removal be done outside of nesting bird season, typically March to August (inclusive). If required within this time period, then a check for active bird nests should be undertaken. If an active nest is discovered during the inspection, establish a safety perimeter around the nest. This perimeter must be maintained until the chicks have fledged.	Adding tree planting to the site would benefit birds. Bird boxes should be added to the site.
<u>Invertebrates</u> Retention of trees and hedgerows will retain habitats for invertebrates. The pollution control measures will help protect invertebrates in the wider landscape.	Additional native planting would be beneficial.

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1. Introduction

JW Biodiversity Management has been commissioned to carry out a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA) of a residential property located near Great Paxton in Cambridgeshire. This report will provide a baseline assessment of the site reporting on the current conditions of the habitats present and the sites potential to support protected and notable species.

1.1 Project outline

JW Biodiversity Management Ltd understands that the development will involve the demolition of existing out buildings and construction of a new residential property.

1.2 Site Description

The site comprises of a relatively large residential property containing a bungalow and several outbuildings. The buildings were mostly located to the east of the site, near Paxton Hill Road, the site sloped down to the west where it bordered a trainline. The site contained large areas of grassland with a relatively large number of trees as well as hedgerows and areas of ornamental planting. The site is located in a row of similar sized properties along Paxton Hill Road.

The site is located in a relatively rural area to the south of Great Paxton. To the west of the site, beyond the rail line, is the River Great Ouse and the Paxton Pits Nature Reserve beyond the river. The wider landscape is dominated with agricultural land, wetlands and woodland.

The site is located in Great Paxton, Cambridgeshire; TL 2063 6007.

1.3 Aims of Report

The aim of this PEA is to:

- Identify the likely ecological constraints associated with a project;
- Identify any mitigation measures likely to be required, following the ‘Mitigation Hierarchy’
- Identify any additional surveys that may be required to inform an Ecological Impact Assessment (EcIA); and
- Identify the opportunities offered by a project to deliver ecological enhancement.

1.4 Limitations

The contents of this report are based on a single site visit and a search or the local records bureau. Though the survey and interpretations of the data were carried out by a competent ecologist there may be things that have been overlooked or missed. The area measurements are based on plans provided by third parties.

1.5 Relevant Legislation and Planning Policies

Relevant legislation implications for this site include;

- The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010 (as amended);
- The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended);
- The Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000;
- The Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act (NERC Act) 2006;
- Environment Act (2021)

Planning policies, both local and national, may affect any proposed development. Relevant planning policies to this development include;

- National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)
- Local planning policy



Figure 1: Approx. Assessment area.

2. Methods

2.1 Site Visit

JW Biodiversity management undertook a site visit on the 2nd of July 2026. This was to carry out a walk over of the site, determining the basic habitats present and their current condition. The potential for these habitats to support protected and notable species was also recorded. The site visit was carried out by an experienced ecologist who can appropriately identify habitats and assess their quality and suitability to support species.

The methodology followed that of an Extended Phase 1 Habitat Survey following the methodology of JNCC (1993) as modified by IEA (1995). The Phase 1 Habitat Survey is a standard technique for classifying and mapping British habitats. The aim is to provide a record of habitats that are likely to be ecologically important.

2.2 Protected Species

The following evidence of protected species or habitats to support them was assessed;

2.2.1 Badgers

Evidence of badger activity on site was assessed by searching for:

- Presence of setts, indicated by suitably sized holes or burrows with evidence of badgers such as badger hair and footprints
- Evidence of well runs supported by secondary evidence such as foraging signs or footprints; and
- Presence of badger latrines

2.2.2 Bats

The site was assessed for its potential to support:

- Roosting bats; and
- Foraging and commuting bats.

Features which could indicate a potential bat roost include:

- Holes and fissures in trees; and
- Gaps in buildings that could allow access to areas such as roof voids, e.g. holes in soffits, broken, lose or missing tiles, damaged lead flashing, etc.

The methodology for assessing bat roost potential followed that recommended by the Bat Conservation Trust[1].

2.2.3 Breeding Birds

The site was assessed for its potential to support nesting and breeding birds, considering factors including sufficient habitat cover and food sources.

2.2.4 Dormice

The site was surveyed for suitable dormouse habitat, such as the presence of a well-connected understorey broadleaf habitat, and suitable food sources such as hazel, oak and other nut-bearing trees, fruiting trees and shrubs, flowers and invertebrates. Where hazel nut shells were found, these were inspected for evidence of dormouse feeding.

2.2.5 Aquatic Mammals

Aquatic habitats were assessed for their potential to support aquatic mammals such as Otter or water vole. Signs including; foot prints, droppings and evidence of feeding where searched for.

2.2.6 Reptiles

The site was assessed for its potential to support reptile populations. Suitable habitat for reptiles includes long grass, scrub, woodland and hedgerow borders and wood/rubble piles that act as hibernacula.

2.2.7 Amphibians

Any aquatic habitat was assessed for its potential to support amphibian species, including Great Crested Newts. Any ponds on site were assessed, using the Habitat Suitability Index, for its potential to support Great Crested Newts. Terrestrial habitat was also accessed for its ability to support amphibians.

2.2.8 Other species

The site was assessed for its potential to support other notable species.

2.3 Desktop Study

Internet-based resources were consulted to identify designated nature conservation sites within 1km of the site and habitats of potentially high ecological importance and sensitivity within 500m of the site (e.g. ancient woodlands, ponds). Local policy maps were also reviewed for any relevant designations. A local records search was obtained from Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Environmental Records Centre (CPERC) regarding information about species and habitats within 1 km of the site.

[1] Collins J. (ed) (2023) Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines (4th Edition). The Bat Conservation Trust, London).

3. PEA Results

3.1 Habitat Assessment

The location and extent of the habitats are shown in appendix 1. TN refers to a target note. CIEEM guidance recommends that the value or potential value of an ecological resource or feature should be determined within a defined geographical context. It recommends the following frame of reference.

- International;
- UK;
- National (i.e. England/Northern Ireland/Scotland/Wales);
- Regional;
- County (or Metropolitan - e.g. in London);
- District (or Unitary Authority, City, or Borough);
- Local or Parish; and
- Site
- Within zone of influence only (which might be the project site or a larger area).

The habitats will be assessed based on these criteria.

Habitat	Geographical context	Habitat Description	Area (m^2)
Buildings	Site	The site contained several buildings and structures. Main house- this was a single level bungalow. With rendered brick walls and a pitched tiled roof. The building also contained a flat roof section. Outbuilding 1- Was a large metal shed. Outbuilding 2- Was a large brick built detached garage with pitched tiled roof. Outbuilding 3- Was a brick-built building with pitched tiled roof. Outbuilding 4- Was a wooden summer house with felt roof. Sheds- Wooden sheds were located across the site. These were generally of a dilapidated nature. Caravan- a delipidated caravan was noted between outbuilds 1 and 2.	420
Hardstanding	Zone of influence	Areas of tarmac and block paving were located on the site, predominately around the buildings to the east of the site. These areas offered little opportunity of wildlife.	518
Modified Grassland	Site	The majority of the garden area consisted of modified grassland. This extended from around the buildings to the east of the site down the sloping garden to the west of the site. This was generally short mown around the east of the site with a longer sward towards the west of the site. The grassland was dominated by grasses with a few floral species present. Species noted included; Yorkshire fog (*Holcus lanatus*), White clover (*Trifolium repens*), Spear thistle (*Cirsium vulgare*), Common dandelion (*Taraxacum officinale*), Common selfheal (*Prunella vulgaris*), nettle (*Urtica dioica*), hawkbit (*Leontodon hispidus*), bramble (*Rubus fruticosus*). Some encroaching scrub was noted to the west including the non-native invasive species *buddleia*. The short-mown areas of grassland provide little opportunities for protected and notable species. The longer areas to the west provide some opportunities.	4280
Introduced shrubs	Site	Areas of ornamental planting were located across the site. Predominately in the southern section of the site, these were dense and well established in places. This included areas of shrubs and flowering plants. The denser areas provided opportunities for nesting birds.	333
Pond	Site	A small plastic lined pond was located close to the bungalow. This contained relatively clear water as well as some Lilles (*Nymphaea sp.)* and a pond weed, likely curly pond weed (*Lagarosiphon major*). The pond was small and surrounded by ornamental habitats and areas of hardstanding and therefore likely provides a limited potential for protected species.	9
Individual trees	Local	The site contained several individual trees scattered across the site. These were a mixture of semi mature and newly planted trees. Several trees were fruit species such as apple (*Mulnus sp.*) or cherry (*Prunus sp.*) as well as several species of pine and conifer trees.	-

Habitat	Geographical context	Habitat Description	Area (m^2)
		Though predominately ornamental in nature the trees provide opportunity for wildlife as well as providing connectivity across the site and local landscape.	
Hedgerows	Site	The site was bordered by hedgerows. To the south was a relatively young native hedgerow dominated by hawthorn (*Crataegus monogyna*) with nettle dominant at the base. The was maintained in a rough square shape. Around the northern and eastern boundaries was a tall established conifer hedgerow. A smaller section of this type of hedgerow extends in the centre of the site. The hedgerows have potential to support nesting birds.	215 m

Table 1: Description and value of habitats on site.

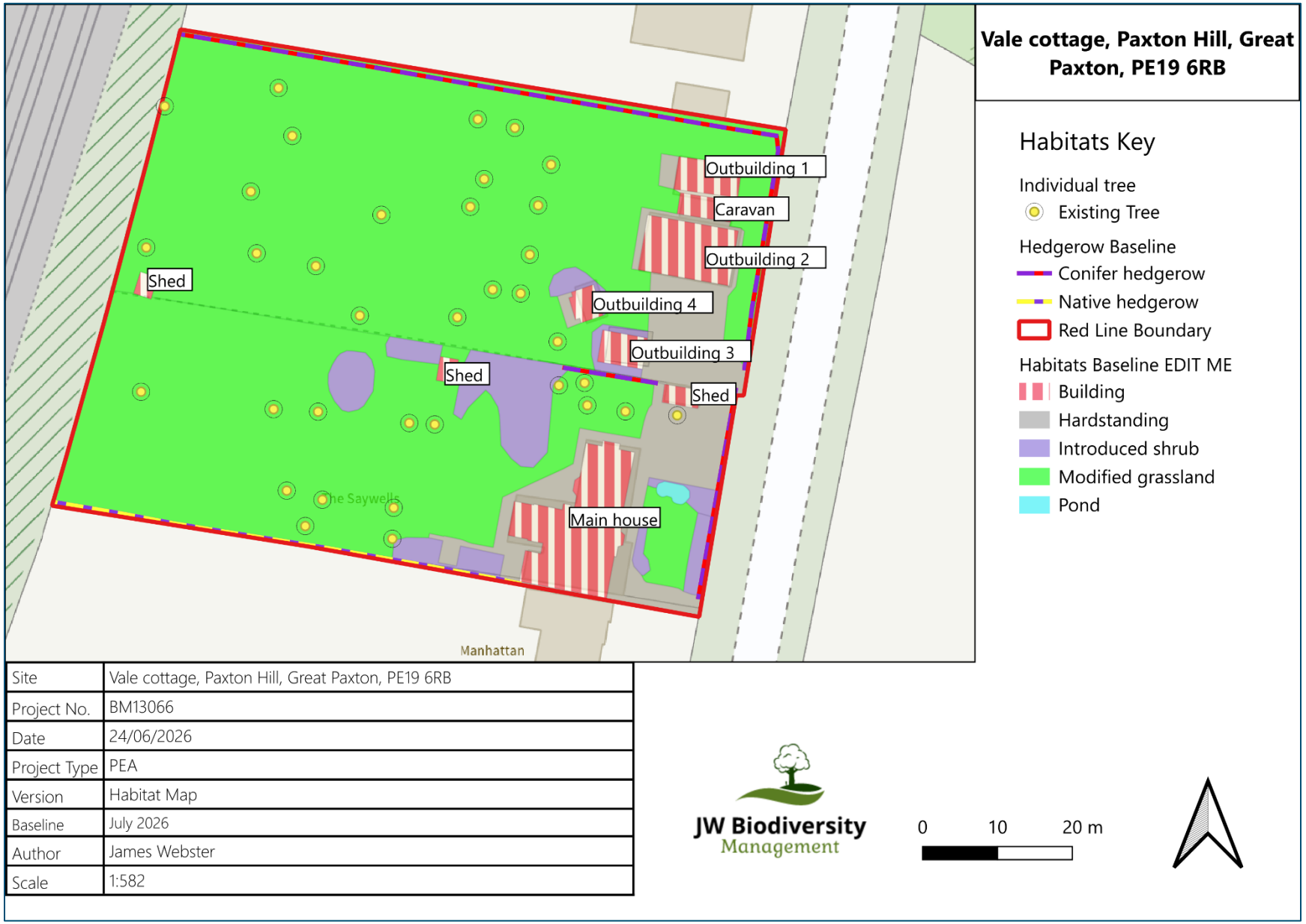


Figure 2: Current Habitat Layout.

3.2 Species Desktop Results

A recent biological record bureau search from The CPERC report produced some records of protected and Species of Conservation Concern (SoCC) within 2 km of the site. Table one below summarises the key species groups and protected areas within these results. A full list of the species can be seen on request.

Protected species are those listed on EC Habitats Directive- Annexes II and IV, EC Bird Directive- Annex I, Conservation (Natural Habitats) Regulations 1994- Schedules 2 & 5, NERC 2006 Section 41, Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended_-Schedules 1, 5 & 8, Protection of Badgers Act 1992. Notable species are categorised as being a: BAP priority National, Red list species (not least concern) and or Red status bird species, Red Data Book Species, NERC species. Legislation and BAP designation are explained in the appendix.

Sites and Habitats	**Present/Absent**	**Details**		
Statutory sites	Present	There are statutory protected areas within 2 km of the site.		
Non-Statutory sites or Local Wildlife Sites	Present	Non-statutory protected areas are located within 2 km of the site.		
Ancient Woodland	Absent	Ancient woodland is not located within 2 km of the site.		
Priority Habitats	Present	The local landscape contains areas of priority habitat including deciduous woodland.		
Protected and Notable Species	**Number of species**	**Number of records**	**Date of earliest record**	**Date of most recent record**
Amphibian Species	3	70	1984	2020
Reptile Species	2	17	2003	2021
Invertebrate species	90	1207	1966	2020
Terrestrial Mammal Species (excl. Bats)	5	77	2002	2025
Bat Species	8	56	2011	2022
Bird Species	113	10742	1957	2021

Table 2: Summary of protected areas and species information.

3.2.1 Other desktop results

Additionally, the Natural England resource; Magic map[2], was consulted for any granted protected species licences that may be in the area. The closest is a record of a bat licence located approximately 3.1km to the west of the site.

[2] www.magic.gov.uk

3.3 Site Assessment and Evaluation

The following assessment takes into account the information from the desktop study as well an assessment of the habitats on site and their potential to support protected and notable species. The likelihood of species being found on site is defined as follows;

- High- Definite signs of species identified on site and habitat considered suitable.
- Medium/ moderate- habitat considered suitable but obvious signs not necessarily detected.
- Low- no obvious signs and habitat considered sub-optimal. Though species may be present.
- Negligible- highly unlikely that species is present

The table below summarises the sites potential to support protected and notable species. Potential impacts are discussed and need for additional surveys and mitigation highlighted if required.

Ecological Feature	Evaluation of Feature on site and desktop records.	Evaluation	Relevant Legislation or Policy	Sites Potential to support	Next Steps
Designated sites for nature conservation	The are statutory and non-statutory protected areas within 2 km of the site (figure 3). The Little Paxton Pits Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) and Local Nature reserve (LNR) is located within 600m to the west of the site. This is an extensive area of flooded gravel pits of varied age, with a diverse vegetation structure. Nationally important for wintering wildfowl and an important stopping point for migrants. Within a similar area as the statutory protected areas are County Wildlife Sites (CWS). These are non-statutory protected areas. These designations are for assemblages of vascular plants and populations of breeding wader species. The designations also include the section of the River Great Ouse.	The proposed development is unlikely to directly impact the protected areas. The protected areas are separated from the site by a railway line and areas of woodland. There is a potential for indirect impacts caused during construction.	Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended); Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended)	**N/A**	Further mitigation required.
Priority Habitats	The local landscape contains habitats that are listed in the Priority Habitat Inventory (HPI), see figure 4. An area of priority woodland is located within 30m of the western border of the site. This is located the other side of the railway line bordering the site. The protected areas contain priority habitats including deciduous woodland, lowland fens and lowland meadows. An area of traditional orchard is located to the north of the site.	The presence of priority woodland within proximity to the site means there is potential for impacts to priority habitats during development. The woodland is unlikely to be directly impacted. There are priority habitats across the wider landscape which could be impacted during construction.	Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006 Section 41	**N/A**	Further mitigation required.
Great Crested Newt (*Triturus cristatus*)	Amphibians such as the European protected species Great Crested Newt (*Triturus cristatus*) require both suitable aquatic habitats for breeding and terrestrial	The site contained a small ornamental pond in the front garden area to the east of the site. A Great Crested Newt Habitat Suitability Index was conducted following the ARG UK Advice Note 5[4]. This gave the	Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017;	**Low**	Further mitigation required.

[4] file

Ecological Feature	Evaluation of Feature on site and desktop records.	Evaluation	Relevant Legislation or Policy	Sites Potential to support	Next Steps
	habitats to forage and shelter during the active season and hibernate over winter[3]. The local records data contains records of GCN. These are all located in the protected areas to the west of the site approximately 900m from the site. The magic map shows records of GCN, from survey licence returns, in this area as well.	pond a score of 0.59 which is below average. Which means there is a relatively low probability that GCN use the pond. The site did contain some suitable terrestrial habitats for GCN. The areas of longer grassland to the west of the site provided opportunities for GCN though the areas to the east were generally lacking suitability. There is connectivity to the west of the site therefore it is possible GCN are seen on site and could become impacted by the development.	Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 Schedule 5; NERC Act 2006 Section 41		
Common Amphibians	Records of common frog (*Rana temporaria*) and common toad (*Bufo bufo*) were included in the local records data. These were largely located in the protected areas to the west of the site.	The pond has some potential to support common amphibians though its small size is a bit of a limiting factor. The site contained some suitable terrestrial habitats with connectivity to wider areas. There is potential for amphibians to be impacted during construction.	Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 Schedule 5; NERC Act 2006 Section 41	**Low**	Further mitigation required
Reptiles	Reptiles prefer sites with a diversity of habitats containing a number of micro habitats that provide suitable foraging and refuge sites[5]. The local records data contains records of Grass Snake (*Natrix Helvetica*) and Common lizard (*Zootoca vivipara*). The closest is located to the west of the site within 200m, just across the river.	Generally, the site lacked suitable habitat for reptiles. The areas of longer grass to the west of the site provide some suitability and there is connectivity to wider areas where reptiles may be present. There is potential for the occasional reptile to be present on the site. There is potential for reptiles to be impacted during the development.	Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 Section 1; NERC Act 2006 Section 41;	**Low**	Further mitigation required

[3] Great crested newt mitigation guidelines. August 2001. English Nature.
[5] Edgar, P., Foster, J. and Baker, J. (2010). Reptile Habitat Management Handbook. Amphibian and reptile Conservation, Bournemouth

Ecological Feature	Evaluation of Feature on site and desktop records.	Evaluation	Relevant Legislation or Policy	Sites Potential to support	Next Steps
Birds	Birds will nest in a variety of habitats including manmade structures. Birds utilise different habitats for foraging and shelter. All bird nests are protected whilst they are in use. The local records data contained records of notable bird species in the local area. These were largely associated with the wetland habitats in the protected areas to the west of the site.	The trees, hedgerows, denser vegetation and some of the buildings had potential to support nesting birds. There is potential for nesting birds to be impacted.	Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017; Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 Schedule 5; NERC Act 2006 Section 41	**Moderate**	Further mitigation is required.
Bat commuting and foraging	All bat species in the UK eat insects and forage along habitats such as hedgerows, woodlands, grasslands and waterways[6]. Bats use woodland edges, hedgerows, rivers and other linear features like tree-lined footpaths as corridors to commute from one area of countryside to another[7]. The CPERC data contained a number of records of bats. This includes records of common pipistrelle (*Pipistrellus pipistrellus*), Daubenton's Bat (*Myotis daubentoniid*), Soprano Pipistrell (*Pipistrellus pygmaeus*), Brown Long-eared Bat (*Plecotus auritus*), Noctule (*Nyctalus noctule*), Natterer's Bat (*Myotis nattereri*) and Serotine (*Eptesicus serotinus*). The closest records are located approximately 225m to the south of the site. There are several records located within 2 km to the west of the site within Little Paxton. Records are also located in the protected areas to the west of the site.	The site contained suitable commuting and foraging opportunities fir bats. The trees and hedgerows provide opportunities for bats and there is suitable connectivity across the local landscape via the vegetated railway lien to the west of the site and interconnected hedgerows to the east of the site. The development has potential to impact committing and foraging bats.	Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017; Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 Schedule 5; NERC Act 2006 Section 41	**Moderate**	Further mitigation is required
Bat Roosts Buildings	Buildings are known to provide suitable roosting opportunities for a number of bat species[8]. An external inspection of the buildings on site was	All the building was assessed for its potential to support a bat roost internally		**Negligible.**	None

[6] https://www.bats.org.uk/about-bats/where-do-bats-live/bat-habitats/foraging-habitats
[7] https://www.bats.org.uk/about-bats/where-do-bats-live/bat-habitats/commuting-habitats
[8] **Bats and Buildings. Bats and the Build Environment Series. Bat Conservation Trust. January 2012.**

Ecological Feature	Evaluation of Feature on site and desktop records.	Evaluation	Relevant Legislation or Policy	Sites Potential to support	Next Steps
	carried out to assess their potential to support bat roosts, following Bat conservation trust guidelines[9]. The table in appendix 4 summarises the guidelines for assessing the potential suitability of structures. This table is taken from the Bat Conservation Trust good practice guidelines 2023[10].	and externally. This was conducted by a competent ecologist. Appendix 3 provides the detail of the bat roost assessment. Tough in general the buildings were not considered likely to support a bat roost.			
Bat Roost Trees	The trees on the sites were assessed for any Potential Roost Features (PRFs). The bat conservation trust provides information regarding features that may be present in trees that bats could potentially use for roosting.	All the trees were inspected at the ground level for their bat roost potential. No obvious PRFs were identified. Some of the larger trees were of a size and age that could contain PRFs, that weren't visible from the ground.		**PRF-I (Low)**	Further mitigation is required
Hazel dormouse (*Muscardinus avellanarius*)	Across its range dormice prefer the successional stage of woody vegetation; this is the new growth that arises after woodland management such as coppicing, ride widening, thinning or glade creation, they may also occur in scrubby habitat[11]. The local records data does not contain any records of dormouse. The MAGIC map does not show any licences relating to dormouse within 2km of the site.	The habitats on site are generally not suitable for dormouse. The hedgerows lack suitability to support dormouse and there is a lacking connectivity to suitable habitats.	Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017; Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 Schedule 5; NERC Act 2006 Section 41	**Negligible.**	None
Badgers (*Meles meles)*	Ideal badger habitat is a mixture of woodland and open country; they live in a network of underground burrows and tunnels know as a sett[12]. The local records data contains records of badger. There are several records within proximity of the site including from Paxton Hill Road to the east of the site.	No evidence was found of badgers using the site, although given the location they are likely to be found within the wider area. There is a potential for badgers to be present on site and be impacted by the proposed development.	Protection of Badgers Act 1992	**low**	Further mitigation is required

[9] Collins J. (ed) (2023) Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines (4th Edition). The Bat Conservation Trust, London).
[10] Collins J. (ed) (2023) Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines (4th Edition). The Bat Conservation Trust, London).
[11] https://ptes.org/get-informed/facts-figures/hazel-common-dormouse-muscardinus-avellanarius/
[12] Badger (Meles meles) - British Mammals - Woodland Trust

Ecological Feature	Evaluation of Feature on site and desktop records.	Evaluation	Relevant Legislation or Policy	Sites Potential to support	Next Steps
Small mammals	Small mammals such as Hedgehogs (*Erinaceus europaeus*) prefer habitats such as woodland edges and hedges as well as suburban areas[13]. The local records data provides records of hedgehog within the local area.	The habitats on site provide some potential or small mammals and there is connectivity to suitable habitats to the west. There is potential for them to be impacted during construction.	NERC Act 2006 Section 41	**Moderate**	Further mitigation is required.
Invertebrates	The local records data contained a relatively large number of notable invertebrates. The bulk of which are moth records from the Litt Paxton Pitts protected areas and from a site at St Neots nearly 2km to the south of the site.	The garden nature of the habitats on site mean they are less likely to attract notable invertebrates. However, given the proximity of some of the records it is possible they are seen on site.	NERC Act 2006 Section 41. Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981	**Low.**	Further mitigation is required.

Table 3: Protected sites, habitats and species details.

[13] http://www.mammal.org.uk/sites/default/files/factsheets/hedgehog_complete_0.pdf

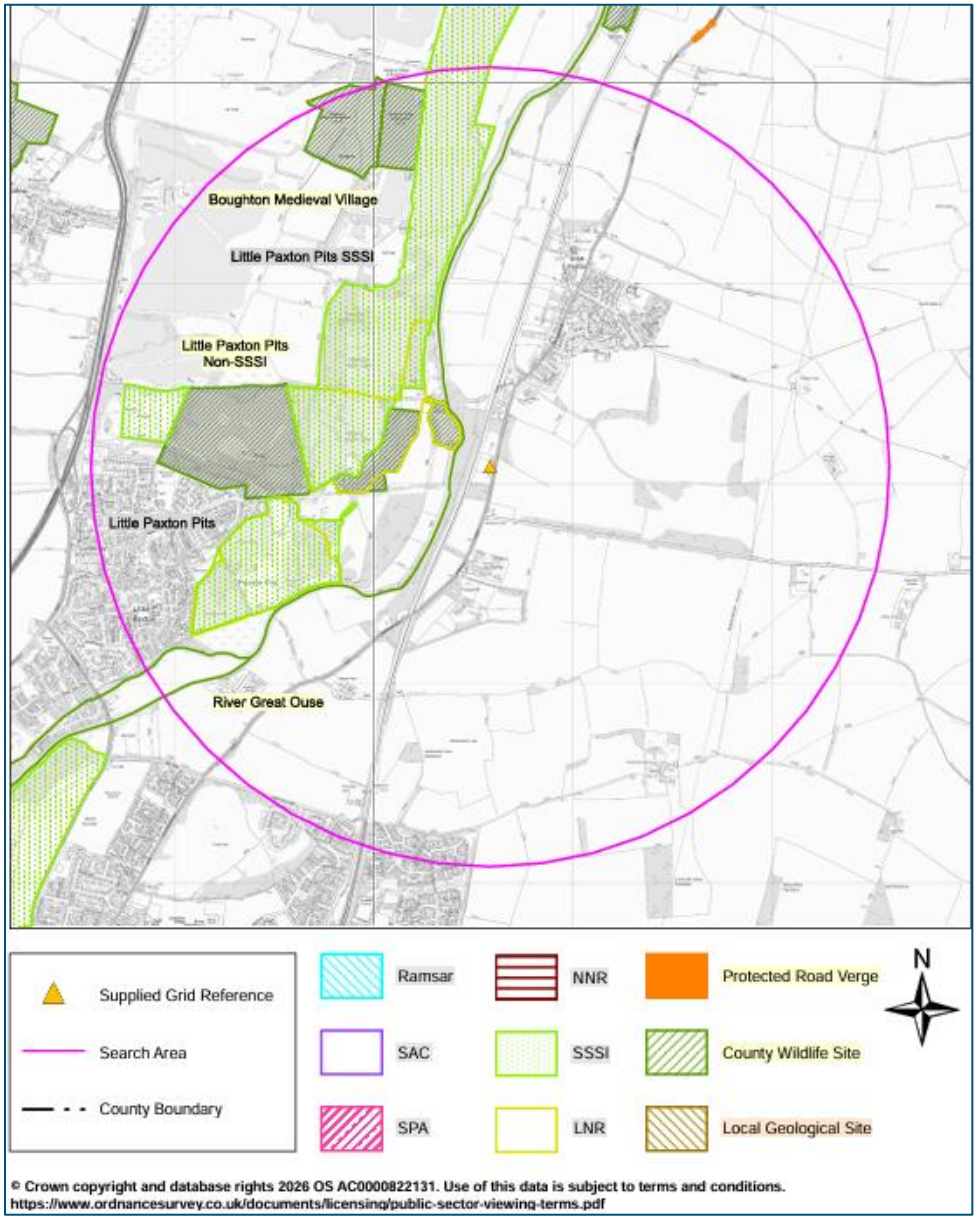


Figure 3: Non-statutory protected areas within 1 km of the site (from CPBRC).

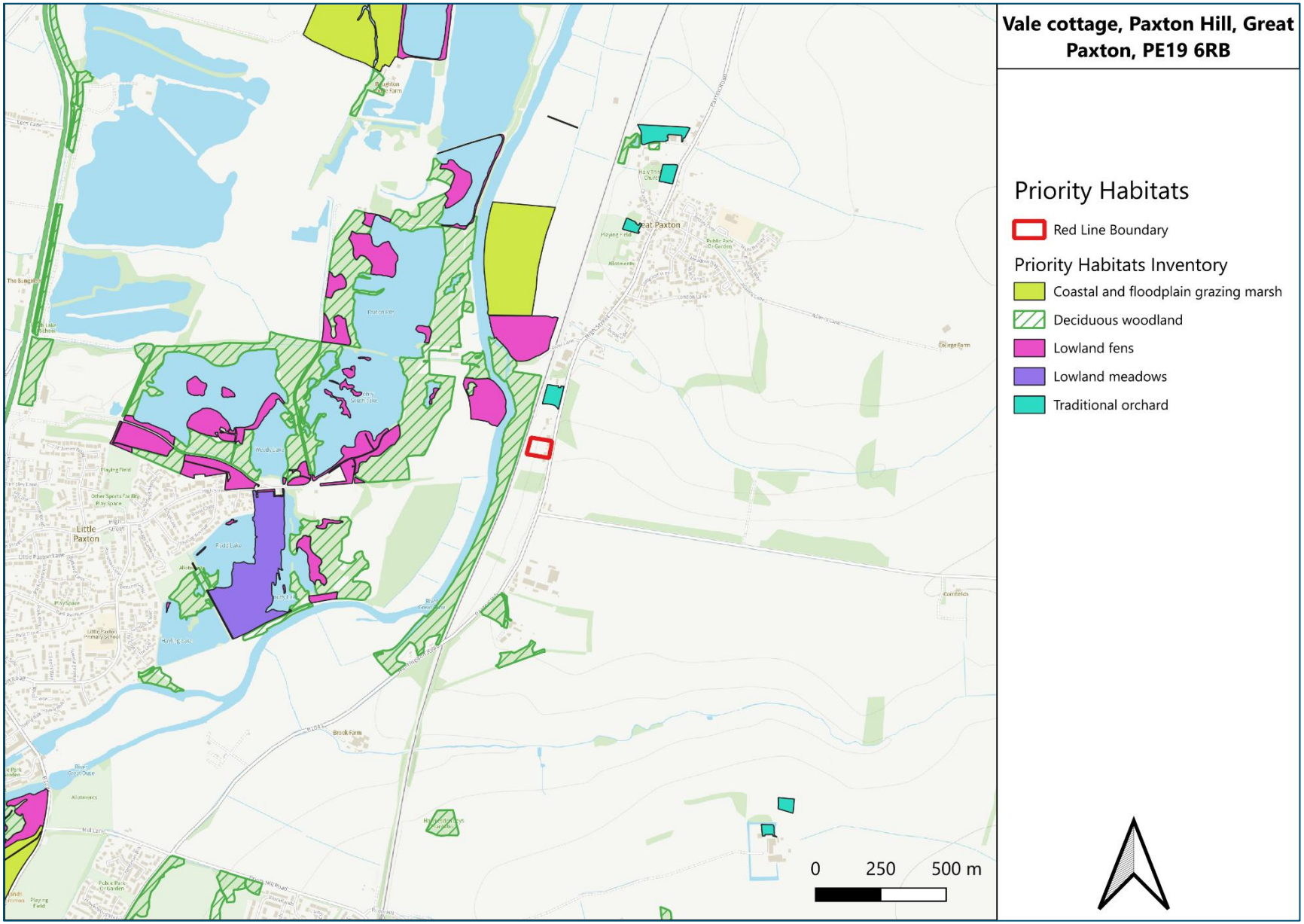


Figure 4: Priority habitats within the local landscape (from magic.gov.uk).

4. Discussion & Recommendations

The table below outlines the recommended next steps in respect of relevant survey, mitigation or enhancements identified for sites and species associated with the Proposed Development. The table below includes optimal survey periods, constraints that need to be considered in the survey programme and related best practice guidance.

The timing of ecological surveys is critical to project planning, as many species surveys are seasonally constrained. Early engagement with these survey requirements can help avoid delays in the planning process and ensure that appropriate mitigation measures can be developed where necessary. Similarly, mitigation measures may have certain constraints associated with them and should be factored into construction plans at the earliest stages to reduce potential delays.

4.1 Proposed Works

The proposed plans are shown in the appendix. The development will involve the demolition of the outbuildings and construction of a new detached dwelling with new driveway. This will result in the loss of areas of buildings and hardstanding as well as areas of modified grassland and ornamental planting. The trees and hedgerows will be retianed.

Ecological Receptor	Mitigation/ Further Survey	Enhancements

Designated sites and priority habitats.	There are priority habitats and protected areas within proximity of the site as well as within the wider landscape. During development works the following measures should be followed to reduce indirect impacts to priority habitats and protected areas.
	• All proposed work will proceed with appropriate pollution control measures such as;
	  • Dust Suppression: Use water sprays or misters on haul roads and stockpiles, particularly during dry, windy conditions.
	  • Vehicle Management: Implement anti-idling policies and use wheel washing systems at site exits to prevent tracking mud onto public roads.
	  • Equipment Emissions: Use low-emission plant machinery and retrofit particulate filters/catalyst converters.
	  • Material Handling: Cover stockpiles and transport vehicles to prevent materials like sand from becoming airborne.
	• Control sources of aquatic pollution, particularly from entering local water courses or ground water.
	• Check, clean and dry tools/ vehicles to restrict potential of spreading non-native species.
	Retention of the existing trees and hedgerows would help to protect priority habitats and protected areas within proximity of the site. The retained trees should have adequate root and crown protection during construction.
		Planting additional hedgerows and trees would provide an additional buffer.

Biodiversity Net Gain	Mandatory Biodiversity Net Gain, as part of the Environment Act (2021), came into effect in early 2024. Under current legislation the development is required to achieve a 10% net gain. This project likely qualifies under the self-build exemption.	Adding habitats to the site would be a benefit for local wildlife.

Amphibians/ reptiles	The site has a potential to support amphibians and reptiles. The small pond will be retianed. The areas that will be directly impacted are unlikely to support reptiles and amphibians.
	To avoid impacts to amphibians/ reptiles the following method statement will be used to remove the vegetation:
	• In advance of construction starting vegetation, within the work zone, will be managed to reduce suitability for amphibians/ reptiles, to discourage them from areas which will be soon worked on.
	  • Move rubble/ log pile carefully from the construction area.
	  • Stage 1- The vegetation will need to be reduced to a height 150-200mm using hand tools (e.g. strimmers). It is recommended that cutting works towards retained areas, where there is connectivity to wider habitats.
	  • Stage 2- After a period of at least one day has passed a second vegetation cut should be undertaken to ground level. Again, it is recommended that this second-stage cutting works towards the retained areas. All cuttings to be removed from work area. The site can then be completely cleared and worked upon as necessary
	• Vegetation management will be undertaken at the appropriate time of the year and in appropriate weather conditions, to avoid killing/injuring reptiles and amphibians.
	• During construction the following measures will be undertaken:
		Add native planting and log piles to the site.

Ecological Receptor	Mitigation/ Further Survey	Enhancements
	• Machinery, materials etc will be stored on areas of hardstanding or raised off the ground on pallets where possible. • Waste materials will be removed off site immediately or stored in skips • Excavations will be backfilled, covered overnight, or ramps placed in to allow any animals to escape • Excavations and working areas will be managed so as not to create temporary waterbodies which may attract amphibians onto site • Access to and from site will be on existing roads and areas of hardstanding. The pollution control measures will help ensure there are no impacts to potential amphibian/ reptile habitats in the area.	
Bats	The buildings on site were not considered as having potential to support a bat roost. It should be noted that bat absence is very difficult to prove definitively due to their mobility and size, and single or small numbers of bats are able to roost in extremely small spaces, such as in gaps between panels. The development work should be undertaken with care, for example with roof tiles lifted rather than dragged. If during development works a bat (or an accumulation of bat droppings) is discovered at any time, work is to temporarily cease whilst an experienced bat ecologist is contacted for guidance and assistance. This can be the Bat Conservation Trust (BCT) helpline (0845 1300 228). Tress will be retained on site. There is potential bat foraging and commuting habitat on site and surrounding the site. This will be retianed. The pollution control measures will help protect potential bat foraging and commuting habitat. Sensitive lighting should also be considered to avoid impacting adjacent habitats and potential bat roosts.	Additional tree/ hedgerow planting on site would help provide additional habitat for bats. Bat boxes could also be added to the site.
Badgers	There is a potential for badgers to be present in the local area. During construction the following methodology will be followed: Any uncovered pits or trenches should be secured overnight, or a ramp should be provided to allow any trapped animals, including badgers, to escape. Before work begins each day, any open pits or trenches should be inspected to ensure no badgers are trapped. If any badgers are found trapped, an ecologist experienced in trapping and handling badgers will need to be called upon to safely remove them.	Appropriate planting will benefit badgers,
Small Mammals	To prevent harm to small mammals' potential hibernation sites and refuges, such as piles of vegetation and deadwood, should be removed from the development area outside of winter months. During construction, any open excavations should be covered overnight, or a ramp should be provided to enable trapped animals to escape. Any vegetation should be cleared in stages.	Instal hedgehog highway holes in fence lines to allow access for hedgehogs.
Nesting Birds	It is recommended that to avoid impacts to nesting birds any vegetation/ building removal be done outside of nesting bird season, typically March to August (inclusive). If required within this time period, then a check for active bird nests should be undertaken. If an active nest is discovered during the inspection, establish a safety perimeter around the nest. This perimeter must be maintained until the chicks have fledged.	Adding tree planting to the site would benefit birds. Bird boxes should be added to the site.
Invertebrates	Retention of trees and hedgerows will retain habitats for invertebrates. The pollution control measures will help protect invertebrates in the wider landscape.	Additional native planting would be beneficial.

Table 4: Recommendations regarding protected species and habitats.

5. Appendix

5.1 Appendix 2: Proposed Layout



5.1 Appendix 1: Photos

Feature	Photo
Showing the area in front of existing outbuildings, area of grassland that will be impacted.	
Showing established shrubs and trees near main house.	

Looking eastward across garden to outbuildings. Showing trees and grassland slope.	
Looking westward from main house. Showing scattered trees and wider landscape.	

Looking towards western boundary.	
Long grass are to west of the site.	

Showing the pond	
Showing area around outbuildings.	

5.3 Appendix 3: Bat Roost Assessment

Building	Description	Discussion	Potential to support bats
Main house	This was a single storey bungalow with a pitched tiled roof. The walls were rendered brick work. The tiles of the roof were all in good condition and appeared to be manufactured of concrete. These fit closely together with no visible gaps or features present. The ridge tiles and end tiles all appeared to be in good condition with no evident gaps or features being noted. The soffits also appeared to be in good condition. A flat roof section was noted to the south of the building. This appeared to be in good condition with no obvious features present. Exterior of building:  Internally there was a relatively large roof void that was mostly accessible. This was constructed of a wooden frame with felt backing the tiles. The felt was in good condition with no visible gaps. The loft space was generally dusty with large cobwebs present. No evidence of bats such as droppings was seen. Interior loft space:	The exterior of the building did not contain any potential roosting features. No evidence of roosting bats was seen during the interior inspection of the building. Therefore, it is considered that the building is unlikely to support a bat roost.	Negligible

Building	Description	Discussion	Potential to support bats
			
Outbuilding 1- metal shed	The was a single skin metal shed with no interior loft space. The building was used for storage with glass windows down one site. Transparent panels were present in the roof. No evidence of bats was seen during the internal inspection. The metal panels provide little roosting opportunities.	The building did not contain any potential roosting features or evidence of bats.	Negligible
Outbuilding 2- Garage	This was a single level brick-built building with a pitched tiled roof. This was in good condition. The tiles appeared solid and fit closely together with no gaps being noted. The brickwork and soffits were all in good condition. Exterior of the garage:	The garage was in good condition with no obvious roosting features being noted. No evidence of bats was seen.	Negligible

Building	Description	Discussion	Potential to support bats
	 The was no interior loft space the entire building was open. The roof was constructed of wooden beams with felt backing the tiles. The felt appeared to be in good condition. No evidence of bats was seen during the internal inspection.		

Building	Description	Discussion	Potential to support bats
			
Outbuilding 3-	This was a small single storey brick-built outbuilding with a pitched tiled roof. As with the other buildings the roof was in good condition with no visible features. The interior contained no loft space. Some dense ivy was noted on the exterior of the building The interior of the building contained no evidence of bats and there were several established cobwebs were noted. Interior of outbuilding 3:	The building did not contain any features considered likely to support a bat roost.	Negligible

Building	Description	Discussion	Potential to support bats
			
Outbuilding 4- summer house	This was a single skin wooden building with a felt roof. This building did not contain any evidence of bats or features likely to support a bat roost. Summer house	The summer house did not contain any suitable features likely to support a bat roost.	Negligible

Building	Description	Discussion	Potential to support bats
			
Sheds	Three dilapidated sheds were found across the garden on site. These did not contain any suitable features or evidence of bats.	Buildings considered unsuitable.	Negligible

5.4 Appendix 4: Bat roost potential of buildings from Bat Conservation Trust

Potential suitability	Description	
	Roosting habitats in structures	**Potential flight-paths and foraging habitats**
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).	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).
Negligible[a]	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.	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.
Low	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]).	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.
Moderate	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 and hibernation – the categorisation described in this table is made irrespective of species conservation status, which is established after presence is confirmed).	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.
High	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.	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.

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 numbers 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.

5.5 Appendix 5: Habitat Suitability Index for GCN

	Pond Name	Vale Cottage
	Grid Ref	TL2059563064
SI No	SI Description	SI Value
1	Geographic location	1
2	Pond area	0.05
3	Pond permanence	0.9
4	Water quality	0.67
5	Shade	1
6	Water fowl effect	1
7	Fish presence	1
8	Pond Density	0.7
9	Terrestrial habitat	0.33
10	Macropyhyte cover	0.7
HSI Score		**0.59**
Pond suitability (see below)		

HIS Score	Pond Suitability
< 0.50	Poor
0.50 - 0.59	Below average
0.60 - 0.69	Average
0.70 - 0.79	Good
> 0.80	Excellent

5.6 Appendix 6: Legislation

Protected species have protection under national legislation such as the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 and European legislation such as the Habitats Directive.

Please note the following:

(1) If there is no record of a particular protected species, this does not signify that that the species is absent from the site in question. It may mean that it has not been recorded, that the site has not been surveyed for this species, or that data relating to its presence has not been made available to us.

(2) The presence of a protected species record does not mean that the species is still present. It means that the species was recorded at that time and place. The implications of the record should be further evaluated, and a survey to establish the current status may be required.

(3) The following summary of legislation is designed purely as a basic guide, if any action is to be taken regarding any of the protected species listed, then it is imperative that the full relevant legislation be consulted.

WILDLIFE PROTECTION LEGISLATION IN ENGLAND

Legislation that protects wildlife in England exists at the European and national level.

European Law

The Bern Convention on the Conservation of European Wildlife and Natural Habitats (1979) was aimed at ensuring conservation and protection of all wild plants and animals, increasing cooperation between states, and affording special protection to the most vulnerable or threatened species. It was implemented by the EC Birds Directive (Council Directive 79/409/EEC) and the EC Habitats Directive (Council Directive 92/43/EEC).

The Bonn Convention on Migratory Species of Wild Animals (1979 & 1994) requires the protection of migratory animals. It was implemented by the EC Birds Directive (Council Directive 79/409/EEC) and the EC Habitats Directive (Council Directive 92/43/EEC).

The EC Habitats Directive aims to establish a network of protected areas in order to maintain the distribution and the abundance of threatened species and habitats. A number of species are listed in the annexes.

Annex II lists animals and plants whose conservation requires the designation of Special Areas of Conservation (SACs).

Annex IV lists animals and plants in need of strict protection. For the animals, this prohibits deliberate capture, killing, disturbance (especially during breeding period), destruction or taking of eggs from wild, and destruction or deterioration of breeding sites or resting places. For the plants,

this prohibits deliberate picking, collecting, uprooting, cutting, destruction, and trade in entire plants or parts, at all stages of life.

Annex V lists animals and plants for which taking in the wild may be subject to management measures

National Law

Wildlife and Countryside Act The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) is the main source of legal protection for wildlife in England and was strengthened by the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000. A statutory five-yearly review of Schedules 5 and 8 (protected wild animals and plants) is undertaken by the relevant authorities. Species protection is provided under Schedules 1, 5, 6 and 8:

Schedule 1 lists bird species that are rare, endangered, declining or vulnerable. The Schedule is divided into two parts. Part I lists birds which receive special protection; these birds receive additional protection from disturbance at the nest. Part II lists birds that receive the same level of special protection, but only during the breeding season.

Schedule 5 protects animal (other than bird) species from certain actions, according to the sections of the Act under which they are listed:

S9 (1) prohibits the intentional killing, injury or taking. S9 (2) protection is limited to possessing and controlling. S9 (4a) prohibits the damaging, destroying or obstructing access to any place used by the animal for shelter or protection. S9 (4b) prohibits disturbing the animal while it is occupying any structure or place which it uses for shelter or protection. S9(5) prohibits the selling, offering for sale, possessing or transporting for purpose of sale, or advertising for sale, any live or dead animal, or any part of, or anything derived from such an animal. Species on this Schedule do not appear on the PSI.

Schedule 6 lists animals that may not be killed by certain methods. Even humane trapping for research requires a licence.

Schedule 8 lists plant species for which it is prohibited to intentionally pick, uproot, destroy, trade in, or possess (for the purposes of trade).

Under the Wildlife and Countryside Act, all wild plants in Britain are protected from intentional uprooting by an unauthorised person. Landowners, land occupiers, persons authorised by either of these, or persons authorised in writing by the Local Authority for the area are exempt from this, except for Schedule 8 species.

Conservation Regulations the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010 (as amended) transpose the EC Habitats Directive into national law. In addition to enabling the designation of SACs, the regulations also provide species protection:

Schedule 2 protects the listed animals from deliberate capture, killing, disturbance or trading in.

Schedule 4 protects the listed plants from picking, collecting, uprooting, destroying or trading in.

These actions can be made lawful through the granting of licences by the appropriate authorities. Licences may be granted for a number of purposes, but only after the appropriate authority is satisfied that there are no satisfactory alternatives and that such actions will have no detrimental effect on wild the population of the species concerned.

Protection of Badgers Act the Protection of the Badgers Act prohibits the killing, injuring or taking of badgers and damage or interference with a badger sett, unless licensed to do so by a statutory authority.

International and European Obligations

In the UK, species receiving protection under international legislation and agreements are protected through the Wildlife and Countryside Act, so are not shown separately in the BMERC notable species lists. For reference, the relevant categories are shown below.

Bern Convention on the Conservation of European Wildlife and Natural Habitats the Bern Convention aims to ensure the conservation of wild flora and fauna species and their habitats.

• Appendix 1 (strictly protected flora) - Plants for which contracting parties will prohibit deliberate picking, collecting, cutting or uprooting.

• Appendix 2 (strictly protected fauna) - Animals for which contracting parties will prohibit deliberate capture, possession, killing, damage to or destruction of breeding or resting sites, disturbance or destruction or taking of eggs. Appendix 3 (protected fauna) - Animals for which contracting parties will include closed seasons and regulate their sale, keeping for sale, and transport for sale or offering for sale of live and dead wild animals. (Not included in Notable Species List).

Bonn Convention on Migratory Species the Bonn Convention aims to conserve terrestrial, marine and avian migratory species throughout their range.

• Appendix 1 (migratory species threatened with extinction) - Species for which contracting parties will strictly protect and endeavour to conserve or restore the places where they live, mitigating obstacles to migration and controlling other factors that might endanger them.

• Appendix 2 (migratory species that need or would benefit from international co-operation) - Species for which contracting parties will be encouraged to conclude global or regional agreements for the conservation and management of individual species or, more often, of a group of species. (Not included in Notable Species List).

The EC Council Directive on the Conservation of Wild Birds the Birds Directive provides a framework for the conservation and management of all wild birds in Europe. As well as designating important sites for birds as Special Protection Areas, birds are generally protected from deliberate killing or capture and destruction of or damage to their nests or eggs, and deliberate disturbance. Allowances are made for game birds.

UK BAP & notable species

UK Biodiversity Action Plan and Section 41 Species

Biodiversity, or biological diversity, is the whole variety of life on Earth. The Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) came about as a result of the 1992 Earth Summit. As one of 168 countries to sign up to the CBD, the UK was required to develop a national strategy for the conservation of biodiversity; the UK Biodiversity Action Plan (UKBAP) was born.

The UKBAP is the result of contributions involving a wide range of people and organisations, enabling the identification of species and habitats that are listed as priorities for conservation action. A 2007 review of the UKBAP has resulted in 1149 species and 65 habitats being listed as conservation priorities. For more information see www.ukbap.org.uk.

In addition to the national priorities and targets, action is also being taken at local level. The Essex Biodiversity Project is responsible for implementing the Essex Biodiversity Action Plan, which has 28 priority species and 15 priority habitats currently listed. For more information see www.essexbiodiversity.org.uk.

The UK BAP

(From Explanatory Note by Defra and Natural England on Section 41 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities

(NERC) Act 2006 - Habitats and Species of Principal Importance in England)

The England Biodiversity List has been developed to meet the requirements of Section 41 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act (2006). This legislation requires the Secretary of State to publish a list of species of flora and fauna and habitats considered to be of principal importance for the purpose of conserving biodiversity.

The S41 list will be used to guide decision-makers such as public bodies, including local and regional authorities, in implementing their duty under section 40 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006 'to have regard' to the conservation of biodiversity in England, when carrying out their normal functions. In particular:

• Regional Planning Bodies and Local Planning Authorities will use it to identify the species and habitats that should be afforded priority when applying the requirements of National Planning Policy framework (NPPF) and PPS9 Circular to maintain, restore and enhance species and habitats.

• Local Planning Authorities will use it to identify the species and habitats that require specific consideration in dealing with planning and development control, recognising that under NPPF and PPS9 Circular the aim of planning decisions should be to avoid harm to all biodiversity.

• All Public Bodies will use it to identify species or habitats that should be given priority when implementing the NERC Section 40 duty.

Habitats of Principal Importance Fifty-six habitats of principal importance are included on the S41 list. These are all the habitats in England that have been identified as requiring action in the UK Biodiversity Action Plan (UK BAP). They range from habitats such as upland hay meadows to lowland mixed deciduous woodland and from freshwater habitats such as ponds to marine habitats such as subtidal sands and gravels.

Species of Principal Importance There are 943 species of principal importance included on the S41 list. These are the species founding England which have been identified as requiring action under the UK BAP. In addition, the Hen Harrier has also been included on the List because without continued conservation action it is unlikely that the Hen Harrier population will increase from its current very low levels in England.

Relationship with the UK Biodiversity List of Species and Habitats the UK BAP list of priority species and habitats is an important reference source and will be the focus for conservation action across the UK over the next decade. It has been used to draw up the species and habitats of principal importance in England under S41 of the NERC Act.

The revised UK BAP list of priority species and habitats can be downloaded from the UK Biodiversity Website: http://www.ukbap.org.uk/NewPriorityList.aspx

Relationship with the biodiversity duty under Section 40 of the NERC Act There is a general biodiversity duty in the NERC Act (Section 40) which requires every public body in the exercising of its functions to 'have regard, so far as is consistent with the proper exercise of those functions, to the purpose of conserving biodiversity'.

There is no direct relationship between the Section 41 duty on the Secretary of State to publish the list and promote the taking of steps to conserve the habitats and species on it, and the Section 40 duty on public bodies to have regard to the purpose of conserving biodiversity. Importantly:

(a) Biodiversity, as covered by the Section 40 duty includes all biodiversity and not just the habitats and species of principal importance. However, there is an expectation that public bodies would refer to the S41 list when complying with the section 40 duty.

(b) The duty on the Secretary of State to promote the taking of steps by others is not restricted to public bodies.

Defra guidance for local authorities and public bodies on implementing the biodiversity duty in the NERC Act draws attention to the S41 list, emphasising that local authorities and public bodies have a role to play in ensuring the protection of these species and habitats. Copies of the guidance can be downloaded from: http://archive.defra.gov.uk/environment/biodiversity/documents/pa-guid-english.pdf