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Report prepared for: Michael Collins Architects

For the Site of: Irongate Farm, Hall's Green, Weston, Hitchin SG4 7DR

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Cherryfield Ecology has prepared this report for the named clients' use only.

Ecological reports are limited in shelf life, Natural England usually expect reports for licences to be from the most recent or current season, e.g. May 2024 to May 2025 for bats. Therefore, should the project not proceed within 12-18 months of this report an updated survey should be undertaken in order to check for changes that may have occurred on site. Information is believed to be accurate at the time of the survey; recommendations are made without bias based on good practice guidelines within the industry. However, species presence and ecological parameters can change over time.

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Ecological Appraisal (EA)

0.0 Non-Technical Summary

0.1 Background

This report follows national guidelines JNCC (2010) and UKHab's (2023) allowing for a daytime inspection and recommends for further surveys if considered necessary. If a deviation from the guidelines has been made, this will be detailed in the Method Section.

The following report details the findings and recommendations for the site of Irongate Farm, Hall's Green, Weston, Hitchin SG4 7DR.

The client commissioned Cherryfield Ecology to undertake an EA as the proposals include for transforming existing barns into buildings intended for educational use. Plans have been provided (Appendix I).

0.2 Results and Findings

The site consists of three barns and two sheds, developed land; sealed surface, modified grassland and a tree.

No protected species were found on site at the time of the survey.

The site provides low potential for badgers as though there is some connectivity to more suitable habitats, there is a lack of suitable terrestrial habitat found on site. The site provides low potential for Great Crested Newt (GCN) as though the site is located within an amber zone according to Natural England and the closest waterbody is located approximately 170m from the site, there is limited suitable terrestrial habitat being affected on site (e.g. developed land; sealed surface). The site provides negligible potential for reptiles due to the lack of suitable terrestrial habitat found on site.

The internally connected buildings (B1 & B2) are confirmed for roosting bats due to the presence of seven bat droppings within the buildings. There are also some gaps under the clay roofing tiles and areas of lifted timber weatherboarding.

Barns (B3 & B4) provide negligible potential for roosting bats due to the lack of suitable roosting features.

Barn (B5) provides moderate potential for roosting bats due to the presence of lifted timber shiplap on the walls.

The barns, sheds and tree provide moderate potential for breeding birds.

The site provides negligible potential for other protected species due to the lack of suitable habitat.

0.3 Impact Assessment and Recommendations

Badger - No further surveys are necessary; however, if any badger setts are found throughout works, all works must stop, and advice sought.

Bats - B1 & B2: Full Roost Characterisation surveys will be required (three surveys, three weeks apart), with four surveyors to cover the buildings B1 & B2; two of these must be undertaken between May to August and the third can be undertaken in September if required.

B5: Presence/likely absence surveys (moderate) will be required (two surveys, three weeks apart), with two surveyors to cover the building B5; these must be undertaken between May to August. If bats are found to be present, one further survey will be required (a minimum of three weeks apart), which can be undertaken in September if required.

B3 & B4: No further surveys are necessary; however, if any bats are found throughout any works on these buildings, all works must stop, and advice sought.

Breeding Birds - No further surveys are recommended; however, the development should take place outside the nesting season (March to August). If this is not

possible, it is recommended that a qualified ecologist is on-site to ensure the building/vegetation is not occupied by breeding birds, prior to demolition/clearance. Should an occupied nest be found, a buffer zone would need to be created until the nest is no longer in use.

Great Crested Newt (GCN) - **Unlicensed Method Statement**

Habitat that is being affected is not suitable for GCN, therefore it is not deemed proportionate to the site to enter into the district level licencing scheme. As there is suitable habitat in the surrounding area, it is recommended that an **Unlicensed Method Statement** be followed.

Reptiles - No further survey is necessary; however, if reptiles are found on-site, all works must stop, and advice sought.

Other protected species - No further survey is necessary; however, if any other protected species are found on site, all works must stop, and advice sought.

Habitats - All habitats found are common and widespread, no impacts are foreseen.

The findings outlined in this report are valid for 12-18 months, after which updated surveys will be required.

Enhancements and mitigation are recommended (please see Section 4.4 for further details).

1.0 Introduction

1.1 Aim

The aim of this report is to inform of ecological constraints that may affect the development proposals and recommend to the client if further surveys are required for protected species. An impact assessment is undertaken at this stage; however, if further surveys are required, additional and unexpected impacts may result. The information within this report can be used as the baseline for any Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) metric requirements, however, the calculations are not included within this report.

1.2 Background Information

The client, Michael Collins Architects, has commissioned Cherryfield Ecology to undertake an EA for the site of Irongate Farm, Hall's Green, Weston, Hitchin SG4 7DR. Planning permission is being sought to transform a collection of existing barns into educational buildings.

This survey has checked all habitats, buildings, trees (from ground level only) or structures due to be affected by the proposals on site; it includes checking for protected species, signs of protected species or habitat value e.g. crevices, badger setts, ponds etc. as well as mapping the habitats on site.

The inspection was conducted 11/03/2025.

The survey can only ever provide a 'snapshot' of the site at the time of the survey and circumstances may change following this report. Health and Safety restrictions or obstructions may limit the ability to find evidence.

Biological records have been requested to give the report context and allow a study of the surrounding area. The information is often sensitive and therefore a synopsis is provided.

The survey can be conducted year-round with the optimal period between mid-March and mid-October (south)/1st April and 30th September (north). However, it can be limited due to bad weather and in the winter, when some species are not as active,

thus evidence and species are often not found. During these periods, habitat value (likely presence) becomes more important to the assessment of the site.

Summary of legislation and National Planning Policy that protects wildlife in England:

- The Conservation of Habitats and Species (Amendment) (EU Exit) Regulations 2019.
- Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 as amended.
- Countrywide and Rights of Way Act 2000.
- Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006.
- National Planning Policy Framework (“NPPF”).
- Circular 06/05.

This legislation makes it illegal to:

- Intentionally or deliberately kill, injure or capture a protected species.
- Deliberately disturb a protected species, whether at rest or not.
- Damage, destroy or obstruct access to a resting place.
- Possess or transport a protected species or any part of that species, unless acquired legally.
- Sell, barter or exchange a protected species, or any part of a species.

1.3 Species Specific Information

All UK-protected species have the same protection and the detail under Bats also applies to GCN, Dormouse, Otters and the two UK-protected reptiles.

1.3.1 Breeding Birds

All nesting birds are protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act (as amended) 1981, which makes it an offence to intentionally kill, injure or take any wild bird or take, damage or destroy its nest whilst in use or being built, or take or destroy its eggs. Furthermore, a number of birds enjoy further protection under that Act and are listed on Schedule 1 of the Act. These further protected birds are also protected from

disturbance and it may be necessary to operate a “no-go” buffer zone around such nests - typically out to 5m.

1.3.2 Bats

All 18 species of bat common in the UK (17 known to be breeding) are fully protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act (as amended) 1981 through inclusion in Schedule V of the Act. All bat species in the UK are also included in Schedule II of The Conservation of Habitats and Species (Amendment) (EU Exit) Regulations 2019, which transpose Annex II of the Directive 92/43/EEC 1992 on the Conservation of Natural Habitats and of Wild Fauna and Flora (“Habitats Directive”) which defines United Kingdom protected species of animals.

Bats species are afforded further protection by the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000; and the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006.

This combined legislation makes it an offence to:

- Intentionally or deliberately kill, injure or capture bats.
- Deliberately disturb bats, whether at roost or not.
- Damage, destroy or obstruct access to bat roosts.
- Possess or transport bats, unless acquired legally.
- Sell, barter or exchange bats.

1.3.3 Reptiles

There are six species of reptiles in Great Britain (Edgar *et al.*, 2010) and four of these are commonly found; the Barred Grass Snake *Natrix helvetica*, Adder *Vipera berus*, Common Lizard *Zootoca vivipara* and Slow Worm *Anguis fragilis*.

All native British species of reptiles are legally protected through their inclusion in Schedule V of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981. As such, all species are protected from deliberate killing or injury. Therefore, where development is permitted, and there will be a significant change in land use, a reasonable effort must be undertaken to avoid committing an offence. The same act makes the trading of native reptile species a criminal offence without appropriate licensing.

Two species of reptile; the Smooth Snake *Coronella austriaca* and Sand Lizard *Lacerta agilis* are further protected under The Conservation of Habitats and Species (Amendment) (EU Exit) Regulations 2019, which defines UK protected species of animals (“rare reptiles”).

1.3.4 Badgers

Badger *Meles meles* and its habitat are protected under The Protection of Badgers Act 1992, Schedule V of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981, and Appendix III of the Bern Convention 1979.

This legislation makes it an offence to:

- Kill, injure, take or possess a badger.
- Interfere with, damage or destroy a badger sett including e.g. obstructing access to a badger sett.
- Cruelly treat or harm a badger.
- Disturb a badger in a sett.

1.3.5 Great Crested Newts

Great Crested Newts (GCN) *Triturus cristatus* are listed in both The Conservation of Habitats and Species (Amendment) (EU Exit) Regulations 2019 and in Schedule V of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981.

GCN are afforded further protection by the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000; and the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006.

1.3.6 Otter

The Eurasian Otter *Lutra lutra* is the only Otter species native to the UK. The Eurasian Otter is fully protected under Schedule V of the Wildlife and Countryside Act (as amended) 1981 and in Schedule II of The Conservation of Habitats and Species (Amendment) (EU Exit) Regulations 2019, which transpose Annex II of the Directive 92/43/EEC 1992 on the Conservation of Natural Habitats and of Wild Fauna and Flora (“Habitats Directive”) which defines United Kingdom protected species of animals. This legislation makes it illegal to:

- Capture, kill, disturb or injure otters (on purpose or by not taking enough care).
- Damage or destroy a breeding or resting place (deliberately or by not taking enough care).
- Obstruct access to their resting or sheltering places (deliberately or by not taking enough care).
- Possess, sell, control or transport live or dead otters, or parts of otters.

1.3.7 Water Vole

The Water Vole *Arvicola amphibius* is protected under Schedule V of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 and is a priority conservation species. This legislation makes it illegal to:

- Intentionally capture, kill or injure water voles.
- Damage, destroy or block access to their places of shelter or protection (on purpose or by not taking enough care).
- Disturb them in a place of shelter or protection (on purpose or by not taking enough care).
- Possess, sell, control or transport live or dead water voles or parts of them (not water voles bred in captivity).

1.4 Protected Sites and Priority Habitats

Some areas with distinctive plants, animals, habitats, geology or landforms are protected at the international, European, national and local-level under statutory and non-statutory sites. Some habitats have been identified as needing priority conservation action; UK BAP Priority Habitats are a range of semi-natural habitat types that are identified as being the most threatened and requiring conservation action.

2.0 Methods

The survey follows the national guidelines JNCC (2010) and UKHabs (2023), and the following equipment is available for the inspection:

- Torches (e.g. LED Lensar type).
- Ladders (Standard 4m telescopic surveying ladder).
- Endoscope where holes, cracks and crevices are accessible.
- Mirrors (extendable and movable mirror face).
- Binoculars (Pentax close focus).
- Thermometer/hygrometer.
- Camera.
- Sample bags for collecting dropping and feeding evidence.
- Quadrat for vegetation sampling.

The survey can be conducted year-round with the optimal period between mid-March and mid-October (south)/1st April and 30th September (north). However, it can be limited due to bad weather and in the winter, when some species are not as active, thus evidence and species are often not found. During these periods, habitat value (likely presence) becomes more important to the assessment of the site.

Trees and building exteriors are checked from ground level only. Buildings are checked internally where access is available.

Ponds are checked in person where access is available. If access is not available, for example the pond is situated on private land, ponds are assessed as far as is possible from satellite imagery.

Target notes are made when appropriate to highlight, for example, protected species evidence or other feature(s) of ecological note.

A summary of the condition assessments for BNG are included (where required) within Section 3.2.1. The excel sheets for these are released separately.

If a deviation from the guidelines has been made the reason and justification will be explained below:

No deviation from the standard guidelines has been made for this survey.

Great Crested Newt District Level License Zones explained, these criteria are from the two schemes:

Natural England Scheme -

- Red zones contain key populations of GCN, which are important on a regional, national or international scale and include designated Sites of Special Scientific Interest for GCN. *If in a red zone traditional surveys methods will have to be used going forward.*
- Amber zones contain main population centres for GCN and comprise important connecting habitat that aids natural dispersal.
- Green zones contain sparsely distributed GCN and are less likely to contain important pathways of connecting habitat for this species.
- White zones contain no GCN. However, as most of England forms the natural range of GCN, white zones are rare and will only be used when it is certain that there are no GCN.

NatureSpace Scheme -

- Black - nationally or regionally important site for great crested newt - excluded from development impacts under the District Licence Scheme.
- Red - highly suitable habitat - the most important areas for great crested newts.
- Amber - suitable habitat - great crested newts are likely to be present.

- Green - moderate habitat suitability - great crested newts may be present.
- White - low habitat suitability - low probability of great crested newt presence.

Table 1: Habitat value (likelihood) of protected species presence assessed against Collins (2023), Edgar *et al.* (2010) and Natural England (2007) etc.

Likelihood of species presence (Habitat Value)	Features that species can use, regardless of evidence being present.
Confirmed Presence	Species are found to be present during the survey. Evidence of species is found to be present during the survey.
Higher likelihood of presence	Buildings, trees or other structures or habitat features of particular significance for use by protected species e.g. nesting habitat, roosting opportunities, and ponds. Habitat of high quality for foraging e.g. broadleaved woodland, tree-lined watercourses and grazed parkland. Site is connected with the wider landscape by strong linear features that would be used by commuting species e.g. river and or stream valleys and hedgerows. Site is close to known locations of records for protected species.
Moderate and Lower likelihood of species presence	Several potential habitat opportunities in buildings, trees or other habitats. Habitat could be used for foraging e.g. trees, shrub, grassland or water. Site is connected with the wider landscape by linear features that could be used by commuting species e.g. lines of trees and scrub or linked back gardens. A small number of less significant habitat opportunities. Isolated habitat for foraging e.g. a lone tree or patch of scrub. An isolated site not connected by prominent linear landscape features.
Negligible likelihood of species presence	No features suitable for roosting, minor foraging or commuting.

2.1 Limitations

This survey provides a snapshot of the site at the time of the survey only. Species are highly mobile and can turn up from time to time unexpectedly. All care has been taken

to ensure the results and recommendations are suitable to the context of the development and the information gathered on surveys.

3.0 Results

The following section details the results of the desk study, inspection and survey; it includes MAGIC information, biological records data and map/aerial photo information. The results detail the building, structure or tree (numbered for reference) description of any evidence found and habitat value if no evidence has been located.

3.1 Desk Study

The desk study is centred on Grid Reference - TL 27446 28733 and Postcode - SG4 7DR.

3.1.1 MAGIC

The following statutory sites and Natural England Protected Species (NEPS) have been located within the 2km search area (Figure 1).

Table 2: MAGIC search results

Receptor	Distance and Direction to Nearest (m/km)	Description
Statutory sites		None within search area
Granted protected species licenses	~1397m NW	License no. 2014-797 Brown long eared <i>Plecotus auritus</i> Common pipistrelle <i>Pipistrellus pipistrellus</i>
	~1053m SE	License no. 2013-5998 Brown long eared Common pipistrelle
	~239m SE	License no. 2012-5044 Brown long eared
	~1397m NW	License no. 2013-5792 Common pipistrelle Brown long eared
	~1397m NW	License no. 2016-27057-1 Brown long eared Common pipistrelle

Priority habitat	~1867m ESE	Coastal and floodplain grazing marsh
	~280m E	Good quality semi improved grassland
	~442m NW	Priority habitat Ponds
	~1939m ESE	Chalk river - high certainty
	~1891m ESE	Chalk river - low certainty
	~1604m SE	Ancient & Semi-Natural Woodland - Brooches Wood - Claypits Wood - Claypit Hills Spring - Coldash Wood - Sloggars Wood - Tilekiln Wood
	~1136m WNW	Ancient Replanted Woodland - Claypit Hills Spring - Park Wood - Tilekiln Wood
	~312m NE	Deciduous woodland
	~921m W	Traditional orchards

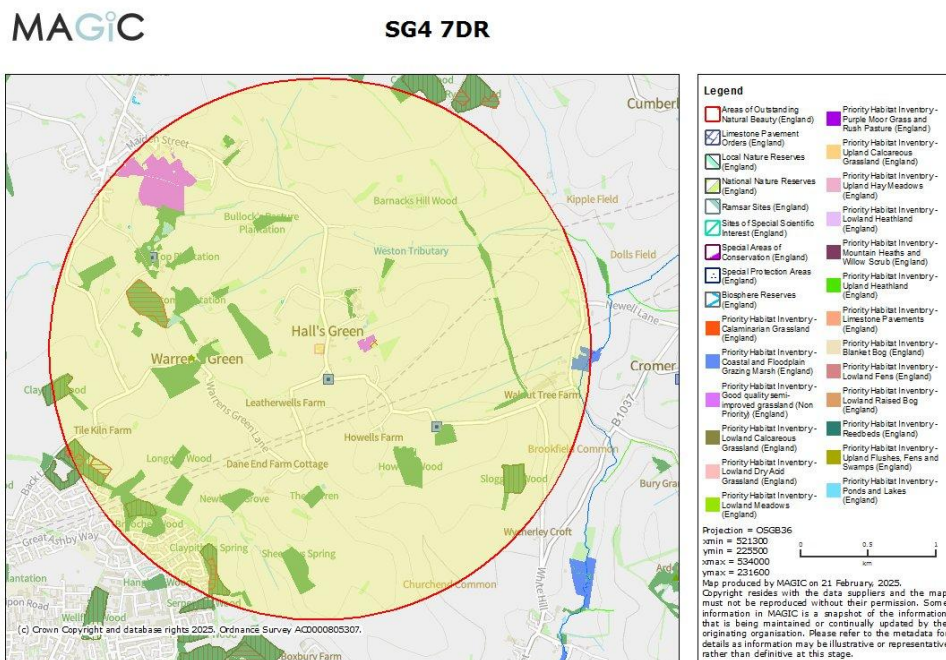


Figure 1: MAGIC Map Search

3.1.2 GCN DLL Zone

Natural England - The site falls within an amber zone.

3.1.3 Biological Records Data

A standard data search of existing records for protected species and nature reserves has been commissioned, below details the results and site context. *Data older than 10 years old will not be included.*

Biological records were obtained from Herts Environmental Record Centre, (2025).

Table 3: Biological Records

Species	Number of Records	Closest Record (accuracy)	Most Recent Record (year)
Amphibians			
Common Frog <i>Rana temporaria</i>	-	-	-
Common Toad <i>Bufo bufo</i>	-	-	-
Great Crested Newt <i>Triturus cristatus</i>	-	-	-
Palmate newt <i>Lissotriton helveticus</i>	-	-	-
Smooth newt <i>Lissotriton vulgaris</i>	-	-	-
Bats			
Barbastelle <i>Barbastella barbastellus</i>	-	-	-
Brown Long-Eared <i>Plecotus auritus</i>	-	-	-
Common Pipistrelle <i>Pipistrellus pipistrellus</i>	1	930m (1km)	2015
Daubenton's <i>Myotis daubentonii</i>	-	-	-
Leisler's <i>Nyctalus leisleri</i>	-	-	-
Nathusius' Pipistrelle <i>Pipistrellus nathusii</i>	-	-	-
Natterer's <i>Myotis nattereri</i>	-	-	-
Noctule <i>Nyctalus noctula</i>	-	-	-
Serotine <i>Eptesicus serotinus</i>	-	-	-
Soprano Pipistrelle <i>Pipistrellus pygmaeus</i>	-	-	-
Unidentified Bat <i>Chiroptera</i> sp.	-	-	-
Unidentified Long-Eared <i>Plecotus</i> sp.	-	-	-

Unidentified Myotis <i>Myotis</i> sp.	-	-	-
Unidentified Pipistrelle <i>Pipistrellus</i> sp.	-	-	-
Unidentified Vesper <i>Vespertilionidae</i>	-	-	-
Whiskered <i>Myotis mystacinus</i>	-	-	-
Mammals (exc. Bats)			
Badger <i>Meles meles</i>	25	610m (1km)	2020
Hazel Dormouse <i>Muscardinus avellanarius</i>	-	-	-
Otter <i>Lutra lutra</i>	-	-	-
Water Vole <i>Arvicola amphibius</i>	-	-	-
West European Hedgehog <i>Erinaceus europaeus</i>	-	-	-
Reptiles			
Adder <i>Vipera berus</i>	-	-	-
Common Lizard <i>Zootoca vivipara</i>	-	-	-
Grass Snake <i>Natrix helvetica</i>	-	-	-
Slow-Worm <i>Anguis fragilis</i>	-	-	-
Other			
Birds, Invertebrates, Plants etc.			
Non-Statutory Sites (see Figure 2)			
Name	Reference No.	Type	Description/designated for
Lolleywood Green Lane	22/018	LWS	Green lane with a gappy ancient hedge supporting a moderate diversity of woody species. Wildlife Site criteria: Wooded green lane with features and structure indicative of ancient origins; woodland indicators.
Hicks Grove	22/020	LWS	Ancient semi-natural coppiced woodland with a few standards. Wildlife Site criteria: Ancient woodland with a semi-natural canopy and field evidence suggesting an ancient origin; shown on Bryant's map (1822); >1 ha.

Halls Green Grassland	22/030	LWS	Small area of predominantly old, neutral pasture with a variety of habitats and a good diversity of flora for its size. Wildlife Site criteria: Grassland indicators.
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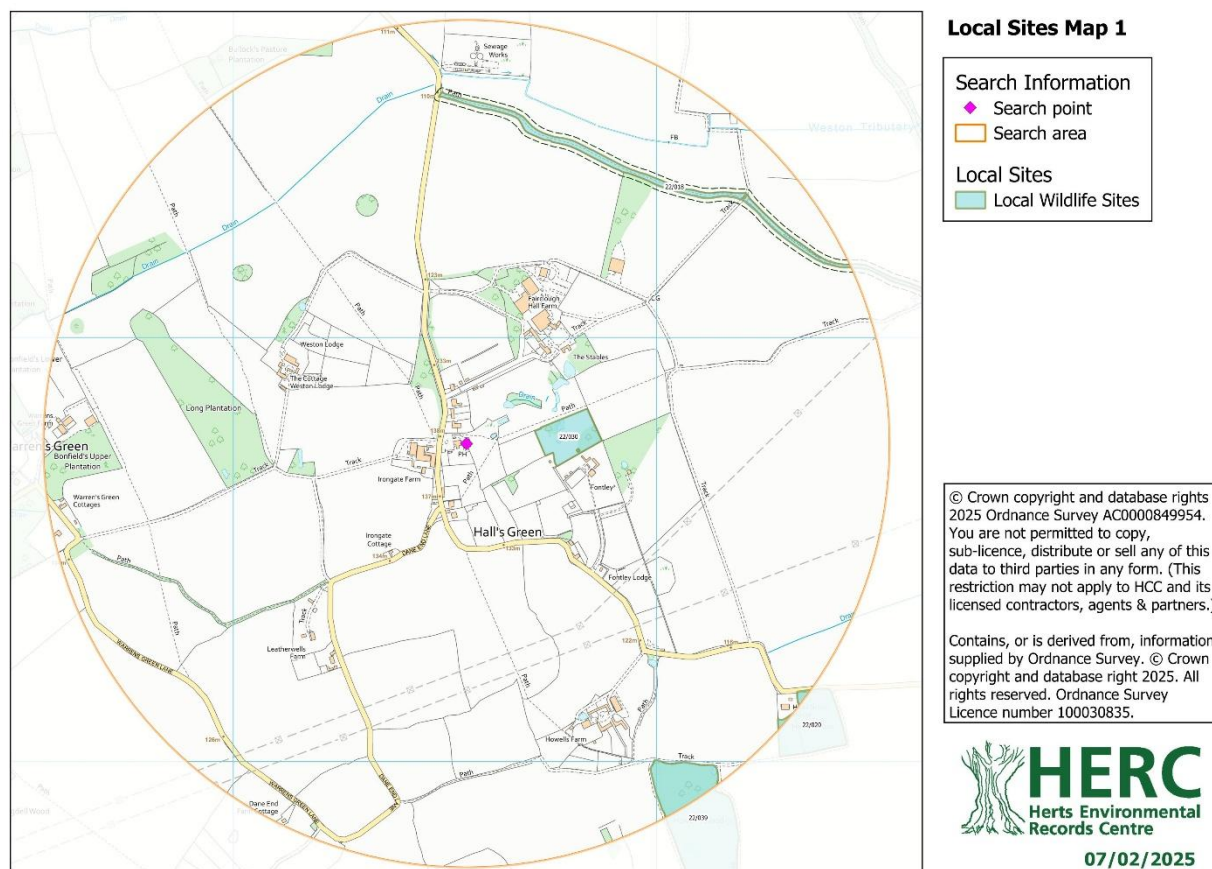


Figure 2: Non-Statutory sites

3.1.4 Site Location and Surrounds

The site is located in Weston, Hertfordshire and is surrounded by arable fields and pasture in the immediate locale. Table 4 details the commuting, feeding and habitat features in a 1km radius of the site.

Table 4: Habitat features suitable for use by protected species.

Feature	Description
Watercourses	Weston Tributary flows through the north of the search area ~680m NW at its closest point. Drainage ditch ~936m SE which drains into the River Beane.
Waterbodies	Waterbodies within 250m - Three ponds ~170m ENE, 195m NE and 224m NE Waterbodies within 500m - Six ponds ~322m E, ~324m ENE~327m NE, ~343m NE, 348m NE and 387m NE - Pond ~475m ESE - Pond ~341m NW - Two ponds ~277m W and 453m W Waterbodies within 1000m - Three ponds ~718 m SE, ~728m SE and 1000m SE - Pond ~990m S - Two ponds ~942m WSW and ~920m WNW
Woodland	Small scattered areas of woodland are present throughout the search area, the closest areas being ~143m north and ~250m west of the site. Larger areas of woodland are found to the west of the site, Long plantation ~354m W, Bonfield's Upper Plantation ~699m W, Bonfields Lower Plantation ~912m W, Warrengreen Wood ~ 930m SW and Bottom Plantation ~950m NW.
Linear e.g. hedgerows	Arable hedgerows dominate the search area
Pasture/arable/grassland	Arable fields and pasture dominate the search area
Other	n/a

3.2 Habitat, Building, Tree or Other Structure

This section details the structures/habitat reference and descriptions (see Figure 18 for Site Plan).

Table 5: Weather Records

Parameter	Unit/value
Temperature	8 °C
Cloud cover	100%
Precipitation	None
Wind	1/12

3.2.1 Habitats

Habitats found on site are mapped using UKHab (UKHab, 2023).

Table 6: Habitat features found on site.

Habitat Features		
UKHab Habitat Type (to the appropriate level)	UKHab Essential Secondary Codes & Additional Secondary Codes (where relevant)	Description
Developed Land; Sealed Surface (Buildings)		B1 is a brick built barn in a gable ended structure with a corrugated sheet roof and concrete frames. There is a section of timber shiplap and some corrugated sheeting found on the front exterior of the building.



Figure 3: Example of B1's front exterior



Figure 4: Example of B1's interior

B1 is internally and externally connected to B2, which is in a cross gabled structure with timber shiplap walls. The roof is partially made up of corrugated sheeting and clay roofing tiles. Internally B2 is timber framed and has a timber roof.



Figure 5: Example of B2's northeast exterior



Figure 6: Example of B2's southeast exterior



Figure 7: Example of B2's southwest exterior



Figure 8: Example of B2's interior



Figure 9: Example of B2's interior

B3 is a brick-built barn in a gable ended structure. the roof is made up of corrugated sheeting. The front of the building has come corrugated sheeting and a small extension with timber shiplap. The barn door is made of and framed by timber.



Figure 10: Example of B3's front exterior

B4 is a barn made up of metal corrugated sheeting, internally it is metal framed.



Figure 11: Example of B4's front exterior



Figure 12: Example of B4's interior

B5 is a timber shiplap shed. The roof is in a mono-pitched structure and made up of corrugated sheeting. A brick plinth is present. The shed is internally boarded.



Figure 13: Example of B5's exterior

		 Cherryfield Ecology 10/03/2025 10:41:07 Figure 14: Example of B5's interior
Developed Land; Sealed Surface		Developed land; sealed surface in the form of hardstanding can be found across the site.  Cherryfield Ecology 10/03/2025 10:35:24 Figure 15: Example of the hardstanding
Modified Grassland	200 - Tree	Two sections of modified grassland can be found on site, species include Yorkshire fog <i>Holcus lanatus</i> and cleavers <i>Galium aparine</i>. One large willow <i>Salix sp.</i> tree can be found in the modified grassland.

		 Cherryfield Ecology 10/03/2025 10:40:19 Figure 16: Example of the modified grassland  Cherryfield Ecology 10/03/2025 10:40:23 Figure 17: Example of the willow tree
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Table 7: Target Notes

Target Note	Description
n/a	n/a

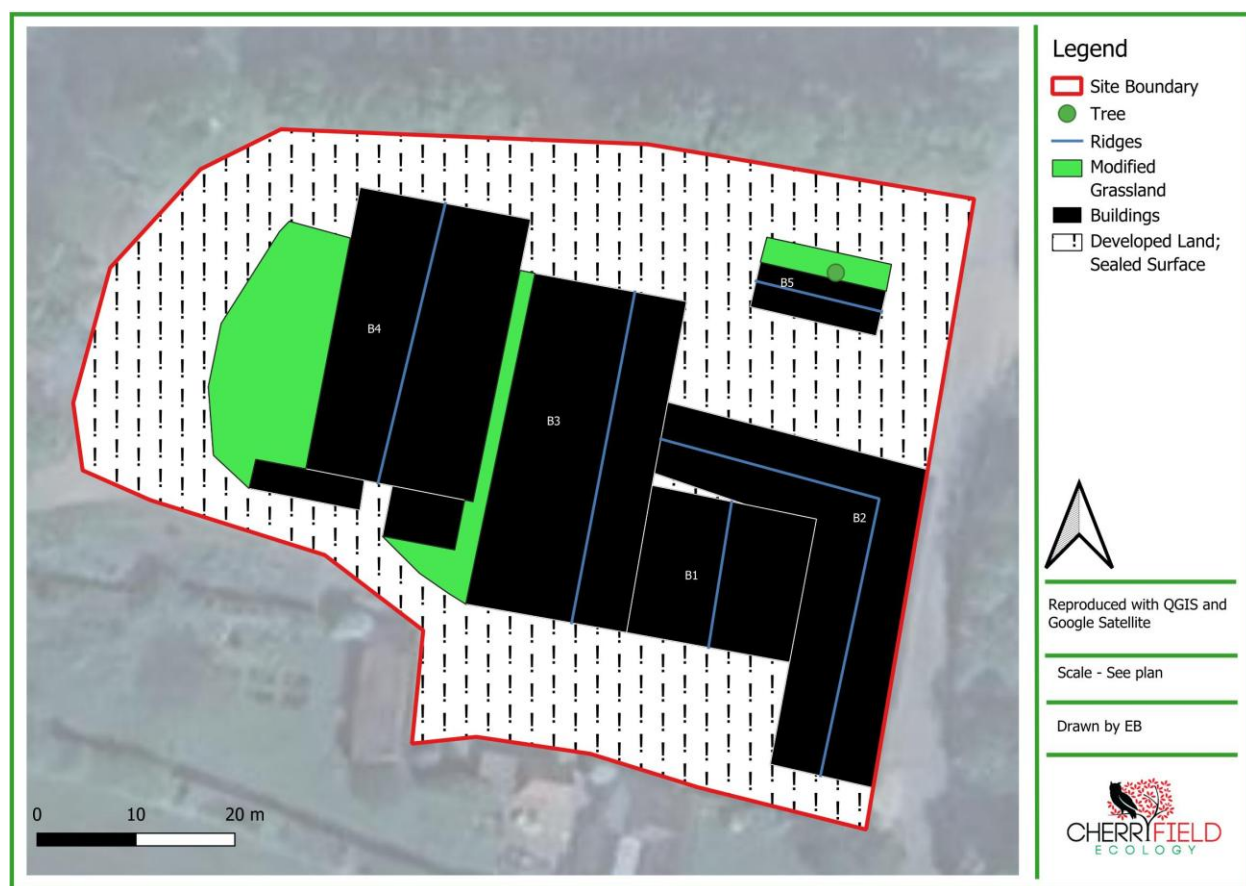


Figure 18: Site Plan

3.2.2 Species List

Table 8: Species found on site with relevant *DAFOR abundance.

Common Name	Scientific Name	*DAFOR Scale	Habitat
Black Horehound	<i>Ballota nigra</i>	R	Modified Grassland
Bramble	<i>Rubus fruticosus</i> agg.	R	Modified Grassland
Buddleia	<i>Buddleja davidii</i>	O	Modified Grassland
Cleavers	<i>Galium aparine</i>	F	Modified Grassland
Cow Parsley	<i>Anthriscus sylvestris</i>	O	Modified Grassland
Garlic Mustard	<i>Alliaria petiolata</i>	O	Modified Grassland
Greater Periwinkle	<i>Vinca major</i>	R	Modified Grassland
Groundsel	<i>Senecio vulgaris</i>	O	Modified Grassland
Purple Toadflax	<i>Linaria purpurea</i>	R	Modified Grassland

Red Dead-Nettle	<i>Lamium purpureum</i>	O	Modified Grassland
Springy Turf Mosses	<i>Rhytidiadelphus squarrosus</i>	O	Modified Grassland
Stinking Iris	<i>Iris foetidissima</i>	R	Modified Grassland
Teasel	<i>Dipsacus fullonum</i>	R	Modified Grassland
White Dead-Nettle	<i>Lamium album</i>	O	Modified Grassland
Willow	<i>Salix</i> sp.	R	Tree/ Modified Grassland
Yorkshire Fog	<i>Holcus lanatus</i>	D	Modified Grassland

*DAFOR - Dominant, Abundant, Frequent, Occasional and Rare

3.3 Evidence or Likelihood of Species Presence

This section details the evidence located and likelihood of species presence.

3.3.1 Bats

Table 9: Bats, evidence or the potential for the species use.

Bats found	No bats were found at the time of the survey.
Evidence of bat use	Seven bat droppings were found within B2, which is internally connected to B1.  Figure 19: Example of the droppings within B2
Potential for bat use	Level of likelihood of presence - B1 & B2 - Confirmed/Moderate The buildings provide confirmed potential for roosting bats due to the presence of bat droppings within B2, which is internally connected to B1.

There are gaps underneath the roofing tiles, which provide moderate potential for roosting bats. There is also some lifted timber shiplap.



Figure 20: Example of lifted clay tiles on B2



Figure 21: Example of the lifted timber shiplap on B2

B3 & B4 - Negligible

B3 and B4 provide negligible potential for roosting bats due to the lack of suitable roosting features found.

B5 - Moderate

B5 provides moderate potential for roosting bats due to the presence of lifted timber shiplap along the walls of the building.

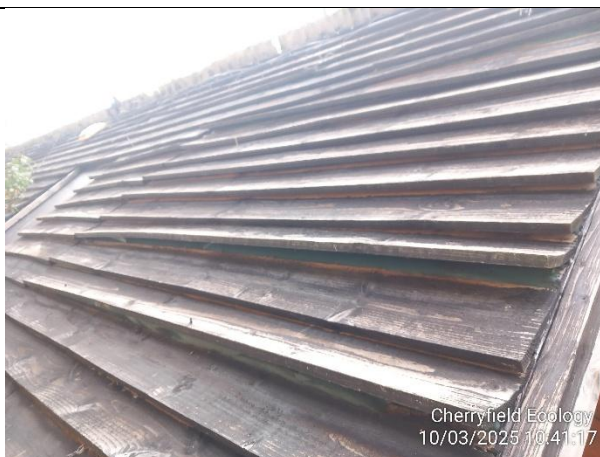


Figure 22: Example of the lifted timber shiplap on B5

3.3.2 Badgers

Table 10: Badgers, evidence or the potential for the species use.

Badgers found	No badgers were found at the time of the survey.
Evidence of badger use	No evidence of badger use was found at the time of the survey.
Potential for badger use	Level of likelihood of presence - Low The site provides low potential for badgers as though there is some connectivity to more suitable habitats, there is limited suitable habitat found on site.

3.3.3 Breeding Birds

Table 11: Breeding birds, evidence or potential for the species use.

Breeding birds found	No breeding birds were found at the time of the survey.
Evidence of breeding bird use	No evidence of breeding birds was found at the time of the survey.
Potential for breeding bird use	Level of likelihood of presence - Moderate The barns, sheds and willow tree provide moderate potential for breeding birds.

3.3.4 Amphibian

Table 12: Amphibians, evidence or potential for species use.

Amphibians found	No Great Crested Newt (GCN) were found at the time of the survey.
Evidence of amphibian use	No evidence of GCN was found at the time of the survey.
Potential for amphibian use	Level of likelihood of presence - Low The site is located within an amber zone according to Natural England and the closest waterbody is located approximately 170m from the site. However, there is limited suitable terrestrial habitat on site, and the development will only impact suboptimal habitats (e.g. developed land; sealed surface).

3.3.5 Reptile

Table 13: Reptiles, evidence or potential for species use.

Reptiles found	No reptiles were found at the time of the survey.
Evidence of reptile use	No evidence of reptiles was found at the time of the survey.
Potential for reptile use	Level of likelihood of presence - Negligible The site provides negligible potential for reptiles due to the lack of suitable terrestrial habitat found on site.

3.3.6 Other Species e.g. Hazel Dormouse / Otter / Water Vole

Table 14: Other protected species, evidence or potential for species use.

Species found	No other protected species were found at the time of the survey.
Evidence of species use	No evidence of other protected species was found at the time of the survey.
Potential for species use	Level of likelihood of presence - Negligible There is no suitable habitat on site for any other protected species.

3.3.7 Invasive Non-Native (Schedule 9 Species)

Table 15: Invasive non-native species found.

Species found	No invasive non-native species were found at the time of the survey.
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4.0 Conclusions, Discussion, Impacts and Recommendations

The following section details the conclusions, discussion, impacts and recommendations in the context of the proposed works.

4.1 Conclusion and Discussion

The proposals include for transforming existing barns into buildings intended for educational use.

The site consists of three barns and two sheds, developed land; sealed surface, modified grassland and a tree.

No protected species were found on site at the time of the survey.

The site provides **low** potential for badgers as though there is some connectivity to more suitable habitats, there is a lack of suitable terrestrial habitat found on site. The site provides **low** potential for Great Crested Newt (GCN) as though the site is located within an amber zone according to Natural England and the closest waterbody is located approximately 170m from the site, there is limited suitable terrestrial habitat being affected on site (e.g. developed land; sealed surface). The site provides **negligible** potential for reptiles due to the lack of suitable terrestrial habitat found on site.

The internally connected buildings (B1 & B2) are confirmed for roosting bats due to the presence of seven bat droppings within the buildings. There are also some gaps under the clay roofing tiles and areas of lifted timber weatherboarding.

Barns (B3 & B4) provide **negligible** potential for roosting bats due to the lack of suitable roosting features.

Barn (B5) provides **moderate** potential for roosting bats due to the presence of lifted timber shiplap on the walls.

The barns, sheds and tree provide **moderate** potential for breeding birds.

The site provides **negligible** potential for other protected species due to the lack of suitable habitat.

Recommended surveys are found in section 4.3.

4.2 Potential Impacts

Impact assessments must be proportionate to the scale of the development (CIEEM, 2018) and Table 16 details a proportionate impact assessment based on current information.

Table 16: Impact Assessment

Impact	Bats - A bat roost will be lost in the development on B1 & B2 and could be lost in the development on B5. No impacts are foreseen for B3 & B4. Breeding Birds - Active nests may be lost in the development. GCN - Minor loss of habitat.
Characterisation of unmitigated impact on the feature	Bats - A low-level loss/impact at a local level. Breeding Birds - A low-level loss/impact at a local level. GCN - A low-level loss/impact at a local level.
Effect without mitigation	Without mitigation, individual bats, birds and GCN could be killed, injured or trapped during the works.
Mitigation and/or potential enhancement	See Table 17 and Table 18
Significance of effects of residual impacts (after mitigation)	Bats - If lost roosts are replaced by bat boxes, the effects would be negligible. Breeding Birds - If lost habitat is replaced by bird boxes and mitigation is followed, the effects would be negligible. GCN - If mitigation is followed, the effects would be negligible.

4.3 Recommendations

Badger - No further surveys are necessary; however, if any badger setts are found throughout works, all works must stop, and advice sought.

Bats - **B1 & B2: Full Roost Characterisation surveys** will be required (three surveys, three weeks apart), with **four** surveyors to cover the buildings **B1 & B2**; two of these must be undertaken between May to August and the third can be undertaken in September if required.

B5: Presence/likely absence surveys (moderate) will be required (two surveys, three weeks apart), with **two** surveyors to cover the building **B5**; these must be undertaken between May to August. If bats are found to be present, one further survey will be required (a minimum of three weeks apart), which can be undertaken in September if required.

B3 & B4: No further surveys are necessary; however, if any bats are found throughout any works on these buildings, all works must stop, and advice sought.

Breeding Birds - No further surveys are recommended; however, the development should take place outside the nesting season (March to August). If this is not possible, it is recommended that a qualified ecologist is on-site to ensure the building/vegetation is not occupied by breeding birds, prior to demolition/clearance. Should an occupied nest be found, a buffer zone would need to be created until the nest is no longer in use.

Great Crested Newt (GCN) - **Unlicensed Method Statement**

Habitat that is being affected is not suitable for GCN, therefore it is not deemed proportionate to the site to enter into the district level licencing scheme. As there is suitable habitat in the surrounding area, it is recommended that an **Unlicensed Method Statement** be followed.

Reptiles - No further survey is necessary; however, if reptiles are found on-site, all works must stop, and advice sought.

Other protected species - No further survey is necessary; however, if any other protected species are found on site, all works must stop, and advice sought.

Habitats - All habitats found are common and widespread, no impacts are foreseen.

The findings outlined in this report are valid for 12-18 months, after which updated surveys will be required.

4.4 Additional Recommendations

Table 17: Additional Recommendations

Work	Specification
General information	The following must be undertaken: - All works must be undertaken within 12 months of this report, thereafter a material change check will be required to check for changes that could affect potential protected species habitat. - If any protected species are found at any point whatsoever during works, works will stop and further advice will be sought.
General Precautions	- Trenches and open holes - All trenches and open holes should be covered overnight, or if the hole or trench cannot be covered it should be filled in or a rough sawn timber plank installed as an escape route for any species. - General maintenance - If grassland and vegetation is kept in a mown/cut state this should be maintained for the duration of the works. - Store all material on hardstanding or in buildings to prevent artificial refuges from being created.
General bat Information	No development will occur until bat surveys consistent with the Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines (4th edition) (Collins, 2023) have been undertaken in the appropriate survey season, May to September (Mid-May to August optimal). The Three Tests to be answered before planning can be granted (NE, 2017): <i>Test 1:</i> Regulation 53(2)(e) states: a licence can be granted for the purposes of “preserving public health or public safety or other imperative reasons of overriding public interest including those of a social or economic nature and beneficial consequences of primary importance for the environment”. Test 1 can be achieved via the ‘imperative reasons of overriding public interest’. Although not for the ecologist to determine the planning officer will on grant of consent. <i>Test 2:</i> Regulation 53(9)(a) states: the appropriate authority shall not grant a licence unless they are satisfied “that there is no satisfactory alternative”

	Test 2 would be achieved on the grant of consent as no other sites have been considered for the development. Test 3: Regulation 53(9) (b) states: the appropriate authority shall not grant a licence unless they are satisfied “that the action authorised will not be detrimental to the maintenance of the population of the species concerned at a favourable conservation status in their natural range.” Test 3 will be achieved once full emergence/re-entry surveys are conducted and full mitigation appropriate to species and population has been designed and implemented via an NEPS licence issued from the statutory authority (Natural England) if this becomes necessary following a dusk and pre-dawn survey.
Lighting	Any lighting near or shining onto any trees/buildings etc, will be designed to minimise the impact it has on potential species and commuting. Lighting will be in line with the BCT lighting guidelines (Bats and Lighting in the UK (Bat Conservation Trust, 2023) https://www.theilp.org.uk/documents/guidance-note-8-bats-and-artificial-lighting/ This lighting, where possible, will be of low level, be on downward deflectors and be on PIR sensors. Using LED directional lighting can also be a way of minimising the light spill affecting the habitat. No up-lighting should be used. Light spill must be minimised to as low as possible. This will ensure that the foraging and commuting resources that the protected species are likely to be using is maintained.

Table 18: The local authority has a duty to enhance biodiversity in its day-to-day duties; the following are suggested enhancements that are easily installed into a development and can be cost-effective whilst ensuring a gain for local wildlife.

Work	Specification
Bat, bird and insect box enhancement.	Bat tubes can be installed in the new buildings (Figure 23). These require no maintenance, can be installed on a gable end/under an eave (no less than 3m above ground level), face south or north and can be faced in any material to provide an aesthetic matching the building.



Figure 23: Example of bat tube.

Bird boxes for a variety of different species can also be installed.

A selection of open-fronted boxes and songbird boxes can be installed (Figure 24 and Figure 25); it is recommended that a minimum of two of each of the boxes are installed. These will be installed at a minimum of 2m high and ideally face north to east.



Figure 24: Robin box.



Figure 25: Songbird box.

A variety of insect boxes can be installed in the area; a minimum of one box is recommended (Figure 26 and Figure 27).



Figure 26: Urban bee nesting box, used for solitary bees and wasps.



Figure 27: Bug biome, ideal for ladybirds, lacewings and bees.

Swifts <i>Apus apus</i>	Swift nest bricks (Figure 28) are recommended due to the increased lack of nesting opportunities swifts are finding in modern-built dwelling homes. Information is adapted from the RSPB https://www.rspb.org.uk/our-work/rspb-news/news/stories/swift-advice-for-ecologists/ and http://actionforswifts.blogspot.com The following will be undertaken: ▪ Wherever possible, swift bricks will be installed into new or restored buildings to increase the overall availability of nest sites for swifts and other species. Birds such as house sparrows can use swift bricks, but swifts cannot use house sparrow nest bricks. ▪ Integral swift bricks are the preferred option for new housing developments. These should be fitted in clusters of 2 to 4 on gable ends and near the roofline where swifts would naturally look for a potential nest site. ▪ Try to ensure swift bricks have a minimum of 5m clearance beneath and in front. Always avoid locating them above doors and windows to help prevent a disturbance issue to both the birds and human owners. ▪ Alternatively, swift boxes (Figure 29) can be placed on the external walls of a building where the installation of swift bricks is not possible. Figure 28: Example of swift bricks, that can be built into a dwelling, Source: https://www.birdbrickhouses.co.uk/brick-nesting-boxes/
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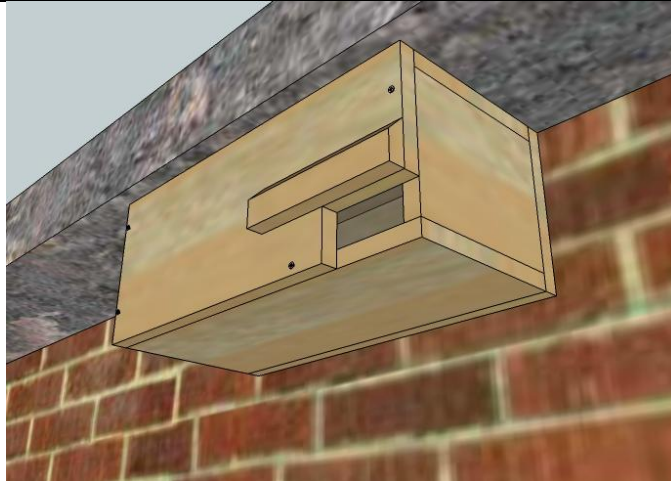


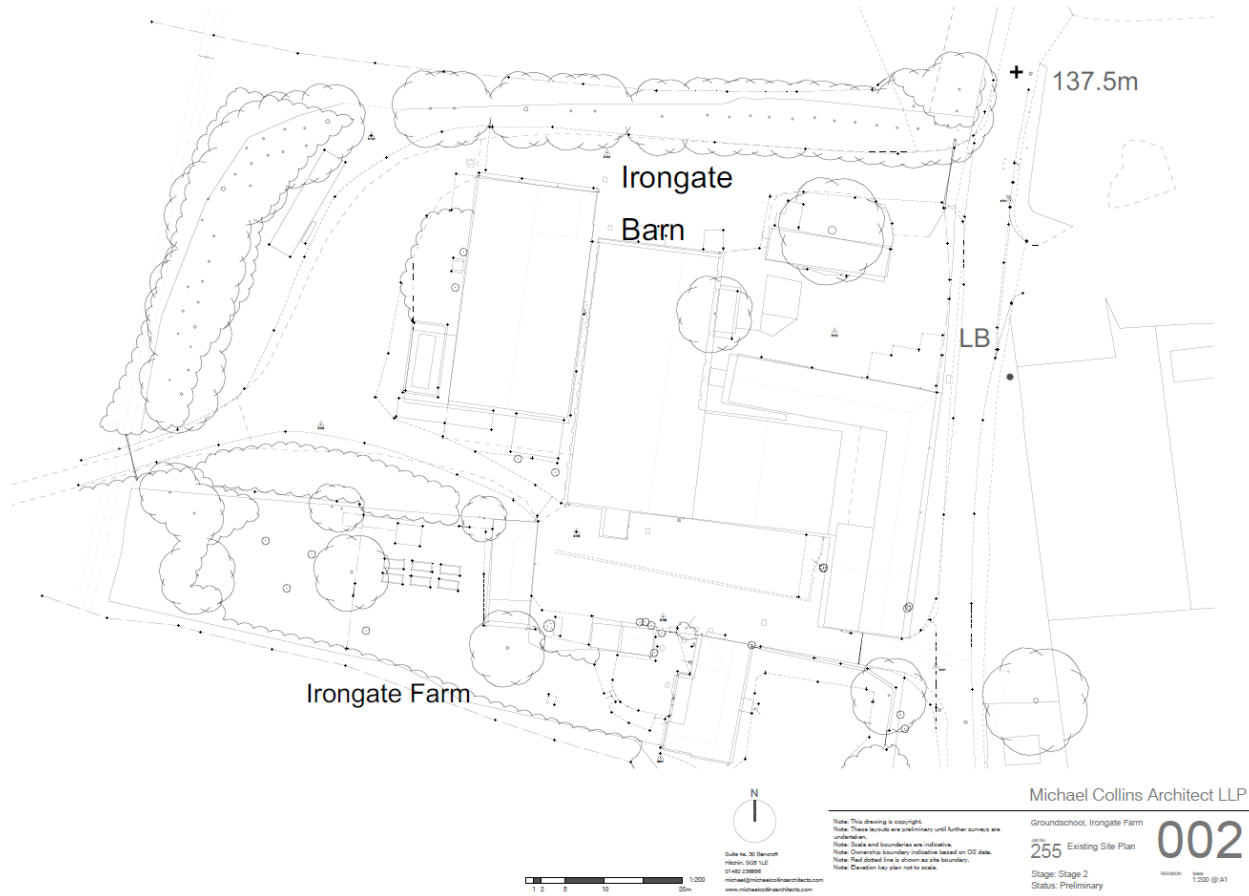
Figure 29: Swift box, source: <http://actionforswifts.blogspot.com/p/diy-swift-box-designs.html>

5.0 References

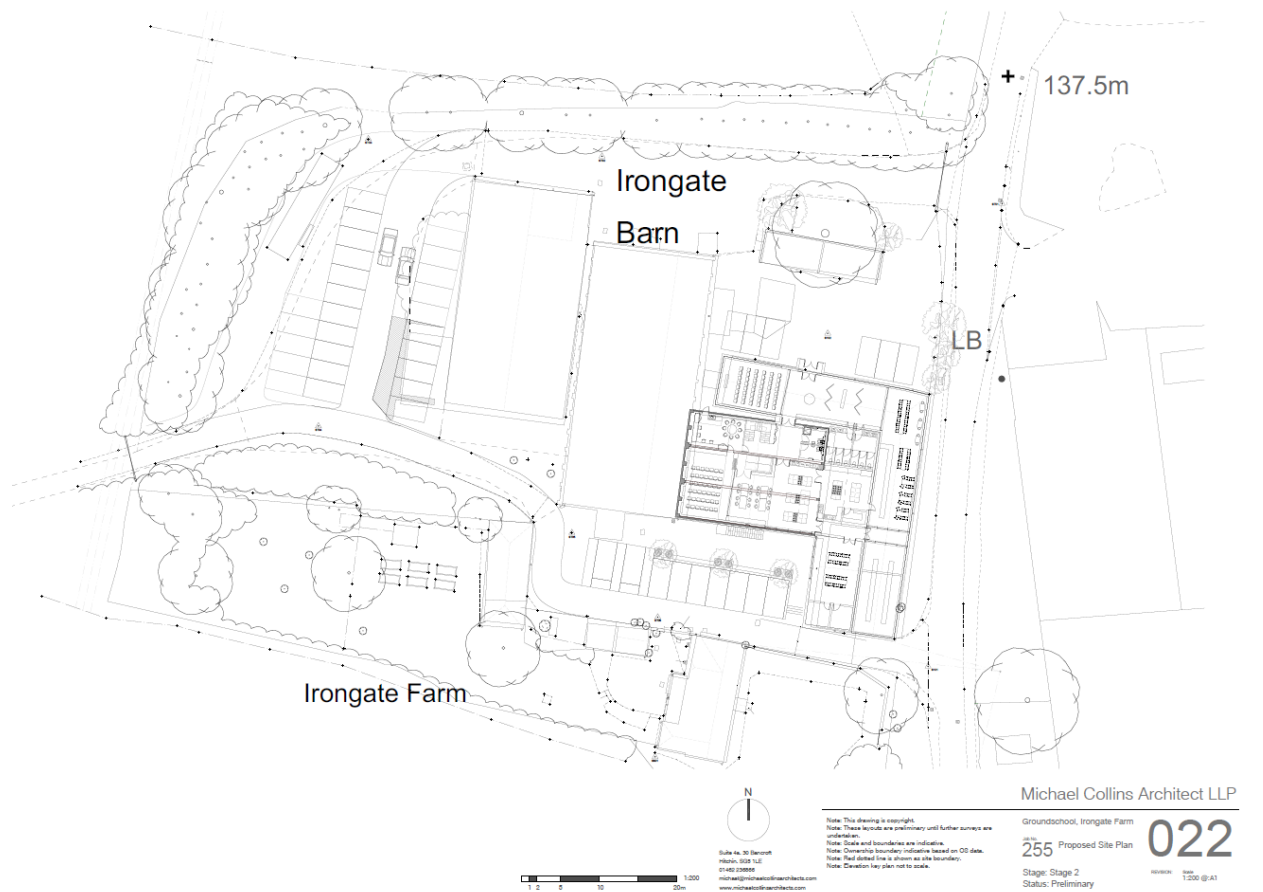
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[20/10/2022](#)

Appendix I - Site Plans



Existing Site Plan (Michael Collins Architect LLP)



Proposed Site Plan (Michael Collins Architect LLP)