PRELIMINARY ECOLOGICAL APPRAISAL

STAFFORDSHIRE FARMERS SITE, CHEADLE ROAD, CHEDDLETON

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1. NON-TECHNICAL SUMMARY

Eyebright Ecology was commissioned by Sammons Architectural Ltd on behalf of John Pointons & Sons to undertake a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal of land known as Staffordshire Farmers Site, Cheadle Road, Cheddleton, Staffordshire.

An 'Extended' Phase I Habitat Survey was undertaken on 19 August 2016 by an experienced and licensed ecologist.

The site comprised an area of hardstanding, a storage warehouse, a two-storey house with wooden garage and a single storey office building. There were small areas of grassland by the buildings and scattered trees.

Two of the buildings were assessed to have moderate potential for bats, whilst the other buildings were assessed to be of negligible potential. A building inspection was undertaken on 19 August 2016 and dusk emergence / dawn re-entry bat surveys were recommended. These are the subject of a separate Bat Survey Report (Eyebright Ecology, 2016).

The majority of trees on site were too young to have developed features which would be suitable for roosting bats. A willow species in the back garden of the house had moderate ivy cover, but was very cluttered with branches, and was assessed to be of low potential for roosting bats. No further bat survey of the trees is necessary.

No evidence of badger was found. It is considered unlikely for badgers to create setts on site in future due to the hardstanding and lack of cover.

Birds may nest in trees, buildings and low vegetation during the breeding season of March to August inclusive. Any vegetation removal undertaken during these months should be subject to a prior check for nesting birds. Any active nests that are found must not be moved until fledglings have dispersed. A range of enhancement measures are recommended for birds depending on the extent of proposals.

The site was assessed to be of low potential for supporting reptiles. There are no further recommendations for reptiles.

The site contained small amounts of habitat that could be used by great crested newts during their terrestrial phase. There was one pond within 500 metres of the site, which was approximately 160 m to the east of the site. A Habitat Suitability Index assessment of this pond was undertaken, and the pond was found to be of 'Good' suitability for great crested newts. However, non-continuous habitat between the pond and the site, as well as significant barriers of busy roads suggest that even if the pond supported a population of breeding great crested newts, there would be low potential for individual newts to reach the site. No further survey of the pond is considered necessary. As a precaution, a Reasonable Avoidance Method Statement should be followed.

2. INTRODUCTION

2.1 Background & Objectives

Eyebright Ecology was commissioned by Sammons Architectural Ltd on behalf of John Pointons & Sons to undertake a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal of land known as Staffordshire Farmers Site, Cheadle Road, Cheddleton, ST13 7BW (SJ967507).

An Extended Phase I Habitat Survey was undertaken on 19 August 2016 by an experienced ecologist who is a full member of the Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (CIEEM). The objective of this report is to provide the client with information on any known or potential protected or rare species that may be using the site, and to outline recommendations on how to proceed with the works in a legal and ecologically sensitive manner.

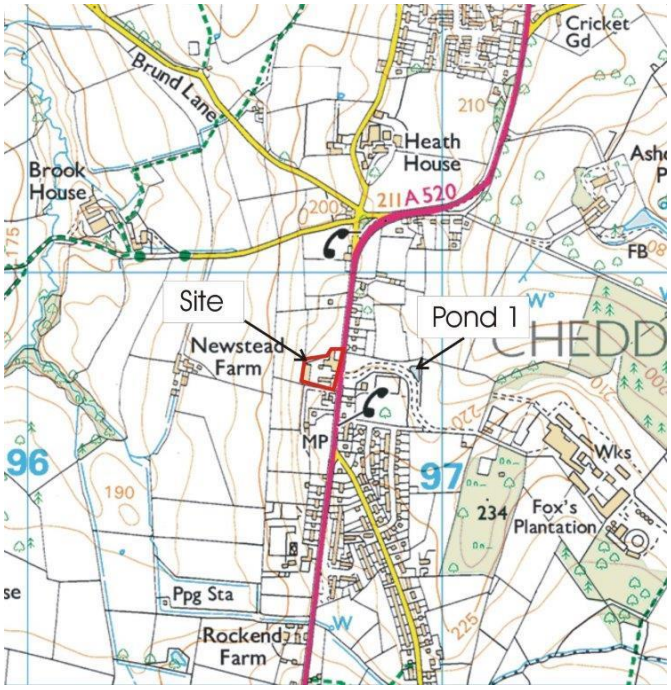
Unless the client indicates to the contrary, information on the species found to be present on the site will be passed to the county biological records centre to update records held for the area.

2.2 Site Description

The site comprised an area of hardstanding, a large storage building, a two-storey house with wooden garage and a single storey office building. There were small areas of grassland by the buildings and scattered trees.

2.3 Site Location

Figure 1: Location of site and Pond 1



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3. METHODOLOGY

3.1 Data Search

Statutory internationally, nationally and locally designated sites within 2 km of the site were identified using Natural England's web-based database (http://www.magic.gov.uk/).

A request for records of protected sites and species within 2 km of the site was made to Staffordshire Ecological Records Ltd (SER).

Ordnance survey maps (1:25,000) and aerial images of the site (www.streetmap.co.uk and www.maps.google.co.uk) were examined online.

3.2 Habitats

An 'Extended' Phase I Habitat Survey was undertaken following standard methodology (JNCC 2010)[1]. The habitat types within the site were identified and mapped, and evidence or potential for protected species was noted.

The Extended Phase I Habitat survey was undertaken on 19 August 2016. Weather conditions during the survey were mild and dry.

3.3 Species

During the 'Extended' Phase I survey, the site was inspected for any field signs of protected species or species of conservation concern (see Table 1 – Legislation is detailed in Appendix 3). In addition, the habitats on, and immediately adjacent to the site were assessed for their potential to support such species.

*Table 1: Protected fauna species **relevant** to site habitats and field signs*

Species	Habitats / Features	Field signs (in addition to sightings of individual animals)
Bats	Roost sites: Trees, buildings and other structures (e.g. mines, caves, bridges etc) Foraging areas: Waterbodies and wetland areas, river and stream corridors, grassland, parkland, woodland/edges, hedgerows and gardens Commuting routes: Hedgerows, water courses and other linear features	At potential roost sites – droppings, staining from urine, feeding remains, individual bats
Badger	Setts can occur in most urban and rural habitats, often found in woodland, along hedgerows and fields	Sett entrances, day nests, well-worn pathways, latrines, snuffle holes, hairs, prints.
Birds	Trees, scrub, grassland, hedgerows, buildings	Nests, droppings below nest sites, pellets

[1] *Handbook for Phase I Habitat Survey – A technique for environmental audit.* Joint Nature Conservancy Council, 2010 (revised reprint).

Species	Habitats / Features	Field signs (in addition to sightings of individual animals)
Reptiles	Rough grassland, logpiles, rubble, hedgebanks, wetland	Sloughed skins
Great crested newt	Ponds within 500 metres of site. Terrestrial habitat includes rough grassland, scrub, woodland, hedgerows, log and rubble piles, stone walls, animal burrows.	No field signs – presence is only confirmed by individual animals and eggs within pond.

A Habitat Suitability Index (Oldham et al, 2000) assessment for great crested newts was undertaken of the one pond within 500 metres of the site.

3.4 Personnel

The Extended Phase I Habitat Survey was undertaken by Eleanor Weir, an experienced ecologist who has worked as a consultant since 2002 and holds survey licences for bats, dormouse, great crested newts and barn owl. She is a full member is CIEEM. Eleanor was accompanied by assistant ecologist Carl Capewell, who has been assisting on a range of ecological surveys over the past year. Carl is a graduate member of CIEEM.

3.5 Survey Constraints

Data Search

Desk study data provides information on recorded species in the area and can be helpful for targeting survey. However, it is possible that protected species that have not been identified within the data search may occur on or adjacent to the site.

Field Survey

It was not possible to access some adjacent areas to check for badger setts, due to fencing and residential gardens. However, there were no signs of badger (e.g paths, hairs) leading into these areas.

Fauna species present may not always leave field signs and in addition, species may take up residence on site subsequent to the survey. If no development takes place within 12 months of this survey report, the findings should be reviewed and may need updating, and a full survey should be repeated within three years.

4. RESULTS

4.1 Data Search – Protected Sites

International Designations

There are no internationally designated sites within 2 km of the site.

National Designations

There are no nationally designated sites within 2 km of the site.

Local Designations

There are no local statutory protected sites within 2 km.

Non-statutory sites

There are twelve non-statutory sites within 2 km of the site. These include 8 Local Wildlife Sites (LWS) and 4 Biological Alert Sites (BAS).

The closest non-statutory site is The Rookery LWS, 520 m to the east, which is an ancient woodland with a stream and associated woodland flora. The next nearest site is Wetley Rocks LWS, 970m to the south which is a rocky outcrop with heathland community.

Due to their distance, it is unlikely that there would be any impacts on the above protected sites from any development proposals on site.

4.2 Data Search – Protected Species

SER returned the following protected species records within 2 km of the site.

SER provided numerous records of bats within 2 km, including common pipistrelle *Pipistrellus pipistrellus*, soprano pipistrelle *Pipistrellus pygmaeus*, brown long-eared *Plecotus auritus*, noctule *Nyctalus noctula* and Daubenton's bat *Myotis daubentonii*. The nearest record was 538 m from the site.

There were records of badger *Meles meles* within 2 km of the site, although none related to the site or immediate locality. The nearest record was of a road traffic accident at Wetley Rocks to the south. All of the recorded setts were over 1 km away.

SER returned 18 records of grass snake *Natrix natrix*, with some recent records but none pertaining to the site or immediate surrounds. There were also records of slow worm, adder and common lizard within 2 km, although all of these records were very old (1942 - 1986).

There was one record of great crested newt *Triturus cristatus* approximately 1 km away from the site, north of Cheddleton village. The record dates from 2007.

SER returned a number of bird records. Species which may be relevant to the habitats present on site are shown in Table 2.

Table 2: Records of relevant bird species within 2 km.

Species	Scientific name	Special protection (see Appendix 3)	Status in UK[2]	Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) Species
Barn Owl	Tyto alba	Schedule 1	Amber List	Staffordshire BAP
Brambling	Fringilla montifringilla	Schedule 1		Staffordshire BAP UKBAP
Fieldfare	Turdus pilaris	Schedule 1	Red List	
Redwing	Turdus iliacus	Schedule 1	Red List	

4.3 Field survey

Habitat Descriptions

The site was largely gravel / hardstanding which was sparsely vegetated, several buildings, small areas of unmanaged grassland and several trees. The habitats are shown on Figure 2 (Appendix 1) and on Plates 1 - 5.

Semi-improved neutral grassland

There was a small area of unmanaged grassland (Plate 3) adjacent to the storage warehouse which comprised abundant false oat-grass *Arrhenatherum elatius* and red fescue *Festuca rubra*, frequent ribwort plantain *Plantago lanceolata*, red clover *Trifolium pratense*, ragwort *Senecio jacobaea* and yarrow *Achillea millefolium* and occasional willow *Salix* sp. saplings. The grassland had a high moss content.

Amenity grassland

There was a roughly cut lawn at the back of the house (Plate 4), which comprised common garden grass species such as *Poa* species and Yorkshire fog *Holcus lanatus*.

There was an overgrown garden to the back of the office building (Plate 5). The garden included tussocky grasses dominated by false oat-grass, cock's-foot *Dactylis glomerata* and Yorkshire fog whilst soft-rush *Juncus effusus*, common hogweed *Heracleum sphondylium*, common nettle *Urtica dioica*, ragwort and willowherb *Epilobium* species occurred frequently. Ox-eye daisy *Leucanthemum vulgare* was abundant in places.

Ephemeral / Short perennial

Much of the gravel and hardstanding covering the majority of the site was becoming vegetated with typical pioneer plants able to colonise shallow stony substrate (Plate 1). Clumps of grass including cock's-foot and Yorkshire fog were observed, and herbs including mugwort *Artemisia vulgaris*, great mullein *Verbascum thapsus*, prickly sow-thistle *Sonchus asper,* willow saplings, willowherb species and mosses were scattered throughout the site.

[2] BTO Birds of Conservation Concern 3 (2009): Red List species have suffered severe recent population declines, Amber List species are in moderate population decline.

Tall ruderal herbs

There were stands of rosebay willowherb *Chamerion angustifolium* along the north edge of the site with great willowherb *Epilobium hirsutum* scattered throughout.

Broad-leaved trees

There was an ivy-covered willow *Salix* species in the garden of the offices (Target Note 5). A mature beech *Fagus sylvatica* tree (Target Note 6) was located on the north corner of the site near the road. There were scattered willow saplings throughout the site, and young sycamore *Acer pseudoplatanus* and elder *Sambucus nigra* bordering the garden along the roadside.

Buildings

Building 1 (Target Note 1, Plate 4) was a two storey house which was recently occupied, comprising stone walls and tiled roof.

Building 2 (Target Note 2, Plate 5) was a single storey building used as offices at the time of the survey. The building had a shallow pitched clay tile roof.

Building 3 (Target Note 3, Plate 2) was a large storage warehouse comprising brick walls, windows and corrugated asbestos roof, which was used for storage at the time of the survey. The building was open inside apart from one end which had a suspended ceiling but was open above to the rest of the building.

Building 4 (Target Note 4, Plate 6) was a flat roofed wooden garage which was covered in ivy in the garden of the house.

Species

Bats

There were four buildings on site (described above). Building 1 (house) and Building 2 (offices) were assessed to be of moderate potential for roosting bats, due to presence of tiles with potential access gaps underneath. Building 3 (storage warehouse) was assessed to be of negligible potential for roosting bats. Building 4 (wooden garage) was also considered to be of negligible potential for roosting bats.

An internal inspection of the buildings was undertaken, as well as dusk and dawn surveys of Buildings 1 & 2, and these are detailed in a separate Bat Survey Report (Eyebright Ecology, Sep 2016).

The ivy-covered willow tree (Target Note 6) was assessed to have low potential for roosting bats, due to being particularly cluttered with branches.

The mature beech tree (Target Note 7) was assessed to have negligible potential for roosting bats, as no suitable roosting features could be seen.

The site was likely to be of limited value to foraging or commuting bats.

Badger

There was no evidence of badger activity on site, or within the areas which could be accessed within 30 metres of the site.

Birds

Birds may use the trees or buildings for breeding. In particular, the ivy covered garage could provide potential undisturbed nest sites.

A robin was noted to be alarm calling inside the storage warehouse, suggesting a nest was present inside the building. There were two unglazed windows that birds could use to access inside the building.

Reptiles

The limited areas of grassland on site had low potential to support common species of reptiles, such as grass snake *Natrix natrix.*

Great crested newt

The grassland and overgrown garden could provide potential terrestrial habitat for great crested newts if there was a breeding pond nearby which was connected to the site by suitable habitat.

According to OS and aerial maps, there appeared to be only one pond within 500 m of the site (see Figure 1).

Pond 1 was 160 m to the east of the site, the other side of the busy A520. The pond was approximately 7 m x 6 m and was located in an area fenced off from amenity grassland, so the immediate surrounding habitat was rough grassland and herbs. The pond appeared to have abundant aquatic and emergent vegetation.

A Habitat Suitability Index calculation was undertaken of the pond (Appendix 3). It was calculated to be of 'Good' suitability for great crested newts.

The pond appeared to be fairly recently established (as it is not present on aerial maps it suggests it may have been created as part of the adjacent Pointons Park development in 2014).

The pond was not connected to the site by continuous suitable terrestrial habitat due to the presence of a busy road (A520) as well as the entrance road to the Pointons site, which is used regularly 24 hours a day. If the pond supported great crested newts, it is likely that these roads represent a significant barrier to great crested newts reaching the site.

Invasive species

No invasive species were found during the site surveys.

4. 4 Photographs

Plate 1: View over majority of site, showing gravel hardstanding and ephemeral herbs

Plate 2: Storage warehouse and tall ruderal herbs

Plate 3: Area of semi-improved grassland between storage warehouse and road.

Plate 4: South aspect of two storey house with recently cut lawn

Plate 5: Single storey offices with overgrown garden

Plate 6: Ivy covered wooden garage which may conceal bird's nests

Plate 7: Pond 1 which was assessed to be 'Good' habitat for great crested newts

5. DISCUSSION & RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Summary of Findings

There were no statutory protected sites within 2 km, but 12 non-statutory protected sites within 2 km of the proposed development. The closest non-statutory site was 520 m away. Due to the distance, these protected sites are unlikely to be affected by any development proposals on the site.

The site comprised hardstanding, small areas of amenity and semi-improved grassland, and several buildings.

There were four buildings within the site. The storage warehouse and wooden garage were assessed to be of negligible potential for roosting bats. The house and offices were assessed to be of moderate potential for roosting bats. The site as a whole is considered to be of limited value to foraging and commuting bats.

No badger setts or other badger activity was found on or adjacent to the site where accessible. There is likely to be low potential for badgers to occur on site in future.

Nesting and foraging birds may use the trees, buildings and grassland on the site.

The grassland was assessed to be of limited potential for supporting grass snake (the only recently recorded reptile in the locality).

The site contained small amounts of potentially suitable terrestrial habitat for great crested newt. There was 1 pond found within 500 m of the site; this was Pond 1, 160 m to the east and was assessed to be of 'Good' suitability for great crested newts. However, even if great crested newts were present in this pond, the busy A520 is likely to form a significant barrier to newts reaching the site.

No invasive species were found on site.

5.2 Potential Impacts of Works

The site is proposed for demolition and construction of new dwellings. The following summarises some general potential impacts.

Demolition of buildings could cause loss of bat roosts, if present. Without mitigation, bats could be injured or killed, and roosts would be destroyed.

Any work affecting the buildings, trees or garden habitats could potentially harm nesting birds if carried out during the breeding season (March to August inclusive). Loss of small amounts of grassland may reduce foraging resources available to birds.

Removal of grassland / garden habitat may directly harm great crested newts, if present. They would also experience habitat loss.

5.3 Recommendations

Bats

A preliminary roost assessment and bat dusk emergence and dawn re-entry surveys were recommended to establish whether the house and office buildings support any bat roosts. Bat dusk and dawn surveys were completed in August and September and the findings are detailed in the accompanying Bat Survey Report (Eyebright Ecology, 2016).

No further bat survey of trees is necessary unless there is a significant lapse before any construction takes place. Mature trees should be retained wherever possible within the development.

Birds

Trees and garden habitats, as well as buildings, could be used by nesting birds during the bird breeding season (March to August inclusive). If any vegetation or building removal is planned to commence during these months, a prior check for nesting birds should be undertaken. Any active nests that are found must not be moved until fledglings have dispersed.

Where possible, trees should be retained within the proposals. Loss of potential nesting or foraging habitat should be compensated for by provision of habitat suitable for nesting and foraging birds.

Compensation measures could include;

- provision of a variety of nest boxes / nest sites within any development proposals
- new planting / landscaping using a wide range of fruiting native shrubs and plants

Great crested newts

The site contained a small amount of habitat which could be used by great crested newts if there was a breeding pond within 500 m.

Although there was a pond 160 m away which was assessed to have 'Good' suitability for breeding great crested newts, there was no continuous terrestrial habitat linking the pond to the site. Furthermore, the busy A520 is likely to represent a significant barrier to any newts reaching the site. There are no nearby ponds on the site side of the road, so there is unlikely to be movement of newts across the site to reach other ponds.

Given these factors, it is likely to be low potential for great crested newts to occur on the site, even if a population is associated with the pond. Survey of the pond is therefore not considered necessary.

As a precaution, a Reasonable Avoidance Method Statement (RAMS) should be produced, which will include careful methods of working, such as a check underneath any stored items or rubble which need to be moved during the construction work. In the unlikely event that a great crested newt was found on site, work would have to stop immediately and there could be delays until a licence from Natural England was obtained.

6. REFERENCES

Anon (1995) *Guidelines for Baseline Ecological Assessment*. Institute of Environmental Assessment. Chapman & Hall.

Anon (1995) *The UK Biodiversity Action Plan*. Joint Nature Conservation Committee, Peterborough.

Anon (1999) *Advice Sheet 10: Reptile Survey*. Froglife, Peterborough.

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Oldham R.S., Keeble, J., Swan M.J.S. & Jeffcote M. (2000*). Evaluating the suitability of habitat for the Great Crested Newt (*Triturus cristatus*). Herpetological Journal 10 (4), 143 – 155.*

Rose, F. (1991). *The Wild Flower Key*. Frederick Warne, London.

Websites used:

Protected Sites: www.magic.gov.uk

Staffordshire Biodiversity Action Plan: http://www.sbap.org.uk/

UKBAP: http://jncc.defra.gov.uk/page-5155

www.rspb.org.uk

www.streetmap.co.uk

www.maps.google.co.uk

www.bing.com/maps

Web addresses for access to full UK legislation and policy text:

Conservation (Natural Habitats &c.) Regulations 1994:
http://www.opsi.gov.uk/si/si1994/uksi_19942716_en_1

Conservation (Natural Habitats &c.) (Amendment) Regulations 2007:
http://www.opsi.gov.uk/si/si2007/uksi_20071843_en_1

Conservation (Natural Habitats &c.) (Amendment) Regulations 2009:
http://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2009/6/pdfs/uksi_20090006_en.pdf

Habitats Directive:
http://ec.europa.eu/environment/nature/legislation/habitatsdirective/index_en.htm

Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981:
http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1981/69

Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000:
http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2000/37/contents

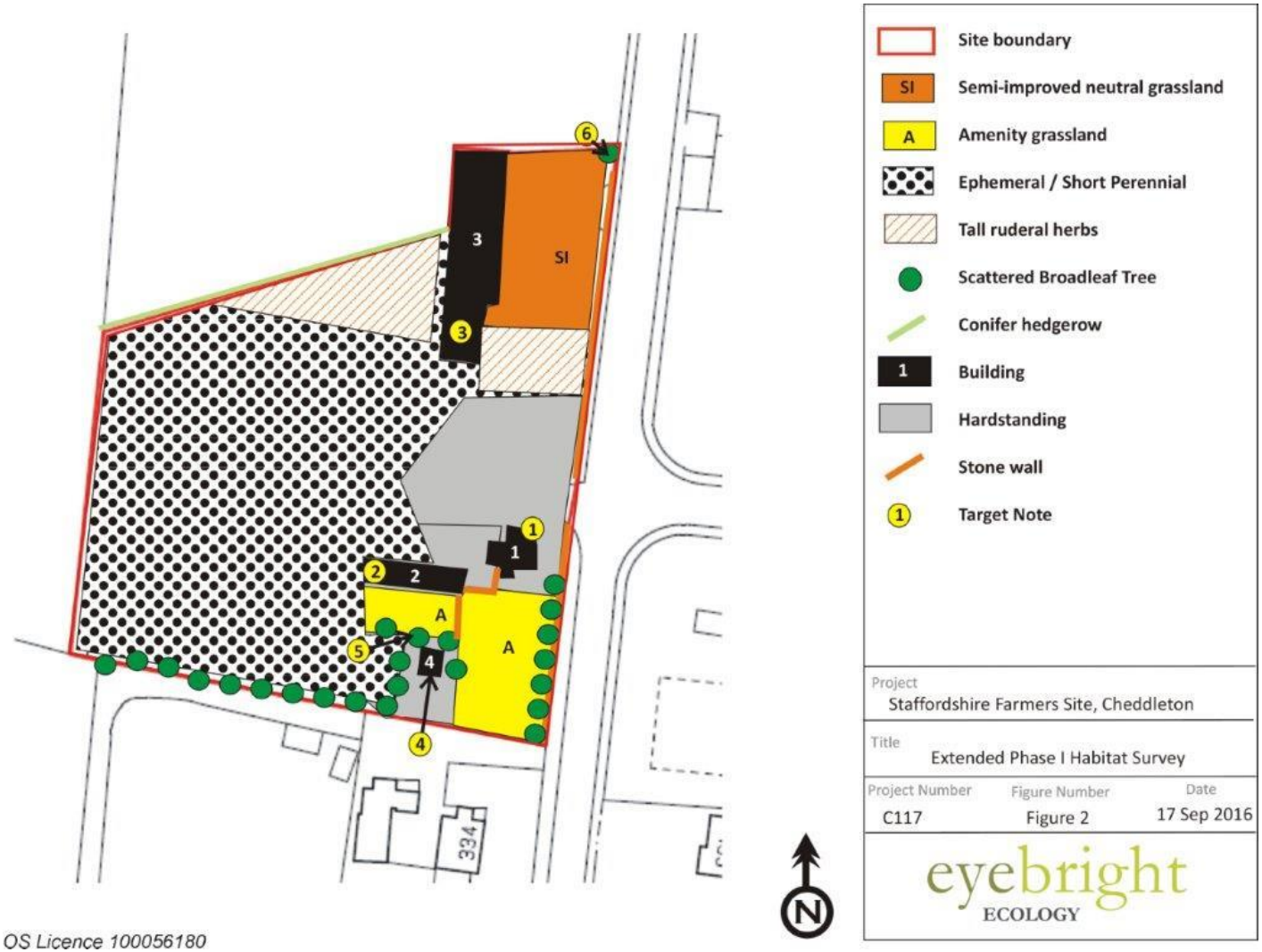
Protection of Badgers Act 1992:
http://www.opsi.gov.uk/ACTS/acts1992/ukpga_19920051_en_1

Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006:
http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2006/16/contents

National Planning Policy Framework 2012:
http://www.communities.gov.uk/publications/planningandbuilding/nppf

APPENDIX 1

Figure 2: Extended Phase I Habitat Map



APPENDIX 2: Target Notes

Table 2: Target Notes (shown on Figure 2)

Number	Target Note
1	Two storey house with stone walls and tiled roof. Chimneys present. Potential for roosting bats due to several gaps under tiles.
2	Single storey office building with two separate roof areas. Accessed west end which was the boiler room. Could see to roof, lined with breathable membrane. Pitched clay tile roof.
3	East end of offices not accessed internally, but same roof materials, roof line slightly higher. Possible roof space but would be small. Potential for roosting bats due to several gaps under tiles. Large warehouse building used for storage of materials. Brick walls with corrugated asbestos unlined roof. Suspended ceiling at one end. Two unglazed windows on west side. Light and airy inside. Assessed to be of negligible potential due to no roosting crevices observed. Possible nesting robin inside (alarm calling during inspection).
4	Wooden garage / storage shed with corrugated asbestos/concrete flat roof. Ivy covered. Could conceal bird's nests.
5	Willow species with thick ivy cover. As many branches clutter the trunk, it was assessed to be of low potential for roosting bats.
6	Mature beech tree, 0.8m DBH. No bat features observed. Negligible potential for roosting bats.

APPENDIX 3: Habitat Suitability Index

Table 3: Habitat Suitability Index calculations for pond near to site (Shown on Figure 1).

Scoring system	**Pond 1 (Entrance road to Pointons)**
Location	Optimal (1)
Pond Area	40m^2 (0.05)
Pond Drying	Never (0.9)
Water Quality	Good (1)
Shade	0% (1)
Fowl	Absent (1)
Fish	Absent (1)
Density of Ponds in 1 km	1.5 (0.7)
Terrestrial Habitat	Good (1)
Macrophytes	90% (0.9)
Calculated score (scores multiplied and tenth root taken)	0.70
Pond Suitability	**Good**

APPENDIX 4: Relevant wildlife legislation and policy

Habitat Regulations

The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010 make it an offence to deliberately capture, kill or disturb any wild animal listed in Schedule 2. It is also an offence to damage or destroy a breeding site or resting place of such an animal, even if the animal is not present at the time. In UK, these European Protected Species include (in addition to other animals and plants not relevant to this site):

- All species of bats
- Great crested newt

Special Areas of Conservation (SAC) sites are also designated under the Habitats Directive, due to the presence of habitats and/or species which are important for conservation at a European level.

Wildlife & Countryside Act

The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981, as amended by the Countryside and Rights of Way Act (CRoW) 2000 and the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act (NERC) 2006, consolidates and amends existing national legislation to implement the Convention on the Conservation of European Wildlife and Natural Habitats (Bern Convention) and Council Directive 79/409/EEC on the Conservation of Wild Birds (Birds Directive), making it an offence to:

- Intentionally kill, injure or take any wild bird or their eggs or nests (with certain exceptions) and disturb any bird species listed under Schedule 1 to the Act, or its dependent young while it is nesting;
- Intentionally kill, injure or take any wild animal listed under Schedule 5 to the Act; intentionally or recklessly damage, destroy or obstruct any place used for shelter or protection by any wild animal listed under Schedule 5 to the Act; intentionally or recklessly disturb certain Schedule 5 animal species while they occupy a place used for shelter or protection;
- Pick or uproot any wild plant listed under Schedule 8 of the Act.
- Plant or otherwise cause to grow in the wild any invasive plant listed under Schedule 9 of the Act.

Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) are also designated under this Act.

In respect to this site, the widespread reptile species (adder, grass snake, common lizard and slow worm) have partial protection under Schedule 5, against intentional killing, injuring and trade. Bats and great crested newts also have full protection under Schedule 5.

Protection of Badgers Act

The Protection of Badgers Act 1992 makes it illegal to kill, injure or take a badger or to intentionally or recklessly interfere with a badger sett. Sett interference includes disturbing badgers whilst they are occupying a sett or obstructing access to it.

Hedgerow Regulations

The Hedgerow Regulations 1997 (as amended) makes it illegal to remove or destroy 'important' hedgerows without Local Planning Authority permission (either through planning or a Hedgerow Removal Notice). Hedgerows that are at least 20 metres long, more than 30 years old and contain certain botanical species need to be assessed for 'importance' using a number of criteria set out in the Regulations.

Natural Environment & Rural Communities Act

The NERC 2006 places a duty on authorities to have due regard for biodiversity and nature conservation during the course of their operations.

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

The NPPF replaces Planning Policy Statements (e.g. PPS9) and sets out current government policy on biodiversity and nature conservation. Planners are required to set criteria based policies against which proposals for development which may affect legally protected species will be judged. The NPPF promotes sustainable development by ensuring that developments take account of the role and value of biodiversity with emphasis on maintaining ecological networks at a landscape level.

Biodiversity

Biodiversity 2020: A strategy for England's Wildlife and Ecosystem Services is the current government strategy for maintaining and increasing biodiversity in UK. As a response to this, Local Biodiversity Action Plans set targets which aim to conserve priority species and habitats relevant to each county.