



Preliminary Ecological Appraisal



“Higherland Farm”

Caverswall Common, Caverswall,
Stoke-on-Trent, ST11 9EU.

October 2025

Notice to readers

This report has been prepared by Charnia Ecology with all reasonable skill, care and diligence, within the terms of the contract with the client. The actions of the surveyor on site and during the production of the report were undertaken in accordance with the Code of Professional Conduct for the Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (www.ieem.org.uk).

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The flora and fauna detailed within this report are those noted during the field survey and from anecdotal evidence. It should not be viewed as a complete list of flora and fauna species that may frequent or exist on site at other times of the year. Up to date standard methodologies have been used, which are accepted by Natural England and other statutory conservation bodies. No responsibility will be accepted where these methodologies fail to identify all species on-site.

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Client / Architect Details:
Lee and Emma Termine Higherland Farm, Caverswall Common, Caverswall, Stoke-on-Trent, ST11 9EU.
Application area:
Existing Barn Buildings and Part of Site at Higherland Farm, Caverswall Common, Caverswall, Stoke-on-Trent, ST11 9EU.
OS Grid Ref:
SJ949445
Issue No:
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Report valid for 2 year from issuance date.
Author:
Mark Weston BSc (Hons), MRSB Principal Ecologist.

Surveyor capability

Ecological assessment and report preparation have been undertaken by a qualified ecologist who holds a First-Class Honours degree in Conservation Biology. He has over thirteen years' experience of working within the ecological consultancy sector undertaking protected species surveys and biodiversity impact assessments with regard to planning and the Law. The Principle Ecologist holds Natural England Class surveyor licenses for bats [Class License CL18 (Level 2) Reg. No. 2015-10722-CLS-CLS]; Schedule 1 listed Barn Owl [CL29/00586] and Great crested Newt [Class License Reg. No. Number: 2015-18995-CLS-CLS]. He is also an associate university lecturer in ecology and environmental sciences at the University of Derby in Ecology and a higher member of the Royal Society of Biology (MRSB). The actions of the surveyor on site and during the production of written reports are undertaken in accordance with the Code of Professional Conduct for the Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (CIEEM).

NON-TECHNICAL SUMMARY

1. Charnia Ecology was commissioned by Mr. Lee Termine to carry out a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA) in-relation to a proposed development at Higherland Farm, Caverswall Common, Caverswall, Stoke-on-Trent, ST11 9EU. [NGR: SJ949445]. The proposed development area is currently a working farm for cattle, and equates to ca. 0.49ha in coverage which comprises predominantly of agricultural farm buildings with associated hard-standing regions.
2. The development proposes a change of use to existing land and buildings to form 'Higherland Stone' – a small-scale stone products supply merchant's business on part of the existing land area at Higherland Farm.

Proposed application

IMPACTS & RECOMMENDATIONS

Designated sites

3. While there are no designated sites of conservation concern located on site or within a 1km radius of the proposed application area, the site falls marginally within a SSSI Impact Risk Zone of Hulme Quarry (SSSI and NNR) located ca.1.8km due west of the site. Conversely, and considered as being a small-scale development, negligible impact to any designated sites of conservation concern is predicted under the proposed scheme.

Invasive Non-Native Species (INNS)

4. No invasive none-native species (INNS) that are currently listed as a Schedule 9 species under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 were recorded in the proposed application area. There were no trees recorded around site allocated with any Tree Preservation Orders.

Flora

5. In their current form, habitats and vegetation communities within the proposed development area are not considered as being unique within the context of the wider landscape, with no habitats classified as Habitats of Principle Importance as determined using Natural England Priority Habitat dataset present. Other than minor occurrence of common Bluebell recorded along the western boundary, no adverse impact to any ruderal plant species and/or vegetation communities currently supported by legislative protection is considered.

Fauna

6. Based on local distributions and associated habitats, predicted impact on wildlife populations and assemblages in absence of extended survey effort / mitigation is summarised in the following table:

Species	Predicted impact	Further Survey	Actions
BADGER	NEGLECTIBLE TO LOW	NO	Pre-survey data finds no records of any active badger setts occurring within the zone of influence of the proposed development, although the surrounding rural landscape is considered as being optimal for this species. An extended search radius around the application area found no evidence of badger setts and/or characteristic field signs present in a 30m radius and no further survey effort is considered. Any trench work should be excavated and closed in the same day to prevent any wildlife becoming trapped. If it is necessary to leave a trench open overnight then it should be sealed with a close-fitting plywood cover; or a means of escape should be provided in the form of a shallow sloping earth ramp, sloped board or plank.
BATS	NEGLECTIBLE	YES	Structures occurring on site are considered as having negligible suitability for roosting bats, and no further survey recommendations are made. The site is located in a semi-rural setting of low district brightness (E2). Any artificial post-development lighting intended should comply to the guidance and protocols set out in this report (see section 87). In accordance with the Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006, a minimum of three external woodcrete bat boxes are recommended on and around site. Exact type and location would need to be further determined pending the final design of the proposed scheme
BIRDS	LOW	NO	It is understood that all existing hedgerows are to be retained under the proposed scheme. Should any works affect linear habitats around site, then this should ideally be undertaken outside the bird breeding season (March to August inclusive). Where this is not possible, then a check for nesting birds should be undertaken by an a suitably qualified ecologist within 48hrs of any works commencing. No impact to any schedule 1 listed birds including Barn Owl is predicted under the proposed scheme, although the surrounding landscape provides optimal habitat and resources for this species, and is recorded within a 2km radius of the site. A quantity of nest boxes for different species of birds should be incorporated into the land holding area of Higherland Farm (specific type of boxes, locations and numbers would need to be confirmed pending the final design of the proposed scheme).

GREAT CRESTED NEWT	NEGLIGIBLE "GREEN" OFFENCE PREDICTED	NO	No standing water bodies occur within the application area with five standing water-bodies are recorded in a 500m radius. While 'P2' (277m due East) and 'P3' (328m due west) were found to be terrestrialised, it was not possible to carry out a HSI on Ponds 'P1' (460m due North), 'P4' (208m due South) and 'P5' (102m due SW), over. Based on a small-scale development (< 0.5ha) on previously developed land and absence of GCN records in the wider landscape, Natural England's rapid risk assessment (2011) calculates low risk potential of causing an offence, with no significant adverse impact on any standing water-bodies or terrestrial habitat suitable for GCN occurring within a 250-500m radius of the site. No further surveys are considered. Reasonable Avoidance Measures (RAMs) should be adopted for herpetofauna in general during ground works [see section 93]. In the unlikely event that Great crested newts are unexpectedly encountered during works then all works must cease immediately and further advice should be sought from the acting Ecologist.
INVERTEBRATES	NEGLIGIBLE	NO	In absence of mitigation, negligible impact to any UKBAP/LBAP invertebrate species is predicted. In its current form, the site has negligible value for invertebrates overall and no further survey effort is considered. It is recommended that any landscaping encompass dead wood piles and pollinator strips to enhance the overall site for invertebrates.
OTTER / WATER VOLE	NEGLIGIBLE	NO	The site lacks any suitable riparian habitat and adjacent watercourses to support either of these two species. In absence of mitigation, negligible impact to Otter and Water vole is predicted and no further survey effort is considered.
REPTILES	NEGLIGIBLE	NO	Other than boundary hedgerows, the site lacks any notable refugia and habitat for reptiles overall and is subject to frequent disturbance. Negligible impact to any notable key registered reptile sites is predicted under the proposed scheme and no further survey effort is considered, although. Care and vigilance should be holistically adopted as part of RAMs during ground-works regarding more mobile species such as Grass snake.

Biodiversity Net Gain feasibility

○ ***Habitat baseline***

- In their current form, the proposed development area equates to ca. 0.31ha of land to the east of main residential dwelling. Of this ca. 0.7ha has zero metric value comprising of an agricultural building (0.2ha), and an existing ménage (0.5ha). Under UK Habitats Classification, the broad habitat affected and lost by the proposed development equates to ca. 0.2ha of 'Tier 1' - modified grassland of medium distinctiveness.

● ***Linear baseline***

- Combined linear habitats ('H1'+ 'H2'+ 'H3') comprise of ca. 154m of non-continuous species-poor hedgerow composed predominantly of Hawthorn. It is understood that all extant hedgerow around site is intended to be retained. Subsequently, no net loss to linear habitat is predicted under the proposed scheme.
- Based on loss of area habitat alone, the proposed development would be subject to mandatory Biodiversity Net gain requirement, in-order to demonstrate compliance with national and local planning policies.**
- It will therefore be necessary to further assess the site's 'biodiversity' unit value before development using DEFRA's standardized Statutory Biodiversity Metric calculator. This should be undertaken by a competent ecologist in accordance to BS 42020:2013, BS8683:2021 and The Statutory Biodiversity Metric User Guide.
- While lost habitat of 'low distinctiveness' tier can be offset with any broad habitat of the same or higher tier; it is unclear as to whether a 10% uplift could be achieved on site based on the current design, with much of the extant modified grassland region being replaced by block paving and hardcore to accommodate parking and a vehicle turning area. It is understood that there is no additional land available for off-setting purposes should this be required.

● ***Registered off-site gain***

- If the full 10% gain cannot be achieved on-site, a developer can purchase biodiversity units from a 'Habitat Bank' or landowner whose site is registered for providing off-site gains. Preference is given to off-site locations in the same Local Planning Authority area.

● ***Statutory biodiversity credits:***

- If both on-site and registered off-site options are unavailable, developers can, as a last resort, purchase credits directly from DEFRA. The revenue is then used to fund strategic habitat creation projects.



Preliminary Ecological Appraisal

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1. INTRODUCTION

1. Charnia Ecology was commissioned by Mr. Lee Termine to carry out a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA) in-relation to a proposed development at Higherland Farm, Caverswall Common, Caverswall, Stoke-on-Trent, ST11 9EU. [NGR: SJ949445]. The proposed development area is currently a working farm for cattle, and equates to ca. 0.49ha in coverage which comprises predominantly of agricultural farm buildings with associated hard-standing regions.

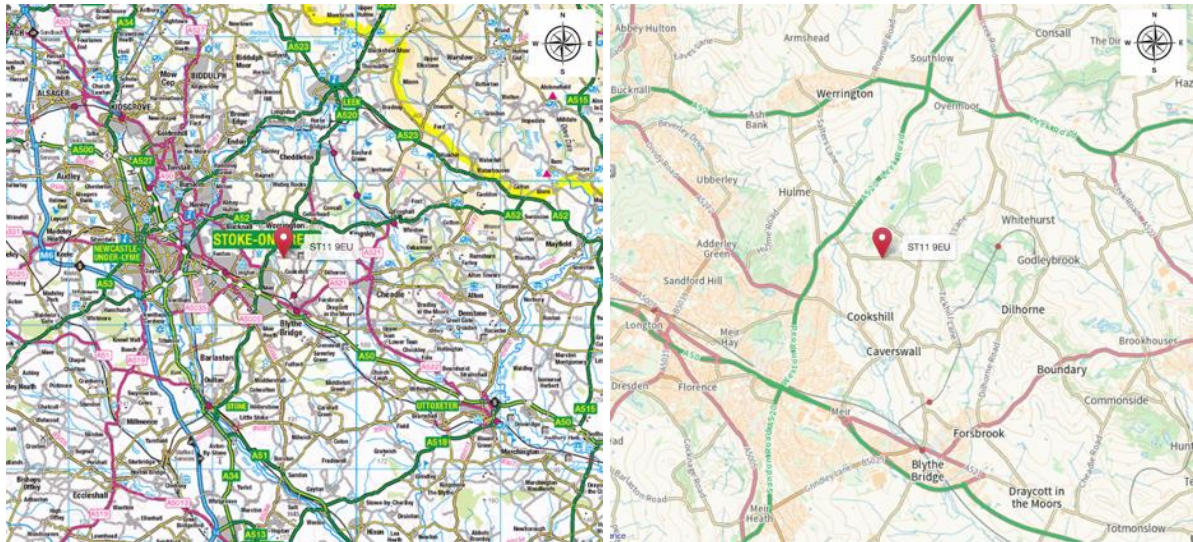


Figure 1 & 2. Location of proposed development area (red target) in context to the wider landscape (source: OS Maps)

2. The objective of this report is to:
 - 1) inform both the client and the Local Planning Authority of any known impacts on protected fauna and flora that may arise through development in absence of mitigation;
 - 2) outline any further recommendations or extended survey effort in-order that the development is carried-out in an ecologically sensitive manner in accordance to current National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and UK legislation.
 - 3) Assess the ecological baseline regarding mandatory Biodiversity Net Gain requirements under Schedule 7A of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as inserted by Schedule 14 of the Environment Act 2021).
3. The Preliminary Ecological Appraisal was carried out by Dr. Eleanor Harrison (PhD, MCIEEM. MRSB) and Mark Weston (BSc (Hons), MRSB) on the 1st October 2025, and was determined in-line with the proportional approach to ecological survey assessment and subsequent recommendations for avoidance and mitigation of impacts in accordance with the Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management's (CIEEM) Code of Practice.
- **Proposed application**
4. The development proposes a change of use to existing land and buildings to form 'Higherland Stone' – a small-scale stone products supply merchant's business on part of the existing land area at Higherland Farm.

- **Site description**

6. The proposed development area is located on Caverswall Common on the semi-rural outskirts of Stoke-on-Trent [NGR: SJ949445]. The land holding area of Higherland Farm equates to ca. 0.38ha in coverage and currently comprises of the existing dwelling and agricultural curtilage buildings with associated hardstanding areas. The proposed application is intended on ca. 0.31ha of species poor semi-improved/modified grassland land immediately to the east of main dwelling with an agricultural building and horse ménage present.



Figure 3. Proposed development area boundary (red) with remainder of retained land-holding area (blue).

2. METHODOLOGY

- **Desk Study**

7. The following methods in line with guidance provided in Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (CIEEM, 2018) on Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (CIEEM, 2012), have been used to determine the following criteria:
 - **Avoidance** - Seek options that avoid harm to ecological features (for example, by locating on an alternative site).
 - **Mitigation** - Adverse effects should be avoided or minimized through mitigation measures, either through the design of the project or subsequent measures that can be guaranteed – for example, through a condition or planning obligation.
 - **Compensation** - Where there are significant residual adverse ecological effects despite the mitigation proposed, these should be offset by appropriate compensatory measures.
 - **Enhancements** - Seek to provide net benefits for biodiversity over and above requirements for avoidance, mitigation or compensation.
8. The survey which consisted of a desk study and a field survey where habitats were mapped and any potential to support protected species was target noted. This is based on the extended Phase 1 habitat survey guidelines (JNCC 2010) in association with UK Habitat Classification System.

9. An initial desk-based study was undertaken to examine the development site in context to the wider landscape and changes of temporal stability that may increase the sites importance to nature conservation. Web bases resources, such as Multi-agency Geographic Information for the Countryside (MAGIC) (www.magic.gov.uk), Natural England (www.naturalengland.org.uk); National Biodiversity Network (NBN) (www.nbn.org.uk); UK BAP (www.data.nbn.org.uk, Google Earth and www.ordnancesurvey.co.uk were utilized.
10. In order to compile background information on the site and immediate surroundings, local records regarding existing designated sites, Special Areas of Conservation (SAC), habitats, and protected and notable species within a 1km radius were consulted via a number of sources (Staffordshire Ecological Records/ MAGIC (Multi-Agency Geographic Information for the Countryside, 2010) to ascertain the following:
 - *Extent of Sites of Biological Importance* (SBIs) and Biodiversity Alert Sites*(BASs) in the area in question.*
 - *A list of SBIs/BASs and other statutory and non-statutory sites of biological or geological importance, together with a list of woodlands listed on the Natural England Ancient Woodlands Inventory.*
 - *An annotated list of protected species within the search area, covering European and UK protected species and species occurring on the UK Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) (short list) and Staffordshire BAP.*
 - *Statutory & Non-statutory conservation designations within 1 km of the site.*
 - **Valuation of Ecological Features**
11. The value of areas of habitat and plant communities has been measured against published criteria where available. Biodiversity Action Plans (BAPs) have been searched to identify whether action has been taken to protect all areas of a particular habitat and to identify current factors causing the loss and decline of particular habitats. The presence of injurious and legally controlled weeds has also been considered.
12. When assigning a level of value to a species, its distribution and status (including a consideration of trends based on available historic records) has been considered. Other factors influencing the value of a species are legal protection, rarity and Species Action Plans (SAPs). Guidance, where it is available, for the identification of populations of sufficient size for them to be of national or international importance has also been considered.
- **Nomenclature**
13. The English name only of flora and fauna species is given in the main text of this report; however, scientific names are used for invertebrates where no English name is available. Vascular plants and charophytes follow the nomenclature of The Botanical Society for the British Isles (BSBI) 2007 database (BSBI, 2011), with all other flora and fauna following the Nameserver facility of the National Biodiversity Network Species Dictionary (<http://www.nhm.ac.uk/nbn/>), which is managed by the Natural History Museum.
14. 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.

Field survey

Jan	Feb	March	April	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
Phase 1 & NVC – Sub optimal survey			Phase 1 & NVC- Optimal survey period						Phase 1 & NVC – Sub optimal survey		

15. Walkover surveys can be conducted all year round, although the optimum time for undertaking such surveys is between April and September due to seasonal cessation of vegetation.
16. Scoping of baseline conditions on-site is considered a crucial stage of ecological impact evaluation (Wood *et al.* 2006) and Biodiversity Impact Assessment, to ensure the widest possible input to the definition and refinement of the Terms of Reference (TOR) is demonstrated. Baseline ecological assessment of any Valued Ecological Receptors (VER) in the Zones of Influence (Zoi) of the development were also determined, using a combination of desk-based study and field survey consistent with current standard methodologies.

FLORA

17. The observable higher plant species in each habitat type within the site, and their abundance, were recorded using the DAFOR scale: D [Dominant]; A [Abundant]; F [Frequent]; O [Occasional]; R [Rare].
18. Each habitat has been colour coded in accordance to survey methodology and shown in the Extended Phase 1 Habitat Map. Baseline target notes (TN) have been assigned alongside the description of compartments and habitats.

FAUNA

Amphibians / Great crested newt

(protected status EPS, WCA, UKBAP, LBAP)

Jan	Feb	March	April	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
Hibernation		Peak surveying period for adults / terrestrial & egg survey (April-May = Optimal) Larvae searches (mid-May = Optimal)				Habitat and larvae survey (Sub-optimal)		Habitat survey (Sub-optimal)		Hibernation	

19. Great Crested Newt (GCN) *Triturus cristatus* is a protected species under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) (Natural Habitats Regulations 1994). Great crested newt is a priority UKBAP species and targets are given to maintain geographical range and viability of existing *T. cristatus*.
20. Under current legislation, it is illegal to Intentionally kill, injure, or capture great crested newts or their young; (this includes the eggs of great crested newts). Furthermore, it is illegal to intentionally or recklessly damage, destroy or obstruct access to areas used by great crested newts for shelter.
21. Based on the scale of the development, any water-bodies located in a 250m radius were assessed (where accessible) on their suitability of supporting newt populations using the Habitat Suitability Index HSI (Oldham et al. 2000) and calculator (Crawshaw, 2015).

HSI Pond suitability Index score rating	
< 0.5 = poor	0.67 – 0.79 = good
0.5 – 0.59 = below average	>0.8 = excellent
0.6 – 0.69 = average	

Table 1. Habitat Suitability Index HSI (Oldham et al. 2000).

Other amphibians

22. Common frogs are listed in Annex V of the Habitats Directive, and common frogs, common toads and smooth newts are listed under Schedule 5 of the WCA 1981 (as amended) and protected under section 9(5) only.

Badger

(protected status WCA)

Jan	Feb	March	April	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
Limited sett / bait surveys (Sub-optimal)	Bait marking and sett surveys (Optimal)			Limited sett / bait surveys (Sub-optimal)				Sett surveys (Optimal)			Limited sett / bait surveys (Sub-optimal)

23. The Protection of Badgers Act 1992 makes it illegal to willfully kill, injure or take any badger, or attempt to do so and it is an offence to intentionally or recklessly damage, destroy or obstruct access to any part of a badger sett.
24. Natural England (2002) advises that disturbance of an active sett can include:
- *Light work such as hand digging within 10m*
 - *Use of light machinery (generally wheeled vehicles) within 20m.*
 - *Use of heavy machinery (generally tracked vehicles) within 30m.*
25. The word "disturbance" includes anything from the trivial to the lethal. An example of a trivial disturbance may be extra traffic noise on or near to an application area. In contrast a lethal disturbance may be as a result of a badger sett being destroyed in order to make way for the planned works.
26. An extended radius of 30m around the application site was surveyed for evidence of badger setts and characteristic field signs in accordance with accepted standards, methodologies and guidelines. Field evidence includes; well defined desire line tracks through vegetation, snuffle holes, latrines and sett entrances. The presence of badger hair, fresh spoil heaps and active latrines are indicators that the sett entrance active.

Bats

(protected status EPS, WCA, UKBAP, LBAP)

Jan	Feb	March	April	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
Inspection of Hibernation roosts- semi optimal survey			Limited activity-sub optimal	Summer roost emergence & re-entry surveys-Optimal survey period					Limited activity-sub optimal	Hibernation roosts- semi optimal survey	
Internal roost surveys are possible / Trees are best surveyed during Winter											

27. All species of bats are fully protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981, the European Conservation (Natural Habitats etc.) Regulations 1994 and the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000.
28. This legislation makes it illegal to possess or control any live or dead specimens, to damage, destroy or obstruct access to any structure or place used for shelter, protection or breeding, and to intentionally disturb a bat while it is occupying a structure or place which it uses for that purpose.
29. Bats are considered as being an indicator species of biodiversity and ecosystem quality. If bats are found to be present on the application area, then a European Protected Species (EPS) development license issued by Natural England (NE) may be required prior to any development. If required, further presence/absence survey should be undertaken and a mitigation strategy be implemented with Natural England and the Local Planning Authority.
30. Unlike many smaller mammals, bats have low fecundity with a long and complex life cycle which is played out over a large spatial landscape. Bats need different roosting conditions at different times of the year and they will often move around to find a roost that meets their needs i.e. hibernacula, maternity, bachelor, satellite roosts and feeding perches. Bats are highly social animals and loss of a single habitat alone can have a serious impact on populations.

31. A bat roost is interpreted as 'any structure or place, which any wild bat uses for shelter or protection' (i.e., buildings, trees, bridges, tunnels etc.). Bats tend to show a high fidelity to roosts; subsequently, legal opinion regards a roost to be protected whether or not the bats are present at the time. There are many types of roost used by temperate bats during their annual cycle.

Roost category	Description
Summer Maternity / nursery roost	Used by breeding bats, where pups are born and raised to independence (Anecdotal evidence may support this prospect despite sub optimal survey period).
Hibernation site	Where bats may be found during over-wintering.
Daytime Summer roost	Used by males and/or non-reproductive females (seasonal limitations can prevent robust assessment of this roost status).
Night roost	Where bats rest between feeding bouts during the night but are rarely present during the day.
Feeding roost	Where bats temporarily utilize feeding perches and stations to eat an item of prey.
Transitional (or swarming) site	Where bats may be present during the spring or autumn

Table 2. Bat roost categories.

32. The potential suitability of any structures occurring within the proposed development area and/or with the Zone of Influence were assessed for Potential Roost Features (PRFs) using the following criteria:

Suitability	Description of Roosting habitats
Negligible	Negligible habitat features on site likely to be used by roosting bats.
Low	A structure/tree with one or more potential roost sites that could be used by individual bats opportunistically. However, these potential roost sites do not provide enough space, shelter, protection, appropriate conditions 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 or hibernation).
Moderate	A structure/tree with one or more potential roost sites that could be used by bats due to their size, shelter, protection, conditions and surrounding habitat but unlikely to support a roost of high conservation status (with respect to roost type only – the assessments in this table are made irrespective of species conservation status, which is established after presence is confirmed).
High	A structure/tree 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 and surrounding habitat.
Confirmed Roost	Roosting bat/s or definitive evidence of roosting bats (i.e. accumulations of droppings) present.

Table 3. Potential Roost Feature criteria.

33. Due to the nature of habitats surrounding the site, and the presence of peripheral linear features an assessment was made of the suitability of the site and the surrounding landscape to support foraging and/or commuting bats. The assessment was based on the presence of key habitat features such as woodland, scrub, hedgerows, grassland and open water which are highly attractive to bats.

Birds

(protected status WCA, UKBAP, LBAP)

Jan	Feb	March	April	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
Winter species (Optimal)		Breeding birds / Migrant species (Optimal)		Breeding birds (Optimal)		Low activity (Sub-optimal)		Migrant species (Optimal)		Winter birds (Optimal)	

34. All common wild birds are protected under The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (and as amended). Under this legislation it is an offence to:

- Kill, injure or take any wild bird.
- Take, damage or destroy the nest of any wild bird while it is in use or being built.
- Take or destroy the egg of any wild bird.

35. In addition to statutory protection, some species are classified according to their status on Red and Amber lists of Birds of Conservation Concern (BoCC) in the UK; and whether they have been identified as UKBAP Priority Species and /or Staffordshire LBAPs.
36. A bird scoping survey was undertaken to identify the presence and distribution of birds on the site, evaluate the importance of local bird populations and the conservation importance of the site in context to the wider its suitability to support breeding bird populations. Hedgerow habitat and nearby potential habitat were assessed and recorded.

Reptiles

(protected status WCA)

Jan	Feb	March	April	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
Hibernation		Peak surveying period (Optimal)				Reduced / Low activity (Sub-optimal)		Peak survey (Optimal)	Low activity (Sub-optimal)	Hibernation	

37. Grass snake *Natrix helvetica*, Adder *Vipera berus*, Common lizard *Zootoca vivipara* and Slow worm *Anguis fragilis* are partially protected via their listing on Schedule 5 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended).
38. The habitats on site were assessed for their variance in structure, the availability of basking sites, breeding, foraging and hibernacula potential as outlined in the Herpetofauna Workers Manual (Gent and Gibson 1998).

Otter and Water vole

(protected status EPS, WCA, UKBAP, LBAP)

	Jan	Feb	March	April	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
Otter	Limited by vegetation cover and weather conditions rather than seasons											
Water vole	Low activity Initial habitat		Habitat and field signs / activity surveys May be limited by vegetation cover and weather								Initial habitat Low activity	

39. Otter *Lutra lutra* and Water Vole *Arvicola amphibious* are both listed in Schedule 5 of The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 and as such receive protection under Section 9 of this Act. This has been amended several times, most recently by the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000, which added 'or recklessly' to Section 9(4) (a) and (b).
40. In summary, it is a criminal offence to:
- *Intentionally kill, injure or take a wild Water Vole or Otter;*
 - *be in possession of, or control, any live or dead wild Water Vole or Otter or part of, or anything derived from a wild Water Vole or Otter;*
 - *Intentionally or recklessly damage, destroy or obstruct access to any place that a wild Water Vole or Otter uses for shelter or protection;*
 - *Intentionally or recklessly disturb any wild Water Vole or Otter whilst it is occupying a structure or place that it uses for shelter or protection;*
 - *Transport for sale or exchange, or offer for sale or exchange a live or dead Water Vole or Otter or any part of a Water Vole or Otter.*
41. Water Vole is the subject of a Priority Species Action Plan under the UK Biodiversity Action Plan (UKBAP), due to significant declines in recent decades. These declines largely result from habitat loss and degradation, population fragmentation and predation by American Mink *Neovison vison*.

Invertebrates

(protected status EPS, WCA, UKBAP, LBAP)

42. A number of invertebrate species are covered by the UK's domestic wildlife legislation, national biodiversity policies and relevant international statutes. A semi-quantitatively assessment of key invertebrate habitat guidance using the following criteria was carried out on site: decaying timber, rotational management, nectar sources, botanically-poor wetland features, structural patchwork, still air habitat, connectivity, ecoclines and bare earth (Lee, 2017) with other microhabitat features noted down.

3. LEGISLATION

43. The United Kingdom Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) 1994 sets out a strategy for implementing the Convention on Biological Diversity, which was signed by the United Kingdom at the Rio de Janeiro Earth Summit in 1992. The published report contains action plans for the United Kingdom's most threatened species and habitat plans for the most vulnerable areas.
44. The Local BAP sets out the county's part in the UK biodiversity planning process, in the form of local habitat and species action plans. Local BAPs are intended to focus resources, to conserve and enhance biodiversity, by taking account of national and local priorities.
45. Schedule 1 Part 1 of The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (and amendments) lists birds protected by special penalties at all times. It prohibits intentional killing/injuring, taking, possessing, disturbing and selling (including parts and derivatives, eggs, nests, etc. As applicable) as well as damaging, destroying or disturbing nests in current use or dependent young, etc.
46. Schedule 5 of The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (and amendments) prohibits deliberate killing, injuring, taking, possessing, disturbing and selling (including parts and derivatives) as well as damaging, destroying or obstructing any structure or place of refuge of listed fauna, such as dormouse, otter and bat species.
47. The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010 consolidate all the various amendments made to the Conservation (Natural Habitats, &c.) Regulations 1994, in respect of England and Wales. It is illegal to kill, disturb, destroy eggs, breeding sites or resting places, to pick, collect, take cuttings, uproot or destroy in the wild as well as keep, transport, sell/exchange and offer for sale/exchange species listed.
48. The Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 increases the protection given by The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (and amendments). The offence to intentionally damage any structure or place that a wild animal listed in Schedule 5 of the Act uses for shelter or protection, or deliberately disturbing any such animal while in such a structure or place is extended so that the offence also covers reckless damage / disturbance. The CROW Act places a duty on Ministers and Government Departments to have regard for the purpose of conserving biological diversity in accordance with the Convention on Biological Diversity.
49. The Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006, as well as creating Natural England, gives all public authorities the duty to have regard for conserving biodiversity within the commission of their duties. This includes a duty to restore and enhance as well as maintain biodiversity. The act also strengthens protection for Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) and makes authorities liable for allowing damage to such sites or their features.

○ **Planning Policy**

50. As defined in Planning Policy Statement 9 (ODPM, 2005) (now superseded by the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF, 2012 revised 2018, 2019, 2021 & 2023), Biodiversity and Geological Conservation sites of biodiversity conservation value and protected species are material considerations in the planning process.
51. The NPPF promotes the approval of plans where applications can demonstrate that they are in accordance with up-to-date Local Plans and have addressed material considerations. Part of the NPPF core strategy aims to ensure “development where appropriate produces a net gain in biodiversity, and ensuring that any unavoidable impacts are appropriately mitigated for”.
52. The avoidance of harm to natural assets and their conservation, enhancement and restoration should be achieved by:
- 1) Ensuring that proposals which are likely to have a significant adverse effect, directly, indirectly or cumulatively, on any of the following:
 - *the special qualities of the Character Area;*
 - *locally designated biodiversity and geological sites;*
 - *priority species;*
 - *priority habitats*
 - *important woodlands, trees and hedges;*
 - *ecological networks*
 - *geological assets;*
 - *visual amenity;*
 - *landscape character and local distinctiveness.*
 - 2) Development(s) will only be permitted if they can be clearly demonstrated:
 - a) there is no satisfactory alternative means of avoiding such impacts through re-design or by re-locating on an alternative site and;*
 - b) the social or economic benefits of the proposal outweigh the harm to the asset. In all cases, a hierarchy of mitigation then compensation measures will be sought’.*

○ **Biodiversity Net Gain**

53. "Biodiversity Net Gain" is an additional requirement, of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF, 2019 [paragraph 109 and 175]) whereby, sustainable developments should aim to increase overall biodiversity and net gains onsite for nature.
54. In England, Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) is now mandatory for large sites under Schedule 7A of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as inserted by Schedule 14 of the Environment Act 2021), and becomes mandatory for small sites as of April 2024. BNG will be measured using Defra’s Statutory biodiversity metric tool calculator in the first instance to ascertain any net loss through development, whilst any calculated Net Gains will need to be secured for at least 30 years.
55. This sits alongside:
- *a strengthened legal duty for public bodies to conserve and enhance biodiversity,*
 - *new biodiversity reporting requirements for local authorities, and*
 - *mandatory spatial strategies for nature: Local Nature Recovery Strategies or ‘LNRS’.*

4. RESULTS

o Designated sites

56. The site is located in Green belt. While there are no designated sites of conservation located on or within a 1km radius of the proposed application itself, Hulme Quarry (SSSI and NNR) is located ca.1.8km due west of the site. Land to east of Caverswall, east of Handley Banks and Finger Post Farm is designated a Special Landscape Area whilst a number of Non-statutory and Ancient Woodland Inventory (AWI) sites occur in a 1-2km radius. The proposed application area subsequently falls within a SSSI Impact Risk Zone:

Non-statutory Ecological Sites (SBIs/BASs)

94/63/30	SJ963430	Creswellford Crossing	BAS (1998)
94/63/68	SJ966438	Stansmore Grassland	SBI (2005)
94/64/45	SJ964445	Stansmore Wood and Grassland	SBI (2005)
94/64/98	SJ969448	Dilhorne Wood	BAS (1998)
94/65/45	SJ964455	Heywood Grange Wood	BAS (2000)
94/73/42	SJ974432	St.Thomas's Trees	BAS (2000)
94/74/39	SJ973449	Foxfield & Pearcroft Woods	SBI (1998)
94/82/91	SJ989421	Commonside Quarry	BAS (2000)
94/83/12	SJ981432	Fair View (north of)	BAS (2000)

Site on the Natural England Ancient Woodland Inventory (AWI)

SJ968448	Dilhorne Wood	Ancient & Semi-Natural Woodland
SJ974448	Foxfield Wood	Ancient & Semi-Natural Woodland
SJ964455	Grangewood	Ancient & Semi-Natural Woodland
SJ963445	Stansmore Wood	Ancient & Semi-Natural Woodland

Other Significant Woodland/Tree belts:

- Trees lining track which runs east of Caverswall
- Woodland N of Caverswall Common, approx. 1.1km N of Cookshill
 - Nursery, Carmel Farm, 1.1km NNE of Cookshill
 - Blakeleybank Wood, 1.1km E of Caverswall, to the E of Foxfield Railway

Table 4. Designated Areas of Ecological Significance in 2km radius

FLORA

57. Staffordshire Ecological data returned seven records of only one protected species of flora within a 2km search radius of the proposed application area: Common Bluebell *Hyacinthoides non-scripta*. This species is protected through general provisions in the Wildlife and Countryside 1981, which make it illegal to intentionally uproot a wild plant. The nearest recording for this species occurs ca. 984m away at Stansmore Grasslands (GR: SJ 966438).

○ Habitat baseline

58. Area habitats within the proposed development area equate to:

• (J3.6) Buildings on associated hard-standing.

59. There are two adjoined prefabricated agricultural buildings present inside the development area on the inside northern boundary being constructed of corrugated sheet roofing and sides with breeze block bases. The buildings have an extant footprint of ca. 225m² (0.2ha).



Figure 4, 5 & 6. Agricultural farm building positioned on the North west boundary of the site.

Species-poor modified grassland

60. A grassland area ca. 0.2ha in coverage is present inside the central application area, being composed almost entirely of a low, homogenous sward of perennial ryegrass and was found to be well maintained and species-poor overall.
61. The observable higher plant species in each habitat type within the site, and their abundance, were recorded using the DAFOR scale: D [Dominant]; A [Abundant]; F [Frequent]; O [Occasional]; R [Rare].

Perennial ryegrass	<i>Lolium perenne</i>	D	White clover	<i>Trifolium repens</i>	F
Narrow leaf plantain	<i>Plantago lanceolata</i>	O	Yorkshire Fog	<i>Holcus lanatus</i>	F
Common daisy	<i>Bellis perennis</i>	O	Creeping thistle	<i>Cirsium arvense</i>	O
Self heal	<i>Prunella vulgaris</i>	O	Chickweed	<i>Stellaria media</i>	O
Creeping buttercup	<i>Ranunculus repens</i>	O	Common Nettle	<i>Urtica dioica</i>	O
Small flowered willowherb	<i>Chamaenerion angustifolium</i>	O	Dandelion	<i>Taraxacum officinale</i>	O
Hawkbait	<i>Scorzoneroidea autumnalis</i>	R	Woody nightshade	<i>Solanum dulcamara</i>	R
Red clover	<i>Trifolium pratense</i>	F	Sheep sorrel	<i>Rumex acetosella</i>	R
Eyebright	<i>Euphrasia</i> spp.	O	Common ragwort	<i>Jacobaea vulgaris</i>	O
Bracken	<i>Dennstaedtiaceae</i> spp.	O			



Figure 7. Looking west across site.



Figure 8. West boundary interface.



Figure 9. Horse ménage.

(J3.4) Bare ground

62. Some areas of grassland on the open western boundary transition were found to underlain with artificial grass, hardcore and stone ballast aggregate, while a rectangular Horse ménage (0.5ha) demarked by timber post fencing sits inside the grassland region, being composed of a sub-base of crushed aggregates with a layer of sand, and topped with a dark substrate.

○ **(J2) Boundaries**



Figure 10 & 11. North-west 'H1' boundary interface. **Figure 12.** Looking towards Eastern 'H2' boundary .

63. Linear habitats around boundaries comprised of:

- **'H1'** - ca.86.5m of continuous species-poor Hawthorn hedgerow sparsely intermixed with an understory of ornamental Holly, Elder and garlic mustard demarking the northern boundary (adjacent to Caverswall Common Lane)
- **'H2'** – ca. 45m of continuous species-poor Hawthorn hedgerow sparsely intermixed with Holly and Elder demarking the eastern boundary.
- **'H3'** - ca. 22m of internal hedgerow of Hawthorn and ornamental pine dividing western development boundary (adjacent to Higherland Farm).

64. Remaining boundaries were found to be either open along western boundary (adjacent to Higherland Farm) or demarked by timber post and wire fencing along the southern boundary.

65. No Habitats of Principle Importance using Natural England Priority Habitat dataset (Webb et al., 2017) were found to occur on site.

○ **Invasive Non-Native Species (INNS)**

66. No INNS, currently listed as a Schedule 9 species under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 were recorded within the proposed development area itself.

○ **Tree Preservation Orders (TPOs)**

67. No TPO's were recorded on site. It is understood all existing trees and hedgerows present around limited boundaries are to be retained on site. The development will need to be sensitive to Root Protection Areas.

• **FAUNA**

Badger

68. Pre-survey data finds no records of any active badger setts occurring within the zone of influence of the proposed development, although the surrounding rural landscape is considered as being optimal for this species.

69. The proposed application area comprises of a homogenous flat plateau of land providing negligible potential for badger sett uptake. An extended search radius around the application area found no evidence of badger setts and/or characteristic field signs present in a 30m radius.

Bats

70. Pre-survey data finds 11 of the 17 resident UK bat species occur in the county, with seven species currently given UK BAP (2007) Priority Status. Staffordshire Ecological data show 46 records of three species of bats recorded within a 2km radius of the site, three of which are considered UK BAP species (highlighted in grey).

UK BAP Common name	Species	Recorded within 1-2km
Brown long-eared bat	<i>Plecotus auritus</i>	YES
Barbastelle bat	<i>Barbastella barbastellus</i>	NO
Bechstein's bat	<i>Myotis bechsteinii</i>	NO
Noctule	<i>Nyctalus noctula</i>	YES
Greater horseshoe bat	<i>Rhinolophus ferrumequinum</i>	NO
Lesser horseshoe bat	<i>Rhinolophus hipposideros</i>	NO
Leisler's bat	<i>Nyctalus leisleri</i>	NO
Soprano pipistrelle	<i>Pipistrellus pygmaeus</i>	YES

Table 5. UKBAP Bat species recorded in a 2km radius.

71. A further four/five bat species that are not currently given UK BAP consideration are also recorded within the county with three species recorded within a 1-2km radius of the site (highlighted in grey):

Non-UK BAP Common name	Species	Recorded within 1-2km
Natterer's bat	<i>Myotis Nattereri</i>	YES
Daubenton's bat	<i>Myotis daubentonii</i>	NO
Whiskered / Brandt's	<i>Myotis mystacinus / brandtii</i>	YES
Common pipistrelle	<i>Pipistrellus pipistrellus</i>	YES

Table 6. Non UKBAP Bat species recorded in a 2km radius.

72. The prefabricated agricultural buildings present on the inside northern boundary of the proposed development area were found to be well sealed and have negligible potential roost features (PRFs) for roosting bats. No other structures including trees considered suitable for roosting bats were recorded.

Birds

73. SER data show 62 records of protected birds within a 2km radius of the application area which are classified according to their status on Red and Amber lists of Birds of Conservation Concern (BoCC) in the UK (see Appendix). A number of raptorial birds of prey are noted including Red Kite and Peregrine Falcon with twelve records of Barn Owl *Tyto alba* are recorded and considered present in the immediate area. Farmland bird assemblages including Lapwing, which are a Priority Species for CS Targeting are also recorded in the wider landscape.
74. Bird activity was found to be relatively low on site during the walkover survey, with the following species recorded:

<i>Prunella modularis</i>	Dunnock		<i>Cyanistes caeruleus</i>	Blue tit	
<i>Erithacus rubecula</i>	Robin		<i>Corvus corone</i>	Carrion Crow	
<i>Turdus merula</i>	Blackbird		<i>Troglodytes troglodytes</i>	Wren	
<i>Parus major</i>	Great tit		<i>Aegithalos caudatus</i>	Long-tailed tit	
<i>Pica pica</i>	Magpie		<i>Periparus ater</i>	Coal tit	

Table 7. Bird species recorded during October 2025 walk over.

Great crested newt

75. Pre-survey data provides only four individual records of GCN in a 2km search radius, with the nearest sighting 2333m due North-west (1984). While no standing water-bodies occur within the proposed application area itself, five standing water-bodies are recorded in a 500m radius. Due to landowner access constraints it was not possible to carry out a HSI on Ponds 'P1' (460m due North), 'P4' (208m due South) and 'P5' (102m due SW), while 'P2' (277m due East) and 'P3' (328m due west) were found to be completely terrestrialised over.

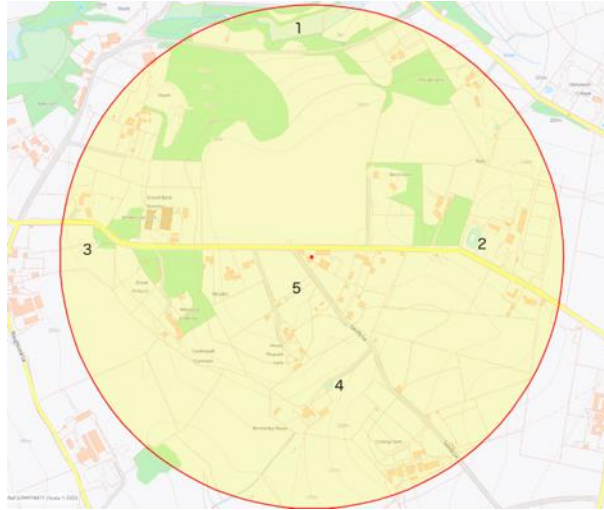


Figure 13. Standing waterbodies occurring in a 500m radius of the proposed application area.

76. Assessment from Google Earth imagery considers 'P1' and 'P2' to also be ephemeral / terrestrialised while 'P4' would appear to be two ornamental ponds in a residential / farm property. Terrestrial Great Crested Newt habitat is limited on site to the hedgerows, with the majority of the application area comprising of hard-standing and a well-maintained grassland paddock with horse ménage and subject to frequent disturbance.,

Invertebrates

77. Pre-survey data provide no records of protected invertebrates of principal conservation concern on site (i.e. UKBAP and LBAP moths and butterflies). In its current form, the site has negligible value for invertebrates overall.

Reptiles

78. Pre-survey records show no Key Register Reptile sites within the ZOI of the proposed application; with only one record of Slow-worm *Anguis fragilis* and Common Lizard *Zootoca vivipara* recorded in a 1.6-2.5km radius of the site in 1980. Other than boundary hedgerows, the site lacks any notable refugia and habitat for reptiles overall.

Species	Adder	Grass Snake	Common Lizard	Slow-worm
Recorded	Absent	Absent	Recorded	Recorded
Total No. of sightings	0	0	1	1
Nearest Distance	-	-	2560m	1631m
Date recorded	-	-	1980	1980

Otter & water vole

79. While pre-survey data provide one records of Otter (2007) and ten records of Water vole (1988- 2009) within a 2km radius of the application area, the site lacks any suitable riparian habitat and adjacent watercourses to support either of these two BAP species.

5. PREDICTED IMPACTS & MITIGATION

80. Potential ecological impacts of the proposed development are based on qualitative and quantitative information of baseline information gathered from; desk-based study, scoping survey and evaluation of ecological features, in-order to identify likely significant ecological impacts upon fauna and flora within the zones of influence from the proposed development, and to address the now mandatory biodiversity gain hierarchy.

○ **Survey constraints**

81. While the Phase 1 habitat survey was carried out during a sub optimal time of October, no survey constraints were encountered and findings are considered as being robust and representative of the dominant habitats and vegetation communities on site.

○ **Designated Nature Conservation sites**

82. Considered a small-scale development on previously developed land, negligible impact to any Statutory or Non-Statutory conservation sites in the wider landscape is predicted under the proposed scheme, with negligible habitat fragmentation and/or edge effects on the wider landscape.

FLORA

83. In their current form, habitats and vegetation communities within the proposed development area are not considered as being unique within the context of the wider landscape, with no habitats classified as Habitats of Principle Importance as determined using Natural England Priority Habitat dataset present. No adverse impact to any ruderal plant species and/or vegetation communities currently supported by legislative protection is therefore considered.

FAUNA

84. Based on local distributions and associated habitats relating to the proposed development, the following impacts to protected species is predicted:

Badger

85. In absence of mitigation, negligible impact to any active badger setts or associated habitat is currently predicted under the proposed scheme, and no further survey effort is considered.
- *Any trench work should be excavated and closed in the same day to prevent any wildlife becoming trapped. If it is necessary to leave a trench open overnight then it should be sealed with a close-fitting plywood cover; or a means of escape should be provided in the form of a shallow sloping earth ramp, sloped board or plank.*

Bats

86. Structures occurring on site are considered as having negligible suitability for roosting bats, and no further survey recommendations are made.
87. Conversely, the site is located in a semi-rural setting of low district brightness (E2). Any artificial post-development lighting intended should comply to the guidance set out in the Institute for Lighting Engineers document "Guidance for the Reduction of Obtrusive Lighting" (2005) [GN01:2011]; and Bat Conservation Trust's "Artificial Lighting and Wildlife Interim Guidance: Recommendations to Help Minimize the Impact of Artificial Lighting" (2014) [GN8/18]. Any submitted lighting scheme should be retained for the lifetime of the development.

Environmental Zones			
Zone	Surrounding	Lighting Environment	Examples
E0	Protected	Dark	UNESCO Starlight Reserves, IDA Dark Sky Parks
E1	Natural	Intrinsically dark	National Parks, Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty etc.
E2	Rural	Low district brightness	Village or relatively dark outer suburban locations
E3	Suburban	Medium district brightness	Small town centres or suburban locations
E4	Urban	High district brightness	Town/city centres with high levels of night- time activity

Table 8. Environmental lighting zones.

Obtrusive Light Limitations for Exterior Lighting Installations / General Observers						
Environmental Zone	Sky Glow ULR [Max %] (1)	Light Intrusion (into Windows) Ev [lux] (2)		Luminaire Intensity I [candelas] (3)		Building Luminance Pre-curfew (4)
		Pre- curfew	Post- curfew	Pre- curfew	Post- curfew	Post- curfew
E0	0	0	0	0	0	0
E1	0	2	0 (1*)	2,500	0	0
E2	2.5	5	1	7,500	500	5
E3	5.0	10	2	10,000	1,000	10
E4	15	25	5	25,000	2,500	25
E0	0	0	0	0	0	0

Table 9. ILP lighting limitation guidance.

ULR = Upward Light Ratio of the Installation is the maximum permitted percentage of luminaire flux that goes directly into the sky.
 Ev = Vertical Illuminance in Lux - measured flat on the glazing at the centre of the window.
 I = Light Intensity in Candelas (cd)
 L = Luminance in Candelas per Square Metre (cd/m²)
 Curfew = the time after which stricter requirements (for the control of obtrusive light) will apply;
 often a condition of use of lighting applied by the local planning authority. If not otherwise stated - 23.00hrs is suggested.
 * = Permitted only from Public road lighting installations

88. In accordance with the Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006, a minimum of three external woodcrete bat boxes are recommended on and around site. Exact type and location would need to be further determined pending the final design and feasibility of the proposed scheme

• **Birds**

89. Assuming all extant hedgerows are to be retained under the proposed scheme, negligible impact to nesting birds is predicted. Should any works affect linear habitats around site, then this should ideally be undertaken outside the bird breeding season (March to August inclusive). Where this is not possible, then a check for nesting birds should be undertaken by an a suitably qualified ecologist within 48hrs of any works commencing.
90. No impact to any schedule 1 listed birds including Barn Owl is predicted under the proposed scheme, although the surrounding landscape provides optimal habitat and resources for this species, and is recorded within a 2km radius of the site.
91. In accordance with the Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006, a quantity of nest boxes for different species of birds should be incorporated into the land holding area of Higherland Farm (specific type of boxes, locations and numbers would need to be confirmed pending the final design and feasibility of the proposed scheme).

• **Great crested newt**

92. Based on a small-scale development (< 0.5ha) on previously developed land and absence of GCN records in the wider landscape, Natural England's rapid risk assessment (2011) calculates low risk potential of causing an offence, with no significant adverse impact on any standing water-bodies or terrestrial habitat suitable for GCN occurring within a 250-500m radius of the site (see below). No further surveys are subsequently recommended.

Component	Likely effect (select one for each component; select the most harmful option if more than one is likely; lists are in order of harm, top to bottom)	Notional offence probability score
Great crested newt breeding pond(s)	No effect	0
Land within 100m of any breeding pond(s)	No effect	0
Land 100-250m from any breeding pond(s)	0.1 - 0.5 ha lost or damaged	0.1
Land >250m from any breeding pond(s)	0.5 - 1 ha lost or damaged	0.03
Individual great crested newts	No effect	0
	Maximum:	0.1
Rapid risk assessment result:	GREEN: OFFENCE HIGHLY UNLIKELY	

93. Reasonable Avoidance Measures (RAMs) should however be adopted for herpetofauna in general (incl. small mammals) during ground works, which is best carried out between March -October in temperatures when amphibians are actively more present in-and-around breeding ponds.

- *A fingertip search of vegetation / dead wood refugia by a qualified Ecologist in-advance of any ground work machinery;*
- *In order to prevent any wildlife from seeking refuge on site during works - any building materials, rubble, bricks and soil should be stored only within existing areas of hard-standing, and should be raised above ground level using either pallets, skips, or other suitable containers. Waste materials should be removed from site immediately or contained within skips.*
- *Any open trenches and pipe work should be inspected at the start of each working day to ensure no animal is trapped.*
- ***In the unlikely event that Great crested newts are unexpectedly encountered during works, then all works must cease immediately and further advice should be sought from the acting Ecologist.***

Invertebrates

94. In absence of mitigation, negligible impact to invertebrates is predicted under the proposed scheme and no further survey effort is considered. It is recommended that any landscaping attempts to encompass dead wood piles and pollinator strips to enhance the overall site for invertebrates.

Reptiles

95. Negligible impact to any notable key registered reptile sites is predicted, and no further survey effort is considered, although care and vigilance should be holistically adopted as part of RAMs during ground-works with consideration being given to highly mobile grass snake.

Otter & water vole

96. In absence of mitigation, negligible impact to Otter and Water vole is predicted and no further recommendations are considered.

Hedgehog

97. Hedgehogs are protected in England under Schedule 6 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act (1981) and are also listed under Section 41 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act (2006). This lists English species that were formerly identified as requiring action under the UK Biodiversity Action Plans and which continue to be regarded as conservation priorities under the current UK Post- 2010 Biodiversity Framework.

- *Contractors should be made aware of the potential presence of hedgehogs around ecotones;*
- *Vegetation clearance to be carried out by hand, slowly and methodically, particularly any areas of scrub/woodland understorey;*
- *During construction works, any excavations left open overnight should be installed with a mammal ladder (piece of wood) to allow any hedgehogs (or other mammals including badger) an ease of escape.*

6. BIODIVERSITY NET GAIN FEASIBILITY

○ Biodiversity Net Gain

98. In England, biodiversity net gain is required under a statutory framework introduced by Schedule 7A of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (inserted by the Environment Act 2021),
99. After potential impacts for protected species have been identified, avoided, mitigated and compensated for in accordance with the mitigation hierarchy, Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG), is now a mandatory approach to development, and/or land management, that aims to leave the natural environment in a measurably better state than it was beforehand, and requires a +10% increase in biodiversity after development compared to the level of biodiversity prior to the development taking place.

○ Habitat baseline

100. In their current form, the proposed development area equates to ca. 0.31ha of land to the east of main residential dwelling. Of this ca. 0.7ha has zero metric value comprising of an agricultural building (0.2ha), and an existing ménage (0.5ha).
101. Under UK Habitats Classification, the broad habitat affected and lost by the proposed development equates to ca. 0.2ha of 'Tier 1' - modified grassland of medium distinctiveness.

● Linear baseline

102. Under UK Habitats Classification, combined linear habitats (H1+H2+H3) comprise of ca. 154m of non-continuous species-poor hedgerow composed predominantly of Hawthorn. It is understood that all extant hedgerow around site is intended to be retained. Subsequently, no net loss to linear habitat is predicted under the proposed scheme.
103. **Based on loss of area habitat alone, the proposed development would be subject to mandatory Biodiversity Net gain requirement, in-order to demonstrate compliance with national and local planning policies.**
104. It will therefore be necessary to further assess the site's 'biodiversity' unit value before development using DEFRA's standardized Statutory Biodiversity Metric calculator. This should be undertaken by a competent ecologist in accordance to BS 42020:2013, BS8683:2021 and The Statutory Biodiversity Metric User Guide.
105. While lost low distinctiveness habitat can be offset with any broad habitat of the same or higher tier; it is unclear as to whether a 10% uplift could be achieved on site based on the current design, with much of the extant modified grassland region being replaced by block paving and hardcore to accommodate parking and a vehicle turning area. It is understood that there is no additional land available for off-setting purposes should this be required.

● Registered off-site gain

106. If the full 10% gain cannot be achieved on-site, a developer can purchase biodiversity units from a 'Habitat Bank' or landowner whose site is registered for providing off-site gains. Preference is given to off-site locations in the same Local Planning Authority area.

● Statutory biodiversity credits:

107. If both on-site and registered off-site options are unavailable, developers can, as a last resort, purchase credits directly from DEFRA. The revenue is then used to fund strategic habitat creation projects.

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Websites used:

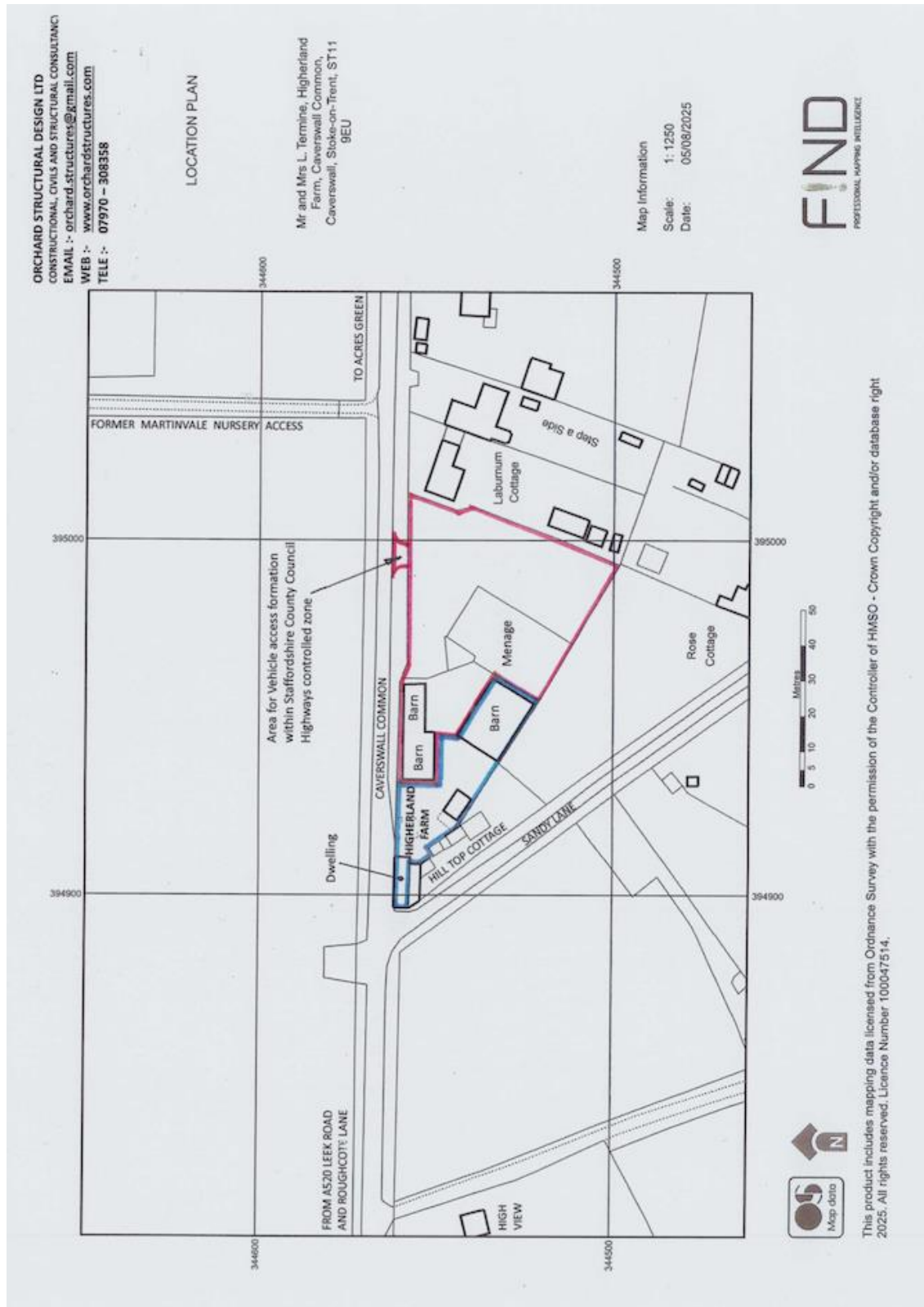
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- Protected Species: <http://data.nbn.org.uk/>
- UKBAP: <http://jncc.defra.gov.uk/page-5155> www.rspb.org.uk
- www.streetmap.co.uk www.maps.google.co.uk www.bing.com/maps

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

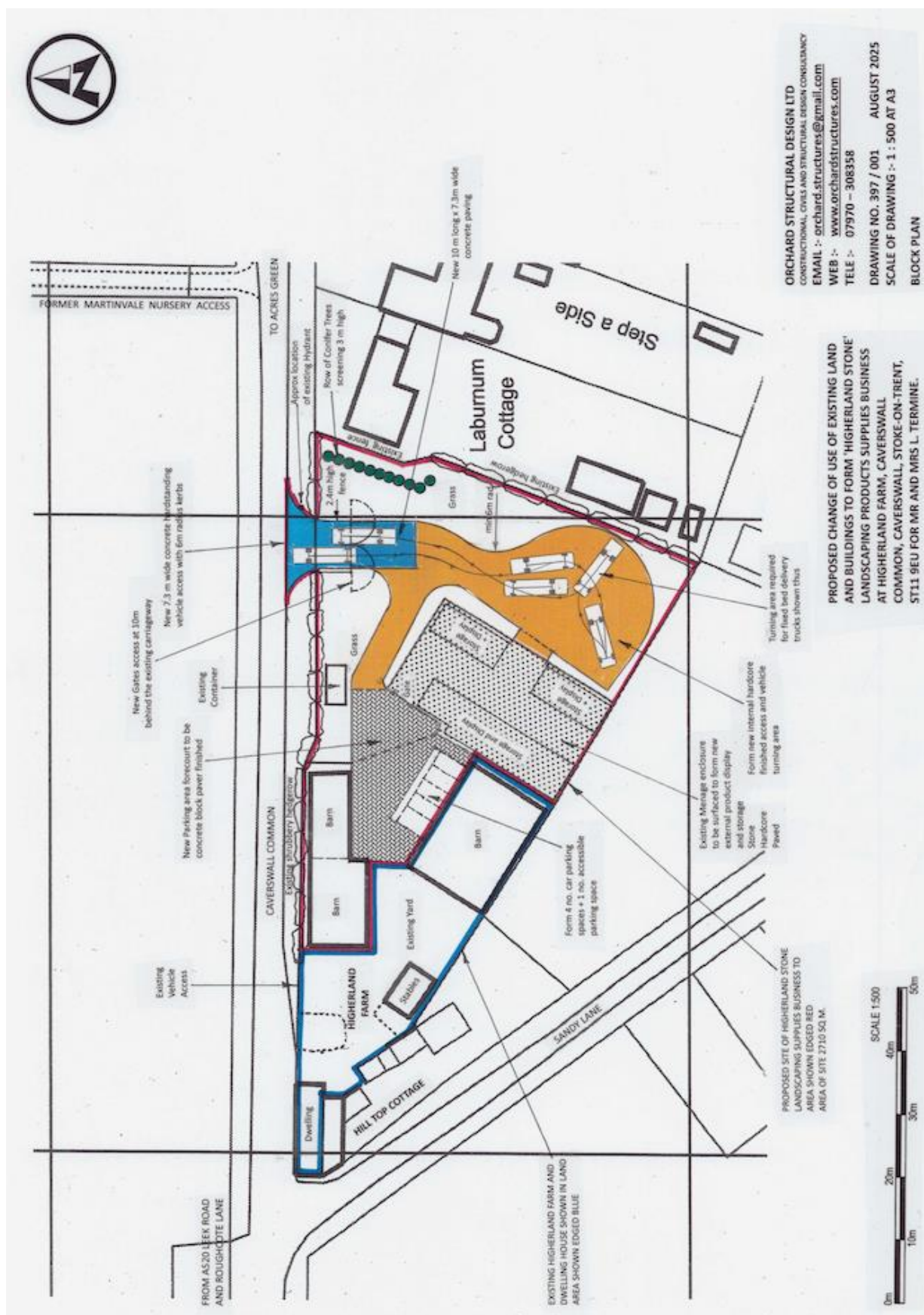
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- Habitats Directive: http://ec.europa.eu/environment/nature/legislation/habitatsdirective/index_en.htm
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- Protection of Badgers Act 1992: http://www.opsi.gov.uk/ACTS/acts1992/ukpga_19920051_en_1
- Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006: <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2006/16/contents>
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8. APPENDIX

○ Site Plan



Proposed block plan.



○ **Biological data records**

Birds recorded in a 2km radius

<i>Acanthis cabaret</i>	Lesser Redpoll	4	2013	2012
<i>Alauda arvensis</i>	Sky Lark	28	2014	1964
<i>Alcedo atthis</i>	Common Kingfisher	6	2013	1998
<i>Anas crecca</i>	Eurasian Teal	3	2010	2010
<i>Anas platyrhynchos</i>	Mallard	8	2009	1983
<i>Anas querquedula</i>	Garganey	1	2001	2001
<i>Anser brachyrhynchus</i>	Pink-footed Goose	2	2008	2008
<i>Anthus pratensis</i>	Meadow Pipit	13	2014	1983
<i>Apus apus</i>	Common Swift	2	2010	1984
<i>Asio flammeus</i>	Short-eared Owl	5	2012	2012
<i>Aythya fuligula</i>	Tufted Duck	1	2002	2002
<i>Charadrius dubius</i>	Little Plover	1	2010	2010
<i>Chroicocephalus ridibundus</i>	Black-headed Gull	5	2009	1981
<i>Columba oenas</i>	Stock Dove	5	2013	1983
<i>Cuculus canorus</i>	Common Cuckoo	2	2011	1983
<i>Delichon urbicum</i>	House Martin	5	2009	1981
<i>Dendrocopos minor</i>	Lesser Spotted Woodpecker	1	2006	2006
<i>Egretta garzetta</i>	Little Egret	6	2015	2010
<i>Emberiza citrinella</i>	Yellowhammer	26	2014	1983
<i>Emberiza schoeniclus</i>	Reed Bunting	17	2013	1983
<i>Falco peregrinus</i>	Peregrine Falcon	3	2012	2010
<i>Falco subbuteo</i>	Eurasian Hobby	1	2014	2014
<i>Falco tinnunculus</i>	Common Kestrel	15	2014	1981
<i>Fringilla montifringilla</i>	Brambling	2	2012	2008
<i>Gallinago gallinago</i>	Common Snipe	20	2012	1981
<i>Haematopus ostralegus</i>	Eurasian Oystercatcher	1	2010	2010
<i>Hirundo rustica</i>	Barn Swallow	13	2014	1981
<i>Larus argentatus</i>	Herring Gull	2	2009	2009
<i>Larus canus</i>	Common Gull	3	2008	1981
<i>Larus fuscus</i>	Lesser Black-backed Gull	4	2009	1981
<i>Larus marinus</i>	Great Black-backed Gull	1	2009	2009
<i>Limosa limosa</i>	Black-tailed Godwit	1	2006	2006
<i>Linaria cannabina</i>	Linnet	6	2010	1983
<i>Locustella naevia</i>	Common Grasshopper Warbler	5	2010	2010
<i>Lymnocyptes minimus</i>	Jack Snipe	11	2010	1983
<i>Milvus milvus</i>	Red Kite	1	2010	2010
<i>Motacilla cinerea</i>	Grey Wagtail	4	2012	1981
<i>Motacilla flava</i>	Yellow Wagtail	3	2014	1981
<i>Muscicapa striata</i>	Spotted Flycatcher	1	2008	2008
<i>Numenius arquata</i>	Eurasian Curlew	1	2008	2008
<i>Numenius phaeopus</i>	Whimbrel	1	2013	2013
<i>Oenanthe oenanthe</i>	Northern Wheatear	10	2013	1981
<i>Pandion haliaetus</i>	Osprey	1	2014	2014
<i>Passer domesticus</i>	House Sparrow	12	2013	1983
<i>Passer montanus</i>	Eurasian Tree Sparrow	6	2012	1981
<i>Phylloscopus trochilus</i>	Willow Warbler	7	2014	1984
<i>Picus viridis</i>	Green Woodpecker	1	2003	2003
<i>Pluvialis apricaria</i>	European Golden Plover	5	2014	1981
<i>Poecile montana</i>	Willow Tit	4	2013	2012
<i>Prunella modularis</i>	Dunnock	11	2013	1983

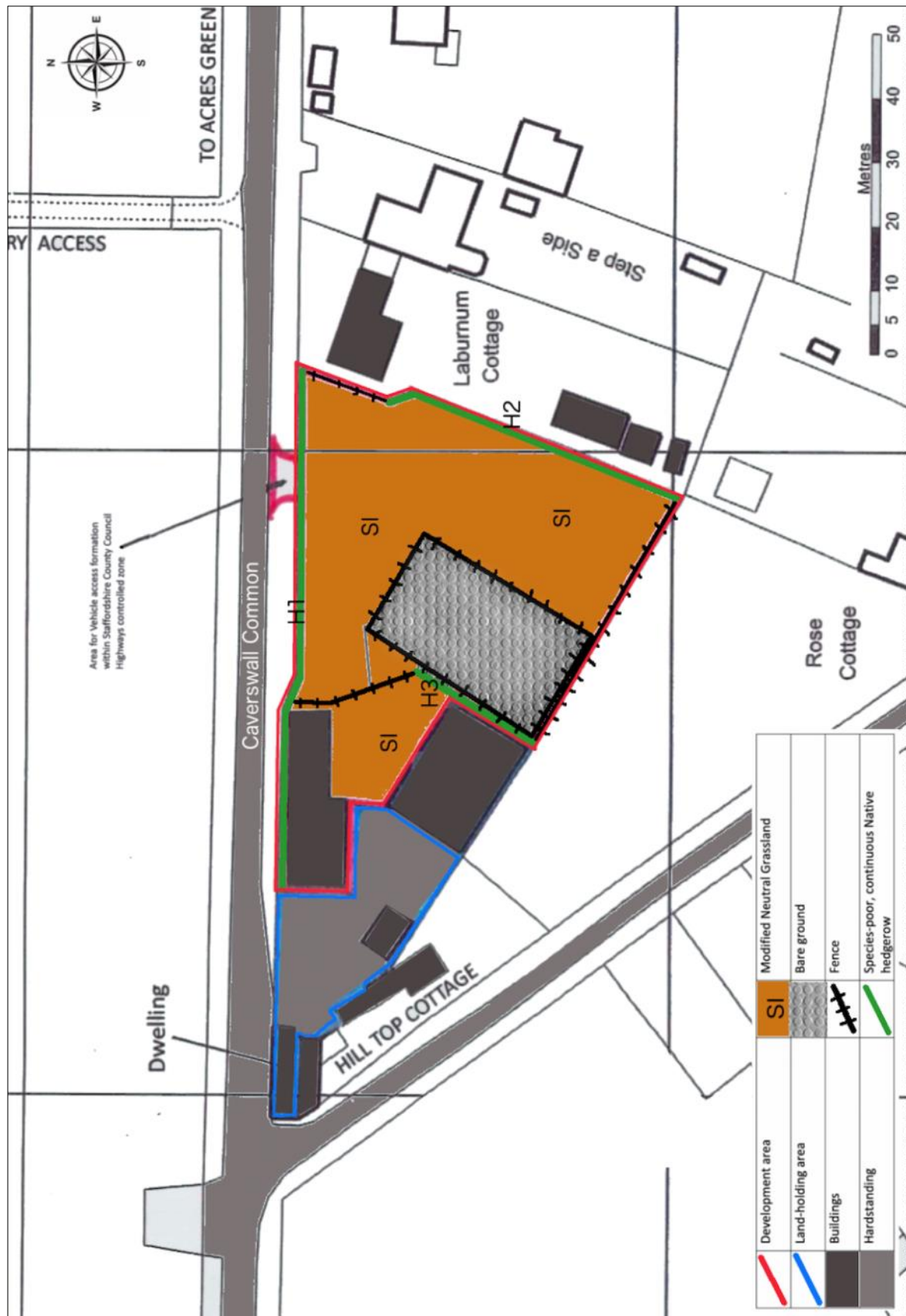
<i>Pyrrhula pyrrhula</i>	Common Bullfinch	11	2013	1981
<i>Riparia riparia</i>	Sand Martin	1	2013	2013
<i>Saxicola rubetra</i>	Whinchat	2	2012	2009
<i>Scolopax rusticola</i>	Eurasian Woodcock	4	2013	1984
<i>Sturnus vulgaris</i>	Common Starling	8	2012	1983
<i>Sylvia communis</i>	Common Whitethroat	5	2014	1984
<i>Tringa ochropus</i>	Green Sandpiper	1	2014	2014
<i>Turdus iliacus</i>	Redwing	8	2010	1983
<i>Turdus philomelos</i>	Song Thrush	9	2009	1983
<i>Turdus pilaris</i>	Fieldfare	9	2014	1983
<i>Turdus viscivorus</i>	Mistle Thrush	6	2009	1983
<i>Tyto alba</i>	Barn Owl	17	2012	1900
<i>Vanellus vanellus</i>	Northern Lapwing	14	2013	1981

Invertebrates recorded in a 2km radius

<i>Anotylus mutator</i>	<i>Anotylus mutator</i>	insect - beetle (Coleoptera)
<i>Anthribus nebulosus</i>	<i>Anthribus nebulosus</i>	insect - beetle (Coleoptera)
<i>Ctenicera pectinicornis</i>	<i>Ctenicera pectinicornis</i>	insect - beetle (Coleoptera)
<i>Curculio villosus</i>	<i>Curculio villosus</i>	insect - beetle (Coleoptera)
<i>Epuraea thoracica</i>	<i>Epuraea thoracica</i>	insect - beetle (Coleoptera)
<i>Hyperaspis pseudopustulata</i>	<i>Hyperaspis pseudopustulata</i>	insect - beetle (Coleoptera)
<i>Involvulus cupreus</i>	<i>Involvulus cupreus</i>	insect - beetle (Coleoptera)
<i>Leiodes longipes</i>	<i>Leiodes longipes</i>	insect - beetle (Coleoptera)
<i>Magdalis cerasi</i>	<i>Magdalis cerasi</i>	insect - beetle (Coleoptera)
<i>Mycetoporus punctus</i>	<i>Mycetoporus punctus</i>	insect - beetle (Coleoptera)
<i>Placusa depressa</i>	<i>Placusa depressa</i>	insect - beetle (Coleoptera)
<i>Sirocalodes quercicola</i>	<i>Sirocalodes quercicola</i>	insect - beetle (Coleoptera)
<i>Thalycra fervida</i>	<i>Thalycra fervida</i>	insect - beetle (Coleoptera)
<i>Coenonympha pamphilus</i>	Small Heath	insect - butterfly
<i>Erynnis tages</i>	Dingy Skipper	insect - butterfly
<i>Lasiommata megera</i>	Wall	insect - butterfly
<i>Pyrgus malvae</i>	Grizzled Skipper	insect - butterfly
<i>Satyrus w-album</i>	White-letter Hairstreak	insect - butterfly
<i>Sympetrum striolatum</i>	Common Darter	insect - dragonfly (Odonata)
<i>Andrena cineraria</i>	Ashy Mining Bee	insect - hymenopteran
<i>Andrena clarkella</i>	Clarke's Mining Bee	insect - hymenopteran
<i>Andrena fulva</i>	Tawny Mining Bee	insect - hymenopteran
<i>Andrena haemorrhoa</i>	Orange-tailed Mining Bee	insect - hymenopteran
<i>Andrena lapponica</i>	Bilberry Mining Bee	insect - hymenopteran
<i>Andrena scotica</i>	Chocolate Mining Bee	insect - hymenopteran
<i>Anoplius infuscatus</i>	<i>Anoplius infuscatus</i>	insect - hymenopteran
<i>Apis mellifera</i>	Western Honey Bee	insect - hymenopteran
<i>Bombus campestris</i>	Field Cuckoo Bee	insect - hymenopteran
<i>Bombus hypnorum</i>	Tree Bumblebee	insect - hymenopteran
<i>Bombus lucorum</i>	White-Tailed Bumble Bee	insect - hymenopteran
<i>Bombus pascuorum</i>	Common Carder Bee	insect - hymenopteran
<i>Bombus sylvestris</i>	Forest Cuckoo Bee	insect - hymenopteran
<i>Bombus terrestris</i>	Buff-Tailed Bumble Bee	insect - hymenopteran
<i>Bombus vestalis</i>	Vestal (Southern) Cuckoo Bee	insect - hymenopteran
<i>Crabro peltarius</i>	<i>Crabro peltarius</i>	insect - hymenopteran
<i>Crossocerus cetratus</i>	<i>Crossocerus cetratus</i>	insect - hymenopteran
<i>Crossocerus varus</i>	<i>Crossocerus varus</i>	insect - hymenopteran
<i>Elampus panzeri</i>	<i>Elampus panzeri</i>	insect - hymenopteran
<i>Formica lemani</i>	<i>Formica lemani</i>	insect - hymenopteran
<i>Formica sanguinea</i>	Slaver Ant	insect - hymenopteran
<i>Lasioglossum albipes</i>	Bloomed Furrow Bee	insect - hymenopteran
<i>Lasioglossum calceatum</i>	Common Furrow Bee	insect - hymenopteran
<i>Lasioglossum fratellum</i>	Smooth-faced Furrow Bee	insect - hymenopteran
<i>Lasioglossum fulvicorne</i>	Chalk Furrow Bee	insect - hymenopteran
<i>Lasioglossum lativentre</i>	Furry-clasped Furrow Bee	insect - hymenopteran
<i>Leptothorax acervorum</i>	Slender Ant	insect - hymenopteran
<i>Mellinus arvensis</i>	Field Digger Wasp	insect - hymenopteran
<i>Mimesa equestris</i>	<i>Mimesa equestris</i>	insect - hymenopteran
<i>Mimesa lutaria</i>	<i>Mimesa lutaria</i>	insect - hymenopteran
<i>Myrmica rubra</i>	Red Ant	insect - hymenopteran
<i>Myrmica ruginodis</i>	<i>Myrmica ruginodis</i>	insect - hymenopteran
<i>Myrmica scabrinodis</i>	<i>Myrmica scabrinodis</i>	insect - hymenopteran

<i>Myrmosa atra</i>	Black Headed Velvet Ant	insect - hymenopteran
<i>Nomada fabriciana</i>	Fabricius' Nomad Bee	insect - hymenopteran
<i>Nomada panzeri sensu lato</i>	Panzer's Nomad Bee	insect - hymenopteran
<i>Nomada ruficornis</i>	Fork-jawed Nomad Bee	insect - hymenopteran
<i>Nomada rufipes</i>	Black-horned Nomad Bee	insect - hymenopteran
<i>Nysson spinosus</i>	Large Spurred Digger Wasp	insect - hymenopteran
<i>Oxybelus uniglumis</i>	Common Spiny Digger Wasp	insect - hymenopteran
<i>Pemphredon lugubris</i>	Mournful Wasp	insect - hymenopteran
<i>Priocnemis perturbator</i>	Priocnemis perturbator	insect - hymenopteran
<i>Rhopalum clavipes</i>	Rhopalum clavipes	insect - hymenopteran
<i>Sphecodes pellucidus</i>	Sandpit Blood Bee	insect - hymenopteran
<i>Symmorphus bifasciatus</i>	Symmorphus bifasciatus	insect - hymenopteran
<i>Trypoxylon figulus sensu lato</i>	Black Wood Borer Wasp	insect - hymenopteran
<i>Vespa crabro</i>	Hornet	insect - hymenopteran
<i>Vespula vulgaris</i>	Common Wasp	insect - hymenopteran
<i>Arctia caja</i>	Garden Tiger	insect - moth
<i>Caradrina morpheus</i>	Mottled Rustic	insect - moth
<i>Celaena haworthii</i>	Haworth's Minor	insect - moth
<i>Ceramica pisi</i>	Broom Moth	insect - moth
<i>Chesias rufata</i>	Broom-tip	insect - moth
<i>Eugnorisma glareosa</i>	Autumnal Rustic	insect - moth
<i>Graphiphora augur</i>	Double Dart	insect - moth
<i>Polia bombycina</i>	Pale Shining Brown	insect - moth
<i>Prolita sexpunctella</i>	Six-spot Groundling	insect - moth
<i>Rheumaptera hastata</i>	Argent & Sable	insect - moth
<i>Tyria jacobaeae</i>	Cinnabar	insect - moth
<i>Watsonalla binaria</i>	Oak Hook-tip	insect - moth
<i>Conops vesicularis</i>	Conops vesicularis	insect - true fly (Diptera)
<i>Tanyptera atrata</i>	Tanyptera atrata	insect - true fly (Diptera)

○ **Extended Phase 1 habitat Map**



Appendix 2 – Policy guidelines

PAS 2010	<i>The published 'PAS 2010' 'Planning to halt the loss of biodiversity' which is the government's new policy aimed at all authorities and developers involved in the planning process in the UK to halt biodiversity decline by 2010 and deliver net biodiversity gains as part of the green infrastructure provisions.</i>
National Planning Policy Framework, Section 11:	<i>The recently published framework in 2012, replaces the previous Planning Policy Statement 9. Section 11: Conserving and enhancing the natural environment, reaffirms the Government's commitment to maintaining protections and preventing urban sprawl, retains the protection of designated sites and preserves wildlife, aims to improve the quality of the natural environment, and halt declines in species and habitats, protects and enhances biodiversity and promotes wildlife corridors.</i>
Article 10 of the EC Habitats Directive:	<i>The published Article requires government to develop features such as 'stepping stones' on the landscape, such as clusters of ponds, tracts of rough grassland or scrubland and vegetated railway line embankments.</i>
Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981:	<i>All species of bat are fully protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981, the European Conservation (Natural Habitats etc.) Regulations 1994, and the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000. This legislation makes it illegal to possess or control any live or dead specimens, to damage, destroy or obstruct access to any structure or place used for shelter, protection or breeding, and to intentionally disturb a bat while it is occupying a structure or place which it uses for that purpose.</i>
Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations (2010)	<i>The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010 consolidate all the various amendments made to the Conservation (Natural Habitats, &c.) Regulations 1994, in respect of England and Wales. It is an offence to possess, sell or offer, or transport for sale any European species of bat or any part derived from such a species. These Regulations also remove the 'incidental result defence'. In other words, it is no longer a defence to show that the killing, capture or disturbance of a species covered by the Regulations or the destruction or damage of their breeding sites or resting places was the incidental and unavoidable result of a lawful activity. Natural England can grant European Protected Species (EPS) licences in respect of development to permit activities that would otherwise be unlawful.</i>
Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act (2006)	<i>Under Section 40 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act (2006), public bodies, including Local and Regional Planning Authorities, have a duty to 'have regard' to the conservation of biodiversity in England when carrying out their normal functions, which includes consideration of planning applications. In compliance with Section 41 of the Act, the Secretary of State has published a list of species considered to be of principal importance for conserving biodiversity in England. This is known as The England Biodiversity List, all of which make up the UK BAP Priority Species. Regional Planning Bodies and Local Planning Authorities will use it to identify the species that should be afforded priority to maintain, restore and enhance species and habitats.</i>
Bird legislation	<i>Most resident nesting birds are protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981, which protects birds, nests, eggs and nestling's. Some rarer species, such as barn owls, are afforded extra protection.</i>

9. CONDITIONS AND DISCLAIMERS



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