LERC Search Summary Report

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Buffer: 1km

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GREATER LINCOLNSHIRE NATURE PARTNERSHIP

Report Details

Produced for	Christopher Barker, CBE Consulting
Search area	

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This report summarises a search of statutory sites, non-statutory sites, other sites, habitats and species within the specified area; where no information is returned for a section, it is excluded from this summary report.

About the Lincolnshire Environmental Records Centre

The Lincolnshire Environmental Records Centre (LERC) collates wildlife and geological information for Greater Lincolnshire from various sources and makes it available for various uses. This data is crucial to aid conservation management of sites, to help organisations prioritise action, and to understand the distribution of species and trends over time. For more information on LERC or to request a data search, visit the website at https://glnp.org.uk/partnership/lerc/

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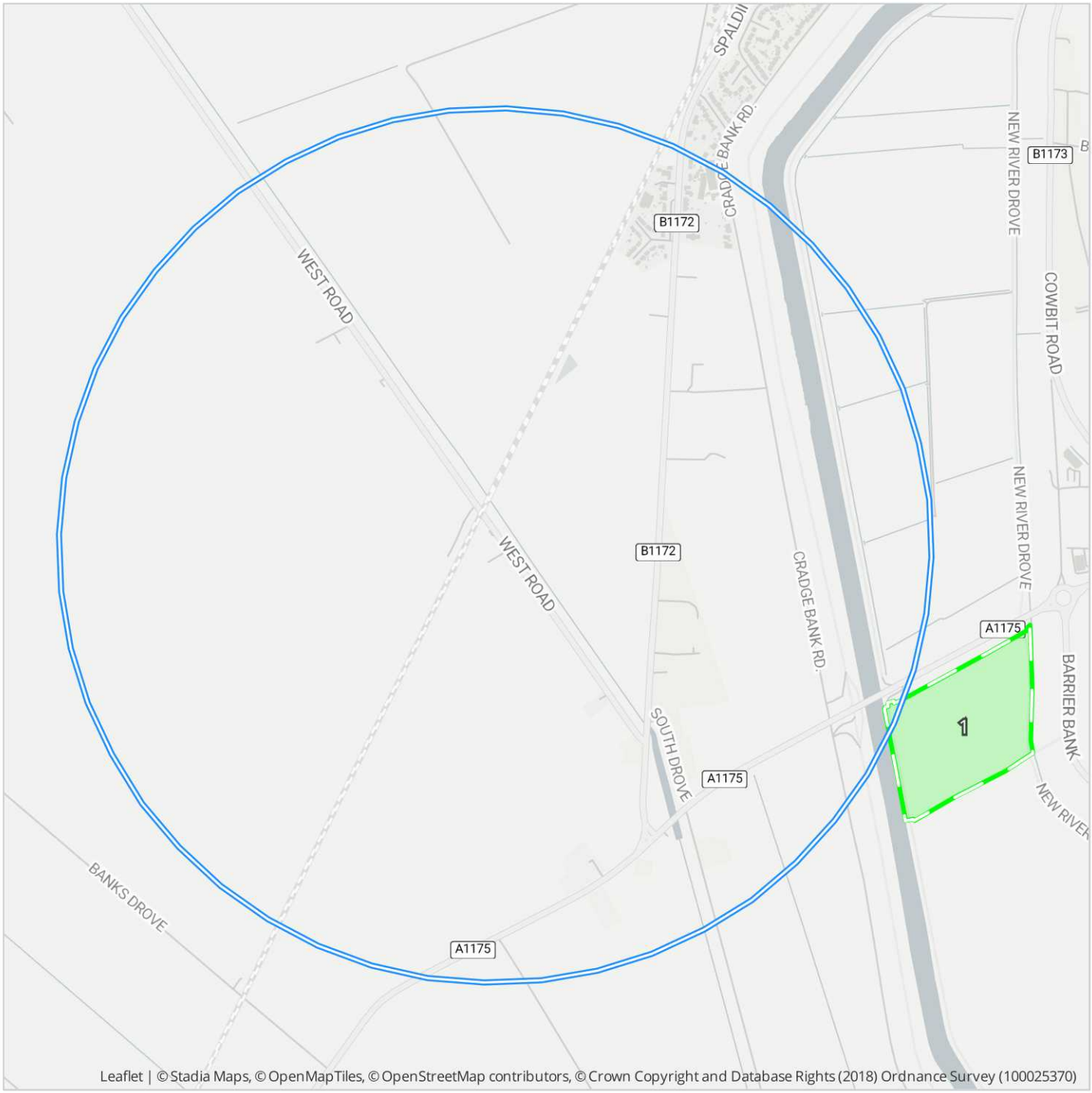
Statutory Sites

Statutory sites are those afforded legal protection aimed at preventing activities that may damage features of interest. Further information on these sites is available from Natural England (SSSIs, NNRs, LNRs, SPAs, SACs, Ramsars) and The National Association for Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONBs).

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Code	Designation	Status	Name
1	SSSI	Notified	Cowbit Wash

Statutory Sites within the search area



Space restrictions on the map may result in some sites not being labelled.

Site of Special Scientific Interest

Search area

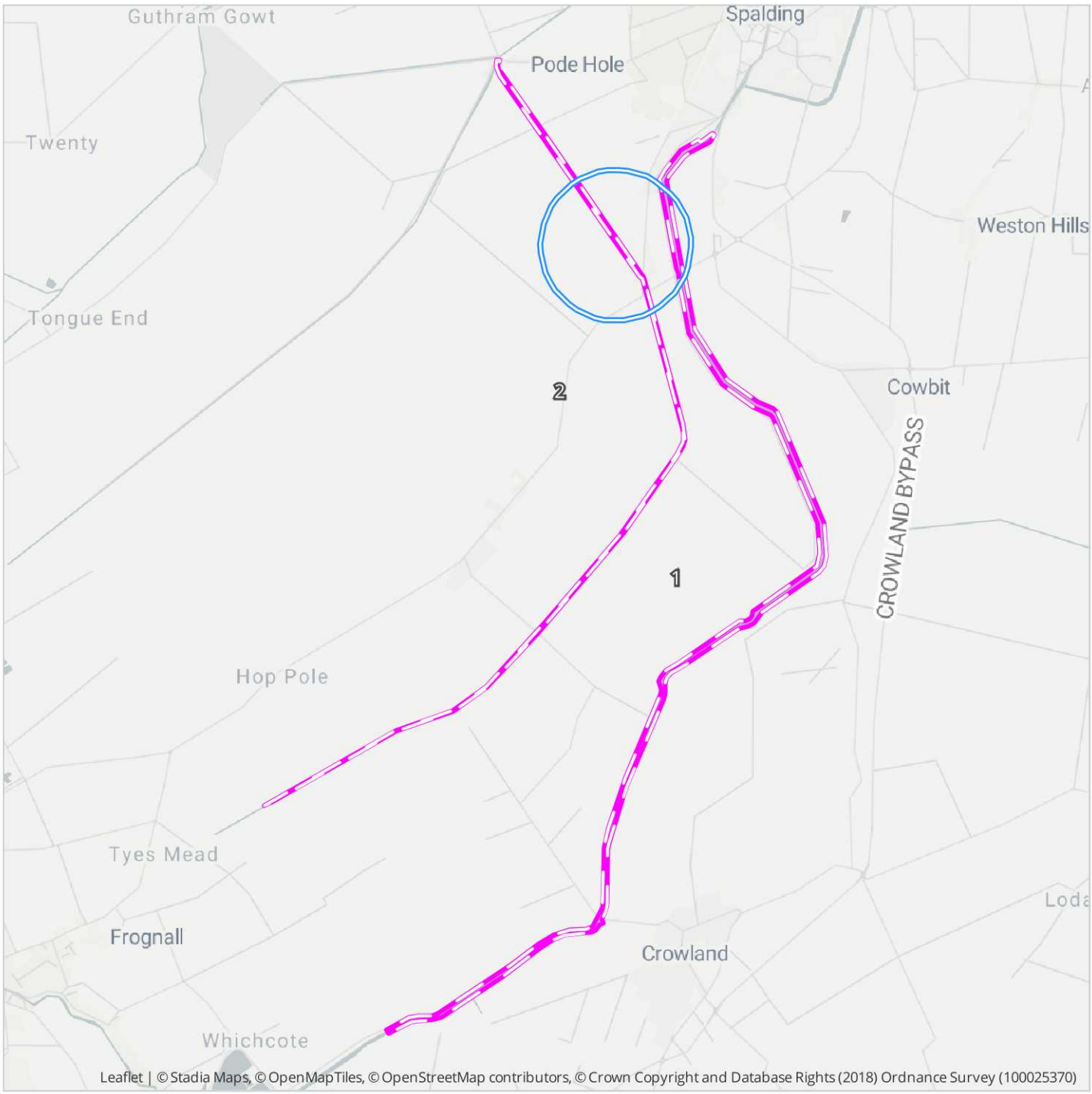
Non-statutory sites

The GLNP works directly with local authorities to coordinate the Local Sites system in Greater Lincolnshire. Sites are selected by the Nature Partnership, based on recommendations made by its expert working groups known as the LWS Panel and LGS Panel. The Register of Local Sites is then submitted for inclusion within local authority planning policy.

These sites are recognition of wildlife or geological value and are a testament to the land management that is already being undertaken on them. Identifying these sites helps local authorities meet their obligations under legislation and government guidance, including reporting on the number of sites in positive management for Single Data List Indicator 160-00.

Code	Designation	Status	Name
1	LWS	Selected	River Welland Corridor
2	LWS	Selected	South Drove Drain

Non-statutory sites within the search area



Space restrictions on the map may result in some sites not being labelled. Please refer to the site citations for details.

Local Wildlife Site

Search area

Species

Lincolnshire Environmental Records Centre holds records on the following species within or overlapping the search area. Data shown is as held by LERC; past records of presence of a species does not guarantee continued occurrence and absence of records does not imply absence of a species, merely that no records are held. Confidential data, zero abundance records, data at poorly defined geographic resolutions and data pending validation and/or verification are also excluded from this report. A number of different datasets have been consulted to produce this report - a summary of attribution statements is available at https://glnp.org.uk/images/uploads/services/lincolnshire-environmental-records-centre/species%20attribution.pdf

Amphibian (1 taxa)

Common Frog, *Rana temporaria*	3	2011 - 2013	Protected

Bird (56 taxa)

Barn Owl, *Tyto alba*	19	2000 - 2019	Protected, Local Priority
Brambling, *Fringilla montifringilla*	5	1998 - 2008	Protected
Canada Goose, *Branta canadensis*	26	1998 - 2017	Non-native
Circus aeruginosus aeruginosus, *Circus aeruginosus aeruginosus*	1	2022 - 2022	Protected
Corn Bunting, *Emberiza calandra*	9	1966 - 2019	Local Priority
Crane, *Grus grus*	1	2021 - 2021	Non-native
Crossbill, *Loxia curvirostra*	1	2008 - 2008	Protected
Cuckoo, *Cuculus canorus*	11	2006 - 2021	Priority
Curlew, *Numenius arquata*	6	1968 - 2017	Priority, Local Priority
Egyptian Goose, *Alopochen aegyptiaca*	2	2017 - 2021	Non-native
Fieldfare, *Turdus pilaris*	55	2002 - 2021	Protected
Garganey, *Spatula querquedula*	2	2017 - 2017	Protected
Goldeneye, *Bucephala clangula*	37	1968 - 2021	Protected
Green Sandpiper, *Tringa ochropus*	5	1998 - 2010	Protected
Grey Partridge, *Perdix perdix*	7	1966 - 2021	Priority, Local Priority
Greylag Goose, *Anser anser*	202	1997 - 2021	Protected
Hen Harrier, *Circus cyaneus*	1	2015 - 2015	Protected
Hoopoe, *Upupa epops*	2	2009 - 2012	Protected
House Sparrow, *Passer domesticus*	81	2005 - 2021	Priority, Local Priority
Kingfisher, *Alcedo atthis*	14	2000 - 2021	Protected
Lapwing, *Vanellus vanellus*	237	1966 - 2021	Priority, Local Priority
Lesser Redpoll, *Acanthis cabaret*	2	2002 - 2007	Priority
Linnet, *Linaria cannabina*	24	1966 - 2021	Local Priority
Little Bittern, *Ixobrychus minutus*	1	2003 - 2003	Protected
Little Egret, *Egretta garzetta*	23	2006 - 2021	Protected
Long-tailed Duck, *Clangula hyemalis*	5	2004 - 2018	Protected

Bird (56 taxa)			
Mandarin Duck, *Aix galericulata*	1	2010 - 2010	Non-native
Marsh Harrier, *Circus aeruginosus*	6	2005 - 2013	Protected
Milvus milvus milvus, *Milvus milvus milvus*	1	2022 - 2022	Protected
Peregrine, *Falco peregrinus*	4	2009 - 2015	Protected
Pintail, *Anas acuta*	1	1968 - 1968	Protected
Red Kite, *Milvus milvus*	5	1998 - 2017	Protected
Red-throated Diver, *Gavia stellata*	2	2002 - 2002	Protected
Redshank, *Tringa totanus*	131	1995 - 2017	Local Priority
Redwing, *Turdus iliacus*	31	1998 - 2021	Protected
Reed Bunting, *Emberiza schoeniclus*	32	2005 - 2021	Priority, Local Priority
Ring-necked Parakeet, *Psittacula krameri*	1	2019 - 2019	Non-native
Ruddy Duck, *Oxyura jamaicensis*	3	2000 - 2002	Non-native
Ruddy Shelduck, *Tadorna ferruginea*	3	2008 - 2010	Non-native
Scaup, *Aythya marila*	1	2008 - 2008	Protected, Priority
Skylark, *Alauda arvensis*	43	1966 - 2021	Local Priority
Snipe, *Gallinago gallinago*	12	1995 - 2021	Local Priority
Snow Bunting, *Plectrophenax nivalis*	1	1968 - 1968	Protected
Song Thrush, *Turdus philomelos*	26	2005 - 2021	Local Priority
Spotted Flycatcher, *Muscicapa striata*	6	1998 - 2008	Priority
Starling, *Sturnus vulgaris*	127	1966 - 2021	Local Priority
Swift, *Apus apus*	41	2000 - 2021	Local Priority
Tree Sparrow, *Passer montanus*	4	2004 - 2019	Priority, Local Priority
Tundra Swan, *Cygnus columbianus*	5	1999 - 2016	Protected
Turtle Dove, *Streptopelia turtur*	9	1994 - 2018	Priority, Local Priority
Whooper Swan, *Cygnus cygnus*	18	2001 - 2021	Protected
Wood Sandpiper, *Tringa glareola*	2	2002 - 2017	Protected
Wryneck, *Jynx torquilla*	2	2014 - 2014	Protected, Priority
Yellow Wagtail, *Motacilla flava*	32	2001 - 2021	Local Priority
Yellow Wagtail, *Motacilla flava flavissima*	1	2021 - 2021	Priority, Local Priority
Yellowhammer, *Emberiza citrinella*	16	1966 - 2021	Priority, Local Priority

Bony Fish (Actinopterygii) (6 taxa)			
Atlantic Salmon, *Salmo salar*	1	-	Protected, Priority, Local Priority
Brown/Sea Trout, *Salmo trutta*	1	-	Priority
Common Sturgeon, *Acipenser sturio*	1	-	Protected, Priority
European Eel, *Anguilla anguilla*	1	2012 - 2012	Priority, Local Priority
Smelt, *Osmerus eperlanus*	1	-	Priority, Local Priority
Spined Loach, *Cobitis taenia*	4	1999 - 1999	Priority, Local Priority

Cartilagenous Fish (Chondrichthyes) (1 taxa)			
Skate, *Dipturus batis*	1	-	Priority

Crustacean (1 taxa)			
Crangonyx pseudogracilis, *Crangonyx pseudogracilis sens. str.*	1	2014 - 2014	Non-native

Flowering Plant (4 taxa)			
Butterfly-bush, *Buddleja davidii*	1	2013 - 2013	Non-native
Italian Alder, *Alnus cordata*	1	2013 - 2013	Non-native
Nuttall's Waterweed, *Elodea nuttallii*	4	2011 - 2016	Non-native
Russian-vine, *Fallopia baldschuanica*	1	2015 - 2015	Non-native

Insect - Butterfly (1 taxa)			
Small Heath, *Coenonympha pamphilus*	1	1999 - 1999	Priority

Insect - Moth (1 taxa)			
Cinnabar, *Tyria jacobaeae*	1	2011 - 2011	Priority

Mollusc (1 taxa)			
Zebra Mussel, *Dreissena polymorpha*	1	2003 - 2003	Non-native

Reptile (1 taxa)			
Grass Snake, *Natrix helvetica*	1	2012 - 2012	Protected, Priority

Terrestrial Mammal (4 taxa)			
Brown Hare, *Lepus europaeus*	5	1966 - 2005	Priority
Chinese Muntjac, *Muntiacus reevesi*	1	2018 - 2018	Non-native
European Water Vole, *Arvicola amphibius*	4	2012 - 2022	Protected, Priority, Local Priority
West European Hedgehog, *Erinaceus europaeus*	11	1966 - 2019	Priority

Terrestrial Mammal (bat) (9 taxa)			
Bat, *Chiroptera*	21	1950 - 2019	Protected, Priority, Local Priority
Brown Long-eared Bat, *Plecotus auritus*	3	2018 - 2018	Protected, Priority, Local Priority
Common Pipistrelle, *Pipistrellus pipistrellus sensu stricto*	4	1997 - 2016	Protected, Local Priority
Daubenton's Bat, *Myotis daubentonii*	13	2008 - 2016	Protected, Local Priority
Leisler's Bat, *Nyctalus leisleri*	3	2018 - 2018	Protected, Local Priority
Nathusius's Pipistrelle, *Pipistrellus nathusii*	2	2018 - 2018	Protected, Local Priority

Terrestrial Mammal (bat) (9 taxa)			
Noctule Bat, *Nyctalus noctula*	3	2018 - 2018	Protected, Priority, Local Priority
Pipistrelle Bat species, *Pipistrellus*	9	2007 - 2021	Protected, Priority, Local Priority
Soprano Pipistrelle, *Pipistrellus pygmaeus*	3	2012 - 2018	Protected, Priority, Local Priority

Greater Lincolnshire Nature Partnership
Banovallum House
Manor House Street
Horncastle
Lincolnshire
LN9 5HF

Tel: 01507 528398
Email: info@glnp.org.uk
Web: www.glnp.org.uk

Achieving more for nature

GLNP
GREATER LINCOLNSHIRE
NATURE PARTNERSHIP

Preliminary Ecological Appraisal
Witteman Nurseries
South Drove
Spalding
Lincolnshire
NGR TF22930 19572

Survey by
Christopher Barker CEnv dipHort ACIEEM

	Report prepared by: C Barker	Date Issued: 05 July 2024 Report Version: 1
	Reviewed by: KLB	C B E Consulting Highbank, 5 Grantham Road, Navenby Lincoln. LN5 0JJ. Telephone (01522) 810086. www.cbeconsulting.co.uk
	Report ref: **P2926 /0724 /01**	

Contents

Part 1: Site Details
1. Introduction
    - 1.1 Site Description and Location
    - 1.2 Objective of the report

Part 2: Survey Methodology and Results
2. Appraisal Methodology
    - 2.1 Baseline Study
    - 2.2 Habitats Assessment Methodology
    - 2.3 Protected Species Assessment Methodology
    - 2.4 Consultations

3. Survey Findings
    - 3.1 Habitat Classifications and Target Notes with Photographs
    - 3.2 Evidence of Protected Species
    - 3.3 Ecological Constraints and Opportunities

Part 3: Initial Ecological Appraisal
4. Impact of any development of the site
    - 4.1 Potential Impact on nearby LWS sites
    - 4.2 Potential impact on biodiversity at the site
    - 4.3 Potential Impact on Protected Species

Appendices
Appendix 1 – Survey Species List
Appendix 2 – Biological Records (**separate appendix)**

Figures
Figure 1 – Site Location Plan
Figure 2 – Contextual Aerial Photograph
Figure 3 – Site Habitat Plan
Figure 4 – Proposed Development Plan

Non-Technical Summary
The site surveyed comprises an area of commercial glasshouses, hardstanding and modified grassland at Witteman Nurseries, South Drove, Spalding, Lincolnshire centred at NGR TF22930 19572. An inspection of the site was completed on 07 June 2024.

The defined site area comprises a former commercial nursery site containing glasshouses, hardstanding and modified grassland. It is in a rural location surrounded by predominantly arable land. There is a linear artificial watercourse running nearby to the north east and a railway line along the north western boundary of the survey area.

The survey has identified the following habitats within the site area:

- Glasshouses and former horticultural buildings
- Hardstanding
- Modified Grassland
- Boundary hedgerows

An assessment of the survey area has identified the following potential for protected species to be present:

Species	Suitable habitat on site / evidence of presence	Likelihood of presence on site	Further Survey / Mitigation recommended
Nesting Birds	Ground nesting within the site interior highly unlikely due to lack of cover. Blue tit nesting identified associated with the insulated interior of B2 but no other nesting activity identified elsewhere. Majority of the site is sub-optimal for nesting birds.	Very low except for the nesting associated with small numbers of Blue Tits using the insulation in the roof edges of Building B2.	Measures to avoid disturbance to any nests or nesting activity will need to be considered prior to any demolition work to Building B2. Removal of insultation materials outside of the nesting season is recommended. Installing at least two nest boxes in suitable positions is also recommended.
Reptiles	The site area contains no scrub or tall vegetation and is suboptimal for reptile species.	Low potential for reptiles to be present.	No further surveys or specific mitigation measures are recommended.
Amphibians	Habitat within the site interior is sub-optimal for amphibians with no ponds or wetland areas present.	Low potential for amphibians to be present.	No further surveys or specific mitigation measures are recommended.
Bats	Some foraging along the site boundaries likely. No evidence of any roosting within the building structures, all of which have negligible roost potential.	Negligible potential for roosting bats. Some foraging around the site margins likely but this is not likely to be a significant foraging area of commuting route.	No further surveys are recommended. Installing at least one bat roost tube into one of the new buildings in a suitable position is recommended.
Badger and other mammals	No field signs of badger, otter or water vole were found in any part of the site area assessed, including the boundary with the railway line.	The site is sub-optimal for these species but some occasional foraging by badger along and adjacent to the railway line cannot be completely ruled out in the future.	No further surveys are recommended. A construction methodology that protects badger from accidental harm is recommended as a precaution.

Ecological Constraints:
No significant ecological constraints have been identified during the survey. However, the following mitigation measures are recommended:

- Any work to building B2 should take into account the potential presence of nesting birds within the roof insultation material
- The site is accessible to badger from the railway line boundary although no evidence of this species was found on site. A construction methodology to protect badger from accidental harm should be employed.

Appraisal and Recommendations
The Cowbit Wash SSSI is sufficiently distant from the area surveyed (950m) that the small scale of the development being proposed will have no impact on this. The Local Wildlife Sites and Local Nature Reserves are separated from the proposed development area by South Drove Road and the existing houses along this so these should avoid any impact from the small scale of the development being proposed.

The survey area comprises an area of buildings, hardstanding and modified grassland of low /negligible biodiversity value. There are no significant habitat present within the survey area but there is a native species hedgerow with trees of good quality (category 3+) adjacent to the south boundary. This is protected by existing fencing.

The site has limited biodiversity at the present time due to the previous use and management of this land. No evidence of any significant locally rare plants or plant communities within or around the site area surveyed was identified during the survey and there are no BAP habitats within the proposed development area (the hedgerow on the south boundary being outside of this area).

The Planning Authority has not requested a biodiversity net gain assessment as the application was registered before this became a requirement. However, based on the inspection completed, it is very likely the proposed development can be completed in a manner which has no negative impact on local biodiversity.

The inspection completed in June 2024 did not identify any physical evidence or field signs of protected species within the survey area with the exception of nesting activity associated with the damaged roof insultation to Building B2 where Blue Tit nesting activity was noted.

The following precautionary measures are advised:
Birds: Any work which disturbs of removes the sprayed insultation lining the roof of Building B2 should be completed outside of the nesting season or be preceded by an inspection by an Ecologist to ensure no nesting birds are present or determine what mitigation measures to protect nesting birds are required.

Badger: As the presence of foraging badger accessing the site in the future cannot be completely ruled out, a construction methodology that protect this species from accidental harm should be employed as a precaution.

General Recommendations: It is recommended that the following biodiversity enhancements should be incorporated:

- At least one bat roost tube should be incorporated into the structure of one of the new houses on the south or west facing side of this in a suitable position,
- At least two nest bricks suitable for Blue Tit or other small bird species should be incorporated into the structure of one of the new houses on the north facing side of this in a suitable position,
- A specification for the re-wilding of the grassland triangle at the southern western corner of the site should be prepared. This should detail how suitable native shrub and perennial species will be established into this area, the timescale for this work and the species / sizes / numbers of these.

Christopher Barker ACIEEM CEnv

Part 1: Site Details

1. Introduction

1.1 Site Description and Location

The site surveyed comprises an area of commercial glasshouses, hardstanding and modified grassland at Witteman Nurseries, South Drove, Spalding, Lincolnshire centred at NGR TF22930 19572. The location of the site is shown on the plan within **Figure 1** and an aerial photograph has been provided within **Figure 2** to place the site in context.

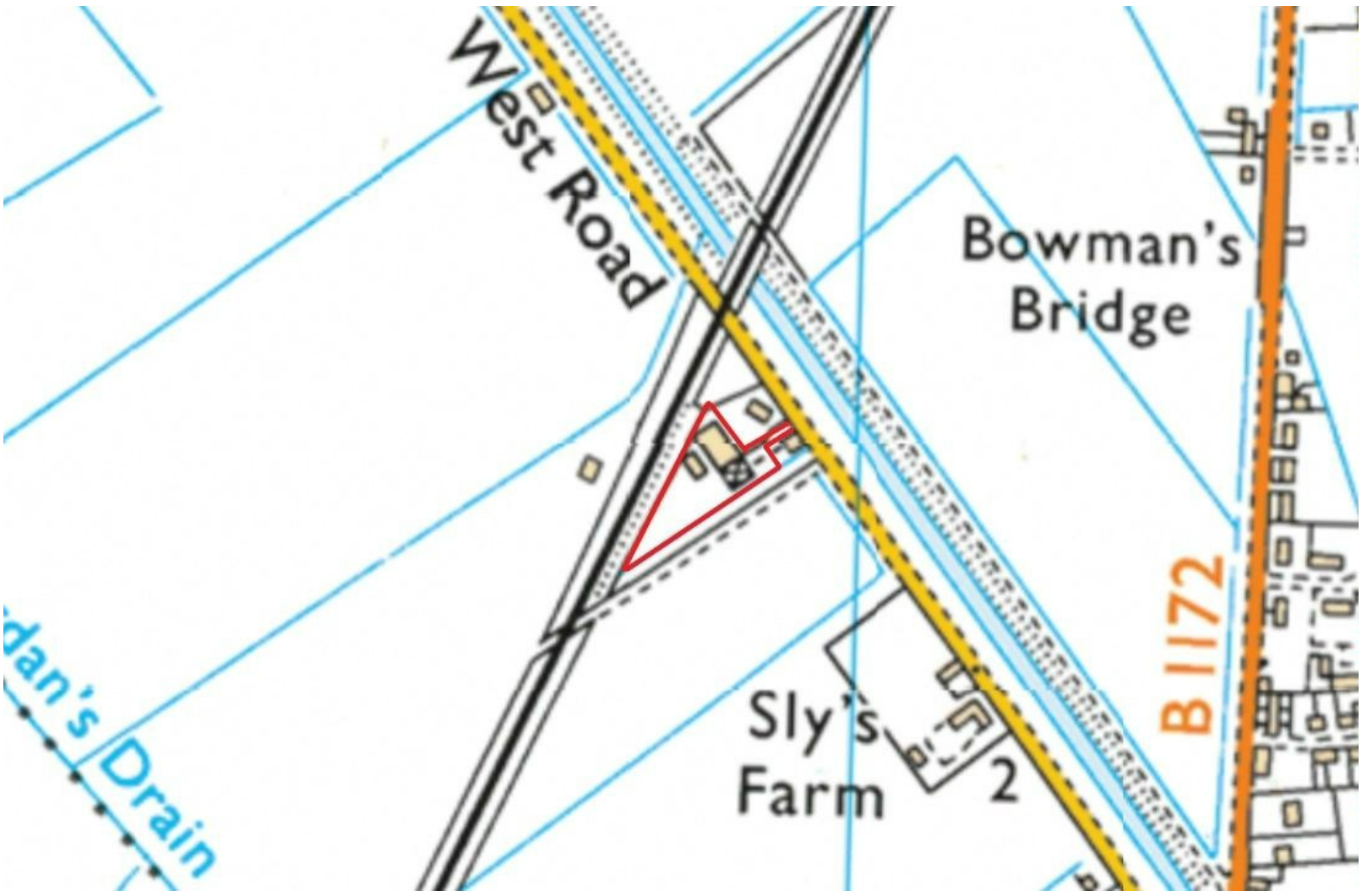


Figure 1: Site location.

Copyright Ordnance Survey Mapping 2024

The Client has requested an ecological survey of the land to determine whether there is anything of ecological value or any evidence of protected species present. An inspection of the site was completed on 07 June 2024 and details of the survey are provided in the table below. A photographic record of key areas is included alongside target notes within the report and a list of plant species identified in the site during the survey is included within **Appendix 1.**

Date	Time	Location	Weather
07 Jue 2024	12.45 – 13.40	Witteman Nurseries South Drove Spalding PE11 3BD	Overcast with clear spells. Wind 1mph from the south west. Temperature 16ºC humidity 62% at 1016hPa.

The defined site area comprises a former commercial nursery site containing glasshouses, hardstanding and modified grassland. It is in a rural location surrounded by predominantly arable land. There is a linear artificial watercourse running nearby to the north east and a railway line along the north western boundary of the survey area. A contextual aerial photograph has been provided below.



Figure 2: Site Contextual Aerial Photograph Image Copyright Microsoft Mapping 2024

1.2 Objective of the Report

This report is a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA) of the area identified in yellow within the aerial photograph above. The objective of the ecological appraisal is to identify the habitat(s) present on, and surrounding, the site area being assessed. Development of the site for the purpose of constructing a new residential house within the land will require planning approval and this report has been prepared to provide information as part of any future planning application process. To this end the report is required to comply with the recommendations and principles set out in the National Planning Policy Framework 2023 as amended (NPPF). The report contains Biological Records and has been prepared to meet the standard required by BS42020 (British Standard for Biodiversity and Development).

Chapter 11 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) describes the Government's national policies on promoting 'an effective use of land in meeting the need for homes and other uses, while safeguarding and improving the environment.' NPPF is accompanied by Planning Practice Guidance on 'Biodiversity, ecosystems and green infrastructure' (2014) and ODPM Circular 06/2005.

The National Planning Policy Framework 2023 sets out the Government's objectives for planning in regard to the protection of habitats and biodiversity. The planning objectives in relation to biodiversity and the natural environment are stated within NPPF 2023 and are as follows:

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

a) protecting and enhancing valued landscapes, sites of biodiversity or geological value and soils (in a manner commensurate with their statutory status or identified quality in the development plan).

b) recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside, and the wider benefits from natural capital and ecosystem services – including the economic and other benefits of the best and most versatile agricultural land, and of trees and woodland.

c) maintaining the character of the undeveloped coast, while improving public access to it where appropriate.

d) minimising impacts on and providing net gains for biodiversity, including by establishing coherent ecological networks that are more resilient to current and future pressures.

e) preventing new and existing development from contributing to, being put at unacceptable risk from, or being adversely affected by, unacceptable levels of soil, air, water or noise pollution or land instability. Development should, wherever possible, help to improve local environmental conditions such as air and water quality, taking into account relevant information such as river basin management plans; and

f) remediating and mitigating despoiled, degraded, derelict, contaminated and unstable land, where appropriate."

Within the revised NPPF 2023 it is now policy that '*permission should be refused for major development applications within National Parks, the Broads and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty other than in exceptional circumstances'.* Planning policy context requires that Planning policies and decisions should be based on up-to-date information about the natural environment and other characteristics of the area including an assessment of existing and potential components of ecological networks (NPPF paragraph 43).

The above approach encapsulates the 'mitigation hierarchy' described in British Standard BS 42020:2013 which involves the following stepwise process:

• **Avoidance** – avoiding adverse effects through good design,
• **Mitigation** – where it is unavoidable, mitigation measures should be employed to minimise adverse effects,
• **Compensation** – where residual effects remain after mitigation it may be necessary to provide compensation to offset any harm,
• **Enhancement** – planning decisions often present the opportunity to deliver benefits for biodiversity, which can also be explored alongside the above measures to resolve potential adverse effects.

The measures for avoidance, mitigation, compensation and enhancement should be proportionate to the predicted degree of risk to biodiversity and to the nature and scale of the proposed development (BS 42020:2013, section 5.5).

This ecological appraisal provides information on the existing ecological and biodiversity value of the land on the site and also reports any evidence of protected species or significant habitats present. It has been provided to provide information to the Planning Authority in order to help meet the requirements of the NPPF and enable the Authority to assess the site area in accordance with the Code of Practice within BS42020 and guidelines issued by CIEEM in 2012. The report also identifies any habitats or species present that require more detailed surveys prior to any improvements being undertaken.

Part 2: Survey Methodology and Results

2. Appraisal Methodology

2.1 Baseline Study

Within NPPF it states that there are three dimensions to sustainable development: "economic, social and environmental." The environmental role includes "contributing to protecting and enhancing our natural, built and historic environment" and, as part of this, helping to improve biodiversity.

Within the NPPF 2023 it states that: *"Great weight should be given to conserving and enhancing landscape and scenic beauty in National Parks, the Broads and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, which have the highest status of protection in relation to these issues. The conservation and enhancement of wildlife and cultural heritage are also important considerations in these areas, and should be given great weight…."*

Within NPPF 2023 the principles by which the protection and enhancement of biodiversity and geodiversity within the context of proposed development are described. These principles state that any development proposal should:

*a) **Identify, map and safeguard components of local wildlife-rich habitats and wider ecological networks**, including the hierarchy of international, national and locally designated sites of importance for biodiversity; wildlife corridors and steppingstones that connect them; and areas identified by national and local partnerships for habitat management, enhancement, restoration or creation; and*

*b) **promote the conservation, restoration and enhancement** of priority habitats, ecological networks and the protection and recovery of priority species; and identify and pursue opportunities for **securing measurable net gains for biodiversity**.*

When determining planning applications, local planning authorities should apply the following principles:

a) *if significant harm to biodiversity resulting from a development cannot be avoided (through locating on an alternative site with less harmful impacts), adequately mitigated, or, as a last resort, compensated for, then planning permission should be refused.*

b) *development on land within or outside a Site of Special Scientific Interest, and which is likely to have an adverse effect on it (either individually or in combination with other developments), should not normally be permitted. The only exception is where the benefits of the development in the location proposed clearly outweigh both its likely impact on the features of the site that make it of special scientific interest, and any broader impacts on the national network of Sites of Special Scientific Interest.*

c) *development resulting in the loss or deterioration of irreplaceable habitats (such as ancient woodland and ancient or veteran trees) should be refused, unless there are wholly exceptional reasons and a suitable compensation strategy exists; and*

d) *development whose primary objective is to conserve or enhance biodiversity should be supported; while opportunities to incorporate biodiversity improvements in and around developments should be encouraged, especially where this can secure measurable net gains for biodiversity.*

The biodiversity of a site area and the potential presence of protected species are factors relevant to all developments irrespective of the size scale and will apply to any development

on the site being assessed. Available information on the baseline ecology of the site and the presence of protected species within the locality has been obtained from the local biological records centre and reviewed (**Appendix 2)** and the records obtained are provided as separate appendices.

These data sources have been reviewed and the character and nature conservation value of habitats and species assessed. The aims of this appraisal of information are:

- To characterize all the existing available information regarding habitats and species that may be present at the site and provide up to date information about the environmental characteristics of the site area.
- To identify any habitats potentially present of nature conservation value in terms of local, regional and national context and within the context of local, regional and national policy; and,
- To identify any areas of ecological interest in order to either a) make recommendations to minimize the potential impact of any site works, or b) identify the need for a further survey work.

Following the appraisal of the available information, a site inspection has taken place to obtain specific site data at the site.

2.2 Habitat Assessment Methodology

The site was inspected on 07th June 2024. The inspection used the extended Phase 1 Habitat Assessment methodology as adopted by Natural England (Joint Nature Conservation Committee 1993) and in accordance with the Guidelines for Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (2012) issued by the Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (IEEM) and BS42020 (British Standard for Biodiversity and Development).

The survey required a systematic walkover of the site to classify the habitat types present and was completed using standard Phase 1 Habitat Survey methodology whereby the habitat types present are identified and mapped, together with an assessment of the species composition of each habitat. This technique provides an inventory of the basic habitat types present and allows identification of areas of greater potential which require further survey. Any such areas identified can then be examined in more detail through Phase 2 surveys. This method was extended, in line with the Guidelines for Preliminary Ecological Appraisal to record details on the actual or potential presence of any notable or protected species or habitats.

Using the above method, the site was classified into areas of similar botanical community types, with a representative species list compiled for each habitat identified summarised within **Appendix 1**. A habitat base map and target notes have been prepared and included as **Figure 3** within section 3 of this report.

2.3 Protected Species Assessment Methodology

A methodical inspection was carried out to look for any evidence of protected species using the site and to identify any habitats with potential to provide significant shelter or foraging opportunities for these. The survey was carried out by Christopher Barker, an experienced ecological consultant and Chartered Environmentalist holding Class Licenses issued by Natural England.

The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010 consolidates the various amendments that have been made to the Regulations. The original (1994) Regulations transposed the EC Habitats Directive on the Conservation of Natural Habitats and of Wild Fauna and Flora (Council Directive 92/43/EEC) into national law.

“European protected species” are those which are present on Schedule 2 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010. They are subject to the provisions of Regulation 41 of those Regulations. All European Protected Species are also protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended). Taken together, these pieces of legislation make it an offence to:

a. Intentionally or deliberately capture, injure or kill any wild animal included amongst these species

b. Possess or control any live or dead specimens or any part of, or anything derived from these species

c. deliberately disturb wild animals of any such species

d. deliberately take or destroy the eggs of such an animal, or

e. intentionally, deliberately or recklessly damage or destroy a breeding site or resting place of such an animal, or obstruct access to such a place

For the purposes of paragraph (c), disturbance of animals includes in particular any disturbance which is likely—

a. to impair their ability—
i. to survive, to breed or reproduce, or to rear or nurture their young, or

ii. in the case of animals of a hibernating or migratory species, to hibernate or migrate; or,
b. to affect significantly the local distribution or abundance of the species to which they belong.

Although the law provides strict protection to these species, it also allows this protection to be set aside (derogation) through the issuing of licences. The licences in England are currently determined by Natural England (NE) for development works. In accordance with the requirements of the Regulations (2010), a licence can only be issued where the following requirements are satisfied:

i) The proposal is necessary ‘to preserve public health or public safety or other imperative reasons of overriding public interest including those of a social or economic nature and beneficial consequences of primary importance for the environment’

ii) ‘There is no satisfactory alternative’

iii|) The proposals ‘will not be detrimental to the maintenance of the population of the species concerned at a favourable conservation status in their natural range.

General faunal activity, such as mammals or birds observed visually or by call during the course of the surveys was recorded. Specific attention was also paid to the potential presence of any protected, rare or notable species, and specific consideration was given to bats, birds, badgers, amphibians and reptiles as described below.

Breeding Birds: All nesting birds are protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) which makes it an offence to intentionally kill, injure or take any wild bird or take, damage or destroy its nest whilst in use or being built, or take or destroy its eggs. The inspection of the site included a search of hedgerows, ground vegetation and tree canopies looking for evidence of active or former nests.

Bats: All species of Bat within the UK are protected under the Conservation of Habitat and Species Regulations 2010 (Habitat Regulations) that amended and incorporated the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981. These regulations make it an offence to:

- Intentionally kill, injure or take a bat [WCA section 9(1)]

- Possess or control any live or dead specimen or anything derived from a bat [WCA section 9(2)]
- Intentionally or recklessly damage, destroy or obstruct access to any structure or place used for shelter or protection by a bat [WCA section 9(4)(a)]
- Intentionally or recklessly disturb a bat while it is occupying a structure or place which it uses for that purpose [WCA section 9(4)(a)]

Any building or significant trees present within the survey area have been assessed for their suitability to support roosting bats based on the presence of features such as holes, crevices, cracks, splits or loose bark.

Potential bat roost locations in relation to buildings are described within this report (taken from Table 4.1 of the updated Bat Survey Guidelines 2023) as:

None No habitat features on site are likely to be used by any bats at any time of year (i.e. a complete absence of crevices / suitable shelter at all ground /underground levels).

Negligible No obvious habitat feature on site likely to be used by roosting bats; however, a small element of uncertainty remains as bats can use small and apparently unsuitable features at times.

Low A structure with one or more potential roost sites that could be used by individual bats opportunistically at any time of year. 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 used for maternity and not a classic cool / stable hibernation site but could be used by individual hibernating bats)

Moderate A structure 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 (i.e. such as maternity or hibernation irrespective of species conservation status).

High A structure with one or more potential roost sites that are obviously suitable for use by larger numbers of bats on a more regular basis and potentially for longer periods of time due to space, shelter, protection, appropriate conditions and/or suitable surrounding habitat. These structures have potential to support high conservation value roosts (i.e. maternity or classic cool / stable hibernation site)

Tree assessments were undertaken from ground level, with the aid of a torch and binoculars where required. During the survey features considered to provide suitable roost sites for bats such as the following were sought:

- Trunk / branch cavities – significant holes in the trunk caused by rot or injury.
- Trunk / branch split – split / fissure in trunk caused by rot or injury.
- Branch socket cavity – Where a fallen branch has resulted in the formation of an access point into a cavity.
- Woodpecker hole – created by nesting birds suitable for use by roosting bats.
- Lifted bark – bark which has rotted / lifted to form suitable access point/roost site for bats.
- Trunk hollows – decay in heartwood leading to internal cavity in trunk.
- Ivy cover – dense / mature ivy cover where the woody stems could create small cavities / crevices.

Common Reptiles: All species of British reptile are protected by the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended). The common species (adder, grass snake, slow worm and common lizard) are only protected against intentional killing and injuring (but not taking).

The survey included a search of all areas where suitable habitat for reptiles to shelter under or bask may be present, lifting logs and other suitable features to search underneath. The surveyor also maintained a careful watch whilst moving across the site to look for signs of reptiles moving to cover.

Great crested newts are afforded legal protection under European and UK law under the auspices of The Conservation (Natural Habitats &c.) (Amendment) Regulations which came into force on 21 August 2007, superseding the Habitat Regulations 1994. The 2007 amendments have increased the protection afforded to European Protected Species.

The law provides protection to adults, juveniles, efts (immature GCN) and eggs and it is an offence to intentionally or recklessly or as an incidental result of actions:

- Intentionally or deliberately capture, kill, or injure Great Crested Newts
- Intentionally or recklessly damage, destroy or obstruct access to any place used for shelter or protection (including resting or breeding places) whether occupied or not
- Deliberately, intentionally or recklessly disturb Great Crested Newts when in a place of shelter
- Possess a Great Crested Newt, or any part of it, unless acquired lawfully
- Sell, barter, exchange or transport or offer for sale Great Crested Newts or any part of them.

The survey included a search of any ponds and wetland areas within the site or immediate surrounding area nearby (where these features were accessible) and an assessment of ponds in the local area using Ordnance Survey Maps and aerial photographs to consider the potential for these species to access the site area.

Badger: Badgers are protected under the Protection of Badgers Act 1992. This makes it an offence to wilfully kill, injure, take, possess or cruelly ill-treat a badger, or to attempt to do so; or to intentionally or recklessly interfere with a sett. Sett interference includes disturbing badgers whilst they are occupying a sett, as well as damaging or destroying a sett or obstructing access to it. A badger sett is defined in the legislation as "*a structure or place, which displays signs indicating current use by a badger*".

The survey searching for evidence of badger activity comprised two main elements. The first element involved searching for evidence of Badger setts. For any setts that were encountered, each sett entrance was noted and mapped. The following information was recorded:

- Number and location of well used / active entrances; these are clear from any debris or vegetation and are obviously in regular use and may, or may not, have been excavated recently.
- Number and location of inactive entrances; these are not in regular use and have debris such as leaves and twigs in the entrance or have plants growing in or around the edge of the entrance.
- Number of disused entrances; these have not been in use for some time, are partly or completely blocked and cannot be used without considerable clearance. If the
- entrance has been disused for some time all that may be visible is a depression in the ground where the hole used to be and the remains of the spoil heap.

The second element of the survey involved searching for signs of Badger activity such as well-worn paths and push-throughs, snagged hair, footprints, latrines and foraging signs, so as to build up a picture of any use of the site by Badger.

Invasive Species: Attention was paid to the presence of any invasive species listed under Schedule 9 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended). However, the detectability of such species varies due to a number of factors, e.g. time of year, site management, etc., and hence the absence of invasive species should not be assumed even if no such species were detected during the Phase 1 survey.

A range of invasive non-native plant species are listed in Schedule 9 (Part 2) of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981, which makes it an offence to plant or cause these introduced invasive plants to grow in the wild, effectively making it illegal to spread the plants during development operations.

2.4 Consultations

The evaluation of ecological features and resources is based on professional judgement whilst also drawing on the latest available industry guidance and research. The approach taken in this report is based on that described by the Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (CIEEM, 2016). In evaluating ecological features. The *Geographic Frame of Reference* is a key factor taken into account when assessing the potential ecological value of a site being surveyed. The value of an ecological feature or resource is determined within a defined geographical context using the following frame of reference:

- International.
- National.
- Regional.
- County (or Metropolitan).
- District (or Unitary Authority, City or Borough).
- Local (or Parish).
- Site level only.

Within this frame of reference, certain sites may carry a statutory ecological designation, e.g. Special Area of Conservation (SAC) for internationally important sites or Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) for sites of national importance. Sites of more localised nature conservation importance do not receive statutory protection but may be designated by Local Planning Authorities or other bodies, e.g. Wildlife Trusts. Such non-statutory designations or 'Local Sites' include Local Wildlife Sites (LWSs) and Sites of Nature Conservation Interest (SNCIs), for example.

A review of the available data confirms that the site is not a Statutory or Non-Statutory site of ecological significance. There is one SSSI sites and two LWS sites within 1km radius and these are summarised within the table below.

Site Name and Reference	Designation	Distance	Description
Cowbit Wash	SSSI	950m SE	Area of wet grassland of botanical interest with no links to the area surveyed.
River Welland Corridor	LWS	200m E	River corridor and riparian habitat separated from the survey area by grassland, roads and South Drove
South Drove Drain	LWS	<100m E	Linear man-made aquatic feature separated from the site by a road and grass bund

A review of the data for protected species has identified a small number of significant records relating to the immediate vicinity of the site which are summarised within the table below.

Scientific Name	Common Name	Latest Record	Number of Records
Rana temporaria	Common Frog	2013	3
Natrix helveticus	Grass Snake	2012	1
Anas acuta	Pintail	1968	1
Anser anser	Greylag Goose	2021	202
Alcedo atthis	Kingfisher	2021	14
Aythya marila	Scaup	2008	1
Bucephala clangula	Goldeneye	2021	37
Circus cyaneus	Hen Harrier	2015	1
Circus aeruginosus	Marsh Harrier	2013	6
Cygnus cygnus	Whooper Swan	2021	18
Cygnus columbianus	Tundra Swan	2016	5
Falco peregrinus	Peregrine	2015	4
Fringilla montifringilla	Brambling	2008	5
Gavia arctica	Black-throated Diver,	2002	2
Loxia curvirostra	Common Crossbill	2008	1
Milvus milvus	Red Kite	2022	1
Plectrophenax nivalis	Snow Bunting	1968	1
Spatula querquedula	Garganey	2021	2
Tringa nebularia	Greenshank	2010	5
Tringa ochropyus	Green Sandpiper	2017	2
Turdus iliacus	Redwing	2021	31
Turdus pilaris	Fieldfare	2021	55
Tyto alba	Barn Owl	2019	19
Upupa epops	Hoopoe	2012	2
Arvicola amphibius	European Water Vole	2022	4
Meles meles	Badger	2020	2
Lutra lutra	Otter	2020	1
Chiroptera	Bat species	2019	21
Pipistrellus pipistrellus	Nathusius Pipistrelle	2018	2
Pipistrellus pipistrellus	Common Pipistrelle	2016	4
Pipistrellus pygmaeus	Soprano Pipistrelle	2018	3
Plecotus auritus	Brown Long-eared Bat	2018	3
Myotis daubentonii	Daubentons	2016	13
Nyctalus noctula	Noctule	2018	3
Nyctalus leisleri	Leislers	2018	3

There are no records of ***great crested newt (GCN)*** within 1km of the site. The nearest record for amphibians is Common Frog associated with wetland areas over 850m from the survey area. From the plans provided and aerial photographs the survey area does not appear to contain any ponds or wetland areas so the potential for amphibians to be present is likely to be low.

There is a records of Grass Snake within 1km associated with open agricultural land and the Soth Drove Drain approximately 980m from the survey area. The site appears to be sub-optimal for reptile species and the likelihood of these being present is low.

The majority of the site area surveyed is very open and exposed with negligible potential for ground nesting birds. There may be nests associated with the building on site.

There are records of roosting and foraging ***bats*** in this area with two species of Pipistrelle, Myotid, Nyctalus and Plecotus bats recorded in the area. There are no recorded roosting sites at this location of within 250m There are records of foraging bats along the South Drove Drain and River Welland with many within 500m of the survey area.

There are records of ***badger*** activity in this area associated with agricultural land over 490m from the survey area. There are records of Water Vole associated with suitable stretches of the River Welland over 750m distance and Otter have been recorded in the South Drive Drain only 70m from the site. The site appears to be sub-optimal for these species but may be accessible.



Figure 3 – Habitat Plan

3. Survey Findings

3.1 Habitat Classifications and Target Notes

The survey has identified the following habitats within the proposed development:

- Glasshouses and former horticultural buildings
- Hardstanding
- Modified Grassland
- Boundary hedgerows

Target Note: Buildings – Developed Land Sealed Surface
There are five buildings within the survey area. These are described in the table below with photographs of the exteriors and interiors provided.

	Description	**Potential for protected species**
B1	Single storey former animal store with a gently sloping roof. Block construction with a corrugated steel sheet roof. External and internal walls are in good condition with no holes, gaps or cavities noted. Interior and exterior blockwork painted. White uPVC doors and windows throughout tightly fitted with no gaps or holes. Roof appears in good condition with no holes or broken roof sheets. Overlapped corrugated sheets appear tightly fixed. Roof appear sealed with timber and uPVC edgings. No enclosed loft areas – underside of roof is plastered within the building interior.	No evidence of any nesting bird activity on the exterior of within the interior. No field signs of roosting bats found within the interior or on the exterior of the building. No structural features identified which might be of significant interest to roosting bats. **Negligible roost potential**
B2	Glasshouse with a corrugated steel roof structure that is coated with spray insultation on the interior. Open glass to the front, back and sides. Concrete floor. Steel roof beams exposed but treated with insultation. No enclosed loft areas. Hight levels of natural light and exposure throughout the interior.	Minor areas where roof insultation has holes and blue tits were previously nesting. No field signs of roosting bats found within the interior or on the exterior of the building. No structural features identified which might be of significant interest to roosting bats. **Negligible roost potential**
B3	Single storey storage shed with a sloping roof. Block construction with a corrugated steel sheet roof. External and internal walls are in good condition with no holes, gaps or cavities noted. Interior and exterior blockwork painted. Timber doors to the south side of the store tightly fitting with no gaps or holes. Roof appears in good condition with no holes or broken roof sheets. Overlapped corrugated sheets appear tightly fixed. Roof edges appear effectively sealed. No enclosed loft areas – underside of roof is fully exposed.	No evidence of any nesting bird activity on the exterior of within the interior. No field signs of roosting bats found within the interior or on the exterior of the building. No structural features identified which might be of significant interest to roosting bats. **Negligible roost potential**
G4	Steel framed glasshouse. No enclosed areas and extremely high light levels within the interior. Concrete flooring throughout.	No evidence of nesting. No field signs of roosting bats. **Negligible roost potential**.

G5	Steel framed glasshouse. No enclosed areas and extremely high light levels within the interior. Concrete flooring throughout.	No evidence of nesting. No field signs of roosting bats. **Negligible roost potential**.



Exterior of B1



Exterior of B1



Interior of B1



Interior of B1



Interior of B2



Underside of insulated roof B2



Interior of B3



Exterior of B3



Glasshouse G4



Glasshouse G4



Glasshouse G5



Glasshouse G5

Target Note: Hardstanding – Artificial Unsealed Surface
Area around the buildings marked within Figure 3 have been surfaced with gravel to provide open hardstanding. These areas are devoid of any vegetation or any other significant ecological features.


Gravel hardstanding


Gravel hardstanding


Gravel hardstanding with concrete road


Gravel hardstanding

Target Note: Modified Grassland

There are small areas of mown, species poor, modified grassland around the margins of the glasshouses and a triangular parcel of similar species poor modified grassland at the south western end of the survey rea. The sward height was approximately 3-5 cm and was dominated by local abundant Perennial Ryegrass *Lolium perenne,* with evidence of other species occasionally present throughout including Fescue *Festuca spp* and Yorkshire fog *Holcus lanatus.*

The sward appeared seasonally mown during the inspection and contained very limited colonisation by ruderal species such as Pearlwort *Sagina spp*, Black Medic *Medicago lupulina,* Dandelion *Taraxacum officinale,* Chickweed *Stellaria media* and Clover *Trifolium repens*. Around the boundaries of the survey area species such as Nettle *Urtica dioica*, Dock *Rumex obtusifolius*, Plantain *Plantago lanceolata* and Sedge *Carex nigra* were present is very low numbers.












Target Note: Hedgerows
There is a Leylandii hedgerow screening B1 and a small section of the northern boundary and a longer native species hedgerow with trees just outside of the southern boundary separated from the modified grassland by a steel-section fence.

Hedgerow Regulations
A measure of statutory protection is afforded to hedgerows under the Hedgerow Regulations 1997, where any ecological or archaeological features are defined as being ‘important’. The Removal of important hedgerows requires consent from the local planning authority, except in certain prescribed circumstances. The importance of hedgerows can be assessed according to the criteria identified in Part II Schedule I of the Hedgerow Regulations 1997. A hedgerow is identified as being ‘Ecologically Important’ if has existed for 30 years or more and satisfies at least one of the criteria listed below.

- *Criteria 6*: Contain certain categories of species of birds, animals or plants listed in the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 or the British Red Data Books
- *Criteria 7*: The hedgerows include:
  a) At least 7 schedule III woody species, on average in a 30m length;
  b) At least 6 schedule III woody species, on average in a 30m length and has at least 3 associated features;
  c) At least 6 schedule III woody species, on average in a 30m length, including a black popular tree, or large-leaved lime, or small-leaved lime or wild service tree;
  d) At least 5 schedule III woody species, on average in a 30m length and has at least 4 associated features.

  The associated features are:
  i. a bank or wall which supports the hedgerow along at least one half of its length;
  ii. gaps which do not exceed 10% of the length of the hedgerow;
  iii. on average, at least one tree per 50 metres;
  iv. at least 3 schedule 2 woodland species within one metre, in any direction, of the outermost edges of the hedgerow;
  v. a ditch along at least one half of the length of the hedgerow;
  vi. connections with other hedgerows, woods or ponds scoring 4 points or more (where a connection to another hedgerow scores 1 and a connection to a broad-leaved wood or pond scores 2); or
  vii. a parallel hedgerow within 15 metres of the hedgerow.

- *Criteria 8:* Run alongside a bridleway, footpath, road used as a public path, or a byway open to all traffic and includes at least 4 woody species, on average, in a 30m length and has at least 2 associated features as listed above.

In accordance with these regulations, regular 30m sections of the hedgerow at the site were sampled i.e. woody species were recorded for 30m out of every 100m in order to sample the hedgerow in a systematic way. The average number of species for each hedgerow was derived by totaling the number of species recorded and dividing by the number of sections. This gives an average to compare with the Hedgerow Regulations Criteria. Only when the average number of species is 5 or more are associated features taken into account. An average of 5 woody species and 4 associated features are needed for a hedgerow to be defined as important hedgerow in accordance with the regulations. The exception to this is when a hedgerow runs alongside a footpath or bridleway. In this case only 4 woody species and 2 associated features are needed.

Each hedgerow is given a grade using HEGS with the suffixes '+' and '-', representing the upper and lower limits of each grade respectively. These grades represent a continuum on a scale from 1+ (the highest score and denoting hedges of the greatest nature conservation priority) to 4- (representing the lowest score and hedges of the least nature conservation priority) as follows:

- Grade 1 – High to very high value
- Grade 2 – Moderately high to high value
- Grade 3 – Moderate value
- Grade 4 – Low value

Hedgerows graded 1 or 2 are considered to be a priority for nature conservation.

The hedgerows were also assessed against the wildlife and landscape criteria contained within Statutory Instrument No: 1160 – The Hedgerow Regulations 19973 to determine whether they qualified as 'Important Hedgerows' under the Regulations. This was achieved using a methodology in accordance with the Regulations.

Hedge	Height	Width	Management	Woody Species	Ground Flora	HEGS Cat.
North /B1	1.5m	1.0m	Box-trimmed (poorly). No trees or other features present.	Leylandii	Negligible	4
South	2 - 4m	1.5m	Side trimmed native species hedgerow with trees. Protected by fencing along the grassland edge.	Hawthorn Elder Ash Field Maple Cherry	Limited to bramble and ruderals behind fence.	3(+)



Leylandii hedge near B1



Leylandii hedge near B1



South boundary hedge



South boundary hedge

3.2 Evidence of Protected Species

During the inspection of the site notes were made on the suitability of habitats for protected species and any sightings or signs of protected species were recorded:

- The suitability of habitats for badger (*Meles meles*) was recorded and any evidence of badgers including setts, dung pits, badger paths, hairs, bedding, footprints and scratching trees was noted.
- A search for evidence of otter and water vole such as tracks, burrows, latrines and feeding debris was completed along the site boundaries.
- Buildings were searched for cavities, holes and crevices looking for potential roosting site. Trees with features suitable for roosting bats were noted, such as hollows (e.g. old woodpecker holes), cracks and cavities within trunks and branches, crevices behind loose bark and ivy growth on trunks.
- The suitability of habitats was assessed for reptiles such as Grass snake (*Natrix natrix*) and amphibians (including great crested newts -*Triturus cristatus*).
- The suitability of site was assessed for nesting birds.

Surveying in June is an optimal time for many protected species. An experienced surveyor can make reliable judgements about the quality and composition of habitats and their potential suitability for protected species. Only an initial assessment of the site was made and no stage 2 surveys were carried out. As such, a lack of evidence of a protected species does not necessarily indicate an absence of these species. The table below provides a summary of the potential for protected species to be present within the site.

Species	Connectivity	Suitable habitat on site / evidence of presence	Likelihood of presence on site
Nesting Birds	Reasonable via the adjacent agricultural land, railway line and nearby aquatic features.	Ground nesting within the site interior highly unlikely due to lack of cover. Blue tit nesting identified associated with the insulated interior of B2 but no other nesting activity identified elsewhere. Majority of the site is sub-optimal for nesting birds.	Very low except for the nesting associated with small numbers of Blue Tits using the insulation in the roof edges of Building B2.
Reptiles	Limited by the surrounding landscape which is sub-optimal habitat for reptiles with a lack of records of these species in this area	The site area contains no scrub or tall vegetation and is suboptimal for reptile species.	Low potential for reptiles to be present.
Amphibians	Limited by the surrounding landscape w\which is sub-optimal habitat for amphibians with a lack of records of these species in this area	Habitat within the site interior is sub-optimal for amphibians with no ponds or wetland areas present.	Low potential for amphibians to be present.
Bats	Reasonable via the adjacent agricultural land, railway line and nearby aquatic features.	Some foraging along the site boundaries likely. No evidence of any roosting within the building structures, all of which have negligible roost potential.	Negligible potential for roosting bats. Some foraging around the site margins likely but this is not likely to be a significant foraging area of commuting route.
Badger and larger mammals	There are no records of badger near to the site area but it is potentially accessible to badger from the adjacent railway line.	No field signs of badger, otter or water vole were found in any part of the site area assessed, including the boundary with the railway line.	The site is sub-optimal for these species but some occasional foraging by badger along and adjacent to the railway line cannot be completely ruled out in the future.

Birds: The local area supports a range of bird species which includes some Scheduled species. The open ground within the majority of the survey area is unsuitable for ground nesting as it is exposed and within range of predatory cats. The buildings on the site were inspected and there is evidence of nesting Blue Tit within the roof edge insultation of B2. No other nesting activity was identified within the survey area. ***Measures to avoid disturbance to any nests or nesting activity will need to be considered within any development.*** Any work to Building B2 which requires the removal of the insultation material should take place outside of the nesting season or be preceded by an inspection carried out by a suitably qualified and experienced ecologist.

Reptiles: The walkover survey of the site area was completed on a grid pattern (as far as was possible) looking for evidence or indication of reptiles. No sightings or physical

evidence of reptiles was seen during the inspection completed in June which is within the optimum survey period for these species. Further surveys for reptiles are not recommended and specific mitigation measures are not required.

Amphibians: The presence of significant numbers of amphibians in the area surveyed is considered unlikely and the inspection found no evidence of these species or optimal habitat to support them. Further surveys and specific mitigation measures for amphibians are not recommended.

Chiroptera: There are five buildings within the survey area and all have been inspected internally and externally. No evidence of roosting bats was found and all of the buildings are assessed as having ***negligible roost potential.*** No further surveys are recommended.

There are no mature or semi-mature trees within the survey area with features of potential interest to roosting bats.

Invertebrates: The area assessed does not appear to support a diverse range of flora. The potential for a significant assemblage of invertebrates to be present within the survey area is quite low at the present time and further invertebrate surveys are not recommended.

Mammals: During the inspection of the survey area a thorough search for evidence of badger, otter and water vole was completed.

No significant established tracks or trails indicative of badger activity were found within the survey area and no sett entrances found. The River Welland and South Drive Drain could support Water Vole and Otter activity but these have no connection to the survey area and are sufficiently distant to make the presence of these species in the site are very unlikely. The site represents sub-optimal habitat for these species.

Further surveys for badger, water vole and otter are not recommended. Purely as a precaution it is recommended that a construction methodology to protect badgers from accidental harm is applied to any development work that may be approved within this site as a precautionary measure. The methodology should incorporate the following measures:

- The covering of excavations overnight to prevent animals falling in, or the provision of an escape ramp (e.g. secured scaffold boards) allowing animals to climb out.
- Secure storage of all materials, fuels, wire fencing etc, that may harm badgers / otters and other animals.
- Restricting access by site personnel to any adjoining buffer zones of trees and scrub to the west of the development area.
- The eastern boundary hedge should be fenced with heras fencing on the side of the construction zone.
- Keeping works at night-time to a minimum will minimise disturbance to commuting and foraging badgers / otters near the site. Where works after dark are necessary, lighting should be as low as possible and directed away from boundary features such as hedgerows and trees.
- A toolbox talk from a suitably experienced ecologist to all site workers will be given prior to construction works detailing the procedures to be followed if a badger / otter is found within the construction zone during works.
- If a badger or otter is found within the construction zone during works, all works must stop and a suitably experienced ecologist be contacted immediately. Their advice should be followed precisely.

3.3 Ecological Constraints and Opportunities

Constraints:
No significant ecological constraints have been identified during the survey. However, the following mitigation measures are recommended:

- Any work to building B2 should take into account the potential presence of nesting birds within the roof insultation material
- The site is accessible to badger from the railway line boundary although no evidence of this species was found on site. A construction methodology to protect badger from accidental harm should be employed.

Part 3: Initial Ecological Appraisal

4. Impact of Proposed Site Development

Within the NPPF 2023, guidance on the provision or retention of biodiversity within any proposed areas for development and measures to ensure the safeguarding of protected species are provided. Development should seek to contribute a net gain in biodiversity with an emphasis on improving ecological networks and linkages where possible.

The NPPF para 170 stresses that planning policies and decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by a variety of measures including minimising impacts on and providing net gains for biodiversity. This is reinforced by Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) which identifies that 'a key purpose of this duty is to embed consideration of biodiversity as an integral part of policy and decision making throughout the public sector, which should be seeking to make a significant contribution to the achievement of the commitments made by government in its 25 Year Environment Plan' (PPG natural environment Paragraph: 009 Reference ID: 8- 009-20190721).

The proposed locations and footprints of the new residential houses are shown within **Figure 4** below. This report is not intended to be a suitable alternative to an Ecological Impact Assessment (EcIA) in accordance with the CIEEM Guidelines on Ecological Impact Assessment, 2016.

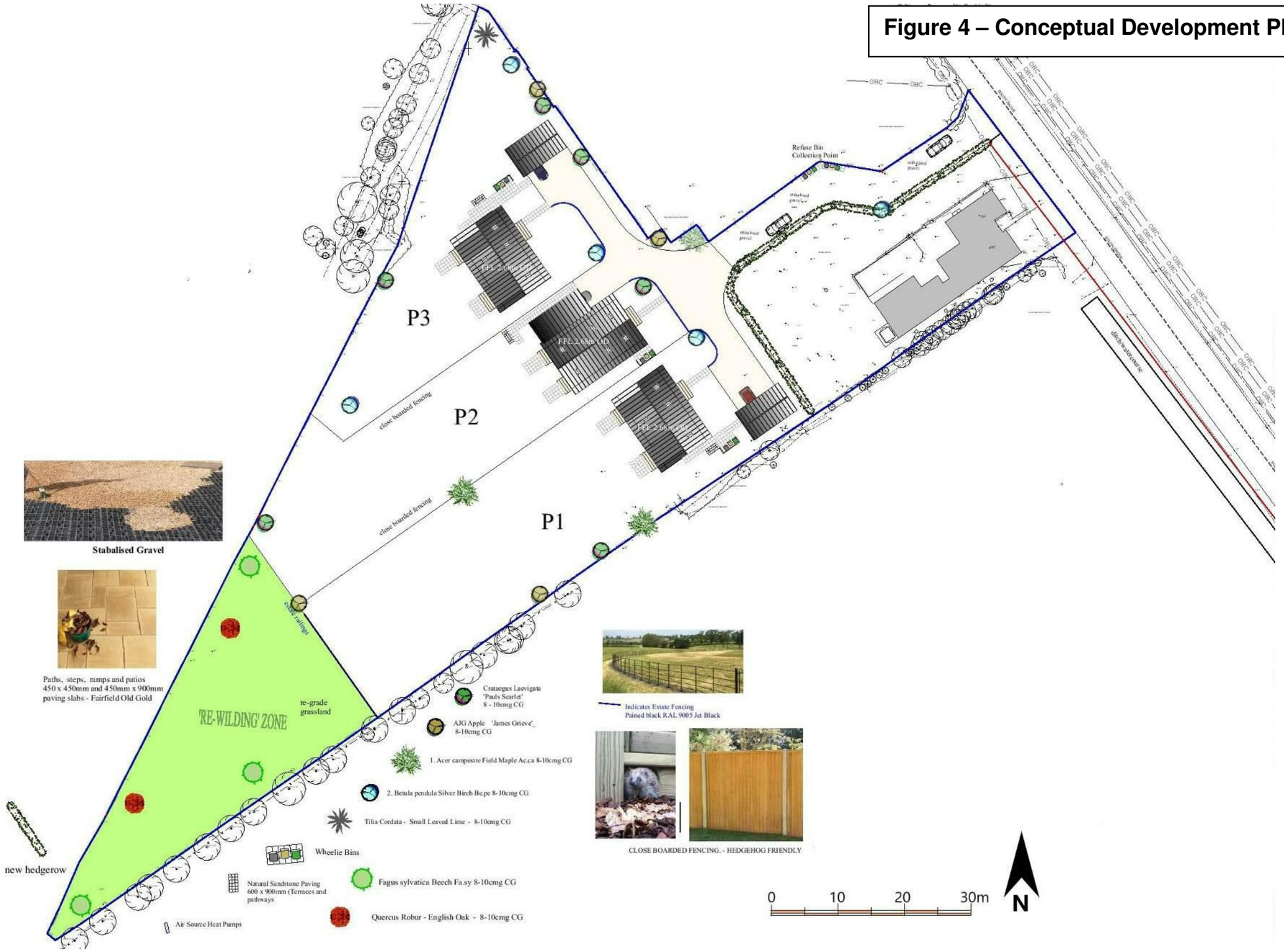
It is understood that the proposals for the site will require all of the existing buildings to be removed to provide space for the construction of three new residential houses and provide garden areas. An area of grassland at the southern end of the site will be excluded from the housing area for 're-wilding' to provide habitat for wildlife.

As noted within this report, the 'mitigation hierarchy' described in British Standard BS 42020:2013 should be applied in regard to biodiversity within sites being considered for development which is a stepwise process:

- **Avoidance** – avoiding adverse effects through good design.
- **Mitigation** – where it is unavoidable, mitigation measures should be employed to minimise adverse effects.
- **Compensation** – where residual effects remain after mitigation it may be necessary to provide compensation to offset any harm.
- **Enhancement** – planning decisions often present the opportunity to deliver benefits for biodiversity, which can also be explored alongside the above measures to resolve potential adverse effects.

The measures for avoidance, mitigation, compensation and enhancement should be proportionate to the predicted degree of risk to biodiversity and to the nature and scale of the proposed development (BS 42020:2013, section 5.5).

Figure 4 – Conceptual Development Plan



The table below considers the features present on the site in the context of the hierarchy.

Feature	Ecological Significance	Hierarchy application	Impact of proposed development
Buildings – developed land sealed surface	Negligible	None	The existing buildings will be removed and replaced.
Hardstanding – artificial unsealed surface	Negligible	None	The existing hardstanding will be removed and replaced.
Modified grassland	Low	Avoidance / Mitigation	Some of the modified grassland will be removed with replacement grassland being provided within the vegetated garden areas. Grassland at the south-western corner will be planted with perennials and shrubs to help with re-wilding of this area.
Leylandii hedgerow	Low	Mitigation	The leylandii hedge will be removed and mitigation in the form of landscape planting will be provided within the garden areas.
Native hedgerow with trees	High	Avoidance	The development will retain all of the hedgerow along the south boundary and provide space to protect this during construction.

4.1 Potential Impact on nearby Statutory and Non-statutory sites

The Cowbit Wash SSSI is sufficiently distant from the area surveyed (950m) that the small scale of the development being proposed will have no impact on this. The Local Wildlife Sites and Local Nature Reserves are separated from the proposed development area by South Drove Road and the existing houses along this so these should avoid any impact from the small scale of the development being proposed.

4.2 Impact of the Proposals on Site Biodiversity

The level of biodiversity within the site being assessed must be a consideration in determining the impact on biodiversity that may arise from any development on the site. Within the NPPF 2023 it states that any development proposal should seek to "*contribute to protecting and enhancing our natural, built and historic environment; including making effective use of land, helping to improve biodiversity, using natural resources prudently, minimising waste and pollution, and mitigating and adapting to climate change…….*"

Within the Guidance it specifically states that "*Planning…. decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by……protecting and enhancing valued landscapes, sites of biodiversity or geological value and soils……..recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside, and the wider benefits from natural capital and ecosystem services – including the economic and other benefits of the best and most versatile agricultural land, and of trees and woodland.*"

The survey area comprises an area of buildings, hardstanding and modified grassland of low /negligible biodiversity value. There are no significant habitat present within the survey area but there is a native species hedgerow with trees of good quality (category 3+) adjacent to the south boundary. This is protected by existing fencing.

The site has limited biodiversity at the present time due to the previous use and management of this land. No evidence of any significant locally rare plants or plant communities within or around the site area surveyed was identified during the survey and there are no BAP habitats within the proposed development area (the hedgerow on the south boundary being outside of this area).

The Planning Authority has not requested a biodiversity net gain assessment as the application was registered before this became a requirement. However, based on the inspection completed, it is very likely the proposed development can be completed in a manner which has no negative impact on local biodiversity.

4.3 Impact of the Proposals on Protected Species

The requirements of Part IV of ODPM / Defra Circular 06/2005 in regard to the protection of certain species are still applicable under NPPF. The presence of protected species at the site must be taken into consideration. Under the requirements of the NPPF provision in relation to the presence of protected species on, or making use of, a site proposed for any development must be taken into account. The presumption in favour of sustainable development does not apply where development requiring appropriate assessment under the Birds or Habitats Directives is being considered, planned or determined or where the impact on protected species is considered to outweigh the benefit of development.

The inspection completed in June 2024 did not identify any physical evidence or field signs of protected species within the survey area with the exception of nesting activity associated with the damaged roof insultation to Building B2 where Blue Tit nesting activity was noted.

The following precautionary measures are advised:

Birds: Any work which disturbs of removes the sprayed insultation lining the roof of Building B2 should be completed outside of the nesting season or be preceded by an inspection by an Ecologist to ensure no nesting birds are present or determine what mitigation measures to protect nesting birds are required.

Badger: As the presence of foraging badger accessing the site in the future cannot be completely ruled out, a construction methodology that protect this species from accidental harm should be employed as a precaution.

General Recommendations: It is recommended that the following biodiversity enhancements should be incorporated:

- At least one bat roost tube should be incorporated into the structure of one of the new houses on the south or west facing side of this in a suitable position,
- At least two nest bricks suitable for Blue Tit or other small bird species should be incorporated into the structure of one of the new houses on the north facing side of this in a suitable position,
- A specification for the re-wilding of the grassland triangle at the southern western corner of the site should be prepared. This should detail how suitable native shrub and perennial species will be established into this area, the timescale for this work and the species / sizes / numbers of these.



Christopher Barker CEnv ACIEEM

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Web references

MAGIC: Designated area data downloaded from URL http://www.magic.gov.uk.html

National Biodiversity Network: Protected species data downloaded from URL http://data.nbn.org/interactive/map

Appendix 1 – Plant Species List

Tree and Shrub Species	***Ground Flora and Perennial Species***
Ash *Fraxinus excelsior* Blackthorn *Prunus spinosa* Cherry *Prunus avium* Elder *Sambucus nigra* Field Maple *Acer campestre* Hawthorn *Crataegus monogyna* Leylandii *Cupressocyparis Leylandii*	Bindweed *Calystegia sepium* Black Medick *Medicago lupulina* Chickweed *Stellaria media* Cleaver *Galium aparine* Clover *Trifolium repens* Cow Parsley *Anthriscus sylvestris* Dandelion *Taraxacum* sp Fescue *Festuca spp* Groundsel *Senecio vulgaris* Lesser Willowherb *Epilobium hirsutum* Nettle *Urtica dioica* Pearlwort *Sagina spp* Perennial Ryegrass *Lolium perenne* Plantain *Plantago lanceolata* St John's Wort *Geranium robertianum* Sedge *Carex nigra* Yorkshire Fog *Holcus lanatus*

This species list records the species seen during the site inspection and is not presented as a detailed botanical survey of the site.

Appendix 2 – Biological Records from Greater Lincolnshire Nature Partnership

Separate Appendix