

Ecological Impact Assessment

Sweetmans Barn,
Ashurst



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This report has been prepared by Harper-Bird Ecological Consultancy, a trading name of Bird and Son Property Services Limited (15428323), with all reasonable skill, care and diligence within the terms of the contract with the client.

The information and data has been prepared and provided in accordance with the Professional Guidance and 'Code of Professional Conduct' issued by the Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (CIEEM). We confirm that the opinions expressed are our true and bona fide professional opinions. The methods and recommendations in this report are based on CIEEM guidelines for ecological report writing and ecological impact assessments, as amended, with surveys carried out in accordance with CIEEM guidelines for preliminary ecological appraisal and the Bat Conservation Trust good practice guidelines. This technical report does not represent legal advice and is intended to be submitted in conjunction with a planning application as part of a development application. It is the duty of the landowner or developer to act responsibly and comply with current environmental legislation if protected species are suspected or found prior to works.

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The assessment and appraisal are considered relevant for a maximum of 18 months due to the possibility of changes in the habitats on-site and scope of proposals. Should alterations to the proposals or site occur, the ecologist should be consulted to confirm that the appraisal is still valid.

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Summary

Mark Alford Design Limited have commissioned Bat Emergence Surveys and an ecological impact assessment for proposals at the existing property; Sweetmans Barn, Ashurst, Steyning, BN44 3AP (TQ17951617, hereafter referred to as 'the site').

An Ecological Impact Assessment (EclA) including Preliminary Bat Roost Assessment (PBRA) was carried out on the 11th of November 2025 by Alex Rosenfeld (Freelance Ecologist) and a report produced (Appendix E).

An update site visit was carried out on the 9th of May 2026 prior to the first emergence survey, and a suite of bat emergence surveys were undertaken of the barn structure B1 on 9th May 2026 and 19th June 2026. The following ecological impact assessment report was completed by Aidan Bird (BSc Ecology and Conservation, ACIEEM –NE Level 2 Bat Licence 2025-13045-CL18-BAT).

There are two permanent buildings on site, the barn converted dwelling B2 and outbuilding B1. The update visit included extensive internal and external assessment of B1 to inspect potential roosting features (PRFs). A limited external assessment of the main dwelling B2 was undertaken with a focus primarily on the proposal areas.

The proposals comprise the erection of a single-storey linked extension between B1 and B2, alongside the conversion of B1 into habitable space. The linking section will incorporate a porch entrance and three conservation rooflights on the southern pitch. Most of the southern elevation of the linked structure will comprise tri-sectional glazed doors. A large section of outbuilding B1 will remain as storage space but will be re-roofed in its current style.

A suite of two bat emergence surveys revealed no bats emerging or closely associating with the outbuilding B1 therefore it is highly unlikely bats are using the structure B1. Minor potential impacts from lighting only are predicted and can be controlled by use of appropriate external lighting if required.

Other impacts are identified in AR188 – Sweetmans Barn Kitchen EclA.V1 (Appendix.E). No impacts upon designated sites or priority habitats are anticipated

When mitigation and enhancements have been taken into account, the proposals are not considered to have a negative impact directly upon bats and their habitats or designated sites in accordance with planning policy. Once enhancements are considered, would result in a minor net gain. The proposals would therefore accord with the relevant local and national planning policies and the relevant legislation.

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 Mark Alford Design Limited have commissioned Bat Emergence Surveys and an ecological impact assessment for proposals at the existing property; Sweetmans Barn, Ashurst, Steyning, BN44 3AP (TQ17951617, hereafter referred to as 'the site').
- 1.2 An Ecological Impact Assessment (EclA) including Preliminary Bat Roost Assessment (PBRA) was carried out on the 11th of November 2025 by Alex Rosenfeld (Freelance Ecologist) and report produced (Appendix E).
- 1.3 An update site visit was carried out on the 9th of May 2026 prior to the first emergence survey, and a suite of bat emergence surveys were undertaken of the barn structure B1 on 9th May 2026 and 19th June 2026. The following ecological impact assessment report was completed by Aidan Bird (BSc Ecology and Conservation, ACIEEM –NE Level 2 Bat Licence 2025-13045-CL18-BAT).
- 1.4 This appraisal consisted of an updated assessment of habitats and structures to determine their potential for protected species, specifically bats. An initial on-site and desktop assessment was undertaken by Freelance Ecologist Alex Rosenfeld and report, of the likelihood of National or European Protected Species being present on or near site, and the constraints these may pose on the development proposals was produced (Appendix E). The report required additional emergence surveys to assess bat presence and use of the site.
- 1.5 Based on the results of the appraisal, recommendations for further survey, mitigation and potential ecological enhancements were provided.

Site Description and Surrounding Area

- 1.6 The site consists of a small c.0.26 acre plot with two buildings on site and ongoing development (DC/25/1323) in the form of construction of a new triple garage (proposed - B3) on the north of the site where a static caravan currently resides until works on the main building are completed; the work also entails a new oak access gate to replace the current Heras fencing.
- 1.7 B1 comprises a single-storey outbuilding on the north-eastern site boundary, dating from the 18th century, with timber-frame and stone-wall construction later infilled with brickwork. B2 is a fine period barn, historically converted in 2004 (DC/04/1871), comprising a two-storey, four-bedroom dwelling with horizontal timber cladding and a small, sloped-brick, single-storey extension on the south elevation. The site lies on the west side of the B2135 opposite the Fountain pub and is bordered to the west by arable farmland with interconnected hedgerows.
- 1.8 The site is within Ashurst, a very small village approximately 11 miles south of Horsham between Partridge Green and Steyning, approximately 1km west of the river Adur. Properties within the local area are typically of larger size with significant gardens and interconnected by semi mature and mature trees. The wider area is covered by agricultural fields, small woodlands, and connective treelines.

Proposals

- 1.9 The proposals comprise the erection of a single-storey linked extension between B1 and B2, alongside the conversion of B1 into habitable space. The linking section will incorporate a porch entrance and three conservation rooflights on the southern pitch. Most of the southern elevation of the linked structure will comprise tri-sectional glazed doors. A large section of outbuilding B1 will remain as storage space but will be re-roofed in its current style.

Scope of Assessment

1. *Categorise habitats present on the site;*
2. *Identify habitat which may have potential for protected species;*
3. *Identify whether any signs of protected species are present on-site;*
4. *Recommend whether further surveys are required, or whether there are any relevant constraints with regards to protected species;*
5. *Identify impacts of the proposed development and set out appropriate avoidance, mitigation and compensation measures;*
6. *Provide recommendations as to how the site and proposals could be enhanced with regards to protected species and habitats.*

1.10 This appraisal and assessment is deemed to be relevant for a maximum of 18 months due to the possibility of changes in the habitats on-site. Should the site or proposals alter, the ecologist should be consulted to confirm that the appraisal is still valid.

2.0 Planning Policy and Legislation

National Planning Policy

- 2.1 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) was updated in December 2024 and sets out the government planning policies for England and how they should be applied. 'Chapter 15: Conserving and Enhancing the Natural Environment' states that development should be 'minimising impacts on and providing net gains for biodiversity, including by establishing coherent ecological networks that are more resilient to current and future pressures.'
- 2.2 The Government Circular 06/2005, which is referred to by the NPPF, provides further guidance in respect of statutory obligations for biodiversity and geological conservation and their impact within the planning system.

Local Planning Policy

- 2.3 The site is within the Horsham District area; the Local Plan consists of the Horsham District Planning Framework (HDPF) which identifies six themes to prioritise and sets out policy for the years up to 2031.
 - i. Economic Development: Plan for a successful local economy with high levels of employment
 - ii. Efficiency and Taxation: Delivering excellent value and high performance
 - iii. Arts, Heritage and Leisure: Build an arts, leisure and culture reputation that also supports our economy
 - iv. Living, Working Communities: Working together to support the life of local communities
 - v. Environment: A better environment for today and tomorrow
 - vi. Safer and Healthier: Improving health and well-being

Policy 24 - Environmental Protection

- 2.4 The high quality of the district's environment will be protected through the planning process and the provision of local guidance documents. Taking into account any relevant Planning Guidance Documents, developments will be expected to minimise exposure to and the emission of pollutants including noise, odour, air and light pollution and ensure that they:
 - i. Address land contamination by promoting the appropriate re-use of sites and requiring the delivery of appropriate remediation;
 - ii. Are appropriate to their location, taking account of ground conditions and land instability;
 - iii. Maintain or improve the environmental quality of any watercourses, groundwater and drinking water supplies, and prevents contaminated run-off to surface water sewers;
 - iv. Minimise the air pollution and greenhouse gas emissions in order to protect human health and the environment;
 - v. Contribute to the implementation of local Air Quality Action Plans and do not conflict with its objectives;
 - vi. Maintain or reduce the number of people exposed to poor air quality including odour. Consideration should be given to development that will result in new public exposure, particularly where vulnerable people (e.g. the elderly, care homes or schools) would be exposed to the areas of poor air quality; and
 - vii. Ensure that the cumulative impact of all relevant committed developments is appropriately assessed. Incorporates partnership working with conservation organisations to improve public understanding of biodiversity and to manage public access to designated sites, particularly on the coast, to reduce harm to nature conservation interests.

Policy 25 - The Natural Environment and Landscape Character

- 2.5 The Natural Environment and landscape character of the District, including the landscape, landform and development pattern, together with protected landscapes and habitats will be protected against inappropriate development. The Council will support development proposals which:
- i. Protects, conserves and enhances the landscape and townscape character, taking into account areas identified as being of landscape importance, the individual settlement characteristics, and maintains settlement separation.
 - ii. Maintain and enhances the Green Infrastructure Network and addresses any identified deficiencies in the District.
 - iii. Maintains and enhances the existing network of geological sites and biodiversity, including safeguarding existing designated sites and species, and ensures no net loss of wider biodiversity and provides net gains in biodiversity where possible.
 - iv. Conserve and where possible enhance the setting of the South Downs National Park.

Policy 26 - Countryside Protection

- 2.6 Outside built-up area boundaries, the rural character and undeveloped nature of the countryside will be protected against inappropriate development. Any proposal must be essential to its countryside location, and in addition meet one of the following criteria:
- i. Support the needs of agriculture or forestry;
 - ii. Enable the extraction of minerals or the disposal of waste;
 - iii. Provide for quiet informal recreational use; or
 - iv. Enable the sustainable development of rural areas.
- 2.7 In addition, proposals must be of a scale appropriate to its countryside character and location. Development will be considered acceptable where it does not lead, either individually or cumulatively, to a significant increase in the overall level of activity in the countryside, and protects, and/or conserves, and/or enhances, the key features and characteristics of the landscape character area in which it is located, including;
- i. The development pattern of the area, its historical and ecological qualities, tranquillity and sensitivity to change;
 - ii. The pattern of woodlands, fields, hedgerows, trees, waterbodies and other features; and
 - iii. The landform of the area.

Policy 28 - Replacement Dwellings and House Extensions in the Countryside

- 2.8 Outside the defined built-up areas, house extensions, replacement dwellings and ancillary accommodation will be supported if the development can be accommodated appropriately within the curtilage of the existing dwelling. In addition:
- i. Replacement dwellings will only be supported on a one for one basis and if it can be demonstrated that the property is not derelict.
 - ii. Replacement dwellings should not be disproportionate to the size of the existing dwelling whilst extensions should also, and in addition, be in keeping with the scale and character of the existing dwelling. The cumulative impact of existing extensions will be taken into account.
 - iii. Ancillary accommodation and garaging will be required to meet with all other appropriate policies, particularly design principles, and demonstrate that the need for additional space cannot be met from an existing dwelling or buildings suitable of conversion on the site. The size of any new outbuilding should have regard to the dwelling they serve and should be grouped with the house. The use of ancillary accommodation as a separate dwelling will not be supported, and
 - iv. Garages and any new outbuildings should have regard to the dwelling they serve and should be grouped with the house. The use of ancillary accommodation as a separate dwelling will not be supported.
 - v. Subsequent extensions to converted agricultural buildings which detract from the original form and character will be resisted

Policy 31 - Green Infrastructure and Biodiversity

- 2.9 Development will be supported where it can demonstrate that it maintains or enhances the existing network of green infrastructure. Proposals that would result in the loss of existing green infrastructure will be resisted unless it can be demonstrated that new opportunities will be provided that mitigates or compensates for this loss, and ensures that the ecosystem services of the area are retained.
- 2.10 Development proposals will be required to contribute to the enhancement of existing biodiversity, and should create and manage new habitats where appropriate. The Council will support new development which retains and /or enhances significant features of nature conservation on development sites. The Council will also support development which makes a positive contribution to biodiversity through the creation of green spaces, and linkages between habitats to create local and regional ecological networks.
- 2.11 Where felling of protected trees is necessary, replacement planting with a suitable species will be required.
- 2.12 Particular consideration will be given to the hierarchy of sites and habitats in the district as follows:
- i. Special Protection Area (SPA) and Special Areas of Conservation (SAC)
 - ii. Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs) and National Nature Reserves (NNRs)
 - iii. Sites of Nature Conservation Importance (SNCIs), Local Nature Reserves (LNRs) and any areas of Ancient woodland, local geodiversity or other irreplaceable habitats not already identified in i & ii above.

2.13 Where development is anticipated to have a direct or indirect adverse impact on sites or features for biodiversity, development will be refused unless it can be demonstrated that:

- i. The reason for the development clearly outweighs the need to protect the value of the site; and
- ii. That appropriate mitigation and compensation measures are provided.

2.14 Any development with the potential to impact Arun Valley SPA or the Mens SAC will be subject to a HRA to determine the need for an Appropriate Assessment. In addition, development will be required to be in accordance with the necessary mitigation measures for development set out in the HRA of this plan.

Policy 35 – Climate Change

2.15 Development will be supported where it makes a clear contribution to mitigating and adapting to the impacts of climate change and to meeting the district's carbon reduction targets as set out in the Council's Acting Together on Climate Change Strategy, 2009.

2.16 Measures which should be used to mitigate the effects of climate change include;

- i. Reduced energy use in construction;
- ii. Improved energy efficiency in new developments, including influencing the behaviour of occupants to reduce energy use;
- iii. The use of decentralised, renewable and low carbon energy supply systems;
- iv. The use of patterns of development which reduce the need to travel, encourage walking and cycling and include good accessibility to public transport and other forms of sustainable transport; and
- v. Measures which reduce the amount of biodegradable waste sent to landfill.

2.17 Development must be designed so that it can adapt to the impacts of climate change, reducing vulnerability, particularly in terms of flood risk, water supply and changes to the district's landscape. Developments should adapt to climate change using the following measures:

- i. Provision of appropriate flood storage capacity in new building development;
- ii. Use of green infrastructure and dual use SuDS to help absorb heat, reduce surface water runoff, provide flood storage capacity and assist habitat migration;
- iii. Use of measures which promote the conservation of water and/or grey water recycling; and
- iv. Use of site layout, design measures and construction techniques that provide resilience to climate change (opportunities for natural ventilation and solar gain). If it is not possible to incorporate the adaption and mitigation measures proposed, an explanation should be provided as to why this is the case.

Legislation

2.18 Legislation relating to wildlife and biodiversity of particular relevance to this assessment includes:

- The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017;
- The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended);
- The Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006;
- The Hedgerow Regulations 1997;
- The Protection of Badgers Act 1992;
- The Wild Mammals (Protection) Act 1996;
- The Environment Act 2021.

2.19 All species of bat and their roosts are protected under The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 and The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981. It is an offence to intentionally kill, injure or handle a bat, to possess a bat (live or dead), disturb a roosting bat, or sell or offer a bat for sale without a licence. It is also an offence to damage, destroy or obstruct access to any place used by bats for shelter, whether they are present or not.

2.20 All UK bird species are protected against disturbance whilst occupying a nest under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981. Developments that could predictably disturb, kill or injure nesting birds could result in an offence. Furthermore, a number of bird species are targets of UK and Local Biodiversity Action Plans and listed as Species of Principal Importance under Section 41 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006. This obligates local authorities to have regard to the purpose of conserving biodiversity with particular emphasis on targeted species.

2.21 All widespread reptiles are protected against killing and injury under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981, with rarer reptiles receiving further protection under The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017. Reptiles must also be given consideration under the NERC Act 2006 as part of the planning process.

2.22 Great crested newts (GCN) are protected under The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017. It is an offence for anyone to intentionally kill, injure or disturb a GCN or to damage, destroy or block access to areas of suitable habitat.

2.23 Badgers are protected under the Protection of Badgers Act 1992. It is an offence to harm badgers or disturb badgers and their setts.

2.24 Water voles are fully protected under Schedule 5 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 and are a priority conservation species. It is an offence to intentionally capture, kill or injure water voles, damage, destroy or block access to their places of shelter or protection (on purpose or by not taking enough care), disturb them in a place of shelter or protection (on purpose or by not taking enough care), possess, sell, control or transport live or dead water voles or parts of them (not water voles bred in captivity).

2.25 In the UK, dormice are legally protected under Schedule 5 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) and have significant further protection as a European Protected Species under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended). Dormice are also a 'Species of Principal Importance for the conservation of biodiversity' listed under section 41 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006 (NERC). It is an offence for anyone to intentionally kill, injure or disturb a dormouse or to damage, destroy or block access to areas of suitable habitat.

2.26 All other mammals receive general protection against cruelty, inhumane killing or injuring under the Wild Mammals (Protection) Act 1996. This protection includes 'intentional' crushing and asphyxiation, for example that might occur when excavating mammal burrows.

2.27 In England, Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) is mandatory from 12 February 2024 under Schedule 7A of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as inserted by Schedule 14 of the Environment Act 2021). Developers must deliver a BNG of 10%. There are a number of exemptions such as for custom and self-build applications. This development is exempt from Mandatory BNG.

3.0 Methodology

Desktop Study

- 3.1 A desktop study was conducted using the government 'MAGIC' Map GIS tool for:
- Within 12km
 - i. International statutory designated sites (Ramsar, SAC, SPA)
 - Within 2km
 - ii. National statutory designated sites (SSSI, NNR, LNR);
 - Within 1km
 - iii. Non-statutory designated sites (SNCI)
 - iv. Priority Habitats.
 - v. Features of ecological interest (water bodies and ancient woodland)
- 3.2 Any sites of relevance to the proposals are summarized below and their significance considered in the context of the development proposals. Given the overall scale and nature of the site and the proposals, a full data search from SxBRC was not considered appropriate. This is in accordance with CIEEM current guidance for such projects.

Site Visits

- 3.3 An Ecological Impact Assessment (EclA) including Preliminary Bat Roost Assessment (PBRA) was carried out on the 11th of November 2025 by Alex Rosenfeld (Freelance Ecologist) and report produced (Appendix E).
- 3.4 An update site visit was carried on the 9th of May by Aidan Bird (BSc Ecology and Conservation, ACIEEM – NE Level 2 Bat Licence 2025-13045-CL18-BAT).
- 3.5 There are two permanent buildings on site, the barn converted dwelling B2 and outbuilding B1. The update visit included extensive internal and external assessment of B1 to inspect potential roosting features (PRFs). A limited external assessment of the main dwelling B2 was undertaken with a focus primarily on the proposal areas.
- 3.6 Systematic internal and external assessment of the buildings on site were conducted using high powered LED and LEP torches, UV torch, mirrors, thermal imaging technology, endoscope, zoom lenses, and a ladder where appropriate.
- 3.7 All internal voids were fully inspected, unless noted otherwise as a constraint, including identification of light ingress, air flow, water ingress, and access points. Externally, each elevation was assessed through examination of the structural features to include potential roost features (PRF) such as lifted, damaged, or missing tiles and gaps large enough to provide an accessible feature to soffit boxes, cavities, bargeboards, and cladding; features were also evaluated based on the potential maximum quantity of individual bats that could comfortably use the structure. Any evidence of bat presence such as grease marks, feeding remains, bat droppings, and urine splashes were noted.
- 3.8 Where bat droppings are positively identified through the crumble test, a sample from across the entire loft void were collected using nitrile gloves and a sterile 50ml laboratory specimen sample tube. All tubes are individually labelled with site reference and date before being dispatched to Ecotype Genetics for multi species DNA analysis. Separate samples were collected from each discrete void spaces and areas.

- 3.9 The suitability of the site additionally considers the local area, habitats, connective and linear features such as waterways, hedgerows, and treelines. Furthermore, potential foraging spaces were also considered such as arable fields, community green spaces, woodlands, and waterbodies.
- 3.10 Relevant buildings were assessed for potential to hold roosting bats in accordance with the Bat Conservation Trust's Bat Surveys: Good Practice Guidelines 4th Edition (Collins, 2023) and assigned a corresponding level of potential suitability; any required deviation from the guidelines is justified and based on professional judgement, previous experience, and area expertise.

Table 1 - Guidelines for assessing the potential suitability of proposed development sites for bats, based on the presence of habitat features within the landscape (Bat Conservation Trust, 2023)

Potential Suitability	Roosting Habitats in Structures	Flight-paths and Foraging Habitats
None	No habitat features on site likely to be used by any roosting bats at any time of the year (i.e. a complete absence of crevices/suitable shelter at all ground/underground levels).	No habitat features on site likely to be used by any commuting or foraging bats at any time of the year (i.e. no habitats that provide continuous lines of shade/protection for flight-lines, or generate/shelter insect populations available to foraging bats).
Negligible	No obvious habitat features on site likely to be used by roosting bats; however, a small element of uncertainty remains as bats can use small and apparently unsuitable features on occasion.	No obvious habitat features on site likely to be used as flight-paths or by foraging bats; however, a small element of uncertainty remains in order to account for non-standard bat behaviour.
Low	A structure with one or more potential roost sites that could be used by individual bats opportunistically at any time of the year. However, these potential roost sites do not provide enough space, shelter, protection, appropriate conditions and/or suitable surrounding habitat to be used on a regular basis or by larger numbers of bats (i.e. unlikely to be suitable for maternity and not a classic cool/stable hibernation site but could be used by individual hibernating bats).	Habitat that could be used by small numbers of bats as flight-paths such as a gappy hedgerow or unvegetated stream, but isolated, i.e. not very well connected to the surrounding landscape by other habitat. Suitable, but isolated habitat that could be used by small numbers of foraging bats such as a lone tree (not in a parkland situation) or a patch of scrub.
Moderate	A structure with one or more potential roost sites that could be used by bats due to their size, shelter, protection, conditions and surrounding habitat but unlikely to support a roost of high conservation status (with respect to roost type only, such as maternity and hibernation – the categorisation described in this table is made irrespective of species conservation status, which is established after presence is confirmed).	Continuous habitat connected to the wider landscape that could be used by bats for flight-paths such as lines of trees and scrub or linked back gardens. Habitat that is connected to the wider landscape that could be used by bats for foraging such as trees, scrub, grassland or water.
High	A structure with one or more potential roost sites that are obviously suitable for use by larger numbers of bats on a more regular basis and potentially for longer periods of time due to their size, shelter, protection, conditions and surrounding habitat. These structures have the potential to support high conservation status roosts, e.g. maternity or classic cool/stable hibernation site.	Continuous, high-quality habitat that is well connected to the wider landscape that is likely to be used regularly by bats for flight-paths such as river valleys, streams, hedgerows, lines of trees and woodland edge. High-quality habitat that is well connected to the wider landscape that is likely to be used regularly by foraging bats such as broadleaved woodland, tree-lined watercourses and grazed parkland. Site is close to and connected to known roosts.

Bat Emergence Surveys

- 3.11 A suite of bat emergence surveys were undertaken of the outbuilding B1 on 9th May 2026, and 19th June 2026 in accordance with the Bat Conservation Trust - Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines Fourth (2023) Editions, and the Interim Guidance on the Use of Night Vision Aids (2022).
- 3.12 The dusk emergence survey began c.20 minutes before sunset and continued until c.1.5 hours after. Extended surveys which continued until c.2 hours after sunset were conducted following BCT good practice guidance when required.
- 3.13 All surveys were designed and led by Aidan Bird ACIEEM (Level 2 Bat Licence 2025-13045-CL18-BAT), using assistant surveyors with at least 3 years of emergence survey experience. Surveyors and cameras thoroughly covered the survey area and the likelihood of bats being missed is very low.
- 3.14 Bat detection was carried out using Full Spectrum Recording Bat Detectors; Batlogger M and Echo Meter Touch 2 Pro enabling a sampling rate of 384kHz to capture sounds of up to 192kHz ensuring that all British bat species calls are detectable. Analysis of recordings were carried out where necessary using Sonobat software. Infrared camera footage was reviewed at between 0.25-2x speed on VLC media player where necessary.

Table 2 – Summary of Bat Surveys

Date	Sunset	Start	End	Weather Conditions - Start	Weather Conditions - End
9 th May 2026	20:37	20:17	22:07	15.8°C, BF.1, Okt.7, RH54%	11.3°C, BF.0, Okt.7, RH52%
19 th June 2026	21:20	21:00	22:50	19.5°C, BF.2, Okt.2, RH74%	18.3°C, BF.1, Okt.1, RH83%

- 3.15 The building was covered using varying numbers of experienced surveyors and night vision aids; thermal and infrared cameras to improve coverage, better vision later into the survey and the ability to review potential emergences. All cameras were equipped with a 720nm filter to block visible light for a clearer image of the building. When surveyors deemed light levels too low to identify features on the building, the use of external monitors (10 inch with 1024 x 600 resolution) displaying camera outputs were implemented.

Survey 1 (9th May 2026)

- 3.16 Two surveyors and six external cameras (Canon XA30, XA40, XA40, XA60, Guide TK612, and Pixfra Arc 613) were used to cover the outbuilding B1 and proposal zone of the main barn B2 allowing for improved coverage, better vision later into the survey and the ability to review potential emergences. Each infrared set up was accompanied by two Illuminators - Nightfox XB5 Pro 850nm torches and independently mounted premium platinum LED infrared 850nm floodlights were used. When surveyors deemed light levels too low to identify features on the building, the use of external monitors (10 inch with 1024 x 600 resolution) displaying camera outputs were implemented. The surveyors and cameras thoroughly covered the survey area and the likelihood of bats being missed is very low.

Survey 2 (19th June 2026)

- 3.17 Two surveyors and four external cameras (Canon XA40, XA40, XA60, and Pixfra Arc 613) were used to cover the outbuilding B1 allowing for improved coverage, better vision later into the survey and the ability to review potential emergences. Each infrared set up was accompanied by two Illuminators - Nightfox XB5 Pro 850nm torches and independently mounted premium platinum LED infrared 850nm floodlights were used. When surveyors deemed light levels too low to identify features on the building, the use of external monitors (10 inch with 1024 x 600 resolution) displaying camera outputs were implemented. The surveyors and cameras thoroughly covered the survey area and the likelihood of bats being missed is very low.

Ecological Impact Assessment

- 3.18 The methodology for Ecological Impact Assessment (EcIA) follows best practice guidelines set by the Chartered Institute of Ecology & Environmental Management (CIEEM): 'Guidelines for Ecological Impact Assessment' (CIEEM, 2024). This includes identifying the baseline conditions on the site and subsequently rating the potential effects of the development based on the sensitivity and value of the resource affected, combined with the magnitude, duration and scale of the impact (or change). This is initially assessed without mitigation measures, and then assessed again after allowing for the proposed mitigation measures; this provides the residual effects. The assessment is divided into construction effects and longer-term operational effects.
- 3.19 Each ecological feature within the site has been considered within a defined geographic context such as:
- International and European;
 - National;
 - Regional;
 - County;
 - District;
 - Local;
 - Site Level;
 - Negligible.
- 3.20 Based upon CIEEM guidance, value was determined with reference to the following factors:
- Its inclusion as a Designated Site or other protected area;
 - The presence of habitat types of conservation significance, e.g. Habitats of Principal Importance (NERC 2006);
 - The presence (or potential presence) of species of conservation significance e.g. Species of Principal Importance (NERC 2006);
 - The presence of other protected species e.g. those protected under The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981;
 - The site's social and economic value.

Evaluation

- 3.21 Requirement for further surveys was assessed following the Bat Conservation Trust Guidelines (BCT, 2023) and Bat Workers' Manual (Mitchell-Jones & McLeish, 2012). Subsequent requirements for mitigation and enhancement will be in accordance with the most recent bat mitigation guidelines (Reason & Wray, 2023) and artificial lighting guidance (Institution of Lighting Professionals, 2023).

4.0 Constraints

Site Visits

- 4.1 Despite two daytime site visits carried across separate days some months apart, it is possible that some signs of habitats, protected species, and other ecology may not be apparent within this short timeframe. This is a constraint recognised within the Survey Guidelines and all reasonable effort has been made to identify evidence of all relevant protected species. For this reason, the surveys are considered valid for up to eighteen months for bats and badgers, and two years for reptiles, amphibians such as great crested newts, and hazel dormice. If the habitat conditions change significantly in the intervening period, then it is recommended that the surveys are updated.
- 4.2 Bats in particular can be difficult to locate within a structure without further surveys due to the many features useable by bats which are inaccessible to humans. Additionally bats roosting within batten spaces, between tiles and membranes, may not leave any evidence visible during a daytime survey therefore further evening emergence surveys may be required to establish presence/absence. Moreover, evidence can deteriorate rapidly in humid conditions, be contaminated by small rodents, and may be wash away on external surfaces by poor weather conditions.
- 4.3 Bats may potentially remain undetected, particularly during daytime roost assessments, or later colonise a site after surveys have been carried out as they are highly mobile species. They also use a variety of buildings at different stages in their lifecycle and across the year therefore may not always be present however the structure may remain a key site such as those of occasional or transitional use.

Bat Emergence Surveys

- 4.4 Many species have very similar echolocation calls making accurate species identification from acoustic techniques alone difficult, especially for cryptic groups like Myotis and Plecotus bats. Different amplitude of species' calls dramatically under or over identify the presence of some species, resulting in a misidentification absence of some species, notably long-eared bats. Unless otherwise emerging from the building these species will only be identified down to genus level. Surveyors and cameras thoroughly covered the survey area and the likelihood of bats being missed is very low.

5.0 Results

Update daytime assessment

- 5.1 No evidence of roosting bats was identified within or on external features of the outbuilding B1. The construction method and associated condition of the roof provides a significant number of access points; these include open-ended clay hip and ridge tiles, dilapidated timber cladding on the north elevation, and access under the eaves. Given the location and connectivity of the outbuilding, whilst also accounting for no previous ecological surveys in conjunction with historic planning applications to the converted barn B2, it was assessed to be of low to moderate suitability for roosting bats.
- 5.2 The section of the main dwelling B2 due to be connected to by the proposed infill structure was covered with a breathable membrane secured in place by vertical battens unlike the remaining elevations of the building which are covered with good condition timber cladding. The area of impact to B2 does not contain significant features for bats to use however loose membrane areas may potentially allow for occasional use by bats; the potential suitability is negligible within the proposal zone.

Bat Emergence Surveys

Survey 1 (9th May 2026)

- 5.3 The survey identified no bats emerging from the building however there was significant use of the west property boundary by commuting and foraging individuals, many of which approached from the dwelling to the north. Most of these individuals were also foraging around the outbuilding B1 with a couple of close passes indicative of an inspecting bat. Of identified bats recorded, the majority were common pipistrelles *Pipistrellus pipistrellus*; also noted was a singular commuting pass by a soprano pipistrelle and a short stretch of foraging between the building, B1 and B2, on site by a long-eared, suspected brown, bat.
- 5.4 Also notable around sunset were multiple swallows *Hirundo rustica* attempting to gain access to the barn blocked by fibreglass insulation at the eaves.
- 5.5 Species recorded;
- Common pipistrelle *Pipistrellus pipistrellus*
 - Soprano pipistrelle *Pipistrellus pygmaeus*
 - Long-eared bat *Plecotus sp.*

Survey 2 (19th June 2026)

- 5.6 No bats were observed emerging or closely associating with the outbuilding B1. The earliest calls recorded were a noctule at 43 minutes after sunset and a common pipistrelle at 44 minutes after. Following these, the remaining survey time was constantly filled with common pipistrelle foraging over the adjacent field and around the site.
- 5.7 Species recorded;
- Common pipistrelle *Pipistrellus pipistrellus*
 - Noctule *Nyctalus noctula*

6.0 Evaluation of Impacts and Mitigation

- 6.1 Impacts and mitigation for designated sites, habitats, nesting birds, reptiles, amphibians, badgers, and other relevant species are covered by Alex Rosenfeld in AR188 – Sweetmans Barn Kitchen EclA.V1 (Appendix.E).

Bats

Potential Impacts

- 6.2 The building was classified as offering 'low to moderate' bat roost potential, and two subsequent emergence surveys identified no emerging bats. It is therefore considered highly unlikely any bat roosts are located within the building. It is highly improbable that a bat would be injured or killed, or a roost disturbed or destroyed in the course of works.
- 6.3 The proposals will increase the area of glasswork on the property; the southern elevation of new construction includes three rooflights and triple sectional aluminium glass doors. It is likely that light spill could increase as a result of the proposals and potentially have a negative impact on foraging or commuting bats.
- 6.4 There is no risk of tree roosts being present and impacted by the proposed works – no trees are present on site or proposed for removal.
- 6.5 Furthermore, in the absence of mitigation, incorrect lighting could lead to loss of foraging and commuting areas.

Mitigation and Compensation

- 6.6 No bats were observed to be roosting within the outbuilding B1 during the course of the two emergence surveys therefore no mitigation licence to disturb bats is required. As a matter of course, it is recommended the hip and ridge tiles are to be taken off with due care given the potential for opportunistic roosting. Should a bat or evidence thereof be discovered, works must cease whilst a licenced ecologist is contacted for advice.
- 6.7 Construction must ensure that any areas with Non-Bitumen Coated Roofing Membranes (NBCRMs) are sealed from potential future access by bats given its significant threat of entanglement.
- 6.8 The property is outside the obligatory South Downs National Park Dark Skies area but given its relative proximity and growing importance it is recommended that light spill is reduced wherever possible. Three sky facing rooflights are present on the new addition which would benefit from light spill mitigation. The design with an internal courtyard mitigates a large portion of the potential light spill from the glazed aluminium doors.
- 6.9 To minimise the light spill it is recommended to reduce the impact by one or more of the following methods:
- Automated blinds and shutters through timed and motorized mechanism
 - Use specialist glass such as tinted or low visible light transmittance (VLT)
 - Programmable Internal smart lighting
 - Artificial natural simulating rooflight systems
 - Smart / electrochromic glass using electrical currents to change the transparency
 - Sun tunnels using similar techniques as fibre optic cables and internal diffuser

6.10 Any new lighting will be expected to accord with the principles within the BCT/ILP Guidance Note 08/23; consideration will be given to the following aspects should any external lighting be required:

- No illumination of features with bat roost potential such as roof tiles;
- Temperature – 2700K or below is preferable;
- Power – the lowest power necessary;
- Lighting type – LED lighting tends to emit a lower-intensity beam than older styles of lighting, although the full lighting spectrogram must be assessed as some LED lights emit blue and white light;
- Angle – lights must be angled below the horizontal and as far down as possible;
- Adaptations – luminaires can be fitted with guards or cowls to reduce the angle of light spill;
- Timings and controls – lighting controls should aim to minimise light use when not necessary – PIRs can be used but must be set to be low-sensitivity; lights should be set to automatic shut-off whenever possible.

6.11 Trees and hedges to be retained must be protected in accordance with British Standard 5837:2012.

Residual Impacts

6.12 The overall impact of the scheme will be negligible. No significant effects are anticipated upon any designated site for bats, provided basic avoidance measures are built into the proposals.

7.0 Ecological Enhancements

- 7.1 Given the scale and nature of the proposals, ecological enhancement opportunities within the construction zone are limited. The most beneficial enhancements would involve including swift and swallow nest cups and potentially consider the creation of a hedgerow along the west boundary of the site. Furthermore, addition of bat roosting opportunities such as bat boxes, lifted tiles, and access features could also be incorporated; if these enhancements are considered Non-Bitumen Coated Roofing Membranes must not be accessible by bats. These additions would also demonstrate a positive impact for ecology on site.
- 7.2 Bug hotels and bee bricks are excellent enhancements to aid invertebrates. These can be purchased or self-made using natural materials, such as straw, bark, wood, and bamboo canes. Guides for construction are available across many different platforms including (The Wildlife Trust, 2023) (RSPB, 2023).
- 7.3 Deadwood can provide a home for many species. Leaving wood piles on the ground under a shaded area will maintain a moist environment and encourage a multitude of organisms including fungi (The Royal Horticultural Society, 2023a).
- 7.4 Efficient nests are essential for hedgehogs to survive the winter months. Supplying a dedicated hedgehog box can provide them with a safe and suitable location to hibernate (The British Hedgehog Preservation Society, 2023). Hedgehogs travel extensive distances so ensuring there is good accessibility to and from the site will be a benefit to the species. This could be done by as simple as cutting a 13cm² hole in fencing (Hedgehog Street, 2023).
- 7.5 Water is an essential resource for wildlife. Where space is limited, the addition of a water receptacle such as a bird bath will be a significant benefit to many species, especially during summer months.
- 7.6 Garden plants are becoming increasingly important for wildlife. They interact with multiple organisms from providing sources of food such as berries, fruits, nectar to creating habitat. There are many plants that will encourage a variety of wildlife, such as the RHS 'Plants for Pollinators' list (The Royal Horticultural Society, 2023c).
- 7.7 It is also good to consider a range of plants with varying flowering and fruiting times, to support wildlife during every month of the year.

8.0 Conclusions

- 8.1 Overall, the proposals are considered to represent a 'negligible' impact upon ecology. The proposal area consists of existing building and developed land, of negligible ecological value.
- 8.2 A suite of two bat emergence surveys revealed no bats emerging or closely associating with the outbuilding B1 therefore it is highly unlikely bats are using the structure B1. Minor potential impacts from lighting only are predicted and can be controlled by use of appropriate external lighting if required.
- 8.3 Other impacts are identified in AR188 – Sweetmans Barn Kitchen EclA.V1 (Appendix.E). No impacts upon designated sites or priority habitats are anticipated
- 8.4 When mitigation and enhancements have been taken into account, the proposals are not considered to have a negative impact directly upon bats and their habitats or designated sites in accordance with planning policy. Once enhancements are considered, would result in a minor net gain. The proposals would therefore accord with the relevant local and national planning policies and the relevant legislation.

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10.0 Appendix A - Site Maps & Additional Photographs



Figure 1: Aerial imagery, created using © 2025 Google Earth, of the site and surrounding area.



Figure 2: Outbuilding B1 north elevation



Figure 3: Outbuilding B1 south elevation



Figure 4: Outbuilding B1 east elevation



Figure 5: Outbuilding B1 internal space facing north



Figure 6: Outbuilding B1 internal space facing south



Figure 7: Outbuilding B1 internal central roof area

11.0 Appendix B – Development Proposals



Figure 1: Sweetmans Barn Block Plan produced by Mark Alford Designs

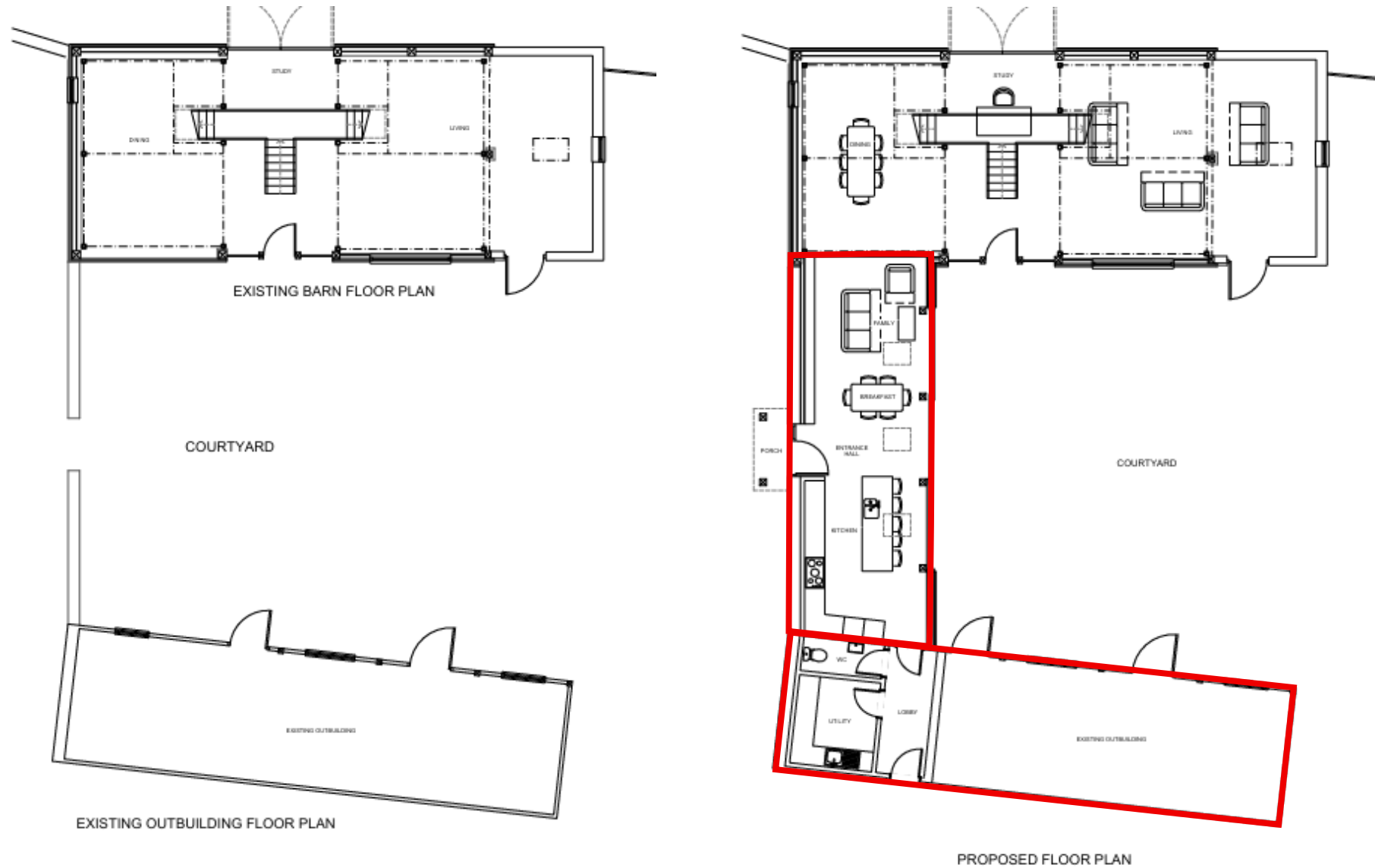


Figure 3: Comparison of existing (left) and proposed (right) floor plans produced from Mark Alford Designs with proposed construction highlighted by red polygons

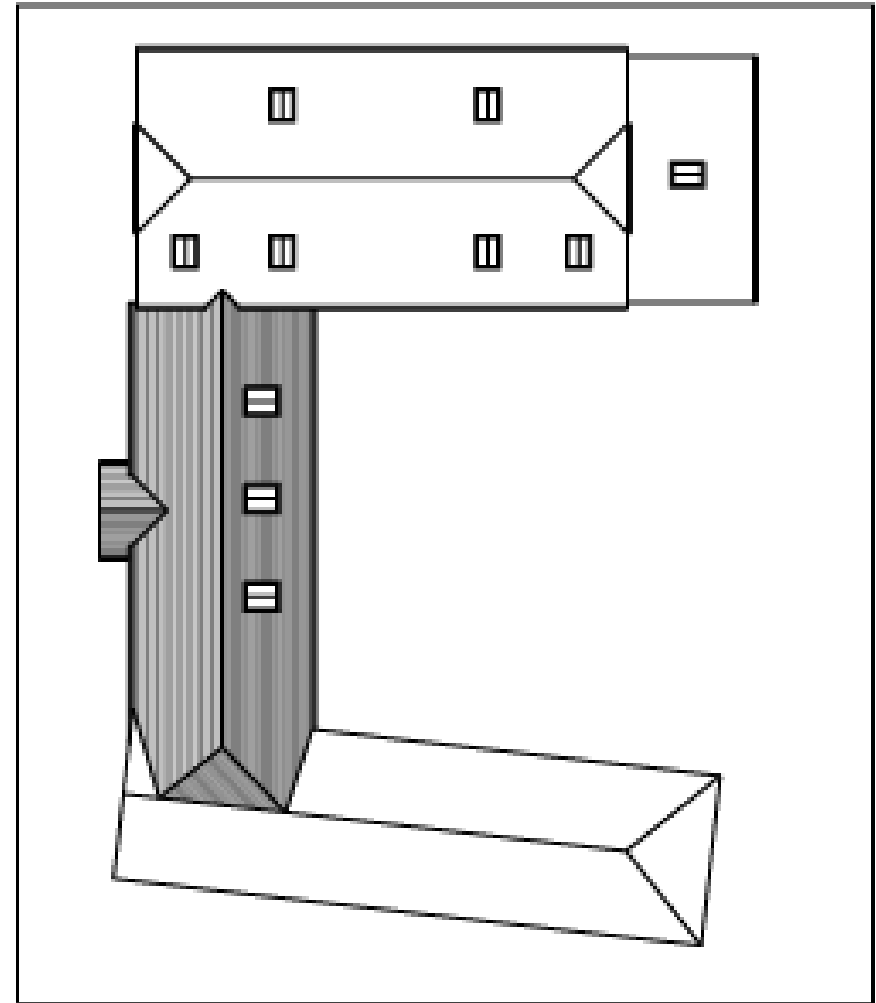
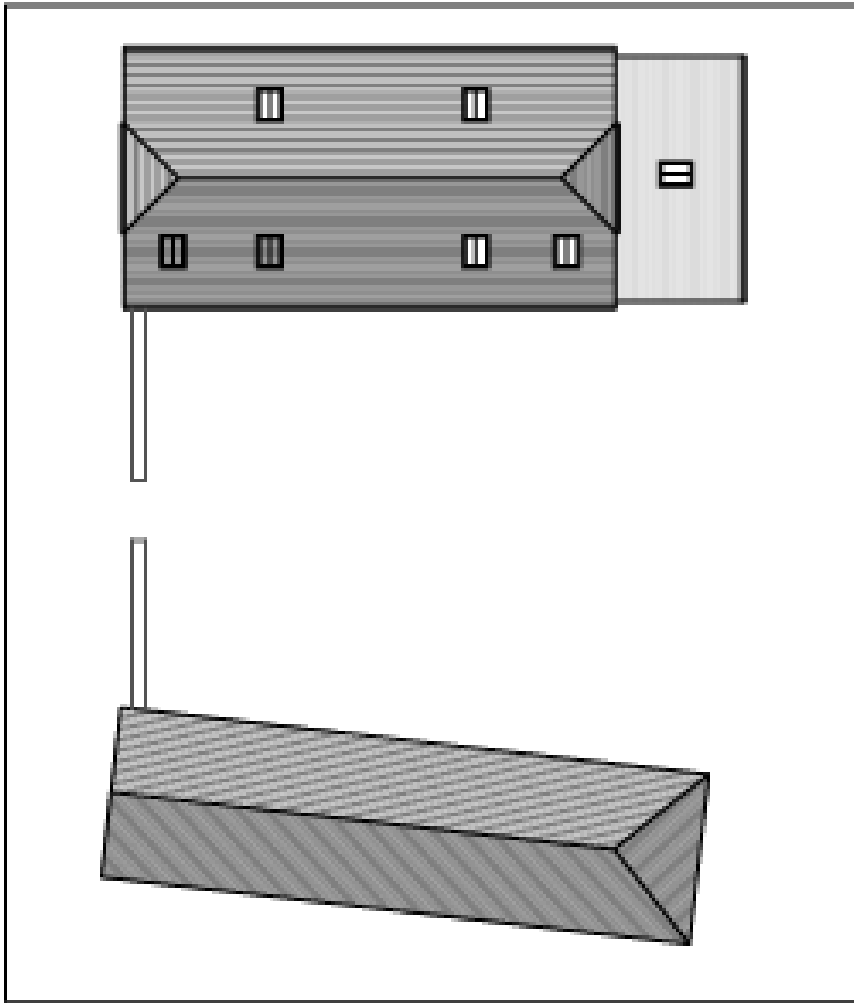


Figure 4: Comparison of existing (left) and proposed (right) roof plans produced from Mark Alford Designs

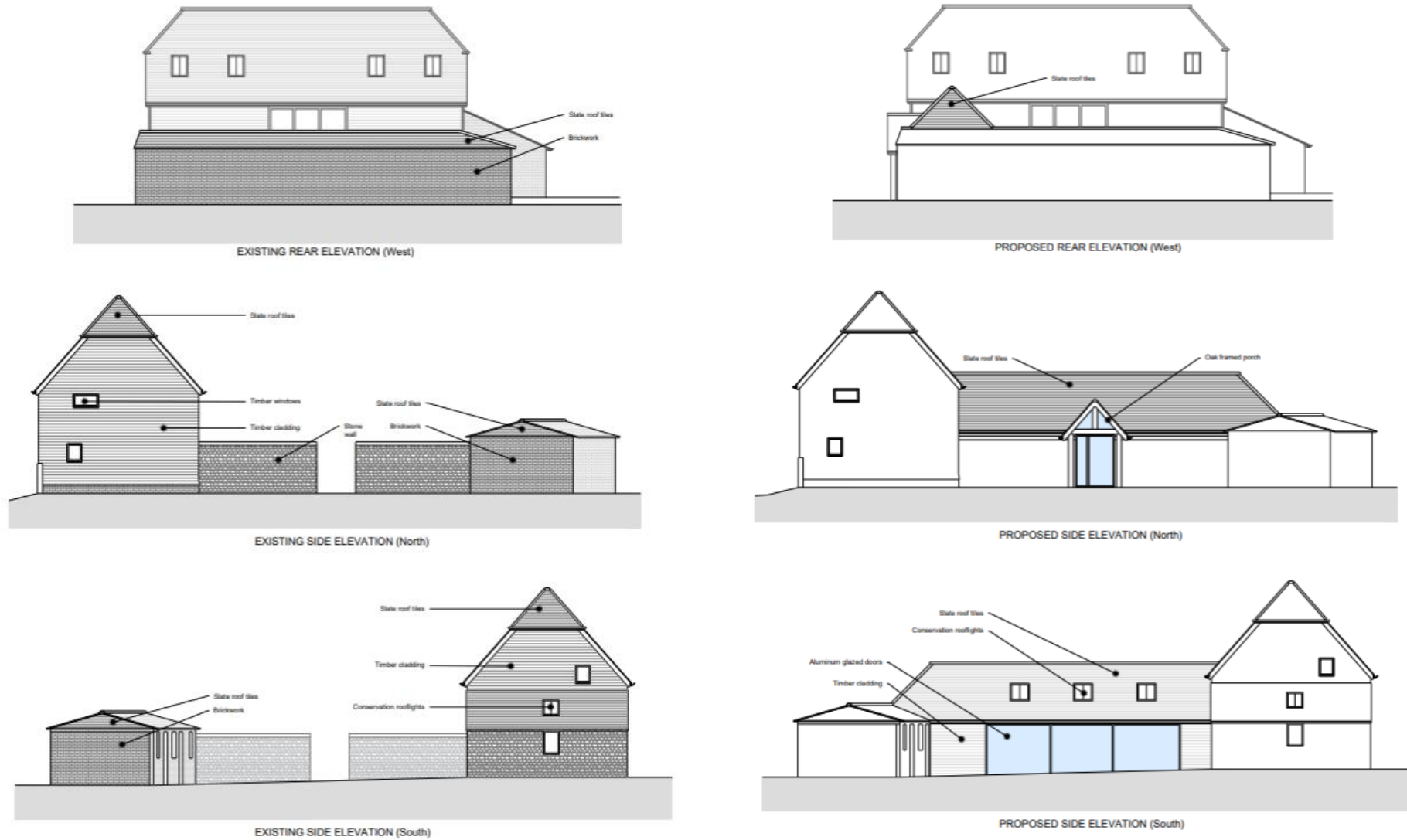


Figure 5: Comparison of existing (left) and proposed (right) elevation plans produced from Mark Alford Designs

12.0 Appendix C – Bat Survey Plans

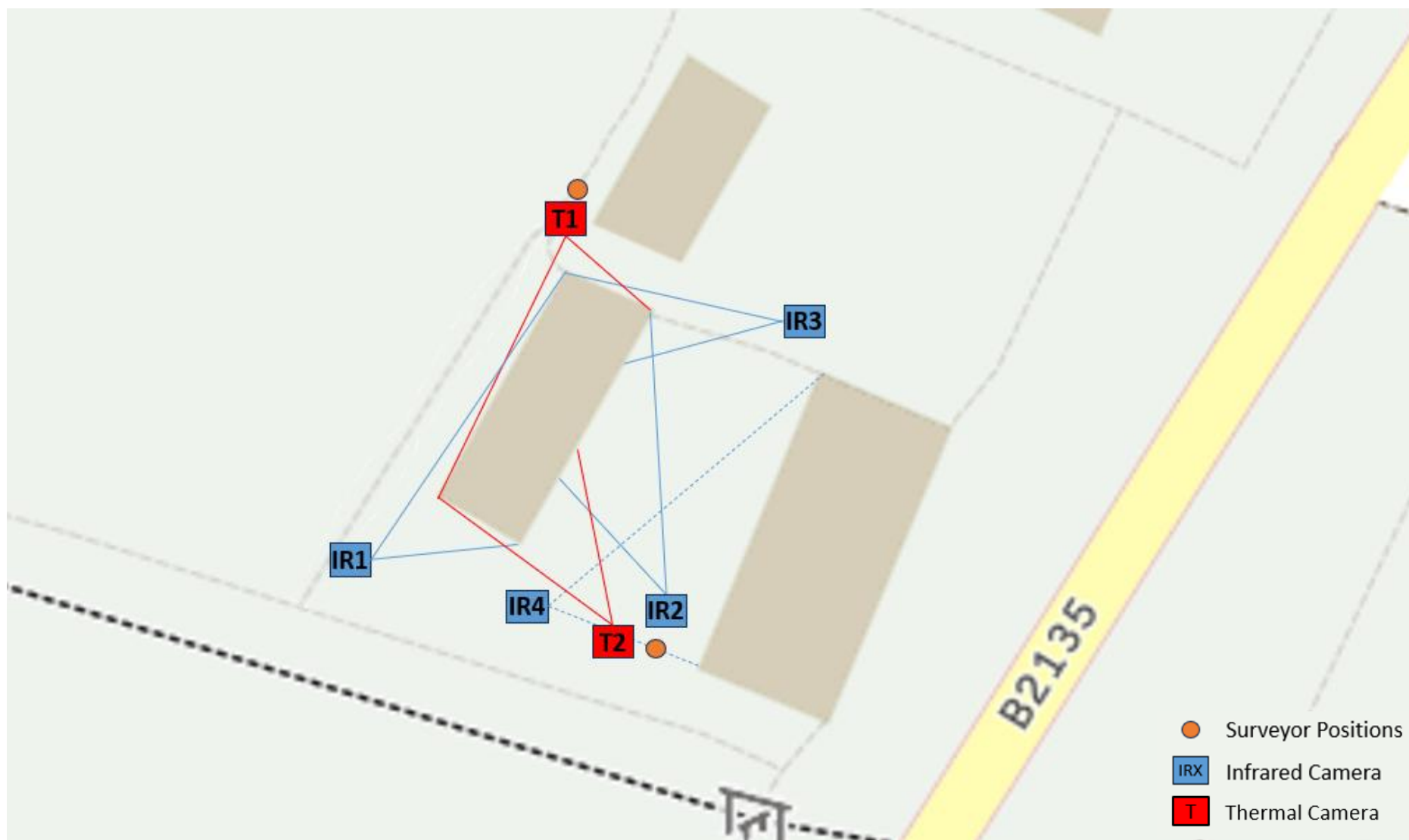


Figure 1- Survey 1 (9th May 2026)

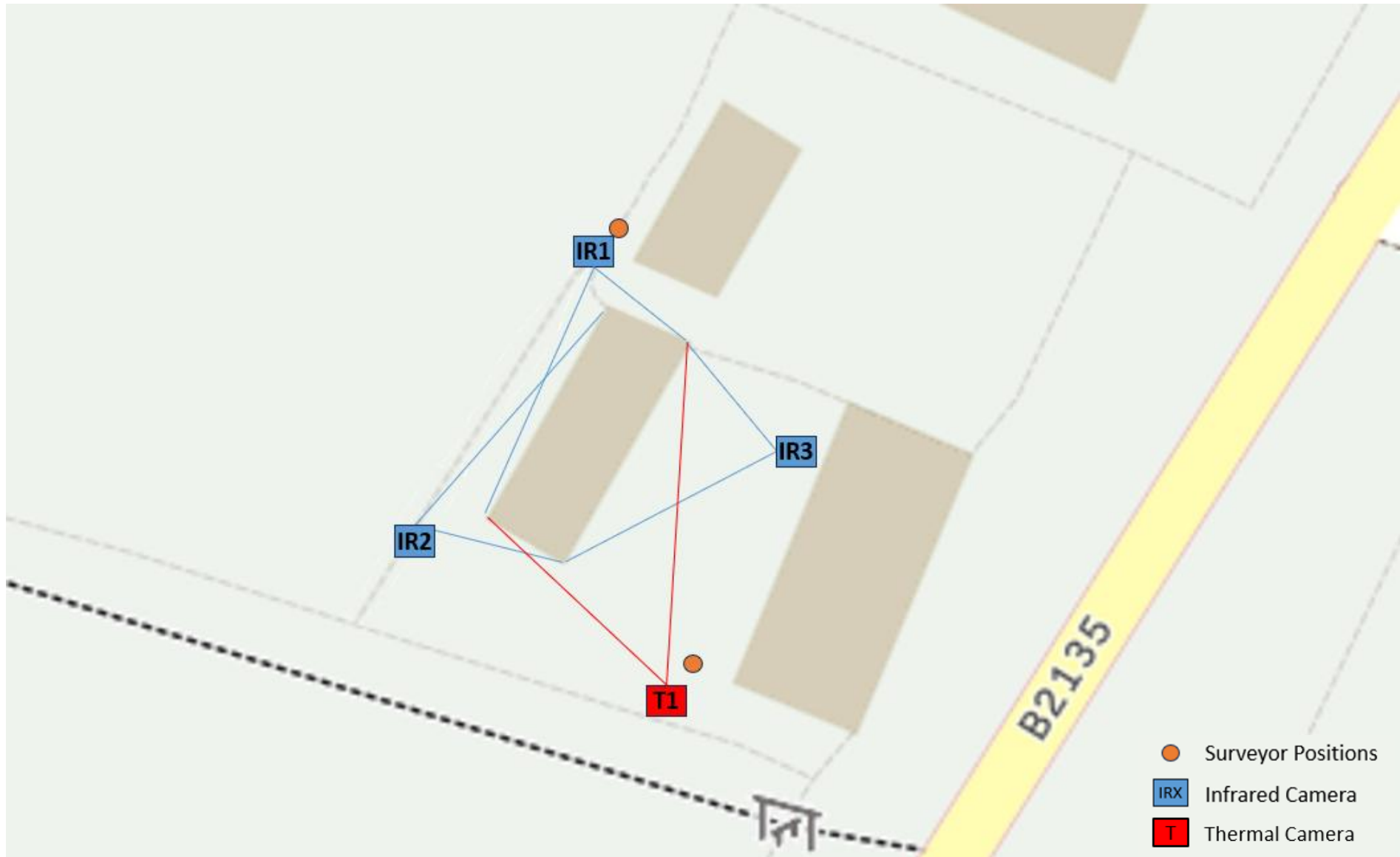


Figure 2- Survey 2 (19th June 2026)

13.0 Appendix D - Night Vision Aids

Survey 1 – 9th May 2026



Photo 1 – T.1 Start

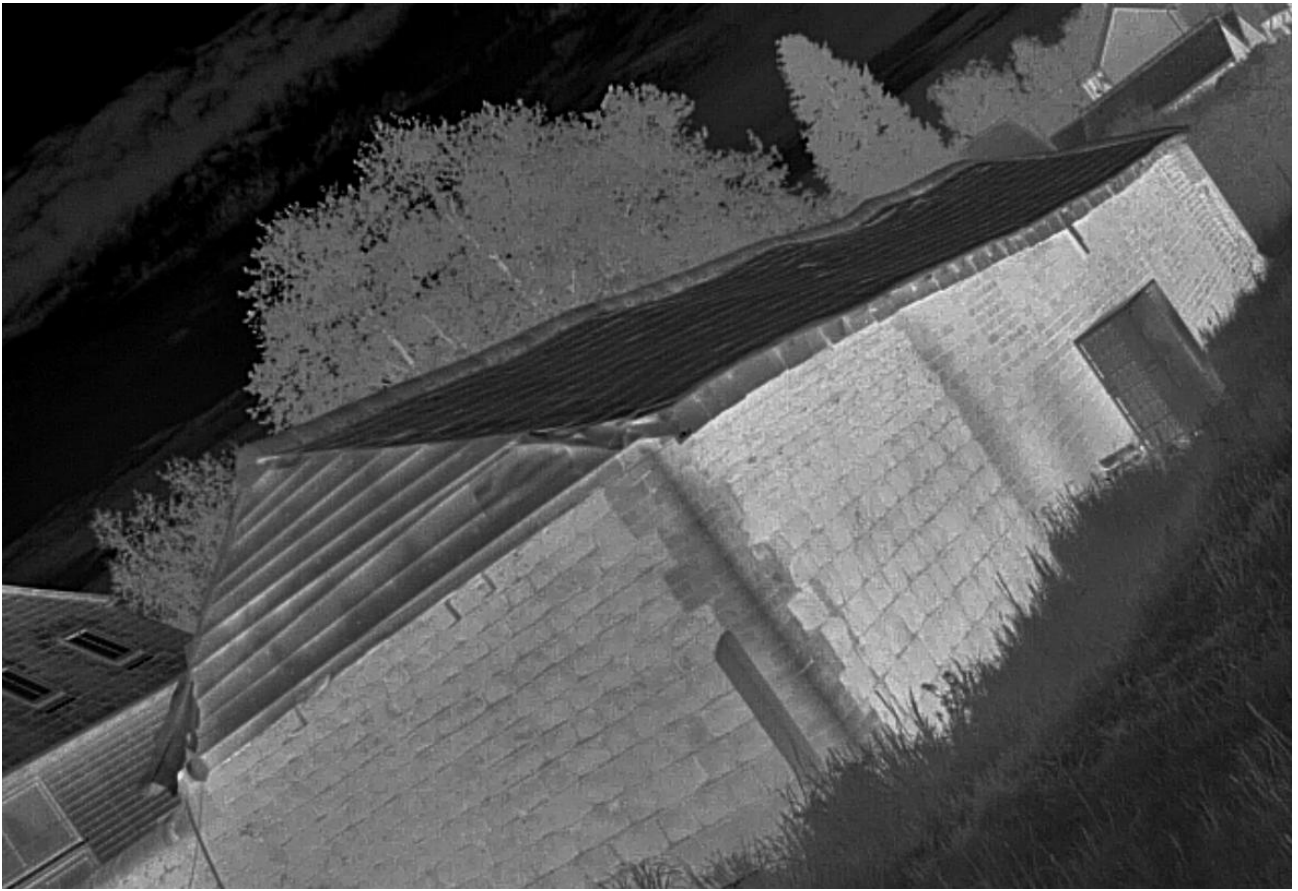


Photo 2 - T.1 End



Photo 3 – IR.1 Start



Photo 4 - IR.1 End



Photo 5 - T.2 Start



Photo 6 – T.2 End



Photo 7 – IR.2 Start



Photo 8 - IR.2 End



Photo 9 - IR.3 Start



Photo 10 - IR.3 End



Photo 11 – IR.4 Start



Photo 12 - IR.4 End

Survey 2 – 19th June 2026



Photo 13 – IR.1 Start



Photo 14 - IR.1 End



Photo 15 – IR.2 Start



Photo 16 - IR.2 End



Photo 17 - T.1 Start



Photo 18 - T.1 End



Photo 19 – IR.2 Start



Photo 20 - IR.2 End

14.0 Appendix E – EcIA

Ecological Impact Assessment

Site – Sweetmans Barn, Ashurst, BN44 3AP

Client – Mr A Whitehouse

Revision – v1

Author – Alex Rosenfeld (*Qualifying member of CIEEM*)

Issue date – 25th February 2026

Ecological Impact Assessment

Document reference	AR188 – Sweetmans Barn Kitchen. EclA
Site	Sweetmans Barn Kitchen, Ashurst, BN44 3AP
Client	Mr A Whitehouse
Author	Alex Rosenfeld Ecologist
Revision Number	1
Report issue date	25/02/2026

The assessment and appraisal are considered relevant for a maximum of 18 months due to the possibility of changes in the habitats on-site and scope of proposals. Should alterations to the proposals or site occur, the ecologist should be consulted to confirm that the appraisal is still valid.

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Summary

Mr A Whitehouse has commissioned a Preliminary Bat Roost Assessment, Preliminary Ecological Appraisal and Ecological Impact Assessment for proposals at Sweetmans Barn Kitchen, Ashurst, BN44 3AP (*grid reference: TQ17951617, hereafter referred to as 'the site'*).

The proposals are for a new kitchen-dining room to be built between two existing barns.

A Preliminary Bat Roost Assessment and Preliminary Ecological Appraisal were carried out on the 11th November 2025 by Alex Rosenfeld.

The proposals area consists of two barns of wood and stone construction with a grass/hardstanding courtyard.

The western barn (B1) offered '**low**' **suitability** for roosting bats. The eastern barn (B2) offered '**negligible**' **value** for bats.

No statutory designated sites lie within a 2.0km radius of the site.

The site lies within a 'red impact risk zone' for great crested newts (GCN). The potential impacts upon GCN shall be assessed within this report.

The site is of '**low**' **value** to nesting birds, foraging badgers, hedgehog and reptiles.

When mitigation and enhancements have been taken into account, the proposals are not considered to have a negative impact upon designated sites, habitats or protected species in accordance with planning policy and once enhancements are considered, would result in a minor gain of onsite ecology. The proposals would therefore accord with the relevant Local Plan Policies.

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 Mr A Whitehouse has commissioned a Preliminary Bat Roost Assessment, Preliminary Ecological Appraisal and Ecological Impact Assessment at Sweetmans Barn Kitchen, Ashurst BN44 3AP (grid reference: TQ17951617, hereafter referred to as 'the site'). The proposals are for a new kitchen dining room to be built between two existing barns.
- 1.2 A Preliminary Bat Roost Assessment and Preliminary Ecological Appraisal were carried out on the 11th November 2025 by Alex Rosenfeld (6 years' professional experience).
- 1.3 The following Ecological Impact Assessment report has been completed by Alex Rosenfeld. The purpose of the assessment has been to identify whether any potential impacts upon protected species, habitats or designated sites might occur, and to propose mitigation or avoidance measures where necessary.
- 1.4 Based on the results of the appraisal, recommendations for potential ecological enhancements have been provided.

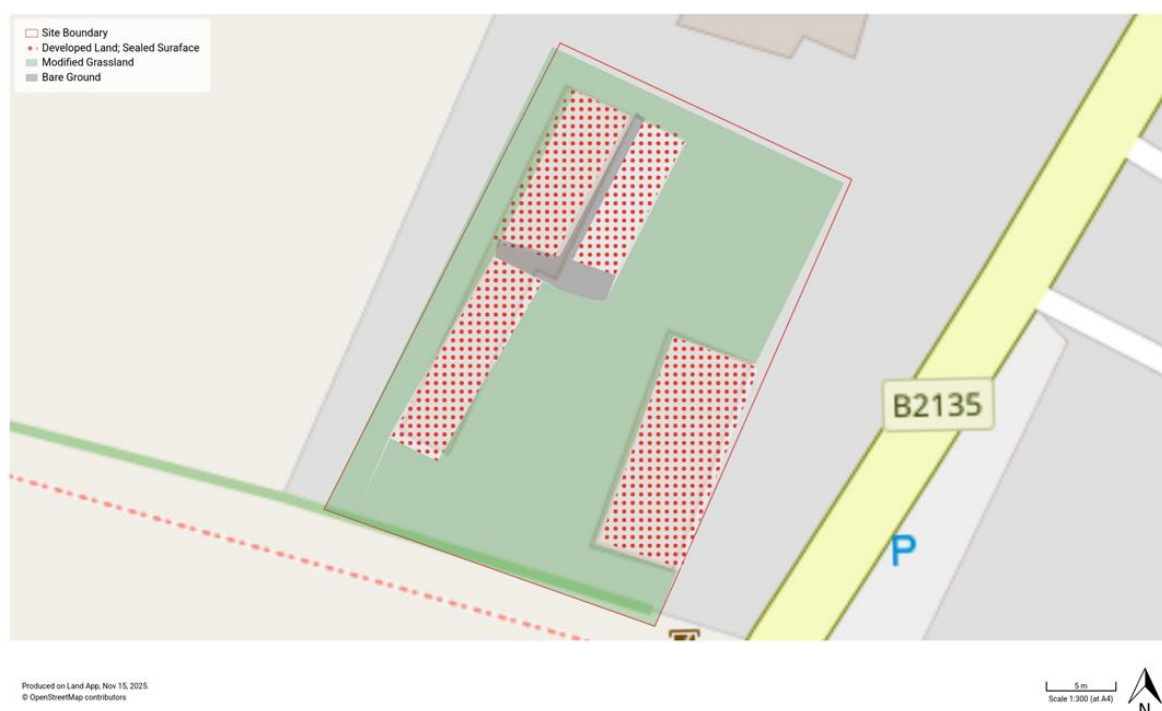
Site Description and Surrounding Area

- 1.5 The proposals area consists of two barns of wood and stone construction with a grass/hardstanding courtyard. Surrounding the proposed works area within the same landholding is a mobile home, and an open sided lean-to storage area with hardstanding and bare ground.

Figure No. 01 – Site location



Figure No.02 – UKHabs Map



- 1.6 The site is located in the village of Ashurst, West Sussex. It is bound to the north by domestic dwellings. To the west and south are pasture fields. The B2135 road bounds the eastern boundary.
- 1.7 The wider area is rural, comprised primarily of arable fields and pasture divided by hedgerows. Pockets of woodland are present. The town of Henfield lies 1.07km east.
- 1.8 No ponds are onsite. 9no. ponds are within a 500 meter radius of the site. The closest pond is C.18 meters to the east of the site.

Proposals

- 1.9 The proposals are for a new kitchen-dining room to be built between two existing barns.
- 1.10 The western barn (B1) offered '**low**' **suitability** for roosting bats. The eastern barn (B2) offered '**negligible**' **suitability** for bats. The surrounding paddocks and hedgerows are of '**moderate**' **value** to foraging and commuting bats.
- 1.11 The site is within the 'red impact risk zone' for GCN. As such an assessment of the sites suitability for GCN was undertaken.

2.0 Scope of Assessment

1. *Categorise habitats present on the site;*
 2. *Identify habitat which may have potential for protected species;*
 3. *Identify whether any signs of protected species are present on-site;*
 4. *Recommend whether further surveys are required, or whether there are any relevant constraints with regards to protected species;*
 5. *Identify impacts of the proposed development and set out appropriate avoidance, mitigation and compensation measures;*
 6. *Provide recommendations as to how the site and proposals could be enhanced with regards to protected species and habitats.*
- 2.1 The assessment and appraisal are considered relevant for a maximum of 18 months due to the possibility of changes in the habitats on-site and scope of proposals. Should alterations to the proposals or site occur, the ecologist should be consulted to confirm that the appraisal is still valid.

3.0 Planning Policy and Legislation

National Planning Policy

- 3.1 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) was updated in December 2024 and sets out the government planning policies for England and how they should be applied. 'Chapter 15: Conserving and Enhancing the Natural Environment' states that development should be 'minimising impacts on and providing net gains for biodiversity, including by establishing coherent ecological networks that are more resilient to current and future pressures.'
- 3.2 The Government Circular 06/2005, which is referred to by the NPPF, provides further guidance in respect of statutory obligations for biodiversity and geological conservation and their impact within the planning system.
- 3.3 The current Local Plan is subject to Regulation 19. Therefore, The Horsham District Planning Framework (Horsham District Council, 2015 - 2031) was used to appraise the proposals.
- 3.4 The Horsham District Planning Framework sets out the existing planning policies for development in the district in relation to biodiversity. Those of potential relevance to this assessment are highlighted in the table below:

Policy Reference	Policy Text
<i>Policy 25: The Natural Environment and Landscape Character</i>	<i>The Natural Environment and landscape character of the District, including the landscape, landform and development pattern, together with protected landscapes and habitats will be protected against inappropriate development. The Council will support development proposals which:</i> <i>1. Protects, conserves and enhances the landscape and townscape character, taking into account areas identified as being of landscape importance, the individual settlement characteristics, and maintains settlement separation.</i> <i>2. Maintain and enhances the Green Infrastructure Network and addresses any identified deficiencies in the District.</i> <i>3. Maintains and enhances the existing network of geological sites and biodiversity, including safeguarding existing designated sites and species, and ensures no net loss of wider biodiversity and provides net gains in biodiversity where possible.</i> <i>4. Conserve and where possible enhance the setting of the South Downs National Park.</i>
<i>Policy 26: Countryside Protection</i>	<i>Outside built-up area boundaries, the rural character and undeveloped nature of the countryside will be protected against inappropriate development. Any proposal must be essential to its countryside location, and in addition meet one of the following criteria:</i> <i>1. Support the needs of agriculture or forestry;</i> <i>2. Enable the extraction of minerals or the disposal of waste;</i>

	3. Provide for quiet informal recreational use; or 4. Enable the sustainable development of rural areas. <i>In addition, proposals must be of a scale appropriate to its countryside character and location. Development will be considered acceptable where it does not lead, either individually or cumulatively, to a significant increase in the overall level of activity in the countryside, and protects, and/or conserves, and/or enhances, the key features and characteristics of the landscape character area in which it is located, including;</i> 1. The development pattern of the area, its historical and ecological qualities, tranquillity and sensitivity to change; 2. The pattern of woodlands, fields, hedgerows, trees, waterbodies and other features; and 3. The landform of the area.
Policy 31: Green Infrastructure and Biodiversity	<i>Development will be supported where it can demonstrate that it maintains or enhances the existing network of green infrastructure. Proposals that would result in the loss of existing green infrastructure will be resisted unless it can be demonstrated that new opportunities will be provided that mitigates or compensates for this loss and ensures that the ecosystem services of the area are retained.</i> <i>Development proposals will be required to contribute to the enhancement of existing biodiversity, and should create and manage new habitats where appropriate. The Council will support new development which retains and /or enhances significant features of nature conservation on development sites. The Council will also support development which makes a positive contribution to biodiversity through the creation of green spaces, and linkages between habitats to create local and regional ecological networks.</i> <i>Where felling of protected trees is necessary, replacement planting with a suitable species will be required.</i> <i>Particular consideration will be given to the hierarchy of sites and habitats in the district as follows:</i> 1. Special Protection Area (SPA) and Special Areas of Conservation (SAC) 2. Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs) and National Nature Reserves (NNRs) 3. Sites of Nature Conservation Importance (SNCIs), Local Nature Reserves (LNRs) and any areas of Ancient woodland, local geodiversity or other irreplaceable habitats not already identified in i & ii above. <i>b) Where development is anticipated to have a direct or indirect adverse impact on sites or features for biodiversity, development will be refused unless it can be demonstrated that:</i> 1. The reason for the development clearly outweighs the need to protect the value of the site; and,

	2. <i>That appropriate mitigation and compensation measures are provided.</i> <i>Any development with the potential to impact Arun Valley SPA or the Mens SAC will be subject to a HRA to determine the need for an Appropriate Assessment. In addition, development will be required to be in accordance with the necessary mitigation measures for development set out in the HRA of this plan.</i>
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- The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017;
- The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended);
- The Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006;
- The Protection of Mammals Act 1996.

- 3.7 All species of bat and their roosts are protected under The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 and The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981. It is an offence to intentionally kill, injure or handle a bat, to possess a bat (live or dead), disturb a roosting bat, or sell or offer a bat for sale without a licence. It is also an offence to damage, destroy or obstruct access to any place used by bats for shelter, whether they are present or not.
- 3.8 All UK bird species are protected against disturbance whilst occupying a nest under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981. Developments that could predictably disturb, kill or injure nesting birds could result in an offence. Furthermore, a number of bird species are targets of UK and Local Biodiversity Action Plans and listed as Species of Principle Importance under Section 41 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006. This obligates local authorities to have regard to the purpose of conserving biodiversity with particular emphasis on targeted species.
- 3.9 All other mammals receive general protection against cruelty, inhumane killing or injuring under the Protection of Mammals Act 1996.

4.0 Methodology

Desktop Study

- 4.1 'Magic' Maps was consulted for information pertaining to priority habitats, statutory designated sites and permitted European Protected Species Mitigation Licences (EPSML's) within a potential zone of influence of the development site.
- 4.2 The following potential zones of influence have been used when identifying designated sites in the local area: Local Nature Reserves (LNRs), National Nature Reserves (NNRs) and Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs) were searched for within a 2.0km radius of the site, and internationally designated sites including Special Protection Areas (SPAs), potential Special Protection Areas (pSPAs), Ramsars (Wetlands of International Importance) and proposed Ramsars (pRamsar) within a 10km radius of the site. Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) and possible Special Areas of Conservation (pSACs) within a 12km radius of the site, to account for the potential presence of SAC's designated for their bat interest, in accordance with recent guidance (SDNP, 2020).
- 4.3 Due to the scale and scope of proposals, a biodiversity record centre was not considered necessary.
- 4.4 A search was carried out to identify features of ecological interest in the area, such as water bodies and ancient woodland.
- 4.5 The report is written based on the following guidance:
 - CIEEM Guidelines for Ecological Report Writing 2017 (CIEEM, 2017)
 - CIEEM Guidelines for Ecological Impact Assessment in the UK and Ireland (CIEEM, 2018)
 - Surveys have been carried out following the guidance sources set out in CIEEM's Good Practice Guidance for Habitats and Species (CIEEM, 2021), which include:
 - o CIEEM Guidelines for Preliminary Ecological Appraisal, Second Edition (CIEEM, 2017)
 - o CIEEM Guidelines for Accessing, Using and Sharing Biodiversity Data in the UK. Second Edition (CIEEM, 2017)
 - o Bat Conservation Trust (BCT) Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines (BCT, 2023)

Site Visit

- 4.7 A site visit was conducted on 11th November 2025 during suitable conditions (15°C, no rain with 100% cloud cover and a westerly breeze). Habitats were recorded broadly according to the UK-Habs Classification System as described within the UK Habitats Manual v2.01 (UKHab Ltd 2023). All habitats present on-site were recorded on a UKHab map (*Figure No. 01 – Site Habitat Plan*).
- 4.8 During the survey any constraints with regard to protected species were considered; potential for impacts upon protected species even when evidence of such was not noted at the time of survey.
- 4.9 Points of interest for protected species have been plotted into the Site Habitat Plan and within target notes. Protected and Notable Species considered as part of this assessment include but are not limited to:
- *Bats – foraging, commuting, roosting, swarming and hibernating;*
 - *Badgers Meles meles – setts, latrines, push-unders and trapped hairs to fences, snuffle holes, and tracks;*
 - *Dormice Muscardinus avellanarius – nesting and commuting;*
 - *Great Crested Newts Triturus cristatus and other Amphibians such as Common Toads Bufo bufo – terrestrial active and hibernation habitat and aquatic habitat, including commuting;*
 - *Birds – nesting, foraging and wintering;*
 - *Reptiles – terrestrial active and hibernation habitat;*
 - *Rare or Notable Invertebrates;*
 - *Rare or Notable Plants;*
 - *Water Voles Arvicola amphibius – foraging and shelter habitats;*
 - *Otters Lutra lutra – foraging and shelter habitats;*
 - *White-clawed Crayfish Austropotamobius pallipes;*
- 4.10 The structure were inspected for features conducive to bat and bird roosting. The bat roost assessment was conducted following the Bat Conservation Trust - Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines (2023). Any evidence of bats such as grease marks, bat droppings, feeding remains and suitable cavities were noted.
- 4.11 Structures were assigned levels of bat roost suitability, ranging between negligible and high for buildings.

- 4.12 Due to the site visit being carried out over one day, it is possible that some signs of protected species may not be apparent within this short timeframe. This is a constraint recognised within the Survey Guidelines and all reasonable effort has been made to identify evidence of protected species. The further revisits added certainty to the original findings.

HSI Assessment

- 4.13 During the site visit, all accessible ponds were appraised for their value to support GCN. As such the following factors were assessed and quantified before being placed into the HSI calculator noted within the report below.

- Geographic Location
- Pond Area
- Pond Permanence
- Shade Cover
- Waterfowl Presence
- Fish Presence
- Surrounding Pond Density
- Terrestrial Habitat Quality
- Macrophyte Cover

- 4.14 The overall score obtained by the pond based on the results of the above factors creates a score showing the overall value of the pond of Excellent, Good, Average, Below Average, Poor.

Ecological Impact Assessment

- 4.15 The methodology for Ecological Impact Assessment (EclA) follows best practice guidelines set by the Chartered Institute of Ecology & Environmental Management (CIEEM): 'Guidelines for Ecological Impact Assessment' (CIEEM, 2018). This includes identifying the baseline conditions on the site and subsequently rating the potential effects of the development based on the sensitivity and value of the resource affected, combined with the magnitude, duration and scale of the impact (or change). This is initially assessed without mitigation measures, and then assessed again after allowing for the proposed mitigation measures; this provides the residual effects. The assessment is divided into construction effects and longer-term operational effects.

- 4.16 Each ecological feature within the site has been considered within a defined Geographic context such as:

- International and European;
- National;
- Regional;

- County;
- District;
- Local;
- Site Level;
- Negligible.

4.17 Based upon CIEEM guidance, value was determined with reference to the following factors:

- Its inclusion as a Designated Site or other protected area;
- The presence of habitat types of conservation significance, e.g. Habitats of Principal Importance (NERC 2006);
- The presence (or potential presence) of species of conservation significance e.g. Species of Principal Importance (NERC 2006);
- The presence of other protected species e.g. those protected under The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981;
- The sites social and economic value.

4.18 Specifically in the case of bats, the impact assessment has been conducted in accordance with the recently published Bat Mitigation Guidelines (Reason and Wray 2023). Other relevant guidelines such as the Dormouse Conservation Handbook, Great Crested Newt Mitigation Guidelines and Froglife Advice Sheet for Reptiles were consulted as appropriate.

5.0 Constraints

5.1 Of the ponds noted within a 500m radius of the site, only one was accessible to gather an HSI Score. However, it is considered that this shall not affect the outcome of the survey or its findings.

6.0 Baseline Ecological Conditions

Desktop Study

Designated Sites and Habitats within 12.0km

6.1 The table below is included to allow the ecological context of the site against that of the wider area. This allows decisions regarding habitat change and protected species to be considered. The habitats of the protected sites listed below may not represent that of the site and may not be affected by proposals.

6.2 No Statutory designated sites were noted within a 2.0km radius of the site.

6.3 No Non-statutory designated sites were noted within a 1.0km radius of the site.

6.4 Due to the nature of the proposals, the LPA will not have to consult with Natural England.

Habitats

Desk Study

- 6.5 Within 1.0km of the site there are Priority Habitats of Deciduous Woodland, Coastal and Floodplain Grazing Marsh and Traditional Orchards. The closest Priority Habitat lies 0.2km west.

Site Assessment

- 6.6 The site is given over to the following habitats.

U1b5 – Buildings

- 6.7 The western barn (B1) is of flint and mortar construction, the eastern barn (B2) is of wooden slat construction. Both barns have tiled roofs. To the north of the site lies a corrugated steel lean-to and a mobile home. Overall, this habitat is of '**negligible**' ecological value.

510 – Bare Ground

- 6.8 A small area of bare ground is noted between the two barns and by the lean-to to the north of the construction area. Overall, this habitat is of '**low**' ecological value.

U1b6 – Other developed Land

- 6.9 Under the cover of the lean-to, to the north of the site is a small area of concrete. Overall, this habitat is of '**negligible**' ecological value.

G4 – Modified Grassland

- 6.10 The majority of the site consisted of modified grassland. Species noted consisted of red fescue (*Festuca rubra*), perennial ryegrass (*Lolium perenne*), annual meadow grass (*Poa annua*) and plantain (*Plantago major*). Overall, this habitat is of '**low**' ecological value.

7.0 Protected Species Assessment

Bats

Desk Study

- 7.1 No granted European Protected Species Licence within the past 10 years are noted within a 2.0km radius of the site.
- 7.2 There are records of Common and nathusius's pipistrelle (*Pipistrellus pipistrellus* and *Pipistrellus nathusii*), serotine (*Eptesicus serotinus*), soprano pipistrelle (*Pipistrellus pygmaeus*), Bechstein's (*Myotis bechsteinii*) and western barbastelle (*Barbastella barbastellus*) within a 2.0km radius.

Site Assessment - Buildings

- 7.3 No signs of bat were noted during the assessment.
- 7.4 B1 is a flint and mortar barn with slate tiled roof. Several crevices and gaps were noted under the tiles along the length of the barn which would allow bats to roost.
- 7.5 B1 soffits and facias all appear to be in good condition and provide little value to bats.

- 7.6 Internally B1 had roofing membrane which could create space for bats to enter from the crevices created between the roof tiles.
- 7.7 B2 is a large wooden slat constructed barn with slate tiled roof. The roof tiles are laid flat to one another creating no visible crevices of value to roosting bats.
- 7.8 The internal roof space of B2 is rendered plaster and of no value to bats.
- 7.9 The Lean-to and mobile home to the north of the site are of no value to bats whatsoever and display no features of value to roosting bats.
- 7.10 Overall, B1 is of '**low**' suitability for roosting bats. B2-B4 are of '**negligible**' suitability for roosting bats.

Foraging and Commuting

- 7.11 The surrounding area provides prime commuting and foraging opportunities for bats along hedgerows and fields. The pond 18 m to the east of the site also provides foraging opportunities. Furthermore, the lack of night time lighting within the local area is conducive to supporting foraging bats.

Birds

Desk Study

- 7.12 Numerous bird species are present in the local area, including those which utilise garden and hedgerow habitats. Species which could utilise the hedgerow and shrub to nest include song thrush (*Turdus philomelos*), blackbird (*Turdus merula*), wren (*Troglodytes troglodytes*) and robin (*Erithacus rubecula*).

Site Assessment

- 7.13 The site provides little nesting opportunities due to the small site size and lack of shrubs/trees / scrub. A beech (*Fagus sylvatica*) hedgerow runs just to the south of the site.
- 7.14 The land was of limited use to foraging birds such as robin and starling which may use the ground to search for invertebrates.
- 7.15 No nesting value or evidence was noted within the buildings. The wider landholding is of '**negligible**' value to nesting and '**low**' value to foraging birds.

Reptiles

Desk Study

- 7.16 There are multiple records of reptiles within a 2.0 km radius of the site.

Site Assessment

- 7.17 The land within the redline boundary was of '**negligible**' value to reptiles as it consisted solely of hard surfacing.
- 7.18 The wider landholding was of '**low**' value to reptiles due to the long sward height of the surrounding paddocks and connectivity of habitats within the wider area.

7.19 The works area is of no value to reptiles and no areas of value to reptiles will be affected.

Amphibians

Desk Study

7.20 The site is within the red impact zone for GCN.

7.21 No ponds are onsite. 9no. ponds were noted within a 500-meter radius of the site. The closest is 18 meters east of the site.

Site Assessment

7.22 There is a '**low/negligible**' potential for amphibians to be present on site. The surrounding habitats of paddock to the west and south are of long sward height and provide very limited foraging and commuting opportunities.

7.23 Despite the surrounding ponds being to all aspects of the site, there are limited entry points to the site. To the north of the works area runs a well maintained close-board wooden fence with domestic dwellings and gardens to the north. To the south of the site runs a small ditch with steep banks, not conducive to supporting commuting amphibians.

7.24 The long sward height grass paddock to the west of site is sub-optimal for commuting GCN.

7.25 The works area is enclosed by B1 and B2 to the west and east. To the north of the proposed kitchen lies a flint wall, further hindering access. The potential for GCN to enter the works area is minimal due to the location of the works and only likely from the south.

7.26 The works area itself is of '**negligible**' value to GCN due to the minimal vegetation in the surrounding area. The bare ground and the grass which is present within the works footprint is of no value whatsoever to GCN.

7.27 The closest pond to the site, 18m east, was of '**negligible**' value to GCN due to the fact it was stocked with fish and had waterfowl present which vastly reduces the potential for GCN to be present.

7.28 The following HSI assessment of the pond confirmed that the pond had little value to GCN.

Figure NO.03 – HSI Calculations

	Pond Name	1
	Grid Ref	TQ17971612
SI No	SI Description	SI Value
1	Geographic location	1.00
2	Pond area	0.10
3	Pond permanence	1.00
4	Water quality	0.10
5	Shade	1.00
6	Water fowl effect	0.01
7	Fish presence	0.33
8	Pond Density	1.00
9	Terrestrial habitat	0.33
10	Macrophyte cover	0.50
HSI Score		0.30
Pond suitability (see below)		Poor
	HIS Score	Pond Suitability
	< 0.50	Poor
	0.50 - 0.59	Below average
	0.60 - 0.69	Average
	0.70 - 0.79	Good
	> 0.80	Excellent

7.29 The potential for GCN to be present onsite is **highly unlikely** within the works area.

Badger

Desk Study

7.30 Badger (*Meles meles*) records are confidential, but they are likely present nearby.

Site Assessment

7.31 No evidence of badger such as setts, snuffle holes or latrines were noted. The site is bound by pasture fields, fences and road. No vegetation runs were noted within the fields. No potential access holes were noted within the fencing. The site provides very limited opportunities for foraging badgers.

Other

7.32 No potential for or evidence of any other protected species such as rare plants was recorded. There is good potential for hedgehogs *Erinaceus europaeus* to forage in the grass on the west of site given its connectivity to other habitats of value. No impacts upon other protected species are considered likely and have not been assessed further.

8.0 Evaluation of Impacts and Mitigation

Designated Sites

Potential Impacts

- 8.1 None foreseen.

Avoidance, Mitigation and Compensation

- 8.2 None required.

Habitats

Potential Impacts

- 8.3 The proposals shall affect hard surfaces, bare ground and small areas of modified grassland.

Avoidance, Mitigation and Compensation

- 8.4 Ensure all materials and plant machinery affect the minimal area of soft surfaces possible by creating pre-determined routes which plant machinery shall use. Specific material storage areas shall be implemented to ensure excess land isn't degraded through works.
- 8.5 All hazardous chemicals should be stored on existing hard surfaces away from soft or open ground. Refuelling should be undertaken in a designated area on existing hard surfaces. Spill kits should be provided in case of emergency.
- 8.6 Any areas of grassland removed or disturbed by works shall be relaid with turf once works are complete.

Bats

Potential Impacts

- 8.7 Inappropriate lighting could lead to loss of foraging areas for bats.
- 8.8 B1 holds bat roost suitability. Lack of mitigation could lead to the injury or death of a bat.

Avoidance, Mitigation and Compensation

- 8.9 To establish exactly if and how bats are using B1, a single bat emergence surveys is required to ensure no bats are injured or killed during works.
- 8.10 The survey shall take place between **mid-May and August** on a night of suitable conditions (above 9 degrees and calm winds with no rain). It shall commence 15 minutes before sunset and continue for 1.5 hours after sunset.
- 8.11 Works shall be designed to minimise disturbance of any bats which might use the surroundings. No external lighting shall be installed other than minimal downlighting of entrances and the access drive. Such lighting must strictly accord with the BCT/ILP Guidance Note 08/23, with minimal illumination of the boundary vegetation in particular (taken to be no more than 0.2 lux other than for emergency lighting). Construction phase lighting shall not be used.

- 8.12 Trees and hedges to be retained must be protected in accordance with British Standard 5837:2012.

Nesting Birds

Potential Impacts

- 8.13 No vegetation of value to nesting birds is currently scheduled for removal. If proposals change, this could lead to the destruction of a nest. This would constitute an offence under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (As Amended).

Avoidance, Mitigation and Compensation

- 8.14 Should proposals change to include vegetation, tree, hedge or shrub removal, works shall be carried out outside of nesting season (March-August inclusive) and in any case shall be preceded by a check to ensure no nests are present. If this is not possible, a more detailed inspection shall be undertaken by a suitable qualified ecologist and dependent on the results of this, monitoring would be necessary by the ecologist to confirm no nests are present or likely to be concealed.
- 8.15 Any active nests must be granted a 5.0 m buffer from any works, until such time that the chicks within have fledged and the nest is no longer in active use.
- 8.16 Should an active nest be discovered or suspected during works, all operations in the area must cease and a suitably qualified ecologist contacted for advice.

Reptiles and Amphibians

Potential Impacts

- 8.17 The works are limited to areas of hardstanding and bare ground with patchy grass surrounding the lean-to.
- 8.18 In the absence of mitigation, there is a low risk that a GCN could be harmed or killed during works, which would constitute an offence within the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (As Amended).

Avoidance, Mitigation and Compensation

- 8.19 The grass within the works area shall be closely mown or removed (leaving bare ground) prior to works in winter 2025/2026 and then maintained as such until works occur and during construction. This clearance shall be overseen by a suitably qualified ecologist.
- 8.20 The grass along the western edge of the site is already due to be cleared under ecological supervision to facilitate works in the northern half of the landholding under a separate application (see EclA report, reference: AR185-Sweetmans Barn.EclAV3 – Alex Rosenfeld 2026).
- 8.21 All materials shall be stored on hard surfaces or pallets, and any piles of timber metals etc. checked for presence of amphibians or reptiles before removal.
- 8.22 In the **highly unlikely** event a GCN is discovered, all works must cease and a suitably qualified ecologist contacted for advice.

- 8.23 In the **highly unlikely** event a GCN is discovered, all works must cease and the suitably qualified ecologist contacted for advice.

Badger

Potential Impacts

- 8.24 In the absence of mitigation, there is a potential that badgers and other mammals could become trapped in trenches and footings.

Avoidance, Mitigation and Compensation

- 8.25 Ensure all trenches and footings are covered at night and when the site is unattended or fitted with a shallow angled ramp to allow any trapped animals to escape.

Other

Potential Impacts

- 8.26 In the absence of mitigation there is a low risk of hedgehogs being disturbed, especially if materials are not stored properly in the garden.

Mitigation and Compensation

- 8.27 All materials shall be stored on hard surfaces or pallets, and any piles of aggregates, timber etc. checked for presence of hedgehogs before removal.

Residual Impacts

- 8.28 The overall impact of the scheme will be negligible.

9.0 Ecological Enhancements

- 9.1 The most beneficial enhancements would involve the following:

- The provision of nesting boxes for a variety of bird species such as starling and house sparrow within trees and swallow boxes in a sheltered spot away from external lighting on the exterior of the barns onsite.
- The creation of log and compost piles, as well as artificial hibernacula in quiet corners of the site;
- Bat boxes suitable for a range of species to be fitted to the southern aspect of the onsite buildings;
- Installation of invertebrate boxes in both sunny and sheltered locations to cater for a range of species.

10.0 Conclusions

- 10.1 The proposals area consists of two barns of wood and stone construction with a grass/hardstanding courtyard. Surrounding the proposed works area within the same landholding is a mobile home, and an open sided lean-to storage area with hardstanding and bare ground.
- 10.2 The works area offered '**low**' **suitability** for roosting bats due to the features displayed within B1. As such a single bat emergence survey shall be required to establish exactly if and how bats are using B1.
- 10.3 The site offers '**low**' **value** for foraging bats.
- 10.4 The site offers '**negligible / low**' **value** for nesting birds and '**low**' **value** for amphibians (within the works area), reptiles hedgehog and badgers.
- 10.5 No significant effects are anticipated upon designated sites, provided the avoidance and mitigation measures stated within this report are followed.
- 10.6 When mitigation has been taken into account, the proposals are not considered to have a negative impact upon designated sites, habitats or protected species. Enhancements and a are included to confirm how ecological gains will be achieved.

11.0 References

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13.0 Appendix A - Site Photos

Photo 1 – B1 from the north.



Photo 2 – View of Southern end of B1.



Photo 3 – Detail of B1 roof.



Photo 4 – Detail of B1 roof.



Photo 5 – Inside of B1.



Photo 6 – B2 from the west and area of modified grassland.



Photo 7 – B2 viewed from the south.



Photo 7 – View of facias of B2



Photo 8 – Internal roof of B2.



Photo 8– Pond noted C. 18 meters east of the site.



14.0 Appendix B - Pond Locations

