

Yew Tree Farm, Stoneclough M26 1EB

## PRELIMINARY ROOST ASSESSMENT AND ECOLOGICAL ASSESSMENT

January 2026

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## Document Control

| Survey Type:                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             | Surveyors <sup>1</sup>                                                              | Survey Date(s)                |
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| Daytime Bat Walkover Survey                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              | Victoria Burrows B.Sc. (Hons) M.Sc. CEnv MCIEEM                                     | 5 <sup>th</sup> June 2025     |
| Reporting                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                | Personnel                                                                           | Date                          |
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## SUMMARY

### Introduction and Scope

- i. This ecological assessment has been prepared for the land at Yew Tree Farm, off Ringley Road West, Stoneclough. The assessment was requested to inform a planning application proposing the redevelopment of the site to two self-build residential properties.
- ii. This report presents the results of a desktop study, a Phase 1 Habitat Survey and the results of surveys for relevant protected species carried out in June 2025. The survey was carried out by an appropriately licensed, qualified and experienced ecologist and is in accordance with standard, recognised survey guidelines. The scope of survey undertaken to date is appropriate to identify potential ecological constraints, the feasibility of mitigation required and opportunities for biodiversity.

### Results of Survey and Assessment

- iii. The approximately 0.1256 hectare (ha) site is located within the Yew Tree Farm complex which is sited off a long driveway to the north of Ringley Road West near Stoneclough / Outwood, near Radcliffe. The site comprises a former workshop which has been burnt out and an adjacent former stable. The buildings are bordered by hardstanding and bare ground, with a vegetated garden of modified grassland and mix of surrounding scrub and ornamental planting / introduced shrub.
- iv. As discussed in **Section 4.2** adverse direct and / or indirect effects of the proposals on any designated sites for nature conservation are reasonably discounted.
- v. No Priority Habitat, semi-natural or irreplaceable habitat is present or will be affected by the proposals.
- vi. Wall Cotoneaster and Indian Balsam, both invasive plant species listed under Schedule 9 of the *Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981* (as amended), are present. The proposals secure the eradication these species as part of the proposed development. Further guidance is presented at **Section 5.3**.
- vii. The burnt-out workshop is assessed to conform to a suitability for use by roosting bats of 'none' and the stable is assessed to have 'negligible' suitability at all times of year. The presence of roosting bats is reasonably discounted at the site. No further surveys for roosting bats are required to comply with relevant survey guidelines or to inform a planning application.
- viii. The site is suitable for use by nesting passerine bird species and by hedgehog (a Priority Species). Measures to be applied for the protection of wildlife prior to and during site preparation and construction and for the enhancement of the site for wildlife in the long-term are outlined in **Sections 5.3** and **5.4**.
- ix. The presence of great crested newt is reasonably discounted. Due to the presence of two ponds within 100 metres of the site reasonable avoidance measures are outlined in **Section 5.3**.
- x. Appropriate and proportionate survey effort and / or assessment, in accordance with standard survey guidelines, has been applied to discount adverse effects on other relevant protected species. No further surveys for other protected species are required to inform a planning application.

### Conclusion

- xi. It is advised that the proposals at Yew Tree Farm can be achieved in accordance with wildlife legislation, planning policy, Natural England guidance and best practice.
- xii. In the presence of the mandatory actions and best practice measures described in **Section 5.0**, adverse effects on protected species are reasonably discounted. The proposals will have no impact on designated sites for nature conservation or other ecologically valuable habitats. Enhancement measures that aim to maximise the benefits for biodiversity as part of the proposals and comply with the National Planning Policy Framework and *Biodiversity Net Gain: Good Practice Principles for Development* (CIEEM, 2016) are outlined in **Section 5.4**.

## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Background and Rationale

- 1.1.1 ERAP (Consultant Ecologists) Ltd was commissioned by JPE Consultancy Limited to carry out an ecological assessment of the land at Yew Tree Farm, Stoneclough M26 1EB (hereafter referred to as the 'site'). The Ordnance Survey (OS) grid reference at the centre of the site is SD 77353 05768. An aerial image of the site and its surrounding habitats is appended at **Figure 1** (source image: ESRI World Imagery).
- 1.1.2 The assessment was requested to inform a planning application proposing the redevelopment of the site to two self-build residential properties.

### 1.2 Scope of Works

- 1.2.1 The scope of ecological works undertaken in June 2025 comprised:
- A desktop study for known ecological information at the site and the local area;
  - An Extended Phase 1 Habitat Survey and assessment, and assessment of the habitats present at the site using the UK Habitats Classification;
  - Assessment of the ecological value of the habitats within the site with the use of the National Vegetation Classification (NVC) and the Ratcliffe criteria, as presented in *A Nature Conservation Review* (Ratcliffe, 1977);
  - A daytime bat walkover survey for bats, an assessment of the suitability of the habitats within the site and the surrounding area for foraging and commuting bats and a licensed preliminary roost assessment of the buildings / structures;
  - Survey and assessment of all habitats for relevant statutorily protected species<sup>1</sup> and other wildlife including badger (*Meles meles*), barn owl (*Tyto alba*), great crested newt (*Triturus cristatus*), bird species and reptiles;
  - The identification of any potential ecological constraints on the proposals and the specification of the scope of mitigation and ecological enhancement required in accordance with wildlife legislation, planning policy guidance and other relevant guidance; and
  - The identification of any further surveys or precautionary actions that may be required to inform the progression of the site through the planning process or prior to the commencement of any construction activities.

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<sup>1</sup> In accordance with Government Circular: Biodiversity and Geological Conservation – Statutory Obligations and Their Impact on the Planning System (Office of the Deputy Prime Minister, 2005) developers should not be required to undertake surveys for protected species unless there is reasonable likelihood of the species being present and affected by the development. In this instance (for example) there are no water courses within or adjacent to the site; there has been no requirement to consider water vole (*Arvicola amphibius*) or otter (*Lutra lutra*) as part of this assessment.

## 2.0 METHOD OF SURVEY

### 2.1 Desktop Study

2.1.1 The following sources of information and ecological records were consulted:

- a. MAGiC Maps: A web-based interactive map which brings together geographic information on key environmental schemes and designations, including details of statutory nature conservation sites;
- b. Ancient Tree Inventory (Woodland Trust, 2026): An online database of ancient and veteran trees;
- c. Greater Manchester Nature Network Map; and
- d. Greater Manchester Biodiversity Action plan (GM BAP).

2.1.2 The proposals at the site are small scale and will be of limited impact upon the site and local area. In accordance with *Guidelines for Accessing, Using and Sharing Biodiversity Data in the UK* (CIEEM, 2020), it is considered that the purchase of ecological records (as provided by Greater Manchester Local Record Centre) is not required in this instance.

### 2.2 Vegetation and Habitats

2.2.1 An Extended Phase 1 Habitat Survey of the site was carried out by Victoria Burrows B.Sc. (Hons) M.Sc. CEnv MCIEEM on 5<sup>th</sup> June 2025. The weather was cloudy with sunny intervals, a light air (Beaufort scale 1) and an air temperature of 14°C.

2.2.2 A habitat and vegetation map was prepared for the site and the immediate surrounding area and is appended at **Figure 2**. The mapping is based on the Joint Nature Conservation Committee Phase 1 Habitat Survey methodology (JNCC, 2010) with minor adjustments to illustrate and examine the habitats with greater precision.

2.2.3 The plant species within the site boundary were determined with estimates of the distribution, ground cover, abundance and constancy of individual species. The estimation of abundance was based on the DAFOR system, where D = Dominant, A = Abundant, F = Frequent, O = Occasional and R = Rare, this being a widely used and accepted system employed by ecological surveyors. The terms L = Locally and V = Very were additionally used to describe the plant species distributions with greater precision.

2.2.4 Stands of vegetation and habitats were described and evaluated using the National Vegetation Classification (NVC). The NVC provides a systematic and comprehensive analysis of British vegetation and is a reliable framework for nature conservation and land-use planning.

2.2.5 Habitats within the site were assessed in accordance with *The UK Habitat Classification Version 2.0* (UKHab Ltd, 2023). The UK Habitat Classification, or 'UKHab' has been designed to function at two scales of minimum mappable unit (MMU): fine scale (25m<sup>2</sup> or 5 metres length) and large scale (400m<sup>2</sup> or 20 metres length). It has been considered for the purposes of this survey that the fine scale of 25m<sup>2</sup> or 5 metres length MMU is appropriate.

2.2.6 Searches were made for uncommon, rare and statutorily protected plant species, those species listed as protected in the *Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981* (as amended) and species which are indicators of important and uncommon plant communities. Plant nomenclature follows *New Flora of the British Isles 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition* (Stace, 2010).

- 2.2.7 Searches were carried out for the presence of invasive species, including those listed on Schedule 9 of the *Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981* (as amended), including Japanese Knotweed (*Fallopia japonica*), Indian Balsam (*Impatiens glandulifera*) and Giant Hogweed (*Heracleum mantegazzianum*).

## 2.3 Licensed Bat Survey and Assessment

### Daytime Bat Walkover Survey

#### *Survey Personnel*

- 2.3.1 The licensed daytime bat walkover survey and assessment was carried out by Victoria Burrows, Natural England Class Survey Licence (bats, CL18 Level 2) Registration Number 2015-10390-CLS-CLS. The surveyor's qualifications and experience meet the criteria as defined in the *Technical Guidance Series Competencies for Species Survey: Bats* (CIEEM, 2013).

#### *Habitat Assessment for Commuting / Foraging Bats*

- 2.3.2 Habitats within and adjacent to the site were assessed for their value and suitability for commuting and foraging bats in accordance with Table 4.1 of *Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines (4<sup>th</sup> edn)* (Collins, J. (ed), 2023). Reference has been made to the categories, descriptions and examples presented in **Table 2.1**.

**Table 2.1: Consideration of Suitability of Foraging and Commuting Habitat for Bats**

| Suitability                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     | Potential Flight Paths and Foraging Habitats                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| None                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            | 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 <sup>a</sup>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         | 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                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             | 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.<br>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                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        | 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.<br>Habitat that is connected to the wider landscape that could be used by bats for foraging such as trees, scrub, grassland or water.                                                                                                                                                                                    |
| High                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            | 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.<br>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.<br>Site is close to and connected to known roosts. |
| <sup>a</sup> Negligible is defined as 'so small or unimportant as to be not worth considering, insignificant'. This category may be used where there are places that a bat could roost or forage (due to one attribute) but it is unlikely that they actually would (due to another attribute). |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |

#### *Preliminary Roost Assessment of the Building / Structures*

- 2.3.3 The survey was carried out in accordance with standard methodology including the *Bat Mitigation Guidelines* (Mitchell-Jones, 2004), the *Bat Workers' Manual 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition* (Mitchell-Jones & Mcleish, 2004) and *Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines (4<sup>th</sup> edn)* (Collins, J. (ed), 2023).

- 2.3.4 An inspection of the external surfaces, walls and roof of the building and the walled frame of a burnt out building was carried out to find potential bat roosting habitat or accesses into internal areas where roosts may be present. Searches for evidence of bat presence in the form of droppings, urine stains, feeding signs, grease marks and other evidence were carried out.
- 2.3.5 The internal survey involved an examination of the accessible internal areas to search for roosting bats or evidence of previous use of the buildings by bats such as droppings and prey remains.
- 2.3.6 The suitability of the buildings for use by roosting bats has been assessed in accordance with Table 4.1 of *Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines (4<sup>th</sup> edn)* (Collins, J. (ed), 2023), taking into account any presence of gaps suitable for access by bats, features suitable for use by roosting bats within the building and walls (including crevice dwelling species and species which can roost in the open in roof voids), and the suitability of the surrounding habitats for use by foraging and commuting bats. The suitability of the buildings has been informed by the following categories as presented in **Table 2.2**.

**Table 2.2: Suitability Categories for Roosting Habitats in Buildings**

| Suitability             | Description                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
|-------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 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).                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
| Negligible <sup>a</sup> | 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.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
| 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 <sup>b</sup> 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 <sup>c</sup> ). |
| Moderate                | A structure with one or more potential roost sites that could be used by bats due to their size, shelter, protection, conditions <sup>b</sup> 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).                                                                   |
| 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 <sup>b</sup> and surrounding habitat. These structures have the potential to support high conservation status roosts, e.g. maternity or classic cool / stable hibernation site.                                                                                                       |

<sup>a</sup>Negligible is defined as ‘so small or unimportant as to be not worth considering, insignificant’. This category may be used where there are places that a bat could roost or forage (due to one attribute) but it is unlikely that they actually would (due to another attribute).

<sup>b</sup>For example, in terms of temperature, humidity, height above ground level, light levels or levels of disturbance.

<sup>c</sup>Evidence from the Netherlands shows mass swarming events of common pipistrelle bats in the autumn followed by mass hibernation in a diverse range of building types in urban environments (Korsten *et al.*, 2016 and Jansen *et al.*, 2022). Common pipistrelle swarming has been observed in the UK (Bell, 2022 and Tomlinson, 2020) and winter hibernation of numbers of this species has been detected at Seaton Delaval Hall in Northumberland (National Trust, 2018). This phenomenon requires some research in the UK, but ecologists should be aware of the potential for larger numbers of this species to be present during the autumn and winter in prominent buildings in the landscape, urban or otherwise.

### Equipment

- 2.3.7 A list of equipment used is listed in **Table 2.4**.

**Table 2.3: Survey Equipment Used / Available for Use During Daytime Bat Survey**

|                                                 |
|-------------------------------------------------|
| Ladders                                         |
| LED Lenser P14 torch                            |
| Canon Ixus digital camera                       |
| 8x20 binoculars                                 |
| Ridgid Micro Inspection Camera Borescope CA-300 |

## 2.4 Other Relevant Protected Species and Animal Life

### Badger

- 2.4.1 The survey area for badger covered the site (as annotated on **Figure 2**) and extended to accessible land within a radius of 50 metres from the site boundary.
- 2.4.2 The survey was conducted in accordance with guidance presented within *Badgers and Development* (Natural England, 2007) and *Badgers: advice for making planning decisions* (Natural England, 2022).
- 2.4.3 The following signs of badger activity were searched for:
- Sett entrances, e.g. entrances that are normally 25 to 35cm in diameter and shaped like a 'D' on its side;
  - Large spoil heaps outside sett entrances;
  - Bedding outside sett entrances;
  - Badger footprints;
  - Badger paths;
  - Latrines;
  - Badger hairs on fences or bushes;
  - Scratching posts; and
  - Signs of digging for food.
- 2.4.4 Habitats within and surrounding the site were assessed in terms of their suitability for use by foraging and sheltering badger in accordance with their known habitat preferences as detailed in current guidance and *Badger* (Roper, 2010).

### Bird Species

- 2.4.5 Habitats throughout the site and in the immediate surrounding area were assessed for their value to roosting, feeding and nesting birds, as indicated by the amount of shelter, feeding value, woody vegetation structure and species diversity of tree and shrub species in the site.
- 2.4.6 During the internal inspection on 5<sup>th</sup> June 2025 the buildings were searched for pellets, faecal splashes and feathers which may indicate use by roosting or nesting barn owl in accordance with *The Barn Owl Conservation Handbook* (Barn Owl Trust, 2012) and *Barn Owl Tyto alba Survey Methodology and Techniques for use in Ecological Assessment. Developing Best Practice in Survey and Reporting* (Shawyer, 2011). The buildings were also searched for evidence of use by other nesting bird species.

## Great Crested Newt and Other Amphibian Species

### Desktop Search for Ponds

- 2.4.7 In accordance with *Great crested newts: advice for making planning decisions* (Natural England, 2022) all ponds within an unobstructed 500 metres of a site should be considered for their suitability to support breeding great crested newts. Where the impact of the proposals is relatively minor (i.e. the site is limited in size (i.e. below 5 hectares) and the area of habitat suitable for use by great crested newt is limited) it is appropriate and proportionate to limit the radius of search for ponds to 250 metres.
- 2.4.8 The search of habitats in the wider area up to a distance of 250 metres from the site boundary revealed the presence of three ponds, as detailed in **Table 2.4**.

**Table 2.4: Ponds within 500 metres of the Site**

| Pond Reference | OS Grid Reference | Distance from Site Boundary | Location (refer to Figure 1)              |
|----------------|-------------------|-----------------------------|-------------------------------------------|
| 1              | SD 77351 05729    | 10 metres                   | In garden area to the south               |
| 2              | SD 77329 05718    | 24 metres                   | Large pond stocked with fish to the south |
| 3              | SD 77285 05999    | 220 metres                  | In a field north of the site              |

### Consideration of Requirement for Further Survey

- 2.4.9 The requirement for further survey at each pond was then assessed (refer to **Section 3.4**) using the following criteria:
- Presence of dispersal barriers to great crested newt movements between ponds and the site, as detected during the walkover survey;
  - Distance of ponds from the site, and the potential influence of the proposed development of the site on any populations of great crested newt (if present at ponds), using the Natural England rapid risk assessment tool.

### Habitat Suitability Index Assessment

- 2.4.10 Relevant ponds (i.e. Ponds 1 and 2) were assessed using the *Habitat Suitability Index (HSI)* (Oldham, et al., 2000) by Victoria Burrows B.Sc. (Hons) M.Sc. CEnv MCIEEM. The ponds were examined with reference to the ten HSI scoring criteria, which are: SI1: Geographical location; SI2: Pond area; SI3: Pond drying; SI4: Water quality (as indicated by the diversity of aquatic plants and invertebrates); SI5: Shade; SI6: Waterfowl; SI7: Fish; SI8: Abundance of other ponds within a one kilometre radius; SI9: Quality of terrestrial habitat; and SI10: Macrophyte cover (i.e. aquatic and emergent plants). The survey was conducted in accordance with *ARG UK Advice Note 5: Great Crested Newt Habitat Suitability Index. Amphibian and Reptile Groups of the United Kingdom* (ARG UK, 2010).
- 2.4.11 The assessment followed guidance in relation to interpreting HSI scores, following the categorical scale shown in **Table 2.5**.

**Table 2.5: Pond Habitat Suitability Index Categories**

| HSI Score  | Pond Suitability for Great Crested Newt |
|------------|-----------------------------------------|
| <0.5       | Poor                                    |
| 0.5 – 0.59 | Below average                           |
| 0.6 – 0.69 | Average                                 |
| 0.7 – 0.79 | Good                                    |
| >0.8       | Excellent                               |

### **Assessment of Terrestrial Habitat**

- 2.4.12 An assessment of the terrestrial habitat within the site for great crested newts and other amphibian species was conducted, as informed by the *Great Crested Newt Mitigation Guidelines* (English Nature, 2001) and the *Great Crested Newt Conservation Handbook* (Langton, et al., 2001).
- 2.4.13 Habitats present within the site were assessed for their value to support foraging, sheltering and hibernating great crested newt. Favourable habitats can comprise rough grassland, scrubland, woodland and sites with underground crevices or cracks, such as mammal holes, voids in tree stumps or banks, and refugia such as rock piles or dead wood.

### **Reptile Species**

- 2.4.14 The site and its surroundings were assessed in terms of their suitability for use by reptile species using the important characteristics for reptiles outlined in the draft document *Reptile Mitigation Guidelines* (Natural England, 2011), and the *Reptile Habitat Management Handbook* (Edgar, et al., 2010). These habitat characteristics are outlined in **Table 2.6**.

**Table 2.6: Important Habitat Characteristics for Reptiles**

|                                            |                                                |
|--------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------|
| 1. Location (in relation to species range) | 7. Connectivity to nearby good quality habitat |
| 2. Vegetation Structure                    | 8. Prey abundance                              |
| 3. Insolation                              | 9. Refuge opportunity                          |
| 4. Aspect                                  | 10. Hibernation habitat potential              |
| 5. Topography                              | 11. Disturbance regime                         |
| 6. Surface geology                         | 12. Egg-laying site potential                  |

### **Other Wildlife**

- 2.4.15 Evidence of other wildlife, including Priority Species, observed whilst on site, but for which specific surveys were not made, was recorded and has been included in this report where it is considered of relevance to the planning application.
- 2.4.16 Habitats have been assessed for their suitability for Priority Species identified in the data search results where this is considered relevant to the application.

## **2.5 Survey and Reporting Limitations**

- 2.5.1 No survey limitations on the intended scope of survey were experienced
- 2.5.2 All measurements within this report are approximate only, and have been either estimated whilst on site or calculated using mapping software (QGIS) or internet-based mapping services such as MAGiC Maps and Google Earth.

## 2.6 Evaluation Methods

- 2.6.1 The habitats, vegetation and animal life were evaluated with reference to standard nature conservation criteria as described in *A Nature Conservation Review* (Ratcliffe, 1977). These are size (extent), diversity, naturalness, rarity, fragility, typicality, recorded history, position in an ecological or geographical unit, potential value and intrinsic appeal.
- 2.6.2 Habitats have been assessed to determine whether they meet those described in *UK Biodiversity Action Plan: Priority Habitat Descriptions* (Maddock, A (ed), 2008); these lists are used to help draw up the statutory lists of Priority Habitats, as required under Section 41 of the *Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006*. Where suitable, the ecological value of the habitats present has been assessed using the terms outlined in *Guidelines for Ecological Impact Assessment in the UK and Ireland: Terrestrial, Freshwater, Coastal and Marine* (CIEEM, 2018). Each habitat and individual trees have been assessed to determine whether they are ‘irreplaceable habitat’, defined in *National Planning Policy Framework* (Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government, 2024)<sup>2</sup> as ‘Habitats which would be technically very difficult (or take a very significant time) to restore, recreate or replace once destroyed, taking into account their age, uniqueness, species diversity or rarity. They include ancient woodland, ancient and veteran trees, blanket bog, limestone pavement, sand dunes, salt marsh and lowland fen’. The further detail presented in *The Biodiversity Gain Requirements (Irreplaceable Habitat) Regulations 2024* (GOV.UK, 2024) has also been referred to.
- 2.6.3 Government advice on wildlife, as set out in the NPPF and associated government circulars has been taken into consideration. Legislation relating to protected species, such as those listed under Schedules 1, 5, 6 and 8 of the *Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981* (as amended) and *The Conservation of Habitats and Species (Amendment) (EU Exit) Regulations 2019*, is referenced where applicable, and any impacts to protected species are evaluated in accordance with current guidance.
- 2.6.4 The presence of any Priority Species, as listed under Section 41 of the *Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006* is noted, and habitats are assessed in terms of their suitability and value for these species. The presence of habitats and / or species listed by the Greater Manchester Biodiversity Action Plans has been taken into account in the evaluation of the site.

## 3.0 SURVEY RESULTS

### 3.1 Desktop Study

#### Statutory Designated Sites for Nature Conservation and SSSI Impact Risk Zones

- 3.1.1 The site and adjoining land have no statutory designation for nature conservation.
- 3.1.2 The site lies within a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) Impact Risk Zone for the Ashclough SSSI located 1.03 kilometres to the north-west. This SSSI is designated for its palaeogeographical interest.
- 3.1.3 The SSSI Impact Risk Zone requires the Local Planning Authority to consult with Natural England on likely risks from the following development categories (Natural England, 2026);
- **Infrastructure:** Pipelines and underground cables, pylons and overhead cables (excluding upgrades and refurbishment of existing network). Any transport proposal including new or extended

<sup>2</sup>Hereafter the NPPF

footways, cycleways, roads / car parks, railways and waterways (excluding routine maintenance). Airports, helipads and other aviation proposals.

- **Minerals, Oil and Gas:** Planning applications for quarries, including: new proposals, Review of Minerals Permissions, extensions, variations to conditions etc. Oil and gas exploration / extraction.
- **Rural Residential:** Any residential development of 100 or more units outside existing settlements / urban areas.
- **Air Pollution:** Livestock and poultry units with a floorspace greater than 500m<sup>2</sup>, slurry lagoons greater than 750m<sup>2</sup> and manure stores greater than 3500 tonnes.
- **Waste:** Landfill. Including: inert landfill, non-hazardous landfill, hazardous landfill.
- **Water Supply:** Large infrastructure such as warehousing / industry where the total net additional gross internal floorspace following development is 1,000m<sup>2</sup> or more.

3.1.4 The proposals do not meet any of these criteria and Natural England states:

*'You do not need to consult Natural England on the proposed development at this location.*

*The Impact Risk Zones for Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI IRZs) indicate that at the location selected, the proposed development is unlikely to have a harmful effect on terrestrial Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs) and the Special Areas of Conservation (SACs), Special Protection Areas (SPAs) or Ramsar sites that they underpin.*

*Therefore, you do not need to consult Natural England on the likely impacts of development on terrestrial SSSIs and the SACs, SPAs or Ramsar sites that they underpin.'*

#### **Non-statutory Designated Sites for Nature Conservation**

3.1.5 The site and adjoining land have no non-statutory designation for nature conservation, called 'Sites of Biological Importance' or 'SBI' in Greater Manchester.

#### **Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS)**

3.1.6 The site has not specific allocation on the Greater Manchester Nature Network Map.

#### **Priority Habitats Inventory**

3.1.7 The Priority Habitats Inventory<sup>3</sup> was checked via MAGiC Maps. No Priority Habitats are identified within or adjacent to the site.

#### **Ancient Tree Inventory**

3.1.8 No ancient or veteran trees are identified at the site by the inventory.

<sup>3</sup> A spatial dataset that describes the geographic extent and location of Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act (2006) Section 41 habitats of principal importance.

## 3.2 Vegetation and Habitats

### General Description

- 3.2.1 The approximately 0.1256 hectare (ha) site is located within the Yew Tree Farm complex which is sited off a long driveway to the north of Ringley Road West near Stoneclough / Outwood, near Radcliffe. The site comprises a former workshop which has been burnt out and an adjacent former stable. The buildings are bordered by hardstanding and bare ground, with a vegetated garden of modified grassland and mix of surrounding scrub and ornamental planting / introduced shrub.
- 3.2.2 The site is surrounded by its associated yard used for a landscaping business, including but not limited to: a small car park, residential detached house, small woodland area, garden and other farmyard buildings. Surrounding this property is agricultural farmland.
- 3.2.3 A Phase 1 Habitat Survey map is appended at **Figure 2**. Photographs are appended in **Table 8.1**.

### Buildings and Hardstanding

- 3.2.4 Buildings at the site are the concrete block frame of the burnt-out workshop and a single storey stable. The buildings are described in relation to their suitability for use by roosting bats at **Section 3.3**. The buildings are described by the UKHab as u1b5 buildings.
- 3.2.5 Refer to **Photos 1 to 3**. The buildings are bordered by hardstanding of asphalt / concrete and compacted hardcore which is regularly disturbed and does not support any significant assemblage or cover of plant species. Ruderal / ephemeral plant species growing at the base of the concrete walls of the building are locally abundant Broad-leaved Willowherb (*Epilobium montanum*) and Field Horsetail (*Equisetum arvense*), occasional Groundsel (*Senecio vulgaris*) and Prickly Sow-thistle (*Sonchus asper*), very locally abundant Herb-Robert (*Geranium robertianum*) and garden / ornamental plants. A plant species list is appended at **Table 8.2**.
- 3.2.6 The hardstanding is described as u1b6 other developed land with the secondary code 81 ruderal / ephemeral.

### Vegetated Garden

#### Mown Lawn of Amenity / Modified Grassland

- 3.2.7 Refer to **Photos 4 and 5**. The mown lawn to the south-east of the stable building is characterised by constant and abundant Perennial Rye-grass (*Lolium perenne*), frequent Red Fescue (*Festuca rubra*), Yorkshire-fog (*Holcus lanatus*), Creeping Bent (*Agrostis stolonifera*), Common Bent (*Agrostis capillaris*) and Greater Plantain (*Plantago major*) with locally frequent Annual Meadow-grass (*Poa annua*). Other forbs were recorded as very locally abundant White Clover (*Trifolium repens*), Creeping Thistle (*Cirsium arvense*) and Lesser Trefoil (*Trifolium dubium*) with occasional Common Mouse-ear (*Cerastium fontanum*), Cow Parsley (*Anthriscus sylvestris*) and Tufted Vetch (*Vicia cracca*). A plant species list is appended at **Table 8.3**.
- 3.2.8 The grassland / lawn has affinities with the MG7 *Lolium perenne* ley community of the NVC (Rodwell, 1992) and is described by the UKHab as g4 modified grassland with the secondary code 828 vegetated garden and 107 mown and collected.

### ***Area of Introduced Shrub / Ornamental Planting***

- 3.2.9 Refer to **Photo 6**. Immediately south of the elevation wall of the burnt-out workshop is a stone edged flower bed of *Hosta* and other ornamental plants.

### ***Invasive Plant Species***

- 3.2.10 No Japanese Knotweed is present at the site.
- 3.2.11 As illustrated on **Figure 2**, stands of Wall Cotoneaster and Indian Balsam were detected around the buildings. These species are listed on Schedule 9 of the *Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981* (as amended); it is an offence to spread or cause their spread in the wild. This is considered further at **Section 4.3** below.

## **3.3 Bat Walkover Survey**

### ***Habitat Assessment for Commuting and Foraging Bats***

- 3.3.1 The vegetated garden habitat area of the site is small in size and is unlikely to provide an abundance or diversity of invertebrate prey. The other habitats comprise buildings and hardstanding. Based on the size of the site and the limited cover of habitats the site is assessed to be of 'negligible' suitability for use by foraging and commuting bats.
- 3.3.2 The habitats adjacent to the site such as the hedgerow and tree-lined track (**Photo 16**), Pond 2 (**Photo 18**), the woodland and scrub will contribute to the wider foraging area of species associated with suburban habitats such as common pipistrelle (*Pipistrellus pipistrellus*). These off-site habitats are assessed to be of 'moderate' suitability for use by foraging and commuting bats. The proposal provide an opportunity to contribute to the suitability of the area for use by foraging bats, as outlined in **Section 5.4**.

### ***Preliminary Roost Assessment: Buildings***

#### ***Burnt-out Workshop***

- 3.3.3 Refer to **Photos 8 to 10**. The burnt-out former workshop currently comprises the concrete block elevation walls. No roof is present and the remaining items within the walled frame are charred. A section at the north-eastern end supports the timber joists but these are fire damaged; no gaps at mortise joints or other features with suitability for bat access were found.
- 3.3.4 Inspection of the external and internal sides of the concrete block walls did not detect any gaps or potential roost features. Due to the absence of a roof covering the area is entirely exposed to the weather and water ingress.
- 3.3.5 No bats, bat droppings or potential roost features were found at the burnt out former workshop. The workshop is assessed to have a suitability for use by roosting bats of 'none'.

#### ***Former Stable***

- 3.3.6 Refer to **Photos 11 to 15**. To the north-east of the burnt-out workshop is a concrete and brick built stable building with a pitch corrugated sheet covered roof.
- 3.3.7 Inspection of the interior and exterior of the concrete block walls confirmed that the walls are entirely sealed / pointed and no gaps or opportunities for bat access were found.

- 3.3.8 No gaps or opportunities for bat access were noted behind the timber fascia at the northern elevation; inspection confirmed that this area supports a hollow timber frame rather than concrete blockwork.
- 3.3.9 Inspection of the internal areas did not detect any bats or bat droppings. It is confirmed that the wall tops inside the stable are infilled; no gaps or hollow walls are present. No insulation or lining is present on the underside of the roof covering.
- 3.3.10 Due to the absence of potential roost features the stable building is assessed to be of 'negligible' suitability for use by roosting bats.

#### Ground Level Tree Assessment

- 3.3.11 No trees lie within the site boundary.

### 3.4 Other Relevant Protected Species and Animal Life

#### Badger

- 3.4.1 No badger or signs of badger were detected within the site or within the accessible / viewable area around the site boundaries. The presence of badger is reasonably discounted.

#### Bird Species

- 3.4.2 Birds detected in the site on 5<sup>th</sup> June 2025 are listed in **Table 3.1**.

**Table 3.1: Bird Species Detected on 5<sup>th</sup> June 2025**

| Scientific Name                  | Common Name          | BOCC Status <sup>1</sup> | Notes / Habitat                  |
|----------------------------------|----------------------|--------------------------|----------------------------------|
| <i>Columba palumbus</i>          | Wood pigeon          | Green                    | In off-site trees                |
| <i>Corvus corone corone</i>      | Carrion crow         | Green                    | In flight over site              |
| <i>Corvus monedula</i>           | Jackdaw              | Green                    | On roof of adjacent farmhouse    |
| <i>Erithacus rubecula</i>        | Robin                | Green                    | In scrub near Pond 2             |
| <b><i>Passer domesticus</i></b>  | <b>House sparrow</b> | <b>Red</b>               | <b>At the adjacent farmhouse</b> |
| <b><i>Prunella modularis</i></b> | <b>Dunnock</b>       | <b>Amber</b>             | Beneath off-site scrub           |
| <i>Streptopelia decaocto</i>     | Collared dove        | Green                    | In flight over site              |
| <i>Troglodytes troglodytes</i>   | Wren                 | Green                    | Beneath off-site scrub           |
| <i>Turdus merula</i>             | Blackbird            | Green                    | In scrub near Pond 2             |

<sup>1</sup>BOCC: Birds of Conservation Concern (Stanbury, et al., 2021).

Priority Species are presented in bold.

- 3.4.3 As detailed in **Table 3.1** the detected birds were all recorded in the off-site habitats bordering the site. The low growing shrubs in the garden area of the site are not considered to be dense enough to provide opportunities for use by nesting passerine birds. The guidance at **Section 5.3** in relation to protection of nesting birds in vegetation is precautionary only.
- 3.4.4 No evidence of the current or previous use of the buildings by nesting or roosting barn owl was found.
- 3.4.5 No evidence of the current use of the buildings by swallow or other nesting birds was found. One old swallow nest which has since been built over by a passerine bird species was found in the stable.

## Great Crested Newt and other Amphibians

### **Habitat Suitability Index Assessment: Ponds 1 and 2**

- 3.4.6 Refer to **Photos 17** and **18**. Pond 1 is a small artificially lined ornamental pond with fish. Pond 2 is a large pond stocked with fish.
- 3.4.7 A Habitat Suitability Index (HSI) assessment of Ponds 1 and 2 was conducted and the results are given in **Table 3.2**.

**Table 3.2: Habitat Suitability Index Assessment for Ponds 1 and 2**

| Criteria                                                                                    | Description             | Pond 1            | Score <sup>1</sup> | Pond 2             | Score <sup>1</sup> |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|
| SI1                                                                                         | Location                | Optimal           | 1                  | Optimal            | 1                  |
| SI2                                                                                         | Pond area               | <50m <sup>2</sup> | 0.05               | 1731m <sup>2</sup> | 0.86               |
| SI3                                                                                         | Permanence              | Sometimes dries   | 0.5                | Never dries        | 0.9                |
| SI4                                                                                         | Water quality           | Poor              | 0.33               | Moderate           | 0.67               |
| SI5                                                                                         | Shade                   | 1%                | 1                  | 30%                | 1                  |
| SI6                                                                                         | Waterfowl               | Absent            | 1                  | Minor              | 0.67               |
| SI7                                                                                         | Fish                    | Major             | 0.01               | Major              | 0.01               |
| SI8                                                                                         | Pond count <sup>2</sup> | 0.64              | 1                  | 0.64               | 0.5                |
| SI9                                                                                         | Terrestrial habitat     | Moderate          | 0.67               | Moderate           | 0.67               |
| SI10                                                                                        | Macrophyte cover        | 70%               | 1                  | 10%                | 0.4                |
| <b>Assessment Result:</b>                                                                   |                         | <b>Poor</b>       | <b>0.38</b>        | <b>Poor</b>        | <b>0.46</b>        |
| <sup>1</sup> Calculated by (SI1 x SI2 x SI3 x SI4 x SI5 x SI6 x SI7 x SI8 x SI9 x SI10)1/10 |                         |                   |                    |                    |                    |
| <sup>2</sup> Ponds within an unobstructed 1 kilometre radius                                |                         |                   |                    |                    |                    |

- 3.4.8 The HSI assessment for Ponds 1 and 2 is 'poor'. The score for the ponds is most affected by the presence of fish.

### **Presence of Dispersal Barriers**

- 3.4.9 There are no significant dispersal barriers between the ponds and the site.

### **Consideration of Terrestrial Habitats and Natural England Rapid Risk Assessment**

- 3.4.10 Based on the conditions present and the fact that only 153m<sup>2</sup> (12.2%) of the total site area is occupied by vegetation (mown amenity grassland and ornamental planting) the suitability and area of the site available for use by sheltering amphibians is very limited. It is recognised that there are areas of debris within the hardstanding areas of the site which may provide opportunities for sheltering amphibians, the majority of which are stacked on pallets or are regularly removed / disturbed which limits their suitability.
- 3.4.11 The Natural England Rapid Risk Assessment tool from *GCN Method Statement WML-A14-2 (Version April 2020)* (Natural England, 2020) has been completed to inform the requirement for further surveys, and is presented in **Table 3.3**.
- 3.4.12 The tool has been completed based on the distances of the ponds from the site, and the area of the development site which is currently suitable for sheltering amphibians (0.0153 hectares, or 'ha'). The rapid risk assessment tool assumes that great crested newt are present.

**Table 3.3: Rapid Risk Assessment Result**

| Component                                | Likely Effect                 | Notional Offence Probability Score |
|------------------------------------------|-------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| Great crested newt breeding pond(s)      | No effect                     | 0                                  |
| Land within 100m of any breeding pond(s) | 0.01 - 0.1 ha lost or damaged | 0.3                                |
| Land 100-250m from any breeding pond(s)  | No effect                     | 0                                  |
| Land >250m from any breeding pond(s)     | No effect                     | 0                                  |
| Individual great crested newts           | No effect                     | 0                                  |
| Maximum:                                 |                               | 0.3                                |
| Rapid risk assessment result:            | AMBER: OFFENCE LIKELY         |                                    |

- 3.4.13 The rapid risk assessment result of 'Amber: Offence likely' indicates that due to the proximity of the vegetated area of the site to the ponds, if great crested newt are present, the works may result in an offence under wildlife legislation.
- 3.4.14 In this instance and from the information collated during the site visit it is considered that the risk of great crested newt at Ponds 1 and 2 is negligible. This assessment is based on the poor conditions at Ponds 1 and 2 for use by great crested newt namely the presence of fish<sup>4</sup>.
- 3.4.15 As illustrated at **Photo 18**. Pond 2 is a diverse habitat and a valuable water body for the attraction of other wildlife. The presence of common toad (a Priority Species) cannot be reasonably discounted; this is discussed further in **Section 4.4** and guidance is provided in **Section 5.3**.

#### Reptiles

- 3.4.16 The site is not adjacent or linked to any areas of favourable habitat for reptile species. In consideration of all information available, the presence of reptiles within the site is reasonably discounted.

#### Other Fauna

- 3.4.17 The vegetated garden habitats within the site and in adjacent areas are suitable for use by foraging and sheltering hedgehog (*Erinaceus europaeus*), a Priority Species. The site is too small to provide core or important habitat for hedgehog, however. The suitability of the site for hedgehog is considered further at **Section 4.4**.

## 4.0 EVALUATION AND ASSESSMENT

### 4.1 Introduction and Description of Proposals

- 4.1.1 The proposals are illustrated on the *Proposed Site Plan* (JPE Consultancy Limited, 2025) comprise the rebuilding of the workshop and stable to create two self-build dwellings with associated car park areas, landscaping and gardens.
- 4.1.2 **Section 4.2** provides an assessment of any impacts of the proposed development on the designated sites for nature conservation present in the wider area. The ecological value of habitats within the site is evaluated at **Section 4.3**, and protected and notable species are considered at **Section 4.4**.

<sup>4</sup> Fish predate on great crested newt eggs and larvae, particularly as the larvae of this species spends a greater amount of time in the water column in the centre of the pond which leaves them more vulnerable to fish predation.

## 4.2 Designated Sites for Nature Conservation

- 4.2.1 The site has no hydrological links to any designated sites for nature conservation in the wider area.
- 4.2.2 Direct and / or indirect adverse effects of the minor proposals on the integrity and conservation status of the designated site(s) in the wider area is reasonably discounted.

## 4.3 Vegetation and Habitats

- 4.3.1 All detected plants at the site are common and widespread species. None of the habitats present are representative of semi-natural habitat or are an irreplaceable habitat. The NVC communities present are typical of the geographical area and conditions present. No Priority Habitats are present.
- 4.3.2 In terms of each habitat's importance in a geographical context<sup>5</sup>, none of the habitats are not considered to hold any importance on a geographical scale.
- 4.3.3 Although they are outside the redline / site boundary the hedgerows along the access track are assessed to be of site value and, as outlined in **Section 5.3**, it is essential that the hedgerows are protected from damage during the construction phase.
- 4.3.4 Wall Cotoneaster and Indian Balsam, both invasive plant species listed under Schedule 9 of the *Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981* (as amended), are present. It is considered that the proposals present an opportunity for the eradication these species as part of the proposed development. Further guidance is presented at **Section 5.3**.

## 4.4 Protected Species and Other Wildlife

### Bat Species

- 4.4.1 The burnt-out workshop is assessed to conform to a suitability for use by roosting bats of 'none' and the stable is assessed to have 'negligible' suitability at all times of year. The presence of roosting bats is reasonably discounted at the site. No further surveys for roosting bats are required to comply with relevant survey guidelines or to inform a planning application.
- 4.4.2 Inappropriate use of artificial lighting at the redeveloped site may have an adverse effect on use of the local area by foraging bats and other wildlife. Guidance to avoid a significant impact on foraging and commuting bats in the long-term is described at **Section 5.2**.

### Bird Species

- 4.4.3 Opportunities for nesting birds at the site are limited. Nevertheless mandatory measures to be applied to ensure the protection of nesting birds during and prior to the site preparation works are described at **Section 5.3**. Recommended enhancements for nesting birds (including Priority Species) are presented at **Section 5.4**.

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<sup>5</sup> Using the terms presented at Section 4.7 of *Guidelines for Ecological Impact Assessment in the UK and Ireland: Terrestrial, Freshwater, Coastal and Marine* (CIEEM, 2018), i.e. International and European, National, Regional, Local Authority-wide area, River Basin District, Estuarine system / Coastal cell or Local. The term 'site' value is additionally used to highlight ecological features considered to be of importance in the context of the wider site habitats, but which are of negligible value in the context of the local area.

## Hedgehog and Amphibian Species

- 4.4.4 Due to the presence of garden habitats that are suitable for use by hedgehog (a Priority Species) and the proximity of the site to Ponds 1 and 2 which may support breeding amphibians, including common toad (a Priority Species), guidance in relation to reasonable avoidance measures to be applied for the protection of fauna during construction and their conservation at the site in the long-term is provided in **Sections 5.2 and 5.3.**

## Other Animal Life

- 4.4.5 Appropriate and proportionate survey effort and / or assessment, in accordance with standard survey guidelines, has been applied to discount adverse effects on other relevant protected species. No further surveys for other protected species are necessary to inform a planning application.

## 4.5 Consideration of Statutory Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG)

- 4.5.1 It is understood that the proposals are a self-build application and, as such, statutory biodiversity net gain does not apply.
- 4.5.2 Notwithstanding the above, the recommendations outlined below aim to secure measurable gains for biodiversity / ecological enhancement to satisfy the requirements of the NPPF, *Biodiversity Net Gain: Good Practice Principles for Development* (CIEEM, 2016) and best practice.

## 5.0 RECOMMENDATIONS AND ECOLOGICAL ENHANCEMENT

### 5.1 Introduction

- 5.1.1 The recommendations described below are appropriate and proportionate to the scale of the redevelopment proposals and aim to ensure that the proposals are implemented in accordance with the mitigation hierarchy, relevant wildlife legislation, Natural England guidance, the principles of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government, 2024), local planning policy and best practice.
- 5.1.2 The recommendations aim to ensure compliance with Chapter 15, paragraph 193(d) of the NPPF which states:

*'opportunities to improve biodiversity in and around developments should be integrated as part of their design, especially where this can secure measurable net gains for biodiversity or enhance public access to nature where this is appropriate'.*

### 5.2 Recommendations in Relation to Site Layout / Proposals and Protection of Habitats and Wildlife

#### Lighting in Relation to Foraging Bats

- 5.2.1 Paragraph 198(c) in Chapter 15 (conserving and enhancing the natural environment) of the NPPF states that development should:
- 'limit the impact of light pollution from artificial light on local amenity, intrinsically dark landscapes and nature conservation.'*

5.2.2 Any lighting scheme to be implemented at the redeveloped site must avoid / minimise the use of lighting. Where artificial illumination is required this must involve the use of appropriate products and screening, where necessary, to ensure no excessive artificial lighting shines over the off-site adjacent habitats and any landscape planting, as lighting overspill may deter use by wildlife such as foraging bats.

5.2.3 The lighting scheme will be designed with reference to current guidance, namely:

- a. *Guidance Note 08/23: Bats and Artificial Lighting at Night* (Institution of Lighting Professionals & Bat Conservation Trust, 2023); and
- b. *Bats and lighting: Overview of current evidence and mitigation guidance* (Stone, 2014).

### **Habitat Connectivity**

5.2.4 To ensure the developed areas of the site remain accessible to wildlife such as hedgehog (a Priority Species) it is recommended that installation of lifted gates and plot boundary fences and / or the accommodation of gaps to permit the passage of wildlife beneath, refer to **Insert 1**, is accommodated by the site proposals.



**Insert 1:** Wildlife access gaps

## **5.3 Protection of Existing Features and Wildlife During Demolition and Construction**

### **Introduction**

5.3.1 To inform the site preparation, demolition and construction activities it is recommended that the following actions / measures are implemented:

### **Protection of Trackside Hedgerows and Trees**

5.3.2 During the demolition and construction phase it is essential that all contractors are made aware of the requirement to protect and avoid damage to the hedgerows and trees along the access track. Construction materials must not be stored in proximity to the hedgerows to avoid the risk of damage.

### **Invasive Plant Species**

5.3.3 It is an offence under the *Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981* (as amended) to cause the spread of Indian Balsam and Wall Cotoneaster in the wild. Both these species should be removed during the site clearance / preparation works and buried on site.

## Best Practice During Demolition

### ***Discovery of a Bat During Works***

- 5.3.4 If at any time during the works a bat is discovered or suspected all contractors must withdraw from the area and ERAP (Consultant Ecologists) Ltd (01772 750502) or the Bat Conservation Trust must be contacted for further guidance.

### **Protection of Nesting Birds**

- 5.3.5 All wild birds are protected under the *Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981* (as amended) while they are breeding. Any works such as building demolition and vegetation clearance that will affect habitats suitable for use by nesting birds are scheduled to commence outside the bird nesting season. Commencement of works in the nesting season must be informed by a pre-works nesting bird survey, carried out by a suitably experienced ecologist. The bird breeding season typically extends between March to August inclusive.
- 5.3.6 If breeding birds are detected the ecologist will issue guidance in relation to the protection of the nesting birds in conjunction with the scheduled works. This may involve cordoning off an area of the site until the young birds have fledged.

### **Reasonable Avoidance Measures Method Statement for Hedgehog, Amphibians and Other Wildlife**

- 5.3.7 During the site preparation works and construction operations it is essential that the following best practice and Reasonable Avoidance Measures Method Statement (RAMMS) are applied for the protection of wildlife:
- a. All site personnel must be made aware of this RAMMS and best practice guidance;
  - b. To ensure the RAMMS outlined below remain of relevance it is advised that the lawn at the garden is kept short until immediately prior to the construction works. If this has not occurred it is advised that the grassland is cut to a height of 0.15 metres prior to removal to permit the passive displacement of fauna;
  - c. Prior to the commencement of works it is recommended that any remaining debris is carefully removed and the area is searched for amphibians. Any detected amphibians must be carefully lifted and placed in suitable vegetation at the margins of Pond 2. If a great crested newt is found or suspected an ecologist must be contacted for guidance;
  - d. During works all arising waste must be either removed from the area or placed in a skip to avoid the accumulation of materials that may create suitable habitat and shelter for terrestrial mammals and amphibians;
  - e. During construction, bricks etc. must ideally be stored on pallets or raised from the ground in another suitable manner in order that no suitable habitat for hedgehog / amphibians is created;
  - f. Trenches or holes must be fitted with a means of escape (such as ramped edge or a sloping plank of timber). This will ensure that any inquisitive animals do not become trapped;
  - g. Deep trenches / excavations must not be left open overnight. Any open excavations (e.g. foundations/ footings/ service trenches etc) will be covered with plywood sheeting (or similar) at the end of each working day;
  - h. Any pipes must be stored with caps on (to prevent animal entry);
  - i. No fires must be lit at the site;

- j. The use of chemicals (such as fertilisers and herbicides) harmful to wildlife should be avoided wherever possible; and
- k. If a hedgehog is detected on site, it must be carefully picked up, placed in a clean bucket and moved to an area of suitable habitat beyond the working area. ERAP (Consultant Ecologists) Ltd (01772 750502) can be contacted for further guidance if required.

## 5.4 Ecological Enhancements

### Bats

- 5.4.1 To enhance the opportunities for roosting bats at the site it is recommended that the development incorporates the installation of two bat boxes / bat access panels at the gable ends of the new buildings.
- 5.4.2 The bat access panels / boxes should be sited at least 4 metres above ground level. The access panels / boxes should not be positioned over windows or doorways where bat droppings may become a nuisance. Suitable bat access panels are available from NHBS Ecology ([www.nhbs.com](http://www.nhbs.com)), Wild Care ([www.wildcare.co.uk](http://www.wildcare.co.uk)) and / or Greenwood's Ecohabitats ([www.greenwoodsecohabitats.co.uk](http://www.greenwoodsecohabitats.co.uk)) and are presented at **Insert 2**.



**Insert 1:** Examples of integrated bat access panels and an externally mounted box<sup>6</sup>

### Enhancing Habitats for Nesting Birds: House Sparrow

- 5.4.3 House sparrows are associated with suburban areas. Monitoring suggests a severe decline in the UK house sparrow population, estimated as dropping by 71 per cent between 1977 and 2008 with large falls in both rural and urban populations (RSPB, 2023).
- 5.4.4 The installation of one house sparrow terrace nest box is recommended at the new garage. The boxes will not be positioned over windows or doorways where droppings may become a nuisance. RSPB advice states that boxes should ideally be sited facing north to east, to avoid exposure to direct sunlight, which may cause overheating of chicks in the nest.
- 5.4.5 Such bird boxes are available from the NHBS ([www.nhbs.com](http://www.nhbs.com)) or Wild Care ([www.wildcare.co.uk](http://www.wildcare.co.uk)). ERAP (Consultant Ecologists) Ltd will advise on the siting of bird boxes.
- 5.4.6 An example of a suitable house sparrow bird box is given below at **Insert 3**.

<sup>6</sup> Left to right: IBstock Enclosed Bat Box 'c' (left); Habibat Bat Access Panels (centre left and centre right) and Greenwood's Ecohabitat's two crevice bat box (right). Products with a brick face are illustrated, however the Habibat bat access panels can be supplied unfaced to enable the addition of matching material.



**Insert 2:** Schwegler 1SP House Sparrow Nesting Terrace

## Landscape Planting

- 5.4.7 It is recommended that the landscaping scheme within the residential garden includes night-scented flowers which will attract moth species and bats; a list of suggested species is presented at **Table 5.1**.

**Table 5.1: Recommended Plants for Use in Gardens to Attract Bats<sup>7</sup>**

| Flowers for Borders                                 |                                                      |
|-----------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------|
| Aubretia species ( <i>Aubretia</i> sp.)             | Michaelmas Daisy ( <i>Aster</i> sp.)                 |
| Candytuft ( <i>Iberis sempervirens</i> )            | Night-scented Stock ( <i>Matthiola longipetala</i> ) |
| Cherry pie ( <i>Heliotropium arborescens</i> )      | Oxeye Daisy ( <i>Leucanthemum vulgare</i> )          |
| Corncockle ( <i>Agrostemma githago</i> )            | Fiddleneck ( <i>Phacelia tanacetifolia</i> )         |
| Cornflower ( <i>Centaurea cyanus</i> )              | Poached Egg Plant ( <i>Limnanthes douglasii</i> )    |
| Corn Marigold ( <i>Glebionis segetum</i> )          | Primrose sp. ( <i>Primula</i> sp.)                   |
| Corn Poppy ( <i>Papaver rhoeas</i> )                | Red Campion ( <i>Silene dioica</i> )                 |
| Coneflower species ( <i>Echinacea</i> sp.)          | Common Valerian ( <i>Valeriana officinalis</i> )     |
| Bluebell ( <i>Hyacinthoides non-scripta</i> )       | Scabious species ( <i>Scabiosa</i> sp.)              |
| Evening primrose ( <i>Oenothera biennis</i> )       | St John's Wort species ( <i>Hypericum</i> sp.)       |
| Honesty ( <i>Lunaria annua</i> )                    | Sweet William ( <i>Dianthus barbatus</i> )           |
| Ice plant 'Pink lady' ( <i>Delosperma cooperi</i> ) | Tobacco Plant species ( <i>Nicotiana</i> sp.)        |
| Knapweed species ( <i>Centaurea</i> sp.)            | Vervain species ( <i>Verbena</i> sp.)                |
| Mallow species ( <i>Malva</i> sp.)                  | Wallflower species ( <i>Erysimum</i> sp.)            |
| Mexican aster ( <i>Cosmos bipinnatus</i> )          |                                                      |
| Herbs                                               |                                                      |
| Wild Angelica ( <i>Angelica sylvestris</i> )        | Hyssop ( <i>Hyssopus officinalis</i> )               |
| Bergamot ( <i>Monarda didyma</i> )                  | Lavender species ( <i>Lavandula</i> sp.)             |
| Borage ( <i>Borago officinalis</i> )                | Lemon Balm ( <i>Melissa officinalis</i> )            |
| Coriander ( <i>Coriandrum sativum</i> )             | Marjoram ( <i>Origanum majorana</i> )                |
| English Marigold ( <i>Calendula officinalis</i> )   | Rosemary ( <i>Rosmarinus officinalis</i> )           |
| Fennel ( <i>Foeniculum vulgare</i> )                | Sweet Cicely ( <i>Myrrhis odorata</i> )              |
| Feverfew ( <i>Tanacetum parthenium</i> )            | Thyme species ( <i>Thymus</i> sp.)                   |

- 5.4.8 Native hedgerows and small tree species can be planted to provide opportunities for feeding and nesting birds and to enhance habitat connectivity.
- 5.4.9 Any understorey and ground cover planting design should be prepared to optimise the attraction of invertebrates such as feeding bumblebees and butterflies. Where possible the use of native species should be maximised but where necessary non-native species known to be attractive to invertebrates should be used. Planting schemes that include flowering species such as *Viburnum*, *Ceanothus*, *Hebe*,

<sup>7</sup> Extracted from *Encouraging bats, A guide for bat-friendly gardening and living* (Bat Conservation Trust, 2016).

*Lavandula*, *Lonicera*, *Potentilla*, *Rosmarinus* and *Vinca* can maximise opportunities for feeding invertebrates and for the attraction of foraging bats and birds.

## 6.0 CONCLUSION

- 6.1 It is advised that the proposals at Yew Tree Farm can be achieved in accordance with wildlife legislation, planning policy, Natural England guidance and best practice.
- 6.2 In the presence of the mandatory actions and best practice measures described in **Section 5.0**, adverse effects on protected species are reasonably discounted. The proposals will have no impact on designated sites for nature conservation or other ecologically valuable habitats. Enhancement measures that aim to maximise the benefits for biodiversity as part of the proposals and comply with the National Planning Policy Framework and *Biodiversity Net Gain: Good Practice Principles for Development* (CIEEM, 2016) are outlined in **Section 5.4**.

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## 8.0 APPENDIX 1: TABLES AND FIGURES

### 8.1 Photographs

**Table 8.1: Photographs**



**Photo 1:** Hardstanding to the north of the burnt-out Workshop



**Photo 2:** Northern elevation of the burnt-out Workshop



**Photo 3:** Hardstanding with debris



**Photo 4:** Mown lawn of amenity grassland



**Photo 5:** Mown lawn of amenity grassland



**Photo 6:** Mown lawn of amenity grassland and bed of ornamental plants to the south of the burnt-out Workshop



**Photo 7:** Wall Cotoneaster



**Photo 8:** Concrete walls of the burnt-out Workshop



**Photo 9:** Concrete walls of the burnt-out Workshop



**Photo 10:** Concrete walls and section of former roof of the burnt-out Workshop



**Photo 11:** Eastern elevation of the Stable



**Photo 12:** Eastern elevation of the Stable



**Photo 13:** Southern elevation of the Stable



**Photo 14:** Interior of the Stable



**Photo 15:** Interior of the Stable



**Photo 16:** Access track from Ringley Road West



**Photo 17:** Pond 1



**Photo 18:** Pond 2

## 8.2 Plant Species Lists

**Table 8.2: Plant Species List for the Ruderal / Ephemeral Vegetation**

| Scientific Name                 | Common Name             | DAFOR <sup>1</sup> | Cover |
|---------------------------------|-------------------------|--------------------|-------|
| <i>Capsella bursa-pastoris</i>  | Shepherd's-purse        | VLF                | <1%   |
| <i>Cardamine flexuosa</i>       | Wavy Bitter-cress       | VLF                | <1%   |
| <i>Cirsium arvense</i>          | Creeping Thistle        | LF                 | 1%    |
| <i>Cotoneaster horizontalis</i> | Wall Cotoneaster        | R                  | <1%   |
| <i>Epilobium montanum</i>       | Broad-leaved Willowherb | LA                 | 5%    |
| <i>Equisetum arvense</i>        | Field Horsetail         | LA                 | 1%    |
| <i>Galium aparine</i>           | Cleavers                | LF                 | 1%    |
| <i>Geranium lucidum</i>         | Shining Crane's-bill    | R                  | <1%   |
| <i>Geranium robertianum</i>     | Herb-Robert             | VLA                | 1%    |
| <i>Geum urbanum</i>             | Wood Avens              | VLF                | <1%   |
| <i>Hosta species</i>            | Hosta species           | LF                 | 1%    |
| <i>Ilex aquifolium</i>          | Holly                   | LF                 | 1%    |
| <i>Impatiens glandulifera</i>   | Indian Balsam           | VLF                | <1%   |
| <i>Lapsana communis</i>         | Nipplewort              | R                  | <1%   |
| <i>Malus domestica</i>          | Apple                   | LF                 | 1%    |
| <i>Persicaria bistorta</i>      | Common Bistort          | VLF                | <1%   |
| <i>Prunus sp.</i>               | Cherry species          | LF                 | 1%    |
| <i>Sambucus nigra</i>           | Elder                   | LF                 | 1%    |
| <i>Senecio vulgaris</i>         | Groundsel               | O                  | <1%   |
| <i>Silene dioica</i>            | Red Campion             | R                  | <1%   |
| <i>Sonchus asper</i>            | Prickly Sow-thistle     | O                  | <1%   |

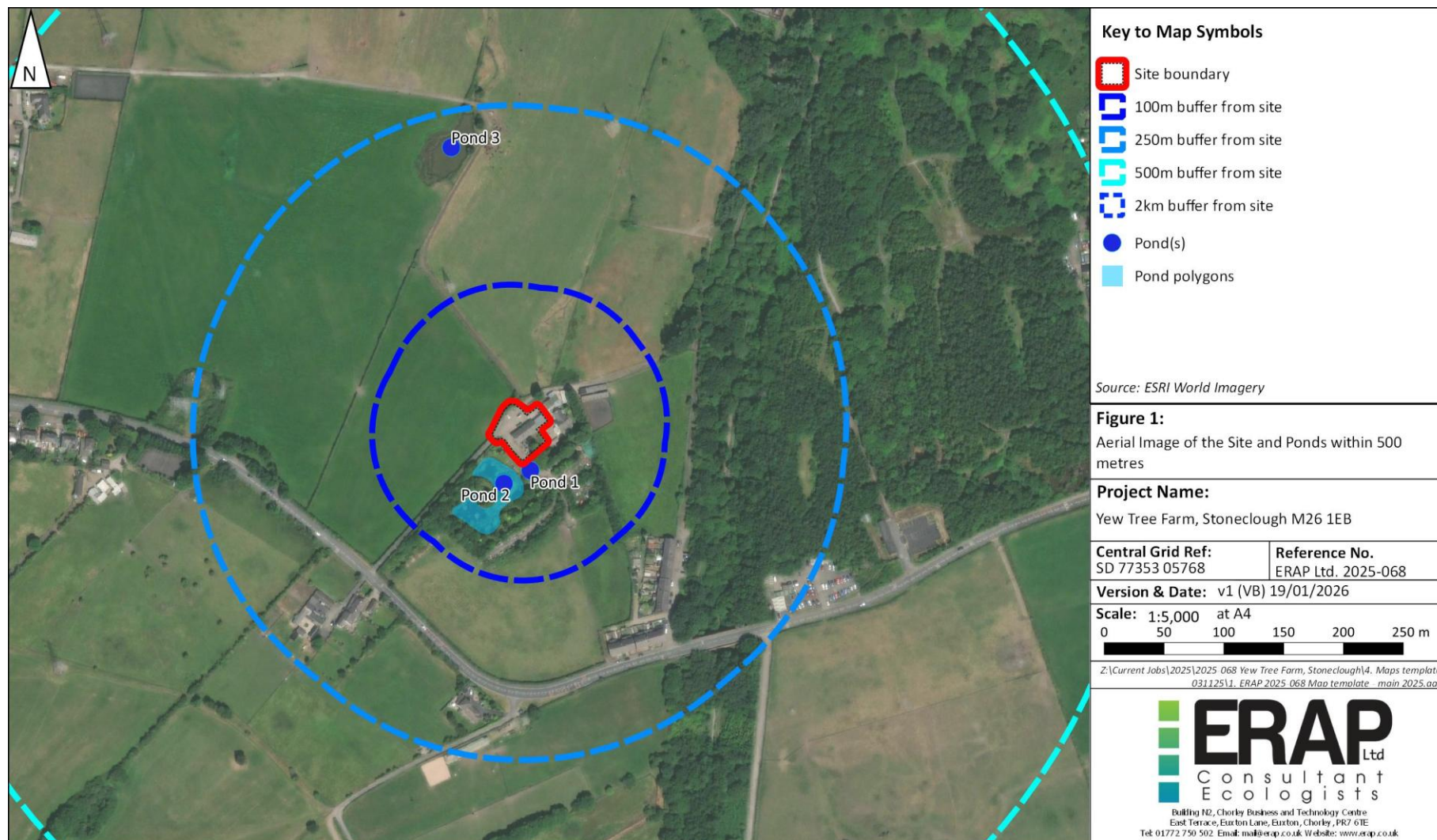
<sup>1</sup>Key to DAFOR: D=Dominant, A=Abundant, F=Frequent, O=Occasional, R=Rare, V=Very, L=Local and \*denotes a constant species

**Table 8.3: Plant Species List for Lawn of Amenity / Modified Grassland**

| Scientific Name                                                                                                                      | Common Name         | DAFOR <sup>1</sup> | Cover |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------|--------------------|-------|
| <i>Agrostis capillaris</i>                                                                                                           | Common Bent         | F                  | 5%    |
| <i>Agrostis stolonifera</i>                                                                                                          | Creeping Bent       | F                  | 10%   |
| <i>Anthriscus sylvestris</i>                                                                                                         | Cow Parsley         | O                  | <1%   |
| <i>Bellis perennis</i>                                                                                                               | Daisy               | O                  | <1%   |
| <i>Cerastium fontanum</i>                                                                                                            | Common Mouse-ear    | O                  | <1%   |
| <i>Cirsium arvense</i>                                                                                                               | Creeping Thistle    | VLA                | <1%   |
| <i>Cirsium vulgare</i>                                                                                                               | Spear Thistle       | R                  | <1%   |
| <i>Festuca rubra</i>                                                                                                                 | Red Fescue          | F                  | 5%    |
| <i>Geranium robertianum</i>                                                                                                          | Herb-Robert         | VLF                | <1%   |
| <i>Holcus lanatus</i>                                                                                                                | Yorkshire-fog       | F                  | 5%    |
| <i>Lolium perenne</i>                                                                                                                | Perennial Rye-grass | A*                 | 80%   |
| <i>Plantago lanceolata</i>                                                                                                           | Ribwort Plantain    | R                  | <1%   |
| <i>Plantago major</i>                                                                                                                | Greater Plantain    | F                  | 1%    |
| <i>Poa annua</i>                                                                                                                     | Annual Meadow-grass | LF                 | 5%    |
| <i>Prunella vulgaris</i>                                                                                                             | Selfheal            | R                  | <1%   |
| <i>Ranunculus repens</i>                                                                                                             | Creeping Buttercup  | O                  | 10%   |
| <i>Rubus fruticosus</i> agg.                                                                                                         | Bramble             | R                  | <1%   |
| <i>Rumex obtusifolius</i>                                                                                                            | Broad-leaved Dock   | VLA                | <1%   |
| <i>Senecio jacobaea</i>                                                                                                              | Common Ragwort      | O                  | <1%   |
| <i>Trifolium dubium</i>                                                                                                              | Lesser Trefoil      | VLA                | <1%   |
| <i>Trifolium repens</i>                                                                                                              | White Clover        | VLA                | <1%   |
| <i>Urtica dioica</i>                                                                                                                 | Common Nettle       | VLF                | 1%    |
| <i>Vicia cracca</i>                                                                                                                  | Tufted Vetch        | O                  | <1%   |
| <i>Vicia sativa</i>                                                                                                                  | Common Vetch        | O                  | <1%   |
| <sup>1</sup> Key to DAFOR: D=Dominant, A=Abundant, F=Frequent, O=Occasional, R=Rare, V=Very, L=Local and *denotes a constant species |                     |                    |       |

## 8.3 Figures

**Figure 1: Aerial Image of the Site and its Surroundings**



**Figure 2: Phase 1 Habitat Survey**

