Preliminary Ecological Assessment



Project: Midway Lane, Abergavenny

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1. Introduction

The applicant is seeking planning permission for the development of a parcel of land adjacent to Midway Lane in the suburb of Mardy, Abergavenny. The development will include the creation of a number of residential properties, a new access point, garden spaces and drainage areas. It is anticipated that the majority of the habitat within the Site boundary will be lost to accommodate future development.

The proposed Development Site is located at the northern outskirts of Abergavenny, centred at SO 30653 15955. The Development Site includes an occupied residential property, five outbuildings, two shipping containers, garden space, an orchard, a grazing pasture, areas of woodland, trees and scrub.

This report will assess the potential of the land within the Site boundary to support habitats and species and the implications that any future development proposals could have on them.

1.1 Site Description

The Development Site is immediately adjacent to residential housing along all sides of the boundary. Midway Lane forms the southern boundary and Poplars Road the north. The residential areas of Mardy extend further north, east and west of the Development Site with Abergavenny town to the south.

The River Gavenni is located approximately 310 m to the east of the Site at its closest point. The A465 and a railway line following the road, is present approximately 480 m to the east of site. Abergavenny Grid Substation is located approximately 300 m to the west. Bannau Brycheiniog National Park is located approximately 460 m north at its nearest point.

Three ponds are located within 500 m of the Site. The closest pond is situated approximately 260 m northeast of the Site within the residential area of Maindy Drive. Two further ponds are located within the grounds of Penlanlas Farm, approximately 370 m and 400 m northwest of the Site, respectively. All three ponds are separated from the Site by areas of residential development and associated infrastructure. Consequently, habitat connectivity between the ponds and the Site is considered to be limited.

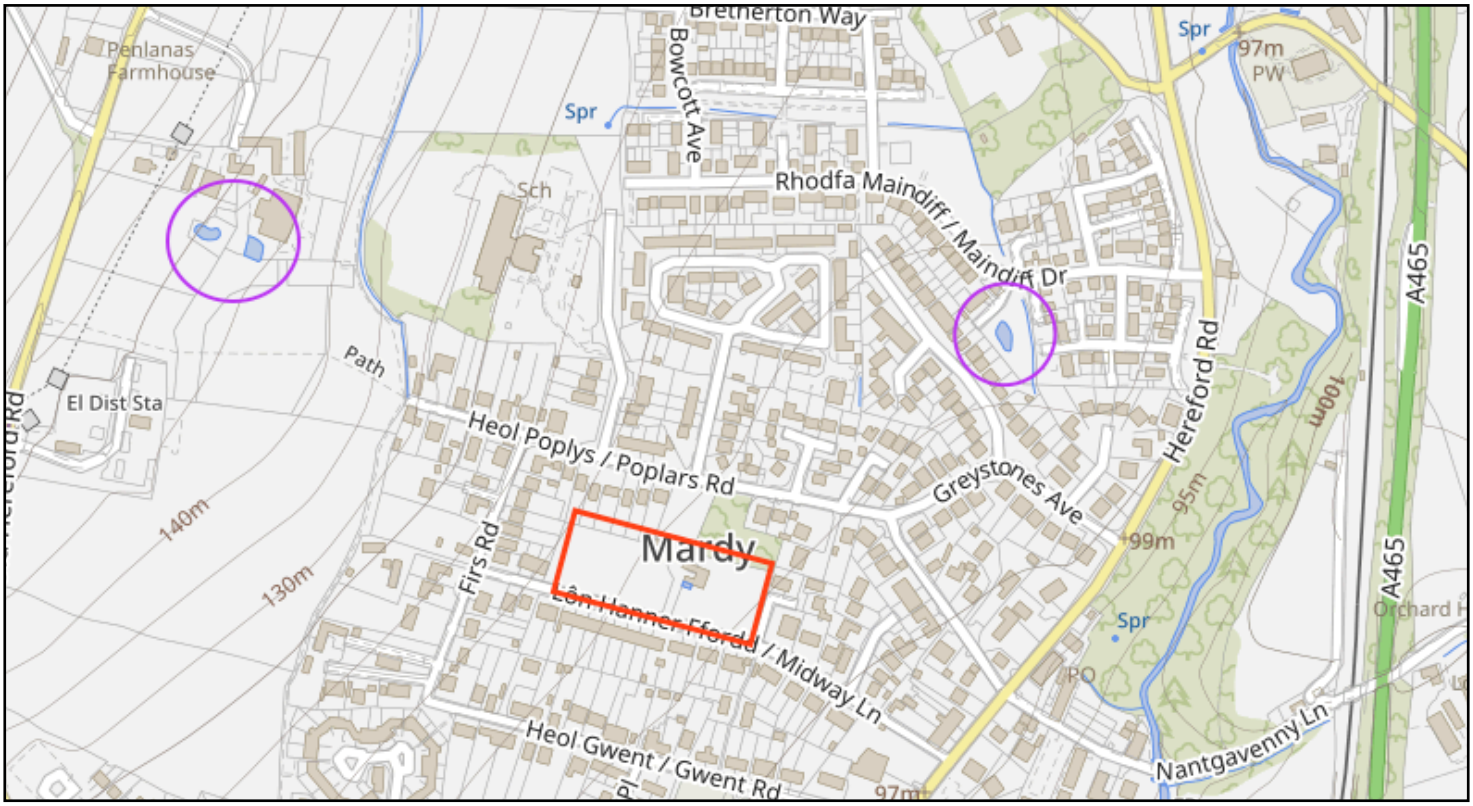


Figure 1. Waterbodies within 500 m of the Site.

1.2 Survey Constraints

The survey visit was undertaken in June which is within the optimal survey period for habitat assessments. A broad assessment of habitat types was possible based on the Site visit findings.

The optimal time period to carry out ground-based visual assessments of trees for bat roosting potential is between December to March inclusive, when broadleaved trees are devoid of leaves and features are more readily visible. It should be noted that ground based assessments are inherently constrained and potential roosting features present upon the skyward facing surfaces of limbs and branches will most likely be missed.

1.3 Surveyor Experience

Aislinn Harris is a full member of Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (CIEEM). Aislinn is an ecologist with 14 years experience undertaking a wide range of flora and fauna surveys. All survey work is undertaken following JNCC Phase 1 Survey Guidelines and CIEEM Guidelines for Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (2nd Ed 2017). Aislinn is a licensed bat, great crested newt and dormouse ecologist with a wide variety of experience undertaking ecological surveys.

2. Desktop Study

A data search was undertaken via Aderyn (*LERC Reference: 0267-174*) for the proposed Development Site and surrounding area. A 1 km buffer zone was searched and **records returned within 500 m of site are noted below**:

- Eight records of hedgehog (*Erinaceus europaeus*) - six of the records were immediately within the Site boundary, the next closest record was 450 m southwest.
- Four records of common frog (*Rana temporaria*) - all of which were immediately within the Site boundary.
- 14 records of bat commuting and foraging activity were returned within 500 m of the Site for species including: Common pipistrelle (*Pipistrellus pipistrellus),* lesser horseshoe bat (*Rhinolophus hipposideros*), noctule *(Nyctalus noctula), s*oprano pipistrelle (*Pipistrellus pygmaeus*) and an unidentified species - closest records being immediately within the Site and the next closest approximately 240 m east.
- Two records of American mink (*Neovison vison*)- the closest record approximately 350 m southeast.
- Two records of great crested newt (*Triturus cristatus*)- the closest record approximately 400 m northeast.
- One record of weasel (*Mustela nivalis*) - the closest record approximately 450 m south.
- Two records of otter (*Lutra lutra*)- the closest record approximately 450 m east.
- One record of white-clawed crayfish (*Austropotamobius pallipes*)- the closest record approximately 460 m northeast.
- Seven records of invasive and non-native plant species were returned within 500 m of the Site. These records comprise Himalayan balsam (*Impatiens glandulifera*) and wall cotoneaster (*Cotoneaster horizontalis*), both of which are listed under Schedule 9 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 as invasive non-native plant species. Records of false acacia (*Robinia pseudoacacia*) and snowberry (*Symphoricarpos albus*) were also returned by the data search. Whilst these species are non-native and may exhibit invasive characteristics in some habitats, they are not currently listed as Schedule 9 invasive non-native plant species in Wales.
- 22 records of invertebrates were returned within 500 m of the Site for species including: *Dolichovespula media*, Australian flatworm (*Australoplana sanguinea*), Azure damselfly (*Coenagrion puella*), blossom underwing (*Orthosia miniosa*), common darter (*Sympetrum striolatum*), emperor dragonfly (*Anax imperator*), large red damselfly (*Pyrrhosoma nymphula*), mint moth (*Pyrausta aura*), purple emperor (*Apatura iris*), scarlet tiger (*Callimorpha dominula*), signal crayfish (*Pacifastacus leniusculus*), small blue (*Cupido minimus*) and southern hawker (*Aeshna cyanea*).

- Two bird species are listed under Schedule 1 of the Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981 (WCA1.1) and were returned within 500 m of the Site. Species include: Firecrest (*Regulus ignicapilla*) and red Kite (*Milvus milvus*).
- Bird species listed under Section 7 (S7) of the Environment (Wales) Act 2016 (EWA 2016) were returned within 500 m of the Site. Species include: Bullfinch (*Pyrrhula pyrrhula*), cuckoo (*Cuculus canorus*), curlew (*Numenius arquata*), dunnock (*Prunella modularis*), house sparrow (*Passer domesticus)*, lesser spotted woodpecker (*Dryobates minor*), linnet (*Linaria cannabin*a), pied flycatcher (*Ficedula hypoleuca*), reed bunting (*Emberiza schoeniclus*), skylark (*Alauda arvensis*), song thrush (*Turdus philomelos*), starling (*Sturnus vulgaris*), tree pipit (*Anthus trivialis*), wood warbler (*Phylloscopus sibilatrix*), yellow wagtail (*Motacilla flava*) and yellowhammer (*Emberiza citrinella*).

Records of note returned for the rest of the buffer zone are detailed below:

- Three records of badger (*Meles meles*).
- 12 records of hazel dormouse (*Muscardinus avellanarius*).
- One record of polecat (*Mustela putorius*).
- One record of water vole (*Arvicola amphibius*).
- One record of slow worm (*Anguis fragilis*).
- Two records of adder (*Vipera berus*).
- One record of common lizard (*Zootoca vivipara*).
- Three records of palmate newt *(Lissotriton helveticus).*
- 27 records of Bat roosts were returned within 1 km of the Site for species including: brown long-eared bat (*Plecotus auritus*), common pipistrelle (*Pipistrellus pipistrellus*), greater horseshoe bat (*Rhinolophus ferrumequinum*), lesser horseshoe bat (*Rhinolophus hipposideros*), soprano pipistrelle (*Pipistrellus pygmaeus*) and an unidentified bat species.
- 101 records of bat commuting and foraging activity were returned within the rest of the buffer zone for species including: Common pipistrelle (Pipistrellus pipistrellus), lesser horseshoe bat (*Rhinolophus hipposideros*), Nathusius pipistrelle (*Pipistrellus nathusii*), Natterer's bat (*Myotis nattereri*), noctule (*Nyctalus noctula*), soprano pipistrelle (*Pipistrellus pygmaeus*) and whiskered bat (*Myotis mystacinus*).
- 28 records of invertebrates were returned within the rest of the buffer zone. The closest 10 species include: Azure damselfly (*Coenagrion puella*), beautiful demoiselle (*Calopteryx virgo), c*ommon darter (*Sympetrum striolatum), g*low worm (*Lampyris noctiluca*), harlequinn ladybird (*Harmonia axyridis*), leopard moth (*Zeuzera pyrina*), oak hook-tip (*Watsonalla binaria*), rugged oil beetle (*Meloe rugosus*), small blue (*Cupido minimus*) and scarlet tiger (*Callimorpha dominula*).

- 117 records of Invasive Non-Native Plant Species (INNS) were returned within the rest of the buffer zone. Species include: Bluebell hybrid (*Hyacinthoides non-scripta x hispanica = H. x massartiana*), Japanese Rose (*Rosa rugosa*), Montbretia (*Crocosmia aurea x pottsii = C. x crocosmiiflora*), Three cornered Garlic (*Allium triquetrum*), Variegated Yellow Archangel (*Lamiastrum galeobdolon subsp. argentatum*). Three records of Japanese Knotweed (*Reynoutria japonica*) were returned within the rest of the buffer zone- the closest record was approximately 670 m northeast.
- Records of butterfly bush (*Buddleja davidii*), cherry laurel (*Prunus laurocerasus*), greater periwinkle (*Vinca major*), monkeyflower (*Erythranthe guttata*), Portugal laurel (*Prunus lusitanica*), white stonecrop (*Sedum album*) and Wilson's honeysuckle (*Lonicera nitida*) were returned by the desk study. These species are all considered non-native to the UK, however, they are not currently listed under Schedule 9 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 as invasive non-native plant species.
- Bird species listed under Schedule 1 of the Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981 (WCA1.1) were returned within the rest of the buffer zone. Species include: Barn owl (*Tyto alba*), Cetti's warbler (*Cettia cetti*), fieldfare (*Turdus pilaris*), golden oriole (*Oriolus oriolus*), goshawk (*Astur gentilis*), hobby (*Falco subbuteo*), kingfisher (*Alcedo atthis*), peregrine (*Falco peregrinus*) and redwing (*Turdus iliacus*).
- Bird species listed under Section 7 (S7) of the Environment (Wales) Act 2016 (EWA 2016) were returned within the rest of the buffer zone. Species include: Black headed gull (*Chroicocephalus ridibundus*), grey partridge (*Perdix perdi*x), hawfinch (*Coccothraustes coccothraustes*) herring gull (*Larus argentatus*), kestrel (*Falco tinnunculus*), lesser redpoll (*Acanthis flammea cabaret*), marsh tit (*Poecile palustris*), ring ouzel (*Turdus torquatus*) and yellow hammer (*Emberiza citrinella*).

2.1 Protected Sites

The search also considered statutory and non-statutory protected sites within 1 km of the Site boundary.

Statutory Protected Sites

There are three statutory protected sites within 1 km of the development area. The closest is Cwm Mill Section, Mardy Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) which lies approximately 420 m southeast. The Sugarloaf Woodlands SSSI is located approximately 630 m west at its closest point.

The Sugarloaf Woodlands is designated a Special Area of Conservation (SAC) and is considered one of the largest sessile oak woodland on the southeast edge of their natural range in Britain and Europe. The Sugarloaf Woodlands SAC is located approximately 670 m to the west of site extending further west and northwards across the landscape.

Non-Statutory Protected Sites

There are four Sites of Interest for Nature Conservation (SINCs) within 1 km of the Site. The closest SINC is the Land Adjoining Old Hereford Road SINC, located approximately 200 m to the southwest.

All other SINCs are listed below with their approximate distance from the Site:

- River Gavenni SINC (260 m east).
- Ross Road SINC (460 m southeast).
- Maindiff Court Hospital SINC (750 m southeast).

There are five areas of Ancient Semi Natural Woodland (ASNW) within 1 km of the Site boundary. The closest area being approximately 350 m southeast. These are broadleaf woodlands comprising mainly native tree and shrub species which are believed to have been in existence for over 400 years. The ground vegetation will reflect the naturalness of these woodlands and will frequently feature species which provide clear indication of long and continued woodland cover. They will have been woodland for centuries and contribute substantially to our natural and cultural heritage.

There are two areas of Restored Ancient Woodland (RAWS) within 1 km of the Site boundary. The closest is located approximately 740 m southeast. These are woodlands which are predominately broadleaved now and are believed to have been continually wooded for over 400 years. They will have gone through a phase when canopy cover will have been more than 50% non-native conifer tree species and now have a canopy cover of more than 50% broadleaf.

Hedgerow habitat is present along the southern boundary of Area 1. Hedgerow is a section 7 habitat of importance for protection under The Environment (Wales) Act 2016. Hedgerow habitat is a priority habitat and must be retained where possible. Any impacts to hedgerow habitat will require compensatory hedgerow planting.

2.2 Potential Impacts to Protected Sites

Given the localised nature of the development proposals, there are unlikely to be any negative effects on statutory or non statutory protected sites in the local area.

3. Phase 1 Survey

3.1 Habitats

A walkover survey of the Site was completed on the **9th June 2026** by Ash Harris. A species list can be found in Appendix 1, photographs of the Site can be found in Appendix 2 and a map of the habitats found within the Site is provided in Appendix 3. For ease of reference the Site has been split into three separate areas

Area 1 - Grazed Field

To the west of the Site is a large open grassland field currently grazed by a horse and foal. It is understood that the field has been subject to seasonal grazing for a number of years, with livestock present for several months of the year. The majority of the field is considered to be **species-poor semi-improved grassland**. Species noted across the field include meadow buttercup, red clover, rough meadow grass, yarrow, cat's tail, common cat's ear, knapweed, ragwort, a species of brome, perennial rye grass, common daisy, hop trefoil, Yorkshire fog, silverweed and common bent.

The grassland is fairly short due to grazing pressure and stands of **tall ruderal vegetation** dominated by nettle and curled dock area present across the field. Small stands of bramble **scrub** are also present across the field and a band of **scrub** is present along the northern boundary of the field.

A mature **tree line** is present along the eastern boundary with species noted present to include sycamore, ash, elder, bramble and hazel.

A **hedgerow** is present along the southern field boundary containing hazel, holly, bramble, elder, hawthorn and dog rose. Mature standard trees are present along the hedgerow with one sycamore, two ash and one cherry species.

Area 2 - Northern Field & Woodland

This portion of the Site forms part of the grounds of main property and appears to have been managed as garden space for some time. Areas of **mixed woodland** are present around the periphery of the Site containing both native and non-native tree species and both broadleaved and coniferous species. The edges of the woodland areas to undulate and species noted include a large copper beech, walnut, hazel, rowan, goat willow, Norway maple and laurel including various ornamental conifer trees. The understory within the woodland areas contained pendulous sedge, Lords and Ladies, nettle, cleavers, wood dock, enchanter's-nightshade, hedge woundwort and bramble.

The interior of this area was well mown **semi-improved grassland**. Species noted within the semi-improved grassland include perennial rye grass, common daisy, dandelion, ribwort plantain, selfheal, creeping buttercup, common sorrel and rough hawkbit.

Two **planted beds** are present to the west of this area. The planted beds have been sown with a variety of wildflower and vegetables and only lightly managed to try and diversify the habitat.

Area 3 - House & Immediate Grounds

This portion of the Site contains the **tarmac drive** and main house **building.** Two metal shipping containers are present to the west of the main house partially covered in trees. A small single storey shed and corrugated metal shelter are present to the north of the main house, just within the woodland areas. The remains of previous derelict and collapsed buildings are present covered in woodland vegetation across the Site.

The **tarmac drive** is lined on both sides by flower beds full of **ornamental planting**. A stand of miscanthus grass, mapped as **ornamental planting** is present to the south of the main house. To the east, west and south of the main house well mown **semi-improved grassland** is present. Within the grassland to the east, there is a small area of four fruit trees planted by the Site owner.

This area is also border by **mixed woodland** containing both native and non-native tree species and both broadleaved and coniferous species. The woodland is a continuation of the woodland habitat to the north in Area 2. Additional species noted include wisteria, yew, hornbeam and elm.

3.2 Great crested newts

Great crested newts (*Triturus cristatus)* are a European protected species and are protected under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017. In summary, they are protected from:

- Deliberate capture, killing and injuring,
- Deliberate disturbance of a breeding site or resting place,
- Deliberate taking or destroying of eggs,
- Damage or destruction of a breeding site or resting place.

Great crested newts (GCN) are listed on schedule 5 of The Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981 which protects them from intentional or reckless disturbance or obstruction when using a structure or place for shelter and / or protection. It is also an offence to sell, offer or expose for sale a GCN. GCN and common toad are listed in section 7 of the Environment (Wales) Act 2016 which makes them key species to sustain and improve biodiversity.

Two records for GCN have been returned as part of the data search. The closest record is approximately 430 m away to the northeast of site, the second record is approximately 690 m from the Development Site also to the northeast. The closest record is from 2018 and for

GCN observed within a pond. The remaining record sits the opposite side of the River Gavenny from 2005 but has limited details available for this record.

Generally, great crested newts utilise a network of suitable breeding ponds within the wider landscape, together with connected terrestrial habitats that facilitate dispersal between waterbodies. Although three ponds are located within 500 m of the Site, habitat connectivity between these ponds and the Site is considered to be limited due to the presence of residential development, roads and other associated infrastructure surrounding the Site.

The Development Site contains a variety of habitat suitable for GCN use during their terrestrial life stages. The woodland areas, scrub and rubble piles are all useful for overwinter use while the open grassland and ornamental planting creating a mosaic of habitat useful for basking, foraging and commuting.

Whilst the habitat within the Site boundary are suitable for terrestrial use by GCN the Site is isolated from surrounding suitable habitat as it is immediately surrounded by housing and roads. The Site isolation coupled with the lack of suitable breeding habitat in the local area and lack of local GCN records would indicate the potential presence of GCN within the Site boundary as being unlikely. **No further survey recommendations are made for this species.**

3.3 Dormouse

The dormouse (*Muscardinus avellanarius)* is a European protected species and is protected under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017. In summary, they are protected from:

- Deliberate capture, killing and injuring,
- Deliberate disturbance of a breeding site or resting place,
- Damage or destruction of a breeding site or resting place.

Dormouse is listed on schedule 5 of The Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981 which protects them from intentional or reckless disturbance or obstruction when using a structure or place for shelter and / or protection. It is also an offence to sell, offer or expose for sale a native dormouse. Dormouse is listed in section 7 of the Environment (Wales) Act 2016 which makes them a key species to sustain and improve biodiversity.

One record for the presence of dormouse has been returned as part of the data search. The closest record is approximately 620 m away to the north east of site. The record is from 2022 and for the presence of a dormouse within a nest box along the A465.

The proposed Development Site contains mixed woodland, scrub, tree line and a hedgerow which are all suitable habitat for dormouse to use. However, the Site has no direct habitat connectivity with any surrounding areas of woodland, tree lines or hedgerow. It is surrounded in all directions by housing and roads. Dormice are predominantly arboreal and infrequently travel across open ground, consequently, suitable habitat such as woodland,

scrub and connected hedgerow networks is essential to support their movement through the landscape.

Whilst some habitat within the Development Site appears suitable for dormouse to use, given the lack of habitat connectivity to wider areas of dormouse habitat and the lack of local records, the presence of dormouse within the Site boundary is considered to be highly unlikely. **No further survey recommendations are made for this species.**

3.4 Bats

All British bats are a European protected species and are protected under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017. In summary, they are protected from:

- Deliberate capture, killing and injuring,
- Deliberate disturbance of a breeding site or resting place,
- Damage or destruction of a breeding site or resting place.

Schedule 5 of The Wildlife and Countryside Act (1981) also protects all species of British bat and their roosting locations. British bats are protected from intentional or reckless disturbance and or obstruction of their roosting places. Barbastelle, Bechstein, noctule, brown long-eared, common pipistrelle, soprano pipistrelle, greater horseshoe and lesser horseshoe are also listed in section 7 of the Environment (Wales) Act 2016 which makes them a key species to sustain and improve biodiversity.

14 records of bat commuting and foraging activity were returned within 500 m of the Site. Recorded species include **common pipistrelle**, **lesser horseshoe bat**, **noctule**, **soprano pipistrelle** and **unidentified bat species**. The closest records are located within the Site itself, with the next closest records situated approximately **240 m east** of the Site.

Building Assessment

A large detached residential building, small out-house and corrugated-sheet wood store are present within the Site boundary. A small number of shipping containers, derelict shed and out-houses are also present within the Site boundary. The previous ecological assessment of the proposed Development Site by Soltys Brewster Ecology in 2024 categorised the main residential house as having **high bat roosting potential** and the small out-house as having **low bat roosting potential**. All remaining structures within the Site boundary were found to have **negligible bat roosting potential**.

In accordance with the *Bat Conservation Trust (BCT) Survey Guidelines (2023, 4th Edition)*, three bat activity surveys are required on the main residential house and one bat activity survey is required on the small out-house. **Ecological Services Ltd have been commissioned to undertake bat activity surveys focused on the main residential house and small outhouse.** The survey methodology, findings and recommendations will be provided in a separate bat survey report once activity surveys have been completed.

Tree Assessment

A cursory ground-level assessment of trees within the Site was undertaken to evaluate their potential for roosting bats. In accordance with the *Bat Conservation Trust (BCT) Survey Guidelines (2023, 4th Edition)*, any tree assessed as having roosting potential of PRF-I or PRF-M will require further detailed survey work using more detailed ground-based visual assessment methodology.

A number of mature trees are present within the Site boundary. As the trees were all in leaf and had close canopy cover, it was difficult to see each tree in detail. However, of particular note is T25 (Norway Maple), T31 (Copper Beech) and T32 (ash). It is not clear what trees on site will be lost as part of the development proposals but it is likely a number of mature trees will require removal to facilitate the proposed layout. In the first instance it is recommended that trees are retained, if possible, due to the potential for bat roosting use and value to other local wildlife. If it is not possible to retain mature trees **further detailed survey work of trees may be required to establish their potential use by roosting bats.**

Habitat Assessment

The Site is surrounded by housing, roads and street lighting in all directions and is considered to have limited habitat connectivity to the wider landscape. The habitats within the Site boundary are considered suitable for bat foraging and commuting use. Given the limited habitat connectivity to the wider landscape, the Site is likely more suitable for use by small numbers of more common bat species such as common pipistrelle and soprano pipistrelle bats which are typically less light averse.

Bat activity surveys focused on the buildings are being undertaken during the summer months of 2026 by Ecological Services Ltd. Whilst the survey effort will focus on the buildings it will still provide some detail on bat activity in the immediate area. **Given the lack of habitat connectivity and overall relatively small area of the Development Site, focused bat transect survey work is not recommended in this instance.**

A wildlife friendly lighting strategy will be required as part of the development proposals. It will be important to design the scheme to prevent light spill onto retained vegetation to the south and west of the Site. Recent Bat Conservation Trust (BCT) guidance would advise desired illuminance levels for a feature to be considered dark would be at or below 0.2 lux on a horizontal plane and 0.4 lux on a vertical plane.

3.5 Otters

The otter (*Lutra lutra)* is a European protected species and is protected under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017. In summary, they are protected from:

- Deliberate capture, killing and injuring,
- Deliberate disturbance of a breeding site or resting place,

- Damage or destruction of a breeding site or resting place.

Otter are listed on schedule 5 of The Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981 which protects them from intentional or reckless disturbance or obstruction when using a structure or place for shelter and / or protection. It is also an offence to sell, offer or expose for sale an otter. Otter is listed in section 7 of the Environment (Wales) Act 2016 which makes them a key species to sustain and improve biodiversity.

A number of otter records were returned within 1 km of the Site, all to the east along the River Gavenny and A465. The closest record is approximately 450 m to the east and for a n otter road casualty along the A465.

Whilst the Development Site contains woodland and scrub habitat which otters can utilise, the Site is immediately surrounded by housing and roads in all directions. There is no habitat connectivity with the River Gavenny. The potential presence of otter within the Site boundary is considered to be unlikely. **No further survey recommendations are made for this species.**

3.6 Badger

Badgers (*Meles meles)* are protected under the Protection of Badgers Act 1992. In summary they are protected from:

- Taking, killing or injuring;
- Cruelty;
- Interfering with a badger sett;
- The selling and possession of badgers;
- Marking or ringing.

Badgers are also listed on schedule 6 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 as amended.

Badgers tend to have a variety of setts with different uses and functions within the territory for the family unit. In general there is usually a main sett which the family will use the most. There are then annex, subsidiary and or outlier setts which depending on family structures and environmental pressures may be used at different times of the year. As female badgers tend to have their cubs over winter the disturbance and damage of badger setts is prohibited between December and June inclusive. Natural Resources Wales (NRW) are the licensing body for any actions which may contravene the above legislation.

Three badger records were returned within 1 km of the Site. The closest record is approximately 490 m to the northwest but is given to a four figure grid reference with no further record details provided. Another badger record is provided 700 m to the south east along the A465 and a third approximately 800 m to the northwest.

Badgers typically favour dry, sloping ground for sett construction, often within woodland or beneath substantial hedgerow banks, and they routinely follow established pathways

between setts and foraging areas. No evidence of badger activity, such as digging, latrines, paths, or snagged hairs, was observed during the survey. The Site is generally well managed with residents accessing much of the Site on an infrequent basis.

Whilst the Development Site contains woodland and scrub habitat which badger can utilise, the Site is immediately surrounded by housing and roads in all directions. There is no connectivity to surrounding areas of suitable badger habitat. The potential presence of badger within the Site boundary is considered to be unlikely. **No further survey recommendations are made for this species.**

3.7 Birds

All breeding birds are protected under schedule 1 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act (1981) as amended. Under this Act it is an offence to:

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

Enhanced protection is afforded to species listed on Schedule 1 of the Act, this additional protection makes it an offence to:

- Intentionally or recklessly disturb any wild bird listed on Schedule 1 while it is nest building, or at a nest containing eggs or young, or disturb the dependent young of such a bird.

The tree lines, areas of scrub, hedgerow, woodland and buildings are considered likely to offer suitable foraging and nesting opportunities for local bird species. The mosaic of habitats across the Site also provide foraging habitat, supporting a range of common bird species that may utilise the Site throughout the year.

A precautionary approach will be required when removing any habitat with potential for nesting birds including the building on site, in line with relevant legislation. Appropriate compensation measures should also be implemented to offset the loss of foraging and nesting habitat.

3.8 Reptiles and Amphibians

Reptiles such as the slow-worm, common lizard, adder and grass snake are protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended). They are protected from killing, injuring and sale. They are protected from killing, injuring and sale. They are also listed in section 6 of The Environment (Wales) Act 2016.

The four widespread species of amphibian i.e. the smooth newt, palmate newts, common frog and common toad, are protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) by Section 9(5) of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981. This section prohibits

sale of these species. Common toad is listed in section 6 of The Environment (Wales) Act 2016.

Two reptile records and nine amphibian records were returned within the data search. The lack of reptile records are thought to indicate under recording, rather than an absence of species within the local area. Four of the amphibian records are for common frog within the Development Site from 2025. The closest reptile record relates to common lizard approximately 600 m north east, past the River Gavenny.

Reptiles typically favour a mosaic of habitats with varied vegetation structure, providing open areas for basking alongside nearby refuge for shelter and protection. Amphibians require still waterbodies for breeding and damp terrestrial habitats offering suitable foraging opportunities during their non-breeding life stages.

Although three ponds are located within 500 m of the Site, habitat connectivity between these ponds and the Site is considered to be limited due to the presence of residential development, roads and other associated infrastructure surrounding the Site. While the Site does provide some shelter and foraging opportunities for amphibians, its location, surrounded on three sides by residential housing and roads, limits the likelihood of amphibian dispersal into the Site from these directions. The Development Site is likely suitable for small numbers of common amphibians on an occasional basis.

The areas of woodland, scrub, hedgerow, tree line and rubble piles are all suitable for overwintering use by reptiles. The grassland, woodland and ornamental shrub interface create a mosaic of habitats suitable for commuting, foraging and basking use by reptiles.

Whilst the Site has limited connectivity to wider suitable habitat, it does sit adjacent to residential gardens that are suitable for slow worm use and dispersal. Whilst there are limited reptile record in the local area, the habitats within the Site are considered suitable for reptile use. The development proposals will affect the majority of habitats present within the Site boundary, with only some areas of woodland proposed for retention.

Whilst there are limited records for reptiles within the local area, given the suitability of the habitats within the Site boundary to support reptile species and the development proposals affecting the majority of the Site, potential impacts to reptile species cannot be discounted. **Reptile surveys are recommended to support any future planning application for the proposed Development Site boundary.**

3.9 Other Mammals

Other notable mammal species listed under Section 7 of the Environment (Wales) Act 2016 which had records returned during the data search for hedgehog, polecat and weasel these are species of principle importance for the purpose of maintaining and enhancing biodiversity in relation to Wales.

Hedgehog - 11 records of hedgehog were returned within 1 km of the Site, with the closest records located within the Site boundary. This species is considered likely to be present within the Site, at least on an occasional basis, for foraging and potentially overwintering

Hedgehog is a Species of Principal Importance for the purpose of maintaining and enhancing biodiversity in Wales and is also listed under Schedule 6 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended). As such, appropriate consideration must be given to this species in any site proposals. **Any removal of brash, log or stone piles should be carried out with caution to avoid harm to hedgehogs and other wildlife that may be sheltering or overwintering within these features.**

Polecat - One record of polecat was returned approximately 450 m away to the south of site. Given the surrounding urban landscape, it is considered highly unlikely that polecat are present within the Site boundary.

Weasel - One record of weasel was returned approximately 700 m away to the south east of site. Given the surrounding urban landscape, it is considered highly unlikely that weasel are present within the Site boundary.

3.10 Invertebrates

Invertebrate species can be listed under Section 7 of the Environment (Wales) Act 2016 as 'species of principal importance for the conservation of biological diversity in Wales'. Notable Section 7 invertebrate species returned in the data search include Australian flatworm, Azure damselfly, blossom underwing, common darter, emperor dragonfly, large red damselfly, mint moth, purple emperor, scarlet tiger, signal crayfish, small blue and southern hawker.

The Site comprises a mosaic of grassland, scrub, ornamental planting and woodland. A diverse habitat structure is important for invertebrates, as many species require access to multiple habitat types throughout their lifecycle. The habitats of the Site and immediately adjacent habitats were assessed for their potential to support invertebrates using the Invertebrate Habitat Potential Assessment (IHPA) as found in *CIEEM in practice Issue 112, June 2021.* See Table 1 for results. The IHPA protocol has been produced to allow ecologists without specialised entomological expertise to identify key habitats and features likely to support important invertebrate assemblages. Full details of habitat types can be found in Appendix 5.

Based on the Invertebrate Habitat Potential Assessment (IHPA), the Site, in its current state, is considered to have potential to support common and widespread species of invertebrate. **No further survey work is recommended for invertebrates but steps must be incorporated into the new site design to create and enhance habitats that encourage invertebrate populations.**

Table 1. Invertebrate Habitat Potential Assessment

Habitat Element	Grade
Decaying Wood – H1	D - Minor
Rotational Management – H2	D - Minor
Nectar Resources – H3	D - Minor
Wet Substrates – H4	E – Negligible/Absent
Open Water Habitats – H5	E – Negligible/Absent
Structural Patchwork – H6	C - Moderate
Still Air (S) – H7	D - Minor
Still Air (H) – H8	E – Negligible/Absent
Connectivity – H9	E – Negligible/Absent
Ecoclines – H10	D - Minor
Bare Earth – H11	E – Negligible/Absent

4. Recommendations and Mitigation

The applicant is seeking planning permission for a residential development within the Site boundary, The proposed works will include the creation of a number of houses and flats with a new access road along the northern site boundary. The proposed development works are likely to affect the majority of habitat within the Site boundary. However, it is noted that some areas of woodland and mature trees are proposed for retention within the Site layout.

Broad recommendations are made below to help inform the design process. **Once the development proposals are progressed and the considerations to development within the Site are addressed, further ecological input may be required.** General recommendations include:

- **Bat activity surveys of the detached residential dwelling and single out-house within the Site boundary are recommended.** Bat activity surveys must follow the guidance provided within the Bat Conservation Trust (BCT) Survey Guidelines (2023, 4th Edition).
- A **reptile refugia survey** of the Site is recommended to establish the presence or likely absence of reptiles and other amphibian species within the Site boundary. Artificial refugia must be set out within suitable habitat in the Site boundary following advice given in Froglife Advice Sheet 10.
- A **detailed ground based visual assessment of all trees** proposed for removal for their use by roosting bats will be required for any tree to be removed. Should any tree be found to have PRF-I or PRF-M suitability for use by roosting bats further detailed surveys such as endoscope or aerial inspection surveys to fully inspect any suitable feature will be required. The optimal survey window for bat tree assessment work is the winter when leaves are not on the trees.
- Careful consideration must be given to the use of lighting within the Development Site, as this can adversely affect the activity of a variety of fauna, particularly foraging bats, nesting birds and invertebrates. L**ight spillage into adjacent semi-natural habitats must be avoided** and brightness kept to the lowest permissible level in the areas adjacent to such habitats. All lighting must meet recommendations in the *BCT Guidance Note 08/23 Bats and artificial lighting* in the UK document.
- The trees, scrub, hedgerow and buildings within the Site are considered suitable for nesting birds. **Vegetation clearance and building demolition (scrub and trees) must be undertaken outside the bird nesting season (March - August inclusive)**. Where this is not achievable, an ecologist must inspect the vegetation or buildings prior to works to check for active nests. If an active nest is identified, a minimum buffer zone of 5 m, where no site works can take place, must be maintained until chicks have fledged, after which works may proceed. Larger buffer zones may be required depending on the species and habitat.

- Ideally all excavations within the Site will be securely covered over if left unattended. Any excavations that have a depth in excess of 0.5 m and that are left open overnight will have a means of escape let for any mammals (e.g. hedgehog) that may fall into them. A wooden board or equivalent will be left from the bottom to the top of the hole at an angle no steeper than 45 º. This will allow any mammal to escape and avoid increased stress from being trapped.
- **A root protection zone (RPZ) must be implemented around any retained trees** within or adjacent to the proposed development, British Standard BS 5837, Trees *in relation to design, demolition and construction - Recommendations* will be followed. Measures will include clear marking of the RPZ to guarantee no machinery is used or digging carried out in that area. This will ensure that there is no detrimental impact to the trees and the flora or fauna it supports.
- **Any hedgerow removal must be avoided where possible.** If hedgerow impacts cannot be avoided the consideration to hedgerow translocation must be given. If new hedgerow creation is required, it is recommended that 2 m of native hedgerow planting is created for every 1 m of hedgerow lost. A suitable aftercare regime will be required to ensure the new planting establishes into mature hedgerow.
- **The overall loss of green space within the Site boundary must be considered.** The trees, woodland and hedgerow within the Site have the highest biodiversity benefit. The presence of orchard habitat within the Site boundary also has a high biodiversity value. The semi-improved grassland across the Site is considered to be of local value for wildlife. The Site layout must be designed to retain as much woodland habitat as possible. It is likely that a scheme of off-site habitat compensation will be required to ensure suitable compensation for biodiversity impacts are provided.

5. Biodiversity Enhancements & Green Infrastructure Considerations

The *Environment Act (Wales) 2016* places a duty on competent authorities to conserve and enhance biodiversity. Chapter 6 of P*lanning Policy Wales (version 12)*, paragraph 6.2.5 requires Green Infrastructure considerations to be included with all planning applications. Development proposals must detail how green infrastructure considerations which are proportionate to the scale and nature of the plans are being provided.

The green infrastructure currently present within the Site boundary is considered to be of high local biodiversity value. The mature trees, woodland, orchard and hedgerow habitat are all features considered to have high biodiversity value. The areas of managed grassland, hardstanding and ornamental planting are also considered to have low biodiversity value. The Site has negligible habitat connectivity to surrounding areas of green space as it is immediately surrounded by residential housing in all directions.

In accordance with Planning Policy Wales (Edition 12), paragraph 6.4.16, the biodiversity value of a site must be assessed based on its condition prior to any vegetation clearance works. Consequently, the proposed development must seek to enhance the remaining habitats within the Site to improve the quality of the existing green infrastructure and deliver a measurable increase in biodiversity value. General considerations to green infrastructure to be considered as part for the development include:

- Paragraph 6.4.42 of *Planning Policy Wales (version 12)* requires that at least three trees of a similar type and compensatory size are planted for every tree lost. Final design details are not yet available but it is anticipated that a number of trees may be lost as part of the development work.
- The use of tarmac in any new development has no biodiversity benefit. Where possible, new car parking design must consider the use of materials such as GrassCrete which allows a small amount of hard wearing vegetation to establish and allow water to be absorbed.

The Environment Act (Wales) 2016 places a duty on competent authorities such as Monmouthshire County Borough Council to conserve and enhance biodiversity. The below bullet points are some simple measures that could be achieved to enhance the biodiversity of the Site. At least two of these measures must be included within any future development proposals to help demonstrate a biodiversity enhancement. All ecological measures should be added to architectural drawings.

- The provision of integrated bird boxes within at least 25% of new buildings created on site. A variety of bird boxes should be used but all boxes must be placed at least 2 m high from ground floor.

- The provision of integrated bat boxes within at least 25% of new building created on site. Bat boxes must be placed at eaves level, and not within 2 m of an external light source.
- Consideration to the creation of roosting provision with a pitched roof should also be given. For example any new building within the Site can be lined with a bitumen based roofing felt and suitable bat access points included to the space between the roofing felt and roof tiles.
- The use of native species within the soft landscaping works on the Site. Suitable long term management of soft landscaping also helps ensure spaces are useful to wildlife.
- The removal of ornamental or invasive plant species from all woodland areas retained within the Development Site boundary would help improve the quality of the habitat. Species such as laurel out compete more native flora and reduce the diversity of woodland understory habitat.
- All fencing across the Site must be hedgehog friendly in design. A friendly design is considered to allow passage of small animals across the Site. Close board or mesh fencing should provide either a continuous gap between the bottom of the fence and ground of approximately 13 cm or 13 cm by 13 cm gaps cut every 3 m along fencing.
- A reptile hibernacula can be created within the proposed landscaped areas of the Development Site using rubble from on-site clearance works. The hibernacula must at least measure 0.5 m in depth, 2 m wide and 2 m long each. It will be made by creating layers of wood, brash, rubble and soil. The hibernacula will create a mound approximately 0.3 m above ground level which will be covered over with soil and seeded using a native seed mix.
- The creation of at least one butterfly bank within the grounds of the Site would be welcomed. A butterfly bank creates a range of micro-climates and habitats for use by invertebrates. In simplified terms, a butterfly bank requires a mound of poor quality soil to be created ideally 30 m long and ‘C’ shaped. At the base of the bank a gravel substrate should be spread a few metres in width. The mound can then be seeded with a native seed mix and subject to low intensity cut and collect mowing regime.
- The provision of at least one hedgehog home within the Site boundary would provide shelter and cover for hedgehogs to use all year round. Locating hedgehog homes in quiet vegetated areas within the Site is preferable.

Appendix 1 – Plant Species Recorded

Common Name	*Scientific Name*
Herbaceous Plants & Grasses	
Barren Strawberry	*Potentilla sterilis*
Borage	*Borago officinalis*
Broad-leaved Dock	*Rumex obtusifolius*
Brome Species	*Bromus sp*
Cleavers	*Galium aparine*
Cock's Foot	*Dactylis glomerata*
Common Bent	*Agrostis capillaris*
Common cat's-ear	*Hypochaeris radicata*
Common Knapweed	*Centaurea nigra*
Common Mouse-ear	*Cerastium fontanum*
Common Sorrel	*Rumex acetosa*
Creeping Buttercup	*Ranunculus repens*
Creeping thistle	*Cirsium arvense*
Curled Dock	*Rumex crispus*
Daisy	*Bellis perennis*
Dandelion	*Taraxacum lacistophyllum*
Enchanter's Nightshade	*Circaea lutetina*
Fox and Cubs	*Pilosella aurantiaca*
Garlic Mustard	*Alliaria petiolate*
Greater Mullein	*Verbascum thapsus*
Hedge Woundwort	*Stacys sylvatica*
Hoary Mustard	*Hirschfeldia incana*
Hogweed	*Heracleum sphondylium*
Hop Trefoil	*Trifolium campestre*
Ivy	*Hedera helix*
Lesser Celandine	*Ficaria verna*
Lords and Ladies	*Arum maculatum*
Nettle	*Urtica dioica*
Pendulous Sedge	*Carex pendula*
Perennial Rye Grass	*Lolium perenne*
Ragwort	*Jacobaea vulgaris*

Common Name	*Scientific Name*
Red Clover	*Trifolium pratense*
Self Heal	*Prunella vulgaris*
Silverweed	*Potentilla anserina*
Soft Rush	*Juncus effusus*
Willowherb Species	*Epilobium species*
Wood Dock	*Rumex sanguineus*
Yarrow	*Achillea millefolium*
Yorkshire Fog	*Holcus lanatus*
Trees & Woody Shrubs	
Apple	*Malus spp*
Ash	*Fraxinus excelsior*
Bramble	*Rubus fruticosus species*
Butterfly Bush	*Buddleja davidii*
Cherry	*Prunus species*
Cherry Laurel	*Prunus laurocerasus*
Copper Beech	*Fagus sylvatica f.purpuera*
Cotoneaster Species	*cotoneaster*
Dogwood	*Cornus sanguinea*
Elder	*Sambucus nigra*
Goat Willow	*Salix caprea*
Hawthorn	*Crataegus monogyna*
Hazel	*Corollas avellana*
holly	*Ilex aquifolium*
Lawson's Cypress	*Chamaecyparis lawsoniana*
Norway Maple	*Acer platanoides*
Plum	*Prunus species*
Rowan	*Sorbus aucuparia*
Sycamore	*Acer pseudoplatanus*
Walnut	*Juglans regia*
Wellingtonia	*Sequoiadendro giganteum*
Yew	*Taxus baccata*

Appendix 2 – Site Photographs

Area 1



Area 1 - Looking north west



Area 1 - Tree line along eastern boundary looking north



Area 1 - Southern hedgerow looking west



Area 1 - North boundary looking east



Area 1 - West boundary looking north



Area 1 - Looking eastwards

Area 2



Area 2 - Planted beds to south west of area



Area 2 - Woodland / grassland interface along north boundary, looking east



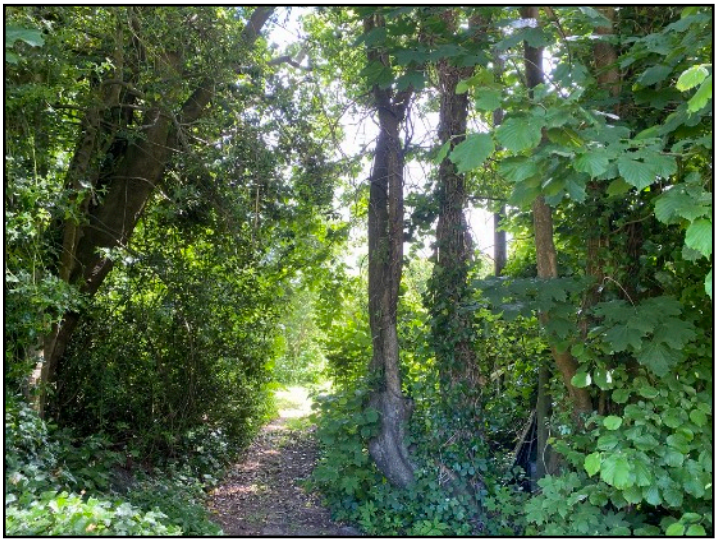
Area 2 - Main grassland area looking southwards



Area 2 - Smaller grassland area looking east



Area 2 - Interior view of woodland to south of area



Area 2 - Path between grassland areas

Area 3



Area 3 - Orchard area to east of main house



Area 3 - Ornamental planting along drive way



Area 3 - Grassland to south of main house



Area 3 - View of woodland



Area 3 - Wood store to north of main house



Area 3 - Derelict building to north west of main house



Area 3 - grassland to west of main house



Area 3 - Storage containers within woodland to west of main house



Area 3 - East elevation of main house



Area 3 - South elevation of main house



Area 3 - Shed to north of main house



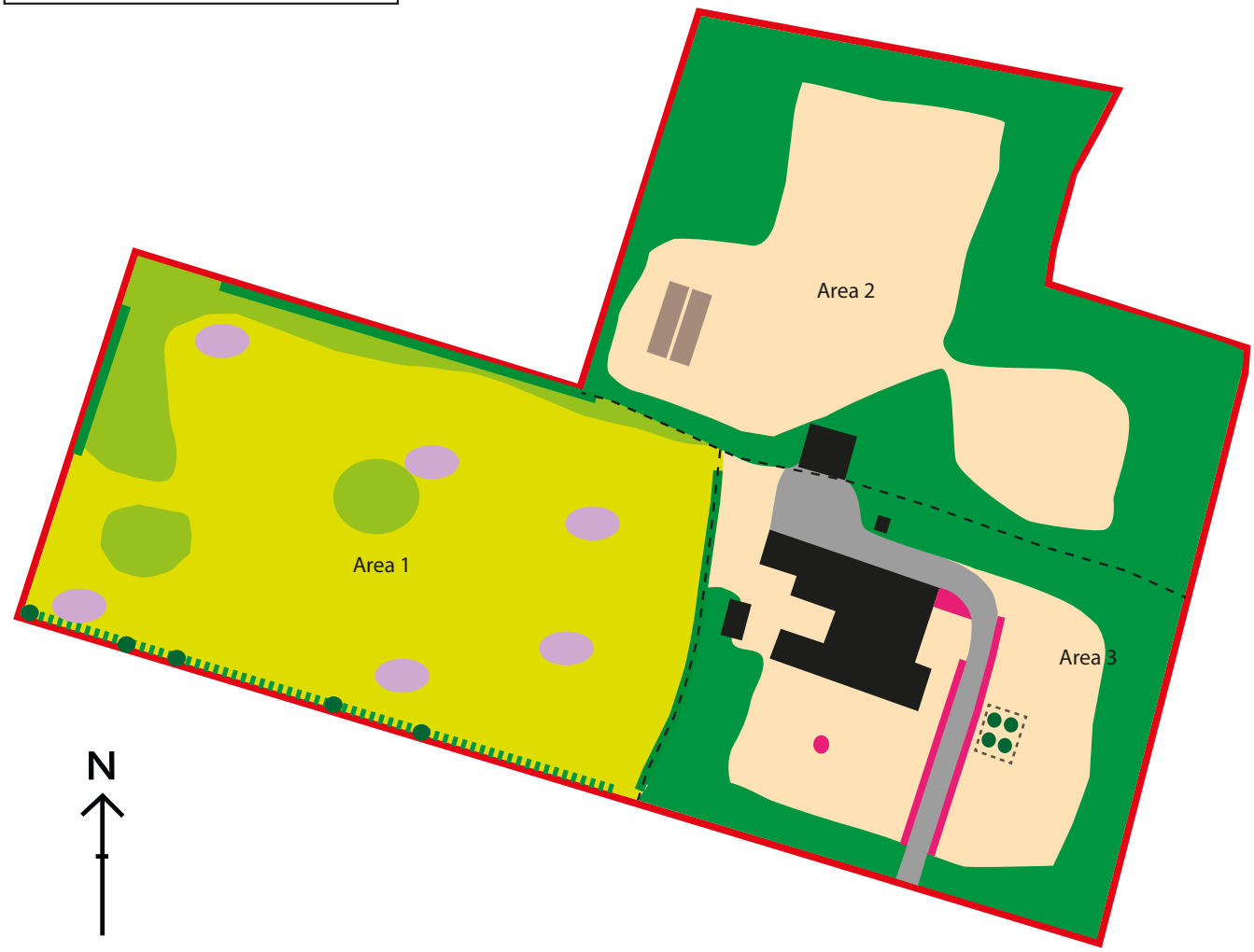
Area 3 - East elevation of shed

Appendix 3 - Habitat Map

MIDWAY LANE, ABERGAVENNY

Habitat Map

June 2026



- Species Poor Semi Improved Grassland
- Mixed Woodland
- Scrub
- Semi Improved Grassland
- Ornamental Planting
- Hedgerow
- Site Boundary
- Tall Ruderal Vegetation
- Taramc Hardstanding
- Building
- Planted Bed
- Mature Tree
- Tree Line

Appendix 4 - Aerial View of Site Location



Appendix 5 – Invertebrate Habitat Potential Assessment

Table 1. Summary of the 11 habitat elements assessed by IHP survey.

Habitat element	No.	Comments
Decaying Wood	HE1	In all its forms; from decaying wood on/in large trees to woodland floor debris
Rotational Management	HE2	Planned or serendipitous; and whether for nature conservation or other purposes
Nectar Resources	HE3	As a proxy for nectar- and pollen resources, as assessment of pollen resources is impracticable on a walk-through survey
Wet Substrates	HE4	Including marginal, marshy, muddy and seasonally inundated habitats, as well as flushes
Open Water Habitats	HE5	The open water element of rivers, lakes, ponds, streams, ditches, etc.
Structural Patchwork	HE6	Habitat mosaics, including, but by no means restricted to open mosaic habitats on previously developed land
Still Air (S)	HE7	Suntraps and still-air microclimates in open situations; the term 'still air' is used in preference to 'wind breaks' as many rigid wind breaks are likely to produce turbulent air in their lee
Still Air (H)	HE8	Humid still-air microclimates in sheltered and shaded situations
Connectivity	HE9	Landscape-scale connectivity between the site and external habitats
Ecoclines	HE10	A graded transition between two or more broad habitats
Bare Earth	HE11	Unshaded bare or sparsely vegetated well-drained substrate, regardless of soil type