



PRELIMINARY ECOLOGICAL APPRAISAL

- Land at 8 Longridge Road, Hurst Green, Lancashire -

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A report for

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PART 1 INTRODUCTION:

1.1 REASONS FOR SURVEY:

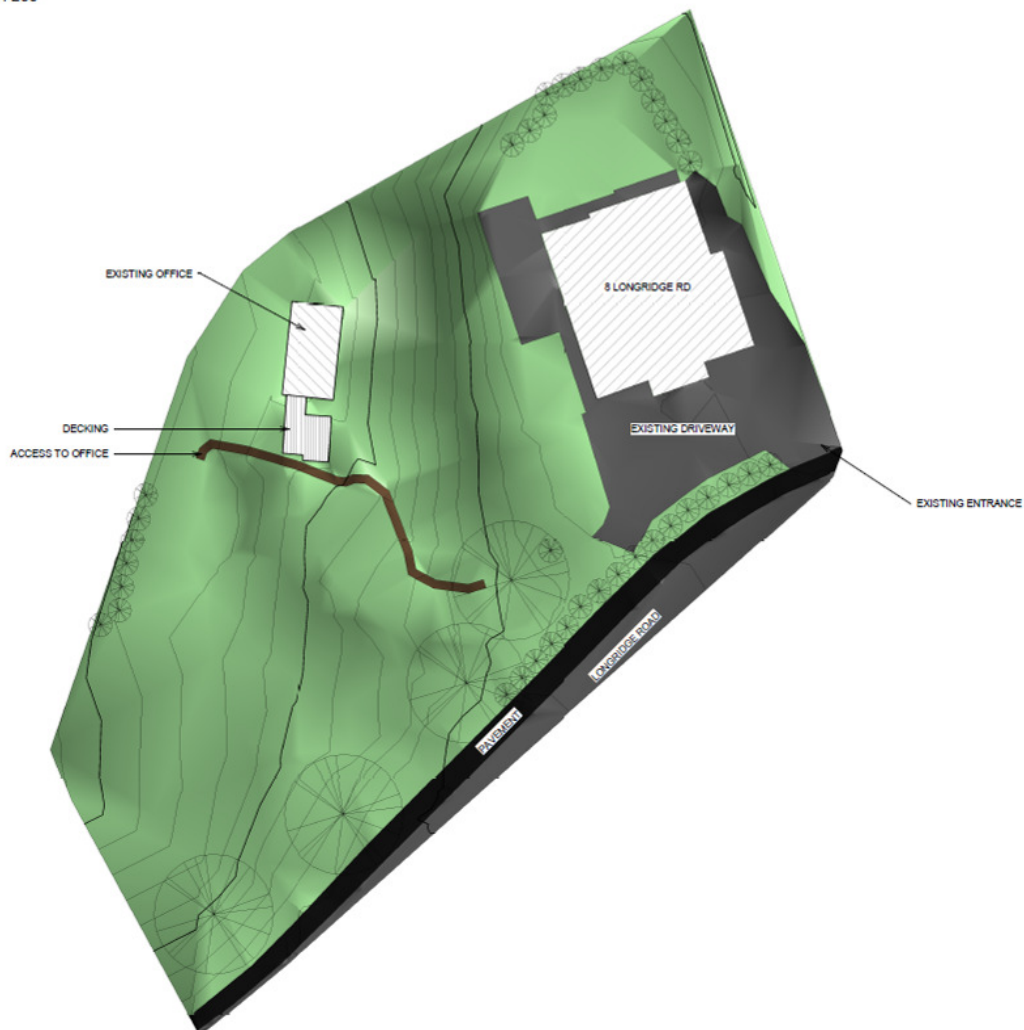
PENNINE *Ecological* have been commissioned to undertake a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal and protected species surveys / assessment of land at 8 Longridge Road, Hurst Green, Lancashire.

The study includes a vegetation, badger survey and a daytime bat roost assessment of the current wooden office on site and surrounding trees. The survey also includes assessment for other potential protected species issues.

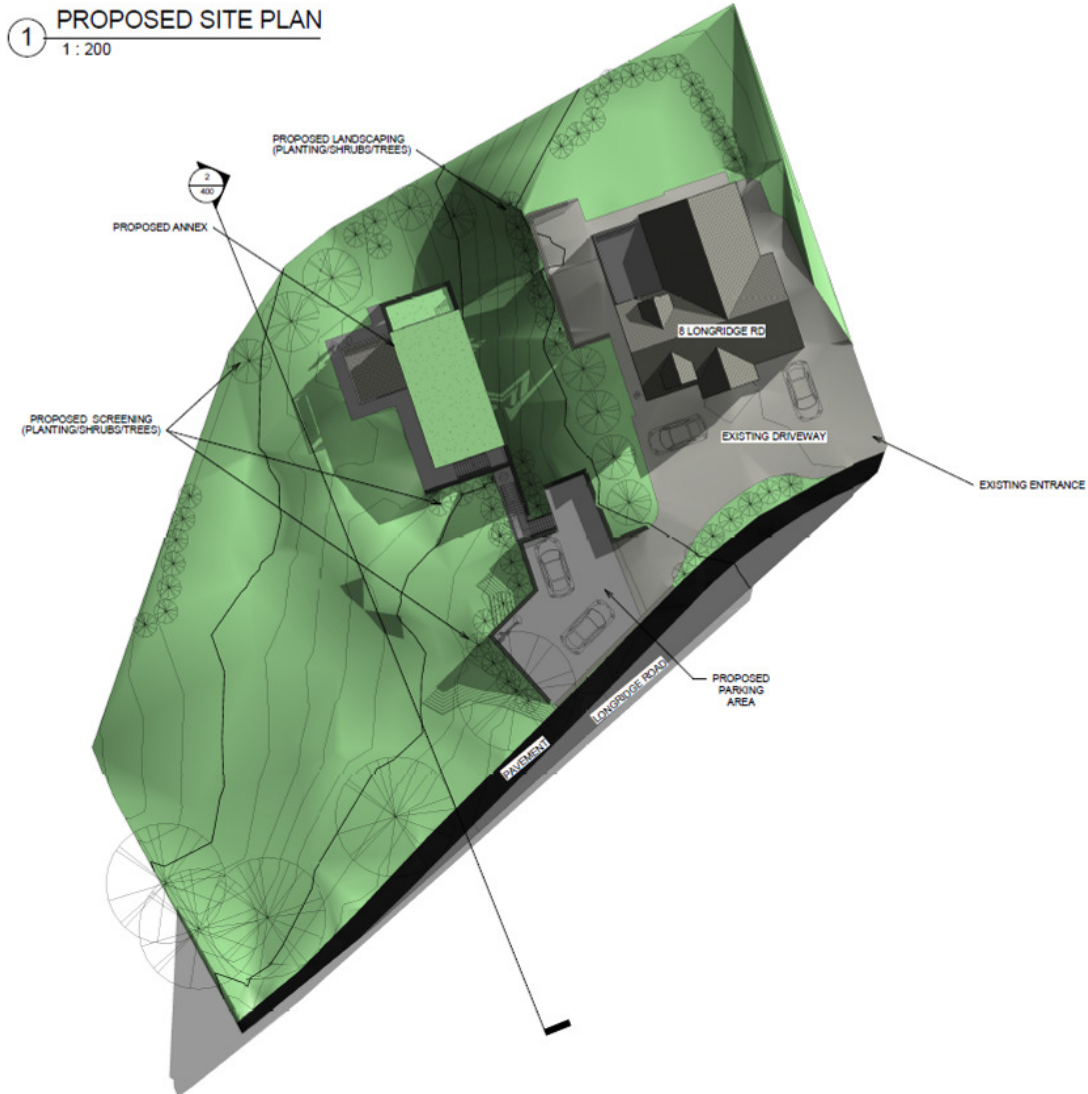
The report includes a full evaluation of the ecological significance of the survey findings.

The surveys are required due to proposals for demolition of the existing office and construction of a new office annex in the same location together with new access/parking. The exiting site plan is shown below;

① EXISTING SITE PLAN
1 : 200



The proposed site plan is shown below;



1.2 SITE LOCATION:

The site is located approximately 8km south west of Clitheroe town centre on the western edge of Hurst Green village. The sites central National Grid Reference is SD 6838 3785.

A Google Earth image of the site is shown on the following page.



1.3 SITE STATUS:

A desk top consultation study with Lancashire County Council was not undertaken for this study. However searches for statutory sites were undertaken as follows;

Statutory Sites:

Details of statutory sites were sought from the Natural England web site search:

<http://www.natureonthemap.naturalengland.org.uk/MagicMap.aspx>

The site falls just within the southern boundary of the Forest of Bowland Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB), further details are provided on the following link;
<http://www.landscapesforlife.org.uk/about-aonbs/visit-aonbs/forest-of-bowland-aonb/>

There are no other statutory wildlife sites within 500m of the site.

The site falls within distant SSSI Impact Risk Zones (IRZ's) associated with the River Hodder Section SSSI, approximately 2.7km to the north east. However the nature / size and scale of the development does not require notification to Natural England.

1.3.2 Non-Statutory Sites:

There are no known County Biological Heritage Sites (*BHS*) associated with the site. There may be sites within 500m of the site's boundaries however this would require verification by a desk top consultation with LCC.

1.4 SURVEY CONSTRAINTS:

The survey was conducted on 29th April 2019 which is an acceptable time for vegetation / habitat survey and protected species assessments.

There are no constraints to any of the surveys and all parts of the site were accessible.

PART 2 SURVEY RESULTS:

2.1 VEGETATION / HABITAT SURVEY:

2.1.1 Habitat Survey Methodology:

Since this site is relatively small and highly artificial in nature the habitat mapping element of an Extended Phase 1 Habitat Survey (*Nature Conservancy Council 1990*) of the site was considered unnecessary. The site is dominated by bare earth and disturbed ground with steep slopes supporting introduced shrubs and on the southern / western boundaries mature trees/woodland edge, including both native and non-native species. The survey was undertaken on 29th April 2019. The sites habitats were photographed in detail and target noted / described where appropriate. Native higher vascular plant species were recorded and given abundance values according to the standard DAFOR scale, where:

D	=	Dominant
A	=	Abundant
F	=	Frequent
O	=	Occasional
R	=	Rare

Where appropriate these values can be prefixed by the letter L (locally) or V (very), to provide more subtle biogeographical data.

2.1.2 Phase 1 Habitats Present:

- A2.1 Dense scrub
- A2.2 Scattered scrub
- A3.1 Scattered broad-leaved trees
- A3.2 Scattered coniferous trees
- C3.1 Tall ruderal herb
- J1.3 Ephemeral / short perennial
- J1.4 Introduced shrub
- J2.2.2 Defunct species-poor hedge
- J2.4 Fence
- J2.5 Wall
- J3.6 Buildings
- J4 Bare ground

2.1.3 General Description:

The surveyed site is approximately 60m by 40m in maximum dimensions forming a steep sloping site above Dean Brook. The brook is outside the clients ownership and at least 25m from any point of impact.

The site is dominated by a steep slope which forms part of the garden curtilage of the property. The slope is only partially vegetated and comprises a mosaic of introduced shrub, scattered scrub, non-native plants, short perennial vegetation and large areas of bare earth / disturbed ground with several bark chipping pathways and steps.

The south western part of the site is low lying and is located along the edge of sycamore dominated woodland, here there is some native woodland ground flora including; dog's mercury, herb Robert and lesser celandine. A short length of hedge is also present comprising of sycamore, holly and raspberry.

A low lying area of land at the base of the steep slope and towards the western boundary has a timber shed with wooden decking used as an office. The vegetation in this part of the site includes a mosaic of native and non-native trees and shrubs including scattered immature sycamore, holly, hazel, hawthorn and garden privet. This is the proposed location of the new office annex.

The sites southern boundary with Longridge Road includes a Leyland cypress hedge and further down the hill a gappy line of hawthorn, holly, sycamore, horse chestnut and exotic tree species.

2.1.4 Invasive species:

No invasive species were found on site.

2.1.5 Target Notes:

Target Note 1: Woodland edge in the south western part of the site:

This target note relates to the shaded woodland edge habitats which occur alongside a line of mature sycamore and rarely ash. These habitats are not affected by the proposed development which lies to the north east. The following species were recorded;

<u>Species:</u>	<u>Abundance:</u>
Ivy	LA
Dog's mercury	VLA
Common nettle	LF
Creeping buttercup	LF
Meadowsweet	LF
Lesser celandine	LF
Wood avens	LF
Herb Robert	LF
Cleavers	LF
Sycamore (boundary)	LF
Raspberry	LF
Great willowherb	VLF

Target Note 1: Woodland edge in the south western part of the site, Cont:

<u>Species:</u>	<u>Abundance:</u>
Opposite-leaved golden-saxifrage	VLF
Hart's-tongue fern	VLF
Hogweed	O
Bramble	O
Dandelion species	O
Red campion	O
Broad-buckler fern	R
Male-fern	R
Primrose	R
Pendulous sedge	R

Target Note 2: Steep slope / habitat mosaic /remaining parts of the site including proposed development area:

This target note covers the remaining parts of the site and includes the steep slope and areas around the existing timber office building. Significant areas of disturbed ground and bare earth are also present. The following species were recorded;

<u>Species:</u>	<u>Abundance:</u>
Non-native shrubs	LD
Non-native exotic herbaceous species	F
Lesser celandine	LF
Common bent	LF
Yorkshire-fog	LF
Creeping thistle	LF
Raspberry	LF
Pine species	VLF
Wood anemone	VLF
Flowering currant	VLF
Wood dock	VLF
Red campion	O
Sycamore sapling	O
Holly	O
Foxglove	O
Dandelion species	O
Cherry species	R

2.2 PROTECTED SPECIES SURVEYS:

During the habitat survey additional surveys were undertaken where appropriate for the presence of other potential protected species. The following surveys were undertaken.

2.2.1 Badger Survey:

Method:

A badger survey was undertaken of the site. The badger survey used standard techniques for establishing the use of the site by badger, and includes searches for evidence of badgers including:

- Setts
- Pathways
- Footprints
- Latrines
- Foraging areas
- Scratching posts
- Boundary searches for runs, pathways and latrines.

The survey results are outlined below.

Results:

Sett Search:

The survey found no setts on site.

Search for Foraging Signs and Pathways:

The site was thoroughly searched for badger pathways and signs of foraging. No sign of badger activity was found therefore it can be concluded that the species is not using this area for foraging or commuting.

Boundary Search:

All of the boundaries of the site were walked and examined for potential runs, pathways and latrines. The search found no evidence to suggest badger activity along any of the site boundaries.

The absence of any activity signs indicates that badgers are not entering the site. The absence of latrines indicates a lack of territorial activity in the near vicinity of the site.

2.2.2 Bats:

Bats are comprehensively protected by European legislation.

All British bats and their ¹roosts are afforded protection under the 1981 Wildlife & Countryside Act (as amended) and are listed in Schedule 2 of the Conservation of Habitats & Species Regulations 2010 (as amended). When dealing with cases where a European Protected Species (all UK bats) may be affected, a planning authority is a competent authority within the meaning of the Regulation 7 of the 2010 Regulations and therefore has a statutory duty to have due regard to the provisions of the Regulations in the exercise of its functions.

Survey Methodology:

A daytime survey was conducted on 29th April 2019. The existing wooden outbuilding / office was inspected internally and externally for evidence of bats and potential places / points of internal access that may be of value to bats. The exterior elevations were investigated from ground floor level, with the aid of close focusing binoculars, for places that are frequently used by bats as roosts or as access into roost chambers. All elevations were visually accessible. There is no internal loft space in the outbuilding. In addition the trees on site were assessed for bat roost potential.

The daytime survey was conducted by Mr. Robert Leatham, who is an experienced ecologist. The results were discussed with Mrs. Kylee Wilding, a highly experienced bat surveyor who holds a Natural England Class 2 bat license (CLS -14227). Mr. Leatham's conclusions concur with those of Mrs. Wilding.

During the survey the surrounding habitat was evaluated in relation to bats as very often roost selection is closely correlated with the surrounding habitat.

Constraints:

The daytime survey was conducted towards the start of the active period for bats. Full access for inspections of the outbuilding and trees on site was achievable in relation to assessing the level of bat roost potential that may exist.

There are therefore no constraints to the survey.

¹ *The term roost is generically referred to as a place that bat/s use for the any of the above reasons, however it should be noted that under the Conservation of Habitats & Species Regulations 2010 (Regulation 41) the term roost is not used but refers to "a breeding site or resting place of such an animal" and is afforded legal protection. The roost, breeding site or resting place of bats, which ever terminology is used is legally protected whether or not bats are in occupation.*

Survey Results:

Wooden office outbuilding:

The building is constructed entirely from timber with tight fitting roofing felt and boards. There is no internal loft space or roof voids.

The building is generally in a very good state of repair and has no potential points for bat ingress.

Trees and bat roost potential:

All the trees on site were inspected for bat roost potential.

The mature sycamores in the south western part of the site all have dense ivy cover which could potentially provide roosting opportunities for bats, although no evidence was observed.

There is no bat roost potential associated with any other trees on site.

One semi-mature ornamental cherry tree on the sites boundary with Longridge Road may need to be removed. This tree has no bat roost potential.

The site is located on the edge of a rural village above the partially wooded slopes of Dean Brook, a tributary of the River Ribble. The property is located on the edge of mature woodland with tree lined boundaries along Longridge Road and a semi-natural stream corridor nearby. These features along with mature adjacent gardens provide excellent bat foraging habitat and increase the sites potential to support roosting bats. However apart from dense ivy cover on some mature trees the site does not support roosting opportunities for bats.

2.2.3 Other Protected Species:

Issues in relation to other potential protected species where no specific survey was undertaken are assessed in the following section.

PART 3 ECOLOGICAL EVALUATION & RECOMMENDATIONS:

3.1 EVALUATION OF SURVEY & RECOMMENDATIONS:

The following section evaluates the site in relation to statutory/non-statutory sites, protected species and species/habitats listed on the former UK Biodiversity Action Plan Priority List, Section 41 Species/Habitats of Principal Importance in England (NERC) Act 2006, and the Lancashire Biodiversity Action Plan.

3.1.1 Statutory Sites:

The site just falls within the southern boundary of the Forest of Bowland Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB). There are no other statutory wildlife sites within 500m of the site.

3.1.2 Sites Habitats & Higher Plant Species:

The habitats lost to development (introduced shrub, scattered scrub, bare ground, short perennial vegetation, ruderal vegetation and building) do not meet any guidelines as Section 41 habitat or Lancashire BAP habitat status.

Plant species recorded on site are common and widespread and are considered to be of site value only.

Recommendations: Habitats & Higher Plant Species:

There are no requirements for further surveys.

It would be desirable to retain and leave undisturbed the southern / south western part of the site alongside/beneath the line of the mature sycamore trees, where a degree of semi-natural woodland flora persists, despite the presence of non-native, cultivated garden species.

3.1.3 Protected Species:

Badgers:

Badgers are protected under Schedule 6 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981, and under the Protection of Badgers Act 1992, which prohibits deliberate interference with the animal or its sett.

The survey found no evidence of historic, recent or current use of the site by badgers for foraging, commuting or occupation and the species is considered to be absent.

Recommendations: Badgers:

There are no issues in relation to badgers arising from the development. No further surveys are required.

Bats:

Bats are comprehensively protected by European legislation. The survey concluded that there is no bat roost potential associated with the timber office / outbuilding. The line of mature ivy clad sycamore in the southern / south western part of the site have limited potential to support bat roosts, although no evidence was observed.

With the possible exception of a semi-mature ornamental cherry species on the boundary with Longridge Road there are no proposals to remove any of the mature / semi-mature trees on site.

Recommendations bats:

There are no requirements for further surveys.

In all cases illumination of the site's woodland / tree lined boundaries must be avoided. Where lighting is required this must be low level, directed downwards away from the wooded / tree lined boundaries and of low intensity. The following principles will apply;

- In all cases illumination of boundary woodland / tree lines will be avoided.
- Where and if lighting is required this will be directed internally within the site avoiding spillage towards boundary woodland / tree lines.
- The use of low powered sodium lights or similar will be used and these will be fitted with cowls / covers that prevent lateral light spillage towards woodland / tree lines.
- Wherever possible and only if required low level (1-1.5m high) bollard lighting will be used.
- If required lights will be fitted with timer controls that minimise the duration of lighting.

If required, lighting requirements will follow guidance provided by the Bat Conservation Trust.

http://www.bats.org.uk/pages/bats_and_lighting.html

Great Crested Newt / Amphibians:

Great crested newt is comprehensively protected under European legislation.

There are no waterbodies on the site capable of supporting the species. There are no known waterbodies within 250m of the proposed development capable of supporting the species.

Recommendations great crested newts:

There are no issues in respect of great crested newts.

Birds:

All birds are offered various levels of protection under the Wildlife and Countryside Act (1981) as amended.

The sites scattered scrub, introduced shrub and sapling trees have breeding bird potential.

Recommendations: Birds;

No strategic bird surveys are required. However, before any development and in order to minimise impacts on birds any removal of sapling trees / scrub / introduced shrub should take place outside of the breeding season, i.e. between the end of August and end of February. Following the removal of trees / shrubs etc., piles of shrub should be removed from the site, failure to do so could provide potential nest sites if left in situ until the following breeding season.

If removal of vegetation is envisaged during the breeding season, then checks should be made to establish any nesting or breeding activity, prior to removal.

PART 4 REFERENCES:

4.1 REFERENCES:

Nature Conservancy Council (1990) *Handbook for Phase 1 Habitat Survey – A Technique for Environmental Audit*. Nature Conservancy Council.

Rose, F. (1981) *The Wildflower Key*. Warne.

Stace, C., (1997) *New Flora of the British Isles (Second edition)*. Cambridge University Press.

Web Sites:

Google Earth.

MARIO.

Natural England – Nature on the Map.

APPENDIX 1:

Site Photographs

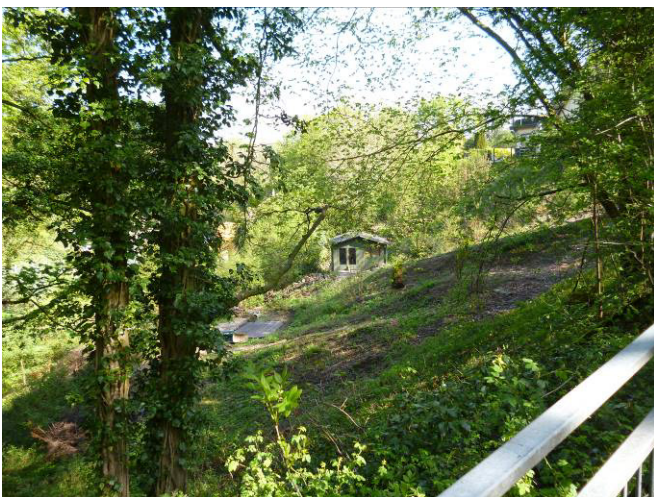
Site Photographs: April 29th 2019



Looking south along the sites boundary with Longridge Road, showing Leyland cypress hedge.



Looking into the sites south western corner from the top of slope.



Site viewed from gap in hedge on Longridge Road.



Disturbed ground towards southern end of the site.



Looking down onto timber office building from the top of slope.



South western site boundary with mature ivy clad sycamore and scattered woodland flora.

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South western site boundary with mature ivy clad sycamore and scattered woodland flora.



Looking north across the slope.



Looking north west across the site and slope.



Timber office / outbuilding.



Looking NE from the base of slope.



Slope from the base.

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Slope looking east.



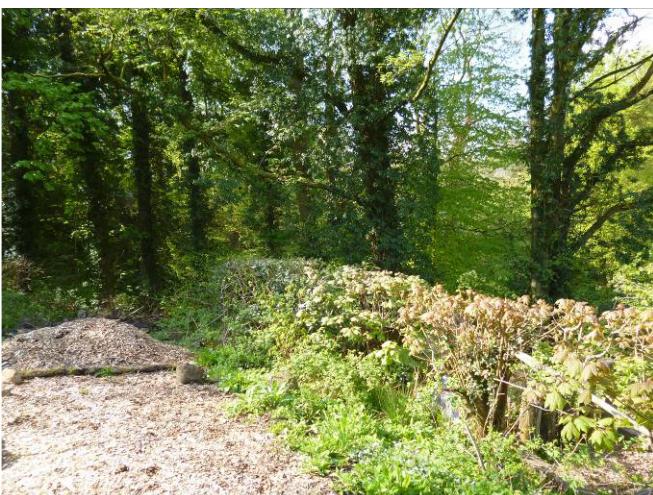
Looking east across the slope.



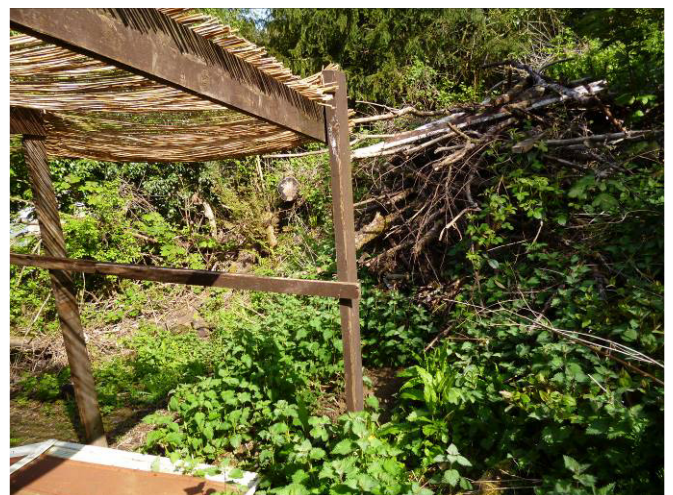
Looking into the SW corner of the site from the timber office.



Timber office to be demolished with no bat roost potential.



SW corner of site and short hedge section.



Rear of timber building.



Vegetation at rear of timber building.



Timber office to be demolished with no bat roost potential.



Looking west across slope.