



PRELIMINARY ECOLOGICAL APPRAISAL

- Land at: Ingledale, Clayton le Dale, Lancashire -

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A report for

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May 2019 Updated October 14th 2020

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PART 1 INTRODUCTION:

1.1 REASONS FOR SURVEY:

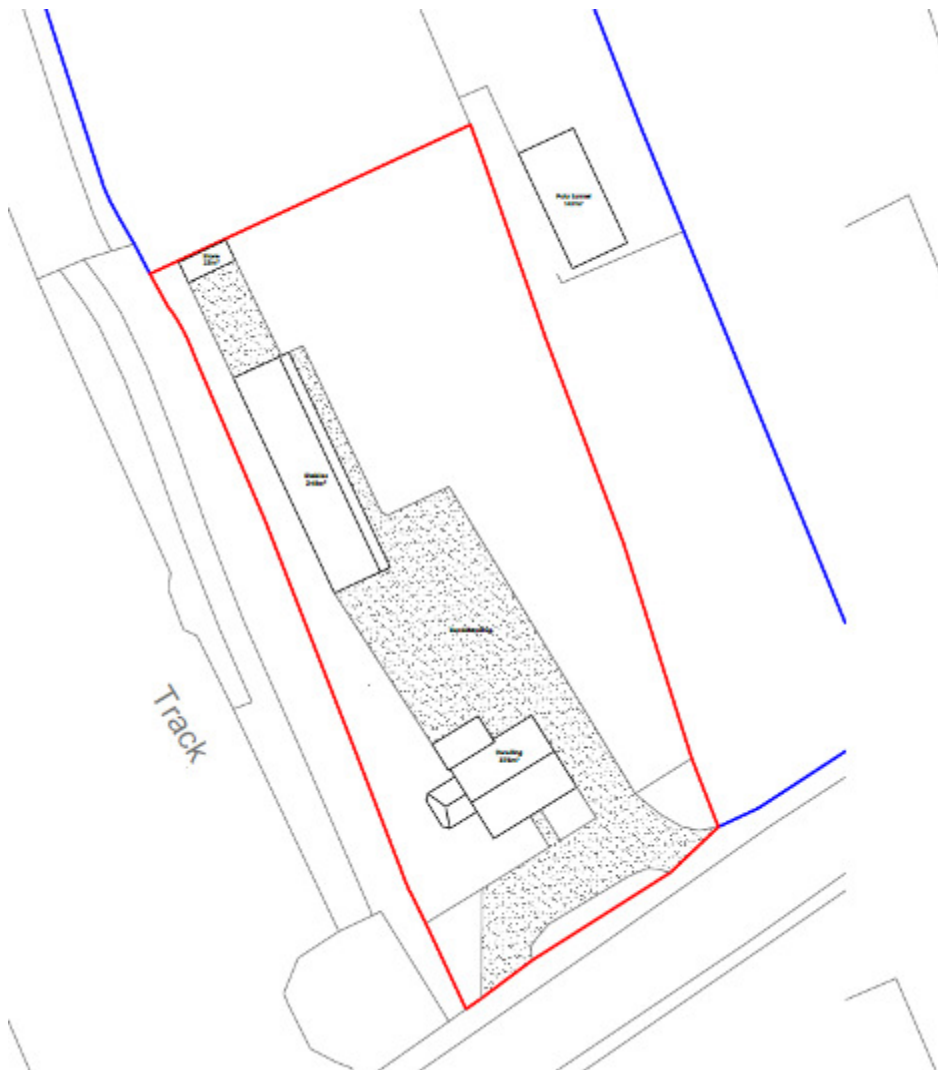
PENNINE *Ecological* have been commissioned to undertake a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal and protected species surveys / assessment of land at Ingledale, Clayton le Dale, Lancashire.

The study includes a vegetation, badger survey and a daytime bat roost assessment of the current bungalow, stables and surrounding trees on site. 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 bungalow and stables and construction of a new residence with new stables to the east and general landscaping / changes to site layout.

The exiting site plan is shown below;



The proposed site plan is shown below;



1.2 SITE LOCATION:

The site is located approximately 6km north of Blackburn on the north eastern edge of Clayton le Dale on the A59 Longsight Road. The sites central National Grid Reference is SD 66423319.

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>

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

The site falls within distant SSSI Impact Risk Zones (IRZ's) 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 20th May 2019 which is an optimal time for vegetation / habitat survey and protected species assessments. **The survey was updated on October 14th 2020.**

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 survey was undertaken on 20th May 2019 and updated on **October 14th 2020**. 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:

- A3.1 Scattered broad-leaved trees
- C3.1 Tall ruderal herb
- J1.3 Ephemeral / short perennial
- J1.4 Introduced shrub
- J2.3.2 hedge with trees; species-poor
- J2.3.2 hedge with trees; species-poor
- J2.4 Fence
- J3.6 Buildings
- J4 Bare ground

2.1.3 General Description / Target Notes:

The surveyed site is approximately 70m by 45m in maximum dimensions forming a rectangular level area of land alongside the busy A59 Longsight Road.

The site is almost entirely dominated by bare ground and a ménage. There are several scattered mature goat willow present on the areas of hard standing.

A mature unmanaged hedge with trees is present on the western boundary. The hedge is dominated by hawthorn with frequent elder. A mature pedunculate oak is present. The hedge bottom is largely inaccessible and is to the rear of the stable block. Where visible the hedge base comprises bare disturbed ground with occasional ivy, bramble and common nettle.

A small area of tall ruderal vegetation is present alongside the poly tunnel and includes scattered plants of common nettle, garlic mustard, cleavers, dove's-foot crane's-bill and great willowherb. **This area has now been removed and is bare ground.**

The northern boundary is open and comprises hard standing.

The eastern boundary is fenced with a native / non-native hedge to the rear. The hedge comprises Leyland cypress, ornamental cherry species and ash.

A short section of hedge is present on the road frontage with the A59 comprising hawthorn and ash.

2.1.4 Invasive species:

No invasive species were found on site.

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.

Situation remains as above following the October 14th re-survey.

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 20th May 2019 and on October 14th 2020. The existing bungalow and stables were 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 accessible internal loft space in the bungalow. There are no loft spaces associated with the stables. 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 within the active period for bats. Full access for inspections of the bungalow / stables 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:

Bungalow:

The building is of rendered brick construction with a slate pitched roof. The fascia boards are tight fitting and there are few if any gaps under slates. There are some minor gaps under the roof ridge tiles. There is a loft space but there is no internal access point to the loft.

There is a small hole in the wall beneath the fascia on the eastern elevation at approximately 2.5m above ground level.

The building is generally in good state of repair.

There is negligible roost potential associated with the wall hole and roof ridge tiles.

Stable blocks:

The stables are of timber construction with Perspex / corrugated sheet roof and no lining. There are no potential bat roost features.

Trees and bat roost potential:

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

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

The site is located on the edge of a rural village with open farmland surrounding the site, providing good foraging habitat for bats.

Situation remains as above following the October 14th re-survey.

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:

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

3.1.2 Sites Habitats & Higher Plant Species:

The habitats lost to development bare ground, short perennial vegetation, ruderal vegetation and buildings 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 all site hedge boundaries and the goat willow trees on site. It is understood that these features are unaffected by the proposals.

Situation remains as above following the October 14th re-survey.

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.

Situation remains as above following the October 14th re-survey.

Bats:

Bats are comprehensively protected by European legislation.

The hole in the bungalow wall and minor gaps under roof ridge tiles have very limited bat roost potential. These are very localised and are considered to have negligible suitability.

Recommendations Bats:

As an absolute precaution it is recommended that precautionary measures are applied in relation to the proposed work. These measure are as follows;

The following work will be supervised by a licensed bat handler.

- Bungalow: Immediately before demolition the hole in the wall will be inspected by endoscope and torch and during demolition the removal of fascia and brickwork in the near vicinity will be supervised. The removal of the roof ridge tiles will also be supervised.

The client must be made aware that in the highly unlikely event that bats are discovered during this work, then all work must be suspended and there will be a requirement to make an application for a European Protected Species Mitigation Licence (EPSML). If this is the case the following advice is given;

It should be noted that where bat/s or their roost/place of rest/shelter will be affected by the proposed works, then to allow work at the site to legally commence, an application for European Protected Species Mitigation Licence (EPSML) will be required. Notwithstanding the granting of a licence works that would affect a roost cannot take place if a maternity colony is in occupation. It should also be noted that before an EPSML can be applied for all Planning issues including Consent and any pre-commencement Planning Conditions relative to bats should be resolved.

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

- In all cases illumination of boundary hedge lines will be avoided.
- Where and if lighting is required this will be directed internally within the site avoiding spillage towards boundary hedges.
- 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 hedge boundaries.
- 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.

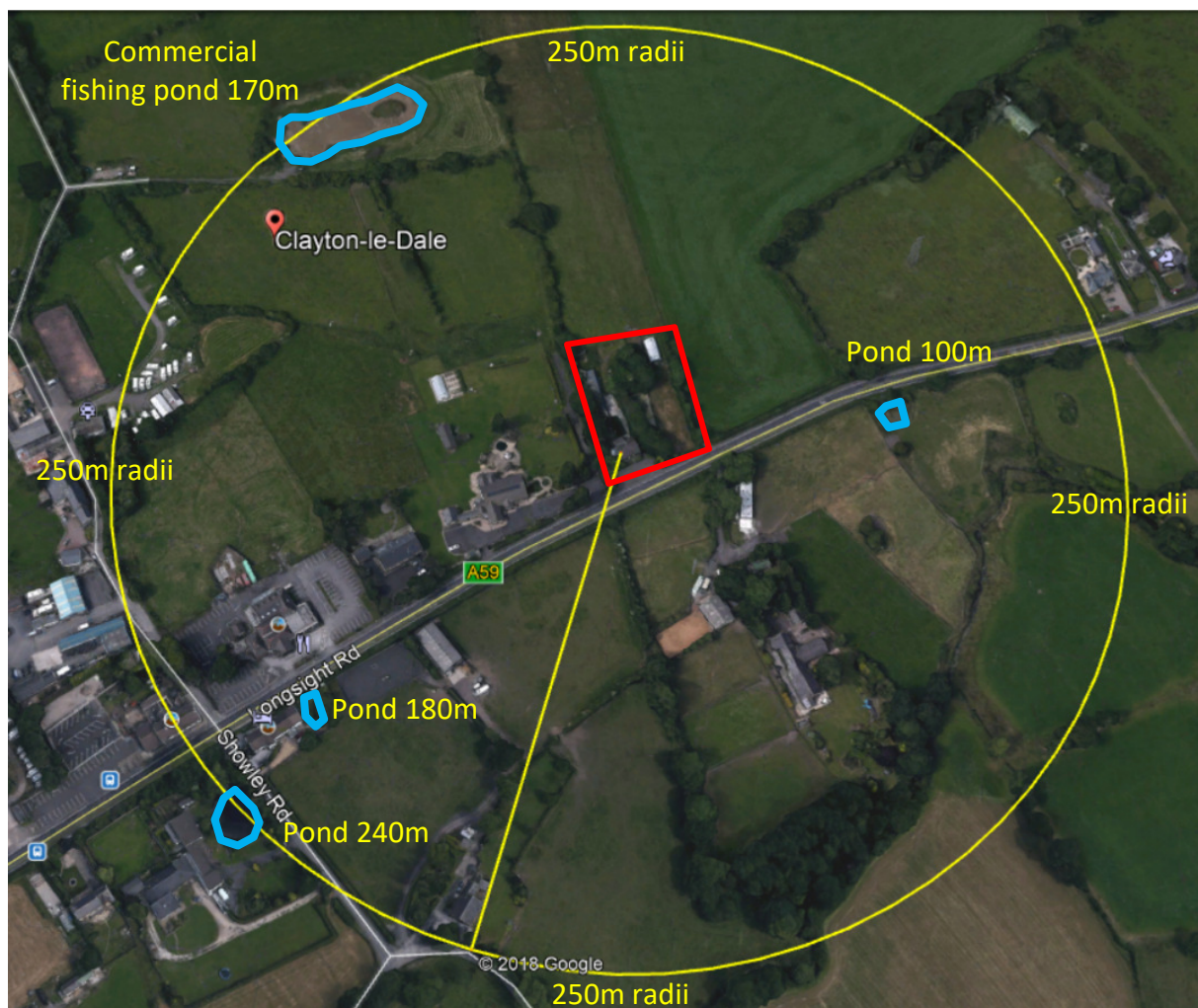
If required, lighting requirements will follow guidance provided by the Bat Conservation Trust.

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

Situation remains as above following the October 14th re-survey.

Great Crested Newt / Amphibians:

Great crested newt is comprehensively protected under European legislation.



There are four ponds within 250m of the proposed development. These are shown on the above aerial photograph together with the distance from the nearest point of the site.

Recommendations Great Crested Newt:

There are four ponds within 250m of the proposed development area which is within the terrestrial range of the species.

There is one pond approximately 170m NW of the site, this is a commercial fishery and totally unsuitable for the species.

There are three ponds on the other side of the busy A59 Longsight Road at distances of between 100 and 240m from the site. For the purposes of this study it is assumed that GCN could potentially be present in these ponds.

The area proposed to be developed is overwhelmingly dominated by hard standing which is highly unsuitable for the species with no refuge potential for newts.

In addition, and in relation to the ponds to the south of the site, these are all located on the other side of the A59 which separates the ponds from the site. This busy road is considered to be a significant barrier to amphibian dispersal towards the site.

In addition all three of these ponds support high quality terrestrial amphibian habitats within 100m of the ponds, including mature hedgerows and small areas of woodland.² Research by Natural England has shown that where such habitat exists around GCN ponds the vast majority of the population is likely to be contained within 100m of the breeding pond creating a 'terrestrial sponge' effect.

Great Crested Newt Conclusions:

Given the biogeography of the above terrestrial habitats, the distances from the site and the highly unsuitable habitats associated with the site there is considered no risk to the species from this development.

Based on the above evaluation we do not believe there is a requirement to undertake further surveys of ponds within the terrestrial range of this site.

Based on our extensive experience of amphibian ecology and licensing we consider that there is a very low / remote risk to great crested newts as a result of this development.

Recommendations Great Crested Newts:

There are no issues in respect of great crested newts.

Situation remains as above following the October 14th re-survey.

² *English Nature Research Report 575 (2004); An evaluation of the effectiveness of great crested newt Triturus cristatus mitigation projects in England, 1990 – 2001. (PENNINE Ecological were contributors to this study).*

Birds:

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

The introduced shrub and ivy on the bungalow have breeding bird potential. The stables are open and also have potential to support swallows, although no current or historical evidence was present at the time of survey. The hedgerows on the boundaries and on site trees are unaffected by the development.

Recommendations: Birds;

No strategic bird surveys are required. However, before any development and in order to minimise impacts on birds any removal of introduced shrub / ivy on the building should take place outside of the breeding season, i.e. between the end of August and end of February. Following the removal of 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. Similarly checks of the stables should be made if removal is proposed within the breeding bird season.

Situation remains as above following the October 14th re-survey.

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: May 20th 2019



Site frontage with the A59.



Fascia boards tight fitting / sealed against render.



Existing bungalow with negligible bat roost potential.



Introduced shrubs adjacent to bungalow.



Existing bungalow with negligible bat roost potential. Some localised gaps under ridge tiles requiring supervised removal. Slates generally tight fitting.



Existing bungalow with negligible bat roost potential.

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Small hole on east elevation rendered wall requires precautionary inspection with torch / endoscope.



Looking north across the site towards stables and extensive hard standing.



Rear northern elevation of bungalow with negligible bat roost potential.



Extensive hard standing to rear (north) of bungalow.



Looking north to stables along the western site boundary with mature hedge with trees to rear.



Hard standing / ménage to rear of bungalow.

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Wooden stable block with negligible bat roost potential.



Land to the north of the site.



Looking south towards stables / bungalow.



Polytunnel in NE site corner.



Land to the north of the site.



Polytunnel in NE site corner.

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Looking south across the site.



Looking south from the polytunnel with mature goat willow.



Looking west across the sites northern boundary.



Polytunnel area.



SE corner of site alongside the A59, ménage area.



Site frontage with the A59.



Looking north along the eastern boundary of the site within the ménage area.



Looking SW along the southern boundary of the site within the ménage area.



Ruderal vegetation alongside polytunnel.

Site Photographs: October 14th 2020



Existing bungalow with negligible bat roost potential.



Former front garden / hard standing.



SE corner of site alongside the A59, former ménage area.



Existing bungalow with negligible bat roost potential.



Site entrance.



Existing bungalow with negligible bat roost potential.

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Small hole on east elevation rendered wall requires precautionary inspection with torch / endoscope.



Hedge on eastern boundary.



Hard standing towards eastern boundary.



Centre of site looking north.



Looking north across the site.



Northern site boundary.

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Looking north from the sites northern boundary.



Wooden stable block with negligible bat roost potential.



Wooden stable block with negligible bat roost potential.



Looking SE across the site.



Looking south across the site from the northern boundary.



Looking south across the site.