PRELIMINARY ECOLOGICAL APPRAISAL (PEA)

Proposed Agricultural Building
Land at Chipping, Lancashire

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1. Introduction

This Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA) has been prepared to support a planning application for the erection of a new agricultural building on land at Chipping, Lancashire.

The proposed development site lies within approximately 200 m of a watercourse (hereafter referred to as “the Stream”). Due to this proximity, consideration has been given to potential ecological receptors associated with riparian habitats and legally protected species.

This report:

- Identifies ecological constraints
- Assesses the likelihood of protected species presence
- Evaluates potential impacts of the proposal
- Recommends avoidance, mitigation and enhancement measures
- Identifies whether further surveys are required

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2. Site Location and Context

The site is located on agricultural land near the village of Chipping in the Borough of Ribble Valley, Lancashire.

Surrounding Habitats

The surrounding landscape comprises:

- Improved grassland used for grazing
- Agricultural fields
- Hedgerows (predominantly hawthorn and blackthorn)
- Scattered mature trees

- A stream corridor approximately 200 m from the proposed building location

The wider landscape is typical of rural Ribble Valley farmland, with interconnected hedgerows and watercourses providing ecological connectivity.

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3. Desk Study (Preliminary)

A full desk study should be undertaken prior to submission; however, based on habitat context and regional records, the following species and designations may be relevant:

Designated Sites

No statutory designated sites are anticipated within the immediate footprint of the development. The stream corridor may contribute to local ecological networks but is not known to form part of a statutory site at this stage (confirmation required).

Protected and Notable Species (Potential)

Given the rural setting and proximity to water, the following species may be present:

- **Bats** – commuting/foraging along hedgerows and watercourses
- **Otter** – potentially using the stream corridor
- **Water vole** – possible along suitable stream banks
- **Breeding birds** – hedgerows and farmland birds
- **Great crested newt (GCN)** – if ponds are present within 500 m
- **Badger** – common in rural Lancashire

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4. Habitat Assessment

The development footprint is assumed to comprise improved grassland of low botanical diversity, typical of intensively managed pasture.

Habitat Value

- **Grassland:** Low ecological value
- **Hedgerows (if retained):** Moderate local ecological value
- **Stream corridor (offsite):** Moderate ecological value due to riparian function

The site itself is not anticipated to support Priority Habitats within the footprint of the proposed agricultural building.

5. Potential Ecological Constraints

5.1 Proximity to Stream (200 m)

Although the building is not directly adjacent to the stream, the following potential pathways should be considered:

- Surface water runoff during construction
- Pollution incidents (fuel, slurry, chemicals)
- Sediment mobilisation
- Disturbance to riparian species

5.2 Protected Species Risk Summary

Species	Risk Level	Further Survey Required?
Bats	Low–Moderate	Activity survey if lighting proposed
Otter	Low (if no works to stream)	No, unless works within 10 m of bank
Water vole	Low	No, unless bank works proposed
Breeding birds	Moderate	Timing restriction required
GCN	Low (if no ponds nearby)	HSI assessment if ponds present
Badger	Low–Moderate	Pre-commencement walkover

6. Impact Assessment

Construction Phase

Potential impacts include:

- Vegetation clearance
- Noise disturbance
- Dust generation
- Accidental pollution of nearby stream

Given separation distance (200 m), impacts are likely to be **minor and temporary**, provided pollution control measures are implemented.

Operational Phase

- Increased hardstanding may alter runoff patterns.
- Potential artificial lighting may affect bat commuting routes.

- Agricultural storage (if slurry or chemicals) may present pollution risk if not appropriately managed.

Overall ecological impact is considered **low**, subject to mitigation.

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7. Mitigation Measures

The following measures are recommended:

Pollution Prevention

- Adherence to Environment Agency pollution prevention guidance
- No storage of fuel or chemicals within 10 m of any drainage ditch
- Bunded fuel tanks
- Silt fencing if ground disturbance occurs
- Sustainable Drainage System (SuDS) to control runoff

Vegetation Clearance

- Avoid removal of hedgerows where possible
- If clearance required, undertake outside bird nesting season (March–August inclusive), or following ecologist check

Lighting Strategy

- Avoid spill towards hedgerows or stream corridor
- Use low-level, directional LED lighting (<3000K warm white)
- PIR sensors where possible

Enhancement Measures (Biodiversity Net Gain Support)

- Native hedgerow planting
- Installation of bat boxes on retained trees
- Installation of bird nesting boxes (including open-fronted and sparrow terraces)
- Wildflower margin along field edge
- Creation of a small attenuation swale or wildlife-friendly drainage feature

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8. Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG)

See attached.

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10. Conclusion

The proposed agricultural building at Chipping is located within 200 m of a stream but does not directly impact riparian habitat.

Subject to:

- Implementation of pollution prevention measures
- Sensitive lighting design
- Retention of hedgerows
- Ecological timing restrictions

The proposal is unlikely to result in significant ecological effects.

With incorporation of recommended enhancements, the development presents an opportunity to deliver local biodiversity gains.