Extended Phase 1 Habitat Survey & Baseline Ecological Impact Assessment

The Lodge, Clitheroe Road, Whalley

Report prepared on behalf of
Stanton Andrews Architects
44 York Street,
Clitheroe BB7 2DL

Cameron S Crook & Associates
Bio-Ecological Consultancy
8 Woodstock Close, Lostock Hall,
Preston, Lancashire PR5 5YY
Telephone: (01772) 316717
Fax: 08707 626071
e-mail: info@csc-associates.co.uk

January 2014

Executive Summary

1. A baseline ecological survey and ecological impact assessment were carried out at The Lodge, Clitheroe Road, Whalley, in respect of proposals to extend and modify the existing building

2. There is relatively little semi-natural habitat on site that will be affected and there are no important habitats or vegetation communities occurring on site or close enough to the site boundaries to be adversely affected by proposals

3. There are no protected or otherwise important species such as badgers or breeding birds occurring on site, adjacent to the site boundaries, or that will be otherwise affected by development proposals, and, with the possible exception of roosting bats, the site is considered to be generally of low ecological value

4. Whilst it would be reasonable to conclude that with adequate mitigation, there will be no negative ecological impact of any significance resulting from proposals to develop the site, as there is Moderate to High roosting potential for bats within the existing building and that the possibility of roosting bats cannot be ruled out without recourse to a night-time survey, any likely impact in respect of bats or their roost sites remains inconclusive at this stage

Contextual Statement

This report ***must be read in conjunction with the documentation and drawings prepared and submitted to the Local Planning Authority in respect of current development proposals (as shown in Figure 7 of this report)***. The author of this report will accept no responsibility for any misunderstanding resulting from a failure to consult all relevant planning documentation or through any lack of information where responsibility for the provision of such is beyond the control of Cameron S Crook & Associates.

This report is not intended as a natural history text or scientific paper. Rather, its purpose is to inform the site owner, developer and local planning authority in accordance with current local and national planning guidance, in as clear and succinct a manner as possible. To that end, all survey and assessment works carried out in respect of current proposals are proportionate to the site and situation, and only the minimum level of information necessary has been provided. Detailed information on the respective life cycles of protected species such as the bat, badger or great crested newt, or detailed descriptions of sundry ecological scenarios that have no relevance to the site or development in question have therefore been omitted.

This report provides no planning or legal advice and no attempt has been made to interpret any respective planning or environmental laws that may apply to this case. Any such interpretation must be obtained from an appropriately qualified Planning Consultant, Planning Officer or Lawyer.

All survey works detailed within the methodology section below have been either carried out personally by the author or by appropriately qualified, licenced and/or experienced surveyors working under the supervision of the author. The author of this report takes full responsibility for the quality of data collected and any subsequent interpretation. Raw survey data and names of individual surveyors may be provided for *bone fide* reasons, upon request, but only where this is strictly necessary and does not otherwise conflict with client, landowner or surveyor confidentiality and privacy.

Cameron S Crook BSc(Hons) MPhil CBiol MSB MIEEM
22nd January 2014

Contents

1.0 Introduction 5
2.0 Methodology 5
General Ecological and Botanical Survey 6
Bats 6
3.0 Existing Situation 6
4.0 Potential Impacts 12
4.1 Likely Impact 12
4.2 Impact Assessment Table 12
4.4 Likely Impact of the Development 13
5.0 Mitigation Proposals 15
6.0 Conclusion 15
7.0 References 16

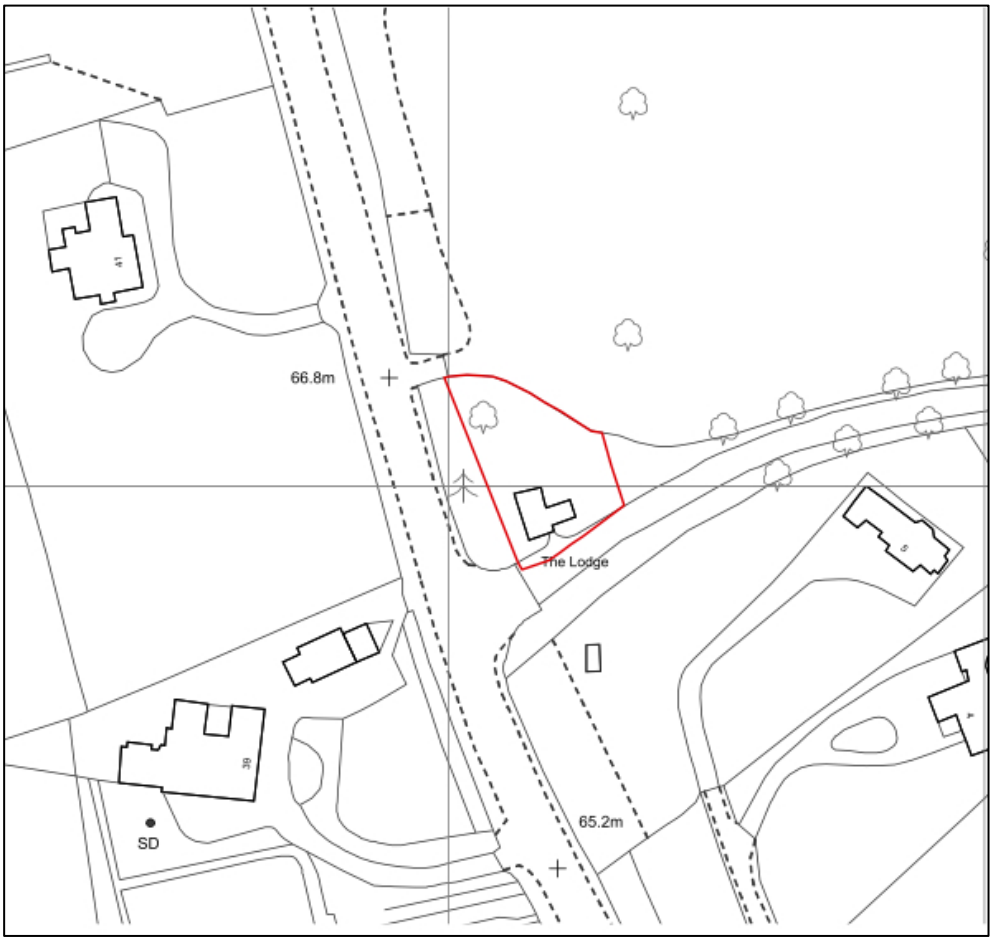
1.0 Introduction

1.1 An ecological survey, site appraisal and impact assessment were carried out at The Lodge situated off Clitheroe Road, Whalley, with the following aims:

1. To establish the presence or absence of protected species and evaluate the overall nature conservation status of the site
2. To assess the likely impact of proposed site development works upon any protected species that may occur on or adjacent to the area of land concerned, and the integrity of nature conservation interest of any other sites of ecological or nature conservation importance within the vicinity
3. To provide mitigation, management and aftercare proposals, as appropriate

1.2 The term *site* will be used in this report to refer to the area of land proposed for development in accordance with the 'red-line' planning boundary at the location shown in *Figures 1* & 2 below unless otherwise indicated within the text. In that respect, it is assumed that this report will be read in conjunction with the documentation supplied as part of the relevant planning application.

Figure 1 *Site location (within red line boundary)*



2.0 Methodology

General Ecological and Botanical Survey

2.1 This part of the survey comprised an appropriately cut down version of Extended Phase 1 Habitat Survey methodology covering the site proposed for development, carried out in November 2013 with any evidence of birds, invertebrates, amphibians, reptiles and mammals noted. The survey methodology for the Extended Phase 1 Habitat Survey comprised a modified version of that described in NCC (1990) and IEA (1995).

2.2 This was supplemented by a vascular plant species using the 'walkabout method' as described in Kirkby (1988) and a generalized assessment of the site for suitability of habitat for animals, in particular protected species such as badger, bats, breeding birds, and great crested newts. The results of the initial Phase 1 Habitat survey were used to guide the requirements and level of detail of the more specific survey outlined below. Only those species reasonably likely to occur or be affected by proposals to develop the site (in this case, bats) were included in the more detailed survey and assessment works.

Bats

2.3 This part of the survey was carried out in accordance with recommendations in NCC (1987), the *Bat Mitigation Guidelines* (English Nature, 2004), and the Bat Conservation Trust (BCT) Bat Survey Guidelines (Hundt, 2012) and comprised a detailed daytime site inspection on the 20th November 2013 to examine the building that will be affected by development proposals in relation to potential bat roosting and to assess any potential for foraging and commuting in the parts of the site located beyond the existing building but within the proposed development boundaries.

2.4 No nocturnal (emergence or roost-return) survey was carried out due to the sub-optimal time of year.

3.0 Existing Situation

General Site Description

3.1 The site subject to this ecological assessment comprises a moderately large detached dwelling of traditional design set within its own formally landscaped grounds comprising a number of mature and semi-mature trees, ornamental shrubs, flower beds and lawn.

3.2 There are no trees within the actual development footprint, the only vegetation that will be directly affected comprising some sections of lawn and some ornamental shrubs. The site is bounded by open land dominated by improved grassland and several blocks of mixed woodland plantation and scattered individual trees to the north, south and east, with Clitheroe Road immediately to the west.

3.3 Beyond the development footprint but within the site boundaries are a number of mature trees, primarily non-native species, both broadleaved and coniferous, particularly along the western boundary with Clitheroe Road. However, none of these trees will be directly affected by proposals. There are no ponds within 250m *where there is direct habitat linkage*, and no streams, rivers or other important habitat such as semi-natural broadleaved woodland, hedgerows or species-rich grassland, close enough to be affected by development proposals.

Habitats and Flora

3.4 There are no discernible vegetation communities on site other than a small number of weed communities and only a limited number of vascular plants were recorded, the latter comprising predominantly ruderal or weed species such as nettle, dock,

bramble, dandelion and daisy, or common grassland species such as ryegrass, red fescue, cock's-foot, false oat-grass, Yorkshire fog and creeping bent.

Significance of Habitats and Flora

3.5 The plants and semi-natural habitats recorded on site (within or close to the proposed development footprint) are all relatively common and widespread in both Lancashire and Great Britain. No rare, scare or otherwise important plant species or habitats were recorded or considered likely to occur. The only vegetation that will be affected by proposals is a small section of the existing lawn, some ornamental shrubs and a small ornamental tree.

Figure 2 *Survey boundary and existing site layout (within dashed red line)*

Mammals (Bats)

3.6 There are a number of mature trees within the site boundaries that range from *Category 1* to *2* in respect of the Bat Conservation Trust evaluation criteria (Hundt 2012) but none of these that will be directly affected by proposals. However, the only habitat suitable for roosting that will be affected is the existing building, as indicated on the site location plan and photographs in *Figures 3* to *5.*

3.7 The building subject to development proposals comprises a relatively large, two-storey dwelling of traditional design with a single-storey annexe. The walls are constructed of brick and sandstone, the windows are wooden-framed with stone lintels, and the two apex roofs are slated with ornamented ridge tiles. The roof has overhanging eaves with ornamented wooden bargeboards and cantilever supports. There are two chimneys, both of which are constructed of brick and sandstone block with tall ornamented ceramic stacks at the top.

3.8 Internally, there is single roof void, located within the two-storey section. The single-storey section has no accessible roof void as such, the underside of the slates being

clad in timber. Within the roof void of the two-storey section, the slates are unlined but have been mortared, much of which was noted to have deteriorated at the time of survey. The slates are supported on softwood timber beams, the base of the roof void being lined with insulating material. The loft-space was found to be very dirty, dusty and ridden with cobwebs throughout but otherwise relatively warm and sheltered with a number of potential niches for bat roosting.

3.9 During the external inspection, several potential points of access for bats were found and a number of the ridge tiles and roofing slates were noted to have lifted or to be poorly seated. Gaps in pointing and lead flashing at various points were also noted, as wells as beneath the soffits and bargeboards. Further details are shown in the photographs of *Figures 3* to *5* below.

Figure 3 *The Lodge as viewed from the southeast, the large mature trees visible to the rear*

Figure 4 *The Lodge as viewed from the south*

Figure 5 *Photographs of the existing building and grounds*

Photo 5.1 The lodge as viewed from the rear (northern elevation)

Photo 5.2 The western elevation of The Lodge

Photo 5.3 Detailed view of the bargeboards and soffits on the south-facing gable end

Photo 5.4 View beneath the eaves showing potential access points for bats in the soffits

Photo 5.5 A view beneath the eaves showing gaps between the wooden soffits and brickwork where bats could feasibly enter

Photo 6.6 Detailed view of the raised ridge tiles and slates on the single storey section of the building and raised lead flashing at the base of the chimneystack

Photo 5.7 View of the rear garden

Photo 5.8 View of the line of mature trees along the western boundary, the tree in the foreground, a mature beech, classed as Category 1 in respect of the BCT criteria

3.10 Internally, there were no conclusive signs of roosting or any evidence of recent or historic bat activity, though the extremities of the roof void such as at the eaves could not be fully accessed, so the presence of bats could not be totally ruled out. Some of these features are shown in the photographs below (*Figure 6*).

Figure 6 *Photographs of the internal features of the building*

<table>
<tr><td>  </td><td>  </td></tr>
<tr><td>Photo 6.1 General view inside the loft</td><td>Photo 6.2 Close up view of the roofing timbers and unlined slates</td></tr>
<tr><td>  </td><td>  </td></tr>
<tr><td>Photo 6.3 Close-up view of the gable end and roofing timbers</td><td>Photo 6.4 View of the partially mortared slates, looking towards the eaves</td></tr>
</table>

Mammals (Badgers)

3.11 The grassland (lawn) and shrub beds on site are marginally suitable for use by badgers for foraging. However, an inspection of the site to a distance of 30m from the proposed development footprint boundaries revealed no signs of badger activity, or their setts, though badgers are know to occur locally.

Birds

3.12 No birds were recorded on site (mainly due to the time of year) and there was no evidence of birds having recently bred on site. However, it is likely that a number of birds breed in the trees and shrubs within the site boundaries and possibly within the building, though no uncommon or specifically protected species such as barn owl are expected to occur.

Significance of Fauna

3.13 No protected or otherwise important species were recorded during any of the surveys and, with the possible exception of bats, for the reasons outlined above none are reasonably expected to occur or be otherwise affected by development proposals.

3.14 Currently no birds appear to use the site for breeding purposes, though it is likely that the trees and ornamental shrubs within the site boundaries and possibly the building, may be used by common birds that are tolerant of disturbance. Whilst no bird species listed under Schedule 1 of the Wildlife & Countryside act were recorded or considered likely to breed or roosting on site, since all breeding birds (with a small few exceptions) are protected in general terms under the Wildlife & Countryside act,

measures must be taken to ensure that there is no disturbance to any birds that may use the site for breeding purposes.

3.15 There were no signs of badgers using the site and no signs of setts within adjacent suitable habitat. Badgers do occur in the wider area and may forage within the grassland from time to time, but are not particularly common. No impact is therefore considered likely.

3.16 There are no water bodies such as ponds, rivers or streams within or close to the site boundaries and no ponds within 250m of the site boundaries where there is direct habitat linkage. There will therefore be no reasonable likelihood of any impact upon great crested newts, water voles, otters or other aquatic species.

3.17 However, whilst there were no conclusive signs of bats or their roosts, the building has Moderate to High bat roosting potential and so the presence of bats cannot be totally ruled out without recourse to a nocturnal survey (emergence or roost return) having been carried out at an optimal time of year (May to August optimally) during suitable weather conditions.

3.18 Beyond the building, the mature trees along the site boundaries also provide potential habitat for roosting as well as for foraging and commuting by bats, but will not be affected by proposals. No impact is therefore likely in that respect.

4.0 Potential Impacts

4.1 Likely Impact

4.1.1 The likely impact of the proposed site works is evaluated against the criteria laid out in the table below which is based on NATA (New Approach to Appraisal) as described in Byron H. (2000). ***This evaluation is based on the assumption that no mitigation works will be implemented*.**

4.2 Impact Assessment Table

Impact Magnitude	**Nature Conservation Importance**				
	Negligible	Local	County	National	European
Beneficial Effects	Non Significant	Non Significant	Non Significant	Non Significant	Non Significant
Nil Effect	Non Significant	Non Significant	Non Significant	Non Significant	Non Significant
Minor (short term or reversible effects)	Non Significant	Non Significant	Slight	Moderate	Moderate
Moderate (deterioration of feature	Non Significant	Slight	Moderate	Severe	Severe
High (loss of feature)	Non Significant	Slight	Moderate	Severe	Severe

4.2.1 The evaluation criteria for nature conservation importance are as follows:

European

Habitats which are listed in Annexe 1 of the Habitats Directive and are included as candidate or proposed Special Areas of Conservation (cSAC, pSAC).

Species which are listed under Schedule 2 of the Habitats Directive and form a population which would qualify the site for consideration as a Special Protection Area (SPA) or Special Area of Conservation.

National

Habitats that would meet the criteria for inclusion, or, are located within, a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)

Species that are protected under national wildlife legislation such as the Wildlife & Countryside act, are listed in a national Red Data Book, or form part of a population or assemblage of species that would meet the criteria for the site being designated a site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI).

County

Habitats that are rare or uncommon in the County, would meet the criteria for inclusion or are included within a second tier nature conservation site (SINC), or which form part of a local Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) or Habitat Action Plan (HAP)

Species that are rare or uncommon within the County, form part of a population or assemblage of species which would meet the criteria for

inclusion or are included as part of a Site of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINC)

Local

Habitats that are uncommon or threatened within the Whalley area

S*pecies* that are uncommon or threatened within the Whalley area

Negligible

Habitats or *Species* that fit into none of the above categories

4.3 Impact of the Development

4.3.1 The current ecological impacts resulting from the proposed sites development works based on the criteria outlined above and mitigation required to negate any impacts, are summarized within *Table 4* below.

4.4 Likely Impact of the Development

4.4.1 The current ecological impacts resulting from the proposed site development works (see provisional layout in *Figure 7* below), based on the criteria outlined above, taking into account the mitigation required to negate any impacts, are summarized within the following respective tables.

Figure 7. *Provisional site layout. Extract from drawing 13.9/PL02 prepared by Stanton Andrews Architects*

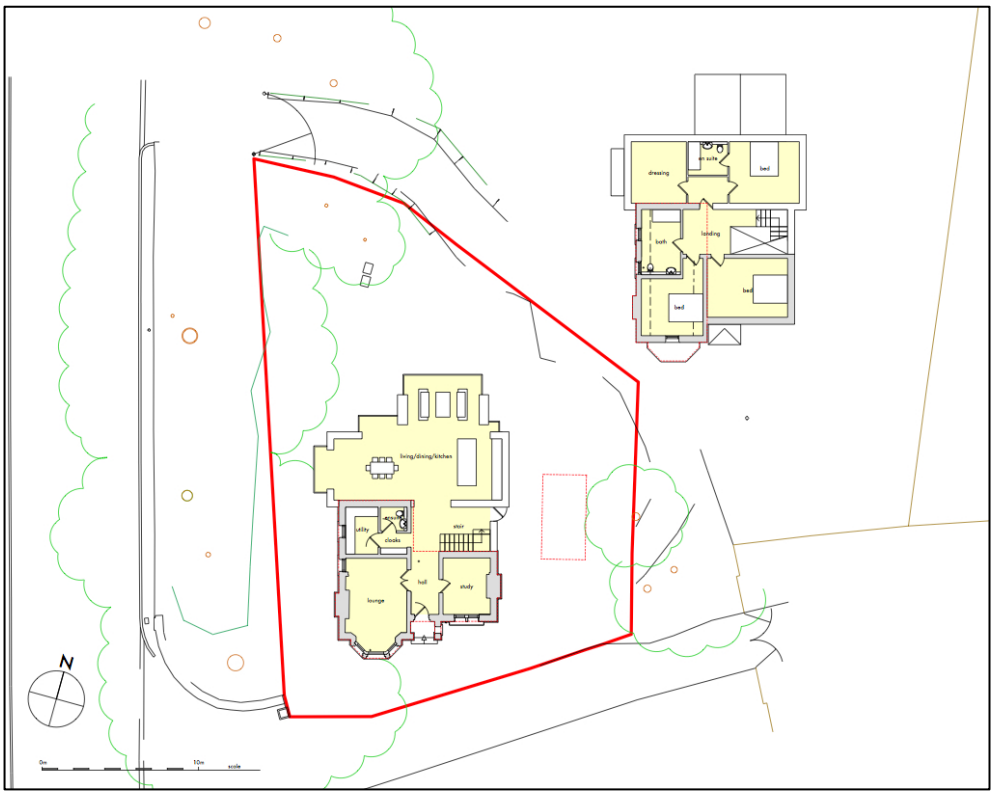


Table 4 *Impact Table*

Ecological Issues (Receptors)	Details and Impact Magnitude	Impact without Mitigation
Habitats, Vegetation Communities and Flora	There is very little semi-natural vegetation on site and that which does occur is of negligible ecological value. Therefore, the impact magnitude is considered to be: **High: Negligible**	**Non Significant**
Mammals (Bats)	No conclusive signs of roosting were found within the existing building and no mature trees suitable for use as bat roosts will be affected by proposals. However, as potential for bat roosting within the building is Moderate-High in repect of the BCT criteria, the presence of roosting bats cannot be totally ruled out without recourse to a night-time emergence or roost-return survey. The impact magnitude is therefore currently considered to be: **Unknown: European**	**Unknown**
Mammals (Badgers)	No conclusive signs of badger activity were found and based on current evidence, no impact is considered likely. The impact magnitude is therefore considered to be: **Nil effect: National**	**Non Significant**
Birds	No signs of bird breeding were found within the existing building. However, it is possible that a small number of common bird species may breed within trees, shrubs and certain parts of the building such as beneath the eaves or within gaps in the soffits and bargeboards. Removal or modification of this habitat, ***if carried out during the bird-breeding season*** (March-July inclusive) may result in disturbance of birds or loss of breeding habitat. The impact magnitude is therefore considered to be: **Moderate: National**	**Severe**

5.0 Mitigation Proposals

5.1 Taking the survey results and impacts above into consideration, the implications for the proposed site works and required mitigation are summarized below.

Table 5 *Summary of Mitigation Proposals*

Ecological Issues	Implications/Mitigation
Botanical/Habitat	No mitigation required
Breeding Birds	Based on current evidence, with respect to the building and any mature vegetation, there should be no works likely to result in disturbance or loss of habitat during the bird-breeding season (March to July inclusive) until or unless this has been first checked for breeding birds by an ecologist. To compensate for the minor loss of breeding habitat, bird boxes (approximately 3-5) of an appropriate type and design (e.g. Schwegler 1B General Purpose Bird Box) should be placed on adjacent mature trees in advance of any site works taking place.
Mammals (Bats)	Whilst there were no conclusive signs of bats roosting, as the presence of bats cannot be ruled out by a daytime survey alone, no works should take place until a night-time survey has been carried out during an optimal time of year (May-August). Should signs of roosting bats be subsequently found, appropriate mitigation measures will need to be formulated and a licence may be required from Natural England. Should bats be found to be roosting, the general lack of signs would suggest it would be feasible to retain the any roosts within the building by incorporation of roosting features such as bat tubes, bat bricks, soffit boxes, and vented ridge tiles, along with the provision of bat boxes of various designs attached to the adjacent mature trees.
Mammals (Badgers)	Based on current evidence, no mitigation is required. However, as badgers are highly mobile and known to occur in the wider area, as a precautionary measure if there is a delay of more than six months from the date of this report until site works commence, a repeat survey for badgers should be carried out to ensure that no setts have been established in the interim.

6.0 Conclusion

6.1 With the exception of bats, providing the minor recommendations made above are taken into consideration and appropriately implemented, there is likely to be no residual negative impact upon any protected species of plants or animals and there will be no loss of any important habitats.

6.2 With regard to bats, given the lack of any conclusive signs of roosting, should any roosts be subsequently be found to be present, these are likely to be small and relatively easy to accommodate within the existing building, supplemented by bat boxes attached to adjacent mature trees. It is considered that the implementation of such mitigation measures combined with the undertaking of works at an appropriate time of year as part of an approved method statement, will result in no adverse impact upon the favourable conservation status of the local bat population.

7.0 References

Bat Conservation Trust (2007). *Bat Surveys – Good Practice Guidelines.* Bat Conservation Trust, London.

Bibby, C.J., Burgess, N.D. and Hill, D.A. (1992). *Bird Census Techniques*. Poyser. London.

Byron H. (2000). Biodiversity and Environmental Impact Assessment: A good practice guide for road schemes. RSPB, WWF-UK, English Nature and The Wildlife Trusts, Sandy.

British Government (1994). *Conservation (Natural Habitats, &c.) Regulations 1994.* Statutory Instrument 1994 No 2716 Wildlife, Countryside. HMSO

British Government (1981). *Wildlife and Countryside Act* 1981 with Amendments. HMSO

IEA (1995). *Guidelines for Baseline Ecological Assessment.* Institute of Environmental Assessment. E & FN Spon.

Kirkby, K.J. (1988). *A Woodland Survey Handbook.* Research and Survey in Nature Conservation No. 11. NCC, Peterborough.

Mitchell-Jones, A. J., (2004). *Bat Mitigation Guidelines.* English Nature.

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