BRITISH STANDARD 5837 TREE SURVEYS ARBORICULTURAL IMPLICATION STUDIES TPO/PLANNIG ADVICE/ PROJECT MANAGEMENT
TREE INVENTORIES AND RISK ASSESSMENTS WOODLAND MANAGEMENT PLANS TREE PLANTING SCHEMES TPO RE-SURVEY




Hillside, Moor Lane, Wiswell

Bat Scoping Survey Report

11th April 2022

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1 Introduction

1.1 Background

Kingdom Ecology have carried out a bat scoping survey of a detached house located at Hillside, Moor Lane, Wiswell, Ribble Valley, BB7 9DG (National Grid Reference SD 7464 3720). Proposals are to demolish the existing house and to redevelop the site.

Field surveys comprising of a daytime bat scoping inspection were undertaken on the 25th March 2022. Surveys were carried out by [redacted] (BSc, MSc, MIEEM, CEnv). [redacted] has extensive experience of undertaking bat surveys as a professional ecological consultant with over twenty years' experience. [redacted] is also a licensed bat worker.

1.2 Purpose of Report

This report provides and outlines the findings of field surveys undertaken at the site.

The field surveys examined habitats present with a focus on the affected building's suitability to support roosting bats. Survey also examined the suitability of the site to support breeding birds. Survey comprised of a daytime assessment examining the exterior of the building (internal access was not possible at the time of survey).

Following a description of the survey findings and an evaluation of habitats at the site, the report goes on to make recommendations for further works, mitigation and ecological enhancement measures where relevant.

1.3 Protected Species Legislation

1.3.1 Bats

All British bat species are fully protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) and through their inclusion in Schedule II of the Habitats Regulations 2010 which transpose Annex II of the Council Directive 92/43/EEC 1992 on the Conservation of Natural Habitats and of Wild Fauna and Flora ("EC Habitats Directive") which defines European protected species of animals.

British bats species are afforded further protection by the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000; and the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006.

Taken together, this legislation makes it an offence to:

- Intentionally or deliberately kill, injure or capture bats.
- Deliberately disturb bats, whether at roost or not.
- Damage, destroy or obstruct access to bat roosts.
- Possess or transport bats, unless acquired legally.
- Sell, barter or exchange bats.

A bat roost is interpreted as "any structure or place, which any wild bat uses for shelter or protection." (Bat Conservation Trust 2016[1]). A bat roost is protected whether or not bats are present at the time.

All species of British bat are considered a European Protected Species (EPS). The Conservation of Habitat and Species Regulations (2010) provide derogation against certain offences which could potentially affect an EPS through the EPS Licensing system.

1.3.2 Birds

All wild birds in England and Wales are protected under Section 1 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended), which makes it an offence to intentionally kill, injure or take any wild bird, or take, damage or destroy the nest (whilst being built or in use) or its eggs.

[1] Bat Conservation Trust (2016) 'Bat Surveys: Good Practice Guidelines 3rd Edition'

2 Field Survey Methods

2.1 Survey Aims and Objectives

Survey comprised of a site visit and inspection of the affected buildings. The survey aim was to assess the site as to its suitability to support roosting bats and to identify suitable habitats for any other protected species including breeding birds.

Survey also aimed to identify opportunities for ecological enhancement and to inform potential mitigation measures if required to ameliorate any negative impacts attributable to the proposed works.

2.2 Survey Methods

2.2.1 Daytime Bat Inspection

Each building was assessed as to its suitability to support bats following standard methodologies prescribed in English Nature's *Bat Mitigation Guidelines* (Mitchell-Jones 2004)[2] and the Bat Conservation Trust's *Bat Surveys: Good Practice Guidelines* 3rd Edition (BCT 2016)[3].

Survey, comprising of an inspection of the exterior of the building, was undertaken during daylight conditions using binoculars, endoscope and a high-powered torch (internal access was not possible at the time of survey). The survey was undertaken during daylight hours on the 25th March 2022.

In addition to searching for evidence of an actual bat roost the survey also aimed to assess the suitability of the buildings to support bats and consequently the likelihood of a bat roost being present but with no obvious field signs.

Survey assessed the building's roost suitability by examining structural features and the surrounding habitat. Structural features that will influence the suitability of a building to support roosting bats include the presence of a roof void; access points into a building including gaps beneath barge boards, gaps under lead flashing, gaps within masonry, loose tiles etc, complexity of any roof void, daytime light levels in roof void etc.

[2] Mitchell-Jones, A.J. 2004. Bat Mitigation Guidelines. English Nature, Peterborough.

[3] Bat Conservation Trust (2016) 'Bat Surveys: Good Practice Guidelines 3rd Edition'

Important habitat features surrounding the structures which could influence roost potential include: whether the structure is in a semi-rural or parkland location, proximity to a significant linear feature (e.g. watercourse, mature hedgerow, wooded lane) or an area of woodland etc.

Taking account of these architectural and habitat features, the building was assigned a level of roost suitability based upon professional judgement.

3 Survey Results

3.1 Site Description

The study site comprises of a detached house and garage located on Moor Lane, Wiswell. The house is considered likely to be of approximately 1930s origin. The house is currently occupied.

The site is located within a rural setting, immediately to the south-east of the village of Wiswell. Surrounding habitats include further scattered residential housing and areas of open farmland comprising principally of pasture with associated hedgerows and scattered mature trees. There is a large block of woodland located approximately 200 m to the south of the site.

Immediate surrounding habitats are considered to offer 'moderate' value bat foraging habitat.

The study site's location and layout are shown on Figures 1 and 2 in the Appendix. Photographs of the site are also provided in the Appendix.

3.2 Habitats

The house is located within managed gardens on the edge of the village of Wiswell. The gardens are arranged in a series of descending terraces running north to south. Moor Lane runs along the eastern boundary of the site and is marked by a hawthorn hedge with holly. An agricultural pasture field is located to the west of the gardens. The boundary between the gardens and the field is marked by a further hedge of hawthorn, hazel and holly with two mature sycamore trees and an ash tree.

The gardens support lawned areas, patio, flower beds and are scattered with ornamental shrubbery including buddleia, magnolia, cypress, holly, willow, rhododendron, barbary, laburnum with scattered trees including cherry, cypress and eucalyptus.

A narrow watercourse runs along the western boundary of the site with a further channel joining this watercourse from the east of the site.

The stone channel is approximately 1 m wide with a low water flow. Much of the channel is dry with water collected in shallow pools less than 10 cm deep. The bank between the hedge and the channel on the site western boundary supports a carpet of wild garlic and ivy.

The upper two terraces (Target Note 3 and 4) support small areas of mown amenity grassland lawn with scattered shrubs and young trees. The two lower terraces (Target Notes 1 and 2) have areas of paving with further scattered ornamental shrubs.

To the south of the house, there is a hardstanding parking area along with a small, raised rockery which is planted with cypress trees (Target Note 5).

There are two small garden ponds located at the site, these are described in section 3.3.2.

The trees, hedges and garden shrubbery offer suitable nesting habitat for breeding birds.

3.3 Protected Species

3.3.1 Bats

Buildings at the site comprise the main house (Building 1 on Figure 2 in the Appendix) and a detached garage (Building 2). Internal access to the buildings was not possible at the time of survey.

The house comprises of a detached building arranged over 1.5 floors, with the upper floor rooms extending into the roof space itself. Therefore, the house is likely to support only a small loft space (estimated to be approximately 1 m in height or less). The loft space may offer some low value bat roosting habitat. The remainder of the house is currently in use and so entirely unsuitable for roosting bats.

The house has a pitched roof clad in ceramic rosemary tiles. The house has three gable faces, facing north, west and south. There is a dormer window at the building's east face. The external brickwork of the house has been rendered in white pebble dashing.

Some limited potential bat roosting habitat was identified at each face of the house. The verge mortar at the gables appears intact and well-sealed, however there are occasional narrow gaps present between the overlapping rosemary tiles at each gable face. These features offer potential roosting habitat for individual or low numbers of bats.

The dormer window, at the buildings east face, also offers potential bat roosting habitat between overlapping tiles running along the pitched dormer roof.

Otherwise, the main roof and ridge tiles are intact and tightly fitted. The external render extends up to the base of eaves and so there are no gaps or crevices here.

Based upon the external inspection alone, the house is considered to offer a 'low' bat roosting potential.

The detached garage building (Building 2) is constructed of rendered concrete panels and has a shallow pitched roof clad in tightly fitted, interlocking concrete tiles. The garage has tight fascia boarding running beneath the gables. No obvious potential bat roosting habitat was identified.

Based upon the external inspection, the garage is considered to offer a 'negligible' bat roosting potential.

The buildings are not considered to offer suitable nesting habitat for breeding birds.

3.3.2 Great Crested Newt

There are two small garden ponds located at the site.

Pond 1 is located adjacent to the watercourse channel on the second garden terrace (Target Note 2). The pond is set within a stone, patio area. The pond measures less than 10 m² in area. The pond is heavily shaded and is overgrown with Canadian pondweed. Frogspawn was observed within the pond.

Pond 2 is located on the top garden terrace (Target Note 4), this pond is also contained within a patio area. The pond measures approximately 10 m² in area and supports Canadian pondweed, marsh marigold and yellow iris with a covering of duckweed. Frogspawn was also observed to be present within this pond.

Given the small size of the ponds and their artificial origins, they are considered to offer aquatic habitat of low value for great crested newt.

Furthermore, there are no other ponds located within 500 m of the site. Consequently, the site is isolated from any other potential great crested newt populations. It is therefore very unlikely that the ponds would support great crested newt.

4 Summary and Recommendations

4.1 Survey Summary

4.1.1 Habitats

Habitat at the site are largely of artificial origin comprising of managed gardens located on terraces which descend down from the main house.

The gardens comprise of areas of lawned amenity grassland, patio and flower beds with ornamental shrubbery and trees.

There are some features of biodiversity value within the garden. These include the two small garden ponds; a watercourse which runs along the western boundary of the site; and the boundary hedgerows with associated trees.

Where practicable, these features should be retained and protected as part of the final development.

The hawthorn hedges on the site's eastern and western boundaries, along with their associated mature trees, are considered to be features of greatest biodiversity value at the site. Hedges and mature trees, as well as being of cultural and ecological value in their own right, could offer valuable refuge and foraging habitat to various local wildlife including birds, small mammals, bats, invertebrates and amphibians.

4.1.2 Bats and Birds

The Bat Scoping Assessment has considered a detached house and garage located at Hillside, Moor Lane, Wiswell. The proposed works are to demolish the house and to redevelop the site.

The interior of the house and garage were not accessible during field survey. Therefore, an initial assessment of the suitability of the buildings has been carried out based upon the external inspection alone.

The main house is initially assessed as offering a 'low' bat roosting potential. The detached garage is initially assessed as offering a 'negligible' bat roosting potential.

The identified external features are considered to only offer suitable roosting habitat for individual or small numbers of non-breeding bats.

The daytime inspection did not identify any field signs indicative of roosting bats.

No suitable features for nesting birds were identified in association with the buildings.

The trees, hedges and shrubbery could be used by nesting birds during the breeding season.

4.1.3 Great Crested Newt

There are two small garden ponds located at the site. Each pond measures approximately 10 m² in area.

Given the small size of the ponds and their artificial origins, they are considered to offer aquatic habitat of low value for great crested newt.

Furthermore, there are no other ponds located within 500 m of the site. Consequently, the site is isolated from any other potential great crested newt populations. It is therefore very unlikely that the ponds would support great crested newt.

4.2 Recommendations

4.2.1 Bats

The external inspection of the main house identified some limited suitable features for roosting bats.

In order to further assess the potential bat roosting features identified, at least one dusk or dawn bat activity survey should be carried out during the peak bat survey season (between late May and the end of August). It is recommended that two surveyors are used to assess the buildings. Recommended surveyor locations are shown on figure 2 in the Appendix.

The surveys would aim to confirm the presence or otherwise of any bat roosts associated with the building.

If any roosting bats are encountered, further nocturnal surveys may be required and any future development of the site may need to be carried out following a European Protected Species License.

No internal inspection of the house was possible at the time survey. Given the small loft space present and the good condition of the roof tiles, it is unlikely that an unidentified bats roost is present within the loft space of the house.

Nevertheless, it is recommended that an additional internal inspection of the house is carried out and the findings of this report updated. Additional bat activity surveys may be recommended, pending the findings of the internal inspection survey.

Following the completion of additional surveys, further recommendations for ecological enhancements of the site may be provided.

These may include installation bat boxes on the building to compensate for the loss of potential roosting habitat.

4.2.2 Breeding birds

It is recommended that any works to remove trees or areas of shrubbery avoid taking place during the breeding bird season (March-August inclusive). Where this is not possible, a check for nesting birds should be completed immediately prior to works by an appropriately qualified ecologist.

It is recommended that a bird box scheme is produced for the site including provision of suitable nesting features for house sparrows. This can comprise of nest boxes fitted beneath the eaves of the proposed new buildings. Further bird boxes could also be fitted to retained trees located on the site's western boundary.

5 Appendix

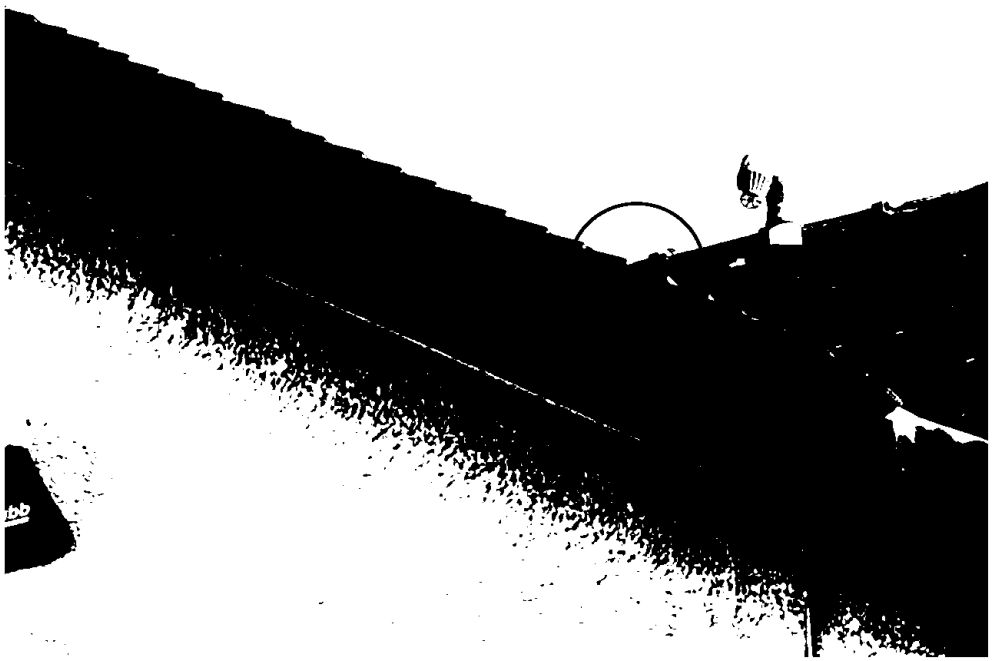
PHOTOGRAPHS

Photograph 1- South and east face of house

Photograph 2- West face of house

Photograph 3- Garage building

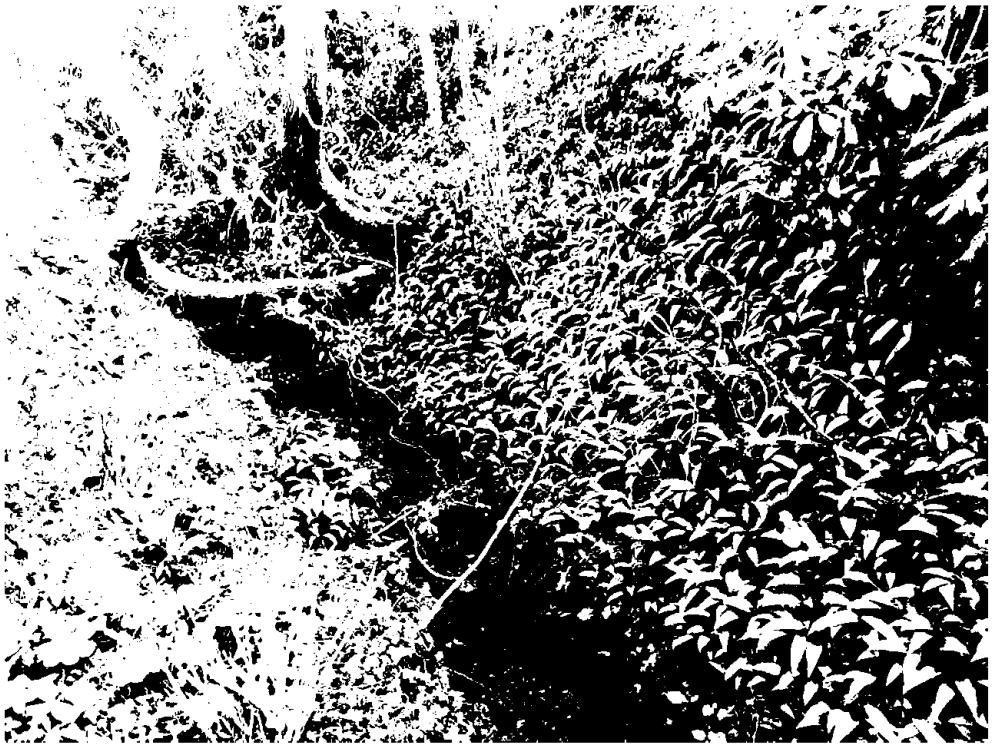
Photograph 4- View of tiles showing narrow crevices



Photograph 5- Upper terrace garden

Photograph 6- Lower terrace of garden

Photograph 7- Small stream/drain that flows through garden

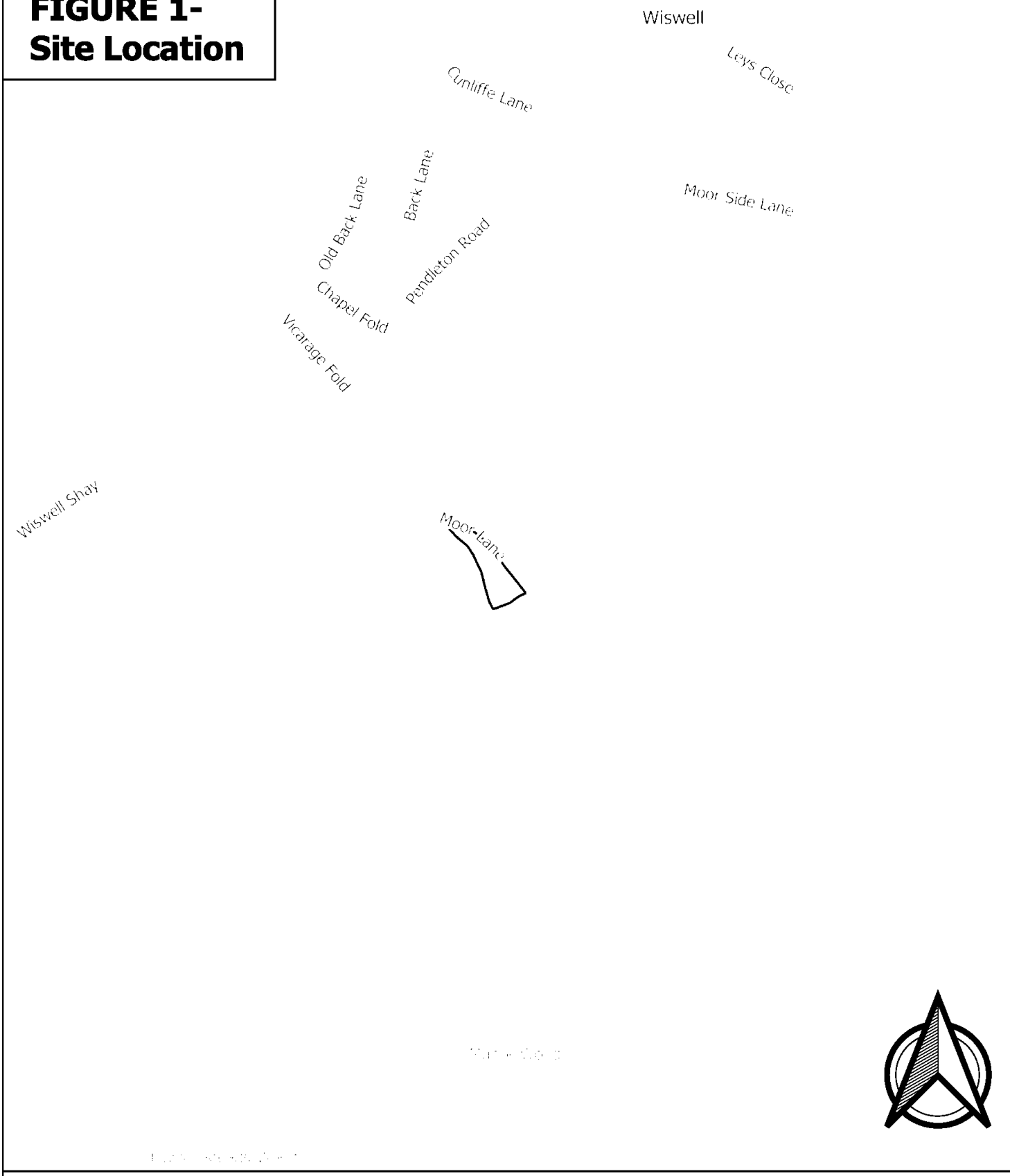


Photograph 8- Hedgerow on west boundary viewed from the adjacent field

Photograph 9- Pond at Target Note 2

Photograph 10- Pond at Target Note 4

FIGURE 1- Site Location



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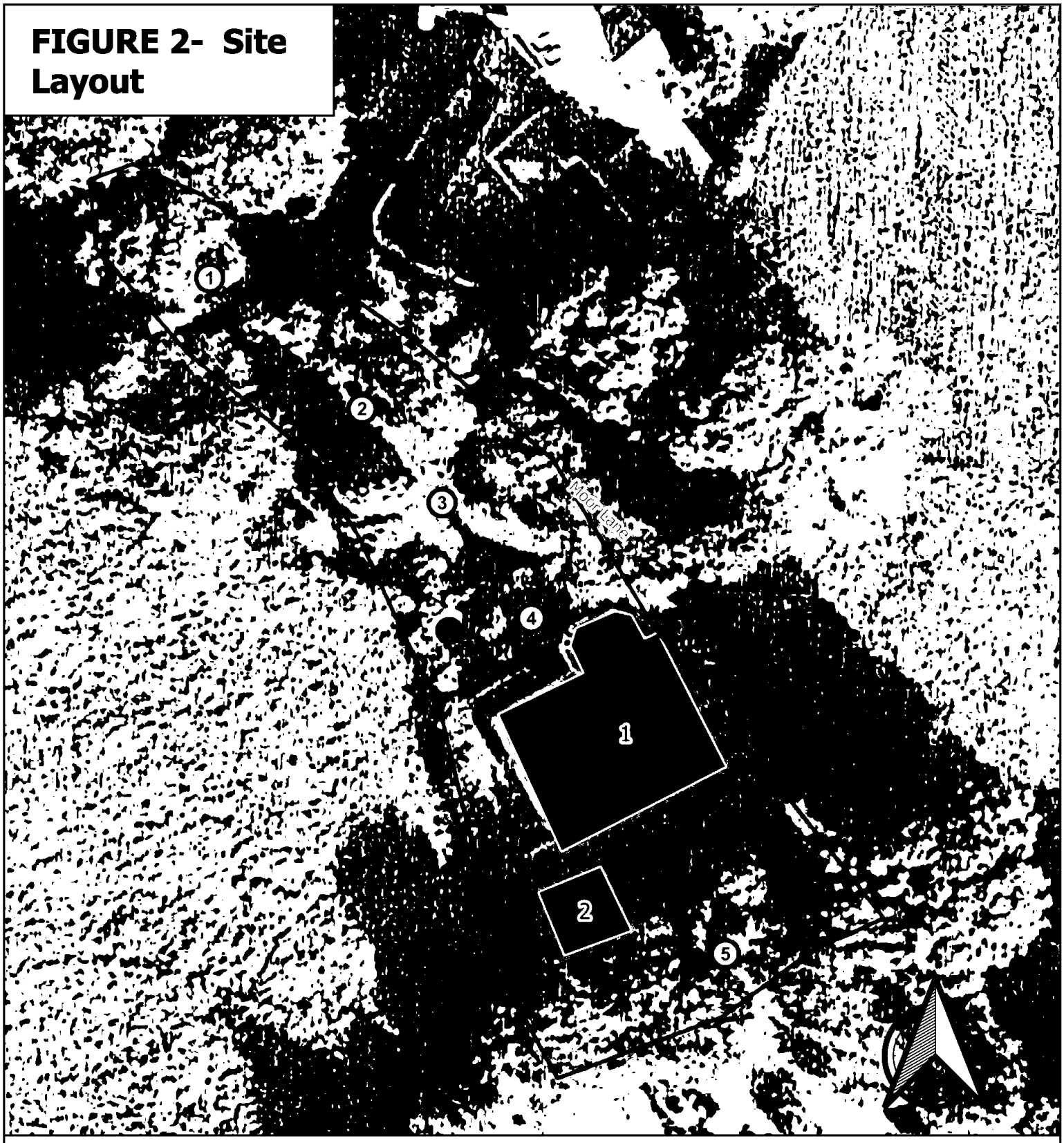
0 50 100 150 200 250 m

Study Site

FIGURE 2- Site Layout



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0 5 10 15 20 25 m

Study Site

Building

Bat Surveyor

Target Note