**The Jolly Anglers**
**314-316 Kennet Side**
**Reading**
**Berkshire**
**RG1 3EA**

# Preliminary Ecological Appraisal

**Report ref.: R2945_PEA_a**

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# 1 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

**1.1.1** John Wenman Ecological Consultancy LLP was instructed by Elite Lending Ltd to undertake a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA) - including a Preliminary Roost Assessment (PRA) - at The Jolly Anglers, Reading, in Berkshire. The PEA (incl. PRA) was commissioned to accompany a full planning application to be submitted to Reading Borough Council seeking consent for change of use and an extension to create a large house in multiple occupation (HMO).

**1.1.2** The desk study (including a TVERC 1 kilometre data search) revealed that the application site is not statutorily or non-statutorily designated for its wildlife interest and has no protected/notable species records.

**1.1.3** Conor Watson ACIEEM and Lauren Hayward carried out a site visit on the 20th April 2025. The application site was a 0.03ha former public house building in an urban setting surrounded by residential and industrial properties; the Kennet river is situated immediately north of the property. The habitats observed were: u1b5 Buildings; and u~829 Unvegetated garden.

**1.1.4** The proposed development is not subject to mandatory Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) because the site has no habitats within the red line boundary with value over 0, so it will qualify for the de minimis exemption.

**1.1.5** The building's roof had a few potential roost sites confined to gaps under ridge tiles and lifted lead flashing, which were considered to provide conditions suitable for opportunistic use by small crevice-dwelling bat species. Due to the nature and scale of the potential roost sites, the building has been classified as low suitability.

**1.1.6** The following recommendations have been made in **Section 10**:

- Bat emergence survey; and
- Biodiversity enhancements.

**1.1.7** This report contains information regarding a mobile species (i.e. bats) so it will likely be valid for 12 months only (CIEEM 2019b).

# 2 INTRODUCTION

## 2.1 Project Background

**2.1.1** John Wenman Ecological Consultancy LLP was instructed by Elite Lending Ltd to undertake a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA) - including a Preliminary Roost Assessment (PRA) - at The Jolly Anglers, Reading, in Berkshire.

**2.1.2** The PEA (incl. PRA) was commissioned to accompany a full planning application to be submitted to Reading Borough Council seeking consent for change of use and an extension to create a large house in multiple occupation (HMO) – see planning drawings in **Appendix 2**.

## 2.2 Site Location and Context

**2.2.1** The application site is a 0.03ha former public house located on the Kennet Side path and cycle track, south of the River Kennet, in Reading (OS grid ref.: SU 72900 73609).

**2.2.2** The site is in a urban setting surrounded by similar residential and industrial properties. The Kennet river is situated immediately north of the property joining the River Thames approximately 319 m north-east of the site, and the railway runs approximately 133 m north of the site, bordered with mature trees. There are small pockets of woodland in the wider area, including a small area of ancient and semi natural woodland approximately 1347 m to the north-east. Redgrave Pinsent Rowing lake (approximately 580 m) and Caversham Lakes (approximately 1002 m) are situated north-east of the site, alongside Thames Valley Park Nature Reserve situated approximately 1547 m north-east.

## 2.3 Report Objectives

**2.3.1** The aim of this PEA is to understand the nature of the site and assess its ecological value. The key objectives are to:

- identify any likely ecological constraints associated with the planning proposals;
- establish appropriate mitigation measures in accordance with the mitigation hierarchy (i.e. avoid > mitigate > compensate);
- determine any additional surveys that may be required following on from this preliminary stage; and
- recognise opportunities to deliver ecological enhancements in line with national and local planning policy.

**2.3.2** The aim of the PRA is to ascertain if there is evidence of the presence of bats and/or

potential for roosting bats to be present, and therefore whether further survey and/or mitigation would be required for the proposed development activities.

# 3 LEGISLATIVE BACKGROUND

## 3.1 Relevant Legislation

**3.1.1** The following legislation is considered relevant for the purpose of this Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA):

- Wildlife and Countryside Act (W&CA) 1981 (as amended)
- Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations ('Habitat') Regulations 2017
- Countryside and Rights of Way (CRoW) Act 2000
- Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006
- Protection of Badgers Act 1992
- Wild Mammals (Protection) Act 1996

**3.1.2** These acts hold relevance to both protected and invasive species and the degree of protection varies depending on faunal/floral group or species. For example, some species of European importance receive full protection in England and Wales under the Habitat Regulations (e.g. bats), whereas others may only be afforded protection through national legislation such as the W&CA 1981 (as amended) (e.g. common lizard). For a detailed overview of species-specific legislation, please refer to **Appendix 1**.

## 3.2 European Protected Species Mitigation Licensing

**3.2.1** The Government's statutory nature conservation advisory organisation, Natural England, is responsible for issuing European Protected Species (EPS) mitigation licences that permit activities that would otherwise lead to an infringement of the Habitat Regulations. An EPS mitigation licence can be issued if the following three tests derived from Regulation 55 have been satisfied:

- (2)(e) – the derogation is for the purposes of '*preserving public health or public safety or other imperative reasons of overriding public interest, including those of a social or economic nature and beneficial consequences of primary importance for the environment.*'

- (9)(a) – there is '*no satisfactory alternative*' to the derogation; and

- (9)(b) – '*the action authorised will not be detrimental to the maintenance of the population of the species concerned at a favourable conservation status in their natural range*.'

**3.2.2** Local Planning Authorities (LPAs) have a statutory duty under Regulation 7(3)(e) of the

Habitat Regulations consider and determine whether these three tests are likely to be satisfied by planning proposals affected EPS before granted planning permission. If an EPS mitigation licence is necessary, a licence can be sought once all the necessary planning consents have been granted. Natural England aims to issue a decision on licence applications within 30 working days of submission.

# 4 PLANNING POLICY

## 4.1 National Planning Policy

**4.1.1** The biodiversity duty imposed through the Environment Act 2021 states that Local Planning Authorities (LPAs) must consider what action they can take to conserve and enhance biodiversity in England.

**4.1.2** The ODPM Circular 06/2005 provides guidance on the application of the law relating to planning and nature conservation in England, stating that '*the presence of a protected species is a material consideration when a planning authority is considering a development proposal that, if carried out, would be likely to result in harm to the species or its habitat*.'

**4.1.3** The revised National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), published in December 2024, sets out the Government's planning policies for England and how they should be applied. Section 15 of the NPPF sets out the approach local authorities should adopt to conserve and enhancing the natural environment when preparing planning policy and when considering planning applications. Paragraph 193 sets out the principles LPAs should apply when determining planning applications, as follows:

*'When determining planning applications, local planning authorities should apply the following principles:*

*a) if significant harm to biodiversity resulting from a development cannot be avoided (through locating on an alternative site with less harmful impacts), adequately mitigated, or, as a last resort, compensated for, then planning permission should be refused;*

*b) development on land within or outside a Site of Special Scientific Interest, and which is likely to have an adverse effect on it (either individually or in combination with other developments), should not normally be permitted. The only exception is where the benefits of the development in the location proposed clearly outweigh both its likely impact on the features of the site that make it of special scientific interest, and any broader impacts on the national network of Sites of Special Scientific Interest;*

*c) development resulting in the loss or deterioration of irreplaceable habitats (such as ancient woodland and ancient or veteran trees) should be refused, unless there are wholly exceptional reasons and a suitable compensation strategy exists; and*

*d) development whose primary objective is to conserve or enhance biodiversity should be supported; while opportunities to improve biodiversity in and around*

*developments should be integrated as part of their design, especially where this can secure measurable net gains for biodiversity or enhance public access to nature where this is appropriate.'*

**4.1.4** In England, BNG became mandatory for major development from the 12th February 2024 and for minor development (small sites) from the 2nd April 2024 under Schedule 7A of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as inserted by Schedule 14 of the Environment Act 2021). In practice, planning permission in England is now subject to a condition to secure a minimum 10% net gain for biodiversity, unless the development is a type that is exempt from mandatory BNG requirements.

## 4.2 Local Planning Policy

**4.2.1** Planning policy within the Reading Borough is defined by the policies within the Local Plan (adopted Nov 2019). The policy relevant to biodiversity and natural environment is as follows:

*'EN12: BIODIVERSITY AND THE GREEN NETWORK*

*a) The identified Green Network, the key elements of which are shown on the Proposals Map, shall be maintained, protected, consolidated, extended and enhanced. Permission will not be granted for development that negatively affects the sites with identified interest or fragments the overall network. The Green Network comprises:*

- *Sites with identified biodiversity interest - Local Wildlife Sites, Local Nature Reserves, Biodiversity Opportunity Areas, protected and priority species and their habitats, Priority and Biodiversity Action Plan habitats, and the River Thames and all its tributaries (including the River Kennet and the Kennet & Avon Canal); and*
- *Areas with potential for biodiversity value and which stitch the Green Network together – designated Local Green Space and open green spaces, and existing and potential Green Links.*

*New development shall demonstrate how the location and type of green space, landscaping and water features provided within a scheme have been arranged such that they maintain or link into the existing Green Network and contribute to its consolidation. Such features should be designed to maximise the opportunities for enhancing this network. All new development should maximise*

*opportunities to create new assets and links into areas where opportunities are as yet unidentified on the Proposals Map.*

*b) On all sites, development should not result in a net loss of biodiversity and geodiversity, and should provide a net gain for biodiversity wherever possible. Development should:*

- *Protect and wherever possible enhance features of biodiversity interest on and adjacent to the application site, incorporating and integrating them into development proposals wherever practicable; and*
- *Provide new tree planting, wildlife friendly landscaping and ecological enhancements (such as wildlife ponds, bird and bat boxes) wherever practicable.*

*In exceptional circumstances where the need for development clearly outweighs the need to protect the value of the site, and it is demonstrated that the impacts cannot be: 1) avoided; 2) mitigated or; 3) compensated for on-site; then new development will provide off-site compensation to ensure that there is "no net loss" of biodiversity. Provision of off-site compensation shall be calculated in accordance with nationally or locally recognised guidance and metrics. It should not replace existing alternative habitats and should be provided prior to development.'*

# 5 SURVEY METHODOLOGY

## 5.1 Desk Study

**5.1.1** A desktop study was conducted by Conor Watson ACIEEM and Lauren Hayward before and after visiting the application site. The study utilised data from open access online resources to acquire information on the nature of the site and its surroundings and highlight any potential ecological features.

**5.1.2** In accordance with the Guidelines for Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (2nd Edition) (CIEEM 2017), TVERC was commissioned to undertake a search of pre-existing records of protected and/or notable species and non-statutorily designated wildlife sites held by them within a 1km radius around a central point inside the site.

**5.1.3** The DEFRA Data Services Platform was used to obtain geospatial datasets for designated sites (i.e. RAMSAR, SPA, SAC, SSSI) and important habitats (i.e. Priority Habitat Inventory, Ancient Woodland Inventory) to be analysed in QGIS. The Multi-Agency Geographical Information Centre (MAGIC) website was examined for granted European Protected Species (EPS) licence applications. These geospatial datasets and Google Earth satellite imagery were used to determine the extent and connectivity of habitats, how the site is linked to the surrounding landscape and whether the development could have wider scale impacts on biodiversity.

**5.1.4** Historical OS maps and Google Earth satellite imagery were consulted to provide insight into historic and current land use; such information helps contextualise the continuity of habitats and determine the importance of existing ecological features on site.

**5.1.5** The type of soil on site was inferred using geological information taken from the British Geological Survey and on-site interpretation.

## 5.2 Field Survey

*Habitat Survey*

**5.2.1** A site walkover was undertaken on the 20th April 2025 by Senior Ecologist Conor Watson ACIEEM and Assistant Ecologist Lauren Hayward. The site was surveyed using the UK Habitat Classification (UKHab) system (UKHab Ltd 2023) in accordance with the Guidelines for Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (2nd Edition) (CIEEM 2017). Particular attention was given to evidence of protected and priority species (NERC Act 2006 Section 41 species of principal importance) and the site's potential to support such

species.

**5.2.2** There were no significant survey constraints because full access was available to the site. The survey was subject to seasonal constraints because not all plant and animal species are visible throughout the year and therefore the report represents a snapshot of the site at the time of the survey only.

*Building Inspection*

**5.2.3** A detailed inspection of the exterior and interior of the building was undertaken on the 20th April 2025 by Senior Ecologist Conor Watson ACIEEM registered under Natural England Bat Survey Class Licence CL18 (Registration no.: 2024-11877-CL18-BAT) and Assistant Ecologist Lauren Hayward, in accordance with good practice guidelines (Collins 2023). The equipment used during the inspection comprised binoculars, a high-power (1 million candlepower) LED torch, a headtorch, ladder and PPE (facemask, gloves etc.). The inspection involved a systematic search of the exterior and interior of the structure during daylight hours to compile information on potential and actual bat access points; potential and actual bat roost sites; and any evidence of bat presence.

**5.2.4** There were no significant survey limitations because PRAs can be carried out at any time of year under any weather conditions and the building was fully accessible.

**5.2.5** It should be noted that it is not always possible to inspect all potential roost sites during a survey, particularly for bat species which typically roost in hidden crevices. Therefore, an absence of bat evidence found during a survey does not necessarily equate to evidence of bat absence in a building.

### 5.3 Report Validity

**5.3.1** This report will likely be valid for up to 18 months; after which point a professional ecologist may need to review the report's validity (CIEEM 2019b).

# 6 DESK STUDY FINDINGS

## 6.1 Designated Sites

**6.1.1** The desk study returned no internationally designated statutory sites within a 5km radius of the application site and no nationally designated statutory sites within a 2km radius. Two locally designated non-statutory sites were identified within a 1km radius of the application site (see **Table 1** below).

*Table 1. Non-Statutory designated sites within 1km of the site (Source: TVERC).*

| Site name | Designation | Description | Distance from nearest site boundary (m) |
|---|---|---|---|
| The Coal, Kennetmouth and Kings Meadow East | Local Wildlife Site (LWS) | 3.62ha combination of two sites (The Coal and Kennetmouth West) and Kings Meadow. The Coal is old colliery spoil site with coal found on the surface throughout; comprising a central and riverside woodland area and an open wayleave at the foot of a steep railway embankment. Kennetmouth West is a short length of towpath at the confluence of the River Kennet and the River Thames, important for the presence of the nationally scarce Loddon lily. Kings Meadow East is currently utilised as a recreational area and as a short cut through to the supermarket from the boating jetty on the Thames. | ~230N |
| Henley Road Gravel Pit | Local Wildlife Site (LWS) | 53.7ha pit next to the Thames where gravel was extracted in the past. The site supports a range of wildfowl that winter in the UK including species such as gadwall which is classed a bird of conservation concern. | ~425NE |

## 6.2 Important Habitats

**6.2.1** There are no irreplaceable habitats (e.g. Ancient Semi-natural Woodland) or priority habitats (Section 41 NERC Act 2006 habitats of principle importance) on site or mapped within 50m of the site. The River Kennet is a chalk stream and is immediately north of the site, but this section is highly modified and is unlikely to resemble a priority habitat.

## 6.3 Protected Species and Notable Species

**6.3.1** The search of the TVERC database revealed a range of protected and notable species records starting from 1960. Only recent records defined as fewer than ten years old are included in this report (see **Tables 2a** & **2b** below).

*Table 2a. Recent protected and/or notable species records within the vicinity of the site (Source: TVERC).*

| Common name | Scientific name | No. of records | Most recent record | Nearest record (m) | Precision (m) | Status |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Amphibians & Reptiles** | | | | | | |
| Common toad | *Bufo bufo* | 2 | 2022 | ~195 | 100 | NERC_S41 |
| Grass snake | *Natrix helvetica* | 2 | 2016 | ~530 | 10 | WCA_5s91k<br>NERC_S41 |

| | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Great crested newt | *Triturus cristatus* | 1 | 2017 | ~975 | 10 | HabReg_2<br>WCA_5s94b/c<br>NERC_s41 |
| Slow-worm | *Anguis fragilis* | 38 | 2018 | ~235 | 10 | WCA_5s91k<br>NERC_S41 |
| **Birds** | | | | | | |
| Black redstart | *Phoenicurus ochruros* | 1 | 2023 | ~890 | 1000 | WCA_1p1 |
| Brambling | *Fringilla montifringilla* | 2 | 2022 | ~890 | 1000 | WCA_1p1 |
| Cetti's warbler | *Cettia cettia* | 4 | 2022 | ~400 | 1000 | WCA_1p1 |
| Common scoter | *Melanitta nigra* | 3 | 2020 | ~85 | 1000 | WCA_1p1<br>NERC_S41 |
| Crossbill | *Loxia curvirostra* | 1 | 2020 | ~85 | 1000 | WCA_1p1 |
| Fieldfare | *Turdus pilaris* | 23 | 2022 | ~915 | 100 | WCA_1p1<br>BOCC_red |
| Firecrest | *Regulus ignicapilla* | 47 | 2023 | ~485 | 100 | WCA_1p1 |
| Kingfisher | *Alcedo atthis* | 71 | 2023 | ~230 | 1 | WCA_1p1 |
| Peregrine | *Falco peregrinus* | 175 | 2023 | ~60 | 10 | WCA_1p1 |
| Red kite | *Milvus milvus* | 52 | 2024 | ~210 | 100 | WCA_1p1 |
| Redwing | *Turdus iliacus* | 110 | 2022 | 0 | 1000 | WCA_1p1 |
| Whimbrel | *Numenius phaeopus* | 2 | 2022 | ~85 | 1000 | WCA_1p1<br>BOCC_red |
| White-tailed eagle | *Haliaeetus albicilla* | 4 | 2021 | ~890 | 1000 | WCA_1p1 |
| **Higher Plants** | | | | | | |
| English bluebell | *Hyacinthoides non-scripta* | 1 | 2020 | ~595 | 10 | WCA_8 |
| English sticky eyebright | *Euphrasia officinalis* subsp. *anglica* | 2 | 2016 | ~330 | 1 | NERC_S41 |
| **Invertebrates** | | | | | | |
| Cinnabar | *Tyria jacobaeae* | 1 | 2016 | ~400 | 100 | NERC_S41 |
| Stag beetle | *Lucanus cervus* | 122 | 2023 | ~30 | 1 | NERC_S41 |
| **Terrestrial Mammals (bats)** | | | | | | |
| Barbastelle | *Barbastella barbastellus* | 2 | 2018 | ~250 | 10 | HabReg_2<br>WCA_5s94b/c<br>NERC_s41 |
| Brown long-eared bat | *Plecotus auritus* | 4 | 2019 | ~0 | 100 | HabReg_2<br>WCA_5s94b/c<br>NERC_s41 |
| Common pipistrelle | *Pipistrellus pipistrellus* | 75 | 2022 | ~0 | 100 | HabReg_2<br>WCA_5s94b/c |
| Daubenton's bat | *Myotis daubentonii* | 6 | 2019 | ~255 | 10 | HabReg_2<br>WCA_5s94b/c |
| Leisler's bat | *Nyctalus leisleri* | 2 | 2016 | ~250 | 10 | HabReg_2<br>WCA_5s94b/c |
| Nathusius' pipistrelle | *Pipistrellus nathusii* | 14 | 2019 | ~250 | 10 | HabReg_2<br>WCA_5s94b/c |
| Noctule | *Nyctalus noctula* | 44 | 2019 | ~0 | 100 | HabReg_2<br>WCA_5s94b/c<br>NERC_s41 |
| Serotine | *Eptesicus serotinus* | 8 | 2019 | ~0 | 100 | HabReg_2<br>WCA_5s94b/c |
| Soprano pipistrelle | *Pipistrellus pygmaeus* | 65 | 2020 | ~0 | 100 | HabReg_2<br>WCA_5s94b/c<br>NERC_s41 |
| **Terrestrial Mammals (excl. bats)** | | | | | | |
| Badger | *Meles meles* | 7 | 2025 | ~385 | 1000 | PBA |
| Hedgehog | *Erinaceus europaeus* | 4 | 2021 | ~760 | 1 | NERC_s41 |
| Otter | *Lutra lutra* | 11 | 2022 | ~20 | 10 | HabReg_2<br>WCA_5s94b/c<br>NERC_s41 |
| Water vole | *Arvicola amphibius* | 1 | 2020 | ~540 | 10 | WCA_5s94b/c<br>NERC_s41 |

*Table 2b. Species status key.*

| Abbreviation | Legislation |
|---|---|
| BOCC_red | Birds of Conservation Concern Red list – Globally threatened according to IUCN criteria; those whose population or range has declined rapidly in recent years; and those that have declined historically and not shown substantial recovery. |
| HabReg_2 | Schedule 2 of Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010 (European Protected Species animal) – It is an offence (subject to exceptions) to deliberately capture, kill, disturb, or trade in the animals listed in Schedule 2. |
| NERC_s41 | Priority Species listed under Section 41 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006. |
| PBA | Protection of Badgers Act 1992. |
| WCA_1p1 | Schedule 1 Part 1 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) – birds protected from disturbance at their nests, or their dependent young. |
| WCA_5s91k | Schedule 5 Section 9 Part 1 (taking) of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) – Animals which are protected from being intentionally killed or injured. |
| WCA_5s94b/c | Schedule 5 Section 9 Parts 4b/c of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) – Animals which are protected from intentional disturbance while occupying a structure or place used for shelter or protection / Animals which are protected from their access to any structure or place which they use for shelter or protection being obstructed. |
| WCA_8 | Schedule 8 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) – Plants and fungi that are protected from intentional picking, uprooting or destruction; selling, offering for sale, possessing or transporting for the purpose of sale; advertising for buying or selling. |

**6.3.2** European Protected Species (EPS) mitigation licences that have been granted inside a 2km radius of the application site in the last 10 years, are detailed in **Table 3** below.

*Table 3. European Protected Species (EPS) licences granted within a 2km radius (Source: MAGIC).*

| Case Reference of Granted Licence | Species on the Licence | Licensable Period | Licensable Works | Distance (m) |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 2019-44194-EPS-MIT | Common pipistrelle (*Pipistrellus pipistrellus*) Soprano pipistrelle (*Pipistrellus pygmaeus)* | 01/02/2020 to 31/03/2020 | Destruction of resting place | ~884 SW |
| 2016-22301-EPS-MIT | Common pipistrelle (*Pipistrellus pipistrellus*) | 21/04/2016 to 20/04/2021 | Damage and destruction of resting place | ~1057 SW |
| 2017-28045-EPS-MIT | Daubenton's bat (*Myotis daubentonii)* | 08/03/2017 to 08/03/2022 | Unknown | ~1106 NW |
| 2014-3941-EPS-MIT-2 | Common pipistrelle (*Pipistrellus pipistrellus*) Soprano pipistrelle (*Pipistrellus pygmaeus)* | 26/01/2015 to 30/09/2019 | Damage and destruction of resting place | ~1310 SW |
| 2020-44895-EPS-MIT-1 | Common pipistrelle | 30/11/2020 to | Destruction of | ~1560 N |

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | (*Pipistrellus pipistrellus*)<br>Soprano pipistrelle (*Pipistrellus pygmaeus)*<br>Daubenton's bat (*Myotis daubentonii)*<br>Brown long-eared bat (*Plecotus auritus)* | 25/02/2025 | resting place | |
| 2018-33476-EPS-MIT | Serotine (*Eptesicus serotinus)* | 07/03/2018 to 21/02/2023 | Destruction of resting place | ~1898 NW |

**6.3.3** The NatureSpace District Level Licensing impact risk map for Reading Brough Council shows the application site falling within a green zone, i.e. moderate habitat suitability where GCN may be present. No potential breeding ponds were identified on OS mapping within a 500m radius of the site.

## 6.4 Historic and Current Land Use

**6.4.1** Google Satellite imagery dating from 2003 shows the application site changing little up to present day. The rear of the property was primarily a vegetated garden with trees until 2020 onwards where it was replaced with hard standing and an addition of a swimming pool.

## 6.5 Geology, Soils and Topography

**6.5.1** The geology of the application site is Seaford Chalk Formation and Newhaven Chalk Formation bedrock which gives freely draining slightly acid loamy soils; habitats associated with such soils include neutral and acid pastures and deciduous woodlands.

# 7 HABITAT SURVEY

## 7.1 Overview

**7.1.1** The application site is a 0.03ha former public house plot located on Kennet Side immediately south of the River Kennet, in Reading. The site is in a urban setting surrounded by similar residential and industrial properties.

**7.1.2** The following UK Habitat Classification (UKHab) habitat was observed during the site walkover: u1b5 Buildings; and u~829 Unvegetated garden The UKHab habitats are described alongside photographs (see **Photographs 1-7**) and a survey plan (see **Figure 1**), as follows:

## 7.2 u1b5 Buildings

**7.2.1** The former public house was two-storey mid-terraced building of brick walls and pitched roofs (**Photographs 1 & 2**).

*Photograph 1. Front of property viewed from River Kennet footbridge to north (u1b5).*

*Photograph 2. Rear of property viewed from poolside bar area to south (u1b5).*

## 7.3 u~829 Unvegetated garden

**7.3.1** The rear of the public house comprised a poolside bar area that was part wooden decking and part patio, with a hot tub and swimming pool (**Photograph 3**). A gazebo of metal and wood construction with paved flooring was present at the back; while paved stairs led to the ground floor of the public house behind the swimming pool (**Photographs 4 & 5**). A small palm tree stood above the stairs (**Photograph 6**).

*Photograph 3. Rear poolside bar area (u~829).*

*Photograph 4. Open gazebo (u~829).*

*Photograph 5. Stairs leading to ground floor of property (u~829).*

*Photograph 6. Small palm tree (u~829).*

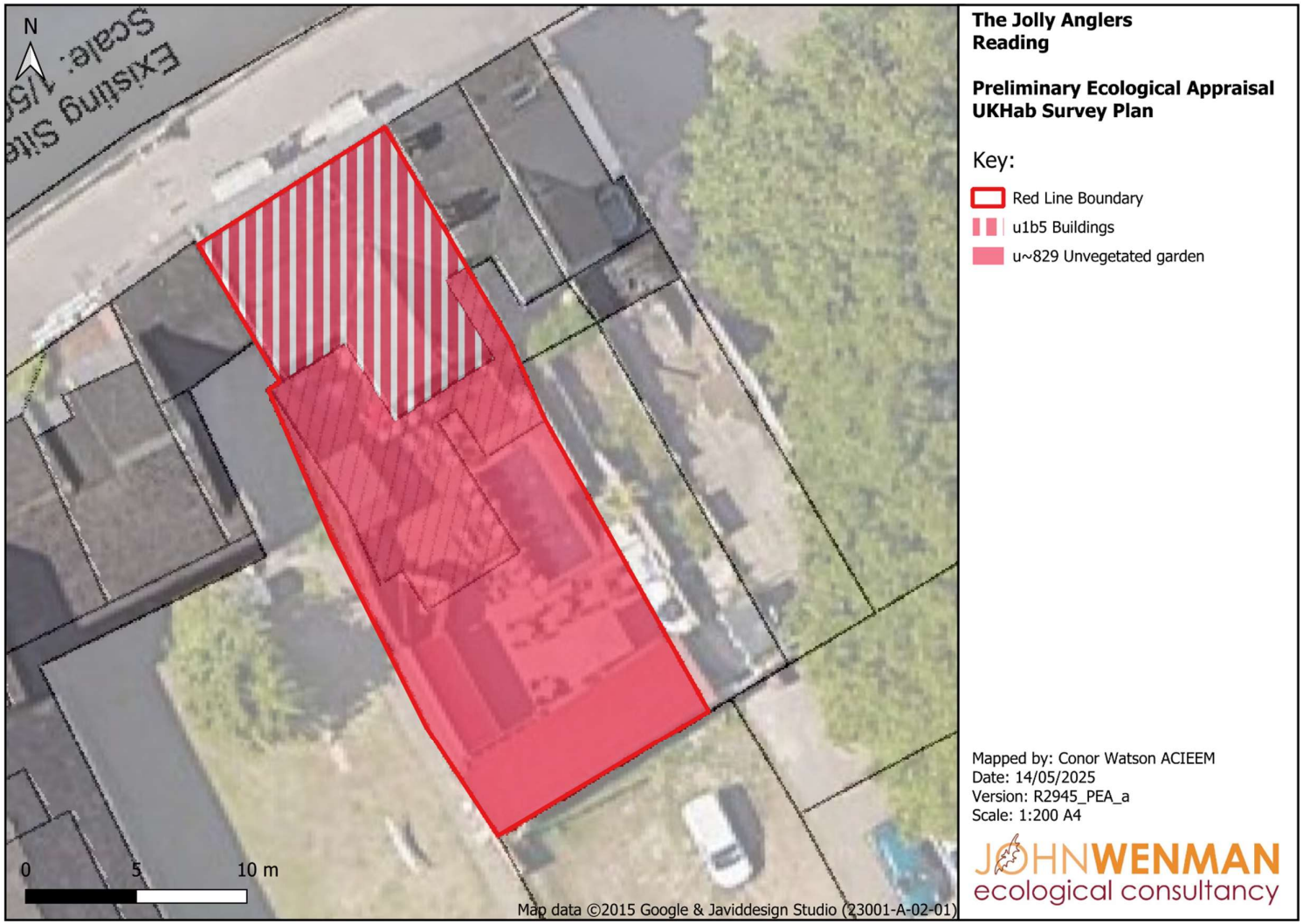


*Figure 1. UKHab Survey Plan.*

# 8 BUILDING INSPECTION

## 8.1 Overview

**8.1.1** The findings from the external and internal inspections carried out for the previous public house property are described with photographs and annotated in a plan (see **Figure 2**), as follows:

## 8.2 External Survey

**8.2.1** The former public house was of brick construction with a cross gabled roof with flat, intact slate roof tiles (**Photograph 7**). The verge mortar on the rear gable was mostly intact, except for a gap between the slates and brick behind an external fluepipe that was thoroughly inspected and assigned negligible suitability due to its limited extent (**Photographs 8 & 9**).

*Photograph 7. Flat, intact slate roof tiles (rear elevation).*

*Photograph 8. Verge mortar on gable mostly intact (rear elevation).*

*Photograph 9. Gap in verge mortar behind fluepipe (rear elevation)*

**8.2.2** There were occasional low suitability potential roost sites for small crevice-dwelling bats, such as the pipistrelle species (*Pipistrellus* spp.), in the roof where mortar was missing beneath ridge tiles and beneath lifted lead flashing (**Photographs 10, 11 & 12; Target notes 1-4**).

*Photograph 10. Gaps beneath ridge tiles and lead flashing (rear elevation).*

*Photograph 11. Gap beneath lifted lead flashing (rear elevation).*

*Photograph 12. Lifted lead flashing above plastic rooflight (front elevation).*

**8.2.3** The front eave comprised ornate brickwork with no visible gaps (**Photograph 13**).

*Photograph 13. Ornate brickwork at eaves (front elevation).*

**8.2.4** No signs of bat presence were identified during the external inspection.

## 8.3 Internal Survey

**8.3.1** The loft space was accessed through a hatch on the first-floor and was of 'cut and pitch' construction. The loft space was approximately 2m floor to ridge with the roof lined with intact bitumen felt and the ridge was heavily cobwebbed, indicating a lack of void-

dwelling bat activity (**Photograph 14**). A square of the roofing felt was missing where the plastic rooflight was, which let in daylight (**Photograph 15**).

*Photograph 14. Bitumen roof felting and heavily cobwebbed ridge (loft space).*

*Photograph 15. Missing bitumen felting and plastic rooflight (loft space).*

**8.3.2** The eastern party wall was lined with fibreglass insulation behind timber studs (**Photograph 16**). The western party wall was of brick construction (**Photograph 17**). Bagged fibreglass insulation covered the floor between the timber joists (**Photograph 18**).

*Photograph 16. Eastern party wall (loft space).*

*Photograph 17. Western party wall (loft space).*

*Photograph 18. Bagged fibreglass insulation (loft space).*

**8.3.3** There was no bat evidence found within the loft space during the visit.

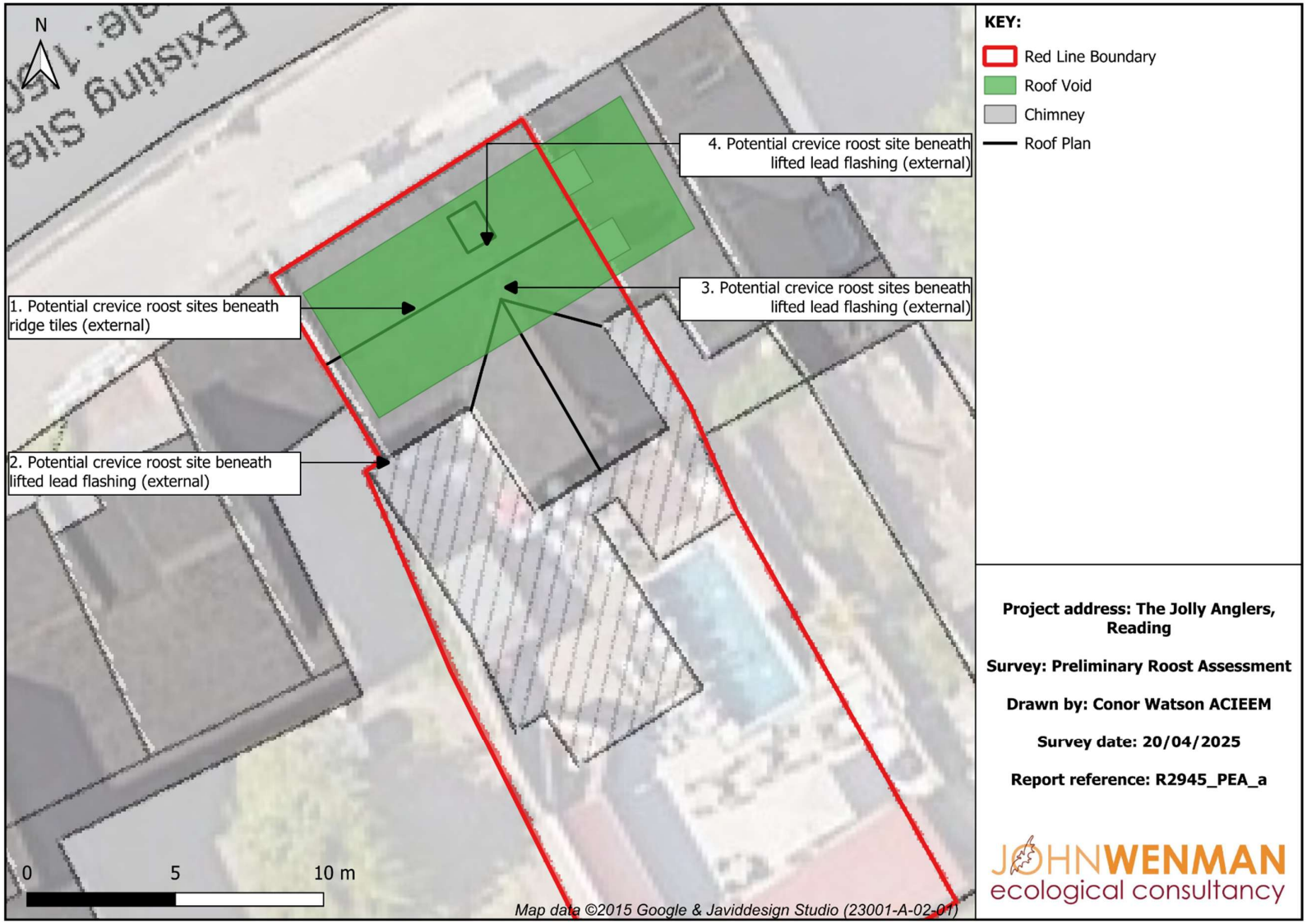


*Figure 2. Building Inspection Plan.*

# 9 DISCUSSION

## 9.1 Designated Sites

*Evaluation of Baseline*

**9.1.1** The desk study revealed that the application site is not designated for its wildlife interest and therefore is not currently recognised as being of international, national or county level conservation significance. No internationally or nationally designated sites for nature conservation were identified within a 5km radius of the application site. However, the site falls on the outer boundaries of the Impact Risk Zone (IRZ) for Lodge Wood and Sandford Mill Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI).

**9.1.2** The two non-statutory designated sites – The Coal, Kennetmouth and Kings Meadow East Local Wildlife Site (LWS) and Henley Road Gravel Pit LWS – are approximately 230m and 425m away respectively.

*Impact Assessment*

**9.1.3** The application site falls on the outer boundary of the Lodge Wood and Sandford Mill SSSI IRZ but the proposals do not correspond with the categories of development that are likely to have an impact on the SSSI. Furthermore, the nature and scale of the works, i.e. change of use and proposed extension are considered highly unlikely to impact the nearby LWSs.

## 9.2 Onsite Habitats

*Evaluation of Baseline*

The site is characterised by urban habitats – i.e. a building (u1b5) and non-vegetated garden (u~829) – of very low distinctiveness with negligible ecological value.

*Impact Assessment*

**9.2.1** The proposed development is not subject to mandatory Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) because the site has no habitats within the red line boundary with value over 0, so it will qualify for the de minimis exemption.

## 9.3 Amphibians (Great Crested Newt)

*Evaluation of Baseline*

**9.3.1** The desk study found no granted great crested newt (GCN) (*Triturus cristatus*) licences within a 2km radius of the application site and the only record from TVERC was just under 1km away. Furthermore, the NatureSpace District Level Licensing impact risk map for Reading Brough Council shows the application site falling within a green zone.

**9.3.2** There is no suitable amphibian breeding habitat on site (i.e. standing water) and no potential breeding ponds on OS mapping within a 500m radius of the site. The terrestrial habitat on site was of limited value for GCN so presence is considered highly unlikely.

*Impact Assessment*

**9.3.3** The risk of GCN presence on site is negligible and as such, no adverse effects are foreseen.

## 9.4 Bats

*Evaluation of Baseline*

**9.4.1** The roof void was of sub-optimal size and heavily cobwebbed throughout so is unlikely to have supported the internal flight typically exhibited by void-dwelling bat species, such as the locally recorded brown long-eared bat (*Plecotus auritus*). Moreover, in the absence of any evidence (i.e. bat droppings), it is considered highly unlikely that any void-dwelling bat species are presently roosting on site.

**9.4.2** Externally, the roof had a few potential roost sites which were considered to provide conditions suitable for opportunistic use by small crevice-dwelling bat species, such as the locally recorded common pipistrelle (*P. pipistrellus*) and soprano pipistrelle (*P. pygmaeus*). These potential roost sites were confined to gaps under ridge tiles and lifted lead flashing.

**9.4.3** Due to the nature and scale of the potential roost sites, the building is considered to have the potential to support opportunistic use by individual small crevice-dwelling bats and as such, has been classified as <u>low suitability</u>.

**9.4.4** Common pipistrelle (*P. pipistrellus*) and soprano pipistrelle (*Pipistrellus pygmaeus*) are the most abundant and widespread bats in Great Britain. These species occur in almost any habitat type and are well adapted to the built environments; they are the species

most regularly reported roosting in houses and churches (Mathews *et al*. 2018). Brandt's / whiskered bat (*M. brandtii / mystacinus*) are small *Myotis* species that are widespread and will roost in the same buildings as the much more abundant pipistrelle species (Mathews *et al*. 2018). Roosts supporting these species hold site to county level conservation importance subject to the roost type, i.e. non-breeding roosts supporting individual bat or small groups through to maternity roosts supporting large numbers of female bats (Reason & Wray 2023).

*Impact Assessment*

**9.4.5** The proposed extension will impact low suitability potential roost sites and do not have the scope to be altered to avoid potential adverse effects on bats. Therefore, further survey is recommended to determine the presence or likely absence of roosting bats – see **Section 10**.

**9.4.6** The proposals are unlikely to result in significant increase to the level of artificial lighting at the site.

## 9.5 Other Mammals

*Evaluation of Baseline*

**9.5.1** The desk study found no hazel dormouse (*Muscardinus avellanarius*) licences within a 2km radius of the application site. Furthermore, there is no suitable dormouse (*M. avellanarius*) habitat on or adjacent to the site.

**9.5.2** There are no signs of badger (*Meles meles*) presence on site and no suitable habitat in the vicinity. There are nearby records of otter (*Lutra lutra*) and water vole (*Arvicola amphibus*) along the River Kennet but the site offers no opportunities for these species.

*Impact Assessment*

**9.5.3** The risk of protected mammal presence on site is negligible and as such, no adverse effects are foreseen.

## 9.6 Birds

*Evaluation of Baseline*

**9.6.1** There was no vegetation on site so nesting opportunities were extremely limited and there was no evidence of nesting birds in the property with no visible opportunities.

*Impact Assessment*

**9.6.2** The risk of nesting bird presence on site is negligible and as such, no adverse effects are foreseen.

## 9.7 Reptiles

*Evaluation of Baseline*

**9.7.1** The urban habitats on and adjacent to the site have no suitability and are too fragmented by urban infrastructure to support a local population of reptiles.

*Impact Assessment*

**9.7.2** The risk of reptile presence on site is negligible and as such, no adverse effects are foreseen.

# 10 RECOMMENDATIONS

## 10.1 Overview

**10.1.1** This chapter provides the details regarding proposed avoidance, mitigation, compensation and enhancement measures; including measures to enable legislative compliance.

## 10.2 Bats

**10.2.1** A minimum of one dusk emergence survey visit should be undertaken in the period of May to August, with any additional survey visits (if presence is confirmed and roost characterisation is required) spaced at least three weeks apart. This survey will either provide sufficient confidence that bats are absent or form part of the roost characterisation necessary to inform an impact assessment and mitigation strategy; the roost characterisation may involve other methods, such as DNA analysis of bat droppings.

**10.2.2** Once roost characterisation is complete, an impact assessment with reference to the mitigation hierarchy will be made. In cases where the adverse effects caused by the development proposals are unavoidable, an application for a European Protected Species (EPS) mitigation licence or the registration of the site under the Bat Mitigation Class Licence (BMCL) would be required to permit the work to proceed lawfully. An EPS mitigation licence or BMCL can be issued by Natural England if the three licensing tests (detailed in **Paragraph 3.2.1**) have been satisfied by the proposals.

**10.2.3** To satisfy one of the licensing tests, it would be necessary to demonstrate that the 'favourable conservation status' of the bat species using the house is maintained during the construction phase and post development. A mitigation strategy setting out avoidance, mitigation, compensation and enhancement measures would be required to achieve this.

## 10.3 Biodiversity Enhancement Measures

**10.3.1** The planning proposals provide opportunities for the enhancement of the site's biodiversity value. The inclusion of the following recommendations would be of ecological benefit and be in line with the national and local planning policy:

- Wildlife-friendly, native landscaping;
- Integrated woodcrete bat and bird boxes;
- Stag beetle loggery; and

- Hedgehog highway signs above 13x13cm gaps in new fencing to connect gardens and allow permeability for wildlife.

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## APPENDIX 1 – LEGISLATIVE BACKGROUND

*Amphibians*

The seven native species of amphibian receive protection under the W&AC 1981 (as amended). The four widespread and common amphibians (common frog, toad, smooth newt and palmate newt) receive only limited protection – making their sale illegal.

The great crested newt (*Triturus cristatus*) receives full protection under the W&CA 1981 (as amended) and under the Habitat Regulations 2019. The combined legislation makes it illegal to:

- intentionally or recklessly kill, injure or take a great crested newt;
- possess or control any live or dead specimen or anything derived from a great crested newt;
- intentionally or recklessly damage, destroy or obstruct access to any structure or place used for shelter or protection by a great crested newt; and
- intentionally or recklessly disturb great crested newts; in particular, any disturbance which is likely to impair their ability to survive, breed or reproduce or nurture their young; or in the case of hibernating or migrating animals, to hibernate or migrate.

Great crested newts (*T. cristatus*) and common toads (*Bufo bufo*) are species of principal importance for the conservation of biodiversity in England (*'UKBAP Priority Species'*) under Section 41 of the NERC Act 2006.

*Badgers*

Badgers are protected by the Protection of Badgers Act 1992. The Act makes activities such as development that would harm or disturb badgers or damage, obstruct or destroy their setts illegal. If badgers are to be affected by the proposed development, activities can be undertaken only under a licence issued by Natural England.

*Bats*

All bat species in Britain are fully protected by the W&CA 1981 (as amended) and by the Habitat Regulations 2019. In summary, the combined legislation makes it an offence to:

- damage or destroy a breeding site or resting place or intentionally or recklessly obstruct access to a structure or place used for shelter by a bat;

- deliberately, intentionally or recklessly disturb bats; in particular, any disturbance which is likely to impair the ability of bats to survive, breed or reproduce or nurture their young; or in the case of hibernating or migrating bats, to hibernate or migrate; or to significantly affect the local distribution or abundance of the species; and
- deliberately kill, injure or take any bat.

*Birds*

All wild birds are protected under the W&CA 1981 (as amended). The Act makes it an offence to kill, injure or take a wild bird or to damage or destroy the nest of a wild bird whilst in use or being built. Species listed on Schedule 1 of the Act, such as barn owls and kingfishers, are afforded additional protection against disturbance while nesting.

*Hazel dormice*

Hazel dormice receive full protection under the W&CA 1981 (as amended) and under the Habitat Regulations 2019. These make it illegal to:

- intentionally or recklessly kill, injure or take a dormouse;
- possess or control any live or dead specimen or anything derived from a dormouse;
- damage or destroy a breeding site or resting place or intentionally or recklessly obstruct access to a structure or place used for shelter by a dormouse; and
- intentionally or recklessly disturb dormice; in particular, any disturbance which is likely to impair their ability to survive, breed or reproduce or nurture their young; or in the case of hibernating or migrating animals, to hibernate or migrate.

*Invasive non-native plants*

The W&CA 1981 (as amended) provides the primary controls on the release of non-native species into the wild in Great Britain. It is an offence under Section 14(2) of the Act to 'plant or otherwise cause to grow in the wild' any plant listed in Schedule 9, Part II. The species listed in the Act include Japanese knotweed (*Fallopia japonica*), giant hogweed (*Heracleum mantegazzianum*) and Himalayan balsam (*Impatiens glandulifera*).

*Otters*

Otters are fully protected by the W&CA 1981 (as amended) and by the Habitat

Regulations 2019. In summary, the combined legislation makes it an offence to:

- damage or destroy a breeding site or resting place or intentionally or recklessly obstruct access to a structure or place used for shelter by an otter;
- deliberately, intentionally or recklessly disturb otters; in particular, any disturbance which is likely to impair the ability of otters to survive, breed or reproduce or nurture their young; or to significantly affect the local distribution or abundance of the species; and
- deliberately kill, injure or take any bat.

*Reptiles*

The four widespread reptiles most likely to be encountered (adder, grass snake, slow worm and common lizard) are protected under the W&CA 1981 (as amended). The Act makes it an offence to intentionally kill, injure, possess or sell any of the species.

The aforementioned species are all listed as being of principal importance for the conservation of biodiversity in England (*'UKBAP Priority Species'*) under Section 41 of the NERC Act 2006.

*Water voles*

Since April 2008, water voles have received full protection under Section 9 in Schedule 5 of the W&CA 1981 (as amended). This makes it an offence to intentionally kill, injure or take water voles or to possess or control live or dead water voles or derivatives. It is an offence to intentionally or recklessly damage, destroy or obstruct access to any structure or place used for shelter or protection or intentionally or recklessly disturb water voles whilst occupying a structure or place used for that purpose.

The water vole is listed as being of principal importance for the conservation of biodiversity in England (*'UKBAP Priority Species'*) under Section 41 of the NERC Act 2006.

*Wild mammals*

Under the Wild Mammals (Protection) Act 1996 it is an offence to intentionally inflict unnecessary suffering, as specified by the Act, on any wild mammal.

## APPENDIX 2 – PLANNING DRAWINGS

Existing Site Plan
Scale: 1/500 @ A3

Proposed Site Plan
Scale: 1/500 @ A3

Disclaimer: Do not scale from this drawing. These drawings are indicative and not for construction, check all dimensions on site before fabrication or setting out.
The areas are indicative at this stage, Due allowance is required for:
1) A fully considered design and subsequent design development.
2) Local authority approvals & regulatory compliance.
3) Construction methods & building tolerances.
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| 0 | Pre Planning Application | 03.12.24 | CF | AJ | AJ |
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Site Location Plan
Scale: 1:1250 @ A3

metre
0 1 2 5 10

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Project: The Jolly Anglers, Reading | | |
| Title: Site Plans | | |
| Client: Elite Lending LTD | | |
| Scale: Vary | Rev: 0 | Drawing No: 23001-A-02-01 |
| Date: 03.12.24 | Drawn: CF | |

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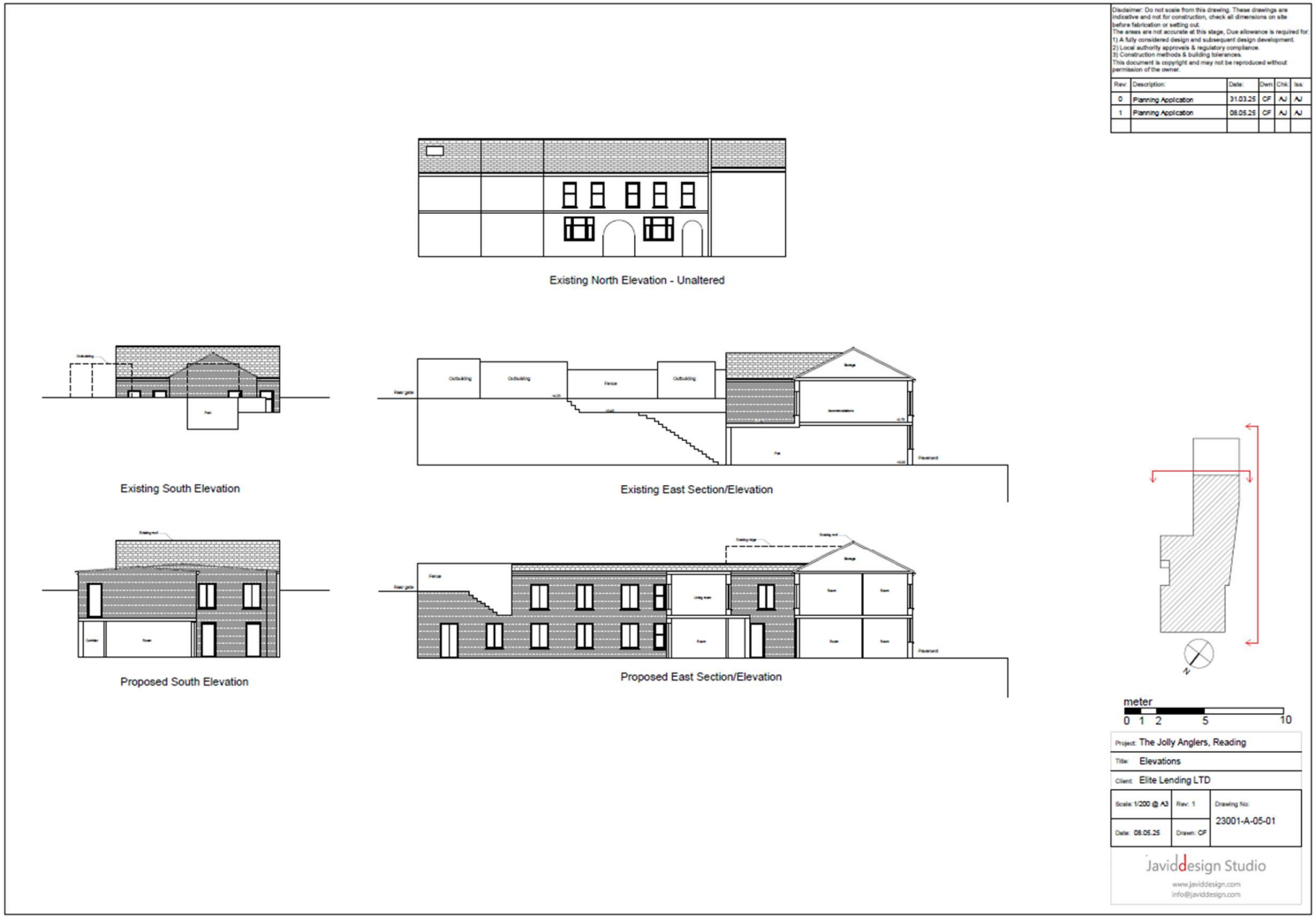


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| 1 | Planning Application | 08.05.25 | CF | AJ | AJ |