

Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA) Survey Report	
For:	JR Planning
Site:	Slate Pitts Farm, Chain Road, HD7 5TY
Report Date:	18 th of May 2026
Report Reference:	SQ-3898

Lead Ecologist:

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Great Crested Newt Licence: 2025-86773-SCI-CL08



Client:	JR Planning
Site Name:	Slate Pitts Farm, Chain Road, HD7 5TY
Grid Reference:	SE 07657 12565
Report:	Preliminary Ecological Appraisal
Date of Survey:	10 th of April 2026
Surveying Ecologists:	Marie McAvan BSc (Hons) MSc

Issue:	Revision:	Stage:	Date:	Prepared by:	Approved by:
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The contents of this report have been produced with consideration of current best practice guidance, and in accordance with the Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management's (CIEEM) Code of Professional Conduct.

This report should not be submitted as part of a planning application without any accompanying species-specific reports which may have been recommended herein.

Data within this report is valid for a maximum of eighteen months from the date of the survey. After this period, an updated site visit will be required to determine a new ecological baseline.

1 Introduction and Background to the Site

1.1 Estrada Ecology Ltd was commissioned to conduct a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA) of the land belonging to Slate Pitts Farm, Chain Road, HD7 5TY, hereon referred to as 'the site'.

1.2 The site consists of:

- Buildings
- Developed Land Sealed Surface
- Vegetated Garden
- Bare Ground
- Ephemeral Vegetation
- Scattered Trees
- Line of Trees
- Non-Native or Ornamental Hedgerow

1.3 It is understood that the current development proposal is redevelopment, subject to the necessary consents.

1.4 Report Objectives

- Present the findings of the ecological survey.
- Assess the potential of existing on-site habitats to support protected or notable species.
- Evaluate any likely ecological impacts on protected and notable species or habitats because of the proposed development.
- Provide recommendations for any further species-specific survey and mitigation measures that may be required; and
- Provide habitat enhancement recommendations in line with the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF, 2024).

1.5 Site Location and Wider Area

1.5.1 The site is Slate Pitts Farm, an area of approximately 0.5 ha to the north of Chain Road. The site is set in a rural agricultural area with managed fields to the north, east and south. Other small farms and residential buildings are scattered in the surrounding landscape. Blackmoorfoot conduit watercourse runs south-eastwards, 140 m southwest of the site.

1.5.2 The survey site's central OS grid reference is SE 07657 12565.

1.5.3 The wider site is mainly agricultural upland areas characterised by mostly agricultural fields, stone walls and scattered farms and villages. The site is approximately 1.3 km from the small town of Slaithwaite. Small pockets of woodland and two large reservoirs can also be found within 1 km of the site. The nearest urban centre is Huddersfield, 7.7 km northeast.

An aerial photograph of a rural landscape, likely in the Netherlands, showing a patchwork of green agricultural fields, small clusters of buildings, and a network of roads and waterways. A red triangle is drawn on the map, highlighting a specific area in the center-right. The text "Google Earth 2026" is visible in the bottom left corner.

Habitats.

2.4.2 Species and Habitats of Principal Importance for the conservation of biodiversity in England (JNCC, 2009) are covered under section 41 of the Natural Environmental and Rural Communities (NERC) Act (2006). Species and habitats listed within Section 41 need to be taken into consideration by a public body when performing any of its functions, such as assessing planning applications.

2.4.3 Development proposals submitted after 12th February 2024, with some exceptions, will be expected to achieve a minimum of 10% net gain in site biodiversity value under The Environment Act 2021 (Commencement No. 8 and Transitional Provisions) Regulations 2024.

2.5 Wildlife

2.5.1 European Protected Species, such as bats (all species) and great crested newt (*Triturus cristatus*), are afforded protection under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017, as well as under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) and the Countryside Rights of Way Act 2000. It is an offence to:

- Deliberately or recklessly capture, injure, or kill any wild animal of a European protected species.
- Deliberately or recklessly disturb any such animal.
- Damage or destroy their breeding site or resting place.
- Keep, transport, or offer for sale / exchange any live or dead animal, or any part of, or anything from these species.

2.5.2 Disturbance of European Protected Species constitutes any activity which is likely to:

- To impair their ability to survive, to breed or reproduce, or to rear or nurture their young; or, in the case of animals of a hibernating or migratory species, to hibernate or migrate; and
- To significantly affect the local distribution or abundance of the species to which they belong.

2.6 UK Legislation

2.6.1 **Breeding birds** (all species) are protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended). It is an offence to intentionally kill, injure or take any wild bird and to take, damage or destroy the nest (whilst being built or in use) or eggs. Schedule 1 species are afforded protection from disturbance at or near nest sites, including reckless disturbance under the Countryside Rights of Way (CROW) Act 2000.

2.6.2 Bats (all native species) and their breeding sites or resting places (roosts) are fully protected under The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010 (as amended). Bats are also protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) through their inclusion in Schedule 5. Under the Act, they are protected from: intentional or reckless disturbance (at any level); obstruction of access to any place of shelter, breeding, or rest; selling, bartering or exchange of these species, or parts of.

2.6.3 Reptiles (all native species) are protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended). It is an offence to intentionally kill, injure and trade these animals.

2.6.4 Amphibians (all native species) are protected by the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended). The sale, barter, exchange, transportation for sale, and advertising to sell or to buy are an offence.

2.6.5 Eurasian Badgers are protected by the Protection of Badgers Act 1992 and under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended). It is an offence: to wilfully, or attempt, to kill, capture, ill-treat or injure any badger; to obstruct, destroy or damage a badger sett or to disturb a badger whilst within its sett; to sell or offer for sale a live badger, or have possession or control of a live badger; and marking a badger or attaching any ring, tag, or other marking device to a badger.

2.6.6 Eurasian Otters are a European Protected Species (EPS) and are also fully protected under Schedule 5 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981. It is against the law to capture, kill, disturb or injure otters (on purpose or by not taking enough care); damage or destroy a breeding or resting place (deliberately or by not taking enough care); obstruct access to their resting or sheltering places (deliberately or by not taking enough care); and possess, sell, control or transport live or dead otters, or parts of otters.

2.6.7 European Water voles are fully protected under Schedule 5 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 and is a priority conservation species. It is against the law to: Intentionally capture, kill, or injure water voles, damage, destroy or block access to their places of shelter or protection (on purpose or by not taking enough care), disturb them in a place of shelter or protection (on purpose or by not taking enough care), and possess, sell, control or transport live or dead water voles or parts of them (not water voles bred in captivity).

3 Survey Methodology

3.1 Desktop Survey

3.1.1 A biological data records search was commissioned from West Yorkshire Ecology Service for a 2 km radius from the central grid reference.

3.1.2 Further inspection, using colour 1:25,000 OS base maps (www.ordnancesurvey.co.uk), MAGIC (www.magic.defra.gov.uk), aerial photographs from Google Earth (www.maps.google.co.uk), was also undertaken to provide additional context and identify any features of potential importance for nature conservation in the wider countryside.

3.1.3 Furthermore, consultation with MAGIC was undertaken to ascertain any European Protected Species Mitigation Licences granted within a 1 km radius from grid.

3.1.4 Natural England's Geoportal: England-wide data for great crested newts (GCN) was analysed for any records within a 1 km radius from grid. The dataset contains eDNA pond surveys for district level licensing (England). When available for the location, the Risk Zones for GCN are considered for the site.

Table 1: Key habitats and field signs of protected and priority species.

Taxon	Indicative Habitats	Field Signs
Bats	Roosts - Trees, buildings, bridges caves etc. Foraging areas - e.g., parkland, water bodies and streams, wetlands, woodland edge, hedgerow. Commuting routes - linear features (e.g. hedgerows).	In or on potential roost sites: Droppings stuck to walls; urine spotting in roof spaces; oil from fur staining around roost entrances; feeding remains (e.g. moth wings).
Great Crested Newts	Ponds within 500m of suitable habitat within the site boundary. Suitable (terrestrial) habitat includes rough grassland, scrub and woodland, log and rubble piles and other debris, animal burrows.	Eggs, Individuals of all life stages. Egg rolled plants.
Reptiles	Rough grassland, log and rubble piles, compost heaps.	Sloughed skins; eggs, individuals.
Birds	Trees, scrub, hedgerow, field margins, grassland.	Nests; droppings below nest sites (especially in buildings of trees); tree holes.
Badgers	Found in most rural and many urban habitats.	Excavations and tracks: sett entrances, latrines, hairs, well- worn paths; prints; snuffle holes.
Otter	Water bodies / water courses.	Holt entrances; prints; latrine / spraint sites; anal jelly / smears.
Water Vole	Water bodies / water courses.	Burrow entrances; prints; latrine areas; faeces; feeding stations.
BAP invertebrates	Each butterfly species has its own habitat requirements determined by the food plant of the caterpillar, the nectar source for the adult and the conditions needed for the caterpillar to survive and then pupate successfully.	Eggs, larva, Pupa, adult butterfly. Habitat type and presence of food plants.

Figure 2: Farmhouse Building (moderate bat suitability) with examples of bat features.



5.1.2.2 The extensions to this building include two storage sheds, and a small conservatory, all of which have flat roofs. There is also a further extension to the northwest which has a domed roof structure of corrugated iron. These buildings are made of single skin corrugated iron or glass with no features suitable for roosting bats. These extensions of the main farmhouse building have been assessed as having

negligible bat roost suitability.

5.1.2.3 Further buildings on site include multiple storage containers of various sizes, two static caravans and a storage shed. These buildings are in generally good condition. One static caravan has a slightly degraded roof where the wood has rotted along the soffits, however, no features or points of ingress for roosting bats were identified. These structures were also assessed as having negligible bat roost suitability.

5.1.2.4 The buildings on site also contain some suitability for nesting and roosting birds.

5.1.2.5 Under current works proposals, this habitat will be impacted. Recommendations regarding this habitat and any species within it are given in the conclusion of this report.

Figure 3: Other building on site – negligible for roosting bats



5.1.3 Developed Land Sealed Surface

5.1.3.1 The site includes a sealed entranceway from Chain Road, which extends into the site. This habitat is used for storage space as well as for access around the site. This habitat provides no intrinsic ecological value with minimal ruderal vegetation colonisation.

5.1.3.2 Species within this habitat include sparse colonising ruderals including dandelion (*Taraxacum officinale*), ribwort plantain (*Plantago lanceolata*) and perennial rye grass

(*Lolium perenne*).

5.1.3.3 Under current works proposals, this habitat will be impacted. Recommendations regarding this habitat and any species within it are given in the conclusion of this report.

Figure 4: Developed Land Sealed Surface



5.1.4 Vegetated Garden and Scattered Trees

5.1.4.1 A small area to the south and southwest of the farmhouse is a separate area of mostly vegetated garden which includes a lawn, some introduced shrub and a walkway/patio area around the conservatory. This habitat has some suitability for nesting birds in larger shrubs as well as some foraging opportunities for hedgehogs and other small mammals. A Rhododendron plant is located within the vegetated garden (see Appendix One map), which is a schedule 9 non-native invasive plant. A stone wall surrounds the garden as well as the majority of the site boundary.

5.1.4.2 One tree within the vegetated garden has reached medium size and will therefore be mapped for biodiversity net gain purposes. This tree is just west of the entranceway and has suitability for nesting birds.

5.1.4.3 Species recorded within this habitat include rhododendron, sycamore (*Acer pseudoplatanus*), Scot's pine (*Pinus sylvestris*), dandelion, ragwort (*Senecio jacobaea*), foxglove (*Digitalis purpurea*), elder (*Sambucus nigra*), red hot poker (*Kniphofia* sp.), holly (*Ilex aquifolium*), hebe (*Hebe* sp.), English laurel (*Prunus laurocerasus*), Lawson's cypress (*Chamaecyparis lawsoniana*), lilac (*Syringa vulgaris*), Indian clusterberry (*Lonicera ligustrina*), lesser celandine (*Ficaria verna*), purple dead-nettle (*Lamium purpureum*), basket of gold (*Aurinia saxatilis*), ivy (*Hedera helix*), cypress (*Cupressus* sp.), white cedar (*Thuja occidentalis*) and stonecrop (*Sedum* sp.).

5.1.4.4 Under current works proposals, this habitat will be impacted. Recommendations regarding this habitat and any species within it are given in the conclusion of this report.

Figure 5: Vegetated Garden and Scattered Trees



5.1.5 Ephemeral Vegetation and Line of Trees

5.1.5.1 Much of the site has been reduced to bare ground and used for storage, a strip of land around the western, northern and part of the eastern boundary remains sparsely vegetated with signs of recent disturbance and mostly ruderal or ephemeral colonisers. This also includes a line of trees that runs along the same boundaries. This habitat provides some suitability for nesting birds within the trees as well as providing commuting and foraging opportunities for badgers and hedgehogs.

5.1.5.2 Species within this habitat include garlic mustard (*Alliaria petiolata*), nettle (*Urtica dioica*), cleavers (*Galium aparine*), buttercup (*Ranunculus* sp.), red dead nettle, male fern (*Dryopteris filix-mas*), goat willow (*Salix caprea*), rowan (*Sorbus aucuparia*), sycamore (*Acer pseudoplatanus*), holly (*Ilex aquifolium*), downy birch (*Betula pubescens*), Franchet's cotoneaster (*Cotoneaster franchetii*), silver birch (*Betula pendula*) and Hawthorn (*Crataegus monogyna*).

5.1.5.3 Under current works proposals, this habitat will be impacted. Recommendations regarding this habitat and any species within it are given in the conclusion of this report.

Figure 6: Ephemeral Vegetation and Line of Trees



Figure 8: Ornamental or Non-Native Hedgerow



5.2 Desktop Survey Results

5.2.1 West Yorkshire Ecology returned 619 records from a 2 km radius from the central grid reference. The list of protected and notable species data records is available upon request. In summary, the following records were returned:

Table 3: Records found within the search radius.

Species	Number of Records	Closest Record	Notes
Bats	102	333 m	One hundred and two bat records were returned for this site between 1999 and 2025. This includes: • Forty-eight records of common pipistrelle (<i>Pipistrellus pipistrellus</i>), • Five records of soprano pipistrelle (<i>Pipistrellus pygmaeus</i>), • One further bat of the <i>Pipistrellus</i> genus, • Three Daubenton's bat (<i>Myotis daubentonii</i>), • Two whiskered bats (<i>Myotis mystacinus</i>), • Three Natterer's bats (<i>Myotis nattereri</i>), • Eight further bats from the <i>Myotis</i> genus, • Ten records of noctule bats (<i>Nyctalus noctula</i>), • Four records of Leisler's bats (<i>Nyctalus leisleri</i>), • Two further bats from the <i>Nyctalus</i> genus • Six records of brown long-eared bat (<i>Plecotus auritus</i>).

			In addition, nine records of unknown bat species were returned.
Badgers	-	-	Any records of badger have been omitted from this report. Full consideration in regard to badger have been made in the conclusions of this report.
Amphibians	12	282 m	The data search returned four records of common frog (<i>Rana temporaria</i>), five records of common toad (<i>Bufo bufo</i>) and three records of smooth newt (<i>Lissotriton vulgaris</i>) between 1988 and 2005.
Reptiles	1	1475 m	One historic grass snake record (<i>Natrix helvetica</i>) was returned from 1952.
Riparian Mammals	38	1040 m	Thirty-eight records of water vole (<i>Arvicola amphibius</i>) were returned by the data search between 1999 and 2024. No other records (<i>Lutra lutra</i>) were returned by the data search.
Hedgehog	1	1575 m	One record of hedgehog was returned in 1999.
Hare	11	157 m	Eleven records of European hare (<i>Lepus europaeus</i>) were returned between 1992 and 2016.

5.2.2 Consultation with MAGIC maps returned no European Protected Species Mitigation Licences within a 1 km radius from grid.

5.2.3 No records for great crested newt presence were recorded within a 1 km radius from grid via consultation with Natural England's eDNA pond surveys for District Level Licensing (England). GCN risk zones are not available for this area.

5.5.2.2 There are trees present on site. These trees were checked individually, and no potential bat roosting features were identified, all trees on this site have therefore been classified as negligible for roosting bats.

5.5.3 Badger and European Hedgehog

5.5.4 Riparian/Aquatic Mammals

5.5.4.2 No aquatic habitat deemed suitable for use by aquatic mammals was recorded within the curtilage of the site or in the immediate environment.

5.5.4.3 No terrestrial habitat deemed suitable for use by aquatic mammals was recorded within the curtilage of the site or in the immediate environment.

5.5.4.4 No impacts towards riparian mammals are anticipated. No further recommendations are given within the report in regard to riparian mammals.

5.5.5 Amphibians and reptiles

5.5.5.1 The site is deemed to offer only negligible suitability for amphibians and reptiles. No presence of great crested newts, common amphibians or reptiles were detected within the site during the survey.

5.5.5.2 No aquatic habitats suitable for amphibians or reptiles were detected within the site. An eDNA will not be run on this site.

5.5.5.3 The ephemeral vegetation under the line of trees may offer negligible commuting and foraging opportunities for these species. Piles of stored materials also offer refugia and hibernacula opportunities. Precautionary measures in regard to these species are outlined in the conclusions below.

6.3.2 Bats

6.3.3 Precautionary Measures

- No open holes or trenches to be left uncovered overnight.
- If any holes are to be left uncovered, a simple measure such as a plank of wood can allow trapped animals to escape.
- A named person is to check all holes, trenches and large pipes each morning prior to works commencing.
- Rubbish piles are to be disassembled by hand to ensure no hedgehogs or herptiles are harmed.
- If any animals are found on site, all works should cease and an ecologist consulted.

6.3.4.1 *Rhododendron ponticum* was recorded within the site. This is a species on the schedule 9 listed plants on the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981. It is an offence to knowingly and intentionally spread any plant listed on schedule 9. It is, however, not an offence to have the species on your land, as long as it is not spread. It is an option to retain the species within the landscaping design for the site plan to reduce the risk of breaching biosecurity.

6.3.4.2 If retaining the species is not an option for the scheme, then removal is possible provided that precautions are made to prevent the spread of the species. The removal will require the entire root systems to be removed to prevent the species regrowing. All plant material of each genus must be kept within itself when removed from its rooted location. Furthermore, care must be taken during removal to ensure no berries are left on site which could subsequently germinate and grow.

6.3.4.3 Once all of the species has been removed, one option is to take it to a licensed landfill to be disposed of. Another option is to burn it on site; however, prior notice must first be given to the Environment Agency to make them aware of the burning of the material.

7 Biodiversity Enhancement

7.1 In line with National Planning Policy Framework (2024) the application should demonstrate biodiversity enhancements.

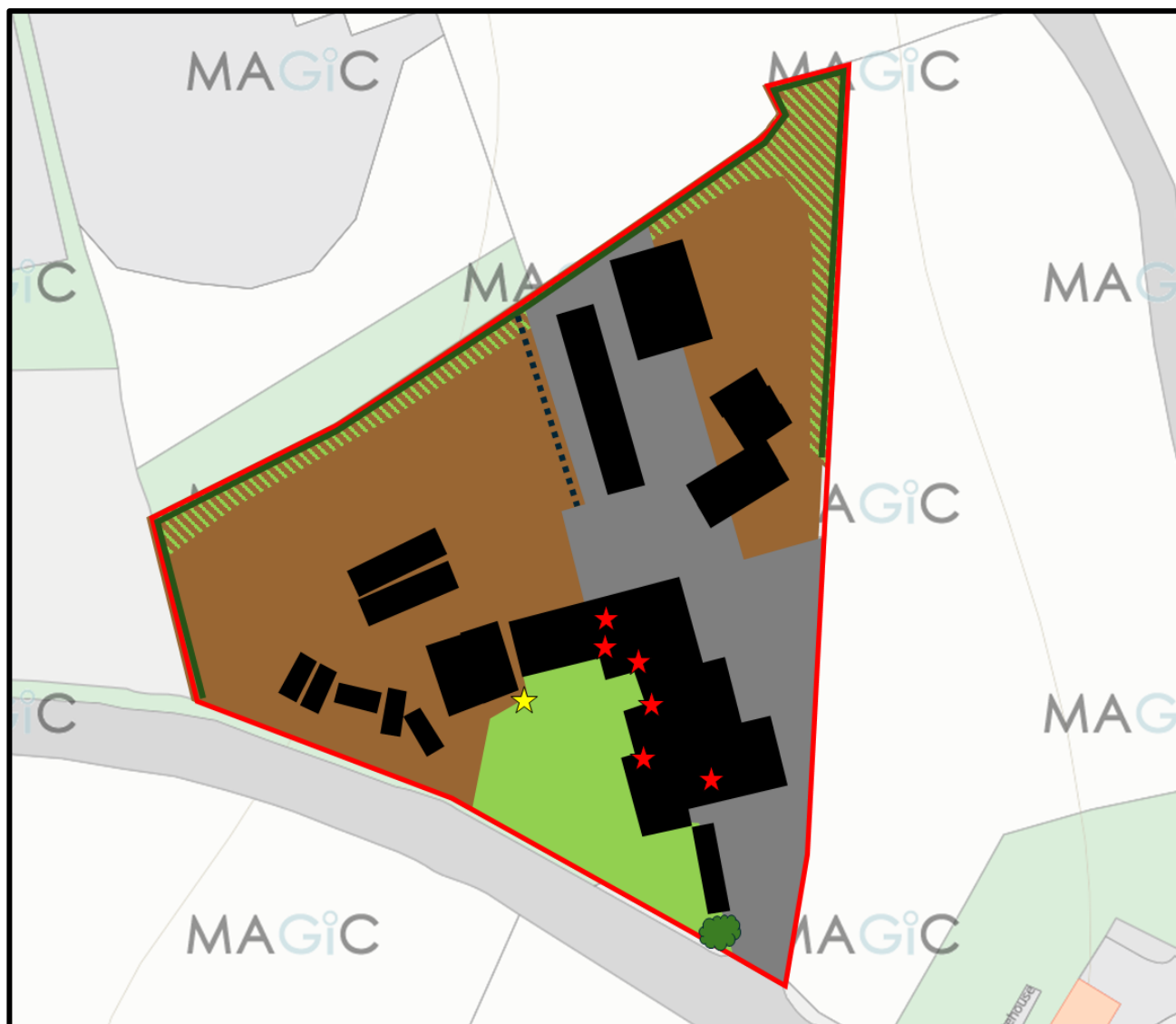
7.3 A baseline assessment of the site and condition assessment of the habitats present was conducted during the survey. The results of the baseline BNG assessment are outlined below. Units are given to two decimal places. A map of the BNG baseline can be found in Appendix Three.

Table 6: Statutory Metric Baseline Habitats

7.5 The total value of the site is calculated to be 1.86 area habitat units and 0.43 hedgerow units. No watercourse units are recorded on the baseline. No irreplaceable habitats are recorded on the baseline.

Page 26 of 31

Appendix One: Map of habitats currently located on site



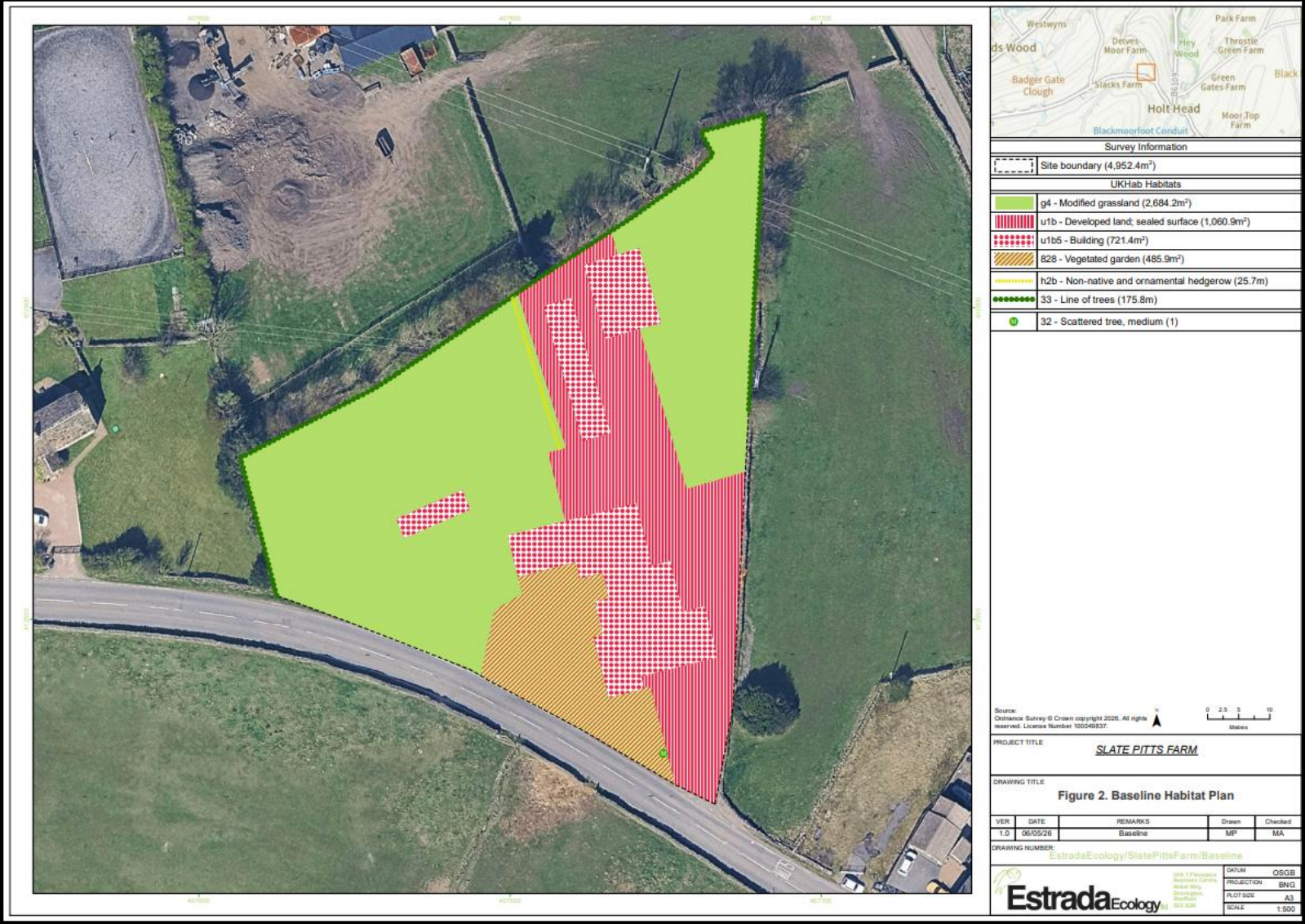
Key			
	Red line boundary		Line of Trees
	Building		Non-native or Ornamental Hedgerow
	Developed Land Sealed Surface		Scattered Tree
	Vegetated Garden		Schedule 9 non-native invasive <i>Rhododendron ponticum</i> .
	Ephemeral Vegetation		PRF-I bat roost features (indicative) on main farmhouse building

Appendix Two: Species list (on site)

Vernacular	Taxon
Flora	
Basket Of Gold	<i>Aurinia saxatilis</i>
Buttercup	<i>Ranunculus</i> sp.
Cleavers	<i>Galium aparine</i>
Cypress	<i>Cupressus</i> sp.
Dandelion	<i>Taraxacum officinale</i>
Downy Birch	<i>Betula pubescens</i>
Elder	<i>Sambucus nigra</i>
English Laurel	<i>Prunus laurocerasus</i>
Foxglove	<i>Digitalis purpurea</i>
Franchet's Cotoneaster	<i>Cotoneaster franchetii</i>
Goat Willow	<i>Salix caprea</i>
Hawthorn	<i>Crataegus monogyna</i>
Hebe	<i>Hebe</i> sp.
Holly	<i>Ilex aquifolium</i>
Holly	<i>Ilex aquifolium</i>
Indian Clusterberry	<i>Lonicera ligustrina</i>
Ivy	<i>Hedera helix</i>
Lawson's Cypress	<i>Chamaecyparis lawsoniana</i>
Lesser Celandine	<i>Ficaria verna</i>
Leyland Cypress	<i>Cupressus</i> × <i>leylandii</i>
Lilac	<i>Syringa vulgaris</i>
Male Fern	<i>Dryopteris filix-mas</i>
Mustard	<i>Alliaria petiolata</i>
Nettle	<i>Urtica dioica</i>
Perennial Rye Grass	<i>Lolium Perenne</i>
Ragwort	<i>Senecio jacobaea</i>

Red Dead Nettle	<i>Lamium purpureum</i>
Red Hot Pokers	<i>Kniphofia sp</i>
Rhododendron	<i>Rhododendron ponticum</i>
Rowan	<i>Sorbus aucuparia</i>
Scot's Pine	<i>Pinus sylvestris</i>
Silver Birch	<i>Betula pendula</i>
Stonecrop	<i>Sedum sp</i>
Sycamore	<i>Acer pseudoplatanus</i>
Sycamore	<i>Acer pseudoplatanus</i>
White Cedar	<i>Thuja occidentalis</i>
White Elm	<i>Ulmus laevis</i>

Appendix Three: Measured baseline map



References

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