

NYMNPA

24/03/2022

From:

Sent: 24 March 2022 17:02

To: Elspeth Ingleby

Cc: Planning

Subject: Blea Wyke Lodge, Ravenscar. Ref. NYMP/2021/1011

Dear Elspeth,

As discussed I am sending the ecology report off first for distribution as necessary.

I will send the metric document as soon as I have found out how to work it.

If you find anything missing from the report that might be needed in the metric please let me know.

Kind regards,

Julian Hall



Virus-free. www.avg.com

NYMNP

24/03/2022



Julian Hall

Environmental Resource Management



LAND AT BLEA WYKE LODGE, RAVENSCAR, NORTH YORKSHIRE

ECOLOGICAL ASSESSMENT

FOR

Mr STEVEN TURNER

per

TONY LANG, RT Design

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Summary.

Attached are the results of an ecological survey relating to the proposed development site at Blea Wyke Lodge, Ravenscar, North Yorkshire. The site comprises an area of disused grassland adjacent to the dwelling house where it is proposed to erect a garage and stable block. In the wider vicinity it stands in an area of uncultivated grass and heathland at the edge of the cliffs above the sea at Ravenscar within the North York Moors National Park. The location of the proposal site is shown edged red on the Location Plan at the end of this report.

The assessment was based on baseline data supplied by the North and East Yorkshire Ecological Data Centre, with a walkover survey carried out in March 2022.

The proposal site is not located within any specified site of scientific or natural interest, and is not located within any area of Priority Habitat. The area surrounding the proposal site has several designations for Biodiversity. The range of sites of Biodiversity Interest is shown on the data sheets provided by NEYEDC and accompanying maps below.

This assessment is based upon a single field survey carried out by Julian Hall Environmental.

The desk survey provided evidence of habitation by many species of flora and fauna within a 2km radius, mainly outside the proposal site.

There are many bird records at the site and NEYEDC provide some evidence within a 10km grid square. The survey revealed some activity around the site, but only within the area of the SSSI and SAC.

It is concluded that the proposal site is of low ecological interest, in spite of its being adjacent to a range of sites of biodiversity interest. The development proposals would have little ecological impact, subject to the requirement to observe the policies set down by the local planning authority for measures to provide a biodiversity net gain in respect of any perceived loss caused by the development.

Recommendations are made in the report in relation to the timing and operation of works to minimise the amount of disturbance to wildlife habitats caused by construction works. Recommendations for landscaping or habitat creation are discussed but the detail will depend of the extent of future development proposals.

1. Introduction.

This report gives the results of a Field Survey of the proposal site at Blea Wyke Lodge, Ravenscar carried out by Julian Hall BSc of Julian Hall Environmental for the client Mr Steven Turner. Briefing material have been supplied, followed by verbal discussions with the planning consultant for the client, Mr Tony Lang, RT Design.

The Survey was undertaken:

- to identify the presence or likely presence of any notable or protected species or habitats and communities on or adjacent to the site;
- to inform what further surveys might be required to confirm their presence or absence;
- to highlight any ecological issues that may prove to be a material constraint on the formulation of future plans for the development of the site;
- to identify the habitats and provide comment on the likely ecological value of the site;
- to make recommendations to mitigate potential damage and for the provision of measures to ensure that such perceived losses are balanced elsewhere for a Biodiversity Net Gain in accordance with the planning policies.

The site survey was carried out in March 2022. No specific surveys were carried out in respect of the species and habitats considered to be potentially vulnerable.

2. Background to Future Development Proposals

The site comprises an area of undeveloped land close to the dwelling house at Blea Wyke Lodge, Ravenscar. The proposal site is located at Grid Reference NZ988009, at a height of about 180m OD (Fig.1) and amounts to about 0.033ha in area. It comprises an area of disused grassland, in poor condition. The planning application Ref. NYM/2021/1011 seeks consent to erect a single garage and a range of stabling and associated storage and hardstanding for up to three horses in accordance with plans submitted and available for inspection on the planning portal.



Fig.1 Aerial view of site (not to scale)

The topography of the site is sloping to the south east. To the north and east are the approach road and rear area of the house, while to the south and west are areas of non-cultivated grass and heath land. The north west boundary is close to a small plantation or shelter belt of coniferous trees. There is no boundary fencing on any sides.

The soil is mainly a sandy light loam deriving from the sandstone below, overlaid with a thin layer of peaty topsoil not exceeding 5cm (Fig 2).

3 Pre-existing Ecological Records

These are listed below in Appendix1 to this report.

4. Methods.

A Field survey was undertaken in March 2022. This comprised a walkover survey of the site identifying different areas of vegetation and habitats. The results of the field survey are shown at Section 5 below.

Assessment of the site in terms of its suitability for notable or legally protected species and habitats was undertaken to the extent to which it was considered that any impact arising from development proposals would raise concerns as to the harm to or benefit to individuals or their habitat.

Species and habitats given protection under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 and other legislation include the following that may inhabit the site or within significant distance from it:

Plant communities within and adjacent to the site.

Bats – all UK species

Birds – all species during the nesting season

Potential Habitats

Bats

The potential habitat for bats is identified in the trees behind the proposal site and comprises the small area of mature coniferous trees forming a shelterbelt along the western boundary and shown on the Survey plan. This small area of mainly coniferous woodland contains a mixture of mature trees (Fig 2, 4). The age and condition of the trees would appear, on the normal criteria used by the Bat Conservation Trust, to indicate a Medium potential for bat habitation since they may exhibit deep fissures or rot holes that may be suitable for roosting sites, but experience indicates that such woodland may attract bats at least for foraging, which is likely to extend over the proposal site.

Birds.

The potential habitat for birds is identified locally and comprises the opportunities for ground-nesting birds in areas of scrub and tall ruderals adjacent to the site.

5. Results.

Desk Study.

The proposal site is not specifically designated for Biodiversity, and is not located within any area of Priority Habitat. There are two Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) and one Special Area of Conservation (SAC) within the data search radius of 2 km. These are located on the maritime cliff slope. There are no Sites of Importance to Nature Conservation (SINC) or other active Non-Statutory sites in the vicinity. There are no Yorkshire Wildlife Trust reserves within the search area. These are notified in the NEYEDC report at Appendix 1 below.

It is understood that there are no Tree Preservation Orders in force relating to the site.

Field Survey.

During the period of the Survey undertaken on 3 March 2022 the land was quite dry, with dry weather conditions.

1. The land immediately adjoining the north east side of the survey area are covered with hardcore roads and buildings. The proposal site contains a car parking area (A) cut into the side of the slope and supported with a barrier constructed with railway sleepers (Fig 2). Much of the soil in the vicinity has been disturbed by the movement of vehicles around the site in connection with building works on the dwelling house, exposing bare topsoil and substrate (Fig 3). A degraded mixture of closely grazed grass species covers the remaining areas.



Fig 2 Garage site and disturbed topsoil. Fig 3 Exposed topsoil and subsoil.

At the western end of the site the stable area (B) is located on partly disturbed soil, with similar areas of degraded grassland (Fig 4). The area of coniferous woodland behind the site contains a solid mixture of semi-mature Norway Spruce (*Picea sp.*)

To the south of the development site the land appears to have never been disturbed and contains a more stable area of acid heathland containing grasses and Sedge (*Carex sp.*), Heather (*Calluna sp.*) and Broom (*Cytisus sp.*) with occasional Hawthorn (*Crataegus sp.*)(Fig 5).



Fig 4 Stable area and woodland.

Fig 5 Undisturbed local vegetation.

Further to the west and within the same ownership is a substantial paddock (C) with semi-improved grassland to be used by the applicant's horses that will use the proposed stables.

2. Bats. The potential for bats in the adjacent woodland area has been investigated. No suitable habitat for bat species was identified in any of the trees near the boundary. However the area is likely to attract foraging bats from other areas within 1-2 km.
3. Birds. The potential for birds in the area of, grass and trees has been investigated and although numerous species have been recorded there were few birds to be seen on the date of survey owing to the early part of the season. A small number of bird

species was identified at the site, mainly in the nearby areas of trees, although the nesting season would not begin before up to two months after the survey date.

6. Discussion.

6.1 Although there are no official statutory or non-statutory designations applying directly to the proposal site it is evident that the principal interest will lie in the potential effect on wildlife in the adjacent areas of maritime cliff and slope to the north east, and not less than 50m away. It is considered from our observations of the area contained in the proposal site that the surface vegetation has been severely degraded by the movement of machinery across it, making full assessment of the future impact difficult and potentially without meaning.

6.2 In the areas adjacent to the proposal site to the north east the area of maritime cliff slope represents an important area of conservation interest but which is unlikely to be materially impacted by the development.

6.3 The area immediately to the south of the site comprises a variety of species with associated insect life that appears to have avoided disturbance for some considerable time, allowing it to reach and maintain its optimum state, which provides an opportunity to employ the areas as a source of the indigenous flora from which to make provision for a significant Biodiversity Net Gain close to the development site in mitigation.

6.4 It is considered that intrinsically there are no plant communities that merit conservation for their own sake.

6.5 Potential Impact of Development.

Although details of the proposed development were known at the time of the survey, it is not considered that the plant communities within the proposal site provide any areas of special or rare interest. In the event of the proposed development it would be anticipated that the vegetation on the site would be mostly cleared, and the area subject to increased footfall.

This would result in the minor loss of foraging areas for bat species and of nesting sites for ground or tree nesting birds. It is unlikely that the grassland element on the site would survive in its present form.

The fragmentation of vegetation types on the site caused by development would result in the destruction of the current plant community within the site.

The result of the use of the stabling by up to three horses, with the required winter feed, and also the production of manure and run-off from hard surfaces, would be threefold.

1. Firstly the increase in insect life surrounding livestock of any kind, with its beneficial attraction to bats and birds.
2. The risk of the impact of high nitrogen content run-off into the surrounding soil structure. It will be important that all such run-off liquids, augmented by rainwater, should be fully contained until it can be spread on the nearby field, already used as grazing for the horses.
3. Increased footfall by humans and livestock around garage and stable.

6.6 Landscaping proposals or means of habitat creation will depend upon future plans for development on the site, but should take into account the particular impact upon foraging areas for bats and nesting sites for ground-nesting birds including the establishment of areas reserved from development to allow continuing use by ground nesting birds. It is important that all equine and motor traffic activity is contained within the proposal site

7. Conclusion and Recommendations.

7.1 The Data Search provided no records of areas of conservation importance or of protected species or habitats within the proposal site. It is assessed that none of the designated sites within the locality will be subject to damaging impact by the proposed development, but that mitigation measures detailed below are put in place to deter the spread of any activity arising on the site from unintended spread on to more vulnerable areas adjoining.

7.2 The objectives of the Survey were to provide an understanding of the current status of the site so that future development of the site could be planned with a policy consistent with its wildlife status.

7.3 The use of this survey and the results and recommendations of the relevant surveys may be most effective in indicating the basis of future development proposals that will minimise the impact on the current ecological state of the site. This impact could be further reduced if proposals for Biodiversity Enhancement are followed, as outlined in Appendix 2 below.

7.4 The potential of the site as a ground-bird nesting site is considered to be of low value since large areas are closely cropped. Attention is drawn to the legal protection given to all bird species during the nesting season under Section 1 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981.

7.5 No plant species or communities of special ecological importance were identified in the Field Survey.

7.6 The interpretation of the new Guidance Notes from Bat Conservation Trust is that the general habitat for bats is of low quality, with poor connectivity between foraging areas and roosting sites for which records are available. Any future development that removes the current vegetation is likely to cause negligible loss or severance of foraging habitat that could result in

the potential disruption of commuting or seasonal movements. Loss of the site for garage and stabling is unlikely to diminish its foraging value for bats to any significant extent. A potentially beneficial effect of having horses on the site, as described above will be the likely

increase in insect and invertebrate life around the site, resulting in the encouragement of both foraging bat and bird species.

8. Biodiversity Enhancement.

The new National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) proposes that future development should take account of the value of ecosystems and enhance ecological networks.

It is recommended that a section of the undeveloped area of the grass field west of the area to be developed be reserved to allow for the natural spread of the existing vegetation and for associated ground flora to establish. This will be to minimise human access and allow both the local flora and fauna to re-establish during the process of natural regeneration. Details are set out below at Appendix 2.

9. Limitations of Survey.

This report records wildlife found during the survey and some reported evidence of sightings. It does not record any plants and animals that may appear at other times of the year and were therefore not evident at the time of the visits.

The behaviour of animals can be unpredictable and may not conform to a standard pattern recorded in current scientific literature. Species such as bats are highly mobile and can occupy a site that has previously held no potential for them, and factors such as increasing habitat pressure can cause animals to occupy areas that were previously unoccupied. The converse may also prevail. This report therefore cannot predict with absolute certainty that animal species will occur in apparently suitable locations or that they will not occur in locations or habitats that appear unsuitable.

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Signed (electronically): JJ Hall J J Hall TD BSc

Date 22 March 2022

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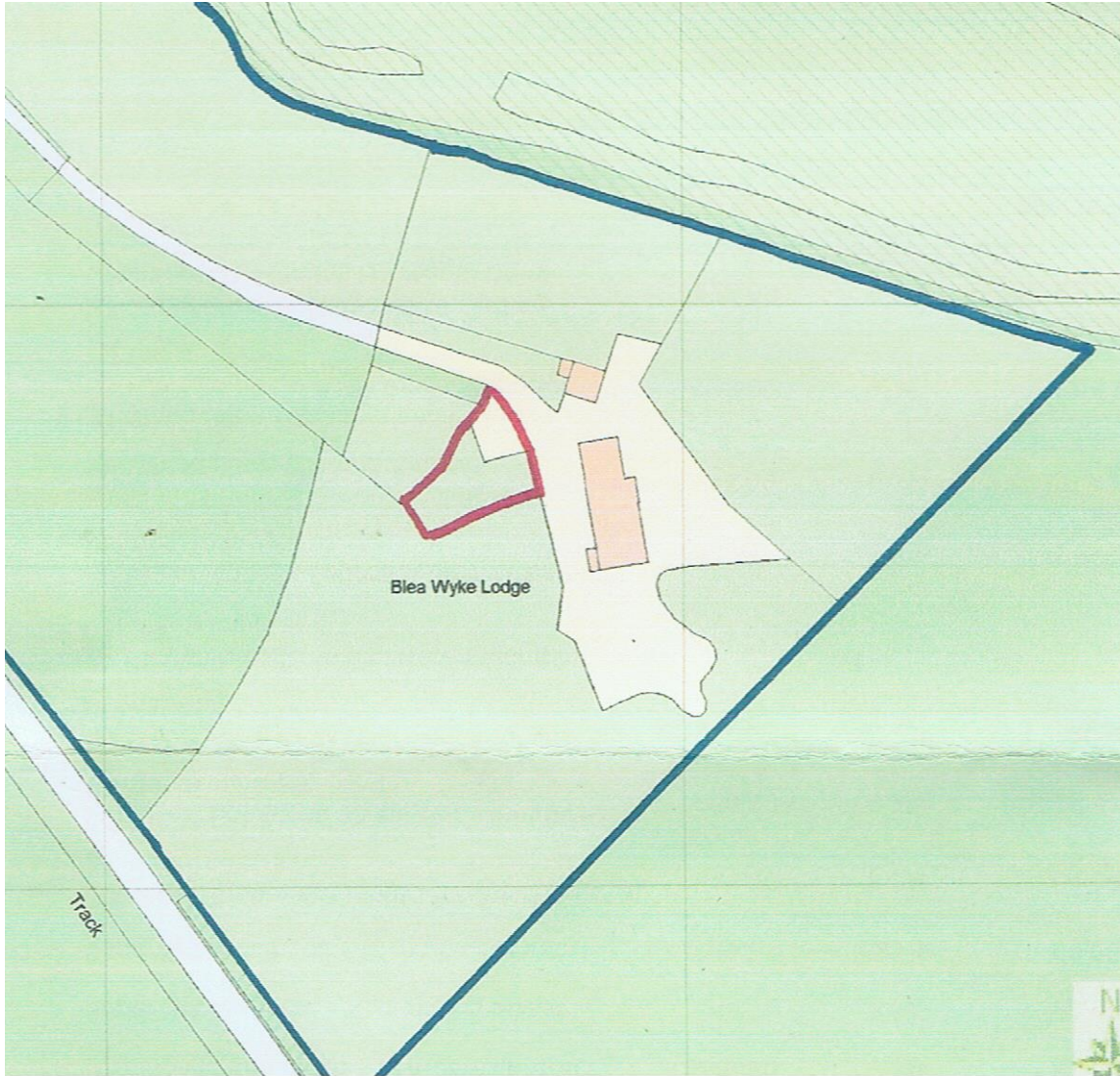
Reference:

Bat Surveys. Good Practice Guidelines
Badgers and Development

Bat Conservation Trust
Third edition 2016
English Nature 2003

Bibliography:

The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981	HMSO
Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000	HMSO
Conservation (Natural Habitats etc.) Regulations 1994 as amended 2010	HMSO



Location Plan (Edged red)

Site

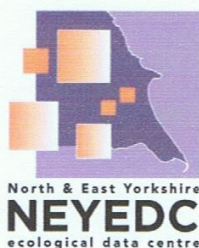
Appendix 1

Pre-existing Ecological Records.

A local enquiry was made to the North and East Yorkshire Ecological Data Centre: info@neyedc.co.uk for local information as to the conservation status of the site and surroundings as shown below.

The proposal site is not designated for Biodiversity. There are no Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) within the data search radius of 2 km. There are three Sites of Importance to Nature Conservation (SINC) and one active Non-Statutory site in the vicinity. The Burton Riggs Nature Reserve administered by Yorkshire Wildlife Trust forms the south and west boundaries to the site.

It is understood that there are no Tree Preservation Orders in force relating to the site.



Our Ref: E06256
Your Ref: Ravenscar
On behalf of: Julian Hall Environmental
Date: 01/03/2022
Search area: 2km from NZ988009

NEYEDC Site Data Search

Internationally Designated Sites

The following internationally designated site boundaries were searched:

- Ramsar sites published May 2017, revised October 2020
- Special Areas of Conservation published July 2017, revised May 2021
- Special Protection Areas published March 2016, revised July 2019

The following internationally designated sites are in or partly within the search area, and are shown on the accompanying map.

Designation	Name or location of site	Grid reference in relation to the search area
Special Areas of Conservation	Beast Cliff – Whitby (Robin Hood's Bay)	NZ990012 (crossing search area, see attached map).
Special Areas of Conservation	North York Moors	NZ971002
Special Protection Areas	North York Moors	NZ971002

Nationally Designated Sites

The following nationally designated site boundaries were searched:

- Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty published January 2017, revised August 2020
- National Nature Reserves published April 2017, revised June 2021
- National Parks published August 2016, revised February 2019
- Sites of Special Scientific Interest published April 2017, revised June 2021

The following nationally designated sites are in or partly within the search area, and are shown on the accompanying map.

Designation	Name or location of site	Grid reference in relation to the search area
National Parks	North York Moors	Entire terrestrial search area.
SSSI	Robin Hood's Bay: Maw Wyke to Beast Cliff	NZ990012
SSSI	North York Moors	NZ971002

We do not hold full details or citations of national designated sites. For further information please see the relevant section of the .gov.uk website

<https://www.gov.uk/topic/planning-development/protected-sites-species>

or go to JNCC's UK Protected Areas webpage: <https://jncc.gov.uk/our-work/uk-protected-areas/>

Locally Designated Sites

The following locally designated site boundaries were searched:

Local Nature Reserves

published April 2017, revised June 2021

There are no Local Nature Reserves in or partly within the search area.

North Yorkshire SINC (Site of Importance for Nature Conservation)

Version: North Yorkshire SINC v9.8, June 2021

There are no North Yorkshire SINCs in or partly within the search area.

Yorkshire Wildlife Trust Reserves

published January 2019

There are no Yorkshire Wildlife Trust Reserves in or partly within the search area.

Priority Habitats

The following site-based habitat boundaries were searched:

Ancient Woodland Inventory

published July 2013, revised January 2020

The following areas of ancient woodland are in or partly within the search area and are shown on the accompanying map

Habitat type	Location description
Ancient & Semi-Natural Woodland	Beast Cliff Wood, NZ999997.

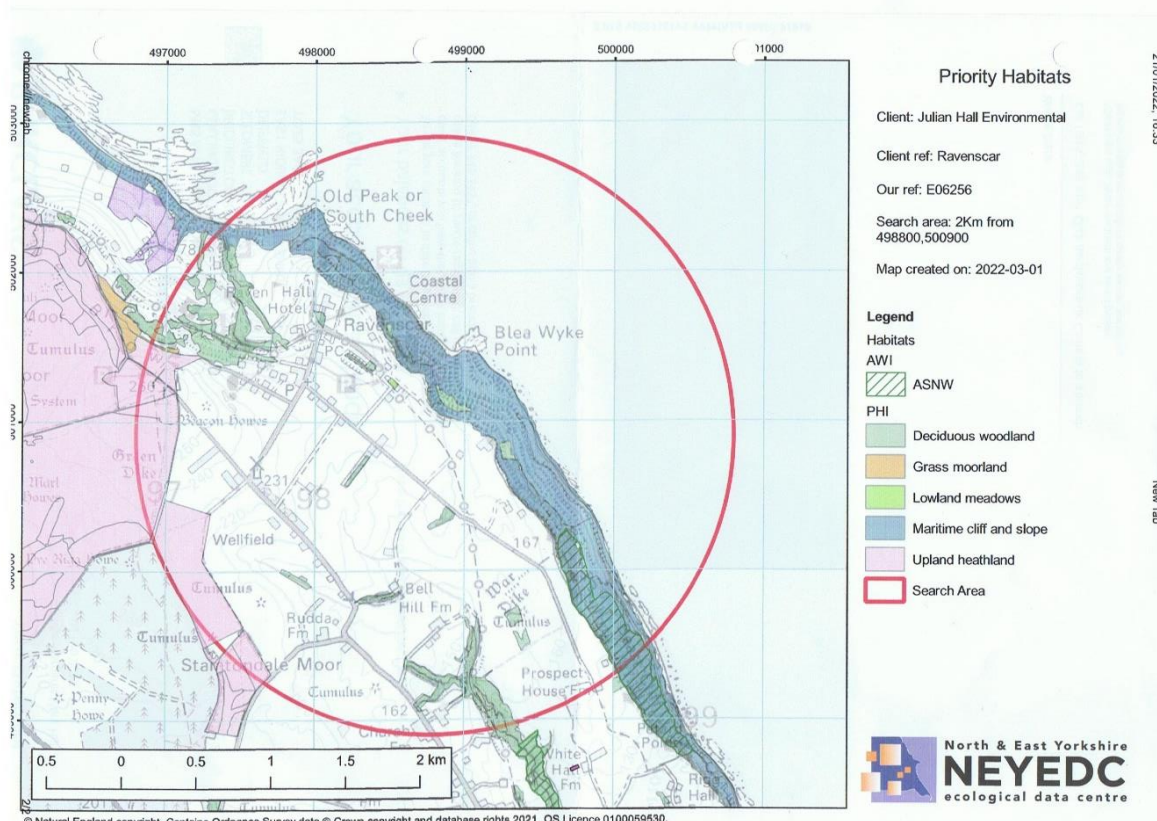
Priority Habitat Inventory

published August 2017

The following areas of priority habitat are in or partly within the search area and are shown on the accompanying map

Habitat type	Location description
Grass moorland	Adjacent to North York Moors at NZ970014.
Deciduous woodland	Several polygons throughout the search area. Most are concentrated near Ravenscar.
Lowland meadows	One very small polygon at NZ985012.

Data Search Area Plan



Appendix 2

Code of Practice for Ecology.

Prior to any construction on the site or on access roads into the site, or any site excavations and groundwork, the following protective policies will be put in place by the Contractor in respect of the three specific topics considered in the above survey:

2.2 Birds.

Any clearance of scrub, grassland or trees as part of any development plan, for access or for safety reasons, should be carried out during the out-of-nesting season, i.e. between October and March.

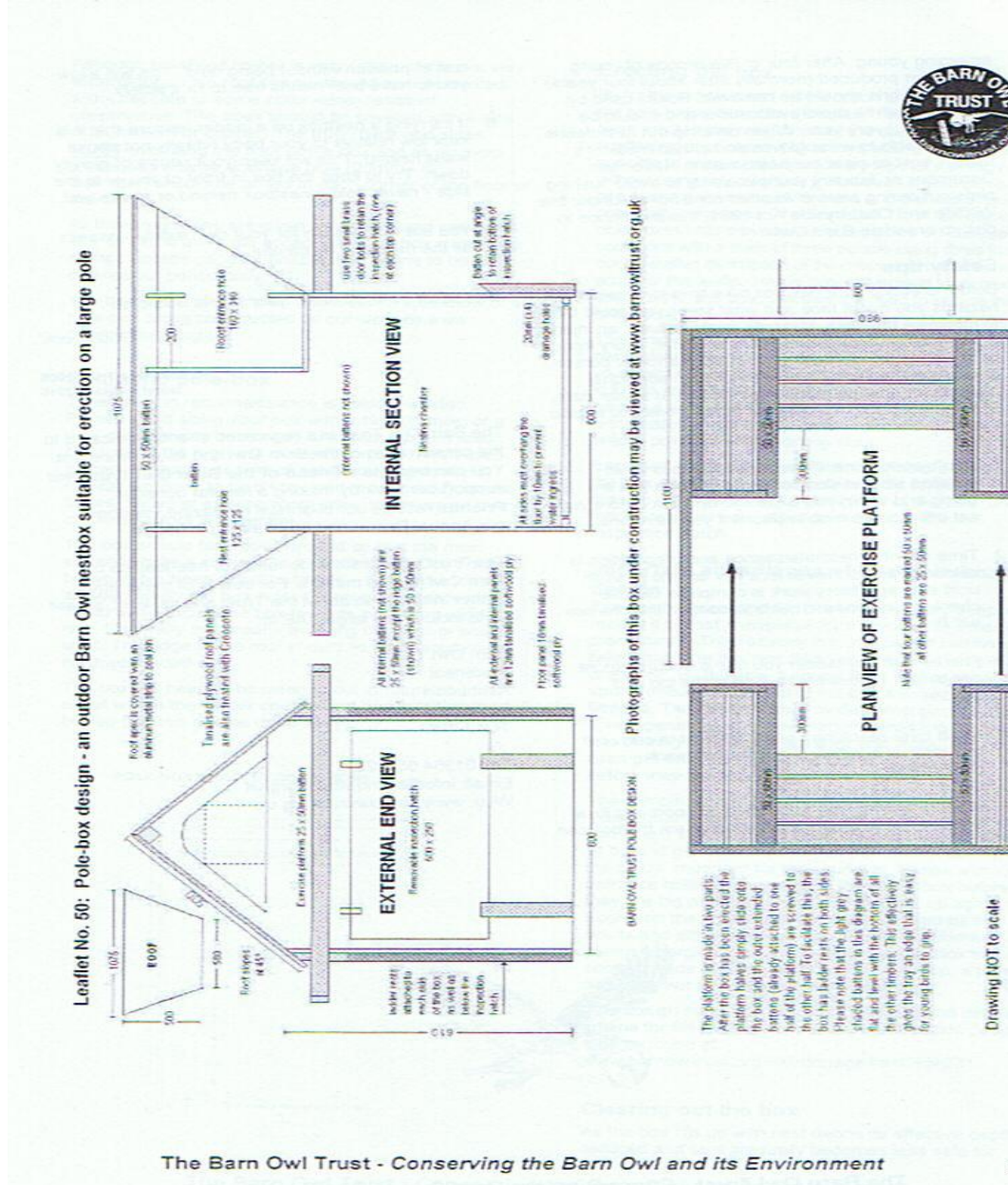
If such clearance is likely to take place within the nesting season, these areas should be inspected by a suitable consultant immediately prior to the commencement of operations to confirm that no birds are nesting there.

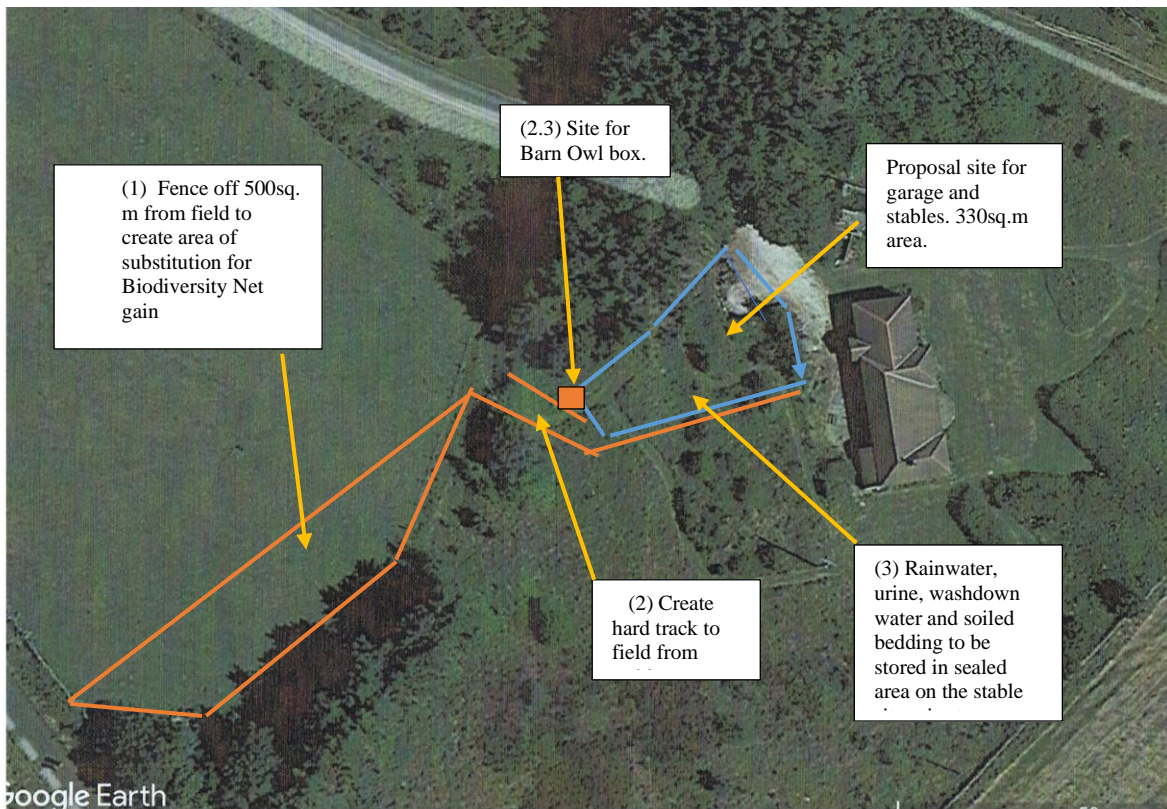
Although there is no evidence for the presence of Barn Owls at the site it is considered that the arrival of horses with usual increase in insect and small mammal activity that will accompany them and the manure generated area is likely to attract foraging Barn Owls from other areas within 1-2 km.

2.4. Barn Owls

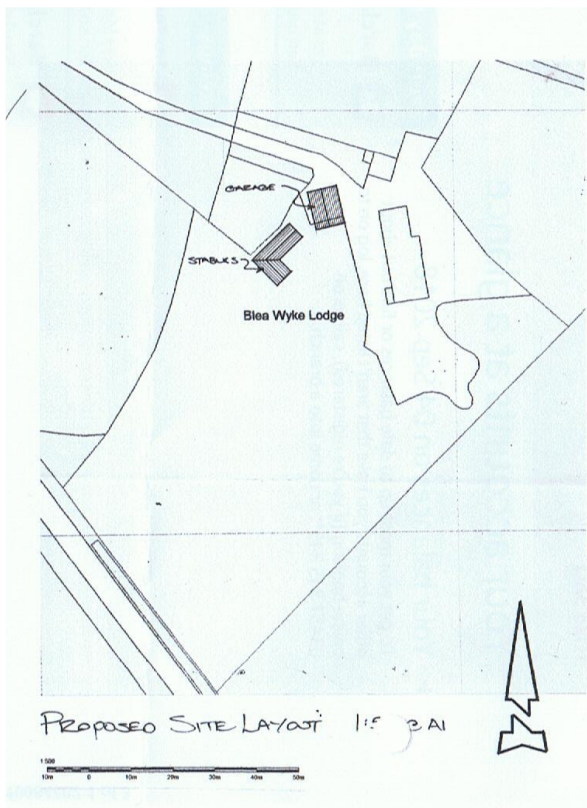
Barn Owls are given specific protection under Sch.1 pt. 1 of WCA81. The potential increase in activity by small mammals arising from the storage of hay and feedstuffs for livestock is considered as a useful opportunity to make provision to allow this activity to become established by the provision of a barn owl box within close proximity to the proposal site.

This will allow Barn Owls to fly out at night over the same territory to forage for small mammals and other food, and to return for eating and resting during the day. The attached illustration, designed by the [Barn Owl Trust](http://www.barnowltrust.org.uk) (www.barnowltrust.org.uk) and for installation on a high pole in open fields, is suitable for the existing circumstances, and can be erected in the close vicinity of the trees on the top of a 3m. high pole such as a telegraph pole, as long as it is supported to avoid being rocked by winds. It should face south over the open area, and should be erected as soon as possible before works commence in order to allow time for acclimatisation. Suggested locations are shown on the location plan at section 2.3.1 below.





Site replacement and mitigation areas.



Lay-out plan of buildings.

- (1) Area 1 at the east end of the grazing field to be permanently fenced out of any future cultivation or access by grazing stock in order to allow the fertility and pH to drop from the lack of any animal droppings and future application of 'artificial' fertilisers containing lime, nitrogen, phosphates or potash. The future growth of any plants arising from the current stock of plants should be mown annually before it has chance to flower,

and all cuttings removed from the area. As the level of fertility drops it will allow the re-establishment of the native herbage from the adjacent unimproved area.

- (2) It is recommended that a short length of hardcore roadway be laid on the line of access from the stables to the field entrance. The effect will be to limit the tendency of stock to wander off the track and reduce the amount of soil that would be chopped up in wet weather and resulting further damage to the plant community.
- (3) All run-off of rainwater, urine and washdown water should be stored within the fenced off stable area so that liquid manure and soiled bedding can be stored prior to being removed for spreading on the semi-improved grassland in the field