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Castle Walk
Bridgnorth
Slope Stabilisation Project

Preliminary Ecological Appraisal

BRIDGNORTH TOWN COUNCIL

Final

VERSION 2

13 January 2025

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Contents

Executive Summary

BiOME Consulting Ltd was commissioned by Bridgnorth Town Council to undertake a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA) of a site where slope stabilisation works are required. The 'site', located adjacent to the Castle Walk in the centre of Bridgnorth, Shropshire, comprised a steep scrub-clad embankment.

The ecology surveys detailed within this report were completed in order to determine the baseline ecological conditions of the site, with particular attention given to the possible presence of protected, controlled or otherwise notable species and/or habitats.

The potential ecological issues identified during the PEA were:

Designated Sites: There were no statutorily designated sites within the 2km search area. Taking into account the nature of the proposals, the site and the location/qualifying features of the identified designated site, no impacts in relation to designated sites are anticipated and no further works are required.

Habitats: The site comprised dense bramble scrub and sapling trees. The habitats present within the site are heavily anthropogenically influenced and common across England, and locally. Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) to achieve at least 10% net gain is required; a standalone BNG report has been produced.

Ground Dwelling Fauna: The site could provide foraging/commuting habitat for ground dwelling fauna; mitigation is proposed to ensure no such species come to harm during works.

Bats: No buildings/structures/trees with the potential to support roosting bats were present in areas to be impacted. No further survey work is considered necessary; in the highly unlikely event that any bats/roosting evidence is recorded going forward works must cease immediately, and the advice of a Suitably Qualified Ecologist (SQE) sought. Mitigation to minimise potential impacts to foraging/commuting bats is recommended.

Herptiles: Great Crested Newt (GCN) and reptiles are considered likely absent from the site based on desk study, onsite habitats, and absence of potentially suitable water features for GCN within 0.25km. In the apparently unlikely event

that any GCN, significant numbers of common amphibian species or reptiles are disturbed during works, works must cease and the advice of a SQE should be sought.

Nesting Birds: Nesting birds are likely to occur within the site. If works are to take place during the breeding bird season (1 March to 31 August) mitigation to ensure that a breach of legislation does not occur will be required.

Report Validity: The findings of this report are considered valid until 1 February 2026. If works are delayed beyond this date, then an updated assessment of potential impacts may be required.

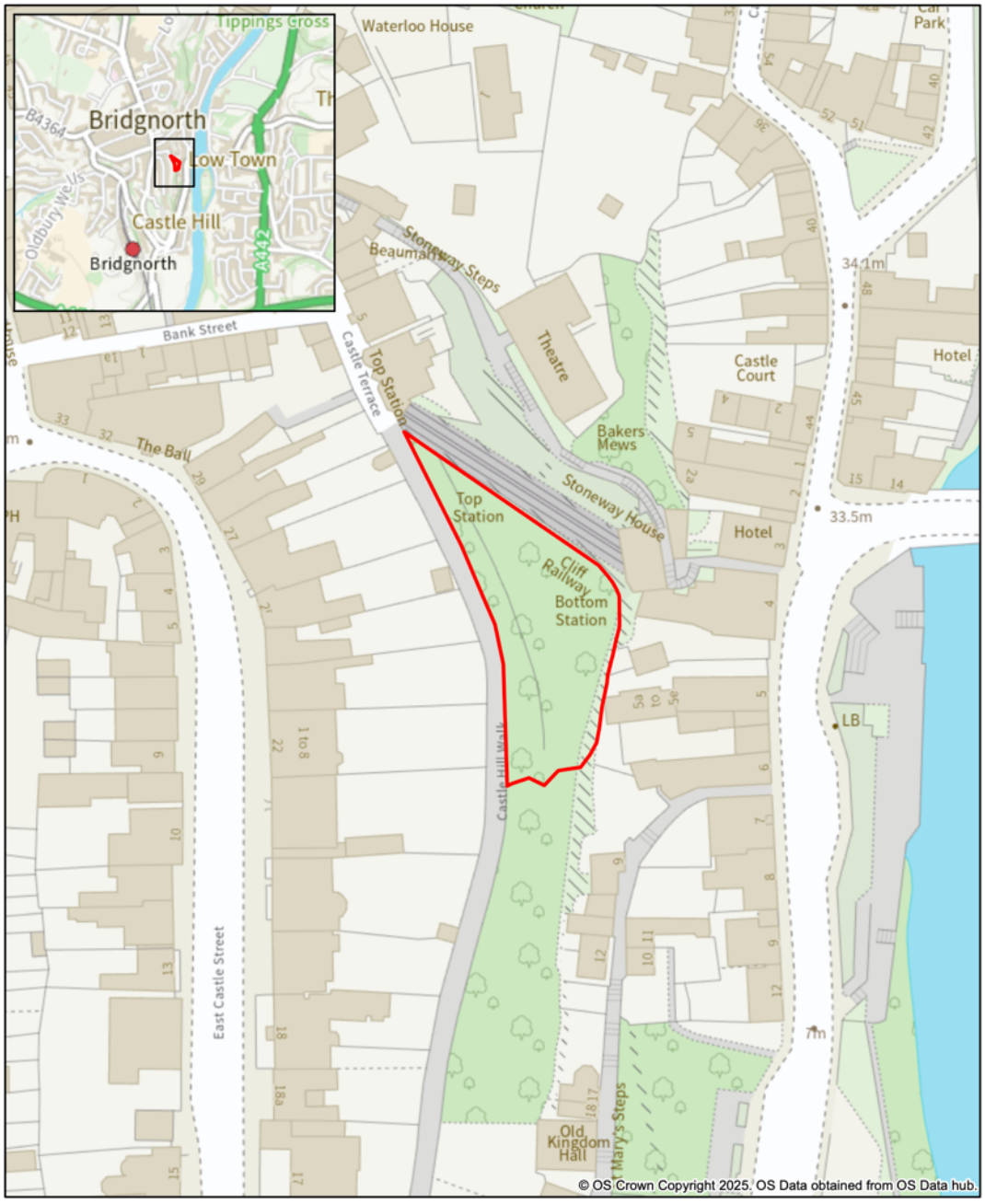
1. Introduction

1.1. Background

BiOME Consulting Ltd was commissioned by Bridgnorth Town Council in December 2024 to undertake a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA) of a site where slope stabilisation works are required. The 'site' **(Figure 1**), located adjacent to the Castle Walk in the centre of Bridgnorth, Shropshire, comprised a steep scrub-clad embankment.

1.2. Proposed Project

Due to subsidence issues, slope stabilisation works within the site are required. The full scope of works had not been confirmed at the time of writing, although it is understood will likely include the stabilisation of an existing retaining wall and the installation of soil-nails and plates along with erosion control matting and structural mesh.



Bridgnorth Retaining Wall Castle Terrace Bridgnorth Figure 1 Site Location	Planning Application Boundary	N Meters 0 5 10 15 20 Scale: 1:1,000 @A4 Content: MO Checked: MO Drawn: JG Ver: 1.0 Date: 09/01/2025	BiOME CONSULTING

2. Relevant Legislation

Conservation of Habitats and Species (Amendment) (EU Exit) Regulations 2019

The Habitats Regulations convey special protection to a number of species, which are listed in Schedule 2 of the Regulations and are referred to as European Protected Species (EPS).

Regulation 43 makes it an offence to:

- Deliberately capture, injure or kill any wild animal of a EPS;
- Deliberately disturb wild animals of such a species;
- Deliberately take or destroy the eggs of such a species;
- Damage or destroy a breeding site or resting place of such an animal.

Disturbance in the context of the offences above is disturbance which is likely to impair the ability of the animals to survive, to breed or reproduce, to nurture their young, to hibernate, to migrate; or to affect significantly the local distribution of the species.

Licences can be granted by the relevant Statutory Nature Conservation Organisation (SNCO) for developments (sometime referred to as EPS Licences or Derogation Licences) providing the purposes of the licence is for "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".

Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended)

The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) provides protection to both EPSs and other species including wild birds, Water Voles and reptiles.

All wild birds, their nests and eggs are protected, with some rare species afforded extra protection from disturbance during the breeding season (these species are listed in Schedule 1 of the Act). It is illegal to take any wild bird or damage or destroy the nests and eggs of breeding birds. There are certain exceptions to this in respect of wildfowl, game birds and certain species that may cause damage.

In England some species are listed on Schedule 5 of the Act, receiving full protection since 2008. The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 together with amending legislation lists the following offences:

- Intentionally killing, injuring, or taking these species by any method.
- Intentionally or recklessly damaging or destroying these species' place of shelter or protection.
- Intentionally or recklessly damaging disturbing these species whilst they are occupying such a structure or place it uses for shelter or protection.
- Intentionally or recklessly obstructing access to these species' place of shelter or protection.
- Selling, offering for sale, or possessing or transporting for the purposes of sale, any live or dead Schedule 5 species, or any part or derivative, or advertising any of these for buying or selling.

All native reptile species in the UK are subject to partial protection from intentional or reckless killing or injury only.

The Act also includes provisions for the control of invasive non-native species (INNS). Under these provisions it is an offence to:

- Release or allow to escape into the wild any animal which is not ordinarily resident or a regular visitor to Great Britain or is included in Schedule 9 of the Act.
- Plant or otherwise cause to grow in the wild any plant which is included in Schedule 9 of the Act.

People undertaking works in proximity to invasive non-native plant species should take all reasonable steps and exercise all due diligence to avoid committing an offence.

The Invasive Alien Species (Enforcement and Permitting) Order 2019

The order came into effect on the 1 December 2019 to allow for enforcement of EU Regulations (Regulation (EU) No. 1143/2014 on the prevention and

management of the introduction and spread of invasive alien species in England and Wales) also known as the IAS Regulations.

There are currently 22 species listed in the Order:

- Chinese Mitten Crab *Eriocheir sinensis*
- Red Swamp Crayfish *Procambarus clarkii*
- Signal Crayfish *Pacifastacus leniusculus*
- Spiny-cheek Crayfish *Orconectes limosus*
- Muntjac Deer *Muntiacus reevesi*
- Ruddy Duck *Oxyura jamaicensis*
- New Zealand Flatworm *Arthurdendyus triangulates*
- Egyptian Goose *Alopochen aegyptiacus*
- Pumpkinseed *Lepomis gibbosus*
- Grey Squirrel *Sciurus carolinensis*
- Himalayan Balsam *Impatiens glandulifera*
- Fanwort (otherwise known as Carolina Water Shield) *Cabomba caroliniana*
- Giant Hogweed *Heracleum mantegazzianum*
- Water Hyacinth *Eichhornia crassipes*
- Parrot's Feather *Myriophyllum aquaticum*
- Floating Pennywort *Hydrocotyle ranunculoides*
- Floating Water Primrose *Ludwigia peploides*
- Water Primrose *Ludwigia grandiflora*
- Giant Rhubarb *Gunnera tinctoria*
- Salvinia Moss *Salvinia molesta* (otherwise known as *Salvinia adnata*)
- Curly Waterweed *Lagarosiphon major*
- Nuttall's Waterweed *Elodea nuttallii*

Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006

The UK Biodiversity Plan (BAP) was a programme designed to help conserve the UK's biodiversity. It led to the production of 436 action plans between 1995 and 1999 to help many of the UK's most threatened species and habitats to recover.

A review of the UK BAP priority list in 2007 led to the identification of 1,150 species and 65 habitats that met the BAP criteria at UK level.

Currently 56 Habitats of Principal Importance and 943 Species of Principal Importance are included within Section 41 of the NERC Act 2006 and these include species and habitats which were identified in the UK BAP and which continue to be considered to represent the conservation priorities of England in the UK Post-2010 Biodiversity Framework.

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 2023

The National Planning Policy Framework sets out the Government's planning policies for England and how these should be applied. It provides a framework within which locally-prepared plans for housing and other development can be produced.

Chapter 15 'Conserving and enhancing the natural environment' details what local planning policies should seek to consider with regard to planning applications:

"Planning policies and decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by:

174 a) protecting and enhancing valued landscapes, sites of biodiversity or geological value and soils (in a manner commensurate with their statutory status or identified quality in the development plan);

174 b) recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside, and the wider benefits from natural capital and ecosystem services – including the economic and other benefits of the best and most versatile agricultural land, and of trees and woodland;

174 c) maintaining the character of the undeveloped coast, while improving public access to it where appropriate;

174 d) minimising impacts on and providing net gains for biodiversity, including by establishing coherent ecological networks that are more resilient to current and future pressures;

174 e) preventing new and existing development from contributing to, being put at unacceptable risk from, or being adversely affected by, unacceptable levels of soil, air, water or noise pollution or land instability. Development should, wherever possible, help to improve local environmental conditions such as air and water quality, taking into account relevant information such as river basin management plans; and

174 f) remediating and mitigating despoiled, degraded, derelict, contaminated and unstable land, where appropriate."

3. Methodologies

3.1. Suitably Qualified Ecologist Details

The site survey was completed by Martyn Owen BSc (Hons) MCIEEM. Martyn is a highly experienced consultant ecologist, has completed survey and assessment work for many similar projects over the preceding 20 years and holds Natural England (NE) survey licences in relation to bats, GCN and a variety of Schedule 1 birds.

The deliverable was reviewed by Richard Moores BSc (Hons) MCIEEM. Richard has worked as a consultant ecologist for over 20 years and has completed ecological assessments for many similar projects.

3.2. Desk Study

The below information was obtained from MAGIC[1]:

- Information in relation to internationally designated sites within 2km of the site boundary.
- Information in relation to nationally designated sites within 2km of the site boundary.
- Granted European Protected Species (EPS) mitigation licences within 2km of the site boundary.
- GCN Pond Surveys to inform for District Licencing within 2km of the site boundary.
- GCN class licence returns within 2km of the site boundary.

Habitats and Species of Principal Importance[2] and the Local Biodiversity Action Plan (LBAP) priority habitats and species were also reviewed to compare to those habitats and species either recorded within the site during the survey or recorded

1 MAGIC (2020) [online] available at: www.magic.defra.gov.uk (accessed 13 January 2025)
2 Habitats and Species of Principal Importance are listed under Section 41 (S41) of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006.

as having potential to be present (due to habitat suitability). The LBAP which covers this site is the Shropshire Biodiversity Action Plan[3].

3.3. Preliminary Ecological Appraisal Survey

A PEA site survey[4] was undertaken on 8 January 2024 during suitable weather conditions (overnight frost, overcast and dry). Prior to the completion of the survey aerial imagery was reviewed[5] to provide an indication of habitat types present within the site and in the surrounding area.

During the survey all areas within the site and adjacent areas were walked and habitat types assessed. Signs of protected species, invasive plants (*i*.e. those included on Schedule 9 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended)) and other notable species were also searched for, as well as noting habitats considered to have the potential to support protected species.

The ultimate purpose of this PEA was to identify potentially valuable habitats and plant species assemblages, and to identify the presence and/or potential for protected/controlled species. This report presents an assessment of the ecological significance of the features present and discusses the potential for the site to support legally protected species and/or species of conservation interest which may be impacted by the project.

3.4. Badger Survey

A Badger activity survey, following the method outlined within Harris *et al*. (1989)[6], was completed of all areas within the site and a buffer of 30m (when accessible). The presence of Badgers is indicated through observations of latrines, hair, prints and setts.

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3 https://next.shropshire.gov.uk/environment/ecology-and-biodiversity/biodiversity-action-plan-and-marches-nature-partnership/ (accessed 13 January 2025)

4 CIEEM (2017) *Guidelines for preliminary ecological appraisal* [online] available at: https://www.cieem.net/guidance-on-preliminary-ecological-appraisal-gpea- (accessed 13 January 2025)

5 Google Maps [online] available at: https://www.google.co.uk/maps (accessed 7 January 2025)

6 Harris, S., Cresswell, P. & Jefferies, D. (1989). *Surveying Badgers*. The Mammal Society

3.5. Bats -

3.5.1. Preliminary Roost Assessment – Buildings/Structures

A Preliminary Roost Assessment (PRA) survey of all structures to be impacted within the site (**Figure 1**) and in areas where disturbance impacts may occur, was completed in line with appropriate survey guidance[7] concurrently with the PEA.

The survey involved a systematic search of the structures to identify potential or actual bat access points and roosting sites, and to locate any evidence of bats such as live or dead specimens, bat droppings, urine splashes, fur-oil staining and/or squeaking noises. It should be noted that sometimes bats leave no visible sign of their presence on the outside of a building (and even when they do wet weather can wash away evidence).

The inspection of buildings and built structures for evidence of bats, which can be conducted at all times of year, was facilitated by the use of ladders, a high-powered torch, endoscope and small dental mirrors to inspect accessible crevices considered likely to support bats.

The potential suitability of the structures for roosting bats was assessed in line with relevant guidelines and allocated to one of the categories detailed within **Table 1**.

Table 1. Guidelines for assessing the potential suitability of proposed development sites for bats

Suitability	Description of Roosting Habitats
None	No habitat features on site likely to be used by any roosting bats at any time of the year (i.e. a complete absence of crevices/suitable shelter at all ground/underground levels)
Negligible	No obvious habitat features on site likely to be used by roosting bats; however, a small element of uncertainty remains as bats can use small and apparently unsuitable features on occasion.

7 Collins, J. (ed.) (2023). *Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines* (4th edition). The Bat Conservation Trust, London

Suitability	Description of Roosting Habitats
Low	A structure with one or more potential roost sites that could be used by individual bats opportunistically at any time of year. However, these potential roost sites do not provide enough space, shelter, protection, appropriate conditions and/or suitable surrounding habitat to be used on a regular basis or by larger numbers of bats (*i.e.* unlikely to be suitable for maternity and not a classic cool/stable hibernation site, but could be used by individual hibernating bats).
Moderate	A structure with one or more potential roost sites that could be used by bats due to their size, shelter, protection, conditions and surrounding habitat but unlikely to support a roost of high conservation status (with respect to roost type only – the categorisation in this table are made irrespective of species conservation status, which is established after presence is confirmed).
High	A structure with one or more potential roost sites that are obviously suitable for use by larger numbers of bats on a more regular basis and potentially for longer periods of time due to their size, shelter, protection, conditions and surrounding habitat. These structures have the potential to support high conservation status roosts, e.g. maternity or classic cool/stable hibernation site.
Confirmed Roost	Definitive evidence of roosting bats, i.e. live animals or accumulation of droppings associated with a Potential Roost Feature (PRF).

All structures were also inspected/assessed for hibernation potential as well as evidence of bats and categorised in line with the criteria detailed within **Table 2**.

Table 2. Guidelines for assessing the hibernation potential of proposed development sites for bats

Suitability	Description
None/ Very Limited	A structure unlikely to support hibernating bats.
Classic Site	Often underground (e.g. tunnels, caves, mines, cellars) but may also be above ground. (e.g. some ice houses and lie kilns) and they provide cool, stable and damp conditions favoured by some species for winter torpor and hibernations.
Non-Classic Site	Void dwelling species (notably Brown Long-eared bat and Serotine) can linger in buildings into the winter but may not be visible to surveyors during inspection. Pipistrelles are often found roosting individually in more exposed/thermally unstable conditions.

3.5.2. Ground Level Tree Assessment

A detailed assessment of the available tree roosting resource within the site and adjacent areas was completed using a Ground Level Tree Assessment (GLTA) to map and categorise all trees that may be impacted.

This method involved a detailed inspection of each tree during daylight from ground level to compile information about the tree, PRFs (or lack of) and any evidence of bats. The inspection of each tree was completed systematically and consistently around all parts of the tree (from all angles and from both close to the trunk and further away) and the results recorded electronically. Torches were used to illuminate shaded areas, and assessment was assisted with the use of binoculars (8x magnification) and telescopes (32x magnification).

Trees were categorised according to the criteria detailed within **Table 3**.

Table 3. Guidelines for categorising the potential suitability of PRFs on a proposed development site for bats, to be applied using professional judgement

Suitability	Description
Potential Suitability of Trees, applied using professional judgement	
None/No	Either no PRFs in the tree or highly unlikely to be any.
FAR	Further Assessment Required (FAR) to establish if PRFs are present in the tree.
PRF	A tree with at least one PRF present.
Potential Suitability of PRFs, applied using professional judgement	
PRF-I	PRF is only suitable for individual bats or very small numbers of bats either due to size or lack of suitable surrounding habitats.
PRF-M	PRF is suitable for multiple bats and may therefore be used by a maternity colony.

3.6. Limitations

The findings presented in this report represent those at the time of survey and reporting, and data collected from available sources. Ecological surveys can be limited by factors affecting the presence of plants and animals, such as the time of year, migration patterns and behaviour.

Whilst not a full protected species or botanical survey, a PEA allows an experienced ecologist to obtain a sufficient understanding of the ecology of a site in order to either evaluate the conservation importance of the site, and assess the potential for impacts on habitats and species likely to represent a material consideration in planning terms, or to ascertain that further surveys will be required before such an evaluation can be made.

The site survey was completed outside the optimal time period for vegetation survey, and it is highly likely that some species present would not have been evident during the survey. This limitation has been factored into the conclusions and recommendations within this report.

The absence of evidence of any particular species should not be taken as conclusive proof that the species is not present or that it will not be present in the future.

4. Results

The results of the desk study (**Section 4.1**) and the site survey (**Section 4.2**) are presented below.

4.1. Desk Study

4.1.1. Designated Sites

There are no statutorily designated site within the search area.

4.1.2. Flora and Fauna

Biological records data obtained from Magic.gov.uk are summarised within **Section 4.2** when relevant.

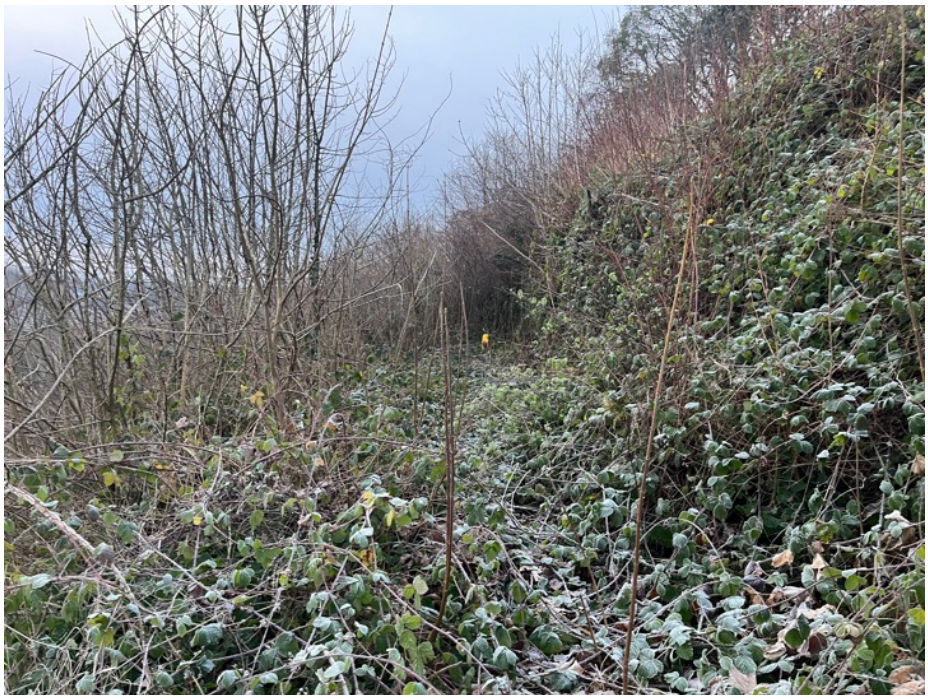
4.2. PEA Site Survey

4.2.1. Habitats

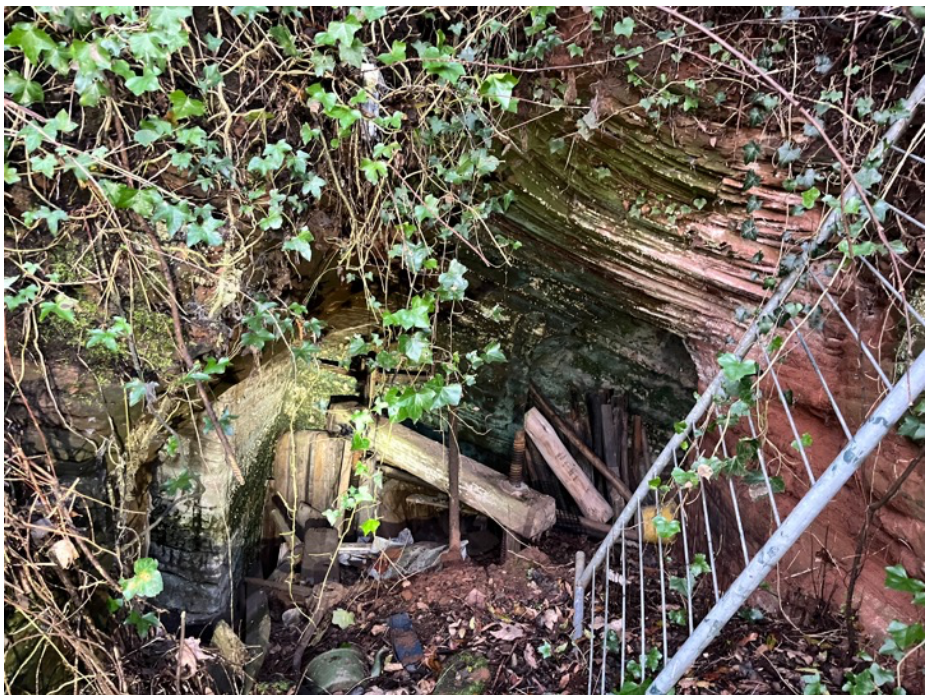
The site was comprised of dense bramble *Rubus fruticosus* agg. scrub and sapling trees (predominantly Sycamore *Platanus occidentalis*) (**Photograph 1**).

The site had been historically terraced with various walls present along with a single cave within the sandstone cliff face (**Photograph 2**) also present. Much Ivy *Hedera helix* growth was evident.

Photograph 1. Typical area of vegetation within the site



Photograph 2. Cave within site



4.2.1.1. Habitat Evaluation

The habitats present within the site are heavily anthropogenically influenced and relatively common across England, and locally.

Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) to achieve at least 10% net gain is required; a standalone BNG report has been produced.

4.2.2. Protected and Notable Species

4.2.2.1. Badger

A comprehensive Badger survey did not identify any indication of presence within the site, although it is considered likely that Badger may use the site and the surrounding habitats for foraging/commuting on occasion.

4.2.2.2. Bats

4.2.2.3. Desk Study

The desk study identified one granted EPS development licence in relation to bats within the search area, detail is provided within **Table 4.**

Table 4. Granted EPS development licences (2km)

Species	Distance/Direction	Details
Bat: Soprano Pipistrelle *Pipistrellus pygmaeus*	0.87km/N	**2017:** Destruction of a breeding site

4.2.2.4. Preliminary Roost Assessment

A single sandstone cave and numerous walls were present. All were fully inspected and assessed to be of **NEGLIGIBLE** potential value to roosting bats (**Table 1**) and of **NO** potential value to hibernating bats (**Table 2**).

4.2.2.5. Ground Level Tree Assessment

All trees within the site and in areas of potential impact were assessed and deemed to be of **NO** (**Table 3**) potential value to roosting bats.

4.2.2.6. Other Section 41 Mammals

It is considered likely that the site supports Hedgehog on occasion. This species is most abundant where grassland is in close proximity to woodland, scrub or hedgerows[8].

Aside this species, the site is considered unlikely to support other Section 41 mammal species. No further survey work in relation to Section 41 mammal species is considered necessary.

4.2.2.7. Amphibians

Details in relation to GCN desk study results are provided within **Table 5**.

Table 5. GCN class licence survey returns and pond surveys (2017-2019), within 2km

Approx. Distance from Site Centre/Direction	Date	Present/Absent
1.36km/SW	2015	Present

No ponds were present within the site or a buffer of 0.25km of the site. GCN typically have a maximum routine migratory range of 0.25km from breeding waterbodies during terrestrial phases[9] and further studies suggest that 95% of newt summer refuges are within 63m of breeding ponds[10].

4.2.2.8. Reptiles

Habitats favoured by reptiles tend to be sunny, well-drained and often south-facing. Typical habitats include grass and heather heathland, chalk downland, coppiced woodland, sand dunes, disused allotments, suburban wasteland, road/railway embankments, golf course roughs, rough grassland, open woodland and woodland edge, immature plantation forestry, sea cliffs, moorland,

8 Harris, S. & Yalden, D.W. (eds.) (2008). *Mammals of the British Isles*: Handbook, 4th Edition. The Mammal Society

9 Cresswell, W. & Warren, ER. (2004). An assessment of the efficiency of capture techniques and the value of different habitats for the Great Crested Newt *Triturus cristatus*. English Nature report

10 Jehle, R. (2000). The terrestrial summer habitat of radio-tracked Great Crested Newt *Triturus cristatus* and Marbled Newts *T. marmoratus*. Herpetological Journal 10: 137-142.

disused quarries, non-intensive farmland and wild gardens. In addition, Grass Snakes *Natrix helvetica* favour damp habitats[11].

Due to the dense nature of the vegetation present and the absence of basking opportunities the site is considered to represent unsuitable habitat for any reptilian species and no further work in relation to this species group is considered necessary.

4.2.2.9. Birds

No birds were observed within the site during the site survey. The site and adjacent areas where disturbance could occur is considered unsuitable for any nesting Schedule 1 species. It is considered highly likely that common species of bird nest within vegetation on site.

4.2.2.10. Invertebrates

Given the nature of habitats within the site, it is considered unlikely that the site supports any important species/populations. Invertebrates are not considered further.

4.2.2.11. Invasive Plants

No invasive non-native species of plant (INNS) (listed on Schedule 9 of the Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981 (as amended)) were observed within the site. INNS are not considered further.

4.2.2.12. Other Species/Habitats

No other potential protected, notable or controlled species/habitat issues were identified.

11 Froglife (1999). *Froglife Advice Sheet 10; Reptile Survey. An introduction to planning, conducting and interpreting surveys for snake and lizard conservation*

5. Conclusions and Recommendations

A PEA site survey/complimentary desk study have been completed to inform slope stabilisation works required at a site, located adjacent to the Castle Walk in the centre of Bridgnorth, Shropshire. These surveys identified the below detailed ecological considerations/requirements, along with recommendations to ensure that the works are carried out lawfully and in such a manner to minimise ecological impacts.

5.1. General Mitigation

Standard pollution control measures should be implemented during construction to protect habitats on/adjacent to the site.

All works should be undertaken in accordance with Guidance for Pollution Prevention (GPP5) and PPG1 Understanding your Environmental Responsibilities.

If any protected species are encountered during the works, all work in the vicinity should stop immediately and a Suitably Qualified Ecologist (SQE) should be contacted for advice on how to proceed.

5.2. Designated Sites

There were no statutorily designated sites within the 2km search area. Taking into account the nature of the proposals, the site and the location/qualifying features of the identified designated site, no impacts in relation to designated sites are anticipated and no further works are required.

5.3. Habitats

The site was comprised of dense bramble scrub and sapling trees. The habitats present within the site are heavily anthropogenically influenced and common across England, and locally.

BNG to achieve at least 10% net gain is required; a standalone BNG report has been produced.

Retained trees should be protected in line with the requirements of BS 5837:2012[12].

5.4. Ground Dwelling Fauna

The occasional presence of foraging Hedgehog within the site is considered possible. To ensure that ground dwelling fauna come to no harm during construction the following measures are recommended:

- covering trenches at the conclusion of each working day, or include a means of escape for any animal falling into excavations, and
- any temporarily exposed open pipe system should be capped in such a way as to prevent Badgers gaining access.

5.5. Bats

Following the PRA, all structures/trees/cave were assessed to be of **NEGLIGIBLE/NO** bat roost potential. No further survey work is considered necessary; in the highly unlikely event that any bats/roosting evidence is recorded during re-development, then works must cease immediately and the advice of a SQE sought.

5.6. Herptiles

GCN are considered likely absent from the site based on desk study and absence of potentially suitable water features within 0.25km. Based on the nature of the habitats present, reptiles are considered likely absent and no further survey work is considered necessary.

In the apparently unlikely event that any GCN, significant numbers of common amphibian species or reptiles are disturbed during works, works must cease and the advice of a SQE should be sought.

5.7. Nesting Birds

If possible, any vegetation clearance/building/structure works should be completed outside the bird nesting season (1 March to 31 August), although it should be noted that the nesting period may extend beyond these dates (for

12 British Standards Institute BS 5837:2012. *Trees in relation to design, demolition and construction.*

example, pigeons can breed in any month of the year in the UK). Should an occupied bird nest or a nest in the process of being constructed be encountered during works, clearance must cease in this area and should only re-commence once the birds have fledged, or the nest is abandoned.

If works must be undertaken during the nesting season, a survey to identify any nests which may be impacted will be required. This survey should be undertaken by a Suitably Qualified Ecologist (SQE). Again, should an occupied nest or nest under construction be found, works must cease in this area until the birds have fledged, or the nest has been abandoned.

5.8. Report Validity

The findings of this report are considered valid until 1 February 2026[13]. If works are delayed beyond this date, then an updated assessment of potential impacts will be required.

13 CIEEM (2019). *Advice Note on The Lifespan of Ecological Reports and Surveys* [online] available at: https://cieem.net/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/Advice-Note.pdf