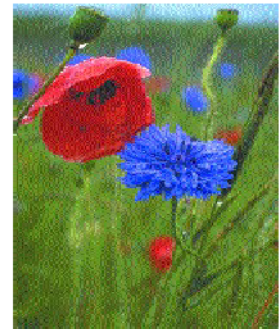


Len Vidler  
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## Countryside Consultants Ltd

Ecological Surveys  
Land Management Options  
Project Management  
Rural Development Projects  
Strategic Countryside



*Professional, Progressive, Integrated*

7th November 2017

Dear Mr Vidler

### **Erection of double garage with games room above, Rowden Abbey, Winslow, Bromyard, Herefordshire HR7 4LS**

Please find this letter as a summary of ecological survey of the site which should be considered against the proposals set out in drawing: 1960-3A dated 1/11/17.

As the potential scope and impact of the proposals are limited, I have reduced the reporting to include a brief description of the site, potential implications for protected species and any mitigation / avoidance measures required within this letter. This I would suggest is a reasonable deviation from normal reporting standards set out within BS42020 but which allows the local planning authority to appropriately consider ecology as part of the statutory commitments.

The proposed site was inspected on the 3<sup>rd</sup> November by myself, an experienced ecologist holding full membership of the Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management. This was confined to a walk-over assessment looking for potential evidence of protected species and habitat assessment. No search of the Herefordshire Biological Records Centre was made given the nature of the proposal and limited potential impacts.

The proposed site is accessed off the existing unbound gravel surfaced drive serving Rowden Abbey. The area on which the proposed building will sit (as well as a surrounding area adequate for construction activities) was found to have recently been cleared and excavated to a level area with profiled banks. This comprised bare ground sown with grass mixture.

Surrounding this is mature mixed plantation woodland with a sparse shrub layer and absence of any well developed ground flora with a deep leaf litter. This was likely to have occupied the majority of the area recently cleared and excavated.

Within the woodland habitat surrounding the site, mature trees include: frequent horse chestnut *Aesculus hippocastanum* and Scot's pine *Pinus sylvestris* as well as frequent young stage holly *Ilex aquifolium* and sycamore *Acer pseudoplatanus*; occasional pedunculate oak *Quercus robur*, beech *Fagus sylvatica*; and occasional to rare Douglas fir *Pseudotsuga menziesii*. The shrub comprised occasional young stage holly, sycamore and less frequent elder *Sambucus nigra*. The ground layer was notable for the deep leaf litter with occasional ruderal growth dominated by stinging nettle *Urtica dioica* and occasional dog's mercury *Mercurialis perennis*.

Continued..

The proposals are considered to have negligible potential impact on woodland habitat, restricted to the likely construction of a surfaced pedestrian path around the edge of the building to access the upper floor.

The nearest pond is 190m to the west. This is a recently de-silted feature close to the River Frome which until de-silting held no open water. The next nearest pond is located nearly 300m to the east / south east. At these distances, the risk of any potential impacts to protected amphibians would be extremely low.

The proposed site is not suitable for reptiles being located on the shaded side of the woodland and lacking any suitable habitat.

There was no evidence of badgers within 50m whilst the woodland habitat would be considered unsuitable for hazel dormouse.

There were no trees around the edge of the woodland associated with the proposed site which were considered to have roosting potential for bats. No roost site would therefore be indirectly impacted. Bats are likely to use the woodland edge as a foraging and commuting route.

The following measures are recommended to ensure no impacts to protected or notable species:

1. The storage of materials, plant, machinery or welfare units will avoid areas of woodland.
2. No further felling of trees will be undertaken as part of the construction. Construction of any surfaced pedestrian access path should be kept to a minimum length (avoiding trees) and utilise no dig design such as the use of geo-grid systems. Removal of any shrub should be minimised and carried out during the period 1<sup>st</sup> September through 28<sup>th</sup> February so as to avoid the bird nesting season.
3. Any security lights attached to the building will be fitted with a maximum 100 Watt bulb and set at the lowest sensitivity and shortest duration so as to avoid being triggered by insects and minimise potential illumination within an area where bats are likely to be present.
4. Exterior lighting will be minimised to one down-lighter over pedestrian doorways with a maximum equivalent bulb strength of 40 Watts. Lighting of any pedestrian access through the woodland will be restricted to the use of bollard type lighting units at a minimum spacing of 5m with directional filters to prevent skyward light spill, and maximum 40 Watt bulb strength.

To deliver net enhancement for biodiversity, the new building will include 1 x Schwegler 1FR bat tube in the south-eastern gable facing the woodland, and 1 x Schwegler nest block with 32mm hole fitted inside the north-east gable end.

Yours sincerely,



Stewart Rampling MCIEEM  
Director

Inc. Annex 1 Photographic record

Directors S.N. Rampling MCIEEM

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## Annex 1: Photographic record



1: looking north-east across the cleared area and woodland to rear



2: Mixed plantation woodland to rear (east)





3: View south-west



4: View south