Pullar House 35 Kinnoull Street Perth PH1 5GD Tel: 01738 475300 Email: onlineapps@pkc.gov.uk

Applications cannot be validated until all the necessary documentation has been submitted and the required fee has been paid.

Thank you for completing this application form:

ONLINE REFERENCE 100696662-002

The online reference is the unique reference for your online form only. The Planning Authority will allocate an Application Number when your form is validated. Please quote this reference if you need to contact the planning Authority about this application.

Applicant or Agent Details

Are you an applicant or an agent? * (An agent is an architect, consultant or someone else acting on behalf of the applicant in connection with this application) ☐ Applicant ☒ Agent

Agent Details

Please enter Agent details

Company/Organisation:	McKenzie Strickland Associates		
Ref. Number:		You must enter a Building Name or Number, or both: *	
First Name: *	Siobhan	Building Name:	
Last Name: *	Johnston	Building Number:	23
Telephone Number: *	01887 829228	Address 1 (Street): *	Bank Street
Extension Number:		Address 2:	
Mobile Number:		Town/City: *	Aberfeldy
Fax Number:		Country: *	Scotland
		Postcode: *	PH15 2BB
Email Address: *	siobhan@msa-architects.com		

Is the applicant an individual or an organisation/corporate entity? *

☒ Individual ☐ Organisation/Corporate entity

Applicant Details

Please enter Applicant details

Title:	Mr	You must enter a Building Name or Number, or both: *	
Other Title:		Building Name:	Forest House
First Name: *	Robin	Building Number:	
Last Name: *	Crouch	Address 1 (Street): *	--
Company/Organisation		Address 2:	
Telephone Number: *		Town/City: *	Dunkeld
Extension Number:		Country: *	Scotland
Mobile Number:		Postcode: *	PH8 0JA
Fax Number:			
Email Address: *	siobhan@msa-architects.com		

Site Address Details

Planning Authority:	Perth and Kinross Council

Full postal address of the site (including postcode where available):

Address 1:	
Address 2:	
Address 3:	
Address 4:	
Address 5:	
Town/City/Settlement:	
Post Code:	

Please identify/describe the location of the site or sites

Northing	740137	Easting	305901

Description of Proposal

Please provide a description of your proposal to which your review relates. The description should be the same as given in the application form, or as amended with the agreement of the planning authority: *
(Max 500 characters)

proposed residential development site including change of use from paddock to garden ground (in principle)

Type of Application

What type of application did you submit to the planning authority? *

☐ Application for planning permission (including householder application but excluding application to work minerals).

☒ Application for planning permission in principle.

☐ Further application.

☐ Application for approval of matters specified in conditions.

What does your review relate to? *

☒ Refusal Notice.

☐ Grant of permission with Conditions imposed.

☐ No decision reached within the prescribed period (two months after validation date or any agreed extension) – deemed refusal.

Statement of reasons for seeking review

You must state in full, why you are a seeking a review of the planning authority's decision (or failure to make a decision). Your statement must set out all matters you consider require to be taken into account in determining your review. If necessary this can be provided as a separate document in the 'Supporting Documents' section: * (Max 500 characters)

Note: you are unlikely to have a further opportunity to add to your statement of appeal at a later date, so it is essential that you produce all of the information you want the decision-maker to take into account.

You should not however raise any new matter which was not before the planning authority at the time it decided your application (or at the time expiry of the period of determination), unless you can demonstrate that the new matter could not have been raised before that time or that it not being raised before that time is a consequence of exceptional circumstances.

We feel there is scope for approval based on previously approved applications and statements outlined on MSA's supporting statement issued as part of the planning in principle application. The refusal refers to the requirement of an ecological survey which if requested, would have been supplied prior to the planning officer's determination. this we have now obtained and have included this as part of our submission, updating our own supporting statement to refer to this report.

Have you raised any matters which were not before the appointed officer at the time the Determination on your application was made? * ☐ Yes ☒ No

If yes, you should explain in the box below, why you are raising the new matter, why it was not raised with the appointed officer before your application was determined and why you consider it should be considered in your review: * (Max 500 characters)

Please provide a list of all supporting documents, materials and evidence which you wish to submit with your notice of review and intend to rely on in support of your review. You can attach these documents electronically later in the process: * (Max 500 characters)

1391 pl 101 location plan-A3 1391 pl 102 location plan 1 5000-A3 1391 pl 103 existing site plan-A2 1391 pl 104 indicative proposed site plan-A2 1391 supporting statement_rev B Preliminary Ecology Survey and Assessment report

Application Details

Please provide the application reference no. given to you by your planning authority for your previous application.	24/01927/IPL
What date was the application submitted to the planning authority? *	19/12/2024
What date was the decision issued by the planning authority? *	14/03/2025

Review Procedure

The Local Review Body will decide on the procedure to be used to determine your review and may at any time during the review process require that further information or representations be made to enable them to determine the review. Further information may be required by one or a combination of procedures, such as: written submissions; the holding of one or more hearing sessions and/or inspecting the land which is the subject of the review case.

Can this review continue to a conclusion, in your opinion, based on a review of the relevant information provided by yourself and other parties only, without any further procedures? For example, written submission, hearing session, site inspection. *

☒ Yes ☐ No

In the event that the Local Review Body appointed to consider your application decides to inspect the site, in your opinion:

Can the site be clearly seen from a road or public land? *	☒ Yes ☐ No
Is it possible for the site to be accessed safely and without barriers to entry? *	☒ Yes ☐ No

Checklist – Application for Notice of Review

Please complete the following checklist to make sure you have provided all the necessary information in support of your appeal. Failure to submit all this information may result in your appeal being deemed invalid.

Have you provided the name and address of the applicant?. *	☒ Yes ☐ No
Have you provided the date and reference number of the application which is the subject of this review? *	☒ Yes ☐ No
If you are the agent, acting on behalf of the applicant, have you provided details of your name and address and indicated whether any notice or correspondence required in connection with the review should be sent to you or the applicant? *	☒ Yes ☐ No ☐ N/A
Have you provided a statement setting out your reasons for requiring a review and by what procedure (or combination of procedures) you wish the review to be conducted? *	☒ Yes ☐ No

Note: You must state, in full, why you are seeking a review on your application. Your statement must set out all matters you consider require to be taken into account in determining your review. You may not have a further opportunity to add to your statement of review at a later date. It is therefore essential that you submit with your notice of review, all necessary information and evidence that you rely on and wish the Local Review Body to consider as part of your review.

Please attach a copy of all documents, material and evidence which you intend to rely on (e.g. plans and Drawings) which are now the subject of this review *	☒ Yes ☐ No

Note: Where the review relates to a further application e.g. renewal of planning permission or modification, variation or removal of a planning condition or where it relates to an application for approval of matters specified in conditions, it is advisable to provide the application reference number, approved plans and decision notice (if any) from the earlier consent.

Declare – Notice of Review

I/We the applicant/agent certify that this is an application for review on the grounds stated.

Declaration Name: Mrs Siobhan Johnston

Declaration Date: 09/06/2025

PROPOSED NEW DEVELOPMENT SITE, by FOREST HOUSE, DUNKELD

FOR MR ROBIN CROUCH

APPEAL STATEMENT

June 2025

Prepared by McKenzie Strickland Associates
23 Bank Street, Aberfeldy, PH15 2BB
t: 01887 829228
e: info @msa-architects.com

1. Introduction

This statement is submitted as an appeal to the Local Review Body (LRB) in relation to the refusal of outline planning application reference **24/01927/IPL** by Perth and Kinross Council's Planning Department.

- **Application background:** This application was submitted by McKenzie Strickland Associates on behalf of our client, Mr. Robin Couch, and was registered by the local authority on 23rd January 2025. The outline planning application was refused on 17th March 2025.
- **Application details:** The proposal, as described by the Local Authority, is for a "Residential development (in principle), Land 60 Metres Southwest of Forest House, Dunkeld, PH8 0JA." The application followed a pre-application consultation dated 16th July 2024 (reference: 24/00096/PREAPL) for the same site.
- **Review purpose:** This appeal is submitted within the statutory three-month period under Regulation 9(2) to request that the LRB reviews and reconsiders the decision of the appointed planning officer.
- **Overview:** We believe the planning officer has misinterpreted policy, misapplied key guiding tests, and insufficiently assessed relevant impacts. We respectfully request that the LRB overturns the refusal and grants outline consent.

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2. Grounds of Review

a) Incorrect Application of Development Plan / Countryside Policy

Policy misinterpretation: The planning officer concluded that the site lies outside the settlement boundary and is within open countryside, where development is generally restricted.

Our response: While we agree the site is located out with any designated settlement boundary, we believe insufficient weight was given to **LDP2 Policy 19: Houses in the Countryside**, specifically **Category 3 – New Houses in the Open Countryside**. Though referenced in the pre-application report, this policy does not feature heavily in the officer's report of handling. We contend that overlooking section 3.4 of the supplementary guidance document weakens the refusal reasoning.

The refusal is respectfully challenged on the basis that the proposal:

- Accords with the principle behind **LDP2 Policy 19 criteria** for Category 3 development, specifically 3.4: "Houses for Local People"
- Contributes to a clearly evidenced local housing need; and

- Aligns with the strategic goals of both **Perth & Kinross Council** and **National Planning Framework 4 (NPF4)**.

Supporting Evidence: Compliance with Schedule 4 (Policy 19) Siting Criteria: The proposed site once developed further and, in more detail, will satisfy all four siting criteria for Category 3: New Houses in the Open Countryside developments:

- **Siting and landform:** Sympathetic landform: The dwellings will be naturally set below ridgelines, embedded within a natural topographic hollow as the landform slopes down towards the River Tay, and would not be visible on any skyline.
- **Existing natural backdrops:** Enclosure is provided by mature woodland and sloped landform, offering strong natural containment. Even without the trees the landform can provide containment
- **Recognisable long-standing boundaries:** The site is bounded by established post and wire fencing, stone walling and mature hedgerow in parts, established for over 15 years.
- **Landscape impact:** The proposal is landscape-led, with effective visual containment from public viewpoints. Existing trees on site would be retained and mitigation measures put in place to take on board recommendations within the ecologist's report.

Supporting Evidence: Addressing Local Housing Need

- There is clear, pressing demand for affordable family housing in the Dunkeld area, with average house prices exceeding **£330,000**—well beyond the reach of most local households.
- Fewer than 20 affordable homes are delivered annually in the wider Strathtay ward, yet over **3,000 applicants** remain on the Council's Common Housing Register.
- Local organisations, including the **Dunkeld & Birnam Housing Action Group**, advocate for community-led housing, especially for first-time buyers and younger residents.
- The proposed homes are modest in scale and cost, with a **local occupancy intent**, which could be supported by a **Section 75 agreement** to align development with local needs.

Supporting Evidence: Policy Alignment (LDP2 & NPF4): The application supports and aligns with:

- **LDP2 Policy 19** – full compliance with Category 3 Schedule 4 siting and a clear local housing justification.
- **NPF4 Policy 17** – the development promotes rural repopulation and sustainable rural growth through "well-integrated, small-scale housing."

- **Local Housing Strategy 2022–2027** – recognises affordability challenges and prioritises rural supply in Highland Perthshire.

Supporting Evidence: Sustainability & Long-Term Benefit

- The proposed dwelling supports a low-impact, sustainable rural lifestyle for a family with longstanding ties to the area.
- It imposes minimal infrastructure demands and supports low-carbon principles aligned with NPF4 goals.
- The proposal contributes to rural vitality while protecting landscape character and enhancing local housing provision.

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b) Improper Consideration of Historic Land Use

Policy misinterpretation: The planning officer designated the site as greenfield, concluding that NPF4 Policy 9 (reuse of previously developed land) did not apply.

Our response: While the site shows signs of naturalisation—evidenced by emerging bluebells and other species—this does not negate its status as previously developed land (PDL). The officer acknowledges a historic sawmilling use, and although no visible remains exist today, this former use aligns with the Scottish Planning Policy and NPF4 definitions of PDL.

Why this matters:

- National and local policy actively encourage the reuse of brownfield or vacant land to reduce development pressure on greenfield areas.
- Redevelopment of the site for modest residential use represents a more sustainable and appropriate use than former industrial activity.
- It justifies a flexible interpretation of both NPF4, Policy 9 and LDP2, Policy 19, recognising the site's brownfield character and strategic value for rural housing delivery.

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c) Inappropriate Acceptance of Landscape Erosion and Loss of Containment

Policy misinterpretation: In reference to NPF4, Policy 14, the officer argued that future development would have detrimental landscape effects due to factors outside the applicant's control.

Our response: This conclusion is unsubstantiated. The site is currently and securely enclosed by a mature hedge to the northeast and agricultural or deer fencing around the remaining perimeter—features that are either under the applicant's control or can be secured legally.

- Even if commercial felling were to occur beyond the site boundary, the applicant commits to implementing compensatory native planting and additional landscaping to ensure visual containment.
- The application is in outline form, and any future detailed submission would demonstrate appropriate siting and landscaping, taking full account of Schedule 4 guidance and Policy 14's intent.

This demonstrates a resilient, policy-compliant approach to landscape management, not one that invites uncontrolled degradation.

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3. Why the LRB Should Reverse the Decision

- **Material policy error:** The refusal misapplies key countryside development policies that we feel are applicable to this proposal.
- **No demonstrable harm:** There are no unacceptable impacts on landscape, residential amenity, or highway safety.
- **Compliance with planning tests:** The proposal meets national sustainable development principles and satisfies outline stage requirements.
- **Balanced outcome:** Planning conditions or legal agreements can manage impacts and ensure alignment with both local and national policy priorities.

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4. Conclusion

This application satisfies all relevant criteria for a Category 3 countryside development. It does so with minimal visual or environmental impact, while making a meaningful contribution to local housing supply in a high-pressure rural area.

Although the site shows signs of re-naturalisation, including bluebell growth, the officer's designation as greenfield fails to account for its historic use as a sawmilling site, which qualifies it as previously developed land (PDL) under both Scottish Planning Policy and NPF4. This supports the principle of brownfield redevelopment and reduces pressure on genuinely undeveloped countryside.

The proposal represents a modest, appropriate, and sustainable reuse of a rural site in line with Perth & Kinross Council's goals for repopulation, housing delivery, and environmental stewardship. It should be considered a justified and policy-compliant application under Policy 19, not because it seeks an exception, but because it exemplifies what that policy—and national planning strategy—intends: carefully sited, low-impact rural homes meeting genuine need.

Furthermore, the officer's interpretation of NPF4 Policy 14 incorrectly attributes landscape impact to hypothetical future events, when in fact the site's boundaries are secure and manageable. As an outline application, detailed siting and landscape treatment would be addressed at a later stage, ensuring full compliance with Schedule 4 and all relevant policies.

We therefore respectfully request that the Local Review Body overturn the original refusal and grant planning permission in principle. We would also welcome a site visit or hearing to further demonstrate context and proposed mitigation measures.

PROPOSED NEW DEVELOPMENT SITE, by FOREST HOUSE, DUNKELD

FOR MR ROBIN CROUCH

OUTLINE PLANNING APPLICATION SUBMISSION

ARCHITECTURAL STATEMENT TO ACCOMPANY SUBMISSION

MAY 2024, revised June 2025

All photos taken 17th April 2024

Prepared by McKenzie Strickland Associates

23 Bank Street, Aberfeldy, PH15 2BB

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BACKGROUND TO THE APPLICATION

This report, to be read in conjunction with relevant site location drawings form the basis of an outline planning application submission for a residential development site located adjacent to Forest House, Dunkeld.

McKenzie Strickland Associates were appointed by the Applicant, Mr Crouch, to develop proposals for the feasibility for regenerating an area of unused land within their ownership, to provide a residential development with the potential for up to two modest three-bedroom houses.

It was agreed that due to the planning history of the site, that in the first instance, feasibility of a new strategy for the development should be established with the Local Authority and thereafter a further submission of a more detailed planning application for the architect designed houses would be carried out.

The first stage of this process was carried out in June 2024 with a preapplication consultation enquiry (planning reference: 24/00096/PREAPL) which provided feedback on the potential for the site. The current application moves the proposals to the next stage to obtain formal feedback on the potential design methodology and architectural strategy which will meet both the Applicant's brief and current planning policy thus it is hoped securing the support from Perth & Kinross Council as Planning Authority to enable a more detailed submission to be produced and thereafter approved by delegated powers.

SITE LOCATION AND ACCESS: The site is located and accessed from the south side of the 'Old Military Road', or the A984, between Dunkeld and Caputh. It shares a private, well maintained, roughly paved road with nearby fields to the north and forestry accesses at various points along its length to the south. The road is also used by a few properties to the south as well as providing access to the private fishing beats on the River Tay.

The road bisects the applicant's property: to the east lies the garden grounds of Forest House while the development plot is opposite to the west with its own independent access from the road.

Access to site from main road via private drive

Site entrance from private drive

SITE DESCRIPTION: The site is a roughly elongated triangular area of amenity ground, which slopes from the northwest to the southeast as it follows the line of the road. Much of the site is open grassed ground which the applicant maintains to ensure the area does not become overgrown. Historic maps indicate the area was part of a deciduous wood surrounded by coniferous forests, however today there are several mixed specimens, semi mature, deciduous tree groups forming a a band along the lower eastern boundary of the site which wraps around the southern tip of the plot. There are also two mature trees which sit in isolation centrally across the site.

The site is surrounded on the north and southwest sides by forestry pine forest which currently forms the backdrop to the site.

The site is well defined on all sides by post and wire type fencing though the fence on the southeast side is damaged. This is however augmented on the northeast side and the sides of a turn in by a mature beech hedge which runs parallel to the road for a good distance on either side of the access.

Historically this land was ancillary to the original house and was used as a small private timber mill though no evidence of any wood working is evident upon inobtrusive inspection. Currently the land is not used for any specific purpose though the two small outhouses are used for general storage and as a log store for Forest House.

The site provides an exciting design challenge due to its south facing topography and is particularly suited to a unique architect designed solution which will utilize the nature of the existing ground levels within the design of the houses.

Site looking south along eastern boundary

From south looking north along eastern boundary

DESIGN PROPOSAL

The applicant has owned Forest House and its associated land for several years but have become aware in recent years that the proposed development land is difficult to use as part of their garden ground due to its division from the main garden by the road and they have little use for it as a paddock. The Applicant contacted MSA to look at their proposals to create the opportunity to develop the plot as separate private residential properties. The Applicant's brief was to establish the feasibility for a development which would support up to two medium sized private family residences based on local materiality, but with a unique take on the spatial layout and the form of the properties to suit the arrangement of the site.

Feasibility is naturally the inception point of any project and this document, and associated drawings outline the potential for the development of the proposals and possible methodology required for a more detailed design development.

The context of the site and adjacent properties contribute towards the final design proposals, however in this case the latter is a mix of styles and materials and hence we would look to unify the surrounding environs within the design development in a more holistic manner than may currently be perceive.

Using the site to develop proposals ensures that the design and setting of the new properties has little impact upon the surrounding environs and minimises any alteration to the existing topography or landscape. Hence the principles of the proposals are: -

- Retain the nature of the site taking cognisance of any native species of flora and fauna found within and to the periphery of the site.

looking northwest from site entrance

- Maintain and utilise the existing access to the site ensuring good visibility in both directions and provide new hard landscaping to mirror those of Forest House.
- Provide all services and amenities required of modern residential property.
- Maintain the amenity of the existing adjacent house.
- Ensure that design proposals enhance the locality and not detract from it.
- Design of new proposals to be in accordance with all current Perth & Kinross planning guidelines for Houses in the Countryside.

Following feedback from PKC's planning department on this submission, a full detailed design exercise will be carried out, using the analysis provided here and from the Local Authority, a rationale for future design concepts will be developed.

Panorama from southern end of site

HISTORY OF THE SITE IN TERMS OF PLANNING POLICY: Previous owners of Forest House, obtained approval for a small portion of land to the north of the site for a workshop and garage (10/01162/FLL). A subsequent approved proposal (13/00167/FLL) later altered the development to include an independent residential unit at first floor with the planning boundary extended to permit the installation of foul drainage systems. It is noted that both approvals were running in tandem as both were renewed: the Garage/ workshop proposal once (13/01318/FLL); the workshop with residence twice (15/02051/FLL and 18/01720/FLL). Both approvals have now expired; however, it is hoped that a precedent for residential development on the site will be acknowledged by the Local Authority

Panorama from northern location on site

CURRENT PROPOSALS IN TERMS OF PLANNING POLICY: the location of the current development plot is out with any settlement boundary. A review of Policy 6 reveals that generally development sites require to be within settlement boundaries however there are exceptions, among others, where the development site does not adjoin a settlement boundary other factor will be taken into consideration. The proposed site, although not within the settlement boundary is not directly adjoining the boundary at any point and therefore should be considered entirely within the guidance of Policy 19: Housing in the Countryside.

Policy 19 has several categories into which a development proposal must fall into before it can be supported by the Local Authority. In this case we anticipate that the proposal falls into category "(3) new houses in the open countryside on defined categories of sites". This requires additional compliance with Category 3 of the Supplementary Guidance document.

Category 3 supplements Policy 19 by stipulating siting criteria. We will in the fullness of time demonstrate that this proposal will indeed observe these criteria as follows: -

"It blends sympathetically with landform": using the natural contours of the site, the design of the houses will likely be single story utilising design features that heighten the relationship of structure to land.

"It uses existing trees, buildings, slopes or other natural features to provide a backdrop": positioning the houses at the upper levels of the site could make the structure more prominent from the approach however the hillside topography continues to rise behind the site and along with the small, wooded areas both on site and to the north, provide a natural backdrop to the properties.

From south of site looking north

From west of site looking east

"It uses an identifiable site… with long established boundaries which separates the site naturally from the surrounding ground". Although Historic mapping published in 1959 shows the land as part of Dalbeithie House to the northwest, it is with the establishment of the adjacent land to the west as coniferous forest later that the application site was delineated as it is today. As evidenced from viewing the adjacent woodland this boundary has been in existence for many years and is shown on modern OS mapping.

From the National library of Scotland website, Perthshire, Sheet LXII: Survey date: 1864, Publication date: 1867

"It will make a positive contribution to the surrounding landscape": this is by far the most difficult condition to adhere to, yet as the Applicant's architects, McKenzie Strickland Associates will endeavour to provide quality, a low impact design which will make a positive contribution to the environment. This will require a considered approach to the design and materiality of the structure, with the specification of low impact on the environment resourcing and a considered design proposal which will site within the topography rather than on it and enhance the character of the surrounding area. A 3-dimensional strategy will be adopted to analyse the design proposal from a wider vantage point ensuring that from all publicly accessed routes, that the houses will be visually unobtrusive and not effect the enjoyment of the wider landscape. The recommendations within the Preliminary Ecology Survey and Assessment Report carried out by Tay Ecology Ltd will also be taken on board to supplement the existing adjacent woodlands with new native species trees and planting, while maintaining the existing important woodland plant species.

National planning framework for Scotland 4 is a holistic strategy for planning development and asserts the Spatial Strategy that is being adopted throughout Scotland. This document focuses on six principles that any development must follow to ensure success in planning and eliminate any negative impact on its surroundings. This proposal will take cognisance of the following principles and policies.

Sustainable places: It is anticipated that the proposed development would 'touch the earth lightly' by incorporating sustainable, renewable design principles and utilize renewable energy systems efficiently and without harm to the biodiversity of the site or its environs. It is vital that the of renewable energy

Structures on site

systems are incorporated into the design proposals to provide flexible heating and cooling strategies while energy generation and storage via photovoltaic panels along with ground source heat pump technology will contribute towards a carbon neutral development while unaffecting the amenity or appearance of the area.

The potential for rainwater harvesting from roofed areas will also be incorporated to provide a source of water for the garden.

It is evident that the existing landscaping within the site is not of horticultural merit but it can still be an ecological benefit to native flora and fauna. As such it is intended that where possible the existing small pockets of trees on the site will be retained and maintained to encourage growth or where damaged removed so as not to expose any other specimens and replaced with 2 no. of the same or an indigenous species.

However, the immediate garden ground associated with a dwelling should be considered in relation to the character of the area and therefore must enhance the existing surrounding landscape. The extent of hard landscaping would be kept to the minimum required in terms of technical and planning standards and finished in materials which will permit surface water to drain directly to the ground, while still being in keeping with the materiality of the area. Additional planting will be incorporated to augment the existing. The formation of a 'wetland' will be developed in conjunction with the surface water drainage from the house roofs where not harvested and bring further beneficial species to the site to become a 'nature positive place'.

It is anticipated that an ecology survey would be required to ascertain the potential for protected species, and this will be submitted to PKC as part of any

From northwest to south east

future detailed application. A Preliminary Ecology Survey and Assessment Report by Tay Ecology Ltd, has been carried out. The advice obtained from this report will be incorporated into the development of the landscape proposals and used to locate built structures thus mitigating the upheaval to the natural planting and landscape of the site.

Liveable places: As Architects, it is part of McKenzie Strickland Associate's ethos to provide well designed, quality homes which improve the wellbeing and quality of life of their occupants. Hence the strategy behind the full architectural development for any new development should be an appropriate response to the applicant's brief which would permit flexible living accommodation. This will be residences that will be designed to suit the changing physical requirements of the occupants over time. This would ensure that the principles of policy 16 are met by providing a high quality, sustainable and accessible home with adaptability to respond to the changing needs of the future occupants by providing all relevant support accommodation.

It is important that due respect to the architecture and character of the surrounding area is maintained and cognisance of the local identity of the area incorporated in the design development. This provides design precedents in terms of scale, form and materiality which can be adopted in a full design response. Proposals for the new dwellings will reflect elements of the existing structures in the area but create its own unique identity, generated by the site and its topography.

Policy 16: Internally the spatial arrangements will reflect modern living while adhering to all current technical legislation. Regardless of the status of the occupants, flexibility of use needs to be included so home working facilities and

From site entrance looking north

multi-use spaces will be incorporated. All future design development will also follow principles raised in this planning documentation specific to materiality, architectural design, and sustainability issues to ensure a well-designed proposal which does not detract from its surroundings.

In addition, due consideration of the impact that all services, including energy use and waste disposal will have on the site and wider environment. Consulting the SEPA flood risk map there appears to be no risk to the site from surface water flooding. Although these maps do not show the ground conditions within the site it is accepted that an engineering consultation will be required and a course of investigations will be carried out will be required to verify the ground conditions to ensure there are no significant boggy areas or visible water erosion apparent in the proposed site area which would highlight any prolonged surface water issues from the site itself following construction of any buildings and hardstanding areas. These investigations will also further clarify the soil conditions with respect to foundation requirements and site drainage designs which will incorporate a SUDS type drainage system into soakaways from any hardstanding areas will be incorporated.

Provision and routes for all services to the site will be made in conjunction with the service provider as follows: -

Sewage treatment: It is anticipated that there is no mains drainage in the area. Following site investigations and porosity tests a suitably designed septic tank / treatment installation will be provided and contained within the site ensuring no pollutions will be discharged into the adjacent watercourses and in accordance with relevant SEPA Guidelines.

Power: Requests for electricity connection to the existing mains will be requested at an early stage. Alternative energies will be considered. Due to the 'rural' nature of the site the noise effects from an air sourced heat pump would not be an issue and would also be investigated.

Water supply: It is assumed that there is mains water in the areas of the site but prior to the development of the proposals contact will be made with Scottish Water to ascertain availability.

Transportation: Parking standards and turning facilities in accordance with current legislation, including accessible facilities will be provided and integrated into the existing topography to minimise its impact.

Panorama from site entrance

CONCLUSION

From the reasoning outlined within this document, it is believed that the feasibility of the proposed residential site at has been demonstrated on the following basis:

• The site is readily identifiable with well-defined and long-established existing boundaries which will be maintained and with additional hedging as part of the detailed design proposals.

• Assurance is given that subject to approval of this application further, more detailed submissions would follow to ensure the proposed residential development will meet and exceed the quality of design as required in Local Authority Planning Policy.

• The proposed detailed design will take cognisance of the existing environment, landscape, and residential precedent in the area, implementing the design requirements outlined in the local development plan.

• Safeguarding the natural environment by incorporating renewable and Low-Carbon Energy sources and materials.

• No apparent risk to the location of the dwellings from flooding and all necessary measures will be taken to ensure there is no impact from the development on neighbouring properties or the main road.

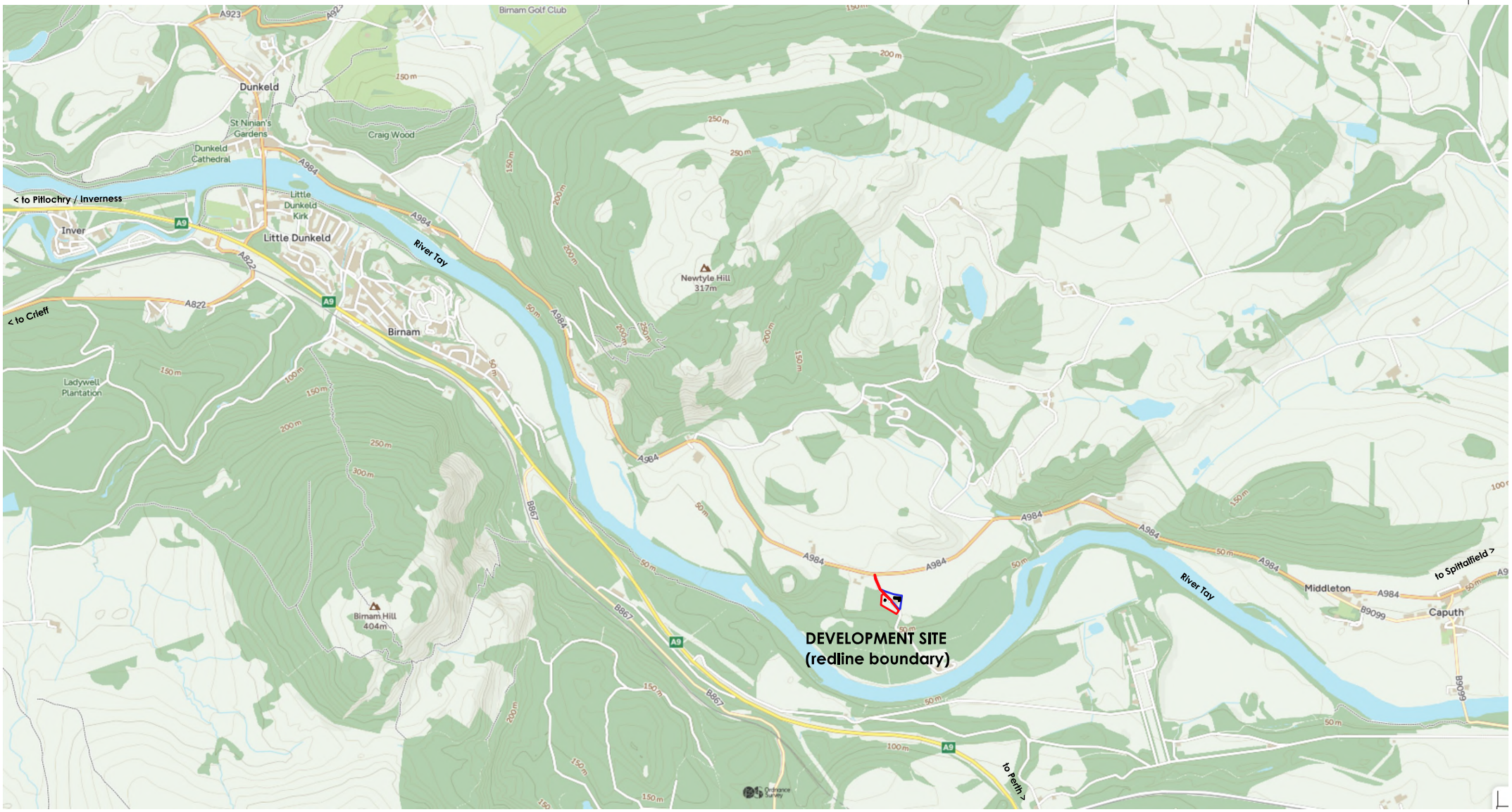
We believe therefore that the proposed development site will meet the criterion of Perth and Kinross Local Development Plan policies.

OUTLINE PLANNING

Proposed residential development site at Forest House, Dunkeld, PH8 0JA

drawing based on Ordnance Survey website data : Accessed May 2024
https://explore.osmaps.com/?lat=56.553201&lon=-3.542373&zoom=13.2540&style=Standard&type=2d

scale in metres
0 100 200 300 400 500 600 700 800 900 1000



McKenzie Strickland Associates
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JOB TITLE:
Proposed residential development site at Forest House, Dunkeld, PH8 0JA

DRAWING TITLE:	SCALE:	DRAWING STATUS:	DRAWN BY:	CHECKED BY:
location plan 1:20000	**1:20000 @A3**	**OUTLINE PLANNING**	**SCJ**	**RJ**

DRAWING NUMBER:	REVISION:	DATE:
1391/PL/101		**December 2024**

drawing based on Ordnance Survey website data : Accessed May 2024
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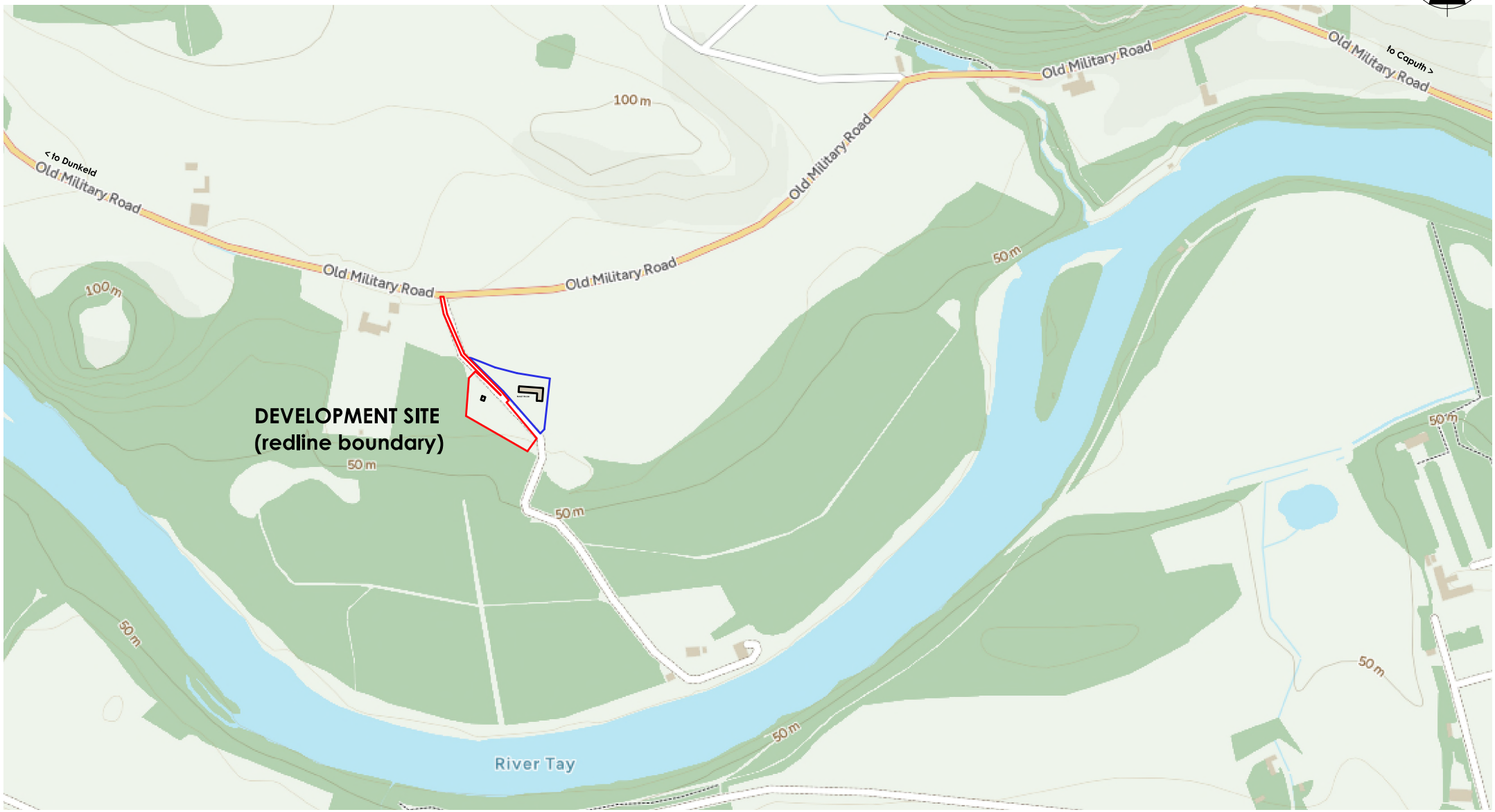

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JOB TITLE:
Proposed residential development site at Forest House, Dunkeld, PH8 0JA

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DRAWING NUMBER:	REVISION:	DATE:
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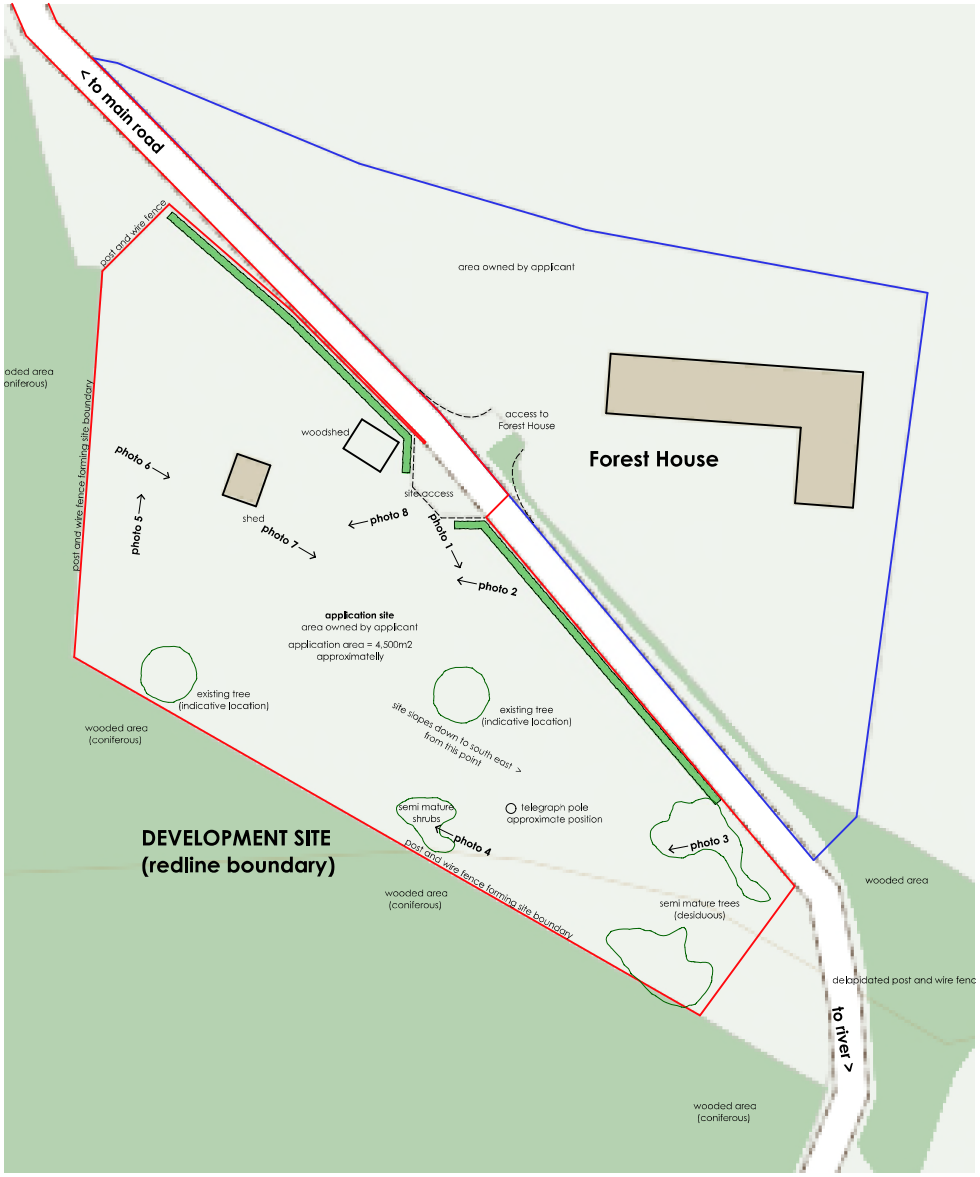


photo 1
All photos taken 17th April 2024


photo 5


photo 2


photo 6


photo 3


photo 7


photo 4


photo 8

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JOB TITLE:
Proposed residential development site at Forest House, Dunkeld, PH8 0JA

DRAWING TITLE:	SCALE:	DRAWING STATUS:	DRAWN BY:	CHECKED BY:
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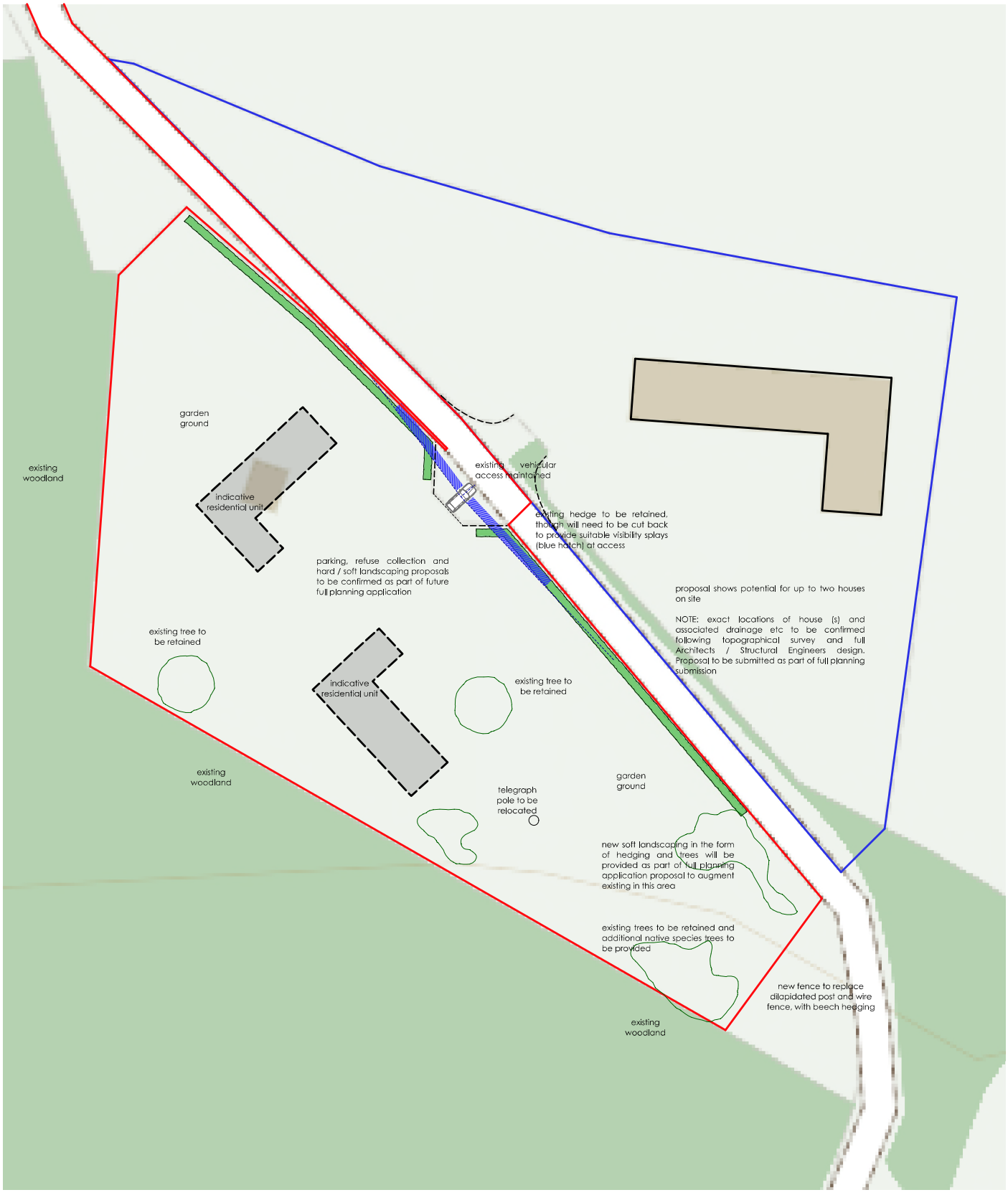

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JOB TITLE:
Proposed residential development site at Forest House, Dunkeld, PH8 0JA

DRAWING TITLE:	SCALE:	DRAWING STATUS:	DRAWN BY:	CHECKED BY:
indicative proposed site plan 1:500	1:500 @A3	OUTLINE PLANNING	SCJ	RJ

DRAWING NUMBER:	REVISION:	DATE:
1391/PL/104		December 2024

Proposed Development To The South-West Of Forest House, Dunkeld, PH8 0JA

Preliminary Ecology Survey And Assessment Report

Monday 2nd June 2025

Author Emma O'Shea MCIEEM, BSc, PG Dip Env Mgmt.

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CONTENTS

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Tay Ecology was commissioned to undertake a preliminary ecology survey and assessment to the south-west of Forest House. Field surveys included habitat, vegetation and those for bats, badgers, birds, pine martens, red squirrels, otters, beavers, water voles, amphibians, and reptiles. The presence/absence of any other protected or local biodiversity action plan species of flora and fauna was assessed. There are no local, national or international nature designations on the site. Craig Tronach SSSI and the River Tay SAC are 200m west and 400m south respectively. There will not be any direct impact to the designated sites. The site comprises grassland, bounded by a beech hedge to the north-east. The western and southern part of the site is classed as Ancient Woodland of Long-Established Plantation Origin, there are two beech trees, abundant bluebells and bracken, and bird cherry across this area, with mature woodland beyond this. It is proposed to retain the existing trees.

Bluebells are abundant across the footprint of the Ancient Woodland and increase in number to the west and south. Bluebells are a Schedule 8 plant and an ancient woodland indicator which indicates that this land has been historically wooded which is why it is therefore classed as Ancient Woodland. The presence of bluebells indicates that the soil profile of the Ancient Woodland remains relatively undisturbed even though the woodland cover has been reduced. The soil structure of an Ancient Woodland is an essential component of the Ancient Woodland classification as it supports Ancient Woodland plants which can survive even when the original woodland is no longer present. Therefore, it is recommended that the dwellings are situated to minimise impact to the remaining bluebells/Ancient Woodland soil which are located within the area where the Ancient Woodland Inventory boundary overlaps with the site boundary. The importance of bluebells should be highlighted with a species protection plan in place for during and post construction to protect the bluebells for the long-term. It is recommended that planting of native trees and shrubs would further enhance the site. For example, a selection of native species, such as silver birch, hazel, holly, crab apple, wild cherry, bird cherry, sessile oak, common oak, rowan, elm, and guelder rose are recommended. It is recommended that all works follow best practice methodology, pollution prevention and control measures.

The bat tree roost assessment confirmed that the trees have negligible or low bat roost potential. There is potential for foraging bats and installing bat boxes are recommended. There were red squirrel signs recorded within 50m of the site and a pre-construction red squirrel survey is recommended. The survey did not find any evidence of badgers, pine martens, otters, beavers or water voles and it is not expected that there will be any impact to these species. It is anticipated there will be a low impact to amphibians, reptiles and small mammals, though it is recommended that where any are found that they are relocated to suitable nearby habitat. Planting native species, creating connecting wildlife corridors, and installing wildlife homes will enhance the site. There is low likelihood as to the presence of Schedule 1 birds at the site. Species of conservation concern were recorded including red-listed swift, house martin, house sparrow; and amber-listed dunnock, wren and song thrush, and recommendations to provide nesting locations and bird boxes for a range of specie are provided. Any work involving ground vegetation clearance, should be aware of the potential for breeding birds in the nesting season and disturbance minimised. There are opportunities to improve the local habitat and incorporate biodiversity enhancement measures as part of the proposed development.

1. INTRODUCTION

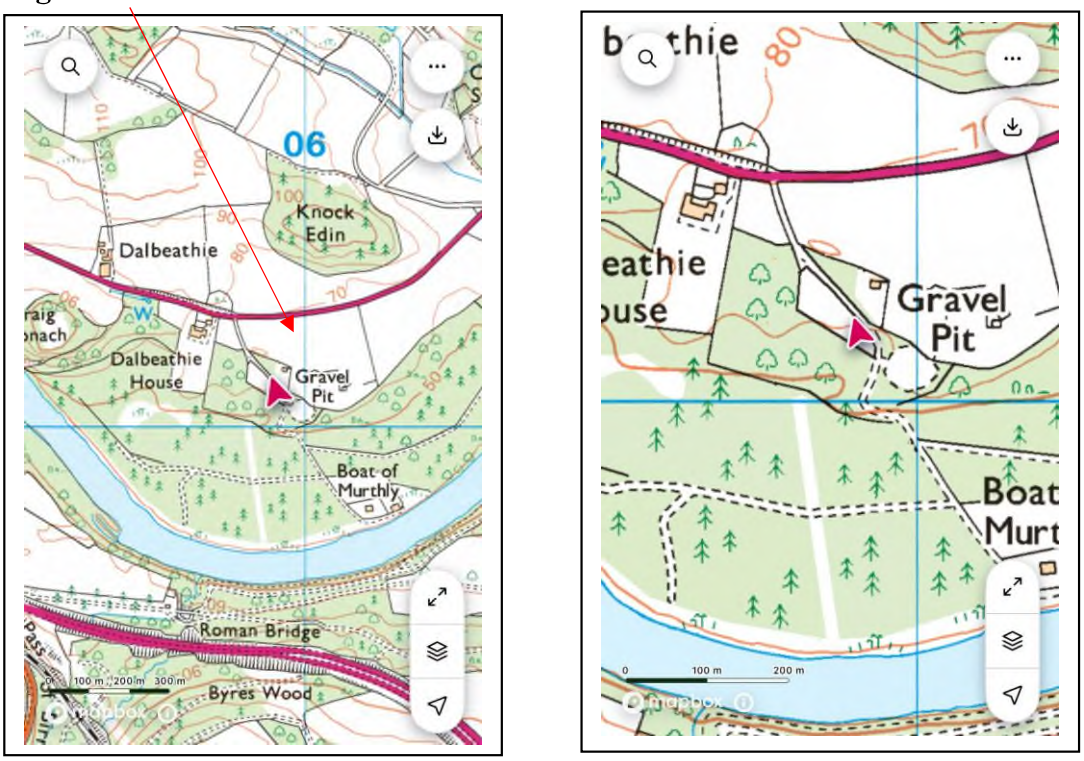
1.1 Brief from Client

Tay Ecology was commissioned to undertake a preliminary ecology survey and assessment for the proposed development at the site to the south-west of Forest House.

1.2 Site location

The proposed site is situated to the south-west of Forest House which is accessed by a private track to Boat of Murthly to the south of the A984. The location grid reference is NO 05891 40115, at an altitude of 80m above sea level. Figure 1 Site Location, Figure 2 Aerial View and Figure 3 Location Plan

Figure 1 Site Location



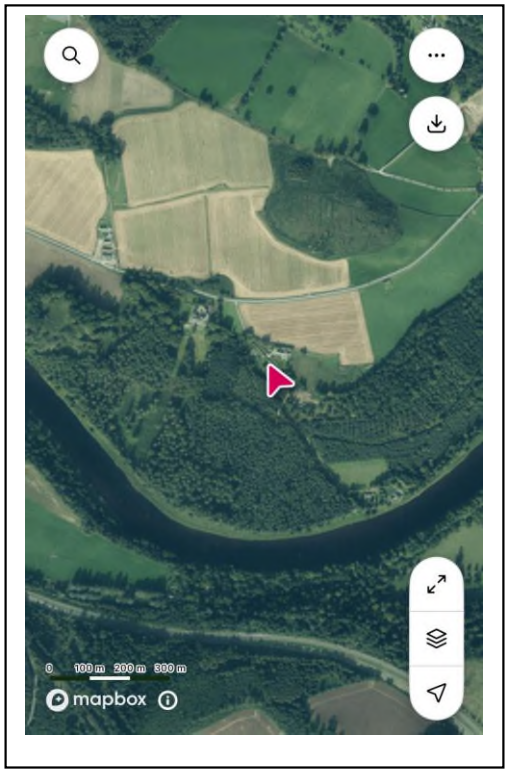
1.3 Site description

The site comprises an area of grassland which is bounded by a mature beech hedge along its north-east boundary. There is a small shed and a woodstore to the north. The western and southern part of the site is classed as Ancient Woodland of Long-Established Plantation Origin, there are two mature beech trees, and abundant bluebells and bracken across the west and south of the site. There is a large patch of bird cherry to the south-east and mature broadleaved woodland to the south-east of the bird cherry, which extends south-east of the site boundary. Figure 2 Aerial View, Figure 3 Existing Site Plan

1.4 Proposed works

It is proposed to construct two new dwellings with associated infrastructure at the site. Figure 4 Indicative Proposed Site Plan.

Figure 2 Aerial View



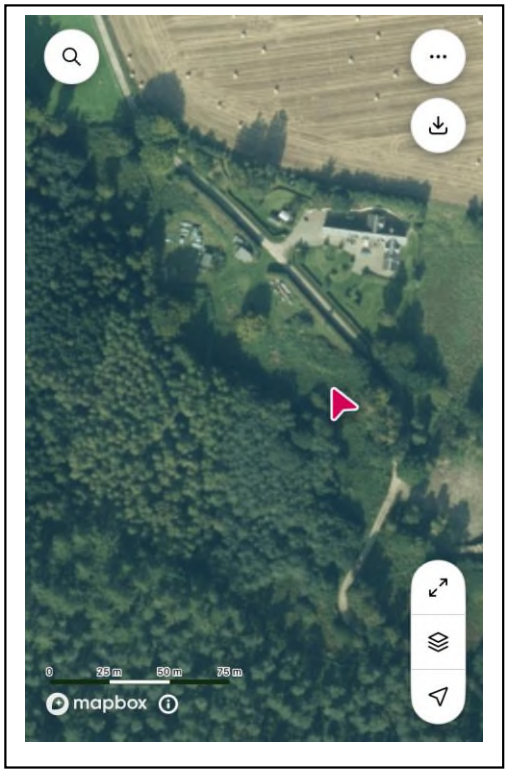
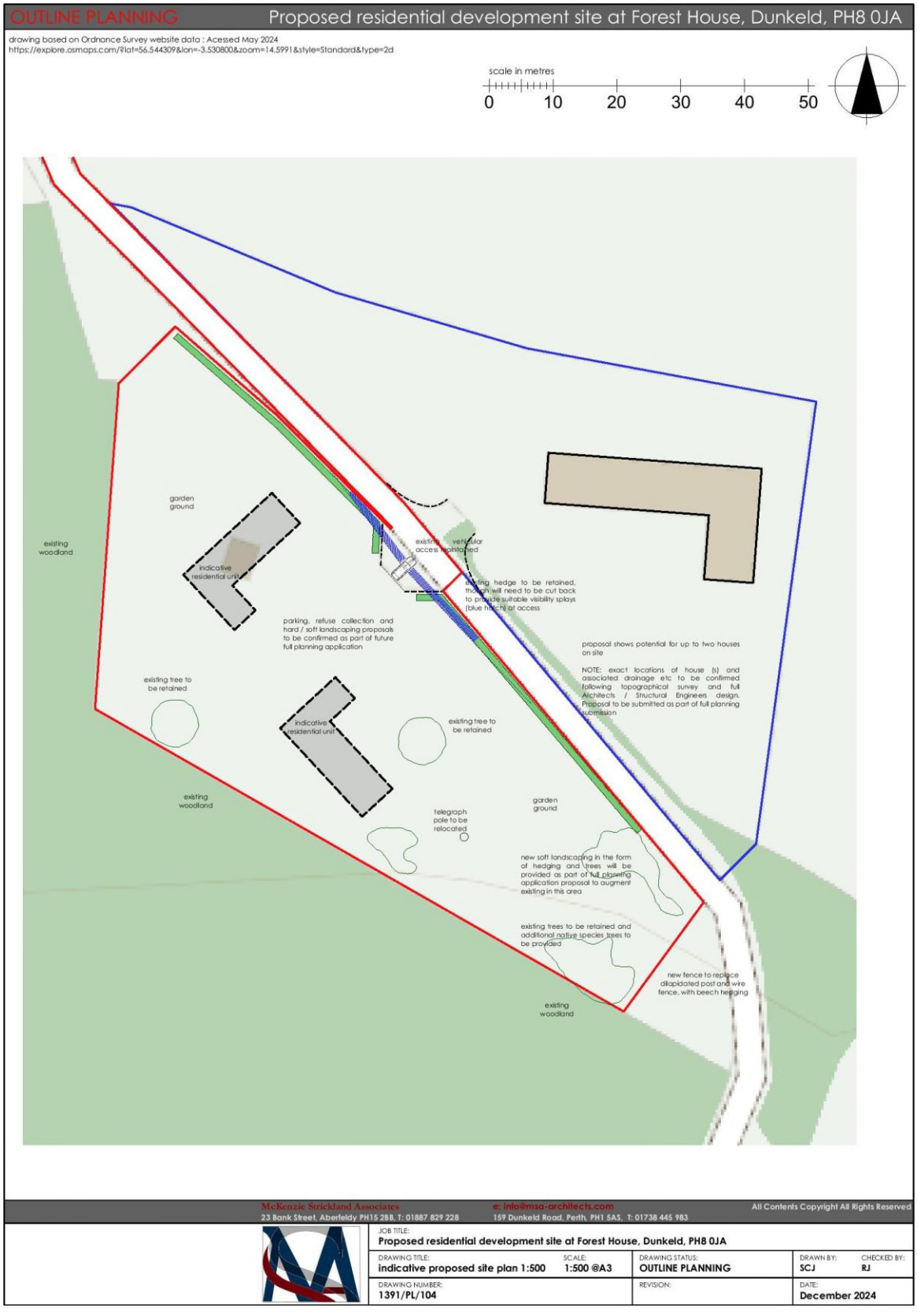


Figure 3 Existing Site Plan

Figure 4 Indicative Proposed Site Plan



2.0 POLICY AND GUIDANCE

2.1 Policy & Guidance

The legislative requirements and guidance below have been considered to ensure that the project is legally compliant and in line with Best Practice.

- The Conservation (Natural Habitats &c.) Regulations 1994 (as amended in Scotland)
- Nature Conservation (Scotland) Act 2004 (NCSA)
- Wildlife and Natural Environment (Scotland) Act 2011 (WANE Act)
- Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (WCA)
- National Planning Framework 4 (NPF4)
- Perth and Kinross Local Development Plan (Adopted) September 2019 (PKLDP)
- The Scottish Biodiversity List (SBL)
- Tayside Biodiversity Action Plan 2016-2026
- NatureScot Developing with Nature guidance - Guidance on securing positive effects for biodiversity from local development to support NPF4 policy 3
- Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (CIEEM); Guidelines for Preliminary Ecological Appraisal in the UK and Ireland, 2017
- Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (CIEEM); Guidelines for Ecological Impact Assessment in the UK and Ireland, 2018 Version 1.2 - Updated April 2022
- A Handbook on Environmental Impact Assessment, Scottish Natural Heritage, 2018.

2.2 National Planning Framework 4

National Planning Framework (NPF4) was adopted in February 2023 and superseded the 2014-issued Scottish Planning Policy. Under Section 25 of the Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997, the determination of a planning application is to be made in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

Policy 3 Biodiversity - aims to enhance biodiversity including “protect biodiversity, reverse biodiversity loss, deliver positive effects from development and strengthen nature networks”.

Policy 4 Natural places – aims to protect, restore, enhance and sustainably manage natural places including “making best use of nature-based solutions.”

Policy 6 Forestry, woodland and trees – aims to protect existing trees and woodlands, expand tree and woodland cover, sustainably manage woodland resources, and improve connectivity.

Policy 20 Blue and Green Infrastructure - aims to co-ordinate multiple functions, including climate mitigation, nature restoration, biodiversity enhancement, flood prevention and water management.

2.3 Perth and Kinross Local Development Plan

Policies to be considered from PKLDP are:

2.3.1 Policy 1 Placemaking

Policy 1A: Development must contribute positively to the quality of the surrounding built and natural environment. Proposals should also incorporate new landscape and planting works appropriate to the local context and the scale and nature of the development.

Policy 1B: Existing buildings, structures and natural features that contribute to the local townscape should be retained and sensitively integrated into proposals.

2.3.2 Policy 38 Environment and Conservation

Policy 38A: International Nature Conservation Sites: Development which could have a significant effect on a site designated or proposed under the Habitats or Birds Directive (Special Areas of Conservation and Special Protection Areas) or Ramsar site, will only be permitted where: an appropriate assessment has demonstrated that it will not adversely affect the integrity of the site; there are no alternative solutions; there are imperative reasons of overriding public interest, including those of social or economic nature; compensatory measures are provided to ensure that the overall coherence of the network is protected.

Policy 38B: National Designations: Development which would affect a National Park, National Scenic Area, Site of Special Scientific Interest or National Nature Reserve, will only be permitted where: the proposed development will not adversely affect the integrity of the area or the qualities for which it has been designated; or any such adverse effects are clearly outweighed by social, environmental or economic benefits of national importance.

Policy 38C: Local Designations: Development which would affect an area of local conservation or geological interest will not normally be permitted, except where: the objectives of designation and the overall integrity of the designated area would not be compromised; or any locally significant adverse effects on the qualities for which the area has been designated are clearly outweighed by social and economic benefits.

2.3.3 Policy 40 Forestry, Woodland and Trees

Policy 40A: Forest and Woodland Strategy: protect existing trees/woodland including orchards; seek to expand woodland cover; encourage the protection and good management of amenity trees, trees in Conservation Areas and trees on development sites in accordance with BS5837 ‘Trees in Relation to Construction’.

Policy 40B Trees, Woodland and Development: Tree surveys, undertaken by a suitably qualified professional, should accompany all applications for planning permission where there are existing trees on a site. The scope and nature of such surveys will reflect the known or potential amenity, nature conservation and/or recreational value of the trees.

The Council will follow the principles of the Scottish Government Policy on Control of Woodland Removal and developers are expected to fully accord with its requirements. In accordance with that document, there will be a presumption in favour of protecting woodland resources. In exceptional cases where the loss of individual trees or woodland cover is unavoidable, the Council will require mitigation measures to be provided.

2.3.4 Policy 41 Biodiversity

The Council will seek to protect and enhance all wildlife and wildlife habitats, whether formally designated/protected or not, taking into account the ecosystems and natural processes in the area. The Council will apply the principles of the Planning for Nature: Development Management and Wildlife Guide and will take account of the Tayside Local Biodiversity Action Plan (LBAP) and relevant national and European legislation relating to protected species when making decisions about applications for development.

European Protected Species: Planning permission will not be granted for development that would, either individually or cumulatively, be likely to have an adverse effect upon European protected species (listed in Annex IV of the Habitats Directive (Directive 92/43/EEC)) unless: there is no satisfactory alternative; and the development is required for preserving public health or public safety or for other imperative reasons of overriding public interest including those of a social or economic nature and beneficial consequences of primary importance for the environment.

Other Protected Species: Planning permission will not be granted for development that would be likely to have an adverse effect on protected species unless it can be justified in accordance with the relevant protected species legislation (Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) and the Protection of Badgers Act (1992)).

3.0 SURVEY AND SITE ASSESSMENT

3.1 Objectives

The site was surveyed by a visual ground survey and habitat and protected species surveys undertaken. Field surveys were carried out to assess the existing habitat; potential of tree bat roosts; presence/absence of badgers and their setts; red squirrels and their dreys; pine martens and their dens; assess for the presence of otters, reptiles, and water voles. The presence/absence of specially protected, sensitive, or very, rare, species of birds was assessed. The presence/absence of any other protected or local biodiversity action plan species of flora and fauna was surveyed. The survey area included the proposed site and up to 250m in the surrounding area.

3.2 Methods

3.2.1 Existing Data Sources

Web-based sources of information were examined, principally the National Biodiversity Network (NBN) Gateway (http://data.nbn.org.uk/) where a radius of 5km from the centre of the development was searched to provide suitable coverage of the area. Nature designation classifications were obtained from NatureScot Site Link (https://sitelink.nature.scot/home).

The UK Biodiversity Action Plan (https://jncc.gov.uk/our-work/uk-bap-priority-species/); Scottish Biodiversity List (https://www.nature.scot/scottish-biodiversity-list); Tayside Biodiversity Action Plan (https://www.taysidebiodiversity.co.uk/).

Other websites searched include Bat Conservation Trust (http://www.bats.org.uk/); Scottish Badgers (https://www.scottishbadgers.org.uk/); Scottish Squirrel Survey (http://www.scottishsquirrelsurvey.co.uk/); and The British Trust for Ornithology (http://www.bto.org/).

Positive records for species present in the survey area can be used to inform the assessment of biodiversity on the site but the lack of records clearly cannot be taken to imply that the species in question is absent.

3.2.2 Survey methodology

A site visit was carried out after receiving project information from MSA Architects. A walk over survey and overall habitat assessment was carried out.

3.2.2.1 The main habitats present were surveyed according to the methodology of the Joint Nature Conservation Committee's 'Phase 1 Habitat Survey' (JNCC, 2010). Classification was given to each area according to JNCC (2010). Ground vegetation was then surveyed for the presence of any other rare or protected species by walk-over surveys. Target notes describe the habitats found and any protected or otherwise notable wildlife and any suitable habitats for these species. Nomenclature for higher plants follows Stace (2019) and for mosses and liverworts British Bryological Society (2010). Species abundance is described using DAFOR scale (D – Dominant, A – Abundant, F – Frequent, O – Occasional, R – Rare, where rare refers to local abundance not national scarcity).

3.2.2.2 Bat roost potential was assessed for trees within/adjacent to the proposed site using methodology to identify the possible presence of bats, and potential for bat roosts from Collins, J (2023) 'Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines' Bat Conservation Trust (4th edition), Cowan, H (2004) 'Looking out for bats. They could be anywhere!' and NatureScot (2025a) 'Standing advice for planning consultations: bats'.

3.2.2.3 Evidence of badgers was surveyed for using guidance from Scottish Badgers (2024), 'Surveying for Badgers: Good Practice Guidelines 2018' and 'Standing advice for planning consultations: badgers' (NatureScot, 2025b). The survey was based on the interpretation of field signs (footprints, foraging holes, latrines, and setts or potential setts) and assessment of suitable habitat rather than direct observation of the animals themselves.

3.2.2.4 The potential presence of red squirrels and red squirrel dreys was surveyed using the Forestry Commission Scotland (FCS, 2006a) 'FCS Guidance Note 33: Forest operations and red squirrels', NatureScot (2025c) 'Standing advice for planning consultations: red squirrels', and UK BAP Mammals: 'Interim Guidance for Survey Methodologies, Impact Assessment and Mitigation' (The Mammal Society, 2012, pp. 13-16). The survey was based on the interpretation of any field signs (feeding signs and dreys) and assessment of suitable habitat.

3.2.2.5 Evidence of pine marten presence was surveyed for using UK BAP Mammals: 'Interim Guidance for Survey Methodologies, Impact Assessment and Mitigation' (The Mammal Society 2012, pp.71-76) and 'Standing advice for planning consultations: Pine Marten' (NatureScot, 2025d). The survey was based on the interpretation of field signs (scats, footprints, and dens or potential dens) and assessment of suitable habitat rather than direct observation of the animals themselves.

3.2.2.6 An otter survey was carried out following the standard otter survey methodology as set out in the 'New Rivers and Wildlife Handbook' (Holmes, Ward and Jose, 2001) and NatureScot (2025e) 'Standing advice for planning consultations: otters'. The survey was based on the interpretation of any field signs (spraints, footprints, tracks, slides, couches and holts or potential holts) and assessment of suitable habitat rather than direct observation of the animals themselves.

3.2.2.7 Evidence of beaver was surveyed for following NatureScot (2025g) 'Standing Advice for Planning Consultations: Beavers'. The survey was based on the interpretation of field signs (beaver dams, beaver lodges, beaver chewed trees) and assessment of suitable habitat rather than direct observation of the animals themselves.

3.2.2.8 Evidence of water vole was surveyed for using information from NatureScot (2025h) 'Water vole survey methods', and 'Standing advice for planning consultations: water vole'. The survey was based on the interpretation of field signs (burrows, runs, tracks, feeding stations, droppings, and latrines) and assessment of suitable habitat rather than direct observation of the animals themselves.

3.2.2.9 An amphibian and reptile survey was carried out following guidelines adapted from Froglife (2013), ARG UK (2025) and NatureScot (2025i) 'Standing Advice for Planning Consultations: reptiles' and NatureScot (2025j) 'Protected Species: Amphibians and Reptile'. The survey focused on searching for animals on banks, piles of wood, at edges of woodland and in / near watercourses. An assessment of suitable habitat was made.

3.2.2.10 Presence of potential Schedule 1 birds was adapted from BTO (2025), 'Methodology and survey design for bird surveys' and NatureScot (2025k) 'Protected species: birds.'

3.2.2.11 The site was surveyed for the presence of any other rare or protected species, guidelines from FCS (2007) FCS Guidance Note 34: Forest operations and European protected species in Scottish forests.

3.2.3 Survey area

The survey area includes the proposed area for development and up to 250m in the surrounding area. N.B. The curtilage of private property was not entered.

3.2.4 Timings, types, and weather conditions of Field Surveys

The site was surveyed by walk-over and protected species surveys carried out in May 2025 by Tay Ecology. The main habitats present were surveyed according to the methodology of the Joint Nature Conservation Committee's Phase 1 Habitat Survey (JNCC 2010). Signs of the presence of protected species were sought and habitats were assessed for their potential to host protected species.

21/05/2025 18 degrees Celsius; wind speed 2mph; cloud cover 0%; no precipitation.
26/05/2025 16 degrees Celsius; wind speed 2mph; cloud cover 50%; no precipitation.

3.2.5 Limitations

Survey data is accurate when the surveys took place. Full access to the site was available. The curtilage of private property was not entered.

3.2.6 Personnel

Emma O'Shea, Ecological Consultant, Tay Ecology. Emma has worked in the environmental sector for twenty-one years, during which time she has gained a wealth of experience and expertise. During the last eleven years she has worked as an ecological consultant for Tay Ecology with lead responsibility for development projects requiring habitat, protected species, bird, tree surveys and species licensing. Emma is a Nature Scot licensed bat, Schedule 1 bird and otter surveyor. Emma is a professional tree inspector and has a background in habitat surveys. She has a Postgraduate Diploma in Environmental Management from the Open University and is a full member of the Chartered Institute for Ecology and Environmental Management, and a technician member of the Arboricultural Association and a member of the Institute of Environmental Assessment and Management.

Gary Flynn, Ecologist, Tay Ecology. Gary has been employed in wildlife management and conservation in Aberdeenshire and Tayside for over twenty years. Gary trained with Tay Ecology during 2019 and his specialisms are habitat, bat, tree, and protected species surveys.

4.0 LEGISLATION AND POLICY GUIDANCE

4.1 Wildlife and Countryside Act, 1981, as amended (WCA)

The WCA sets out the protection offered to various species of plants, birds and animals in England and Wales. Bird species listed in Schedule 1, animal species listed in Schedule 5 and plant species listed in Schedule 8 of the WCA are protected. Under section 14(2) of the WCA it is an offence to "plant or otherwise cause to grow in the wild" any plant listed in Schedule 9, Part II of the Act. Japanese knotweed *Fallopia japonica* is a Schedule 9, Part III species. The WCA has since been strengthened and updated by subsequent UK and Scottish legislation (see below).

4.1.1 The Conservation (Natural Habitats &c.) Regulations 1994, as amended (Habitat Regulations)

The provisions of the Habitats Directive were transposed into UK law by the Habitat Regulations. Schedule 2 of the Habitat Regulations lists the European protected species of animals whilst Schedule 4 lists the European protected species of plants. Under the Habitat Regulations, it is illegal to deliberately capture, kill, disturb, or trade in the animals listed in Schedule 2, or pick, collect, cut, uproot, destroy, or trade in the plants listed in Schedule 4 without a licence granted by the appropriate authority. Licences can only be granted for certain purposes and if a set of conditions have been met.

4.2 Nature Conservation (Scotland) Act 2004

Deals with conserving biodiversity by introducing a duty on all public bodies to further the conservation of biodiversity and requires under Section 2(4) publication of a list of habitats and species for conservation action. Amends the 1981 Wildlife & Countryside Act in respect of protecting Sites of Special Scientific Interest, and similarly strengthens protection of certain birds, animals, and plants. Updates the 1992 Protection of Badgers Act.

The Conservation (Natural Habitats, &c.) Amendment (Scotland) Regulations 2004 Amends 1994 Habitats Regulations to bring provision for protection of European 'Natura 2000' sites into line with the protection regime set out in the Nature Conservation (Scotland) Act 2004 and affords protection to European candidate sites. It gives further protection to European protected species, introducing a new offence of 'reckless disturbance' in respect of European sites and species. The Conservation (Natural Habitats, &c.) Amendment (Scotland) Regulations 2007 Significantly strengthened the regulations relating to European Protected Species of animals and enacting the requirement to assess developments plans (structure and local plans) with, regard to effects on Natura 2000 (EC Directive) sites.

4.3 Wildlife Legislation

4.3.1 Bats

Bats are a European Protected Species and given the highest level of protection. Bats and their roosts are legally protected, whether bats are occupying the roost or not. It is illegal to disturb a bat(s) in their roosts; damage or destroy a bat roosting place, even if there are no bats present at the time; and obstruct access to a bat roost. It is illegal to capture, injure or kill a bat or possess, advertise, sell, or exchange a bat dead or alive.

4.3.2 Badger

Badgers are protected under the Protection of Badgers Act 1992. Offences under the Act include taking, injuring, or killing badgers; cruelty to badgers; interference with badger setts; selling and possession of live badgers and marking and ringing. Exceptions and licences can apply.

4.3.3 Red Squirrel

The red squirrel is protected under schedules 5 and 6 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) and the Conservation (Natural Habitats, &c.) Regulations 1994 (as amended). Under this legislation it is illegal to intentionally kill, injure or take or damage, destroy, or obstruct access to any structure or place used for shelter or protection, or to disturb any animal while it is in a drey.

4.3.4 Pine Marten

Pine martens are protected under Schedule 5 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) and the Conservation (Natural Habitats, &c.) Regulations 1994 (as amended). It is an offence to intentionally, or recklessly: kill, injure, or take a wild pine marten; damage, destroy or obstruct access to any structure or place which such an animal uses for shelter or protection (den); and to disturb such an animal when it is occupying a place for that purpose.

4.3.5 Otter

Otters are a European Protected Species and are legally protected in Scotland by the Conservation (Natural Habitats, &c.) Regulations 1994 (as amended) - "the Habitats Regulations". It is illegal to deliberately or recklessly kill, injure or take (capture) an otter; deliberately or recklessly disturb or harass an otter; damage, destroy or obstruct access to a breeding site or resting place of an otter (ie. an otter shelter). Otter shelters are legally protected whether, or not an otter is present.

4.3.6 Freshwater pearl mussel

Schedule 5 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) gives full protection to freshwater pearl mussel. It is an offence to intentionally or recklessly kill, injure or take a wild animal; damage, destroy or obstruct access to any structure or place which such an animal uses for shelter or protection; disturb such an animal when it is occupying a structure or place for shelter or protection.

4.3.7 Beaver

The beaver is a European protected species, fully protected under the Conservation (Natural Habitats, &c.) Regulations 1994 (as amended). This protection also extends to lodges and burrows used for breeding and can apply to dams.

4.3.8 Water vole

The water vole receives partial protection under Schedule 5 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) and the Conservation (Natural Habitats, &c.) Regulations 1994 (as amended). It is an offence to intentionally or recklessly: damage, destroy or obstruct access to any structure or place that water voles use for shelter or protection; disturb a water vole while it is using any such place of shelter or protection.

4.3.9 Amphibians and Reptiles

Great crested newts, natterjack toads and all marine turtles are European protected species with full protection under the Conservation (Natural Habitats, &c.) Regulations 1994 (as amended). Other amphibian and reptiles are given limited protection under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended). These are the common frog, common toad, palmate newt, smooth newt, adder, common lizard, and slow worm. Common lizard, slow worm and adder are protected against intentional or reckless killing and injury and trade.

4.3.10 Breeding birds

The main legislation Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981, as amended by the Nature Conservation (Scotland) Act 2004 make it an offence to intentionally or recklessly kill, injure or take any wild bird, or take, damage, destroy, obstruct, or interfere with any wild birds' nest, whilst being built or in use, or their eggs or young.

4.4 Invasive non-native species

"The Wildlife and Natural Environment (Scotland) Act 2011 enabled Scotland to adopt the internationally recognised three-stage approach to dealing with invasive non-native species" (Scottish Government, 2025a). This aims to prevent non-native animal and plant species spreading into areas where they may damage native species and cause economic concern; facilitate a response to reports of invasive non-native species; and ensure comprehensive control methods can be enacted (Scottish Government, 2025a).

It is a criminal offence to release or allow to escape from captivity any animal to a place out with its native range; release or allow to escape any other animal specified in an order made by Scottish ministers; cause any animal out with the control of any person to be at place out with its native range; plant or otherwise cause to grow any plant in the wild out with its native range. The Scottish Government (2025b) Non-native species: code of practice, introduced in 2012 provides practical guidance on reasonable steps, how due diligence can be shown, and actions promoting best practice.

5.0 RESULTS

5.1 Existing data search

5.1.1 Nature Designations and Protected Trees/Woodland

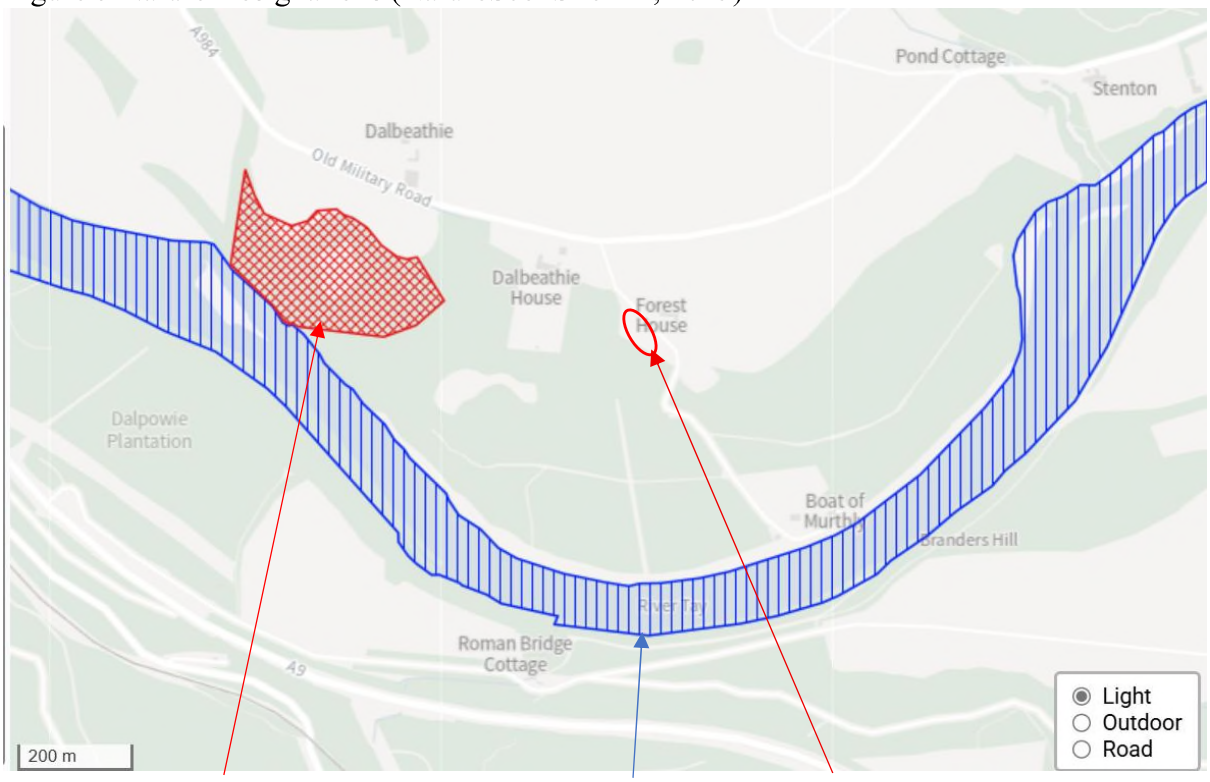
5.1.1.1 Nature Designations

NatureScot Sitelink (2025) indicated that there are no local, national or international nature designations on the site.

Craig Tronach Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) is located 200m to the west of the site. Craig Tronach comprises an area of steep cliff composed of rocks of the Highland Border series which is dominated by open semi-natural deciduous woodland. Craig Tronach is of importance for the forked spleenwort *Asplenium septentrionale*, a regionally rare fern species. The fern occurs in woodland clearings on dry south facing slopes on thin soils and rocky outcrops. The ground flora contains a number of uncommon vascular plants, including three other species of spleenwort, one an even rarer hybrid of forked spleenwort with maidenhair spleenwort.

The River Tay Special Area of Conservation (SAC) is located approximately 400m to the west. The River Tay SAC is designated for River lamprey *Lampetra fluviatilis*; Brook lamprey *Lampetra planeri*; Otter *Lutra lutra*; Sea lamprey *Petromyzon marinus*; Atlantic salmon *Salmo salar*. There are oligotrophic to mesotrophic standing waters with vegetation of the Littorelletea uniflorae and/or of the Isoëto Nanojuncetea

Figure 5 Nature Designations (NatureScot Sitelink, 2025)



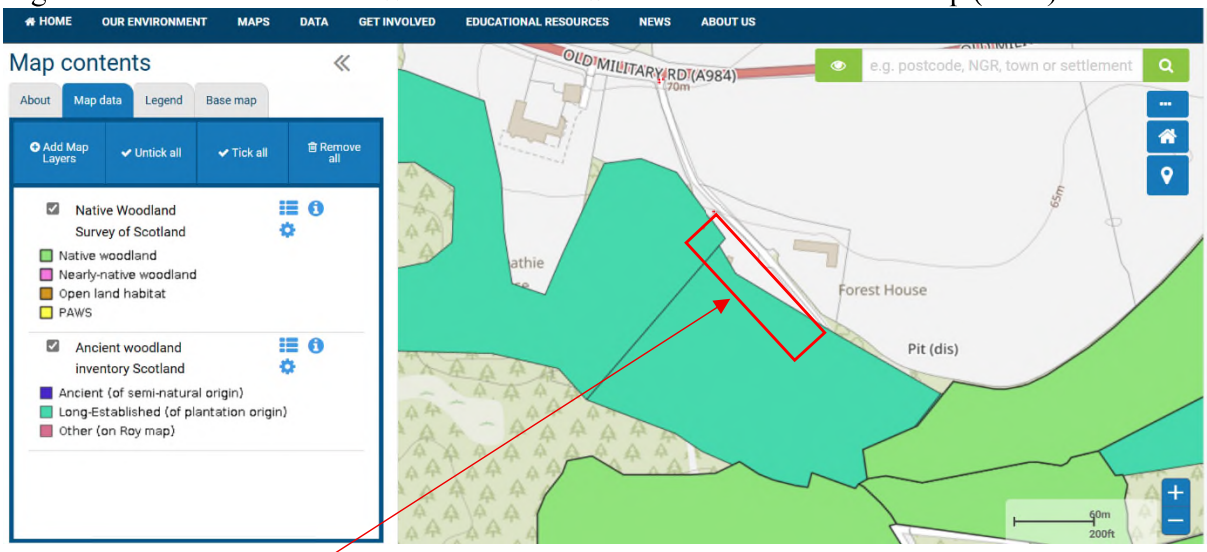
Craig Tronach SSSI River Tay SAC Indicative Site Boundary

5.1.1.2 Protected Trees/Woodland

There are no tree preservation orders TPOs on or adjacent to the site (Perth and Kinross Council, 2025b).

There is Ancient Woodland (AW) as per the Ancient Woodland Inventory (NatureScot, 2025l) shown as being located across the western and southern part of the site. This is Ancient Woodland which is long-established ancient woodland of plantation origin. The Ancient Woodland extends to the north-west, west and south-west of the site. There is no native woodland as per the Native Woodland Survey of Scotland (NWSS) on or adjacent to the site. There is Native Woodland to the south-east and south of the site beyond the Ancient Woodland.

Figure 6 Ancient and Native Woodland from Scotland's Environment Map (2025)



Indicative site boundary

Ancient semi-natural woodland is an irreplaceable resource and, along with other woodlands, hedgerows and individual trees, especially veteran trees of high nature conservation and landscape value, should be protected from adverse impacts resulting from development.

The Scottish Government's policy on control of woodland removal states that there is a strong presumption against removing ancient semi-natural woodland or Plantations on ancient woodland sites, amongst other types of woodland. Other woodlands, hedgerows and individual trees, especially veteran trees, may also have significant biodiversity value and make a significant contribution to landscape character and quality, so should be protected from adverse impacts resulting from development.

NPF4 Policy 6 specifically states that:

a) Development proposals that enhance, expand and improve woodland and tree cover will be supported.

b) Development proposals will not be supported where they will result in:

i. Any loss of ancient woodlands, ancient and veteran trees, or adverse impact on their ecological condition;

ii. Adverse impacts on native woodlands, hedgerows and individual trees of high biodiversity value, or identified for protection in the Forestry and Woodland Strategy;

iii. Fragmenting or severing woodland habitats, unless appropriate mitigation measures are identified and implemented in line with the mitigation hierarchy;

iv. Conflict with Restocking Direction, Remedial Notice or Registered Notice to Comply issued by Scottish Forestry.

c) Development proposals involving woodland removal will only be supported where they will achieve significant and clearly defined additional public benefits in accordance with relevant Scottish Government policy on woodland removal. Where woodland is removed, compensatory planting will most likely be expected to be delivered.

d) Development proposals on sites which include an area of existing woodland or land identified in the Forestry and Woodland Strategy as being suitable for woodland creation will only be supported where the enhancement and improvement of woodlands and the planting of new trees on the site (in accordance with the Forestry and Woodland Strategy) are integrated into the design.

5.1.2 Protected Species

5.1.2.1 Mammals

13 protected mammal species have been recorded within 5km; 7 within 2km; 6 within 1km and 2 within 0.5km. The NBN Atlas Scotland (2025) confirmed presence of the following protected mammal species:

Table 5.1 Protected Species Mammals within 5km, 2km, 1km, 0.5km (NBN Atlas, 2025)

Species	Latin name	5km	2km	1km	0.5km
Water vole	*Arvicola amphibius*	2	0	0	0
Beaver	*Castor fiber*	1798	34	13	0
Hedgehog	*Erinaceus europaeus*	272	43	9	1
Wildcat	*Felis sylvestis*	5	0	0	0
Brown hare	*Lepus europaeus*	134	1	0	0
Otter	*Lutra lutra*	95	20	11	0
Pine marten	*Martes martes*	37	4	2	0
Badger	*Meles meles*	7	0	0	0
Daubenton's bat	*Myotis daubentonii*	9	0	0	0
Natterer's bat	*Myotis nattereri*	2	0	0	0
Soprano pipistrelle	*Pipistrellus pygmaeus*	9	0	0	0
Brown Long-eared bat	*Plecotus auritus*	17	3	2	0
Red squirrel	*Sciurus vulgaris*	3191	402	148	17

5.1.2.2 Schedule 1 Bird Species

2 Schedule 1 bird species have been recorded within 2km; 0 within 1km and 0 within 0.5km. The NBN Atlas Scotland (2025) confirmed presence of the following Schedule 1 birds:

Table 5.2 Schedule 1 Bird Records within 2km, 1km, 0.5km (NBN Atlas Scotland, 2025)

Species	Latin name	2km	1km	0.5km
Crossbill	*Loxia curvirostra*	3	0	0
Barn owl	*Tyto alba*	13	0	0

5.1.2.3 Red listed bird species

20 red list bird species have been recorded within 2km; 2 within 1km and 1 within 0.5km. The NBN Atlas Scotland (2025) confirmed presence of the following red list species:

Table 5.3 Red List Bird Records within 2km, 1km, 0.5km (NBN Atlas Scotland, 2025)

Common name	Latin name	2km	1km	0.5km
Lesser redpoll	*Acanthis cabaret*	1	0	0
Skylark	*Alauda arvensis*	1	0	0
Tree pipit	*Anthus trivalis*	7	0	0
Swift	*Apus apus*	7	0	0
Greenfinch	*Chloris chloris*	106	1	0
Hawfinch	*Coccothraustes coccothraustes*	2	0	0
Cuckoo	*Cuculus canorus*	3	0	0
House martin	*Delichon urbicum*	10	0	0
Yellowhammer	*Emberiza citrinella*	22	1	1
Reed bunting	*Emberiza schoeniclus*	5	0	0
Grasshopper warbler	*Locustella*	2	0	0
Spotted flycatcher	*Muscicapa striata*	3	0	0
Linnet	*Linaria cannabina*	1	0	0
House sparrow	*Passer domesticus*	70	0	0
Wood warbler	*Phylloscopus sibiliatrix*	3	0	0
Whinchat	*Saxicola rubetra*	1	0	0
Woodcock	*Scolopax rusticola*	7	0	0
Starling	*Stumus vulgaris*	24	0	0
Mistle thrush	*Turdus viscivorus*	13	0	0
Lapwing	*Vanellus vanellus*	4	0	0

5.1.2.4 Amber listed bird species

21 amber listed bird species have been recorded within 2km; 3 within 1km and 3 within 0.5km. The NBN Atlas Scotland (2025) confirmed presence of the following amber list species:

Table 5.4 Amber List Bird Records within 2km, 1km, 0.5km (NBN Atlas Scotland, 2025)

Common name	Latin name	2km	1km	0.5km
Teal	*Anas crecca*	58	0	0
Mallard	*Anas platyrhynchos*	118	0	0
Grey heron	*Ardea cinera*	26	0	0
Black headed gull	*Chroicocephalus ridibundus*	6	1	1
Dipper	*Cinclus cinclus*	2	0	0
Woodpigeon	*Columbarius palumbus*	45	0	0
Rook	*Corvus frugilegus*	41	0	0
Whitethroat	*Curruca communis*	6	0	0
Kestrel	*Falco tinnunculus*	6	0	0
Moorhen	*Gallinago chloropus*	77	0	0
Oystercatcher	*Haematopus ostralegus*	12	2	1
Common gull	*Larus canus*	4	0	0
Wheatear	*Oenanthe oenanthe*	1	0	0
Willow warbler	*Phylloscopus trochilus*	37	0	0
Dunnock	*Prunella modularis*	121	1	1
Bullfinch	*Pyrrhula pyrrhula*	17	0	0

Collared dove	*Streptopelia decaocto*	86	0	0
Tawny owl	*Strix aluco*	4	0	0
Sandwich tern	*Thalasseus sandvicensis*	1	1	0
Wren	*Troglodytes troglodytes*	86	0	0
Song thrush	*Turdus philomelos*	44	0	0

5.1.2.5 Amphibian and reptiles

7 amphibian and reptile species have been recorded within 5km; 4 within 2km; 1 within 1km; 1 and 0.5km. The NBN Atlas Scotland (2025) confirmed presence of the following species:

Table 5.5 Amphibian and Reptile Records within 5km, 2km, 1km, 0.5km (NBN Atlas Scotland, 2025)

Common name	**Latin name**	**5km**	**2km**	**1km**	**0.5km**
Common Toad	*Bufo bufo*	27	3	0	0
Palmate Newt	*Lissotriton helveticus*	5	0	0	0
Smooth newt	*Lissotriton vulgaris*	1	0	0	0
Common Frog	*Rana temporaria*	19	3	0	0
Slow worm	*Anguis fragilis*	20	4	2	1
Adder	*Vipera berus*	11	0	0	0
Common lizard	*Zootoca vivipara*	22	2	0	0

5.2 Habitat description

5.2.1 Ancient Woodland

A1.1.2 Planted broadleaved woodland

The western and southern part of the site is shown as Ancient Woodland which is of Long-Established Plantation Origin. There are a small number of trees on the site which include sycamore *Acer pseudoplatanus*, silver birch *Betula pendula*, beech *Fagus sylvatica*, bird cherry *Prunus padus*. The trees are concentrated to the south-east of the site with two mature beech to the north and west. Bluebells *Hyacinthoides non-scripta* and bracken *Pteridium aquilinum* are abundant across the footprint of the ancient woodland and the bluebells increase in number towards the west and south of the site. Bluebells are a Schedule 8 plant and an ancient woodland indicator plant which indicates that this land has been historically wooded which is why it is therefore classed as Ancient Woodland. The presence of bluebells indicates that the soil profile of the ancient woodland remains relatively undisturbed even though the area of woodland cover has been reduced historically to a small number of trees. The soil structure of an Ancient Woodland is an essential component of the Ancient Woodland classification as it supports Ancient Woodland plants which can survive even when the original woodland is no longer present. Beyond the site boundary is a primarily coniferous plantation A.2.2 with Larch *Larix decidua* and Norway spruce *Picea abies*. This woodland is Ancient Woodland which is of Long-Established Plantation Origin with bluebells growing on the woodland floor in this woodland.

5.2.2 Grassland

B2.2 Semi-natural neutral grassland

The main habitat to the east of the ancient woodland is semi-natural neutral grassland with abundant false oat grass *Arrhenatherum elatius* and Yorkshire fog *Holcus lanatus*. There is abundant comfrey *Symphytum officinale* to the east and south; with frequent thistles *Cirsium arvense*, and nettles *Urtica diocia*; and occasional foxglove *Digitalis purpurea*, and dandelion *Taraxacum officinale*. There are small stands of broom *Cytisus scoparius* to the north-west and south-east of the site.


Land South-West Of Forest House, Dunkeld
Habitat Map
SCALE : 1 : 750 @ A4
DATE : 31/05/2025
N
MAP FILENAME : Forest House Habitat Map
Prepared by Tay Ecology Ltd
Email: info@tayecology.co.uk
Web: www.tayecology.co.uk
Key
Ancient Woodland Boundary
Bluebells Ancient Woodland Indicator
A.1.1.2 Broadleaved trees
A2.2.2 Planted coniferous woodland
A2 Scrub
B2.2 Grassland
J2.1.2 Hedgerow
J3.6 Buildings

5.2.3 Hedgerow

J2.1.2 Species-poor Intact hedge

Along the eastern boundary is a mature intact beech hedge with a gap at the entrance to the site.

5.2.4 Site Photographs

a. South-east along beech hedge

b. South-west across grassland

c. Mature beech tree in centre of site

d. West across site with beech and conifer wood

e. West-north-west across site

f. Small shed and woodstore to north-west

g. Bluebells to west of site

h. Bluebells and bird cherry to south-east

i. Broadleaved woodland to south-east of site

j. Beech tree with bluebells to west and south

k. East across site to existing entrance

l. North-east across site to shed and woodstore

m. Mature beech at western boundary

n. South across site from northern corner

o. Conifer woodland to west

p. Chewed cone by red squirrels

5.3 Protected Species

5.3.1 Badger Survey

Badger activity and badger signs were surveyed for, there are seven badger records within 5km and there is suitable habitat on the site and in the surrounding area for badgers.

Species recorded No badgers recorded.

Signs recorded No badger setts or latrines recorded within 100m of the site.

5.3.2 Bat Survey

5.3.2.1 Tree Bat Roost Assessment

The trees within and adjacent to the site boundary have negligible or low bat roost potential. Negligible bat roost potential is 'negligible habitat features likely to be used by roosting bats' (Collins, 2023, p.44). There are no cracks, crevices, ivy cover, deadwood in canopy or stem or decay cavities or hollows in stem (Andrews & Gardner, 2016). Low bat roost potential is 'a tree of sufficient size and age to contain potential roosting features (PRFs) but with none seen from the ground or features with only very, limited roosting potential' (Collins, 2023, p.44). No further surveys are required for trees with negligible or low bat roost potential (Collins, 2023, p.70-71).

5.3.2.2 Bat Activity

Four species of bat, Daubenton's, Natterer's, Soprano pipistrelle and Brown Long-eared bat have been recorded within 5km of the site and there is potential for foraging and commuting bats to cross the site.

5.3.3 Red Squirrel Survey

Red squirrel activity and red squirrel signs were surveyed for. There have been seventeen records of red squirrels recorded within 500m of the site. There is limited suitable habitat for red squirrels on the site. There is suitable habitat for red squirrels in the woodland immediately to the west of the site.

Species recorded No red squirrels were recorded during the survey.

Signs recorded No dreys were recorded within 50m on the site. Feeding signs with chewed cones were located in the conifer woodland to the west of the site.

5.3.4 Pine marten survey

Pine marten activity and pine marten signs were surveyed for. There are two records of pine martens recorded within 2km of the site. There is suitable habitat adjacent to the site for pine martens.

Species recorded No pine martens recorded.

Signs recorded No pine marten dens or scats recorded within 100m.

5.3.5 Otter Survey

Otter activity and otter signs were surveyed for. There are eleven records for otters recorded within 1km of the site. There is negligible habitat on site which is suitable for otters. The River Tay is 400m to the south and provides favourable suitable habitat for otters. Otters are one of the qualifying features of the River Tay SAC.

Species recorded No otters recorded.

Signs recorded No holts, footprints, tracks, and slides, recorded within 200m of the site.

5.3.6 Beaver Survey

Beaver activity and beaver signs were surveyed for. There are 13 beaver records within 1km. There is negligible habitat on site which is suitable for beavers. The River Tay is 400m to the south and provides favourable suitable habitat for beavers.

Species recorded No beavers recorded during the surveys.

Signs recorded No beaver lodges or dams within 200m.

5.3.7 Water vole survey

Water vole activity and water vole signs were surveyed for. There are two water vole records within 5km of the site. There is negligible habitat on site which is suitable for water voles. The River Tay is 400m to the south and provides favourable suitable habitat for water voles.

Species recorded No water voles recorded.

Signs recorded No water vole signs i.e., burrows, runs, tracks, feeding stations, droppings, and latrines recorded within 30m.

5.3.8 Amphibian and reptile survey

The trees and grassland have suitability for amphibians and reptiles such as the common frog, toad, and lizard. Suitable habitat was searched.

Species recorded No toads, frogs, newts, adders, slow worms or lizards were recorded.

Signs recorded No other amphibians or reptile signs were recorded.

5.3.9 Other species survey
Other species activity and signs were surveyed for. Species included invertebrates, and small mammals. The site provides limited habitat for invertebrates, and small mammals such as hedgehogs to be found.
Species recorded No other rare or protected species were recorded.
Signs recorded No other rare protected species signs were recorded.

5.3.10 Schedule 1 and Bird Activity Survey
Schedule 1 and bird activity surveys were carried out. No specially protected, sensitive, or very, rare, species of bird was recorded at the time of the survey.

There is suitable habitat on site for birds to shelter and feed with hedgerow, trees and grassland. Red, green and amber listed bird species were identified either by visual sighting, by bird call or by signs of nesting. Species recorded on or feeding over the site include Red listed swift, house martin, house sparrow; Amber listed woodpigeon, dunnock, wren, song thrush ; Green listed treecreeper, blue tit, robin, chaffinch, great tit, and blackbird.

5.3.11 Protected flora
Rare and protected flora was surveyed for. There are records for forked spleenwort at Craig Tronach SSSI 200m to the west.
Species recorded No rare or protected flora species were recorded.
Signs recorded No other indications to the presence of rare or protected flora were recorded.

5.3.12 Invasive non-native species INNS surveys
Invasive non-native species were surveyed for, including Rhododendron *Rhododendron ponticum*, Japanese knotweed *Fallopia japonica*, Himalayan balsam *Impatiens glandulifera* and Giant hogweed *Heracleum mantegazzianum*.
Species recorded No INNS were recorded on or adjacent to the site.
Signs recorded No INNS species signs were recorded on or adjacent to the site.

6.0 ASSESSMENT

6.1 Limitations
Survey data is accurate when the surveys took place. Full access to the site was available. The curtilage of private property was not entered.

6.2 Discussion

6.2.1 Designated sites
There are no local, national or international nature designations on the site. Craig Tronach SSSI and the River Tay SAC are located 200m to the west and 400m to the south respectively. There will not be any direct impact to the SSSI or SAC from the proposed development.

The western and southern part of the proposed site are designated as Ancient Woodland which is of Long-Established Plantation Origin. The remaining trees are concentrated to the south-east of the site with two mature beech to the north and west. It is proposed to retain the trees which are on the site and there will be negligible impact to the existing tree cover.

Bluebells are abundant across the footprint of the ancient woodland and the bluebells increase in number towards the west and south of the site. Bluebells are a Schedule 8 plant and an ancient woodland indicator plant which indicates that this land has been historically wooded which is why it is therefore classed as Ancient Woodland. The presence of bluebells indicates that the soil profile of the ancient woodland remains relatively undisturbed even though the area of woodland cover has been reduced historically to a small number of trees. The soil structure of an Ancient Woodland is an essential component of the Ancient Woodland classification as it supports Ancient Woodland plants which can survive even when the original woodland is no longer present. Therefore, it is recommended that the dwellings are situated to minimise impact to the bluebells/Ancient Woodland soil which are located within the area where the Ancient Woodland boundary overlaps with the site boundary. The importance of bluebells should be highlighted with a species protection plan in place for during and post construction to protect the bluebells for the long-term.

6.2.2 Habitats and flora

The site comprises an area of grassland which is bounded by a mature beech hedge along its north-east boundary. The western and southern part of the site is classed as Ancient Woodland of Long-Established Plantation Origin, there are two mature beech trees, and abundant bluebells and bracken across the west and south of the site. There is a large patch of bird cherry to the south-east and mature broadleaved woodland to the south-east of the bird cherry, which extends south-east of the site boundary.

The western and southern part of the proposed site are designated as Ancient Woodland which is of Long-Established Plantation Origin. The remaining trees are concentrated to the south-east of the site with two mature beech to the north and west. It is proposed to retain the trees which are on the site and there will be negligible impact to the existing tree cover. Bluebells are abundant across the footprint of the ancient woodland and the bluebells increase in number towards the west and south of the site. Bluebells are a Schedule 8 plant and an ancient woodland indicator plant which indicates that this land has been historically wooded which is why it is therefore classed as Ancient Woodland. The presence of bluebells indicates that the soil profile of the ancient woodland remains relatively undisturbed even though the area of woodland cover has been reduced historically to a small number of trees. The soil structure of an Ancient Woodland is an essential component of the Ancient Woodland classification as it supports Ancient Woodland plants which can survive even when the original woodland is no longer present. Therefore, it is recommended that the dwellings are situated to minimise impact to the remaining bluebells/Ancient Woodland soil which are located within the area where the Ancient Woodland boundary overlaps with the site boundary. The importance of bluebells should be highlighted with a species protection plan in place for during and post construction to protect the bluebells for the long-term.

It is recommended that planting of native trees and shrubs would further enhance the site. For example, a selection of native species, such as silver birch *Betula pendula*, hazel *Corylus avellana*, holly *Ilex aquifolium*, crab apple *Malus sylvestris*, wild cherry *Prunus avium*, bird cherry *Prunus padus*, sessile oak *Quercus petraea*, common oak *Quercus robur*, rowan *Sorbus acuparia*, elm *Ulmus glabra*, and guelder rose *Viburnum opulus* are recommended. Species-rich native hedgerows between properties would benefit biodiversity. It is recommended that all works with the potential to negatively impact (e.g. windblown dust, run-off, sediment, pollution) should be undertaken with due regard to the relevant SEPA Guidance for Pollution Prevention (GPP).

6.2.3 Badger surveys
There was no evidence of badgers recorded on or within 100m of the site. There is suitable habitat on and adjacent to the site for badgers, however, it is not anticipated that there will be any detrimental impact to badgers from the proposed development.

6.2.4 Bat surveys
There is a negligible to low potential that bat roosts are present in the trees around the site. There is potential for bats to forage in the local area and installing bat boxes would enhance the site for bats.

6.2.5 Red squirrel surveys
There was no evidence of red squirrels recorded on the site, however, there were red squirrel feeding signs in the woodland to the west of the site; no dreys were located within 50m. Due to the proximity of the woodland to the site a pre-construction red squirrel survey is recommended to establish if there are any new dreys which become established which are located within 50m of the site. It is not anticipated that there will be a significant impact to red squirrels. The development will not fragment the red squirrel population and it will not lead to an increased risk of local extinction or increased mortality as a result of forced dispersal over unsuitable habitat or areas with no or limited cover because the habitat on and around the site will continue to remain favourable for red squirrels and a dependable long-term food supply from a mixture of deciduous and coniferous trees will remain in the wider area. (Mammal Society, 2012, pp. 16-19).

6.2.6 Pine marten surveys
There is suitable habitat on site for pine martens. No pine martens, dens or scats were recorded during the surveys, though there are local records for pine martens. Pine martens are tolerant of most forms of human disturbance (Mammal Society 2012, p.76-77), and the development is unlikely to have an adverse impact on any pine marten potentially moving closer to the site as suitable habitat will remain around the site for pine martens.

6.2.7 Otter surveys
There is negligible suitable habitat on site for otters and it is not anticipated that there will be any impact to otters from the proposed development.

6.2.8 Beaver surveys
There is negligible suitable habitat on site for beavers and it is not anticipated that there will be any impact to beavers from the proposed development.

6.2.9 Water vole surveys
There is negligible suitable habitat on site for water voles and it is not anticipated that there will be any impact to water voles from the proposed development.

6.2.10 Amphibian and reptile surveys
There is suitable habitat on the site for amphibians and reptiles, although, no evidence of amphibians or reptiles was found. It is not anticipated that there will be any detrimental impact to amphibians and reptiles from the proposed development, although checks for these species should be made before work commences, and in the event any amphibians or reptiles are found they should be relocated to nearby suitable habitat.

6.2.11 Other species surveys

Species such as invertebrates and small mammals were surveyed for. There is limited suitable habitat for these species on the site. There is potential for invertebrates, and small mammals such as hedgehogs to utilise the site and it is recommended that any vegetated areas to be cleared are checked before construction commences.

6.2.12 Schedule 1 and bird activity surveys

Schedule 1 and bird activity surveys were carried out. No specially protected, sensitive, or very, rare, species of bird was recorded at the time of the survey. There is suitable habitat on site for birds to shelter and feed with the hedgerow, trees and grassland. Species of conservation concern were recorded including red listed swift, house martin, house sparrow; and amber listed woodpigeon, dunnock, wren and song thrush.

All birds are protected, and it is an offence to intentionally or recklessly kill, injure or take a wild bird, or to take, damage or destroy its nest or eggs. Any work involving vegetation clearance should be aware of the potential for breeding birds between March and August and steps taken to minimise potential disturbance with a pre-works survey taking place prior to any work commencing during this period. There is no NatureScot licence available to clear ground containing active bird nests or ground nesting birds, work must be delayed until chicks have fledged. The provision of a range of bird boxes for a variety of species placed on site will increase nesting opportunities, this should include swift, house martin, house sparrow, wren, tawny owl and nest boxes for common birds.

6.3 Conclusion

Tay Ecology was commissioned to undertake a preliminary ecology survey and assessment to the south-west of Forest House. Field surveys included habitat, vegetation and those for bats, badgers, birds, pine martens, red squirrels, otters, beavers, water voles, amphibians, and reptiles. The presence/absence of any other protected or local biodiversity action plan species of flora and fauna was assessed. There are no local, national or international nature designations on the site. Craig Tronach SSSI and the River Tay SAC are 200m west and 400m south respectively. There will not be any direct impact to the designated sites. The site comprises grassland, bounded by a beech hedge to the north-east. The western and southern part of the site is classed as Ancient Woodland of Long-Established Plantation Origin, there are two beech trees, abundant bluebells and bracken, and bird cherry across this area, with mature woodland beyond this. It is proposed to retain the existing trees.

Bluebells are abundant across the footprint of the Ancient Woodland and increase in number to the west and south. Bluebells are a Schedule 8 plant and an ancient woodland indicator which indicates that this land has been historically wooded which is why it is therefore classed as Ancient Woodland. The presence of bluebells indicates that the soil profile of the Ancient Woodland remains relatively undisturbed even though the woodland cover has been reduced. The soil structure of an Ancient Woodland is an essential component of the Ancient Woodland classification as it supports Ancient Woodland plants which can survive even when the original woodland is no longer present. Therefore, it is recommended that the dwellings are situated to minimise impact to the remaining bluebells/Ancient Woodland soil which are located within the area where the Ancient Woodland Inventory boundary overlaps with the site boundary. The importance of

bluebells should be highlighted with a species protection plan in place for during and post construction to protect the bluebells for the long-term. It is recommended that planting of native trees and shrubs would further enhance the site. For example, a selection of native species, such as silver birch, hazel, holly, crab apple, wild cherry, bird cherry, sessile oak, common oak, rowan, elm, and guelder rose are recommended. It is recommended that all works follow best practice methodology, pollution prevention and control measures.

The bat tree roost assessment confirmed that the trees have negligible or low bat roost potential. There is potential for foraging bats and installing bat boxes are recommended. There were red squirrel signs recorded within 50m of the site and a pre-construction red squirrel survey is recommended. The survey did not find any evidence of badgers, pine martens, otters, beavers or water voles and it is not expected that there will be any impact to these species. It is anticipated there will be a low impact to amphibians, reptiles and small mammals, though it is recommended that where any are found that they are relocated to suitable nearby habitat. Planting native species, creating connecting wildlife corridors, and installing wildlife homes will enhance the site. There is low likelihood as to the presence of Schedule 1 birds at the site. Species of conservation concern were recorded including red-listed swift, house martin, house sparrow; and amber-listed dunnock, wren and song thrush, and recommendations to provide nesting locations and bird boxes for a range of specie are provided. Any work involving ground vegetation clearance, should be aware of the potential for breeding birds in the nesting season and disturbance minimised. There are opportunities to improve the local habitat and incorporate biodiversity enhancement measures as part of the proposed development.

7.0 RECOMMENDATIONS and MITIGATION

To minimize impact and enhance habitat it is recommended that:

7.1 Environmental Protection

• Follow SEPA and NetRegs Guidance for Pollution Prevention (GPP). Including:
GPP 2: Above ground oil storage tanks
GPP 5: Works or maintenance in or near water
GPP 6: Working on construction and demolition sites
GPP 21: Pollution incident response planning
GPP 22: Dealing with spills

7.2 Ancient Woodland

• It is recommended that the dwellings are situated to minimise impact to the remaining bluebells/Ancient Woodland soil which are located within the area where the Ancient Woodland Inventory boundary overlaps with the site boundary.

• The importance of the Ancient Woodland soil structure should be highlighted to ensure that it is protected during and after development.

• The importance of bluebells as a Schedule 8 plant and an Ancient Woodland Indicator species should be highlighted with a species protection plan in place for during and post construction to protect the bluebells for the long-term.

7.3 Trees and Hedgerows

• It is recommended that the existing trees and hedges are retained and their roots are suitably protected during construction. A BS5837 tree survey is recommended which includes an arboricultural impact assessment and tree protection plan.

• It is recommended that planting includes a selection of native species such as, silver birch *Betula pendula*, hazel *Corylus avellana,* holly *Ilex aquifolium*, crab apple *Malus sylvestris*, wild cherry *Prunus avium*, bird cherry *Prunus padus*, sessile oak *Quercus petraea*, common oak *Quercus robur*, rowan *Sorbus acuparia*, elm *Ulmus glabra*, and guelder rose *Viburnum opulus* are recommended.

• Species-rich native hedgerows between properties would benefit biodiversity.

To minimise disturbance or damage to protected species prior to work starting on site it is recommended that:

7.4 Red Squirrels

• Pre-construction survey for red squirrels to establish if any new dreys have been established.

• In the event any active dreys are subsequently identified appropriate steps must be taken to protect the dreys with suitable exclusion zones or a red squirrel licence in place if exclusion zones are smaller than those required by Nature Scot (5m for non-breeding drey i.e. October to January, 50m for a breeding drey ie. February to September).

• Workers to be fully briefed regarding the possibility of red squirrels on site, the legal status of the animal and their dreys. Any sightings of red squirrel or discovery of a drey should be reported immediately to the Site Manager.

7.5 Amphibians, Reptiles and Small Mammals

• Checks for amphibians, reptiles and small mammals should be made prior to operations.

• Where amphibians, reptiles or small mammals are found, they should be carefully moved to a similar habitat in a safe location out-with the development footprint.

7.6 Breeding birds

• Where ground vegetation clearance is required it is recommended that this is carried out prior to the start or after the end of the bird breeding season (September to end of February). Any works during the bird breeding season (March to August inclusive) will require a pre-operational survey by a suitably qualified ecologist. If no nests are present, vegetation should be cleared following the survey.

• There is no NatureScot licence available to clear ground containing active bird nests or ground nesting birds, work must be delayed in that area until chicks have fledged.

• For any work commencing during the breeding season a breeding bird survey should be undertaken 48 hours prior to work commencing and appropriate buffer zones established around any nests.

To increase biodiversity, in addition to native planting described above, it is recommended that:

7.7 Bat Boxes

• Provision of bat boxes by installing bat boxes, woodcrete bat boxes are more durable. Multiple bat boxes can be placed on larger trees/structures with boxes facing different aspects, ideally positioned three or more metres in height.

• Install bat slates, integrated and/or external wall bat boxes as part of works.

• Example bat boxes

a. Schwelger 2F Bat Box and 2F with double fronted panel
Hanging Bat Box. Specifications: Height 33cm; diameter 16cm; weight 4kg; Schwegler Woodcrete; black with grey front panel (NHBS, 2025a).

b. Schwelger 2FE Wall Mounted Bat Shelter
External Wall Bat Box. Specification: Height: 30cm; Width: 25cm; Depth: 3-5cm; Weight: 2.5kg; Woodstone (NHBS, 2025b).

c. Schwelger 1FD Woodstone Bat Box
Specification – Dimensions: Height: 36cm x Diameter: 16cm; Weight: 4.8kg; Colour: Black, grey front panel; Material: Schwegler wood-concrete, galvanised steel hanger (NHBS, 2025c)

d. Schwelger 2FN Bat Box
Tree Bat Box. Specifications: Height 36cm; diameter 16cm; weight 4.3kg; Schwelger Woodcrete (NHBS, 2025d)

e. Kent Bat Box
Specification: Height: 47cm; Width: 25cm; Depth: 17cm; Weight: 2.9kg; Woodstone (NHBS, 2025e).

• The Bat Access Slate provides a discreet and uninterrupted path from the roof exterior to the interior. The Bat Access Slate comprises of an external vacuum formed weathering cowl showing through a natural roofing slate, this is combined with an injection moulded underbase unit which has a factory applied non-slip surface to aid access for the bats into the roof space. The Bat Access Slate is available to suit 500mm long slates (UK Slate, 2025). Leadworx bat access vents are an alternative (Leadworx, 2025).

7.8 Bird Boxes

• Provide nest boxes for a range of species such as swifts, house martins, house sparrows, wrens, a tawny owl box, and round holed, and open fronted nest boxes. Position of bird boxes above 2m height, utilise nearby trees/structures for shade and tilt boxes slightly forward. A mix of wooden and woodcrete boxes are recommended. Bird boxes are best positioned on SE, E, NE and N aspects.

• Install external wall bird boxes as part of works.

• Example bird boxes

a. 1B Schwelger Nest Box (NHBS, 2025f)

- Dimensions: 23cm x 16cm (H x D)
- Weight: 3.6kg
- Material: Schwegler Woodcrete

- Fixing: galvanised steel hanger and aluminium nail

b. 2H Schwelger Robin Nest Box (NHBS, 2025g)

- Material: Woodcrete
- Dimensions: 20cm x 15cm x 20cm (H x W x D)
- Interior diameter: 12cm
- Weight: 2.5kg

c. Sparrow Terrace Nest Box (NHBS, 2025h)
- Dimensions: 240mm x 376mm x 170mm (H x W x D)
- Weight: 2.2kg
- Fixing: 2 screws

d. Schwelger Lightweight Swift Box Type 1A (NHBS, 2025i)
Swifts are a Priority Species. The box can be attached by screws to walls or in an overhead position on external façades or under the roofs. The chipboard panel should be placed under overhanging eaves or in a sheltered site.

- Dimensions: 135mm x 340mm x 150mm
- Weight: 2.7kg

e. No. 17A Schwegler Swift Nest Box (Triple Cavity) (NHBS, 2025j)
The Swift Box No. 17A is made from a special mixture of compressed plant fibres and concrete which enables it to provide good insulation and an extremely long life. This is an extended version of the No. 17 Standard Swift Box and can accommodate three pairs of swifts in parallel. This assists in the rapid formation of swift colonies. The box is supplied in a natural grey colour but can be painted to match the background using an air-permeable paint.

- Material: Plant fibre and wood-concrete (100% asbestos-free)
- Internal dimensions: 14 x 14 x 30cm
- External dimensions: 15 x 15 x 98cm
- Weight: 7.1kg

f. No. 9A Schwelger House Martin Nest (NHBS, 2025j)

The nest should be positioned beneath the eaves at a minimum height of 2m. House martins prefer to nest on the east or north-facing walls but any direction may be used. Boxes can be installed in groups to encourage colonies to form, as the house martins are sociable birds.

- Dimensions: 110mm x 460mm x 140mm (H x W x D)
- Weight: 2.71kg

g. Small Bird Nest Box
Wooden Small bird nest box – suitable for Great, Coal and Blue Tits as well as other small hole-nesting birds, such as Pied Flycatchers, Sparrows and Nuthatches. Size: 230 x 410 x 250mm; Weight: 3kg; Entrance hole 28mm (Barn Owl Trust, 2025a).

h. Starling Nest Box

These bird boxes are designed with a 45mm entrance hole especially for starlings or woodpeckers. It is constructed from precision cut FSC certified external grade plywood, it is treated with environmentally friendly preservative which is kind to the birds and ensures a long lasting dry comfortable nest box. It features convenient access for cleaning etc, through its removeable lid (secured with a single screw).

Specification:FSC Certified Exterior Grade Plywood; Dimensions Overall height: 51cm, Overall width: 16cm, Overall Depth: 18cm; Weight 2.0kg (Nest Box Company, 2025).

i. Tawny Owl Nest Box

Tawny owl nest sites are becoming increasingly rare, providing an artificial nesting site can be hugely beneficial for these species; face the box between north-east to south-east at 3m-5m height. Approximate size – 320mm x 930mm x 360mm (DxHxW), plus fixing batten; Approximate weight – 15.2kg (Barn Owl Trust, 2025b).

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