Project Dublin Mountain Visitor Centre
Project No 23.144

Register of Ecological Clerk of Works Inspections

Date:	Location:	Issues Noted:
30/09/2025	Entire Site	Precommencement survey
08/01/2026	Masseys Woods	Trail 4 precommencement Inspection
30/01/2026	Masseys Woods	Ongoing works inspection

Additional Mitigation Measures Required

Refer to memo

No additional measures needed, potential squirrel drey and potential bat roosts noted. Memo to be updated to include these.

No additional measures needed, no update needed

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Memo

To	:	South Dublin County Council
C.C.	:	[redacted]
From	:	[redacted]
Date	:	6th February 2026
ROD Project Ref	:	23.144
Project	:	Dublin Mountains Visitor Centre
Subject	:	Pre-construction Ecological Survey Findings

Introduction

Roughan & O'Donovan was commissioned by South Dublin County Council to undertake a number of ecological surveys in advance of the construction of the Dublin Mountains Visitor Centre, which has been split into several projects for administrative purposes. Pre-construction surveys will be undertaken for each contract. The following ecological surveys were undertaken:

- Potential bat roost features (PRF's)
- Badger
- Red Squirrel
- Pine Marten
- Nesting Birds
- Invasive and Alien Plant Species
- Otter
- Bryophytes and Tufa Springs

This memo presents the results of the ecological surveys undertaken to date and presents the actions required in advance of the localised vegetation clearance to facilitate the construction and upgrading of trails. The pre-construction ecological surveys were undertaken by ecologists from ROD on the 30th of September and the 1st of October 2025, and adhered to best practice guidance (TII, 2009 and Collins (ed.), 2023). The surveys were undertaken in Massy's Wood and on Montpellier Hill.

Limitations

The surveys were undertaken on the 30th of September and the 1st of October 2025. October is considered to be a suboptimal time for surveying for Red Squirrel, with November to April being the optimal timing[1]. Many of the trees in the survey area had not lost their leaves yet. This made it difficult for surveyors to identify potential bat roost features and squirrel dreys. The vast majority of tree on Montpellier Hill are conifers which do not obscure bat roost features or dreys any less in the wintertime. The trails will be micro-sited to avoid trees, especially large trees, thereby avoiding dreys. Supervision of vegetation clearance by an ecologist will further mitigate the risk.

[1] TII (2008) Ecological Surveying Techniques for Protected Flora and Fauna during the Planning of National Road Schemes. Transport Infrastructure Ireland.

Dense vegetation made some areas inaccessible. Supervision of vegetation clearance by an ecologist will be undertaken in these areas.

2025 Survey Results

The following section presents the results of the surveys undertaken in September and October 2025.

- **Otter**

The Glendoo Brook and it's tributary, and a 150m buffer, were surveyed for Otter. No signs of Otter were found during the pre-construction 2025 surveys.

- **Bats**

On Montpellier Hill, four trees were identified as having bat roost potential, including a mature Sycamore just off of the existing trail leading from the main car park. In Massey's Wood, a number of trees were found to have bat roost potential throughout the woodland, most of which are in close proximity to the proposed trails. A list of trees with potential bat roost features are presented in Appendix A. The locations of the trees with bat roost potential are displayed in Appendix B. Any trees with bat roost potential identified during the pre-construction surveys have been added to this list. As these trees were recorded during the winter months, the surveyor was not able to identify the species pf the tree in some instances. This does not affect the status of the potential roost features of the tree.

- **Badger**

In accordance with best practice, the location of badger setts has been redacted from the publicly available copy of this memo. An unredacted version has been provided to South Dublin County Council with this information.

- **Red Squirrel**

In the south of Massey's Wood, a drey was identified on a tree located on the other side of the river from the path. Observations of Red Squirrel in Massey's Wood were frequent during the 2025 surveys. The locations of the squirrel drey is displayed in Appendix D.

- **Pine Marten**

No breeding or resting places of Pine Marten were recorded during the survey.

- **Nesting Birds**

No signs of nesting birds recorded during the survey.

- **Invasive and Alien Plant Species**

The following invasive species were recorded during pre-construction surveys:

- Butterfly Bush (*Buddleja davidii*)
- Cherry Laurel (*Prunus laurocerasus*)
- Himalayan Honeysuckle (*Leycesteria formosa*)
- Japanese knotweed (*Reynoutria japonica*)
- Rhododendron (*Rhododendron ponticum*)
- Snowberry (*Symphoricarpos albus*)

In the Hellfire Club, only two invasive species were identified – Buttefly Bush and Himalayan Honeysuckle. Buttefly Bush is present in a small stand off the path leading from the existing car park, and in a small stand on Montpellier Hill. Himalayan Honeysuckle is present on Montpellier Hill in numerous single stands.

Other than Butterfly Bush, all of the invasive species listed above were recorded in Massey's Wood. Cherry Laurel was abundant in Massey's Wood. It is particularly dense at the entrance of Massey's Wood, west of the bend in the Killakee Road (R115), and along the Glendoo Brook. Snowberry is also present in significant amounts extending from the entrance along the path running southeast, and east of the entrance bordering some residential grounds. A small area of Japanese knotweed is present in the northeastern section of Massey's Wood. An area of Rhododendron is present to the west of the walled garden. Himalayan Honeysuckle is present in small stands throughout the woodland. Given the density of Cherry Laurel in Massey's Wood, there may be other areas of invasive species which were not accessible / visible to surveyors during the pre-construction survey, and as such, are not reported here.

A map of invasive alien plant species in the study area is provided in Appendix E.

- **Rare Bryophytes**

The locations of the rare bryophytes identified on the 14th of June 2023 by Denyer Ecology and were located again in November 2024. These bryophytes are pictured in Plate 1. A population of *Orthotrichum stramineum* was recorded on two Sycamore trees in Massy's Wood at approximately 53.250709, -6.3193347. This is approximately 30m from the nearest proposed trail. This species is tolerant of high light conditions.

A population of *Plagiothecium laetum* was recorded on decaying tree stumps in the conifer plantation at approximately 53.251786, -6.3217651. This is approximately 72m west of the Killakee Road. This species requires shade.

The locations of the rare bryophytes are presented in Appendix F.

Plate 1 ***Orthotrichum stramineum*** **(left),** ***Plagiothecium laetum*** **(right).**

- **Tufa Springs**

Tufa springs were found at five locations in Massey's Wood during 2019 surveys. Three tufa springs are located within proximity of one another north of the walled garden. These tufa springs are numbered 1-3. Two of the springs are upstream of the trail and will not be directly impacted. One spring is downstream close to the Glendoo Brook, and is outside the works area. A tufa spring (identified as tufa spring number 4) is located on the east riverbank within 10m west of the walled garden. This is outside the trail works area. The southernmost tufa spring (number 5) is in the south of Massey's wood. The Glendoo Brook lies between this and the proposed trail. Given the location of this two tufa spring in relation to the watercourse, it will not be impacted by any of the proposed works.

The locations of the tufa springs are presented in Appendix G.

- **Amphibians**

Two ponds are present on Montpellier Hill on either side of the path. These provide habitat for Common Frog (*Rana temporaria*) and Smooth Newt (*Lissotriton vulgaris*). The location of these ponds is provided in Appendix H.

Discussion

The mitigation measures described in the EIAR which are conditions of planning are still valid. As outlined in the EIAR for the proposed development, an ECoW has been appointed by SDCC prior to the commencement of works to supervise and provide recommendations on the execution of any and all works which have the potential to give rise to negative effects on biodiversity and the ecological integrity of the area.

Mapping of all of the rare and protected species and habitats in the study area is provided in Appendix I.

- **Otter**

No signs of Otter were found during the pre-construction surveys and no mitigation specifically for otter is required.

- **Bats**

Trees to be felled will be clearly marked and agreed with SDCC, to prevent the removal of vegetation outside the required area, and the loss of potential bat roosts. In the event that pruning or felling of the trees with PRF-I or PRF-M[2] features cannot be avoided the following procedure will be followed:

- For trees with PRF-I features, an ECoW will be present. Trees will be inspected at ground level. If bats are found, they will be taken into care and released on site at dusk.
- For trees with PRF-M features, the feature will be inspected at height using a ladder or climber by an ecologist or person with a licence to survey bats. If bats are found, the tree will not be felled until a licence is in place.
- Tree-felling will be conducted from October to January. Should any tree roosts be identified, a derogation licence from the National Parks & Wildlife Service will be required to fell or undertake works in close proximity these trees.

- **Badger**

In order to protect Badger during site clearance, the process outlined below should be followed:

- A buffer of 30m will be implemented around each of the five badger setts, including all of their entrances. Within this buffer, no works shall take place without consultation with the ECoW.
- The trail proposed through Sett 1 will be rerouted away from the sett or removed from the design.
- None of the works should be undertaken within 50m of active setts, nor blasting or pile driving within 150m of active setts, during the breeding season (December to June inclusive).
- Any vegetation clearance in the inaccessible areas of scrub on Montpellier Hill should be monitored by an ECoW.

[2] PRF-I are features that are suitable for individual or small numbers of bats. PRF-M are suitable for multiple bats/ significant roosts such as maternity roosts.

- **Red Squirrel**

In order to protect Red Squirrel, the process outlined below should be followed:

- Should any additional dreys be found during the works that could be impacted, the works will cease in that area, and the ECoW will seek direction from the NPWS.
- Site clearance is programmed to take place outside the breeding season for Red Squirrel, when pups would be at risk of disturbance from nearby felling operations.

- **Pine Marten**

A pre-construction survey will be undertaken 2-3 weeks prior to construction. The survey will cover the footprint of the proposed development and a 50m buffer. Should any protected species shelters (e.g. dreys.) setts) be found, the ECoW will seek direction from the NPWS.

- **Nesting Birds**

Site clearance including vegetation removal will take place from October to January inclusive. This has taken early nesting birds, such as Common Crossbill, as well as late nesting birds into account and will therefore avoid direct impacts on nesting birds. Nonetheless, a preclearance survey will be carried out for nesting birds prior to the felling of conifers.

- **Invasive Alien Species**

An invasive species management plan has been prepared by Cunnane Stratton Reynolds (CSR).

In the event that the invasive species other than those identified in this memo are found during the works, best practice guidance will be followed, as per the following documents:

- TII (2020a). The Management of Invasive Alien Plant Species on National Roads – Standard. Transport Infrastructure Ireland, Dublin.
- TII (2020b). The Management of Invasive Alien Plant Species on National Roads – Technical Guidance. Transport Infrastructure Ireland, Dublin.

- **Rare Bryophytes**

In order to protect rare bryophytes, the process outlined below should be followed:

- The populations of *Orthotrichum stramineum* will be marked by the ECoW and the populations will be protected from damage during construction.
- The location of *Plagiothecium laetum* will be marked by the ECoW. Vegetation clearance and pruning within 30m of *Plagiothecium laetum* will be avoided unless agreed with the ECoW. This species is sensitive to light and requires shade.
- The Bryophyte populations will be protected during the operational phase by fencing.

- **Tufa Springs**

Any works within 10m of the tufa springs will be reviewed by the ECoW. If there is potential for damage to the tufa springs, mitigation will be put in place to protect the springs, including the supply of ground water.

- **Amphibians**

In order to protect amphibians, a 25m buffer around each of the ponds will be established, within which no vegetation clearance will be undertaken. This will apply not apply to trimming back vegetation growing onto the existing forest roads or trails.

APPENDIX A

A LIST OF TREES WITH BAT ROOST POTENTIAL IN THE STUDY AREA

Tree ID3	Roosting Potential	Tree Species[4]	Location	Notes
1	PRFM	Elm	Massey's Wood	Tear out / deep fissure on north face of main trunk
2	PRF I	Elm	Massey's Wood	Ivy covered elm
3	PRFM	Beech	Massey's Wood	Northeast facing fissures on main trunk
4	PRFM	Beech	Massey's Wood	Crevice where two main trunks join on northwest face of main trunk
5	PRFM	Beech	Massey's Wood	Tearaway and cavity
8	PRFM	Beech	Massey's Wood	Very large southeast and southwest facing fissures on main trunk
10	PRFI	Beech	Massey's Wood	South facing fissure and southeast facing knothole on main trunk
11	PRFI	Beech	Massey's Wood	Fissure and knothole facing north. Tree situated in tree line (second tree from north)
12	PRFM	Yew	Massey's Wood	Very mature. Large northeast facing fissure on main trunk
13	PRFI	Beech	Massey's Wood	Holes / fissures on the east face of the trunk
14	PRFI	Beech	Massey's Wood	Multiple small fissures on main trunk, particularly on southeast side
15	PRFM	Beech	Massey's Wood	Fissure on main trunk facing southwest
15	PRFM	Beech	Massey's Wood	Large fissure facing southwest on trunk
16	PRFM	Sycamore	Massey's Wood	Holes 4-5m from ground facing south, lots of ivy cover
17	PRFM	Beech	Massey's Wood	Multiple fissures on trunk, large hole facing path. Very mature
18	PRFI	Beech	Massey's Wood	Hole facing north on east most trunk
19	PRFI	Beech	Massey's Wood	Hole facing north
20	PRFM	Oak	Massey's Wood	Fissure / hole in tree passing path
21	PRFI	Beech	Massey's Wood	North facing fissure on main trunk
22	PRFM	Beech	Massey's Wood	Multiple fissures facing watercourse. Very mature
23	PRFI	Beech	Massey's Wood	Hole on west leading branch, facing south. Hole facing west on west leading branch
24	PRFM	Beech	Massey's Wood	West and south facing fissures on main trunk
25	PRFM	Beech	Massey's Wood	Large fissures on main trunk facing northeast
26	PRFI	Beech	Massey's Wood	Multiple holes facing south and west
27	PRFI	Beech	Massey's Wood	Holes facing south
28	PRFM	Oak	Massey's Wood	Crack 4m from ground
29	PRFM	Sycamore	Massey's Wood	Multiple broken and split branches
30	PRFM	Spruce	Hellfire Club	Monolith. Woodpecker hole southwest side 5.5m up
31	PRFM	Beech	Hellfire Club	Split of basal stem on west side 1m up
33	PRFM	Spruce	Hellfire Club	Monolith. Woodpecker hole 8m up facing s
95	PRFM	Beech	Massey's Wood	Split trunk, southwest facing
96	PRFI	Oak	Massey's Wood	Covered in ivy, also broken branches as possible PRFs
97	PRFM	Beech	Massey's Wood	Multiple fissures
99	PRFM	Beech	Massey's Wood	Beech with southwest facing fissure on main trunk
99	PRFM	Beech	Massey's Wood	East facing fissure on main trunk
100	PRFM	Beech	Massey's Wood	Mature beech with multiple fissures and some knot holes on main trunk, particularly on east face
101	PRFM	Sycamore	Hellfire Club	Potential roost features not visible from ground-level
2000	PRFI		Massey's Wood	North facing canker sore on NW leading branch
2001	PRFI	Beech	Massey's Wood	Canker wound facing south on main branch, tear out wound facing ne on main trunk, east facing fold main trunk
2002	PRFI	Beech	Massey's Wood	Fold fissure / merge on main trunk facing east
2003	PRFI		Massey's Wood	Two trunks, S trunk has north facing fissure
2004	PRFI		Massey's Wood	Multiple small fissures in main trunk, low down ones appear wet but those higher up may be suitable
2005	PRFI		Massey's Wood	N facing fissure on north- most trunk
2006	PRFM		Massey's Wood	Merging of west-most trunks
2007	FAR	Beech	Massey's Wood	Very mature, on riverbank. Multiple features visible on main trunk.
2008	FAR	Fir	Massey's Wood	Ivy covering tree may be obscuring roosts
2009	FAR	Fir	Massey's Wood	Ivy covering tree on riverbank. May be obscuring features

[3] This number is an arbitrary number that was used to identify trees during the pre-construction survey. It does not correlate to any previous surveys or reports.

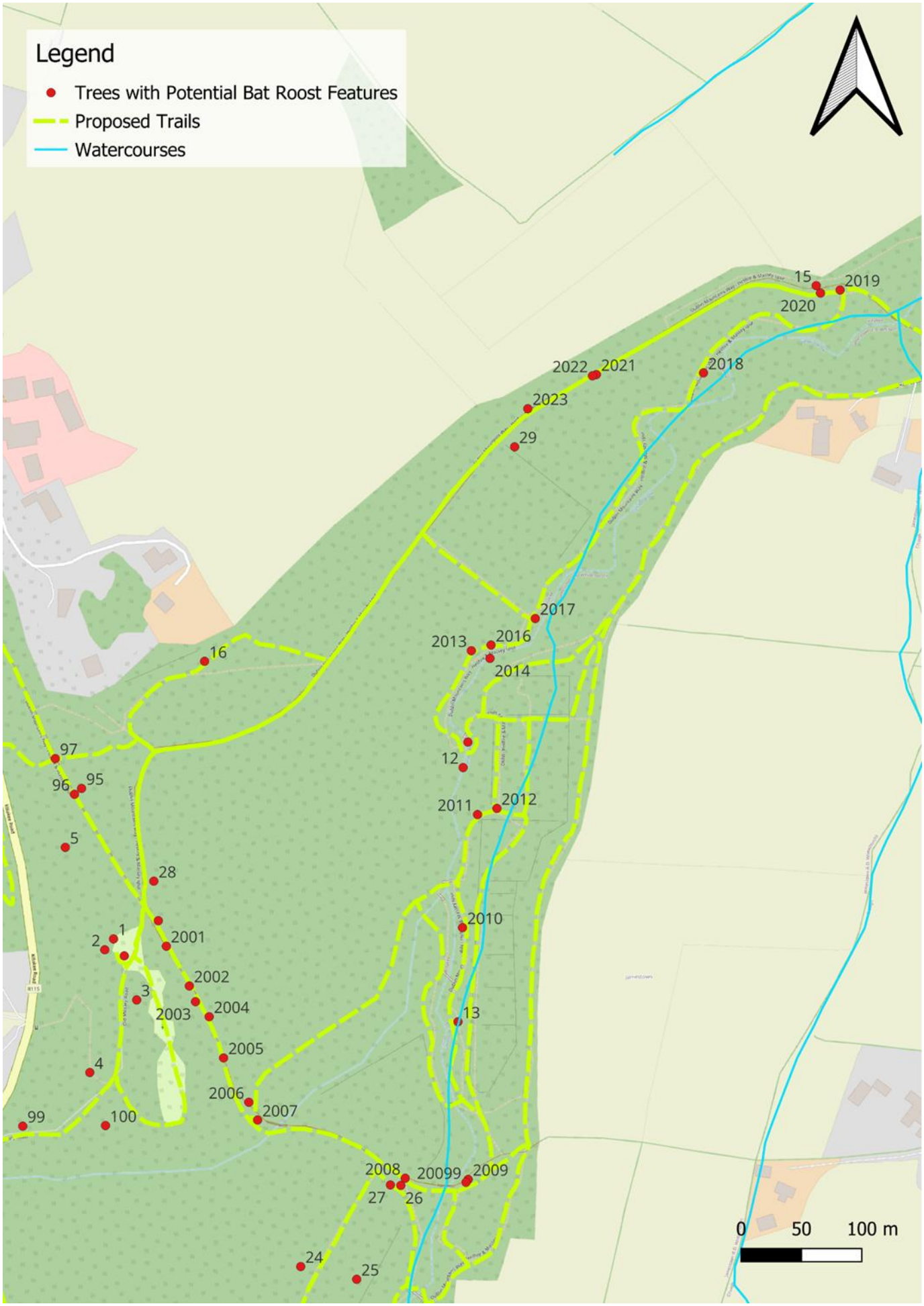
[4] Species left blank if not determined, due to lack of foliage in winter months.

2010	PRFI		Massey's Wood	Very mature tree with bark tear out / wound facing river
2011	FAR	Fir	Massey's Wood	Very mature tree, multiple features on trunk + areas not visible due to size
2012	FAR		Massey's Wood	Ivy covering tree and potentially obscuring features
2013	FAR		Massey's Wood	Mature. Epicormic growth obscuring much of tree.
2014	FAR		Massey's Wood	Mature. Epicormic growth obscuring much of tree.
2016	FAR		Massey's Wood	Mature. Epicormic growth obscuring much of tree.
2017	FAR		Massey's Wood	Mature. Epicormic growth obscuring much of tree.
2018	PRFI	Yew	Massey's Wood	Very mature tree with multiple small holes on main trunk.
2019	PRFI		Massey's Wood	Kntohole facing trail (south)
2020	FAR		Massey's Wood	Tree above trail on stone wall bank. Knothole facing trail (S). Ivy covering most of trunk
2021	PRFM	Beech	Massey's Wood	Merging of trunks may create cavity.
2022	FAR		Massey's Wood	Ivy obscuring much of trunk
2023	FAR	Sessile oak	Massey's Wood	Very mature tree. Due to size, many areas not visible.
3000	PRFI		Massey's Wood	Large monolith should be retained, has some features which may provide roosting habitat
20099	FAR	Fir	Massey's Wood	Ivy covering tree on riverbank. May be obscuring features
3001	FAR	Redwood	Massey's Wood	Very mature tree

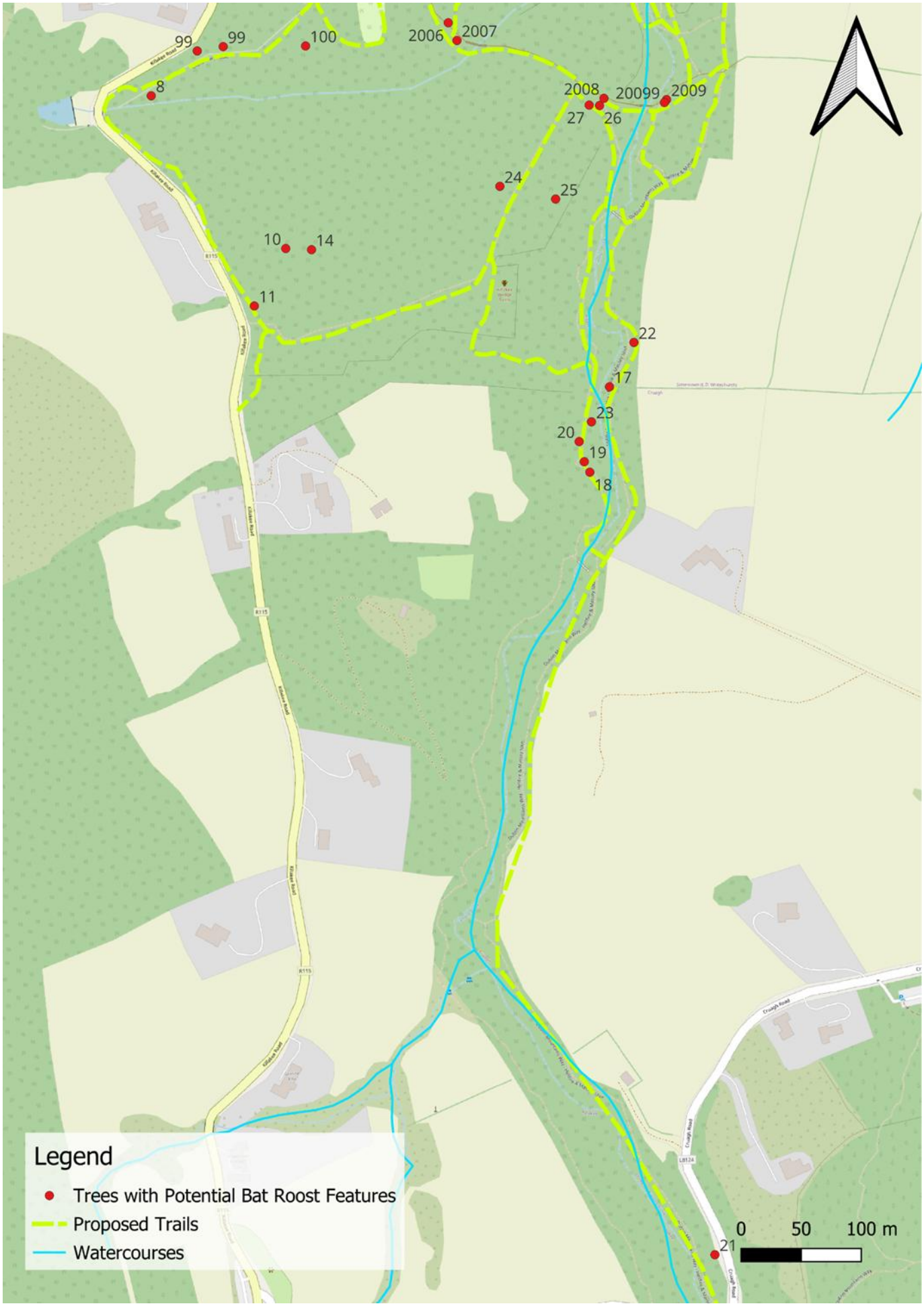
APPENDIX B

THE LOCATION OF TREES WITH BAT ROOST POTENTIAL IN THE STUDY AREA

Trees with potential bat roost features recorded on Montpellier Hill in 2025.



Trees with potential bat roost features recorded in the northern section of Massey's Wood in 2025.



Trees with potential bat roost features recorded in the southern section of Massey's Wood in 2025.

APPENDIX C

THE LOCATION OF BADGER SETTS IN THE STUDY AREA

In accordance with best practice, the location of badger setts has been redacted from the publicly available copy of this memo. An unredacted version has been provided to South Dublin County Council with this information.

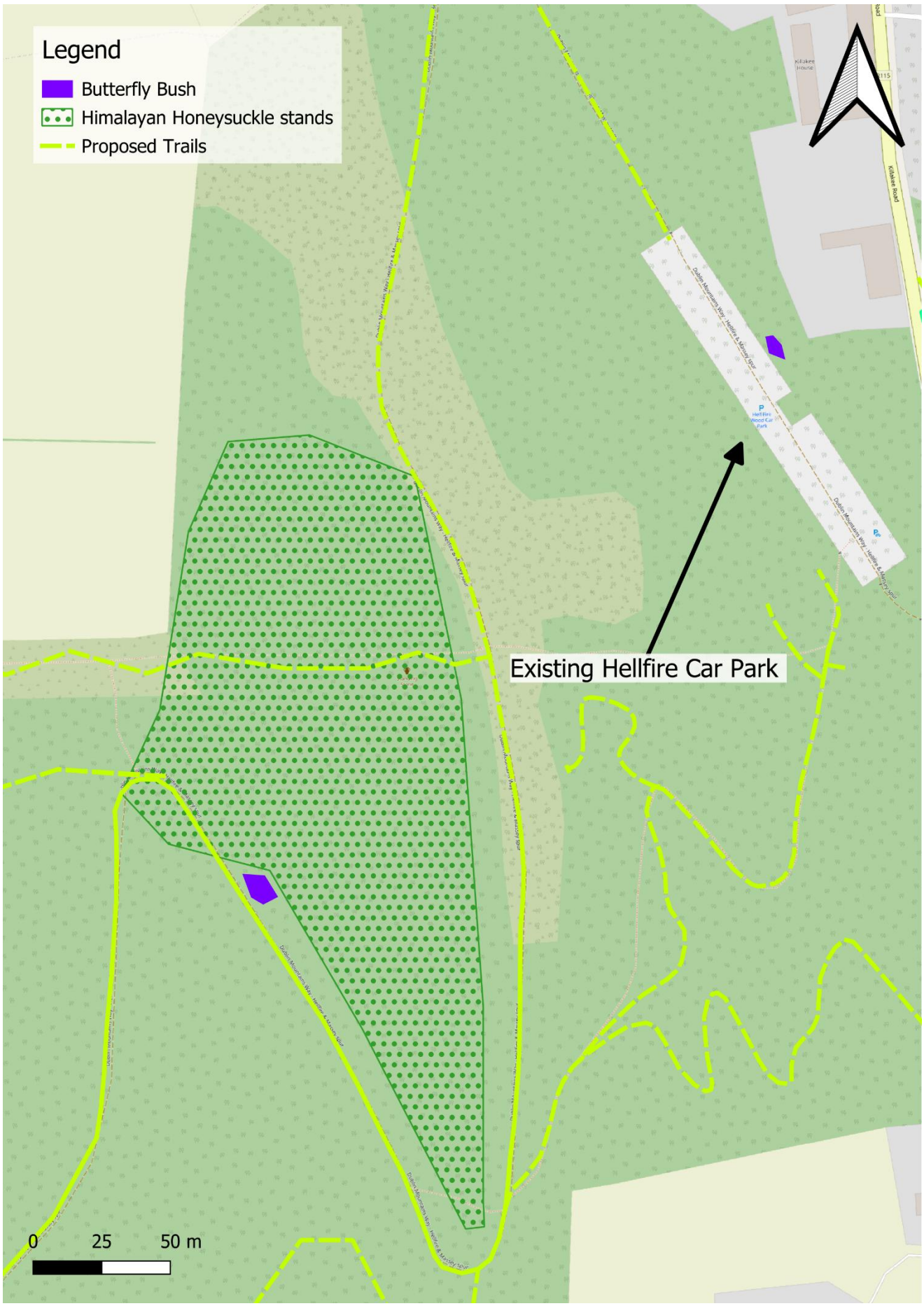
APPENDIX D

THE LOCATION OF RED SQUIRREL DREY IN THE STUDY AREA

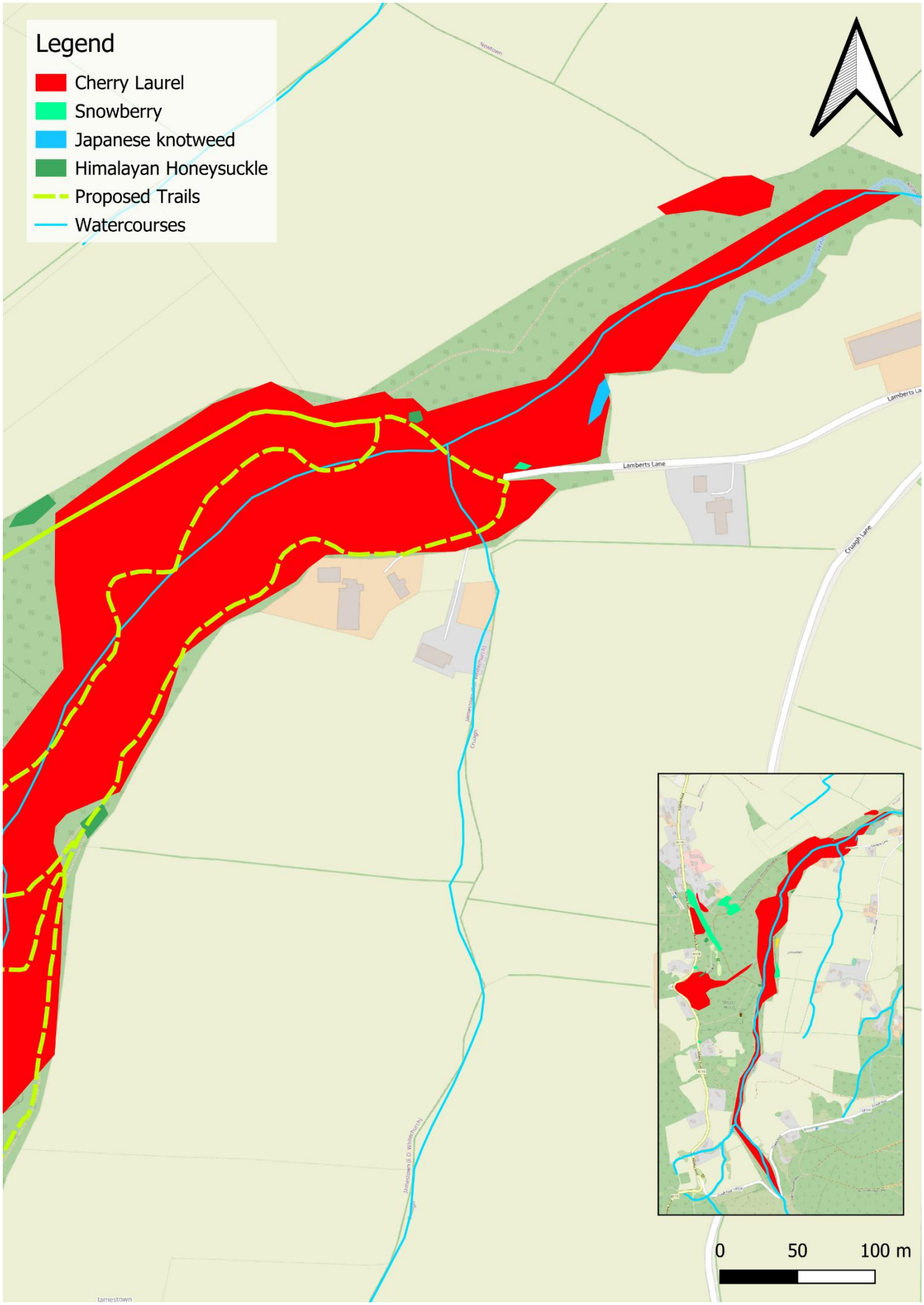

Legend
Red Squirrel Drey
Proposed Trail
Watercourse
0
25
50 m

APPENDIX E

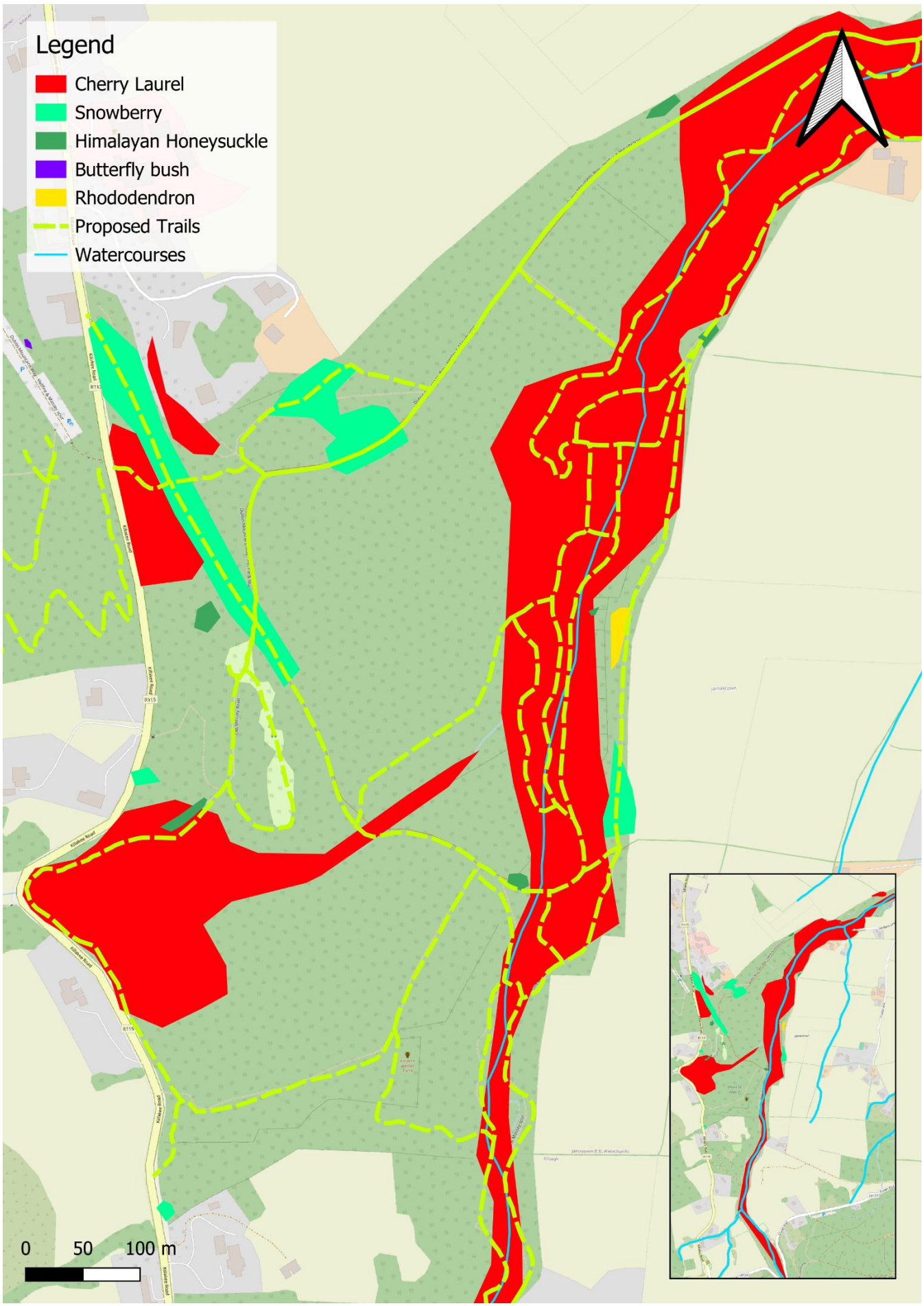
THE LOCATIONS OF INVASIVE SPECIES IN THE STUDY AREA



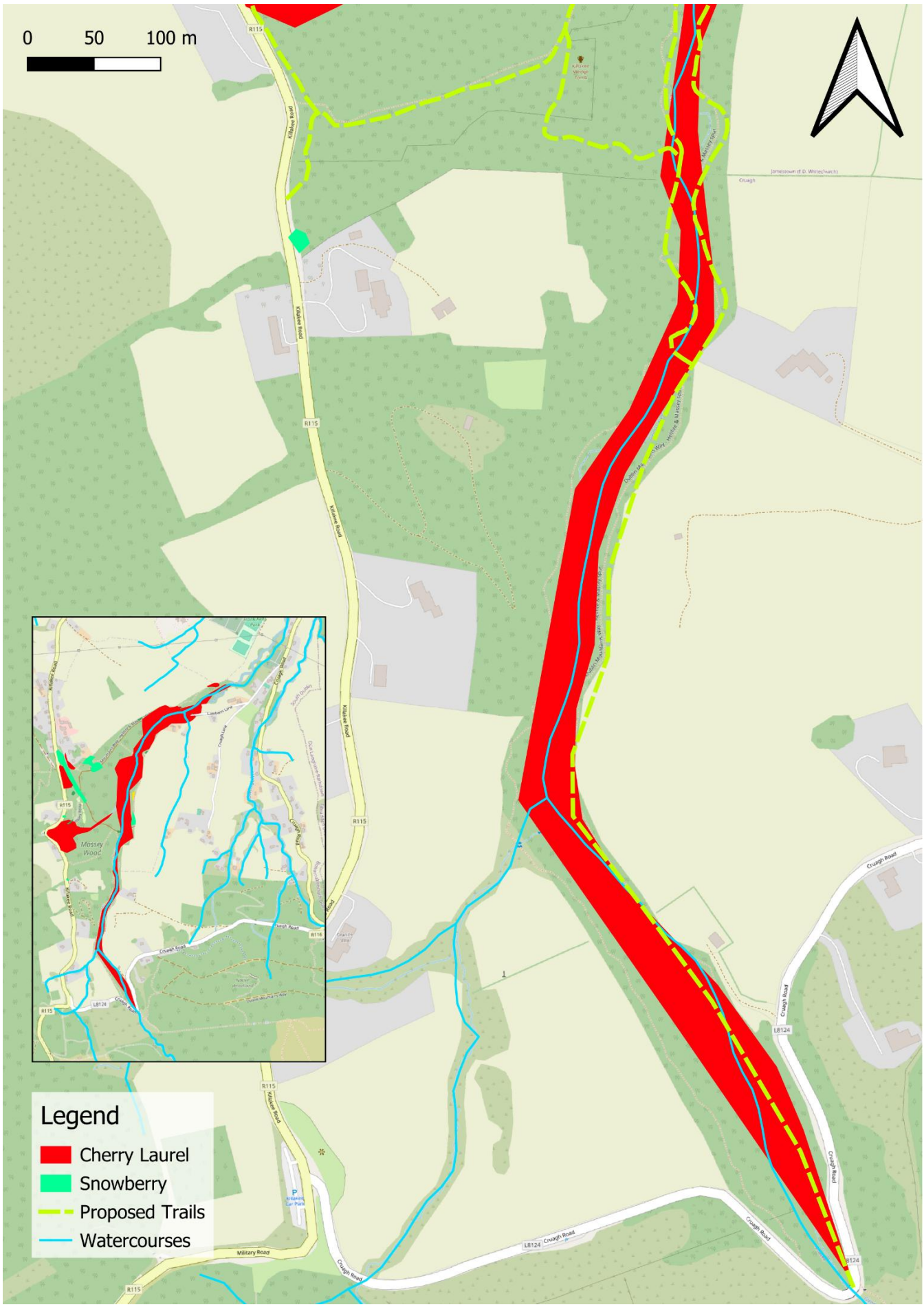
Invasive species recorded on Montpellier Hill in 2025.



Invasive species recorded in the northern section of Massey's Wood in 2025.



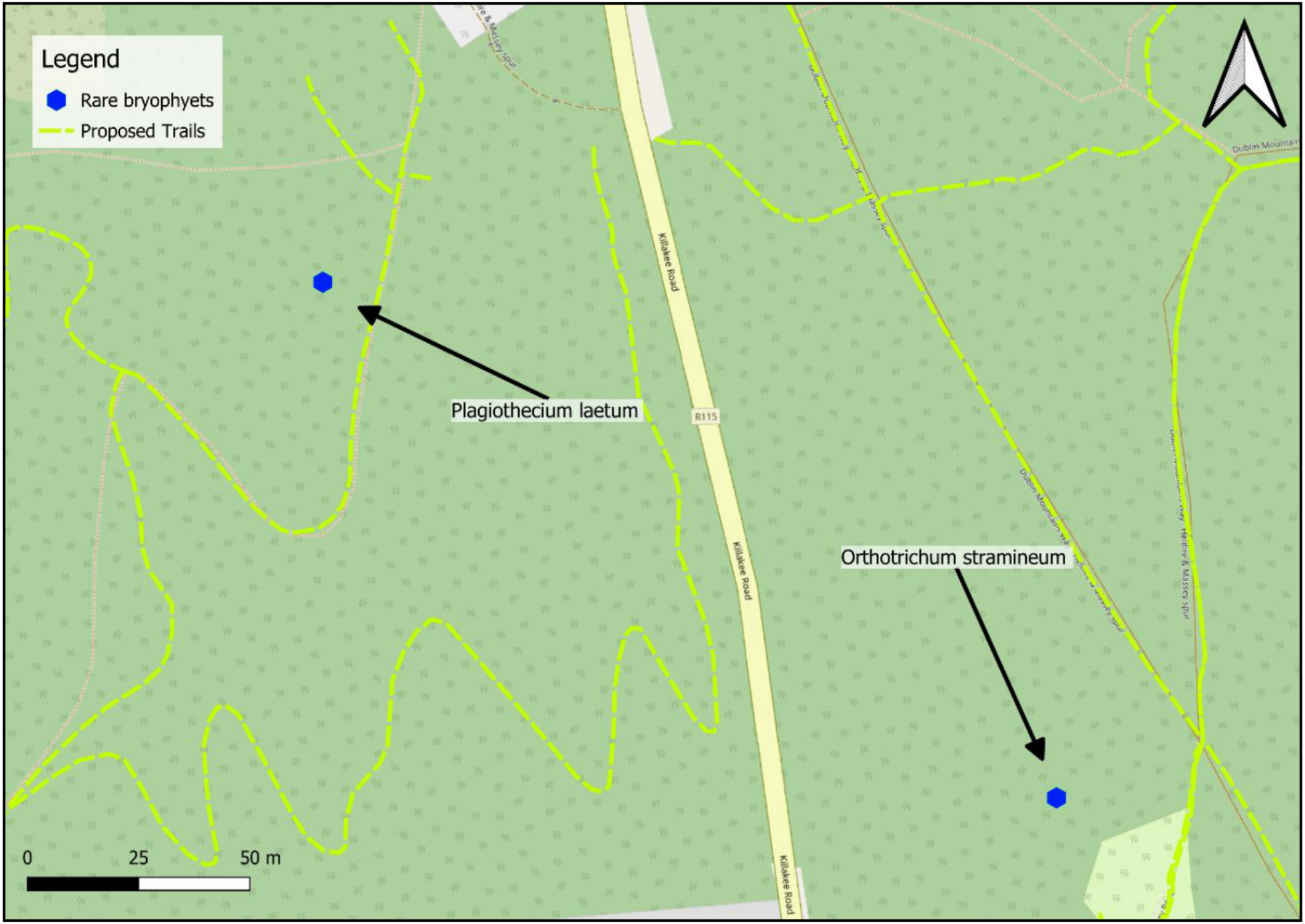
Invasive species recorded in the middle section of Massey's Wood in 2025.



Invasive species recorded in the southern section of Massey's Wood in 2025.

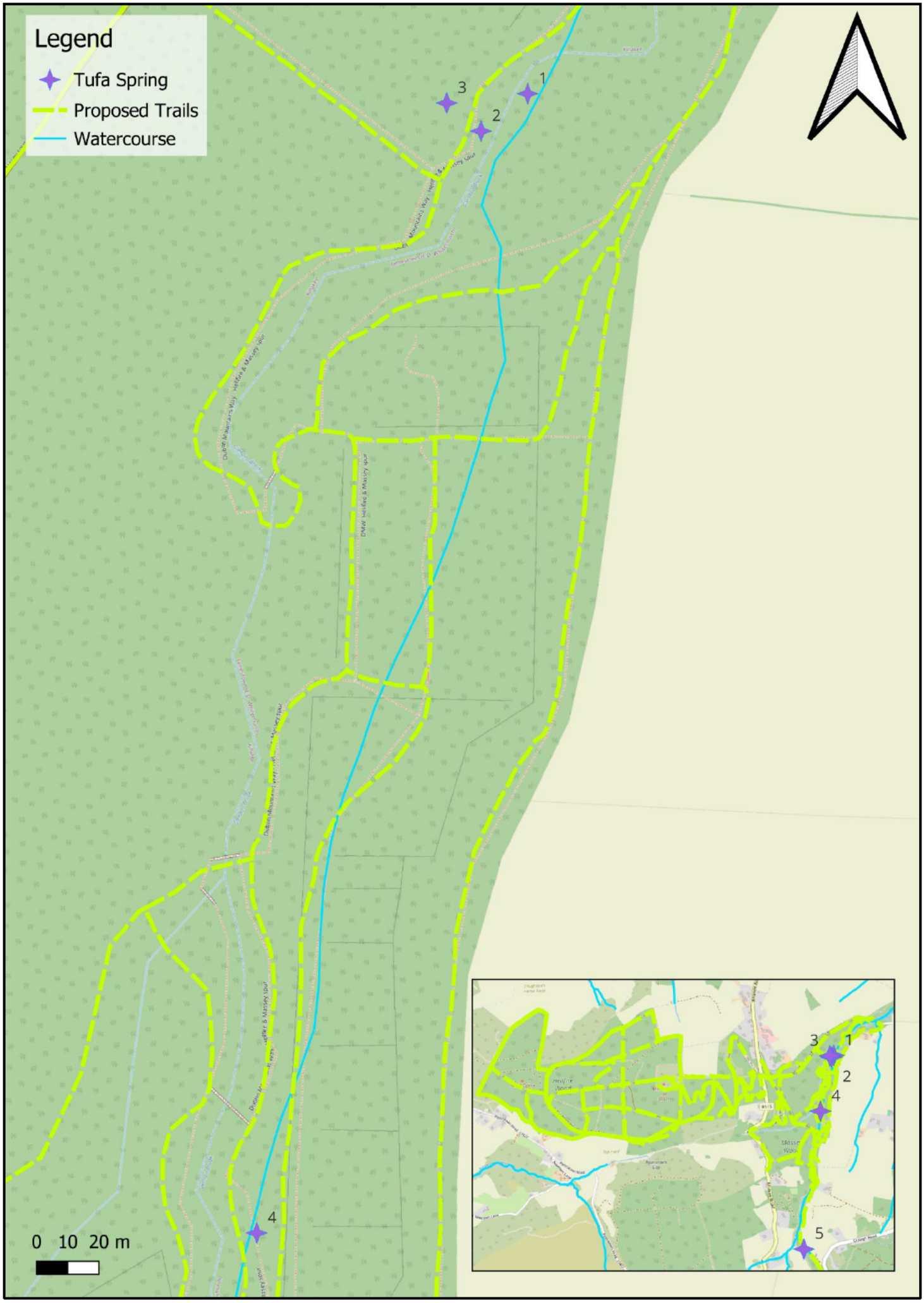
APPENDIX F

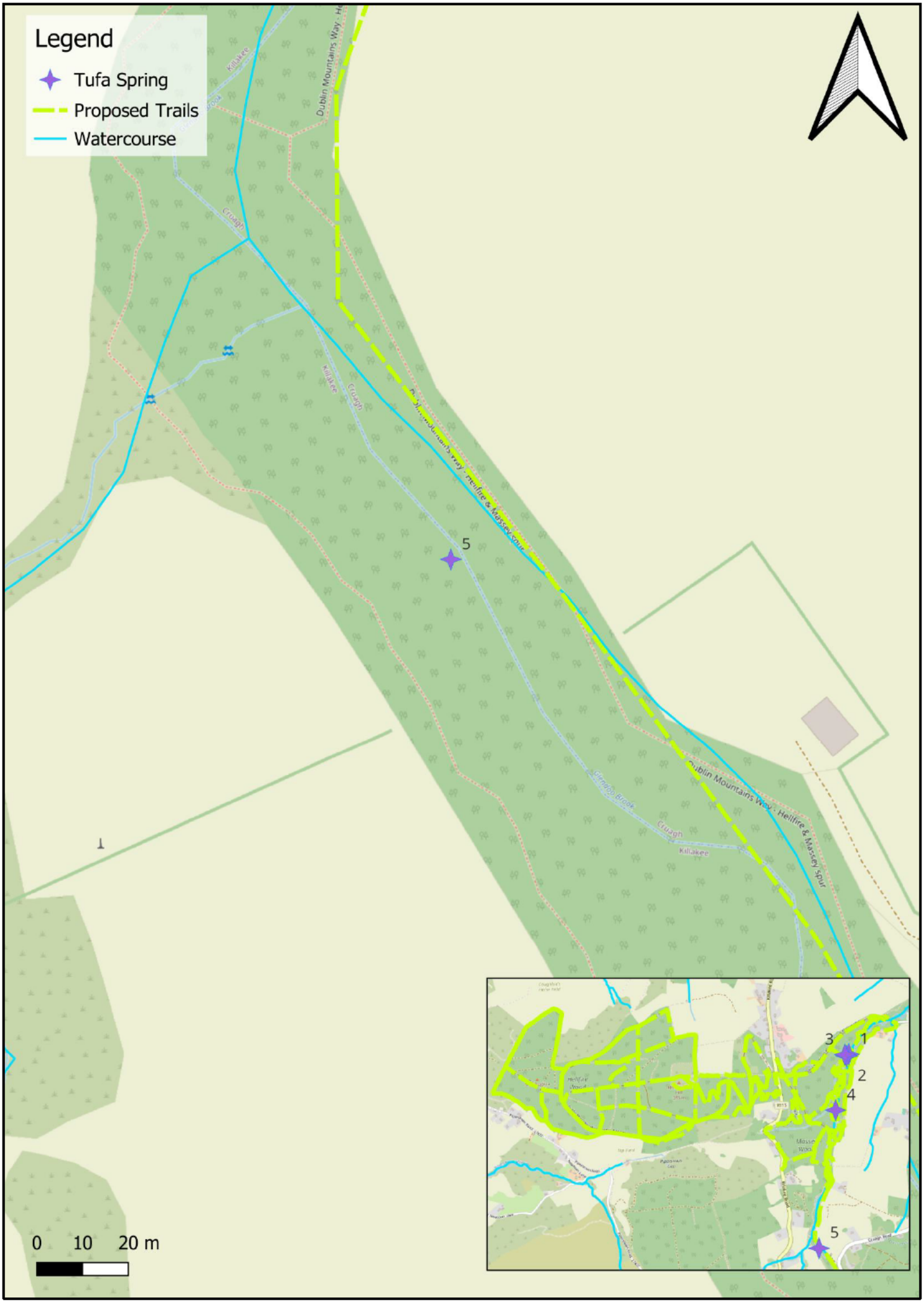
THE LOCATIONS OF RARE BRYOPHYTES IN THE STUDY AREA


Legend
Rare bryophyets
Proposed Trails
Plagiothecium laetum
Orthotrichum stramineum
Killakee Road
R115
Killakee Road
Killakee Road
Dublin Mountain
0
25
50 m

APPENDIX G

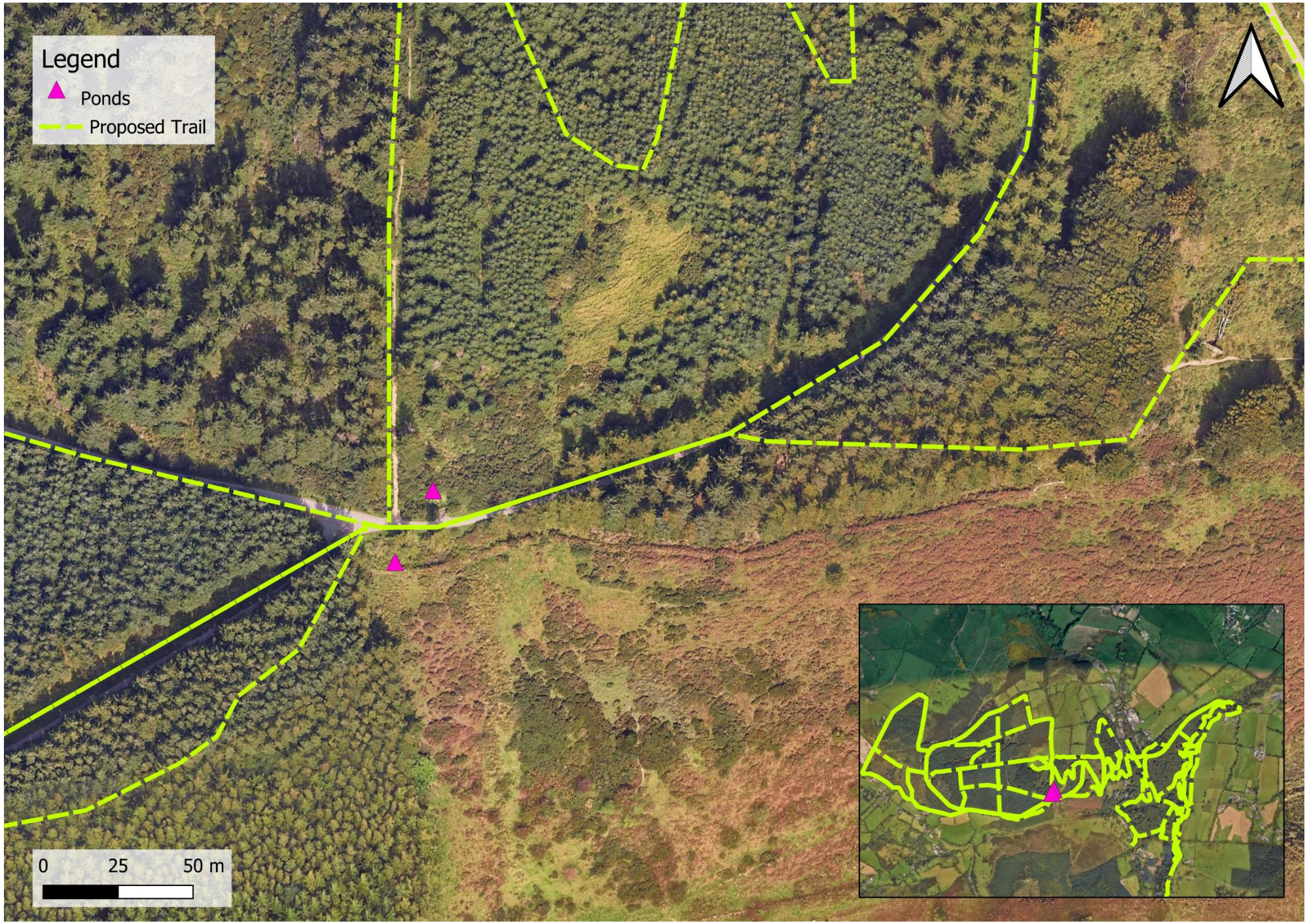
THE LOCATION OF TUFA SPRINGS IN THE STUDY AREA


Legend
Tufa Spring
Proposed Trails
Watercourse
1
2
3
4
5
0 10 20 m


Legend
Tufa Spring
Proposed Trails
Watercourse
Killakee
Dublin Mountains Way - Hellfire & Massey Spur
Cruagh
Glendoo Brook
5
0 10 20 m
1
2
3
4
5

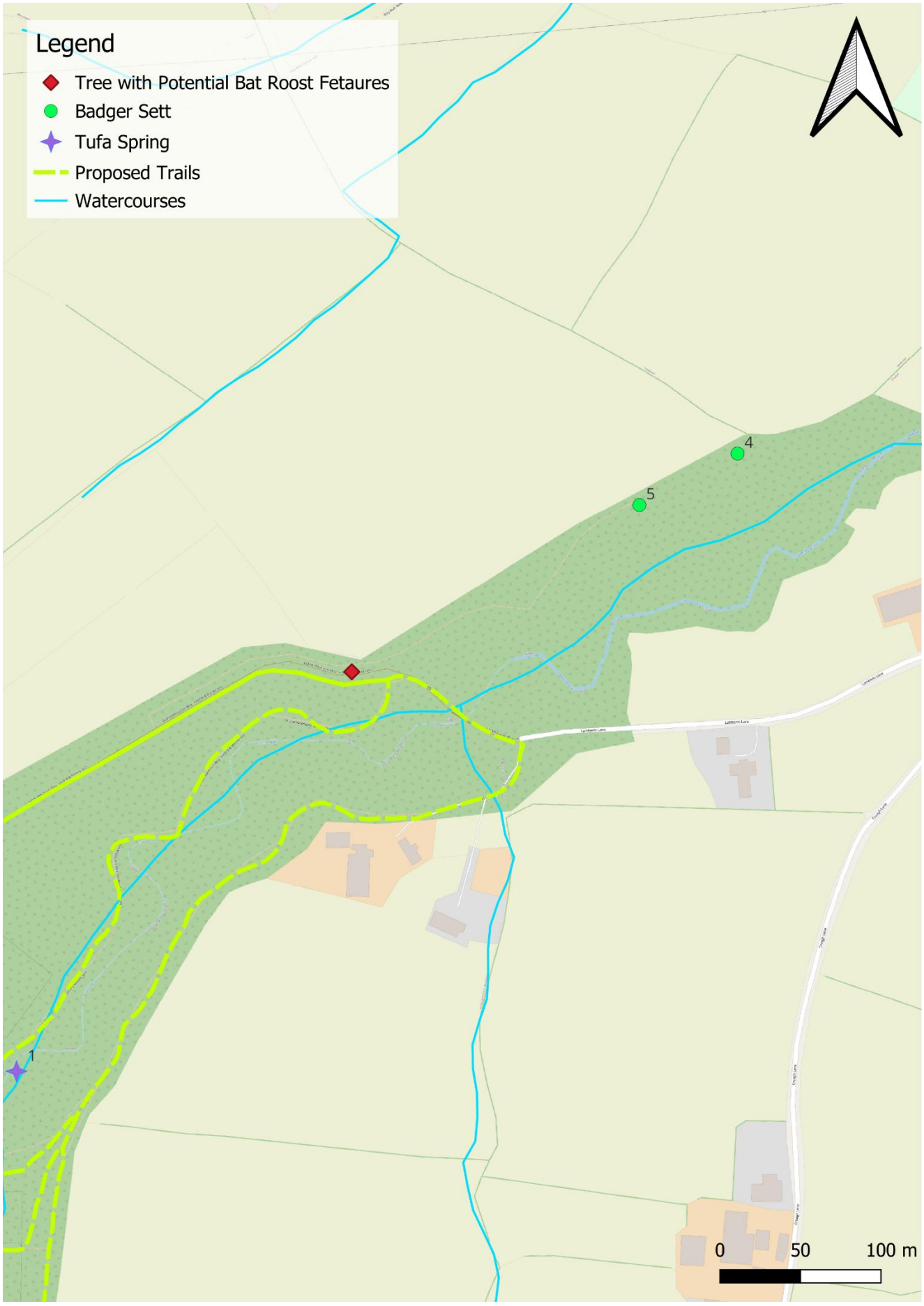
APPENDIX H

THE LOCATION OF PONDS IN THE STUDY AREA

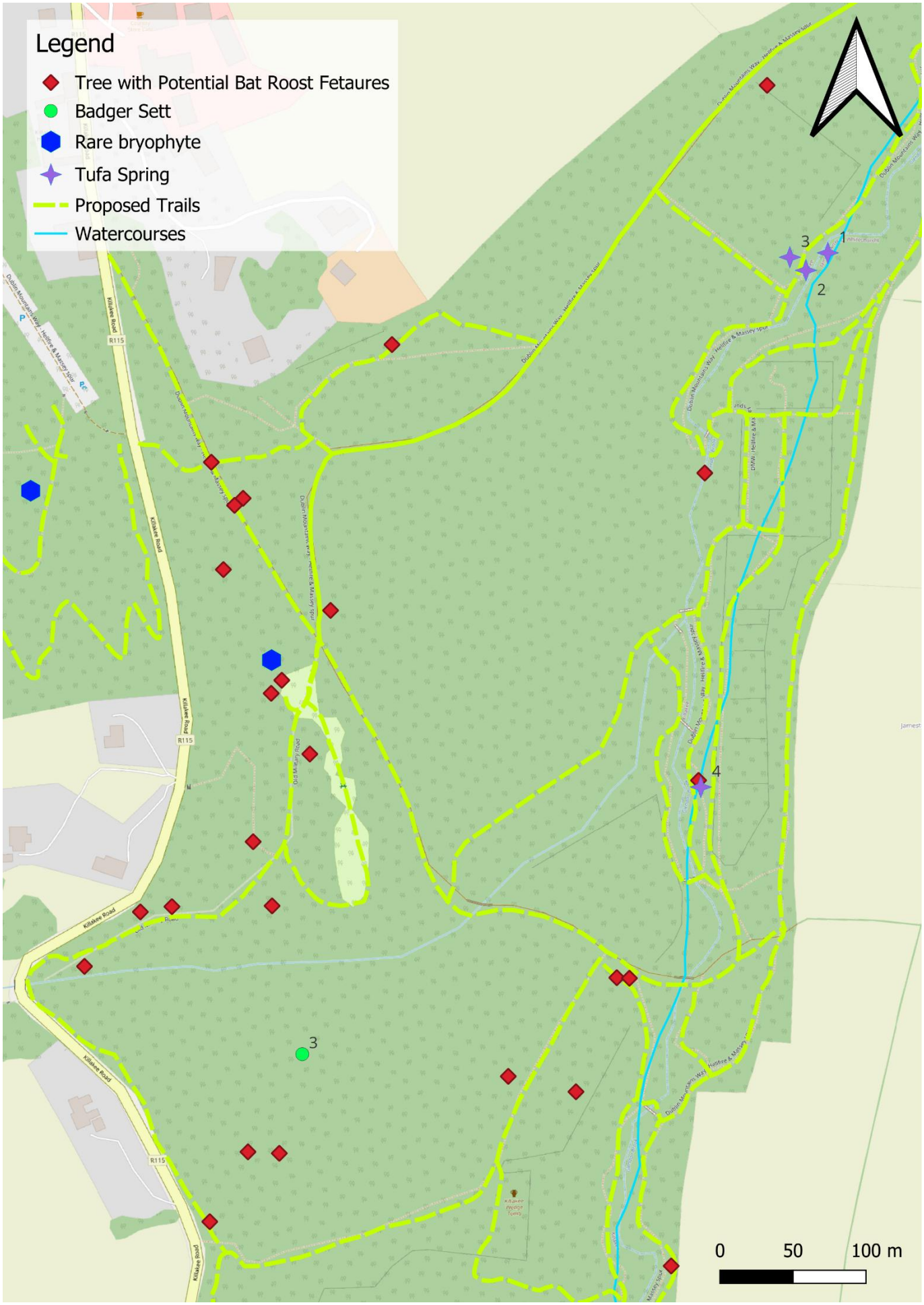

Legend
Ponds
Proposed Trail
0
25
50 m

APPENDIX I

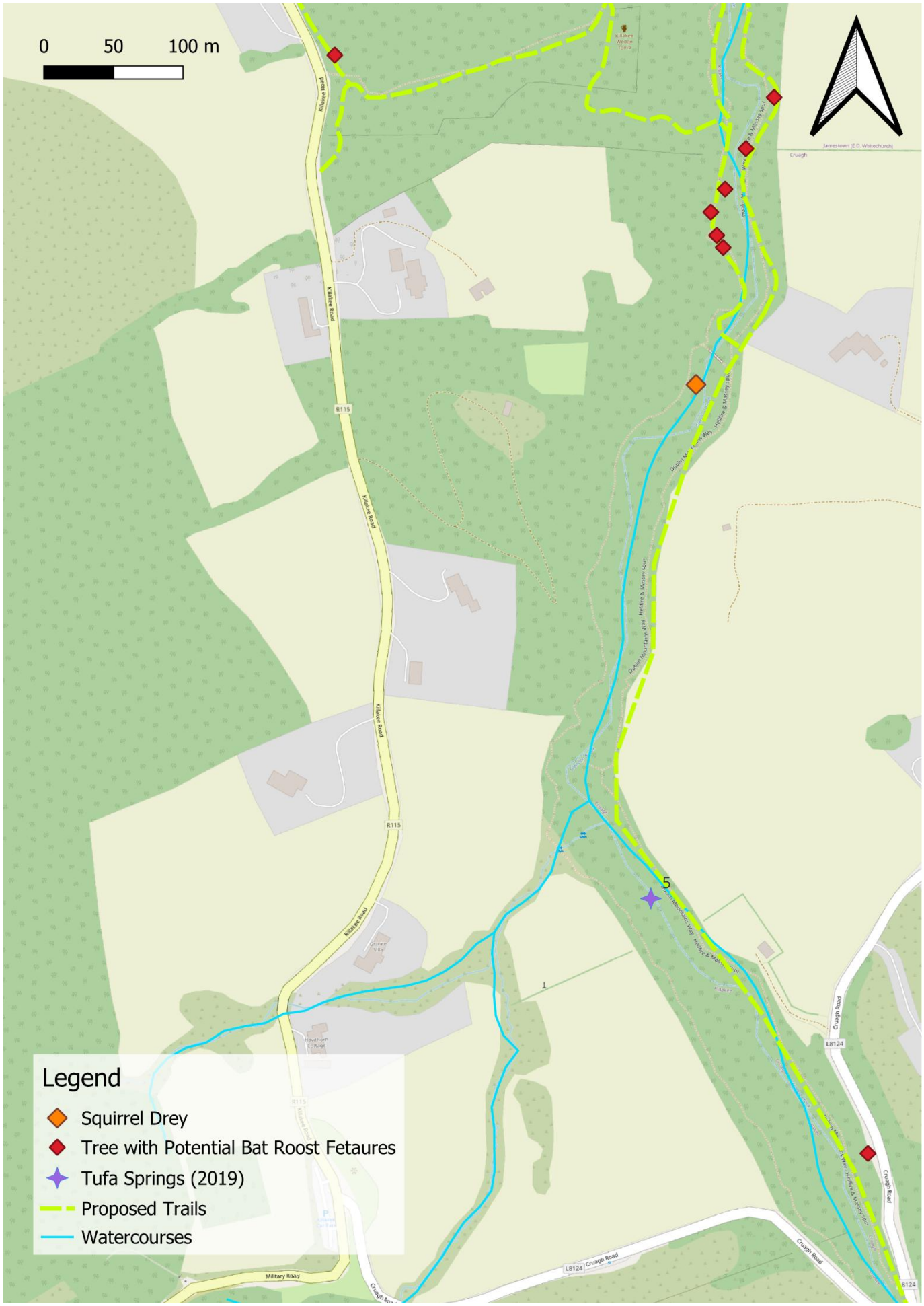
OVERVIEW OF PROTECTED SPECIES AND HABITATS IN THE STUDY AREA



Rare and protected species and habitats recorded in the northern section of Massey's Wood in 2025.



Rare and protected species and habitats recorded in the middle section of Massey's Wood in 2025.



Rare and protected species and habitats recorded in the southern section of Massey's Wood in 2025.