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Preliminary Ecological Appraisal

Survey site:
Penistone Church FC, Church View Road, Penistone, Sheffield S36 6AT

Client:
Penistone Church Football Club

Survey date:
17/03/2026

Project:
This report is prepared to inform a planning application with Barnsley Metropolitan Borough Council. Installation of a synthetic turf stadia football pitch at Penistone Church FC with associated fencing, storage areas and improved parking.

The survey results and recommendations contained within this report are valid for 18 months. An updated site visit may be required if the report is to be used any longer than 18 months after completion

Executive Summary

The following is work you will need to commission to obtain planning permission and to comply with legislation. Further information, along with opportunities for biodiversity enhancement, are outlined in Tables 1, 3 & 4 of this report.

Key Findings
No habitats meet the criteria of an **Important Habitat** of high conservation value (e.g Section 41 Habitat of Principal Importance, Annex 1, Irreplaceable Habitat) (e.g Section 41 Habitat of Principal Importance, Annex 1, Irreplaceable Habitat), and the habitats on site are of no specific conservation value but have value at the **LOCAL** level. The loss of these habitats will contribute to net losses of biodiversity locally. There are no specific concerns regarding any **Protected or otherwise Important Species** of a scale warranting further investigation. Precautionary measures of vegetation clearance/demolition methodology and construction site management are detailed for fauna. A Construction Ecological Management Plan (CEMP) may be requested as a condition of planning consent. **The development will need to achieve a 10% Biodiversity Net Gain to offset habitat losses, preferentially using onsite or adjacent means, supported by a 30 year, legally binding Habitat Management and Monitoring Plan, with offsite (per habitat unit) financial contributions required if not feasible.** An Ecological Management and Enhancement Plan (EMEP) or variant of that will be required by condition to secure habitat and wildlife enhancement measures in line with non BNG related local planning policy and national legislative requirements. **Further information including conclusions, justifications and opportunities for biodiversity enhancement, is provided within the body of the report.**

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Introduction and Context

Introduction

The aim of the PEA was to obtain data on existing ecological conditions, and to conduct a preliminary assessment of the likely significance of ecological impacts on the proposed development.

No previous ecology reports have been produced for this site by Arbtech Consulting Ltd or, to the author's knowledge, by any other consultancy.

Methodology

PEA survey methodology and legislation can be found in the Arbtech Supplement: PEA Methodology and Legislation - 2024.

Limitations

Whilst every effort has been made to describe the baseline conditions within the survey area, and evaluate these features, this report is a preliminary assessment and does not provide a complete characterisation of the site. Nor does it represent a full botanical assessment. It assesses the likelihood of protected, notable and important habitats and species being present, based on a site and landscape level habitat value-based risk assessment. This is based upon the ecology, biology and known distribution of species as currently understood.

A biological records data search has not been undertaken. However, given the location of the site, the nature of the habitats present and the assessed suitability of the site for protected or notable species, it is not anticipated that the purchase of biological records data will add any significant weight or alter the conclusions and recommendations outlined in this report.

The survey was completed outside of the optimal survey period (April to October) for ground flora, and as such the accuracy of botanical assessment and condition assessment data may be limited in terms of species visible and ground conditions at the time of survey.

Results, Impacts and Recommendations

Site Location and Landscape Context

Table 1: Site location and landscape context

Site Location
The site is located at National Grid Reference SE 24981 03066 and has an area of approximately 1.14ha comprising g4 modified grassland and u1b developed land, sealed surface.
Priority Habitats and Designated Sites
Summary of Survey Findings Priority Habitats There are 4 priority habitats located within 2 km of the site. These comprise deciduous woodland, traditional orchard, ancient & semi-natural woodland and ancient replanted woodland. The closest priority habitat comprises deciduous woodland, located ~85 m NE of the site. The site is bordered on most sides by suburban development with vegetated gardens and residential roads, providing possible commuting routes for urban tolerant species to open countryside that lies in all directions. To the north-east however, the site property lies directly adjacent to a strip of deciduous woodland which in turn connects to a railway line which runs directly to arable fields and patches of woodland, the closest of which begin approx. 210m north. The south-east boundary is adjacent to a thin strip of scrub before reaching residential buildings. The fence between this scrub has several holes across its length, leading to what appears to be a mammal trail in the scrub. Designated Sites There are no other statutory sites within 2 km of the site. The site does fall within the impact risk zone for Spring Meadows, Alderman's Head & Cow Croft Meadows SSSI (3.1km south-west, with relatively good connectivity via hedgerow bordered arable fields and scattered woods, as well as an absence of main roads) however, the proposed development type is not listed as possible high risk with regard to this designation.

The presence of non-statutory designated sites within 2km of the site cannot be established without data from the local records centre. Whilst some habitats in the wider landscape may host designations, the immediate environs of the site do not host habitats likely to be of designable quality.

Impacts

No direct impacts to any designated sites will occur as a result of the proposed development, due to the small scale and low overall impact of the development from such sites (where known), alongside additional factors such as distance in combination with connectivity disrupting barriers.

Recommendations

No recommendations.

Habitats and Flora

The site survey was undertaken by Johnny Byrne BSc (Hons), MSc, FISC3, Graduate Ecologist.

Table 2: Survey weather conditions

Date of survey	Temperature (°C)	Humidity (%)	Cloud Cover (%)	Wind (km/h)	Rain
17/03/2026	10.9	71	74	24.5	None

Table 3: Habitats and flora

Habitats and Flora: Conclusion, Impact or Recommendations *This table may include further work you will need to commission (if any) to obtain planning permission or comply with legislation for other consent. All clients are expected to read and understand this section, or to contact the lead surveyor for advice.*
Onsite habitats

Summary of Survey Findings

Modified grassland (g4) - The bulk of the pitch was mown short and consisted of little but grass and very heavily compacted bare ground. However, around the very edges of the pitch appears to be mowed with less frequency because the vegetation was longer and allowed forbs to grow. To the north-east lies a woodland adjacent to the site that has no barriers to entering. Along the eastern boundary lies a fence that goes into scrub, and at various parts of the fence are holes leading to what appears to be mammal tracks within the scrub. Neither the fence nor the woodland edge are adjacent to the proposed development however.

Species present within this habitat include dandelion (Taraxacum), red fescue (Festuca rubra), yarrow (Achillea millefolium), clover sp. (Trifolium sp.), cock's-foot (Dactylis glomerata), perennial rye-grass (Lolium perenne), annual meadow-grass (Poa annua), cleavers (Galium aparine), shepherd's-purse (Capsella bursa-pastoris), common mouse-ear (Cerastium fontanum), thale cress (Arabidopsis thaliana), hairy bitter-cress (Cardamine hirsuta) and broad-leaved dock (Rumex obtusifolius).

In accordance with the Statutory Biodiversity Metric Condition Assessment Matrix, the modified grassland was assessed to have a **moderate** and **poor** condition value.

Developed land, sealed surface (u1b) – this area was comprised of a car park and a sports area, with a patch of modified grassland in the south-western edge. The western border is a hedgerow, but that will not be directly impacted by the development.

Impacts

The proposed development will result in the loss of modified grassland. This is likely to have a minimal impact on biodiversity due to the low ecological value of these habitats. However, this could lead to a net loss in biodiversity at the site.

Recommendations

Best practice measures to minimise the possibility of pollution must be implemented during construction. This should include the following measures:

- Remove only the minimum of habitat required to facilitate the development
- Use of Heras or other appropriate fencing to prevent encroachment by contractors onto retained habitats.
- Protect retained turf and soil resource from destruction and compaction using plastic matting and wooden boarding. Do not store skips and other heavy materials on retained turf.

A Construction Ecological Management Plan (CEMP) may be required, outlining best practice measures delineate the construction

zone and to minimise the possibility of pollution and habitat damage during construction.

The proposed development may require a Biodiversity Net Gain assessment, to calculate the value of habitats on site and ensure the delivery of a minimum of 10% measurable biodiversity net gain.

Invasive / Non-native species

Summary of Survey Findings

No non-native invasive species identified.

Impacts

None foreseen.

Recommendations

None.

Fauna

Table 4: Fauna

Fauna: Conclusion, Impact or Recommendations

This table may include further work you will need to commission (if any) to obtain planning permission or comply with legislation for other consent. All clients are expected to read and understand this section, or to contact the lead surveyor for advice.

Roosting Bats

Summary of Survey Findings

A review of the MAGIC database for European Protected Species Licences (EPSL) for bats within a 2km radius of the site has been completed. 5 EPSL were identified, as detailed below:

Table 4a: EPSL records within 2km of the site - bats

EPSL reference	Bat species affected	Distance from site	Impacts allowed by licence
EPSM2012-4929	Common Pipistrelle	1.8km west	Destruction of resting place
2014-3842-EPS-MIT	Common pipistrelle, brown long-eared	1.2km north-west	N/A
2014-694-EPS-MIT	Common pipistrelle, brown long-eared	1.2km north-west	Damage of resting place
EPSM2011-2745	Common pipistrelle	1km north	Destruction of resting place
EPSM2009-1299	Common pipistrelle	1km north	Desctruction of breeding site, destruction of resting place

No buildings or trees were present on site where development will take place.

Impacts

There are no trees on site, and the buildings will not be directly affected by the development. However, the proposed development could result in disturbance to any bats present in the buildings at the time of the works due to noise, vibration or lighting.

Recommendations

Due to the potential for disturbance impacts to bats during the proposed works, the following precautionary working methods will be required:

- Any use of power tools and high levels of noise and vibration will be carried out at least 10m from the site buildings and the main house where possible.
- In the unlikely event that a bat is found, work will stop and the ecologist will advise on how to proceed.

Foraging and Commuting Bats

Summary of Survey Findings

Modified grassland could be used by local bat populations for foraging as it will support limited invertebrate populations. In addition, the car park contained several potholes which conceivably could fill with water during periods of rain and so provide habitat for breeding mosquitos.

Impacts

The proposed development will result in the loss of modified grassland. Given the limited habitat value for invertebrates, this is likely to be inconsequential for bats.

Recommendations

None.

The following habitat creation and enhancement opportunities could be incorporated into the proposed development which would be beneficial for foraging bats:

- Planting of locally characteristic tree, shrub and hedgerows to increase foraging opportunities.
- Enhancements benefiting flying invertebrates (listed in the relevant section)

Amphibians

Summary of Survey Findings

A review of MAGIC database found no granted EPSL for great crested newts (GCN) within 2km of the site.

A check was also completed for great crested newt class survey license returns and historic pond surveys. No records were identified.

No ponds are located on, or adjacent to, the site. There are no ponds within 250m, reducing the chances of high density

populations, nor ponds within 500m, reducing the likelihood of transient individuals.

Great crested newts Triturus vulgaris exist in metapopulations and persistence within a landscape requires; a) free, unimpeded movement between breeding ponds and b) intervening, invertebrate and refugia rich terrestrial habitat with good connecting linkage habitat (e.g. hedgerows) to provide commuting routes during the migratory parts of their life cycle. Most adults are thought not to range far beyond 250m from their breeding ponds but scattered, transient individuals may occur up to 500m from breeding ponds. Section 41 Species of Principal Importance the common toad exhibits similar landscape requirements in terms of its migration between breeding ponds, although its waterbody requirements are more cosmopolitan

Adult amphibians spend a significant proportion of their life cycles on land, with most of their time in water comprising the breeding season. Their terrestrial requirements must provide abundant ground ranging invertebrate food items and sufficient cover to avoid predation and desiccation. There must be a high availability of dark and damp refugia and hibernacula options.

Landscape Connectivity
Dispersal routes around the landscape are relatively unimpeded by major barriers such as principal roads, impenetrable fences and major/fast flowing watercourses, thus enabling migratory amphibians such as GCN and common toad to migrate without obstruction.

Terrestrial Habitat
While there are areas of scrub around the sites periphery, the site itself is considered sub-optimal for GCN because the habitats on site and their management provide little in the way of cover and refugia. Foraging opportunities are likely to be rather limited and the risk of predation on crossing the open fields would be high. However they can't be ruled out entirely. Common amphibians, whose habits are less predictable may be present as occasionals.

Ponds
In addition to sub-optimal habitat on site, there are no ponds (known from Magic or aerial photographs) within 500m of the site, which reduces the likelihood of GCN presence to negligible.

Other Amphibians
The site has no meaningful connectivity to any habitats in the locale known to host populations of the European Protected Species natterjack toad, nor does the site provide for their specialist habitat requirements (shallow, usually temporary ponds within sparsely vegetated terrestrial habitat such as heathland that may be too arid for other species). In addition their populations are scattered and their dispersal abilities low. It is therefore considered highly unlikely that they would be present on site.

Impacts

None foreseen.

Recommendations

A precautionary approach to managing risk to Herptiles is recommended. This will detail a precautionary working method during construction to ensure no amphibians (or other herptiles) are harmed or killed.

This will include the following measures:

General Precautionary Measures for Herptiles;

- Any rubble piles will be dismantled by hand under supervision by the EcoW
- Heras or a similar appropriate fencing will be erected around the working area to prevent encroachment into retained areas where amphibians could be present.
- Debris and brash will be stored on pallets away from site boundaries or retained vegetation or removed from the site to prevent herptiles from using these areas.
- Best practice pollution and habitat damage prevention measures will be implemented to minimise impacts to retained habitats that herptiles could use.
- Any chemicals or pollutants used or created by the development must be stored and disposed of correctly according to COSHH regulations.
- All trenches will be closed at the end of the day or left with a ramp to enable amphibians to escape. They will be checked prior to closing.
- If any common amphibians are found in the working area these should be encouraged to move away of their own volition. If for any reason they are unable to do so or they are in immediate danger, they will be moved by gloved hand to a bucket or other suitable container and transported to vegetated area away from disturbance. Avoid handling amphibians with bare, dry hands particularly if they have been in contact with toxic substances, as dry hands can damage their gelatinous skin barriers and they can absorb toxins through their permeable skins.

In the unlikely event that a great crested newt or other protected amphibian is identified, works must cease and advice must be sought from a suitably qualified ecologist.

The following habitat creation and enhancement opportunities could be incorporated into the proposed development which would be beneficial for foraging amphibians:
Artificial hibernacula, log/rock piles.
Wildlife pond creation

Reptiles

Summary of Survey Findings

The site contains little of habitat value for reptiles due to lack of ecological features such as cover and refugia. The risk of reptile presence is acceptably low (but can never be ruled out entirely).

Impacts

No impacts are anticipated on reptiles as a result of the proposed development, but any reptiles that may be present on site could be injured or killed during the development.

Recommendations

A precautionary approach to managing risk to Herptiles is recommended. This will detail a precautionary working method during construction to ensure no amphibians (or other herptiles) are harmed or killed.

This will include the following measures:

General Precautionary Measures for Herptiles;

- Any rubble piles will be dismantled by hand under supervision by the EcoW
- Heras or a similar appropriate fencing will be erected around the working area to prevent encroachment into retained areas where amphibians could be present.
- Debris and brash will be stored on pallets away from site boundaries or retained vegetation or removed from the site to prevent herptiles from using these areas.
- Best practice pollution and habitat damage prevention measures will be implemented to minimise impacts to retained habitats that herptiles could use.
- Any chemicals or pollutants used or created by the development must be stored and disposed of correctly according to COSHH

regulations.
▪All trenches will be closed at the end of the day or left with a ramp to enable amphibians to escape. They will be checked prior to closing.
▪If any common amphibians are found in the working area these should be encouraged to move away of their own volition. If for any reason they are unable to do so or they are in immediate danger, they will be moved by gloved hand to a bucket or other suitable container and transported to vegetated area away from disturbance. Avoid handling amphibians with bare, dry hands particularly if they have been in contact with toxic substances, as dry hands can damage their gelatinous skin barriers and they can absorb toxins through their permeable skins.

In the unlikely event that a reptile is identified, works must cease and advice must be sought from a suitably qualified ecologist.

The following habitat creation and enhancement opportunities could be incorporated into the proposed development which would be beneficial for foraging reptiles:

- Areas of refugia, log/rock piles
- Wildlife pond creation

Birds

Summary of Survey Findings

No evidence of nesting birds was identified on the site. There are no suitable habitats on site which provide habitat for nesting birds.

Impacts

No impacts are anticipated on nesting birds as a result of the proposed development.

Recommendations

None.

Badgers

Summary of Survey Findings

Rural badger territories range from 50-150ha around their sett depending on the richness of foraging resources within the

landscape. The largest are in Scotland. Urban badgers may hold ranges of half that of the size of rural populations, with badgers splitting into more numerous but smaller groups. Tracking has revealed a home range of 200 x 100m (around a cemetery) for one urban badger and an allotment and approximately 25 peripheral gardens for another. They also tend to avoid the edges of their territories, to avoid both conflict and the wasting of energetic resources in areas where other badger clans may be foraging

Habitat Suitability
Suitable foraging habitat for badgers was found on site in association with the fields. Badgers are likely to be present within the local landscape.

No Badger Evidence
No badger evidence (e.g. latrines, droppings, snuffle pits, turned over turf, holes with associated dug out spoil heaps, mammal tracks, footprints, hair caught in fencing, push through gaps beneath fencing, D-shaped holes) were found on site or within 30m of the proposed development.

Conclusions of likely absence (Access restrictions within 30m)
Badgers demonstrate high fidelity to their ancestral commuting routes and engage in predictable nightly patterns of activity. Being large and robust animals they tend to leave clear evidence in areas of regular use. Whilst the entirety of the sites 30m perimeter radius could not be explored, the lack of evidence of badger activity on site and in particular around the site boundaries, indicates that badgers are not using the site on a habitual basis and as such, the site is not anticipated to fall within the core territory of a local sett or regularly commuting individual/clan. Whilst this cannot be determined to an absolute degree without further inspection it is considered unlikely that active setts are present within 30m of the proposed development. The presence of transient individuals cannot be ruled out.

Impacts

The project will incur no significant loss of badger habitat and is predicted to incur no impacts (in terms of damage, destruction or disturbance) on any local setts (none of which are thought to occur within 30m of the site). However, construction activities could result in the death or injury of badgers, if present.

Recommendations

Owing to the nature of the proposed development and the low potential for impacts to badgers, further badger surveys are considered to be disproportionate. A precautionary working method will be implemented during construction, including the following measures:

- Any excavations will be covered overnight, or a ramp will be installed to enable any trapped animals to escape.
- Any pipework exceeding 150mm will be capped overnight.
- Any chemicals or pollutants used or created by the development should be stored and disposed of correctly according to COSHH regulations.

In the unlikely event that a badger sett is identified, works must cease and advice must be sought from a suitably qualified ecologist.

The following habitat creation and enhancement opportunities could be incorporated into the proposed development which would be beneficial for foraging badgers:
Planting fruit and nut bearing trees.

Riparian animals

Summary of Survey Findings

There are no riparian habitats on or adjacent to the site.

Impacts

Otters
No impacts are anticipated on riparian animals as a result of the proposed development.

Water Vole
No impacts are anticipated on riparian animals as a result of the proposed development.

Recommendations

Otters
None.

Water Vole
None.

Hazel dormouse

Summary of Survey Findings

There are no suitable habitats on site to support hazel dormice.

Impacts

No impacts are anticipated on hazel dormice as a result of the proposed development.

Recommendations

None.

Invertebrates

Summary of Survey Findings

The PEA assesses the sites habitat value for protected and otherwise Important Species of invertebrate. These include; Schedule 8 Protected Species Wildlife & Countryside Act, 1981 (as amended) and Schedule 5 Conservation of Habitats and Species (Amendment) (EU Exit) Regulations 2019), Species of Principal Importance s.41 NERC Act 2006 (England), endemic, red listed, nationally rare/scarce species, species at the edge of their range, species on local biodiversity and rare lists and common species present on sites containing a large proportion of the species local or regional population.

The site does not lie within to a Buglife Important Invertebrate Area, nor is it close to or likely to be contextually related to one.

Low Invertebrate Interest
The site contains features of some value for a limited assemblage of most likely common and widespread invertebrates. These are limited in their habitat value and are unlikely to provide for any specialist niches. Habitats on site are unlikely to support important populations of more commonplace species.

Impacts

The development will result in an insignificant loss of invertebrate habitat. Sufficient habitat of invertebrate value will be retained to maintain the sites current populations, so the development is anticipated to have negligible impact upon invertebrates. Future management/habitat creation may result in net gains for invertebrate biodiversity.

Recommendations

None.

The following habitat creation and enhancement opportunities could be incorporated into the proposed development which would be beneficial for invertebrates:

- Planting of pollinator friendly grassland species
- Installation of insect hotels
- Incorporation of log piles/dead wood
- Creation of rock and brash piles

Other e.g. small mammals

Summary of Survey Findings

There is limited suitable foraging habitat onsite for terrestrial Section 41 Species of Principal Importance under the NERC Act (2007) terrestrial mammals, specifically hedgehogs.

Impacts

There will be no significant loss of small terrestrial mammal habitat during construction however construction activities could result in the death or unnecessary suffering of small mammals if present, the latter of which constitutes an offence under the Wild Mammals (Protection) act 1996.

Recommendations

A precautionary working method will be implemented during construction, including the following measures:

- Any excavations will be covered overnight, or a ramp will be installed to enable any trapped animals to escape.
- Any pipework exceeding 100mm will be capped overnight.
- The use of night-time lighting will be avoided, or sensitive lighting design will be implemented to avoid light spill on to retained habitats which hedgehogs could use.
- Any chemicals or pollutants used or created by the development should be stored and disposed of correctly according to COSHH regulations.
- If any small mammals are found in the working area these should be allowed to disperse of their own accord or, if at immediate risk, should be moved by hand to a sheltered, vegetated area away from disturbance.

The following habitat creation and enhancement opportunities could be incorporated into the proposed development which would

be beneficial for hedgehogs:

- Planting fruit bearing trees
- Creation of brash piles or installation of hedgehog houses in shady areas.

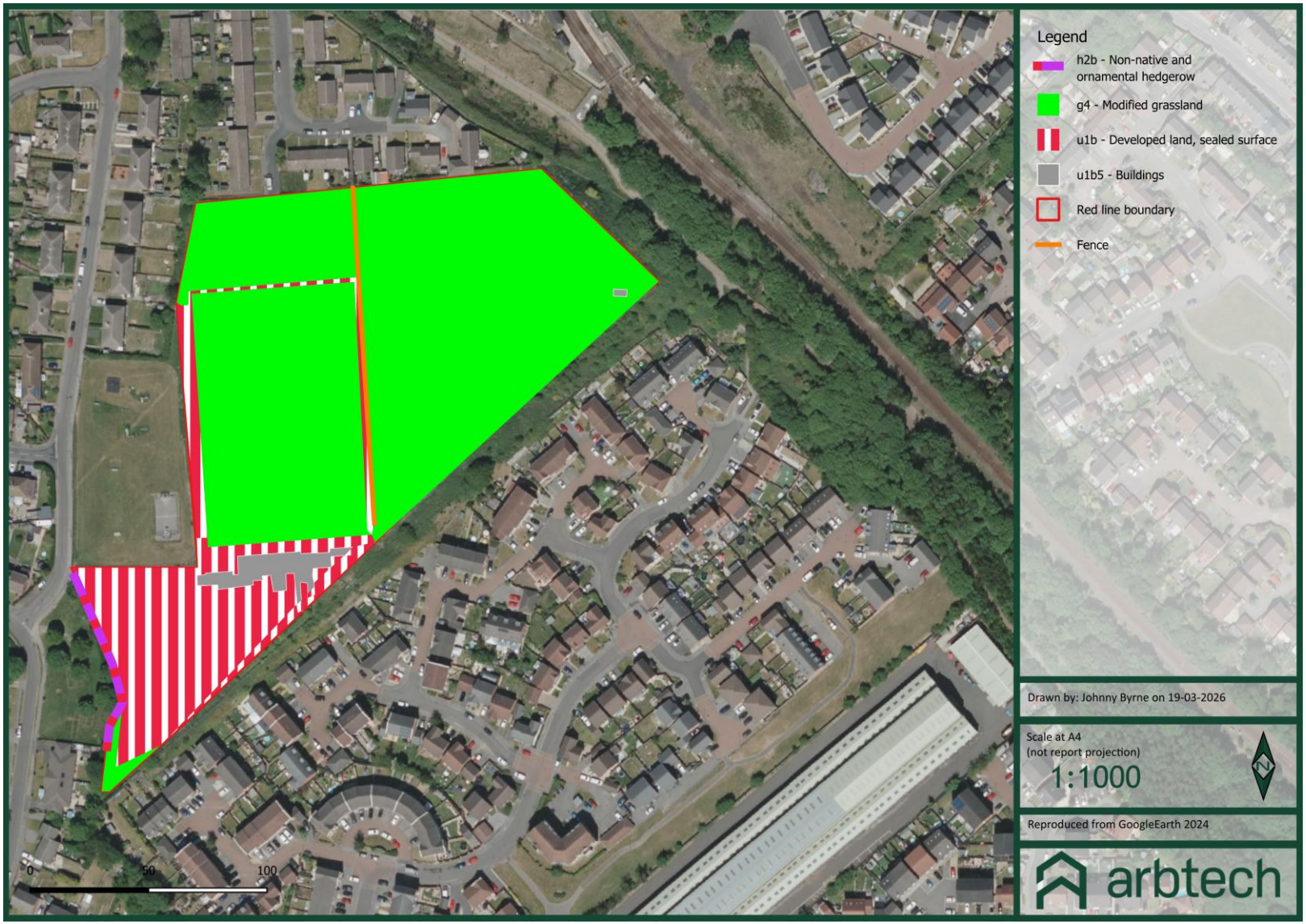
Appendix 1: Proposed Development Plan



Appendix 2: Site Location Plan



Appendix 3: Habitat Survey Plan



Appendix 4: Site Photographs



Photo 1: Heavily compacted bare ground



Photo 2: Modified grassland



Photo 3: The far edges where vegetation grows taller



Photo 4 – the car park, facing south



Photo 5 – one of several holes in the fence along the south-east boundary



Photo 6 – Modified grassland, facing south-east

Appendix 6: Baseline Condition Assessments

Table 6a: Modified grassland condition assessment.

	Criteria Description	Outside of sports pitch	Sports pitch
A	There are 6-8 vascular plant species per m2 present, including at least 2 forbs. **Note - this criterion is essential for achieving Moderate or Good condition.**	**Y**	**N**
B	Sward height is varied (at least 20% of the sward is less than 7 cm and at least 20% is more than 7 cm) creating microclimates which provide opportunities for vertebrates and invertebrates to live and breed.	**N**	**N**
C	Any scrub present accounts for less than 20% of the total grassland area. (Some scattered scrub such as bramble Rubus fruticosus agg. may be present). Note - patches of scrub with continuous (more than 90%) cover should be classified as the relevant scrub habitat type.	**Y**	**Y**
D	Physical damage is evident in less than 5% of total grassland area. Examples of physical damage include excessive poaching, damage from machinery use or storage, erosion caused by high levels of access, or any other damaging management activities.	**N**	**N**
E	Cover of bare ground is between 1% and 10%, including localised areas (for example, a concentration of rabbit warrens). For example, this could include small, scattered areas of bare ground allowing establishment of new species, or localised patches where not exceeding 10% cover.	**N**	**N**
F	Cover of bracken Pteridium aquilinum is less than 20%.	**Y**	**Y**
G	There is an absence of invasive non-native plant species (as listed on Schedule 9 of WCA).	**Y**	**Y**
		Total 4/7	**3/7**
	Outside sports pitch: Condition Moderate due to passing 4 of 7 criteria and all essential criteria. Sports pitch: Condition poor due to failing essential criteria		

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Version Control

Status	Issue	Name	Date
Draft	0.1	Johnny Byrne BSc (Hons), MSc, FISC3, Graduate Ecologist	19/03/2026