Whitcher Wildlife Ltd.
Ecological Consultants.

LAND OFF CARRS LANE, CUDWORTH.

MAP REF: SE 38849 08107

PRELIMINARY ECOLOGICAL APPRAISAL.

Ref No: **260234.**

Date: **4th March 2026.**

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1. INTRODUCTION.

1.1. There are plans to develop an area of land off Carrs Lane, Cudworth. It is proposed to construct two new self-build dwellings on the site.

1.2. Whitcher Wildlife Ltd has been commissioned to carry out a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal of the site to establish whether there are any issues that may affect the proposed works.

1.3. That survey was carried out on 26th February 2026. This report outlines the findings of that survey and makes appropriate recommendations.

1.4. Appendix I of this report provides additional information on specific species and is designed to assist the reader in understanding the contents of this report.

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2. SURVEY METHODOLOGY.

2.1. Prior to visiting the site, the survey area was cross referenced to maps and aerial photographs to give a general idea of the habitats and potential issues within the area and to identify potential access and walking routes.

2.2. The survey area was walked where access was agreed and public rights of way were used where no access was agreed. All habitats within and immediately around the survey area were documented and the dominant species within that habitat listed in line with the UK Habitat Classification methodology to identify the broad habitat types throughout the survey area.

2.3. The survey area and immediate surrounding area was thoroughly searched for evidence of badger (*Meles meles*) activity by looking for the following signs in line with Harris S, Cresswell P and Jefferies D (1989). *Surveying Badgers*. Mammal Society: -

* Badger setts.
* Badger latrines or dung pits.
* Badger snuffle holes and evidence of foraging.
* Badger paths.
* Badger prints in areas of soft mud.
* Badger hairs caught on fencing.

2.4. The survey area was searched for watercourses and where found all watercourses within the survey area and for approximately 50m in each direction were thoroughly searched for evidence of water vole (*Arvicola amphibius*) activity by looking for the following signs, in line with Rob Strachan, Tom Moorhouse and Merryl Gelling (2011). *Water Vole Handbook: Third Edition*: -

* Water vole burrows.
* Water vole faeces and latrines.
* Water vole feeding stations.
* Water vole runs.
* Water vole prints in areas of soft mud.
* Water vole lawns.
* Predator field signs.

2.5. The survey area was searched for watercourses and where found all watercourses within the survey area and for approximately 50m in each direction were thoroughly searched for evidence of otter (*Lutra lutra*) activity by looking for the following signs

in line with the P Chanin (2003). *Monitoring the Otter* and *Conserving Natura 2000 Rivers: Monitoring Series No10 Guidelines: -*

* Otter prints in soft mud.
* Otter spraints.
* Otter Holts.

2.6. The survey area was searched for watercourses and waterbodies. Where found, and where safe to enter the water, all were thoroughly searched for the presence of crayfish, for approximately 50m in each direction of the site, by searching under rocks and logs. Where stated, crayfish traps were also deployed into the watercourse. All survey work was carried out in accordance with the *Conserving Natural 2000 Rivers Monitoring Series No 1, Protocol for Monitoring the White Clawed Crayfish*.

2.7. The survey area was searched for mature trees and derelict buildings and where found these were checked for potential bat roosting sites in line with Collins, J. (ed.) (2023) *Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines (4th edition)* by looking for the following signs: -

* Holes, cracks or crevices.
* Bat Droppings.

2.8. The land immediately adjacent to the survey area was assessed for bat roosting potential and bat foraging potential. Connective routes and flight lines were also assessed whilst on site and using maps of the area.

2.9. The area within 500m of the survey site was cross referenced to maps to highlight all ponds close to the site. Where possible, all ponds identified were accessed using agreed access or public rights of way to assess the potential for great crested newts (*Triturus cristatus*) to be present.

2.10. The survey area was assessed for the potential for reptiles and suitable reptile habitats. Where applicable the area was also searched for the presence of reptiles.

2.11. Where appropriate, the habitat within and surrounding the survey area was searched for species such as hazel, oak, honeysuckle, bramble and other species which may provide potential habitat for hazel dormice (*Muscardinus avellanarius*). Field signs such as feeding remains and nests were also searched for where possible, in line with P Bright, P Morris and T Mitchell-Jones *the Dormouse Conservation Handbook 2nd Edition*.

2.12. Where appropriate, the area within and surrounding the survey area was assessed for its potential to house habitat for red squirrels. Field signs of red squirrels were searched for at least every 50m, looking for any dreys, feeding signs or sightings of red squirrels.

2.13. All surveys were carried out in line with the Chartered Institute of Ecological and Environmental Management (CIEEM) survey standards and advice.

2.14. This document is prepared in line with The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). This sets out the government policy on biodiversity and nature conservation and places a duty on Planning Authorities to give material consideration to the effect of a development on legally protected species when considering planning applications. The NPPF and the Planning Practice Guidance on "Natural Environment" also promote sustainable development by ensuring that developments take account of the role and value of biodiversity and that it is conserved and enhanced within the development.

2.15. This report is prepared in line with the Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act that came into force on 1st Oct 2006. Section 41 (S41) of the Act requires the Secretary of State to publish a list of habitats and species which are of principal importance for the conservation of biodiversity in England.

2.16. This survey was carried out by Derek Whitcher who has over twenty years' experience of surveying for wildlife and has run his own wildlife consultancy since 1998. He has extensive experience of a wide variety of survey techniques for a variety of species of protected wildlife supplemented by attendance on a wide range of training courses through CIEEM, FSC and BCT. As a member of CIEEM he is committed to continuous professional development, a continual process of learning and career development, a condition of CIEEM membership. He holds current Natural England survey licences for barn owl, bat, great crested newt and white clawed crayfish.

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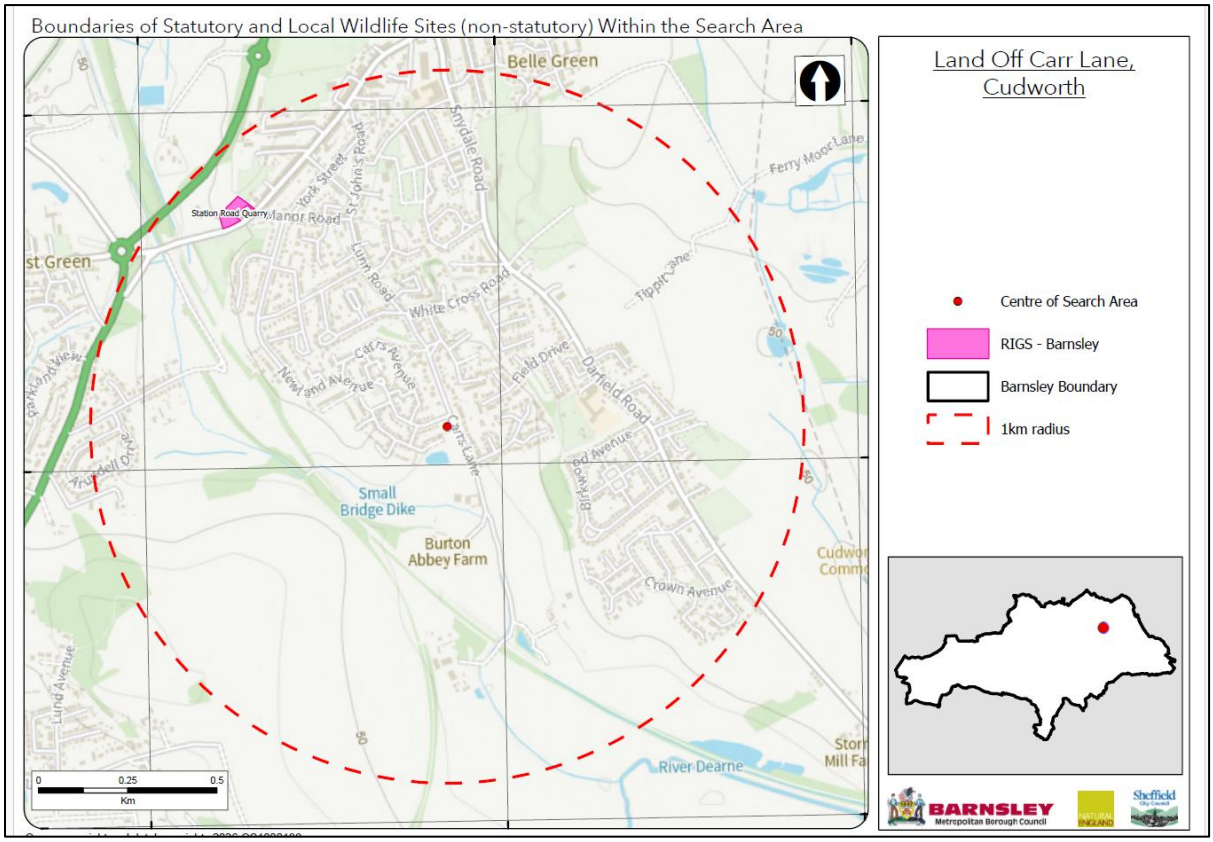
3. SURVEY RESULTS.

3.1. Data Search Results.

3.1.1. A data search request was submitted to Barnsley Biological Records Centre for existing records of designated sites and protected species within 2km of the survey area.

3.1.2. There are no national or international designated sites in the search area and there are no Local Wildlife Sites lie within the search area. There is one RIGS site approximately 0.8km from the survey area.



3.1.3. There are common amphibian and great crested newt records, predominantly at Ferry Moor wader scrapes and ponds but these are in excess of 1km from the survey area.

3.1.4. There is one grass snake record and a small number of bat records but none are relevant to the survey area.

3.1.5. The data search results are available to the client on request but must not be placed in the public domain.

3.2. The Surveyed Area.

3.2.1. The aerial photograph below shows the location of the survey area, marked with a red arrow and the surrounding area. The site is located in a residential area of Cudworth with open countryside to the south.

3.2.2. The survey area is shown below shaded in yellow. At the time that this aerial photograph was taken there was a bungalow on the site. This is no longer present. However, demolition of the bungalow does not represent a degradation of the site.

3.3. Description of Habitats.

3.3.1. Appendix III of this report contains an annotated map marked up with the varying habitats that are on the site. The primary habitats on and adjacent to the site are: -

- g4 – Modified grassland.
- u1f – Sparsely vegetated urban land.
- u1e – Built linear feature.

3.3.2. Biodiversity calculations have been calculated using the Statutory Biodiversity Metric, the current version at this time.

3.3.3. g4 – Modified grassland.

3.3.3.1. There is a strip of land along the northern end of the site that, according to historic mapping, was cleared in 2018 and has since re-vegetated with grass and herbs.

3.3.3.2. Species present include perennial ryegrass (*Lolium perenne*), cocksfoot (*Dactylis glomerata*), dandelion (*Taraxacum officinale),* creeping buttercup (*Ranunculus repens*), thistle (*Cirsium* sp(p)), cranes bill (*Geranium pratense*), dock (*Rumex* sp.), weld (*Reseda luteola*), ragwort (*Jacobaea vulgaris*) and occasional bramble (*Rubus fruticosus*).

3.3.3.3. The condition assessment for this habitat is within the Statutory BNG condition assessment document that accompanies this report. The condition of the grassland is poor, passing five criteria but failing the essential criteria.

3.3.4. Secondary code 847 – Introduced shrubs.

3.3.4.1. Within the eastern side of the grassland there is a small rockery with a group of ornamental shrubs.


3.3.4.2. Species present include rose, cinquefoil (P*otentilla fruticosa*), dogwood (*Cornus sanguinea*), viburnum (*Viburnum davidii*) and New Zealand broadleaf (*Griselinia littoralis*).

3.3.4.3. There is no condition assessment for this habitat.

3.3.5. u1f – Sparsely vegetated urban land.

3.3.5.1. The previous bungalow and drive have been removed from the southern side of the survey area and the area scraped and left to regenerate. This area has been categorised as sparsely vegetated land as the vegetation cover is between 10% and 50%.


3.3.5.2. Species present include white clover (*Trifolium repens*), dandelion (*Taraxacum officinale*), dock (*Rumex* sp.), square stalked willowherb (*Epilobium tetragonum*), thistle (*Cirsium* sp(p)), ragwort (*Jacobaea vulgaris*), selfheal (*Prunella vulgaris*), hairy bitter cress (*Cardamine hirsuta*) and speedwell (*Veronica persica*).

3.3.5.3. The condition assessment for this habitat is within the Statutory BNG condition assessment document that accompanies this report. The condition of the sparsely vegetated urban land is poor, passing only one criterion.

3.3.6. u1e – Built linear feature.

Secondary code 612 – fence.

3.3.6.1. There is a timber fence around two sides of the survey area and a Heras fence alongside the pavement at the front of the site.

3.3.6.2. There is no condition assessment for this habitat.

3.3.7. u1e – Built linear feature.

Secondary code 853 – wall.

3.3.7.1. There is a stone wall along the eastern side boundary.


3.3.7.2. There is no condition assessment for this habitat.

3.4. Description of Fauna.

3.4.1. There were no badger setts or badger field signs present anywhere within the survey area.

3.4.2. There is no watercourse on or close to the site and therefore no habitat for water voles, otters or white clawed crayfish.

3.4.3. The nearest pond on the OS map is 660m south of the survey area in the sewage works with others 1km to the east. Any amphibians present in these ponds would be likely to remain in the habitat around the ponds. The data search results include records of great crested newts in excess of 1km from the survey area.

3.4.4. There are no buildings on the site to provide opportunities for roosting bats.

3.4.5. There are no trees present on the site to provide potential roost features for bats.

3.4.6. The area around the survey area is a residential area that is assessed to be low value habitat for foraging and commuting bats.

3.4.7. There are limited opportunities for nesting birds in the grassland and shrubs within the survey area.

3.4.8. The site is assessed to have no potential for reptiles. The site is surrounded by residential properties and roads and there are no opportunities for shelter in the survey area.

3.4.9. The site is assessed as an unsuitable habitat for hazel dormouse as it lies well outside of their natural range and the habitat is totally unsuitable.

3.4.10. The site is assessed to be totally unsuitable habitat for red squirrels, located outside the natural range for the species.

3.4.11. There are no alien, invasive plant species listed on Schedule 9 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act present on the site.

3.4.12. The site has low suitability for hedgehogs as the site is surrounded by roads and residential properties and there are no opportunities for shelter in the survey area.

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4. BIODIVERSITY NET GAIN.

4.1. Baseline biodiversity calculations have been carried out using the Statutory Metric tool, the current metric at the time of writing this report. The calculations have been completed for baseline area habitats. The condition assessments for each habitat are shown in the attached condition assessment document and the baseline biodiversity values are shown in the attached metric calculation tool as well as being listed below.

4.2. Area Habitats – Pre Development.

Habitat Type	Area in Ha	Distinctiveness	Condition Assessment	Biodiversity Units (BU).
Modified grassland	0.059	Low	Poor	0.12
Sparsely vegetated land - ephemeral	0.043	Low	Poor	0.09
Total	**1.02**			**0.21**

4.3. There are 0.21BU of area habitat on the site pre-development.

4.4. There are no linear habitats present on the site.

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5. EVALUATION OF FINDINGS.

5.1. There are no international or nationally designated sites or Local Wildlife Sites within the search area and therefore there will be no impact on such sites.

5.2. The habitat on the site that will be impacted by the proposed development will be predominantly other neutral grassland and sparsely vegetated land with ephemerals and ruderals. There are currently 0.33BU of area habitats present in the survey area.

5.3. No badger setts or badger field signs were identified anywhere in the survey area and there are no records in the data search results. Therefore, the development will have no impact on badgers.

5.4. There is no watercourse close to the site and therefore no habitat for water voles, otters or white clawed crayfish. There will therefore be no negative impact on these species.

5.5. The nearest pond on the OS map is 660m south of the survey area in the sewage works with others 1km to the east. Any amphibians present in these ponds would be likely to remain in the habitat around the ponds. The proposed development will have no negative impact on amphibians.

5.6. There are no buildings on the site to provide opportunities for roosting bats. The proposed development will have no negative impact on roosting bats in buildings.

5.7. There are no trees present on the site to provide potential roost features for bats. The proposed development will have no negative impact on bats roosting in trees.

5.8. The area around the survey area is a residential area that is assessed to be low value habitat for foraging and commuting bats. The proposed development will have no impact on foraging bats.

5.9. There are limited opportunities for nesting birds in the grassland and shrubs within the survey area and therefore, the proposed development may impact nesting birds if site clearance is carried out between March and August, during the nesting bid season.

5.10. The site is assessed to have no potential for reptiles. The site is surrounded by residential properties and roads and there are no opportunities for shelter in the survey area. The proposed development will have no negative impact on reptiles.

5.11. The site is assessed to be an unsuitable habitat for hazel dormouse, located outside the natural range for the species. The proposed development will have no negative impact on the species.

5.12. The site is assessed to be totally unsuitable habitat for red squirrels, located outside the natural range for the species. The proposed development will have no negative impact on the species.

5.13. There are no alien, invasive plant species listed on Schedule 9 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act present on the site. Therefore, there is no potential to cause the spread of Schedule 9 plants in the wild.

5.14. The site has low suitability for hedgehogs as the site is surrounded by roads and residential properties and there are no opportunities for shelter in the survey area. The proposed development is unlikely to impact on hedgehogs.

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6. RECOMMENDATIONS.

6.1. There is currently no post development landscape plan for this site. However, it is known that the site is to be developed with two new dwellings and gardens.

6.2. On the site at present there are 0.21BU area biodiversity units on the site.

6.3. The client needs to decide whether he can justify qualifying for one of the permitted exemptions to the BNG. These are listed in Appendix II of this document.

6.4. If not exempt from Biodiversity Net Gain, once replacement planting has been considered and a landscape plan prepared, this document must be amended to include post development biodiversity and this be added to this report to arrive at a percentage gain or loss for the site.

6.5. If the 10% net gain required cannot be achieved on site, off site units must be provided or purchased and details of the chosen option included in the final Ecological Impact Assessment to be provided to the planners.

6.6. As the site has been assessed to provide some opportunity for nesting birds, it is recommended that site clearance be undertaken outside the nesting season, which extends from March to August. In the event vegetation clearance does need to be undertaken during the nesting season, it is recommended that a survey for nesting birds is undertaken immediately prior to works commencing by a suitably experienced ecologist. Should any active nests be identified, they must remain undisturbed until the young have fledged from the nest.

6.7. It will be necessary to incorporate biodiversity enhancements in the new buildings on the site in line with the NPPF. To achieve this, it is recommended that integrated bat roosting opportunities and nest boxes be provided in the new buildings on the site.

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Prepared by:	
Derek Whitcher, BSc, MCIEEM, MCMI	Date: 4th February 2026.

Checked by:	
Ruth Georgiou, BSc, MCIEEM	Date: 13th February 2026.

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Appendix I. NESTING BIRD INFORMATION.

Ecology

The nesting season will vary according to the weather each year but generally commences in March, peaks during May and June and continues until September. It is also worth remembering that some birds nest in trees and scrub, but others are ground nesting or prefer man- made structures or buildings.

Surveys

Nesting bird surveys search for potential nest sites in vegetation, buildings etc. Potential nesting sites are observed over a suitable period of time for bird movements or calling male birds that would indicate the presence of a nest. The presence of a nest can be identified from the field signs without the necessity to see the nest itself, thereby avoiding any disturbance of the nests. The best way to avoid this issue is to plan for vegetation clearance to be carried out outside the bird-nesting season.

Legislation

Nesting birds are protected under The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981.

Part 1. -(1) Of the Act states that: - If any person intentionally: - kills, injures or takes any wild bird; takes, damages or destroys the nest of any wild bird while that nest is in use or being built; or takes or destroys an egg of any wild bird, he shall be guilty of an offence.

Part 1. -(5) of the Act states that: - If any person intentionally: - disturbs any wild bird included in Schedule 1 while it is building a nest or is in, on, or near a nest containing eggs or young; or disturbs young of such a bird, he shall be guilty of an offence and liable to a special penalty.

The Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 amends the above by inserting after “intentionally” the words “or recklessly”.

Appendix II. BNG exemptions from the Gov.uk website.

Existing planning applications

If a planning application for a development was made before day one of mandatory BNG on 12 February 2024, the development is exempt from BNG.

Variations of planning permission

Transitional arrangements also apply for variations to existing planning permissions. There is more information in the planning practice guidance.

Developments below the threshold

A development that does not impact a priority habitat and impacts less than:

- 25 square metres (5m by 5m) of on-site habitat
- 5 metres of on-site linear habitats such as hedgerows

A development 'impacts' a habitat if it decreases the biodiversity value.

Find out more about this exemption.

Householder applications

These are applications made by householders as defined within article 2(1) of the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015.

It includes, for example, small projects like home extensions, conservatories or loft conversions.

Self-build and custom build applications

You must meet all of the following conditions to qualify for an exemption as a self-build or custom build.

The development must:

- consist of no more than 9 dwellings
- be on a site that has an area no larger than 0.5 hectares

- consist exclusively of dwellings that are self-build or custom housebuilding as defined in section 1(A1) of the Self-build and Custom Housebuilding Act 2015

Find out more about what qualifies as self-build and custom housebuilding.

Biodiversity gain site

Developments undertaken mainly for the purpose of fulfilling the BNG planning condition for another development are exempt.

High speed rail transport network

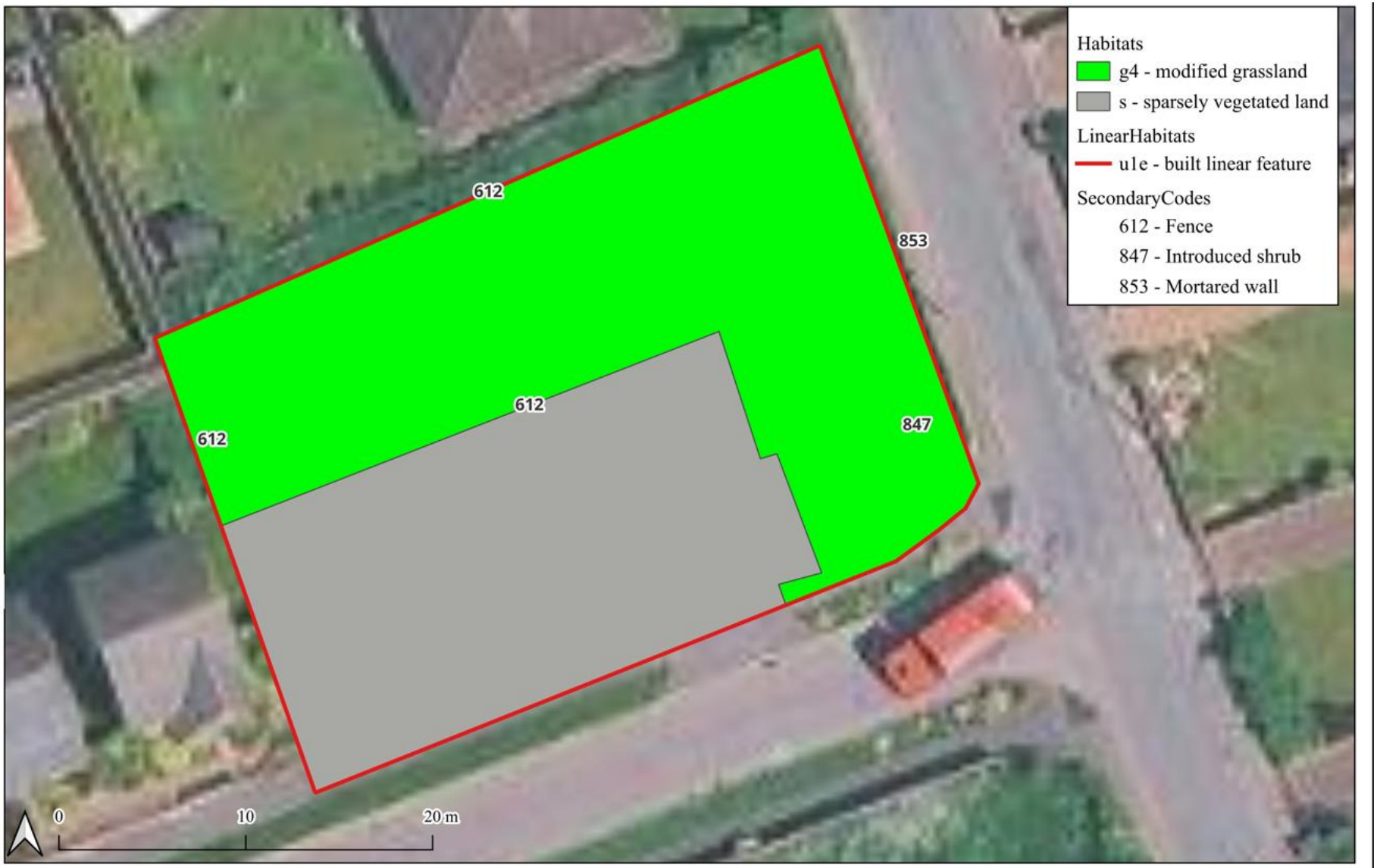
An exemption applies to any development forming part of, or ancillary to, the high-speed railway transport network, comprising connections between all or any of the places or parts of the transport network specified in section 1(2) of the High Speed Rail (Preparation) Act 2013.

Other exemptions

The following are exempt by the Environment Act 2021:

- urgent crown developments
- developments that are granted planning permission by a development order (including permitted development rights)

Appendix III. ANNOTATED MAP OF THE SURVEY AREA PRE DEVELOPMENT.



Site: Land off Carr Lane, Cudworth

Reference: 260234

Date: 05.03.2026

Produced by: Samuel Bentley