



WEST ROAD, BARNSELEY.

OS REF: SE 33050 06496.

PRELIMINARY ECOLOGICAL APPRAISAL.

Ref No: 230424.

Date: 12th July 2023.

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1. INTRODUCTION.

1.1. There are plans to develop and area of land off West Road, Barnsley for commercial use.

1.2. Whitcher Wildlife Ltd has been commissioned to carry out a Preliminary Ecological Survey in support of a planning application for the site.

1.3. An initial survey was carried out on 11th April 2023 and a follow up survey on 11th July 2023. This report outlines the findings of those surveys and makes appropriate recommendations to the client.

1.4. Appendices I and II of this report provide additional information on specific species and are designed to assist the reader in understanding the contents of this report.

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 primary habitat types throughout the survey area. All primary habitats are accompanied by secondary codes which are used to add further specific details where necessary. Each primary habitat and unique set off secondary codes will be shown individually in the appended annotated map.

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.) (2016) *Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines* (3rd 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.

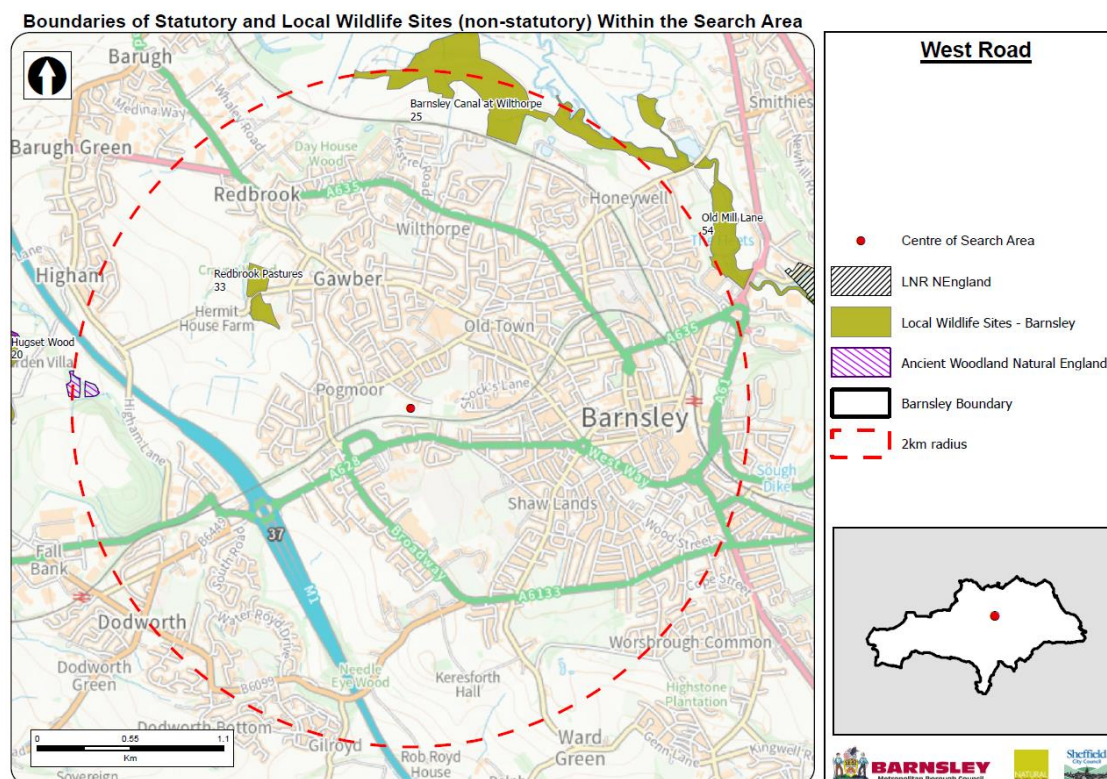
2.16. The survey was undertaken by Derek Whitcher who has over twenty years’ experience of surveying for wildlife and has run his own wildlife consultancy since 1998. He has extensive experience of a wide variety of survey techniques for a variety of species of protected wildlife supplemented by attendance 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.

3. SURVEY RESULTS.

3.1. Data Search Results.

3.1.1. Data search requests were submitted to Barnsley Biological Records Centre and to South Yorkshire Badger Group.

3.1.2. Barnsley Biological Records Centre provided the following map showing there are no statutory or non-statutory sites or local wildlife sites close to the survey area.



3.1.3. Species records include numerous bird and bat records from across the Borough. There are records of great crested newts in Wilthorpe and in Worsbrough, neither site close to the survey area and occasional frog, toad and smooth newt. There are also occasional hedgehog records across the Borough.

3.1.4. South Yorkshire Badger Group hold no records of badgers or badger setts in Barnsley to the east of the M1 corridor.

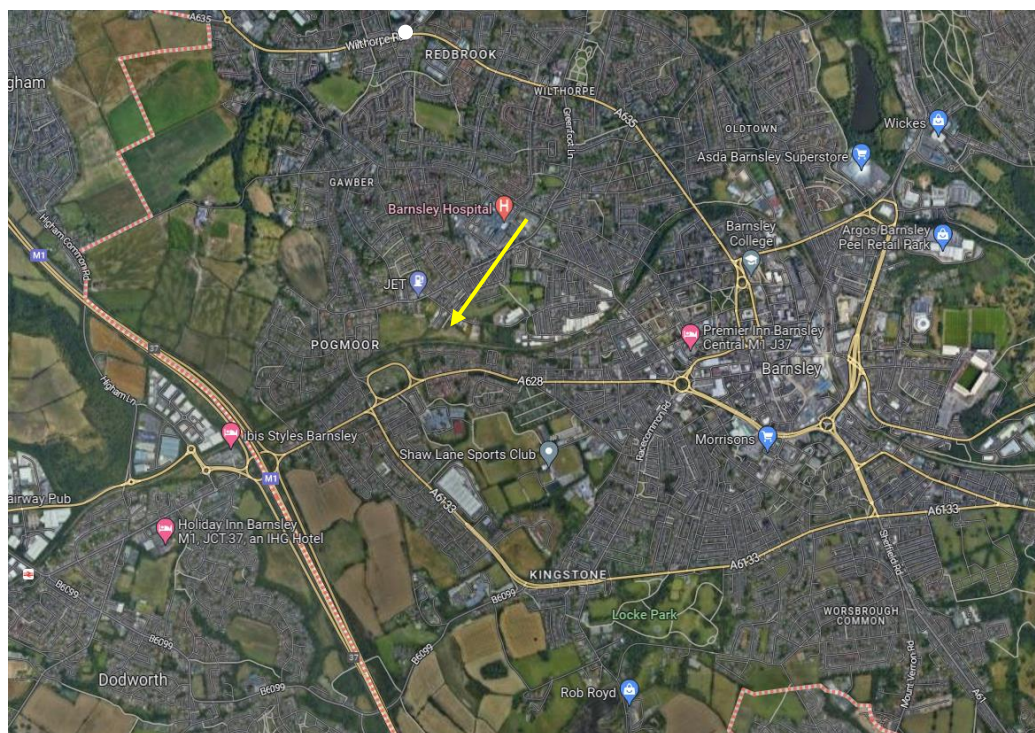
3.1.5. Consultation with the MAGIC website shows the site to be within the zone of influence of the Dearne Valley Wetlands SSSI.

3.1.6. The MAGIC website shows that two bat EPS licences have been granted one in central Barnsley and one in north Barnsley, neither close to the site.

3.1.7. The data search results cannot be placed in the public domain but are available to the client on request.

3.2. The Surveyed Area.

3.2.1. The aerial photographs below show the location of the site shown by the yellow arrow and the surrounding area.



3.2.2. A closer aerial photograph is shown below that shows the site itself shaded in blue and surrounded by yellow lines and the immediate surroundings. The railway line runs along the southern site boundary with residential areas beyond and there is an area of woodland to the east with commercial units beyond. To the west of the site Barnsley MBC contractors are constructing a new cycle way and footpath and those works have impacted on that site boundary where excess soils have been deposited.



3.2.3. Historic mapping shows the site to have previously been developed with small commercial units present and after this, the site has been scraped clear of vegetation in the central areas.

3.3. Description of Habitats.

Appendix III of this report contains an annotated map marked up with the varying habitats that are cross referenced to target notes in Appendix IV of this report. The habitats on and adjacent to the site are: -

- Modified Grassland g4.
- Modified grassland – Ruderals g4 17.
- Scrub h3.
- Bare Ground.
- Built linear features -fence – ule 69.

3.3.1. *Modified Grassland. g4.*

3.3.1.1. The main area of the site has been categorised as modified grassland. Reference to historic aerial photography shows that there were buildings on the site up to 2015/2016 when the site was cleared and was devoid of grass or top soil. As a result, species regeneration has been poor with a very short sward. There has also

been recent damage from machinery. Species identified included Yorkshire fog (*Holcus lanatus*), meadow grass (*Poa annua*), cock's foot (*Dactylis glomerata*), with greater plantain (*Plantago major*), ribwort plantain (*Plantago lanceolata*), clover (*Trifolium repens*) Dove's foot cranesbill (*Geranium molle*), ragwort, black medic, chamomile and daisy (*Bellis perennis*) with occasional common rush (*Juncus spp.*)



3.3.1.2. This habitat falls under the category of “Grassland”. The following table shows the results of the habitat condition assessment of this grassland at the time of the survey. The habitat passes three of the criteria, a Poor result.

Grassland (low distinctiveness)

Condition Assessment Criteria	Condition Achieved (Y/N)
1 – Species per m2	N
2 – Sward height	N
3 – Scattered scrub cover	Y
4 – Physical damage	N
5 – Bare ground	N
6 – Bracken	Y
7 – Non-native species	Y

Condition Assessment Result	Condition Assessment Score
Passes 6 or 7 of 7 criteria including passing criterion 1	Good (3)
Passes 4 or 5 of 7 criteria including passing criterion 1	Moderate (2)
Passes 0, 1, 2 or 3 of 7 criteria; OR 4, 5 or 6 of criteria but failing criterion 1	Poor (1)

3.3.2. Modified grassland – Ruderals g4 17.

3.3.2.1. Large areas around the perimeter of the site support tall ruderal species. Much of this was originally bare ground because it had recently been scraped but the ruderal vegetation has now regenerated. Species present include Yorkshire fog (*Holcus lanatus*), meadow grass (*Poa annua*), cock's foot (*Dactylis glomerata*), with greater plantain (*Plantago major*), ribwort plantain (*Plantago lanceolata*), clover (*Trifolium repens*) Dove's foot cranesbill (*Geranium molle*), ragwort (*Senecio jacobaea*), black medic (*Medicago lupulina*), chamomile (*Chamaemelum nobile*), daisy (*Bellis perennis*), sow thistle (*Sonchus oleraceus*), common comfrey (*Symphytum officinale*), spiny sow thistle (*Sonchus asper*), poppy (*Papaver rhoeas*), mugwort (*Artemisia vulgaris*), common mallow (*Malva neglecta*), garlic mustard (*Alliaria petiolata*), oxford ragwort (*Senecio squalidus*), field bindweed (*Convolvulus arvensis*) and Japanese knotweed (*Fallopia japonica*).

3.3.2.2. This habitat falls under the category of "Grassland". The following table shows the results of the habitat condition assessment of this grassland at the time of the survey. The habitat passes three of the criteria, a Poor result.

Grassland (low distinctiveness)

Condition Assessment Criteria	Condition Achieved (Y/N)
1 – Species per m2	N
2 – Sward height	N
3 – Scattered scrub cover	Y
4 – Physical damage	N
5 – Bare ground	N
6 – Bracken	Y
7 – Non-native species	Y
Condition Assessment Result	Condition Assessment Score
Passes 6 or 7 of 7 criteria including passing criterion 1	Good (3)
Passes 4 or 5 of 7 criteria including passing criterion 1	Moderate (2)
Passes 0, 1, 2 or 3 of 7 criteria; OR 4, 5 or 6 of criteria but failing criterion 1	Poor (1)

3.3.3. Scrub – h3.

3.3.3.1. There is a strip of scrub along the southern site boundary, adjacent to the railway line. The trees present are immature and hence the habitat has been assessed to be scrub. Much of this scrub is growing on a steep slope down to the railway boundary fence.



3.3.3.2. Species present include hawthorn (*Crataegus monogyna*), goat willow (*Salix caprea*) and sycamore (*Acer pseudoplatanus*), with bramble (*Rubus fruticosus*), teasel (*Dipsacus sylvestris*), common comfrey (*Symphytum officinale*), nettle (*Urtica dioica*), dandelion (*Taraxacum officinale*), dock (*Rumex sp.*), rosebay willowherb (*Chamerion angustifolium*), coltsfoot (*Tussilago farfara*), hogweed (*Heracleum sphondylium*), and Japanese knotweed (*Fallopia japonica*).

3.3.3.3. In addition, there is a small clump of hawthorn (*Crataegus monogyna*) growing just inside the north eastern site boundary.



3.3.3.4. This habitat falls under the category of “Scrub”. The following table shows the results of the habitat condition assessment of this scrub at the time of the survey. The habitat passes three of the criteria, a Moderate result.

Condition Assessment Criteria	Condition Achieved (Y/N)
1 – Representative of UKHab description	Y
2 – Age range	N
3 – Non-native species	Y
4 – Edge vegetation	Y
5 – Clearings, glades or rides	N
Condition Assessment Result	Condition Assessment Score
Passes 5 of 5 criteria	Good (3)
Passes 3 or 4 of 5 criteria	Moderate (2)
Passes 0, 1 or 2 of 5 criteria	Poor (1)

3.3.4. Bare Ground

3.3.3.1. The access road onto the site is an area of bare ground.

3.3.3.2. There are no habitat condition assessments for bare ground, all bare ground is classified as poor condition.

3.3.4. Built Linear Features u1e.

There are linear palisade fence lines around much of the site and a blockwork wall around the northern end of the site.



3.4. Description of Fauna.

3.4.1. There were no badger setts or badger field signs anywhere within the survey area and there are no records of badger activity in the surrounding area.

3.4.2. There are no watercourses in the survey area to provide habitat for water voles, otters or white clawed crayfish.

3.4.3. There are no buildings present on the site that could provide bat roosting opportunities.

3.4.4. None of the trees on the site are of sufficient maturity to provide potential for roosting bats.

3.4.5. The site provides low quality foraging habitat for bats due to the lack of any suitable corridors on or around the site. The most suitable flight line is the railway corridor but the vegetation along the line is open and therefore this is not assessed to be a high value foraging habitat. The site itself is very open and exposed.

3.4.6. There are no ponds on or close to the site to provide breeding opportunities for amphibians.

3.4.7. The vegetation around the site provides possible opportunities for nesting birds during the nesting season, which extends from March to September each year. One pigeon was seen sitting on a nest in the scrub adjacent to the railway during the first survey.



3.4.8. The site is assessed to have a low potential for the presence of reptiles. The site is open grassland with no opportunities for shelter.

3.4.9. The site is assessed to be totally unsuitable habitat for hazel dormouse as it is located outside the natural range for the species and lacks continuity to suitable habitat.

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

3.4.15. No alien, invasive plant species listed on Schedule 9 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act (1981) were found growing on the site at the time of the first survey although the site had recently been scraped. During the second survey, abundant Japanese knotweed was identified across the site. Some of this was in the form of young plants, possibly in part the result of the previous scraping works.



4. EVALUATION OF FINDINGS.

4.1. There are no national or internationally designated sites within 2km of the survey area and therefore, there will be No Negative Impact on such sites. The survey area does lie within an SSSI impact zone but the development is not within the categories listed.

4.2. BBRC holds records of one Local Wildlife Site within 2km of the survey area, Redbrook Pastures at Gawber. This will not be affected by the works and therefore, there will be No Negative Impact on any Local Wildlife Sites.

4.3. There are no Priority Habitats as listed under the NERC Act 2006 on the proposed development site. There will be No Negative Impact on Priority Habitats.

4.4. The site contains one main habitat and that is the grassland in the centre of the site. This is assessed to be poor quality as it is short and sparse and growing on disturbed land.

4.5. A large part of the site perimeter has recently been cleared of vegetation, by the time of the repeat visit, this had regenerated as ruderal vegetation and is shown on the site plan as ruderals.

4.6. The following table outlines the habitats on site and the baseline Biodiversity figures for the pre development site. There are 1.84Bu present in the area habitats on the site.

Habitat Type	Area in ha.	Distinctiveness	Condition Assessment	Biodiversity Units.
Modified Grassland	0.3517	Low	Poor	0.70
Modified grassland - ruderals	0.2559	Low	Poor	0.51
Mixed Scrub	0.0597	Medium	Moderate	0.48
Bare Ground	0.748	Low	Poor	0.15
Total	1.263			1.84

4.7. No badger setts or field signs were found within the survey area and therefore, there will be No Negative Impact on the species.

4.8. There are no watercourses in the survey area to provide habitat for water voles, otters or white clawed crayfish. There will be No Negative Impact on these species as a result of the proposed development.

4.9. There are no buildings on the site to provide bat roosting opportunities and therefore, the development of the site will have no impact on roosting bats in buildings. There are also no trees of sufficient maturity to provide bat roosting opportunities.

4.10. The site provides low quality foraging habitat for bats due to the lack of any suitable corridors on or around the site. There will be no fragmentation of that foraging habitat and therefore Negligible Negative Impact on foraging and commuting bats.

4.11. There are no ponds on the site or in the immediate surrounding area to provide breeding habitat for amphibians. Therefore, there is unlikely to be a Negative Impact on amphibians.

4.12. The vegetation within the survey area provides low potential nesting habitat for birds during the nesting season, which extends from March to September each year. Any vegetation clearance during the nesting season will potentially have a Negative Impact on any nesting birds present. Vegetation clearance outside the nesting season will have No Direct Negative Impact on nesting birds although nesting habitat will potentially be lost.

4.13. The site is assessed to have a low potential for the presence of reptiles. The site lies in an urban setting and is surrounded by residential and commercial areas which greatly reduce the potential for reptiles to be present. Therefore, it is unlikely there will be any impact on reptiles as a result of the development.

4.14. The site is assessed to be totally unsuitable habitat for hazel dormouse, outside the natural range of the species. The proposed development will have No Negative Impact on the species.

4.15. The site is assessed to be totally unsuitable habitat for red squirrels, outside the natural range of the species. There will be No Negative Impact on the species.

4.16. There were no alien, invasive plant species listed on Schedule 9 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act (1981) growing on the site at the time of the first survey although these would not show at this time of the year and after the site disturbance. At the time of the second site visit the Japanese knotweed had grown and was present in many areas of the site as shown by the target notes in the Appendices.

5. RECOMMENDATIONS.

5.1. This Preliminary Ecological Appraisal report is designed to advise the client of the initial survey results so that they may be considered within the site development and landscape plan.

5.2. Once the development plans have been finalised, the report must be converted into an Ecological Impact Assessment (EcIA) where details of mitigation and biological enhancements are included, to arrive at an assessment of the residual impact of the proposed development. This format will be suitable to submit to the Local Authority.

5.3. It is recommended that the exact locations of all of the Japanese knotweed plants are plotted to show where they are and that a strategy be put in place to treat and eradicate the plant for the site. Until that time, any materials from the site and particularly within 7m of any plant, is treated as contaminated waste.

5.4. It is recommended that any further vegetation clearance is carried out outside the nesting bird season, which extends from March to September each year. Any such works during the nesting season should be preceded by a nesting bird survey and any active nests identified must remain undisturbed until the young have fledged.

5.5. Further native species planting is recommended to provide further biodiversity benefits within the development and to achieve the required 10% Nett Gain.

5.7. It is recommended that additional biodiversity enhancements as required by the NPPF are provided in the form of an integrated bat brick and an integrated swift nest box in the new building to provide additional opportunities.

Prepared by:	
Derek Whitcher, BSc, MCIEEM, MCMI	Date: 12 th July 2023.

Checked by:	
Ruth Georgiou. BSc, MCIEEM.	Date: 14 th July 2023

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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. JAPANESE KNOTWEED INFORMATION.

Ecology

Japanese Knotweed (*Fallopia Japonica*) is a pernicious non-native species of plant. The plant is an extremely long-living perennial that does not spread by seeding. Instead it spreads by vegetative means. Any small section of the rhizome will grow into a new plant. It is extremely vigorous and very difficult to eradicate.

There does not appear to be any defined distance away from Japanese Knotweed that work should be carried out. Literature does state that the underground root system can spread up to seven metres and this is the suggested size of area to be excavated when eradicating by excavation. All excavated soil must be treated as controlled waste and dealt with according to strictly controlled procedures.

Surveys

A site will be searched for Japanese Knotweed plants growing on site, from mature plants to new shoots. A site will also be searched for dead stems indicating that the plant is present.

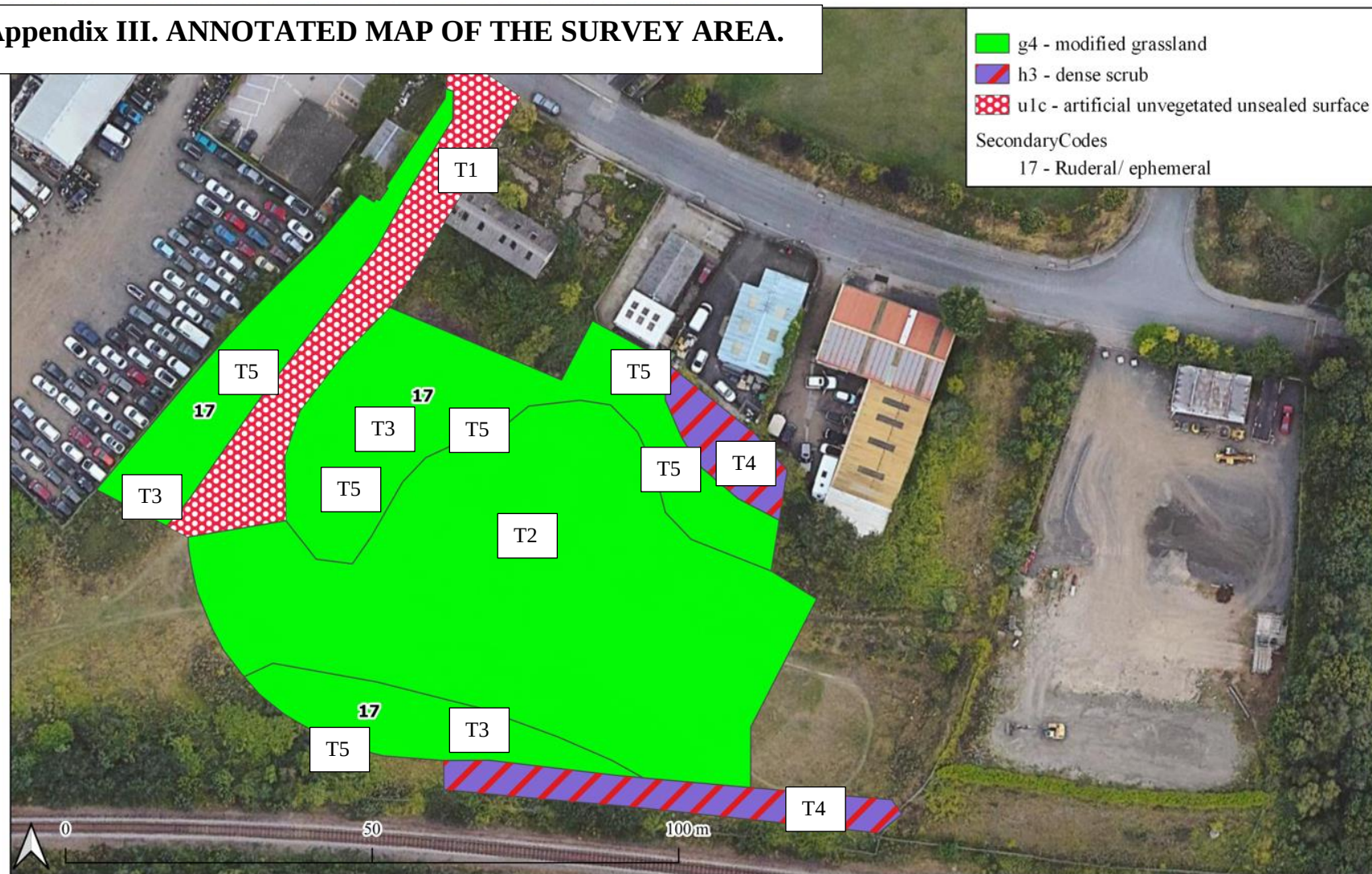
Legislation

Under section 14 and Part II of Schedule 9 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 it is an offence for Japanese Knotweed to be planted in the wild or otherwise caused to grow in the wild. It is not an offence to leave it growing, in situ; only to spread it to new areas.

If land that is contaminated with Japanese Knotweed is required to be worked on or is in danger of being tracked over or affected by the construction works in any way it must be dealt with in a rigorous way. Failure to do so not only risks prosecution but very high costs to eradicate any new growth. Alternatively, Japanese Knotweed can be controlled by a prolonged treatment with approved herbicides.

Any area where Japanese Knotweed is found should be fenced off and warning signs erected. All staff should be warned both verbally and in writing that these areas should not be entered and should not be tracked over by machinery.

Appendix III. ANNOTATED MAP OF THE SURVEY AREA.



Site: West Road

Reference: 230424

Date: 13.07.2023

Produced by: Mitchel Greenhalgh



Appendix IV. TARGET NOTES.

T1. Bare ground on the site access track.

T2. Modified grassland.

T3. Tall Ruderal Vegetation.

T4. Scrub.

T5. Japanese Knotweed.

[illegible]

Rank	Case	Change Item	Date
E		Site area add ~~ed~~ , and line boundary changed	23/5/23
D		Site area add ~~ed~~ , and line boundary changed	23/5/23
C		Site area add ~~ed~~	26/5/23
B		boundary line changed	26/5/23
A		new road added and ~~ed~~ to new road to new site new road to new site added	2/6/23

Project: Proposed Commercial Unit at Land
Adjoining West Road, Pogmoor
Barnsley

Scale: 1:500 Date:26/06/2023

Drawing Nr: S1



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