Whitcher Wildlife Ltd.
Ecological Consultants.

LUND CLOSE, LUNDWOOD.

OS REF: SE 37827 07350.

ECOLOGICAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT.

Ref No: **240631.**

Date: **19th June 2024.**

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TABLE OF CONTENTS.

1. INTRODUCTION.

1.1. There are plans to construct a new dwelling on a vacant piece of land on Lund Close, Lundwood.

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. The initial Preliminary Ecological Appraisal survey was carried out on 19th June 2024. At that time, the site had been cleared of trees and a level plateau largely devoid of vegetation had been formed.

1.4. Schedule 14 of the Environment Act includes measures that allow the Local Planning Authority to take account of any habitat degradation or destruction undertaken on a site since January 2020. If a site has been cleared or degraded the baseline for the purposes of Biodiversity Net Gain is taken to be that before the clearance or degradation has taken place. Aerial or other photographs may be used to evidence the habitat types formerly present on site and, in the absence of any other information, the habitat should be allocated a condition score of 'good' on a precautionary basis.

1.5. However, this site comes under the definition of "Self-build", a category of development that renders a dwelling built for the owner to reside in, exempt from Biodiversity Net Gain. The extract from the Government website below refers.

Self-build and custom build applications

An exemption applies to this type of development when it meets all the following conditions:

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

1.6. Therefore, this report outlines the findings of the survey as the condition of the site at that time and has been written in the form of an Ecological Impact Assessment.

1.7. 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 100m in each direction were thoroughly searched for evidence of water vole (*Arvicola amphibius*) activity by looking for the following signs, in line with Dean M, Strachen R, Gow D and Andres R (2016). *The Water Vole Mitigation Handbook (The Mammal Society Mitigation Guidance Series).* Eds Fiona Mathews and Paul Chanin. The mammal Society, London: -
(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 trees and structures 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. The survey area was searched for all alien invasive plant species as listed on Schedule 9 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981. The location of all plants identified were recorded and listed within the survey report along with appropriate recommendations to avoid causing the plants to spread in the wild. All species were searched for, but the main species generally found under this category are Japanese knotweed, Giant hogweed, Himalayan balsam, Cotoneaster, Rhododendron and Japanese Rose.

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

2.15. 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.

2.16. 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.

2.17. The survey was undertaken by Derek Whitcher who has over thirty 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 bats and great crested newts.

Natural England Bat Survey Licence Number	2015-13205-CLS-CLS.
Natural England Great Crested Newt Licence Number	2015-06792-CLS-CLS.

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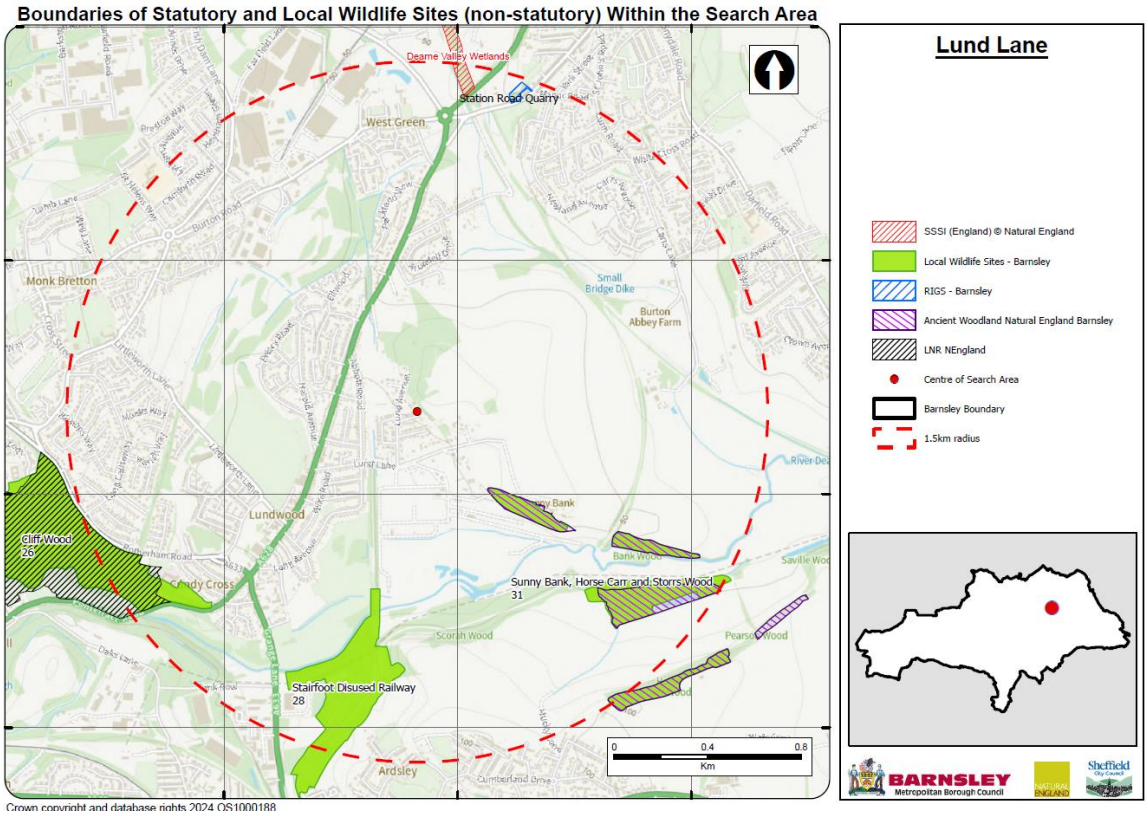
3. ECOLOGICAL BASELINE.

3.1. Data Search Results.

3.1.1. Desktop data searches were requested from Barnsley Biological Records Centre and South Yorkshire Badger Group for records of protected species and designated sites within 2km of the survey area.

3.1.2. Barnsley Biological Records Centre hold records of a number of Local Wildlife Sites to the south and southeast of the site. The closest is 350m southeast of the survey area with residential areas and arable farmland between.



3.1.3. There is one SSSI site 2km north of the survey area. The survey area lies within a zone of impact but does not fall in a category that requires consultation.

3.1.2.1. There are common frog and smooth newt records in Littleworth Park to the northwest but there are large residential areas between.

3.1.2.2. There are abundant bird, plant and insect records, predominantly in the Local Wildlife Sites. None directly apply to the survey area.

3.1.2.3. There are abundant water vole records but all are historic.

3.1.2.4. There are a small number of bat records, but these are all historic with the most recent for 2011.

3.1.2.5. There are badger records to the southeast of the survey area. No further details will be provided.

3.1.3. The badger group hold no additional records of badger setts within 2km of the survey area.

3.1.4. South Yorkshire Bat Group were not consulted as there are no buildings present on the site.

3.2. The Surveyed Area.

3.2.1. The survey area is an area of land off Lund Close, Barnsley. The aerial photograph below shows the survey area and surrounds. The site is surrounded by residential properties to the south and west with arable farmland and woodland to the east and north.

3.2.2. The aerial photograph below is a close up of the survey area shaded in yellow and shows the site to be a corner plot at the top of Lund Close that supports grassland, scrub and trees. The site has been cleared since this aerial imagery was taken.

3.3. Description of Habitats.

3.3.1. Appendix II of this report contains annotated maps marked up with the varying habitats on site. The primary habitats on the site are: -

- u1c – Artificial unvegetated, unsealed surface.
- g4 – Modified grassland
- u1e – Built linear feature

The present on site Biodiversity value has been calculated using the Statutory Small Sites Metric and this automatically calculates condition assessments.

3.3.2. u1c – Artificial unvegetated, unsealed surface.

The site has been cleared, scraped and levelled and the centre of the site now comprises a level plateau largely devoid of vegetation and with a vertical earth bank around the back two sides, as shown in the photographs below.

3.3.3. g4 – Modified grassland.

3.3.3.1. The banks around the outside of the level plateau have been assessed to be modified grassland.

3.3.3.2. Species present include false oat grass (*Arrhenatherum elatius*), Yorkshire fog (*Holcus lanatus*), creeping bent (*Agrostis stolonifera*), cocksfoot (*Dactylis glomerata*), fox and cubs (*Pilosella aurantiaca),* bramble (*Rubus fruticosus*), thistle (*Cirsium sp(p)),* dock (*Rumex sp.),* ash saplings (*Fraxinus excelsior*), oak saplings, (*Quercus Robur*) field bindweed (*Convolvulus arvensis*), hairy willowherb (*Epilobium hirsutum*), Ladies mantel (*Alchemilla mollis),* foxglove (*Digitalis purpurea),* rosebay willowherb (*Chamerion angustifolium*), fringed willowherb (*Epilobium ciliatum*), silver birch (*Betula pendula*) saplings, ragwort (*Senecio jacobaea*), ribwort plantain (*Plantago lanceolata*), honeysuckle (*Lonicera periclymenum*), wild cherry (*Prunus avium*) saplings, wood avens (*Geum urbanum*), autumn hawkbit *(Scorzoneroides autumnalis)* and St John's wort (*Hypericum calycinum).*

3.3.4. u1e – Built Linear Feature.

Secondary Codes: 612 fence, 853 mortared wall.

3.3.4.1. There is a perimeter fence around three sides of the site boundary, predominantly timber panels and post and wire. There is abundant field bindweed growing over the fence.

3.3.4.2. There is a length of brick boundary wall along the western site boundary.

3.4. Description of Fauna.

3.4.1. No badger setts or badger field signs were identified within the survey area and there are no sett records in the immediate surrounding area.

3.4.2. No watercourses were identified within or close to the survey area. Therefore, there is no habitat for water voles, otters or white clawed crayfish within the survey area.

3.4.3. There are no ponds in or close to the survey area. The closest pond is in excess of 1km to the east of the site and it is therefore unlikely there will be great crested newts or amphibians present on the site.

3.4.4. There are no structures present on the site to provide habitat for roosting bats.

3.4.5. There are no trees on the site to provide opportunities for roosting bats.

3.4.6. The survey area provides minimal potential for foraging and commuting bats as there are few features on the site and there is no connectivity between the site and

more suitable foraging habitat. There is woodland to the east and north and these will provide higher value foraging habitat.
3.4.7. The vegetation growing along the fences around the site provides opportunities for nesting birds during the nesting season, which extends from March to August each year.

3.4.8. The survey area provides no suitable habitat for reptiles as the site is devoid of shelter.

3.4.9. The survey area lies outside the natural range for hazel dormice.

3.4.10. The survey area lies outside the natural range for red squirrels.

3.4.11. No alien invasive plant species as listed on Schedule 9 of The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981, was identified within the survey area.

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4. ASSESSMENT OF IMPACTS, MITIGATION AND RESIDUAL EFFECTS.

4.1. Designated Sites.

4.1.1. Assessment.

4.1.1.1. Barnsley Biological Records Centre hold records of a number of Local Wildlife Sites to the south and southeast of the site. The closest is 350m southeast of the survey area with residential areas and arable farmland between.

4.1.1.2. There is one SSSI site 2km north of the survey area. The survey area lies within a zone of impact but does not fall in a category that requires consultation.

4.1.2. Mitigation.

No mitigation measures are necessary.

4.1.3. Residual Effects.

There will be no negative impact on designated sites as a result of the development.

4.2. Habitats.

4.2.1. Assessment.

4.2.1.1. The site is an area of artificial, unvegetated, unsealed surface surrounded by a grass covered bank.

4.2.1.2. These are low value habitats. The Biodiversity value of the site has been assessed using the Statutory Small Sites Metric. The habitats on site are as shown below.

Area Habitats.

Habitat Type	Area in Sqm	Distinctiveness	Condition Assessment	Biodiversity Units.
Modified grassland	264	Low	Moderate	0.11
Artificial, unvegetated, unsealed surface.	325	V. Low	N/A	0
Total site area	589			0.11

4.2.1.3. The total value of the existing habitats on the site is 0.11BU.

4.2.2. Mitigation.

4.2.2.1. These habitats will be replaced by a new dwelling and garden. This is for the owner and family and therefore falls under the definition of "self-build" and such a site is therefore exempt from Statutory Biodiversity Net Gain.

4.2.2.2. A native species hedgerow will be planted around the northern and western site boundaries to conceal the existing untidy fence line and one specimen, native tree will be planted at the northern end of the site.

4.2.3. Residual Effects.

A Biodiversity Net Gain calculation has not been undertaken as the site is exempt.

4.3. Species – Nesting Birds.

4.3.1. Assessment.

The vegetation growing on the fences around the site provides opportunities for nesting birds during the nesting season, that extends from March to August each year.

4.3.2. Mitigation.

Vegetation management works will be carried out as far as is possible outside the nesting bird season, which extends from March to August. Any necessary vegetation

clearance within the nesting season will be preceded by a nesting bird survey no more than three days in advance of the works and in the event an active nest is found, the nest plus a protective buffer around it will be left undisturbed until the young have fledged.

4.3.3. Residual Effects.

There will be no residual negative impact on nesting birds.

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5. COMPENSATION AND ENHANCEMENT MEASURES.

5.1. There are no significant ecology issues to consider on this site as the area of the site is artificially sealed, unvegetated land. As the development of the site falls under the category of "Self-build", the site is exempt from Biodiversity Net Gain.

5.2. Nevertheless, a native species hedgerow and one new tree will ensure that site Biodiversity is maximised within what will be a vegetated garden.

5.3. In order to provide biodiversity enhancements in line with the NPPF, it is recommended that one integrated bat box will be installed in the new building to enhance the habitat and provide roosting opportunities, two swift boxes to provide nesting opportunities and one bee brick to provide for invertebrates.

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Prepared by:	
Derek Whitcher. BSc, MCIEEM, MCMI	Date: 20th June 2024.

Checked by:	
Ruth Georgiou, BSc, MCIEEM.	Date: 25th June 2024.

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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

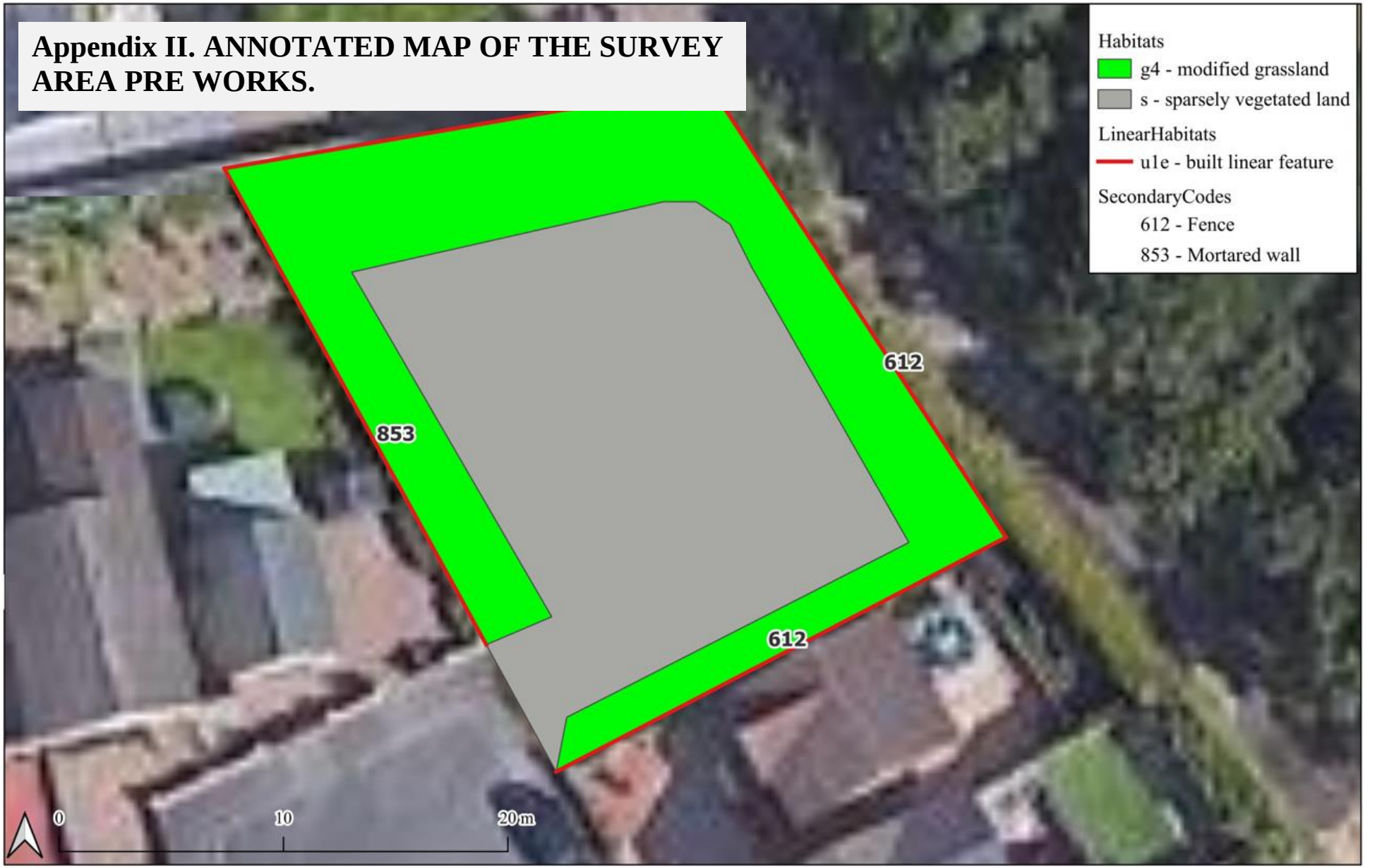
Nesting birds are protected under The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981.

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. ANNOTATED MAP OF THE SURVEY AREA PRE WORKS.



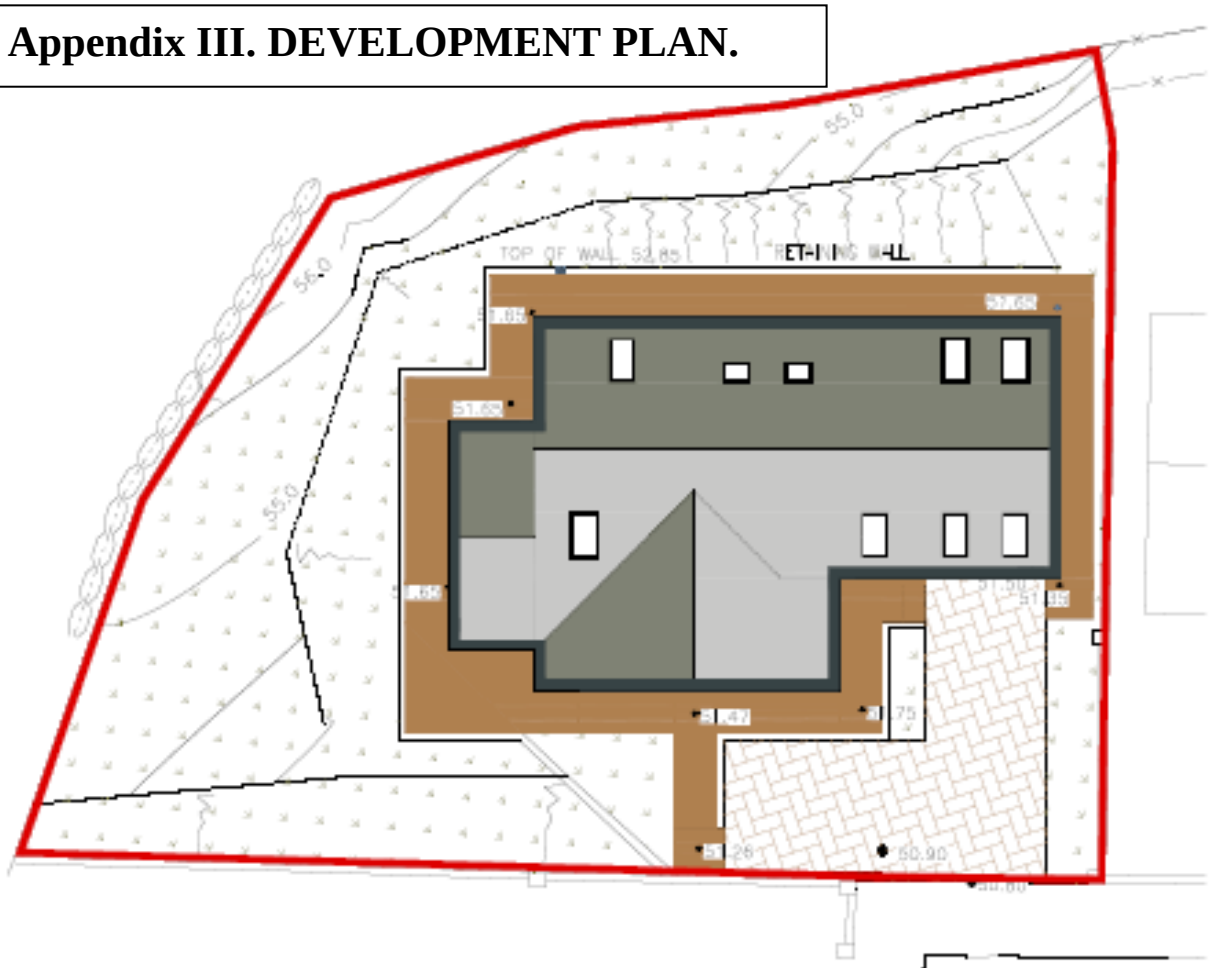
Site: Lund Close

Reference: 240631

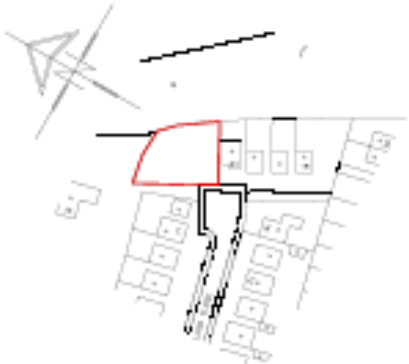
Date: 20.06.2024

Produced by: Whitcher hotdesk 2

Appendix III. DEVELOPMENT PLAN.



SITE PLAN



LOCATION PLAN

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Architectural Services

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S70 2HU

Phone: 01226 209480
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Project: PROPOSED DWELLING ON LAND AT LUND CLOSE, LUNDWOOD, BARNSLEY, S71 5PF	Client: MR DAVID LUMB
Drawing Title: SITE PLAN AND SURVEY	Date: SEPT 2023
	Scale: 1:100 @ A1
	Ref: 23—109
	Dwg. No: 01
	Rev: A

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