

**Whitcher Wildlife Ltd.
Ecological Consultants.**



**PARK HOUSE, CLEAR VIEW,
GRIMETHORPE.**

MAP REF: SE 41505 09653.

ECOLOGICAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT.

Ref No: 240912/EcIA.

Date: 13th November 2024.

TABLE OF CONTENTS.

	Page Number
1. INTRODUCTION.	3
2. SURVEY METHODOLOGY.	4
3. ECOLOGICAL BASELINE.	7
4. ASSESSMENT OF IMPACTS, MITIGATION AND RESIDUAL EFFECTS.	17
5. COMPENSATION AND ENHANCEMENT MEASURES.	23
6. REFERENCES.	25
Appendix I. NESTING BIRD INFORMATION.	27
Appendix II. ANNOTATED MAP OF THE SURVEY AREA – PRE DEVELOPMENT.	28
Appendix III. ANNOTATED MAP OF THE SURVEY AREA – POST DEVELOPMENT.	29

1. INTRODUCTION.

1.1. A planning application is to be submitted for the construction of two new dwellings and the conversion of the existing building to a third dwelling on land off Clear View, Grimethorpe.

1.2. A Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA) is required to support the planning application.

1.3. Whitcher Wildlife Ltd has been commissioned to carry out that PEA of the site to determine whether there are any ecological issues associated with the planned works and to determine Biodiversity Net Gain for the development.

1.4. The site survey was carried out on 10th September 2024.

1.5. This has now been converted into this Ecological Impact Assessment that assesses the impact of the proposed development suitable for submission to the planning Authority.

1.6. 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.

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.

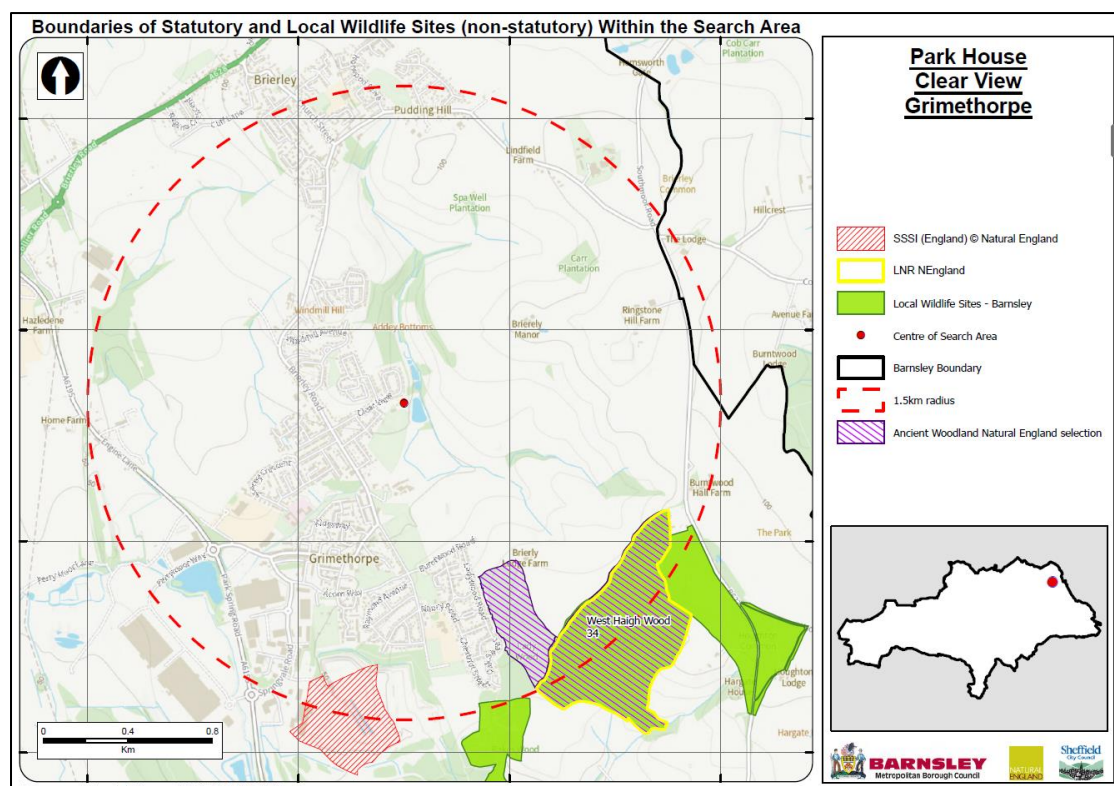
2.16. This survey was carried out by Derek Whitcher who has over twenty years’ experience of surveying for wildlife and has run his own wildlife consultancy since 1998. He has extensive experience of a wide variety of survey techniques for a variety of species of protected wildlife supplemented by attendance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

3. ECOLOGICAL BASELINE.

3.1. Data Search Results.

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

3.1.2. The map below shows there is one SSSI, one Local Nature Reserve and two Local Wildlife Sites within 1.5km of the survey area. These are all in excess of 1km from the survey area.



3.1.3. The survey area lies within the SSSI impact Risk Zone of Carlton Marsh SSSI but the proposed development does not require consultation with Natural England.

3.1.4. There are records of common frog, common toad and smooth newts to the west of Grimethorpe but not close to the survey area. There are no great crested newt records in the data search results.

3.1.5. The data search results include only one common lizard record and that is a record for Grimethorpe brickworks quarry from 2020.

3.1.6. There are bat records in the surrounding area although all are pipistrelle records.

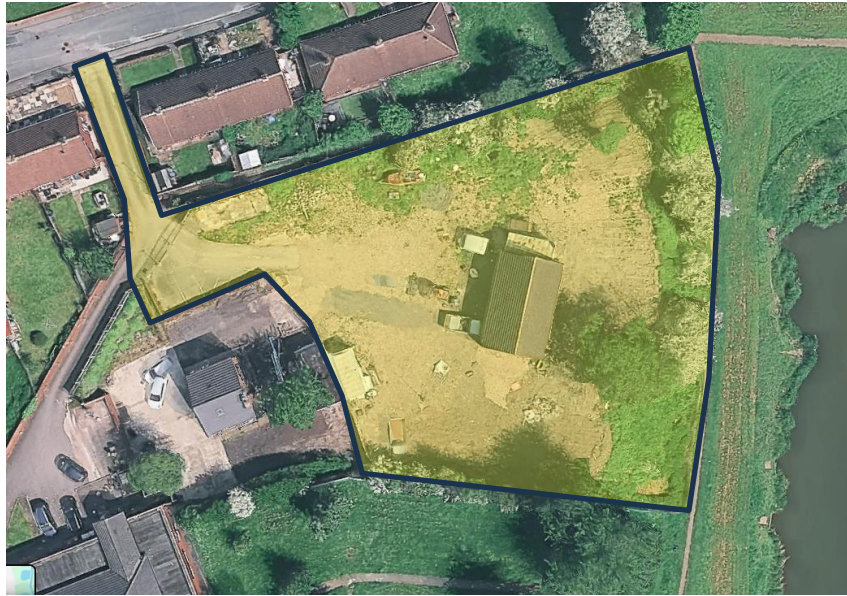
3.1.7. The data search results are available to the client on request but must not be placed in the public domain.

3.2. The Surveyed Area.

3.2.1. The aerial photograph below shows the location of the site marked with a red arrow and the surrounding area. The site is located to the northeast of Grimethorpe with residential areas to the north and west and with open farmland and a fishing lake to the east and south.



3.2.2. The site comprises a building previously used as a ground's maintenance store for machinery plus the surrounding land. This is shown in the aerial photograph below, shaded in yellow.



3.3. Description of Habitats.

3.3.1. Appendix II of this report contains an annotated map marked up with the varying habitats that are on the site cross referenced with target notes in Appendix III.

The primary habitats on and adjacent to the site are: -

- u1b - Developed land, sealed surface.
- u1b5 – Building.
- u1f – Sparsely vegetated land.
- g3c – Other neutral grassland.
- h2a6 – Other native hedgerow.
- u1e – Built linear feature.

3.3.2. Biodiversity calculations have been undertaken using the Statutory Biodiversity Metric from the Government website.

3.3.3. u1b – Developed land, sealed surface.

3.3.3.1. The site entrance road has been part tarmacked and part concreted and is a sealed surface.



3.3.3.2. There is no condition assessment for this habitat.

3.3.4. u1b5 – Building.

3.3.4.1. There is one building on the site, the old machinery store. This is dealt with in more detail later in this report.

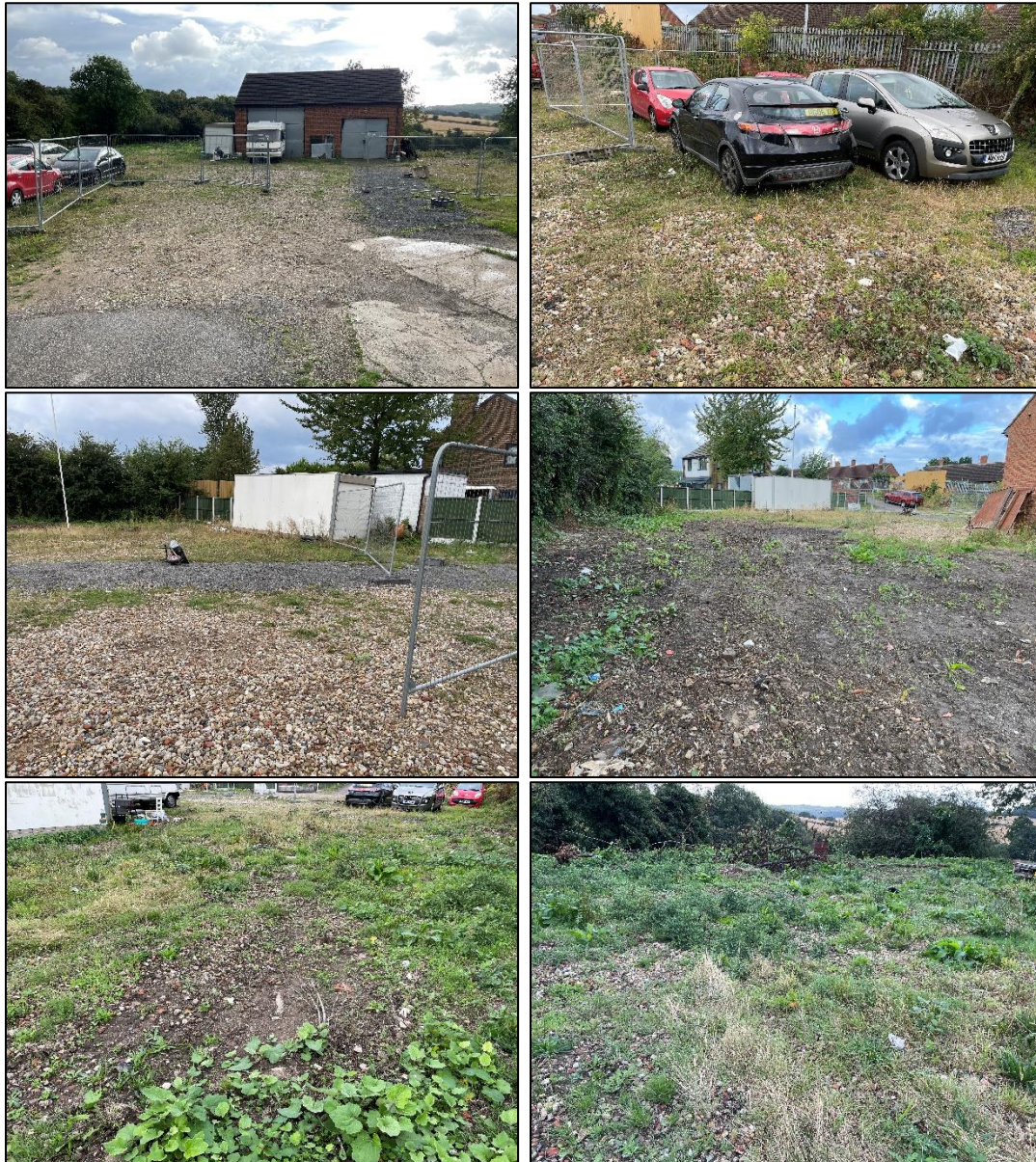


3.3.4.2. There is no condition assessment for this habitat.

3.3.5. u1f – Sparsely vegetated land.

Secondary Code: 200 Trees.

3.3.5.1. The area round the building has been used to park and store vehicles. It comprises areas of hardcore and soil that has become partly regenerated with weeds, as shown below. Vegetation cover is between 10% and 50% throughout.



3.3.5.2. Species present include Yorkshire fog (*Holcus lanatus*), perennial ryegrass (*Lolium perenne*), false oat grass (*Arrhenatherum elatius*), creeping bent (*Agrostis stolonifera*), cocksfoot (*Dactylis glomerata*), red clover (*Trifolium pratense*),

meadow buttercup (*Ranunculus acris*), nettles (*Urtica dioica*), thistle (*Cirsium arvense*), black medic (*Medicago lupulina*), dandelion (*Taraxacum officinale*), mugwort (*Artemisia vulgaris*), weld (*Reseda luteola*), dock (*Rumex* sp.), groundsel (*Senecio vulgaris*), ribwort plantain (*Plantago lanceolata*), sow thistle (*Sonchus oleraceus*), fleabane (*Erigeron karvinskianus*), fig leaved goosefoot (*Chenopodium* sp.), fringe willowherb (*Epilobium ciliatum*), bramble (*Rubus fruticosus*), dog rose (*Rosa canina*), with goat willow (*Salix caprea*) saplings.

3.3.5.3. This falls under the category of “Sparsely Vegetated land”. On the attached Statutory Biodiversity Metric Condition Assessment document, the habitat passes two criteria, a poor result.

3.3.5.4. There are two trees on the site, both are cherry trees, (*Prunus* sp(p)).



3.3.5.5. This falls under the category of “Individual trees”. On the attached Statutory Biodiversity Metric Condition Assessment document, the habitat passes six criteria, a good result.

3.3.6. g3c – Other neutral grassland.

3.3.6.1. At the eastern end of the site there is a bank down to the boundary fence. This is classed as other neutral grassland for the purposes of BNG. The dominant species present is hedge bindweed that covers most of the area. Other species include nettles (*Urtica dioica*), dock (*Rumex* sp.), bramble (*Rubus fruticosus*), with occasional hawthorns (*Crataegus monogyna*).



3.3.6.2. This falls under the category of “Low Distinctiveness Grassland”. On the attached Statutory Biodiversity Metric Condition Assessment document, the habitat passes five criteria, a poor result.

3.3.7. h2a6 - Other native hedgerow.

3.3.7.1. There are two other native hedgerows, one along the northern site boundary and one along the southern site boundary. Species present in both hedgerows include hawthorn (*Crataegus monogyna*) and elder (*Sambucus nigra*).



3.3.7.2. There is a third length of hedgerow that extends part way along the eastern site boundary. Species present in this hedgerow include hawthorn (*Crataegus monogyna*) and elder (*Sambucus nigra*).



3.3.7.3. All three hedgerows fall under the category of “Hedgerow without trees”. On the attached Statutory Biodiversity Metric Condition Assessment document, the northern and southern hedgerows fail two criteria, a good result. The third hedgerow, the eastern hedgerow, fails five criteria, a poor result.

3.3.8 U1e – Built linear feature.

Secondary code: 612 fence.

The site boundaries are lined with primarily palisade fences, albeit they are in places completely covered in bindweed.



3.4. Description of Fauna.

3.4.1. No badger setts or field signs were identified anywhere on the site.

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

3.4.3. There is a line of three ponds that lie on land close to the site, but these are fishing ponds, known to contain large fish and it is therefore an unsuitable habitat for breeding amphibians. There are no amphibian records close to the site, the records in the data search results are for the opposite side of Grimethorpe.

3.4.4. There is one building present on the site. This is the old machinery store. It comprises a brick built structure with cavity walls that are in good condition and with a pitched roof covered with close fitting cement tiles.

3.4.4.1. The eaves are well sealed with close fitting fascias and soffits and close fitting door frames.

3.4.4.2. All roof tiles are in place, all ridge tiles are well pointed and all verges intact with no gaps.

3.4.4.3. The building was assessed in line with the Bat Conservation Trust Good Practice Guidelines, fourth edition, to have negligible potential for roosting bats.



3.4.5. There are two trees present on the site but when inspected from ground level, no potential roost features were seen. The trees are assessed to have negligible potential for roosting bats, PRF-I, in line with the Bat Conservation Trust Good Practice Guidelines, edition 4.

3.4.6. The vegetation growing in the survey area provides moderate value foraging habitat for bats along the hedgerows. These connect with other hedgerows and the site lies adjacent to the fishing lake.

3.4.7. The trees and hedgerows provide opportunities for nesting birds during the nesting season, which extends from March to August each year. No nests were identified during this survey.

3.4.8. The site is assessed to have minimal potential for reptiles as the site is isolated by residential areas on one side and open parkland on the other. The data search results include only one reptile record and that is a slow work record for the Grimethorpe brickworks quarry site.

3.4.9. The site is assessed to be an unsuitable habitat for hazel dormouse, located outside the natural range for the species.

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. No alien, invasive plant species listed on Schedule 9 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act were found on the site.

3.4.12. The habitat on the site has been disturbed by human activity on the site and the vegetation is sparse so the site is assessed to have minimal potential for hedgehogs. There are no hedgehog records in the data search results.

4. ASSESSMENT OF IMPACTS, MITIGATION AND RESIDUAL EFFECTS.

4.1. Designated Sites.

4.1.1. Assessment.

4.1.1.1. There is one national statutory designated site within 2km of the survey area, Carlton Marsh SSSI located 1km south southwest of the survey area.

4.1.1.2. The development site lies within an SSSI impact zone but the proposed development does not require consultation with Natural England.

4.1.1.3. BBRC holds records of one Local Nature Reserve and two Local Wildlife Sites within 1km of the survey area but at sufficient distance from the site that there will be no negative impact on such sites.

4.1.1.4. These sites are sufficiently distant from the site and therefore, the proposed development will have no negative impact on such sites.

4.1.2. Mitigation.

No mitigation is necessary.

4.1.3. Residual Effects.

There will be No Residual Negative Impact on designated sites.

4.2. Habitats.

4.2.1. Assessment.

4.2.1.1. 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 area and linear 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.

4.2.1.2. Area Habitats.

Habitat Type	Area in Ha	Distinctiveness	Condition Assessment	Biodiversity Units.
Vacant or derelict land	0.188	Low	Poor	0.43
Other Neutral Grassland	0.048	Medium	Poor	0.22
Developed land, sealed surface	0.044	V.Low	N/A	0
2xRural scattered trees.	0.0326	Medium	Good	0.30
Total	0.28			0.95Bu

4.2.1.3. The area biodiversity value of the site prior to any works is 0.95Bu.

4.2.1.4. Linear Habitats.

Habitat Type	Length in Km	Distinctiveness	Condition Assessment	Biodiversity Units.
Other native hedgerow	0.067	Low	Good	0.46
Other native hedgerow.	0.043	Low	Poor	0.10
Total	0.11			0.56Bu

4.5. The linear biodiversity value of the site prior to any works is 0.056Bu.

4.2.2. Mitigation.

4.2.2.1. The two existing trees on the site will be retained.

4.2.2.2. The sloping bank down to the site boundary will be retained by the site owner and the area maintained as neutral grassland. This will include control of the

existing bindweed to prevent that plant from smothering out additional planting in that area. Grass and wildflowers will be planted across the site to improve the area.

4.2.2.3. In addition, a further twenty-four native species trees will be planted within this area.

4.2.2.4. The remainder of the site will comprise developed land or vegetative gardens.

4.2.2.5. Existing hedgerows will be retained and the eastern hedgerow enhanced by additional species to infill gaps and improve the variety of species present.

4.2.3. Residual Effects.

4.2.3.1. The following tables show the post development biodiversity values on the site.

4.2.3.2. Area Habitats.

Habitat Type	Area in Ha	Distinctiveness	Condition Assessment	Biodiversity Units.
Developed land, sealed surface	0.076	V.Low	N/A	0
Artificial, unvegetated, unsealed surface.	0.068	V.Low	N/A	0
Vegetated gardens.	0.086	Low	N/A	0.17
Other Neutral Grassland	0.048	Medium	Poor	0.22
2xRural scattered trees retained	0.0326	Medium	Good	0.30
24 new trees planted on the neutral grassland.	0.0977	Medium	Good	0.37
Total	0.28			1.06Bu

4.2.3.3. The area biodiversity value of the site post works is 1.06Bu, an increase of 11.38%.

4.2.3.4. Linear Habitats.

Habitat Type	Length in Km	Distinctiveness	Condition Assessment	Biodiversity Units.
Other native hedgerow enhanced.	0.067	Low	Good	0.46
Other native hedgerow enhanced.	0.043	Low	Good	0.26
Total	0.067			0.72Bu

4.2.3.5. The linear biodiversity value of the site post development is 0.072Bu, an increase of 29.49%.

4.2.3.6. This represents a Positive Residual Impact.

4.3. Species - Amphibians.

4.3.1. Assessment.

4.3.1.1. There is a line of three ponds that lie on land close to the site, but these are fishing ponds, known to contain large fish and it is therefore an unsuitable habitat for breeding amphibians. There are no amphibian records close to the site, the records in the data search results are for the opposite side of Grimethorpe.

4.3.1.2. The proposed development is therefore unlikely to impact on common amphibians.

4.3.2. Mitigation.

No mitigation is necessary.

4.3.3. Residual Effects.

There will be No Negative Residual Impact on amphibians.

4.4. Species - Bats.

4.4.1. Assessment.

4.4.1.1. There is one building present on the site, the old machinery store. It comprises a brick-built structure with cavity walls that are in good condition and with a pitched roof covered with close-fitting cement tiles. This building is assessed to have a negligible potential for roosting bats in line with the BCT Good Practice Guidelines, Edition 4.

4.4.1.2. There are two trees present on the site but when inspected from ground level, no potential roost features were seen. The trees are assessed to have negligible potential for roosting bats in line with the Bat Conservation Trust Good Practice Guidelines, edition 4.

4.4.1.3. The vegetation growing in the survey area provides moderate value foraging habitat for bats along the hedgerows. These connect with other hedgerows and the site lies adjacent to the fishing lake. The development will have a minimal impact on foraging and commuting bats as long as the existing hedgerows are retained.

4.4.2. Mitigation.

No mitigation is necessary.

4.4.3. Residual Effects.

There will be No Negative Residual Impact on bats.

4.5. Species – Nesting Birds.

4.5.1. Assessment.

The trees and hedgerows provide opportunities for nesting birds during the nesting season, which extends from March to August each year. Vegetation clearance between March and August has potential to have a high impact on nesting birds.

4.5.2. Mitigation.

Any vegetation clearance will be undertaken outside the nesting bird season, which extends from March to August. Should any vegetation clearance be necessary during the nesting season, it will be preceded by a nesting bird survey no more than two days before those works commence.

5. COMPENSATION AND ENHANCEMENT MEASURES.

5.1. It is recommended that biodiversity enhancements are incorporated into the new buildings in line with the requirements of the NPPF.

5.2. It is recommended that two integrated bat bricks be provided in the new buildings. These should be Habibat integrated bricks as shown below or equivalent.



5.3. It is recommended that two integrated swift nest boxes are also built into the new buildings. These should be Habibat integrated bricks as shown below or equivalent.



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Checked by:	
Ruth Georgiou, BSc, MCIEEM.	Date: 18 th October 2024.

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JNCC, Peterborough.

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 DEVELOPMENT.



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

