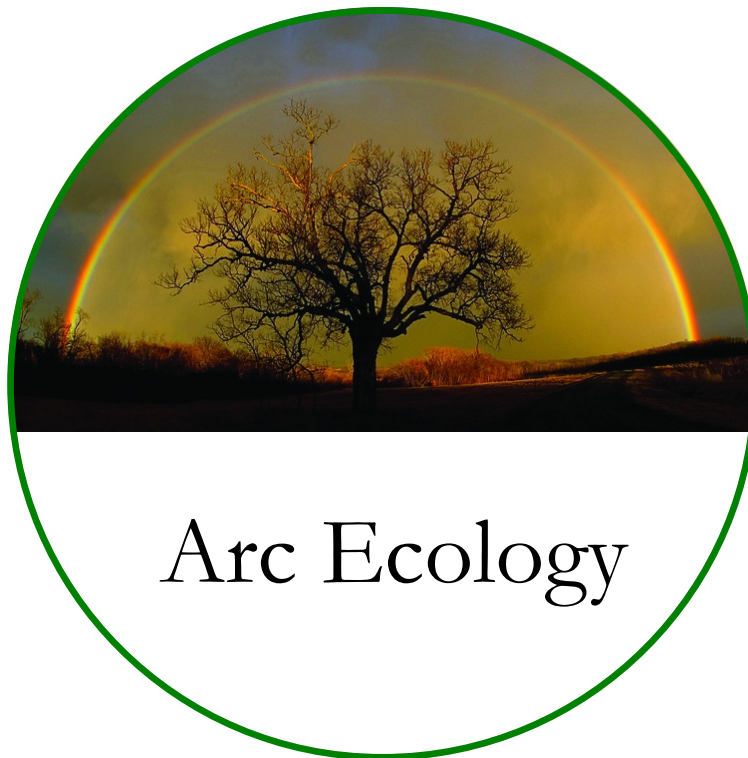




LAND AT TOFTS LANE, BARNSELEY - PHASE 1 SURVEY

JUNE 2017

REPORT PREPARED BY:

CHRIS RICHARDS
BSC (HONS), PGCERT, MCIEEM
PRINCIPAL ECOLOGIST

54 Plumpton Road, Langley Mill, Derbyshire, NG16 4EY
01773 717 775 / 07792 277 745
enquiries@arc-ecology.co.uk
www.arc-ecology.co.uk

LIMITATIONS OF USE

This report has been prepared by Arc Ecology for the sole use of Entrust in accordance with the agreement and scope under which our services were contracted.

This report should not be used by or relied upon by any other party without prior written agreement from Arc Ecology. Unless otherwise stated, the assessments made assume that the use of the site and any planned development will remain as described in the report without significant change.

The conclusions and recommendations of this report are based upon the assumption that all relevant information relating to the site and any proposed development has been provided by the client and any third parties consulted. Information obtained from third parties has not been independently verified by Arc Ecology, unless this is clearly stated in the report.

Where field surveys have been undertaken, these have been restricted to a level of detail required to achieve the stated objectives of the services in line with the original project scope.

COPYRIGHT

© This report remains the copyright of Arc Ecology. Unauthorised reproduction or use of this report or part of the report by any person other than the addressee without prior permission is prohibited.

CONTENTS	PAGE N ^o
1 INTRODUCTION	2
1.1 BRIEF AND SCOPE	2
1.2 SITE DESCRIPTION	2
2 DATA SEARCH METHODOLOGIES AND RESULTS	3
2.1 METHODOLOGIES	3
2.2 RESULTS	4
3 FIELD SURVEY METHODOLOGIES AND RESULTS	4
3.1 METHODOLOGIES	4
3.2 SURVEY RESULTS	5
4 ECOLOGICAL CONSTRAINTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS	7
4.1 VEGETATION AND HABITATS	7
4.2 PROTECTED AND NOTABLE FLORA AND FAUNA SPECIES	7
5 SUMMARY	9
6 REFERENCES	10

FIGURE 1 - PHASE 1 MAP

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 BRIEF AND SCOPE

Arc Ecology was commissioned by Entrust to undertake a Phase 1 Habitat Survey of an area of land off Tofts Lane, Barnsley, South Yorkshire.

The purpose of this investigation was to record broad habitat types and dominant vegetation (including any invasive species) present within the survey area, and to appraise the habitats present for their suitability to support populations of protected or notable fauna species prior to work being carried out on the site.

The appraisal is not intended to be a comprehensive assessment of the effects of any development on flora and fauna species, but aims to identify likely potential effects and ecological constraints to development and to provide recommendations for further investigations where these are considered necessary.

The ecological investigations undertaken during the appraisal are as follows:

1.1.1 FIELD SURVEY

A Protected Species Appraisal was undertaken of all land and features along and within the immediate vicinity of the routes, involving the noting of broad habitats and dominant vegetation, including invasive plant species, and an appraisal of habitats suitable for protected species.

Given the habitat types present, particular attention was paid to features potentially suitable for bats, badger (*Meles meles*) and nesting birds.

A complete botanical inventory was not undertaken.

1.1.2 ANALYSIS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Analysis of the data gathered through the field survey, and identification of any potential ecological constraints and opportunities in relation to the proposed development, including outline recommendations for further survey, avoidance, mitigation or compensation where appropriate.

1.2 SITE DESCRIPTION

The site is situated off Tofts Lane, Barnsley at OSGR SK 26316 99981 (approximate site centre) and consists of a large semi-improved grassland field, a large portion of which is taken up by areas of hard-standing in the form of an electrical sub-station (see Plate 1 and Figure 1).

The site is bounded on all sides by dry stone walls, with two wooden gates on the eastern boundary and metal gates on the northern boundary providing access to the sub-station.

The site is also bounded on the northern side by areas of longer semi-improved grassland on the road margins between the stone wall boundary and Tofts Lane.

Plate 1 - Aerial view of site with boundary in red



2 DATA SEARCH METHODOLOGIES AND RESULTS

2.1 METHODOLOGIES

Given the fact that any impacts are likely to be relatively low-level and localised, a full data search was not considered to be necessary for this project. Details of Statutory and Non-Statutory Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation were obtained from Natural England's 'Nature on the Map' website (www.natureonthemap.naturalengland.org.uk).

Details for protected and notable species were obtained from the National Biodiversity Network Gateway (NBN) website (<http://data.nbn.org.uk>). Records searched were limited to species that the ground survey suggested may be present within the path of, or directly adjacent to, the proposed works, which is anticipated to be the extents of any potential impacts.

In this instance, the NBN Gateway was interrogated in particular for records of bats, badger, and herpetofauna.

2.2 RESULTS

2.2.1 STATUTORY AND NON-STATUTORY SITES

There were no Statutory or Non-Statutory Sites found within 1km of the site.

2.2.2 PROTECTED AND NOTABLE FLORA AND FAUNA SPECIES

The NBN Gateway website provided no records of any protected or notable flora and fauna species from within 1km of the site.

3 FIELD SURVEY METHODOLOGIES AND RESULTS

3.1 METHODOLOGIES

A walkover survey of the site was carried out on the 31st May 2017, during which the following surveys were undertaken:

3.1.1 PROTECTED AND NOTABLE FLORA AND FAUNA SPECIES

A reconnaissance survey for evidence of the presence of protected/notable species, and an assessment of the suitability of the habitats present to support such species were undertaken according to published methodologies. Given the habitats present within the site, the following protected/notable fauna species in particular were considered: bats, badger, herpetofauna and nesting birds.

Full surveys for these species were beyond the scope of this preliminary assessment.

The appraisal of habitats and features within the site for their suitability to support bats was undertaken following guidelines published by the Bat Conservation Trust (2016) and Mitchell-Jones (2004).

Appraisal of the site for badger was undertaken according to guidelines given by Harris *et al.* (1989).

Appraisal of habitats suitable for nesting birds followed guidance given by Bibby *et al.* (2000).

All surveys were undertaken by a suitably experienced ecologist and holder of a current Level II Class Licence to survey for bats.

3.1.2 OTHER NOTABLE SPECIES

The survey area and its surrounds were also appraised for its suitability to support other protected or notable fauna including mammals, amphibians and invertebrates in accordance with the published 'Guidelines for Ecological Assessment' (Institute of Environmental Assessment, 1995).

Evidence of any current or historical presence of such species within the survey area was recorded, though specific surveys were not undertaken for these groups.

3.1.3 INVASIVE FLORA SPECIES

Any invasive plant species recorded during the survey, including Japanese knotweed (*Fallopia japonica*), Himalayan balsam (*Impatiens glandulifera*) and giant hogweed (*Heracleum mantegazzianum*) were noted and the area covered was estimated.

3.2 SURVEY RESULTS

3.2.1 VEGETATION AND HABITATS

3.2.1.1 Semi-improved grassland

The main section of the site consists of semi-improved grassland with a very short sward due to grazing by livestock. This area is dominated by common grass species including common bent (*Agrostis capillaris*), red fescue (*Festuca rubra*), cock's foot (*Dactylis glomerata*), and sweet vernal grass (*Anthoxanthum odoratum*) with a limited range of herb species including dandelion (*Taraxacum officinale* agg); clover (*Trifolium repens*); spear thistle (*Cirsium vulgare*), plantain (*Plantago lanceolata*), creeping thistle (*Cirsium arvense*) and creeping buttercup (*Ranunculus repens*).

There are also areas of soft rush (*Juncus effusus*) within the north and south-eastern sections of the site.

The longer semi-improved grassland on the road verge has a similar floral assemblage as the shorter grassland, but with the addition of cleavers (*Gallium aparine*) and horsetail (*Equisetum arvense*).

3.1.1.2 Tall ruderal vegetation

There are small areas of tall ruderal vegetation along the boundaries of the site which all consist of nettle (*Urtica dioica*). There are also tall ruderal species present within the longer semi-improved grassland areas of the road verge including nettle, bramble (*Rubus fruticosus*), cow parsley (*Anthriscus sylvestris*), broad leaved dock (*Rumex obtusifolius*) and hogweed (*Heracleum sphondylium*).

3.2.1.3 Dry stone walls

There are dry stone walls along all boundaries of the site, with two gaps on the eastern boundary where wooden access gates are situated, and a single gap in the northern boundary where the main metal access gate to the electrical sub-station is situated.

There are a small number of areas within the dry stone wall on the southern boundary where there has been a partial collapse of the stonework.

3.2.1.4 Hard-standing

There is a large area of hard-standing within the site housing the electrical sub-station.

3.2.1.3 Trees/shrubs

There are a small number of hawthorn (*Crataegus monogyna*) shrubs in the eastern and north-eastern section of the site, predominantly along the site boundaries.

3.2.2. PROTECTED AND NOTABLE SPECIES

3.2.2.1 Flora Species

Although the survey was not exhaustive, the habitat types present in the survey area indicate it is unlikely that there are any protected/notable flora species present within the proposed working area.

3.2.2.2 Bats

There were no suitable features or habitats present within the site to support roosting or resting bats.

There are considered to be no potential impacts to any bats populations from the proposed works and bats are not considered to pose a constraint to any proposed work within the site

As such, bats are discounted from the remainder of this report.

3.2.2.3 Badger

There was no current or historic evidence of the presence of badger found during the survey.

Badger are therefore not considered to pose a constraint to the proposed works and are discounted from the remainder of this report.

3.2.2.4 Nesting Birds

The hawthorn shrubs within the site have potential to provide suitable habitat for nesting birds, but no current evidence of nesting was noted during the survey.

3.2.2.5 Other Protected and/or Notable Species

No evidence of any other protected or notable species was noted during the survey, and there were no habitats within the site likely to be affected by the proposed works considered to have any particular suitability for such species.

4 ECOLOGICAL INTERESTS, CONSTRAINTS & RECOMMENDATIONS

4.1 VEGETATION AND HABITATS

4.1.1 PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT AREA

The proposed working has relatively low naturalness, low species diversity and a lack of structural heterogeneity. As such, it is assessed that the proposed works would not result in the loss of any significant areas for nature conservation.

4.1.2 WIDER AREA

The vegetation and habitats within the immediate vicinity of the site are assessed together to have low to moderate nature conservation value. This is based on the habitats present and ecological connectivity to other areas nearby which have a recognised higher ecological value.

It is assessed that there would not be any significant impact on the ecological value of the wider area from the development of the site.

4.2 PROTECTED AND NOTABLE FAUNA SPECIES

4.2.1 NESTING BIRDS

All nesting birds are protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981, which makes it an offence to kill, injure or take any wild bird or take, damage or destroy its nest whilst in use or being built, or take or destroy its eggs. In addition to this, for some rarer species (listed on Schedule 1 of the Act), it is an offence to disturb them while they are nest building or at or near a nest with eggs or young, or to disturb the dependent young of such a bird.

A number of bird species are also listed as Species of Principal Importance under the provisions of the NERC Act 2006. The National Planning Policy Network document 'ODPM Circular 06/2005' gives guidance on the treatment of Species of Principal Importance and states that local authorities should ensure that they are protected from the adverse effects of development, where appropriate, by using planning conditions or obligations.

There was no current evidence of the presence of nesting birds found within the site, but the shrubs present in the eastern section near the existing sub-station provide suitable habitat for nesting birds and could be used at any time during subsequent nesting seasons.

The proposed works are to be restricted to the western section of the site, where there is no suitable nesting habitat for birds, and birds are not currently considered to pose a constraint to works going ahead.

However, if it becomes apparent that work or storage may be required in the eastern section of the site that could potentially cause disturbance to nesting birds, then an appropriately experienced ecologist should conduct an investigation of the areas to be affected to determine whether they are in use by nesting birds immediately prior to work commencing. If nesting birds are found to be present at this time, all work likely to cause disturbance should cease until the young have fledged and the nest is no longer in use.

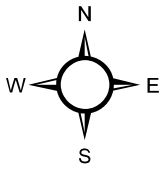
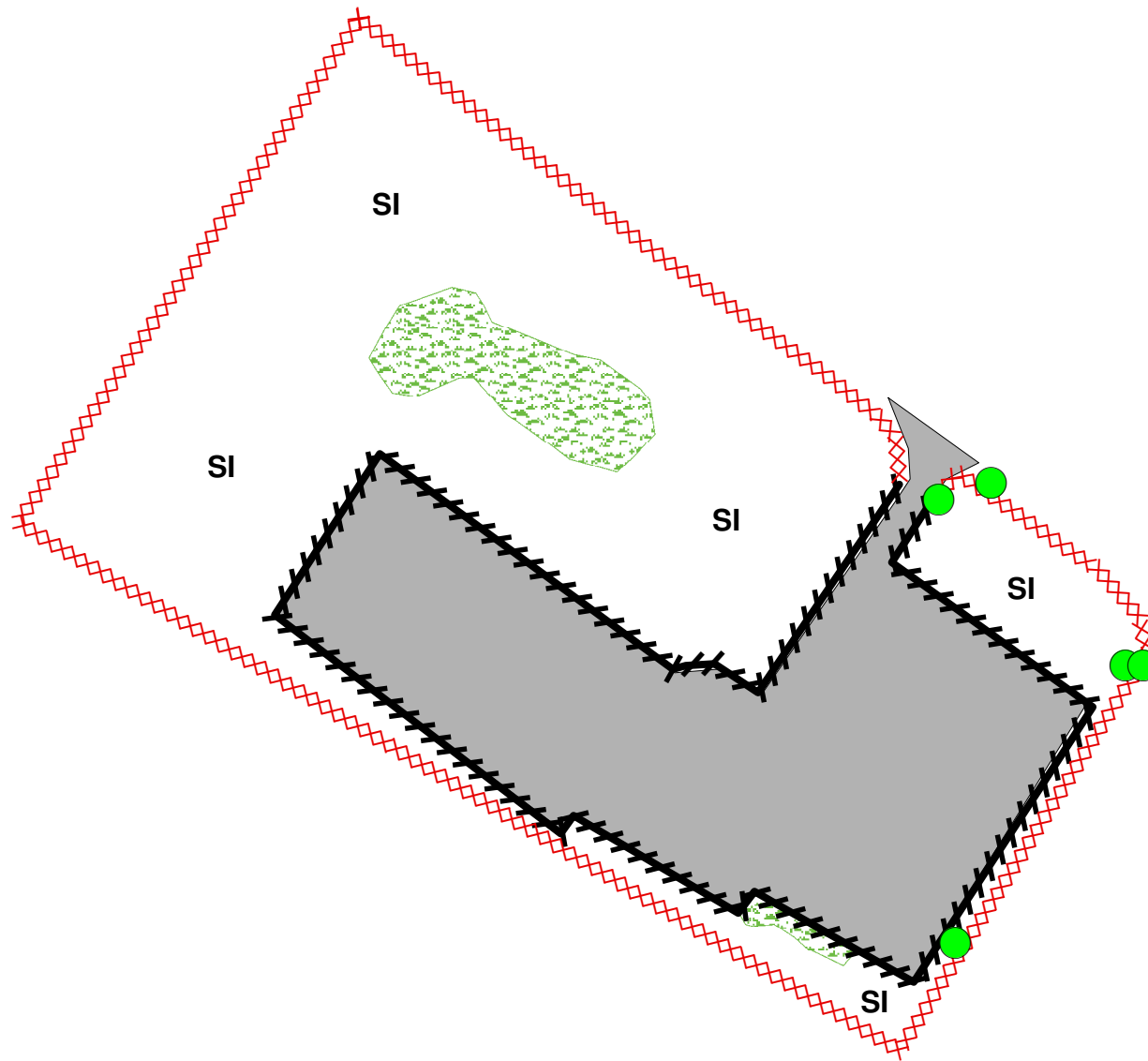
5 SUMMARY

- Arc Ecology undertook a Protected Species Appraisal of an area of land off Tofts Lane, Barnsley to identify any potential ecological constraints to proposed electrical cabling works in the area, and provide recommendations for any further investigations.
- No features suitable to support roosting bats were noted within the site. As such, bats are not considered to pose a constraint to development of the site and no further survey for bats is required.
- There was no evidence of the presence of badgers found within the routes and their surroundings. Badger are therefore not considered to pose a constraint to the proposed works and no further survey for badgers is required.
- There is suitable habitat within the site for nesting birds in the eastern section of the site, but the proposed works are contained to the western section of the site and are not expected to cause disturbance to such species.
- However, if any works likely to cause disturbance are required in the eastern section of the site in future, an experienced ecologist should survey the areas to be removed prior to work, and if nesting birds are found to be present, work should cease until the young have fledged and the nest is no longer in use.
- There are not considered to be any potential impacts from the proposed works on any other protected or notable species and habitats.

6 REFERENCES

- Bat Conservation Trust (2016)
Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists - Good Practice Guidelines (3rd Edition).
Bat Conservation Trust, London.
- Bibby, C.J., Burgess, N.D., Hill, D.A. & Mustoe, S.H. (2000).
Bird Census Techniques (2nd Edition). Academic Press, London.
- Harris, S., Creswell, P. & Jefferies, D. (1989)
Surveying Badgers. An occasional publication of the mammal society - No 9.
Mammal Society, London.
- Institute for Ecological Assessment (1995)
Guidelines for Baseline Ecological Assessment. E & FN Spon, London.
- Joint Nature Conservation Committee (2007)
Handbook for Phase 1 Habitat Survey: A technique for environmental audit.
JNCC, Peterborough.
- Mitchell-Jones, A.J. (2004)
Bat Mitigation Guidelines. English Nature, Peterborough.

FIGURE 1 - PHASE 1 MAP



Legend

-  Shrub
-  Dry stone wall
-  Fence
-  Hard-standing
-  Juncus rush
-  Semi-improved grassland



Project:

**Land at Tofts Lane,
Barnsley**

Dwg. Title

Figure 1 - Phase 1 Map

Drawn by:

Chris Richards

Date:

5/6/17