Company Shop Group,
Tankersley, Barnsley

Preliminary Ecological Appraisal Report

July 10, 2024

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DOCUMENT CONTROL

Project:	Company Shop Group, Tankersley, Barnsley	
Client:	Company Shop Group	
Project Number:	2024/002	
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Reviewer:	Adele Antcliff	
Date of Issue:	10 July 2024	
Version:	V2	
Report Reference Number:	2024/002/01	

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1. Executive Summary

An ecological desk study, an Extended UK Habitat Survey and a ground level tree assessment for bats were undertaken in February 2024 as part of a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal at the Company Shop Group site at Wentworth Way, Wentworth Industrial Estate, Tankersley, Barnsley, S75 3DH. The proposed development involves the construction of a new car park and access road into the site, the current main access road will also be widened.

There is one statutory designated site and four non-statutory designated sites within the desk study search area. Potter Holes LNR/LWS, West Wood LWS and Rockley Woods are all more than 400 m away from the site. Sowell Pond and Westwood Lane Meadows lie approximately 100 m away from the site to the south. None of the LWS will be directly or indirectly affected by the proposed development.

The site consists of developed land with a sealed surface which has no ecological value and low value modified grassland. One mature pine tree, several immature trees and small areas of mixed scrub will be lost alongside modified grassland habitats. The semi natural habitats present within the site are small areas of common and widespread habitats and none of the habitats on the site are priority habitats or local biodiversity action plan habitats.

There is a known population of great crested newt present in the wider area but the species is unlikely to be present within the site boundary. Habitats within the site are of limited value to amphibians. No ponds are present within the site boundary and no suitable breeding ponds are present within 100 m. As a precaution, a method statement for vegetation clearance with regards to great crested newt should be developed and followed.

Six individual trees and three tree groups were assessed for their bat roost potential, trees had no suitability for bats. The site was deemed to have low suitability for foraging bats and no further surveys for bats are recommended. However, lighting on the site should be minimised, and avoided completely, where possible. No light should be allowed to spill onto the trees within the site.

Any vegetation clearance should be undertaken outside the bird nesting season if possible. If this is not possible, they will require an ecologist to check the area immediately prior to their removal.

2. INTRODUCTION

AB Ecology was commissioned by Company Shop Group (owned by Biffa Waste Services) to undertake a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA) in connection with proposals to create a new car park and site entrance at their site on Wentworth Way, Wentworth Industrial Estate, Tankersley, Barnsley, S75 3DH. The site location is shown on Drawing 1 and is hereafter referred to as the 'site'. The site is located at Ordnance Survey National Grid Reference SK 336 996.

2.1 SCOPE OF THE STUDY

The site is approximately 1.2 ha in size and consists predominantly of developed land with a sealed surface, frequently mown modified grassland with individual trees and small areas of mixed scrub.

The proposed development involves the construction of a new car park and access road into the site; the current main access road will also be widened.

This report considers the existing baseline ecological features of the area within the site boundary and immediately adjacent habitats (See Drawing 3) and provides a preliminary ecological appraisal of the site in relation to the proposed development.

2.2 OBJECTIVE

The objectives of the assessment were as follows:

- To undertake an ecological desk study to obtain existing information on designated sites and protected and notable species within 2 km of the site;
- To undertake an Extended UK Hab Survey to map key habitats and highlight the potential for protected species within the site;
- To undertake a ground level tree assessment to determine if any trees within the site boundary have potential to support roosting bats;
- To produce a report which details the findings of the aforementioned surveys and highlights any key ecological issues of the proposed development; and
- To advise on any further ecological surveys that may be required, and any mitigation measures required, if necessary.

2.3 STUDY LIMITATIONS

Species lists included in the results (Section 5.2) are not necessarily an exhaustive inventory of all species occurring at the site. They are intended to illustrate the general species richness of a particular area and draw attention to any species that may be considered uncommon or unusual.

The survey was undertaken in February and species may have been missed on the basis of seasonal flowering periods. However, habitats on site were predominately species poor modified grassland which is regularly cut, so undertaking the survey at this time of year is not thought to have affected the results.

2.4 Survey Personnel

The survey was undertaken by Principal Ecologist Rachel Blackham MSc., BSc. (Hons), MCIEEM. Rachel has over 17 years' experience as a consultant ecologist and has carried out numerous PEA surveys of this type. Rachel holds a Natural England Class 1 Great Crested Newt Survey Licence (Reference: 2015-18970-CLS-CLS).

3. Legislation and Policy

A level of statutory protection is afforded to specific species, largely as a consequence of dramatic declines in populations caused by habitat loss and/or degradation (both direct and indirect impacts) and persecution. The various statutes which provide this protection include the following.

- Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended);
- Countryside and Rights of Way (CRoW) Act 2000;
- Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006; and
- Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017.

Further details of legislation relevant to the protection of individual species are included in Appendix A.

4. Methodology

4.1 Ecological Desk Study

An ecological desk study was carried out in February 2024 to identify existing records of non-statutory sites of nature conservation interest and of protected or notable species within 1.5 km of the site, and statutory sites of nature conservation interest within 2 km of the site (National Grid Reference SK 336 996).

To ensure that the information reported in this desk study is current, only data from surveys conducted within the last fifteen years were considered. It should be noted that desk studies do not provide an exhaustive list of all ecological information for any area, and so cannot be relied on as the only source of information for any study area in question. An absence of records does not necessarily mean a species is not present in an area. Desk studies are, however, very useful in combination with field-based surveys to identify features of nature conservation interest that might be associated with a site. The following organisations/web resources were consulted during the desk study:

- Barnsley Biological Records Centre (BBRC);
- Barnsley Biodiversity Action Plan (Barnsley Biodiversity Trust, 2009); and
- Multi-Agency Geographic Information Centre (MAGIC) [online].

The following survey reports were also reviewed to obtain recent information regarding the distribution of great crested newt *Triturus cristatus* (GCN) in the vicinity of the site:

- Feasibility Study – Sowell Pond, Local Wildlife Site, Tankersley (Access Ecology, 2016);

- Survey of Ponds at Wentworth Business Park, Tankersley – Great Crested Newt Survey Report (Middleton Ecological Consultancy, 2017); and
- Maple Rd, Tankersley – 2023 GCN Monitoring Surveys (Middleton Bell Ecology, 2023).

4.2 Extended UK Hab Survey

An Extended UK Hab Survey was undertaken by a suitably qualified ecologist on 06 February 2024 to record the habitats and vegetation on site. The land within the site boundary, and the immediate surrounds, was surveyed and mapped (refer to Drawing 3). Habitats were mapped using the definitions in UK HAB 2.0 (UK Habitats Classification Working Group, 2023). Nomenclature for plant species names was taken from Stace (2010). During this survey, any evidence of, or habitat suitable for, protected species was recorded within the relevant target note.

4.3 Bat Survey

Daytime Bat Walkover Survey

A daytime bat walkover (DBW) was undertaken on 06 February 2024 to determine the suitability of the site for bats. The survey was commensurate with good practice, following the guidance set out in *Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines* (Collins, 2023). Habitats at the site were assessed for their potential to support roosting bats and for their potential to support flight-paths and foraging habitat. The site was categorized in relation to Table 1 (adapted from Table 4.1 of Collins, 2023)

Table 1: Criteria for Assessing Potential Suitability of a Site for Bats

Potential Suitability	Potential Flight-paths and Foraging Habitats
None	No habitat features on site likely to be used by foraging bats at any time of year.
Negligible	No obvious habitat features on site likely to be used as flight-paths or by foraging bats however a small element of uncertainty remains in order to account for non-standard bat behaviour.
Low	Habitat that could be used by small numbers of bats as flight-paths such as a gappy hedgerow or unvegetated stream, but isolated, i.e. not very well connected to the surrounding landscape by other habitat.
Moderate	Continuous habitat connected to the wider landscape that could be used by bats for flight-paths such as lines of trees and scrub linked to back gardens. Habitat that is connected to the wider landscape that could be used by bats for foraging such as trees, scrub, grassland and water.
High	Continuous high-quality habitat that is well connected to the wider landscape that is likely to be used regularly by bats for flight-paths such as river valleys, streams, hedgerows, lines of trees and woodland edge. High-quality habitats that are well connected to the wider landscape that is likely to be used regularly by foraging bats such as broadleaved woodland, tree-lined watercourses and grazed parkland. Site is close to and connected to known roosts.

Ground Level Tree Assessment

A ground level tree assessment (GLTA) for all individual trees and tree groups within the site was also undertaken by a suitably experienced ecologist to determine their potential for roosting bats. The assessment was conducted on 06 February 2024, during daylight hours. The survey was undertaken from ground level only with the use of close focusing binoculars as necessary. A note

was made of any features (such as cracks, holes, crevices or dense ivy *Hedera helix*) that may provide roosting opportunities for bats. Each tree or tree group was assessed according to the criteria in Table 2 (adapted from Table 4.2 of Collins, 2023).

Table 2: GLTA Suitability

Suitability	Description
None	Either no potential roost features in the tree or there are unlikely to be any.
FAR	Further assessment required to establish if potential roost features are present in the tree.
PRF	A tree with at least one potential roost feature present.

4.4 Great Crested Newt Habitat Suitability Index Assessment

On 06 February 2024, one off site pond (located within 250 m of the site boundary) was assessed for its suitability as aquatic habitat for GCN. There are other waterbodies present within 250 m of the site boundary, see Drawing 4, however Attenuation Pond 2 and Ponds 1 and 2 were not able to be accessed, and the mitigation ponds are no longer functioning as ponds (overgrown with terrestrial vegetation and dry); this is discussed further in Section 6.3. The assessment followed the great crested newt Habitat Suitability Index (HSI) assessment method (ARG UK, 2010), originally developed by Oldham *et al*. (2000). The HSI is a simple model that provides an informed view of the value of waterbodies to breeding populations of GCN. The HSI assessment involves assessing waterbodies based on following habitat parameters that influence breeding populations of great crested newts:

1. Geographic location;
2. Waterbody area;
3. Pond permanence;
4. Water quality;
5. Pond shading;
6. Number of waterfowl;
7. Occurrence of fish;
8. Pond density;
9. Terrestrial Habitat; and
10. Macrophyte cover of pond.

A score between 0 and 1 is assigned to each of 10 habitat variables, based on observations made in the field and interpreting the guidance provided by ARG UK (2010). The HSI score is the geometric mean of the ten habitat variables listed above, obtained by multiplying each of the variable scores together, and then taking the 10th root of the product. The resulting HSI scores were cross-referenced with the ARG UK (2010) guidance (as shown below in Table 3) to estimate the suitability of each pond to support a breeding population of GCN.

Table 3: HSI and Pond Suitability for Great Crested Newt (ARG UK, 2010)

HSI Score	Pond Suitability for Great Crested Newt
0.00 – 0.49	Poor
0.50 – 0.59	Below Average
0.60 – 0.69	Average
0.70 – 0.79	Good
0.80 – 1.00	Excellent

5. RESULTS

5.1 DESK STUDY

Designated Sites

There is one statutory designated site recorded with the 2 km desk study search area; Potters Hole Local Nature Reserve (LNR), details of which are shown in Table 4.

Four non-statutory Local Wildlife Sites (LWS) were also recorded within 1.5 km of the site. Details of the non-statutory designated sites are provided in Table 5; Potters Hole LNR is also a LWS.

Drawing 2 shows the locations of all designated sites within the desk study search area.

Table 4: Statutory Designated Site Details

Site Name	Designation	Site Description	Distance/Direction from Site
Potter Holes	LNR	Semi-ancient woodland developed in and around old bell-pits, plus newer, planted woodland adjacent on a reclaimed colliery site. Contains an important range of woodland plants and birds.	0.4 km West

Table 5: Non-Statutory Designated Site Details

Site Name	Designation	Site Description	Distance/Direction from Site
Sowell Pond and Westwood Lane Meadow	LWS	Two parcels of land which are separated by a narrow strip of low broadleaved plantation. Neutral grassland with a scattering of broadleaved trees, areas of dense scrub and ponds. The site contains a population of great crested newt *Triturus cristatus*.	0.1 km South
West Wood	LWS	The site contains a block of mature oak and birch woodland which is on the register of semi-natural and ancient woodlands. The most diverse area lies along the southwest edge with a range of plant species not noted elsewhere.	0.7 km South
Potter Holes	LWS	See Table 4.	0.4 km West
Rockley Woods	LWS	The site comprises a series of distinct woodlands spreading westwards from the M1. Contains several areas of ancient woodland and other areas are recorded as ancient replanted woodland. Contains a wide range of native trees and woodland plants. Also contains areas of conifer plantation.	1.3 km North

Species

BBRC provided a list of protected or notable species recorded within the 1.5 km desk study search area. The closest roost was a common pipistrelle *Pipistrellus pipistrellus* roost at a farm,

approximately 1 km east of the site. Numerous records of bats in flight were also recorded, including noctule bat *Nyctalus noctule,* brown long-eared bat *Plecotus auritus*, common pipistrelle, soprano pipistrelle *Pygmaeus pipistrellus*, whiskered bat *Myotis mystacinus* and Daubenton's bat *Myotis daubentonii*.

There were no records of otter *Lutra lutra* and no recent records of water vole *Arvicola amphibius* (within the last 15 years) returned from the desk study.

Two records of badger *Meles meles* were recorded within the desk study area, the closest being 750 m south of the site.

There were 11 records of hedgehog *Erinaceus europaeus* returned from the desk study, the closest being within 500 m of the site boundary, all records were from outside the industrial estate.

Ninety records of great crested newt were returned from the desk study search area with the closest records being from Sowell Pond which lies approximately 200 m south of the site. Numerous records of common toad *Bufo bufo* were returned and one record of common frog *Rana temporaria* was also found but this was 100 m south of the site boundary. A review of great crested newt survey reports from 2016, 2017 and 2023 revealed that a medium sized population of great crested newt is present within Sowell Pond which is part of the LWS and lies approximately 200 m south of the site (Ponds 1 and 2 on Drawing 4). A large population of great crested newt is present in the western part of the Sowell Pond and Westwood Lane Meadows LWS and the nearest pond connected to this population lies approximately 580 m away from the site.

Three records of grass snake *Natrix Helvetica* were returned, the closest of which was approximately 100 m south of the site boundary. No other recent records of reptiles were found.

A large number of bird records were returned but none from within the site and the records were mainly from outside the industrial estate. These were all common and widespread species. The closest records included bullfinch *Pyrrhula pyrrhula*, wren *Troglogytes troglodytes*, willow warbler *Phylloscopus trochilus*, dunnock *Prunella modularis*, song thrush *Turdus philomelos* and house sparrow *Passer domesticus.*

A number of records of butterfly were returned including priority species small heath *Coenonympha pamphilus* and dingy skipper *Erynnis tages*. Small heath records were located in the adjacent LWS with the closest one being 200 m south, and the most recent dingy skipper record was from 2007 and located 700 m east of the site.

5.2 Extended UK Hab Survey

The results of the Extended UK Hab Survey are shown on Drawing 3 and Target Notes with Photographs are presented in Appendix B. The habitats are described below with their relevant primary or secondary UK Hab codes where relevant. Habitats within the site comprised the following broad habitat types:

- Developed land; sealed surface;
- Modified grassland;
- Mixed scrub; and
- Individual trees.

Developed land; sealed surface (u1b);

The site contained a significant amount of hardstanding which mainly consists of a large car park, paths and an access road.

Modified grassland (g4 108)

The majority of the site was dominated by frequently mown (UK Hab secondary code - 108) modified grassland which was being used as amenity areas around the building (Target Note 1). The grassland was species-poor (contained less than 9 species per m^2) and was dominated by perennial rye-grass *Lolium perenne* with white clover *Trifolium repens*, dandelion *Taraxacum officinale* agg., common daisy *Bellis perennis*, creeping buttercup *Ranunculus repens* and occasional ground ivy *Glechoma hederacea*. Some areas were damaged where they had been walked on, particularly near the outside shelter near the main entrance to the gym on the south side of the building.

Mixed scrub (h3h 523)

Two areas of mixed scrub were found in the east of the site (Target Note 2) which contained a mixture of non-native (secondary code – 523) and native species such as common privet *Ligustrum vulgare*, David viburnum *viburnum davidii* and ivy *Hedera helix*.

Individual trees

A number of individual urban trees were recorded across the site. These consisted mainly of ornamental Cherry *Prunus* sp.*,* with several specimens of non-native trees such as mature red oak *Quercus rubra,* Swedish whitebeam *Sorbus intermedia* and immature rowan *Sorbus aucuparia* and sycamore *Acer pseudoplatanus.* The trees are further described in Section 5.3 and Appendix C. One large mature pine *Pinus* sp. was present to the north east of the site (Tree 2 – Appendix C).

5.3 Bat Survey

Daytime Bat Walkover

The site is located in the centre of an industrial estate which is in use through the night and is likely to be highly lit. The site does lie within close proximity to the Sowell Pond and Westwood Lane Meadows LWS which would provide suitable foraging habitat for bats so they are likely to be present in the area. The site itself was deemed to have low potential to support foraging bats.

Ground Level Tree Assessment

Six individual trees (T1-T6) and three tree groups (TG1-TG3) were present within the site boundary and were assessed for their bat roost potential (see Drawing 3). All trees were assessed as having no bat roost potential. Full results of the GLTA can be seen in Appendix C.

5.4 Great Crested Newt Habitat Suitability Index Assessment

The results of the HSI assessment are presented in Table 6. With reference to Table 3, the HSI scores indicate that the Attenuation Pond 1 offers good suitability habitat for GCN – further discussion regarding this can be found in Section 6.3.

Table 6: Great Crested Newt Habitat Suitability Index Assessment Results

Variable	Attenuation Pond 1 (off site)
Geographic Location	1
Pond Area	0.2
Pond Permanence	0.9
Water Quality	0.67
Pond Shading	1
Waterfowl	1
Occurrence of Fish	0.67
Pond Density	1
Terrestrial Habitat	0.8
Macrophyte cover	0.6
HSI Score	**0.72**

6. Evaluation and Recommendations

6.1 Designated Sites

There is one statutory designated site and four non-statutory designated sites within the desk study search area. Potter Holes LNR/LWS, West Wood LWS and Rockley Woods are all more than 400 m away from the site with no ecological pathways directly connecting habitats on the site with the habitats within the designated sites. The site is separated from the designated sites by industrial buildings and paved surfaces within the industrial estate.

It is unlikely that development of the site would have any direct or indirect impacts on these designated sites and therefore they are not considered further within this assessment.

Sowell Pond and Westwood Lane Meadows LWS lies approximately 100 m away from the site to the south; the LWS consists of two parcels of land which are separated by a narrow strip of broadleaved plantation. It is designated for its neutral grassland, broadleaved trees, areas of dense scrub and ponds and its population of great crested newt. The habitats within the LWS will not be directly affected by the proposed development; potential impacts on GCN are discussed in Section 6.3.

6.2 Habitats

The site consists of developed land with a sealed surface which has no ecological value and low value modified grassland that is cut regularly and contained less than 9 species per metre squared. The semi natural habitats present within the site are small areas of common and widespread habitats and none of the habitats on the site are priority habitats or local biodiversity action plan habitats. There are also a number of individual trees with are generally too immature to be of ecological interest however, there are several semi-mature trees (Swedish whitebeam and red oak) and despite being non native species, provide habitat for birds and invertebrates; these trees should not be impacted upon by proposed plans. The main area that is likely to be lost to the development through creation of the new car park, is an area of modified grassland with mixed scrub, a mature pine tree and a number of immature silver birch and sycamore; compensation for this is discussed in the Biodiversity Net Gain Feasibility Statement (AB Ecology, 2024).

6.3 SPECIES

Badger

Two records of badger were recorded within the desk study search area, the closest being 750 m south of the site however, habitats at the site are generally unsuitable for this species and no signs or evidence of badger were recorded during the Extended UK Hab Survey. Therefore, badgers are not considered further within this assessment.

Bats

All species of bats and their roosts are protected under UK legislation (see Appendix A for full details). The desk study revealed that the closest roost was a common pipistrelle roost at a farm, approximately 1 km east of the site.

Six individual trees and three tree groups within the site boundary were assessed for their potential to support roosting bats however none of the trees were suitable for bats. The site was deemed to have low suitability for foraging bats due to the lack of mature semi-natural habitats that would support diverse populations of invertebrates. The site is also well lit, and this is likely to discourage many species of foraging bat.

Birds

All species of birds are protected whilst they are breeding (see Appendix A for full details). A large number of bird records were returned but none from within the site and the records were mainly from outside the industrial estate. Habitat that would support breeding birds is very limited on the site, however the mixed scrub and the individual trees do provide some potential habitat.

Any vegetation clearance should be undertaken outside the bird nesting season (i.e. avoid March-August inclusive). If this is not possible then the vegetation should be checked for nesting birds immediately prior to removal. If nesting birds are present, then the area will need to be left untouched until the young have fledged the nest.

Otter and Water Vole

There are no recent (i.e. within the past 15 years) records of otter or water vole within the desk study search area. Additionally, there is no suitable habitat for either species on the site. Therefore, these species need not be considered further.

Amphibians

GCN are fully protected under UK legislation (see Appendix A for full details) and are known to be present in the wider area.

This site itself contains mainly poor quality terrestrial habitat for GCN or other amphibians (frequently mown grassland and hardstanding) however, there are two areas of mixed scrub that could be used as refuges. There are no ponds within the site boundary, however there are ponds and records of GCN within 250 m of the site boundary – see Drawing 4 for the location of ponds. Suitable habitats within 250 m of a breeding pond are likely to be used more frequently by GCN (English Nature, 2001). The ponds that lie within 250 m include two attenuation ponds, two mitigation ponds and two ponds within the Sowell Pond LWS.

Attenuation Pond 1 and the two mitigation ponds lie on land owned by the Company Shop Group south of the site boundary. These ponds were created when the shop building was built in 2012/13 (this is the large square building immediately north of the mitigation ponds). Attenuation Pond 1

(Photograph 1) was subject to a HSI assessment during the PEA which classified the pond as being of good suitability for GCN. The mitigation ponds were not subject to a HSI assessment due to the fact that they are not functioning any longer as ponds and are overgrown with terrestrial vegetation (Photograph 2) and have been like this for some time (Middleton Bell Ecology, 2023). These ponds are therefore not suitable for GCN and can be discounted.

Photograph 1 – Attenuation Pond 1

Photograph 2 – Site of Former Mitigation Ponds

Attenuation Pond 2 lies to the north of the site, approximately 120 m away from the site boundary and was constructed in 2020/2021 as part of an extension to the industrial estate. There was no access to view this pond during the PEA however the pond is separated from the site by industrial buildings and roads with kerbs which would act as dispersal barriers to GCN. This makes it unlikely, that if newts were present to the north, that they would disperse onto the site; also no desk study records of GCN were returned from the desk study from this area prior to its development.

The main population of GCN present within 250 m of the site is present around Sowell Ponds (Ponds 1 and 2 on Drawing 4). These ponds are part of the LWS and many records of GCN were returned from the desk study and were all located within 150 m of the pond. Ponds 1 and 2, Attenuation Pond 1 and the former mitigation ponds have been subject to regular GCN monitoring surveys over the last several years as part of requirement under GCN Mitigation Licence 2019-41739-EPS-MIT-1 (Middleton Bell Ecology, 2023). The survey results show that a medium population exists around Ponds 1 and 2, however since the mitigation ponds and Attenuation Pond 1 were created in 2011, no GCN have been recorded in these ponds during the surveys (surveys took place in 2017, 2021, 2022 and 2023). Work was carried out in 2021/22 to enhance the mitigation ponds however the work has been unsuccessful (Middleton Bell Ecology, 2023). As part of a review of existing information that the Company Shop Holds regarding the mitigation license to build the new shop building, it was also noted that the fencing and trap out undertaken of that area prior to construction returned a nil result for GCN.

Considering the information available for the site it is deemed highly unlikely that GCN would be present within the site boundary due to the fact that the population of GCN in Ponds 1 and 2 are situated within an area of high quality terrestrial habitat and are unlikely to disperse from this area into the poorer quality terrestrial habitat found within the site boundary. The ponds are also separated from the site by industrial buildings and car park areas which act as a barrier to dispersal. GCN are not present in Attenuation Pond 1 and the former mitigation ponds do not provide suitable habitat to support GCN either. It is recommended however as a precaution, that

a method statement for vegetation clearance is developed that sets out the ecological considerations of the works and details the environmentally safe practices of work that must be followed to prevent impacts/harm to GCN in the unlikely event that they are discovered during works.

Reptiles

Three records of grass snake, the closest of which was approximately 100 m south of the site were returned from the desk study search area however, habitats at the site are unsuitable for this species and for other reptile species. These species are therefore not considered further.

Hedgehog

Numerous hedgehog records were returned from the desk study search area however all were outside the industrial estate. Although no evidence of hedgehog was found during the PEA, and no specific surveys were carried out, suitable foraging habitat is present, therefore it is possible this species may forage and commute across the site. Mitigation should be put in place to ensure any development does not have a detrimental effect on this species. All trenches and excavations will need to be back-filled, covered or a means of escape installed which will prevent any hedgehogs commuting across the site at night from getting trapped. Any materials that need to be stored on the site must be stored off the ground so that they cannot be used as temporary refuges by hedgehogs.

Invertebrates

Numerous records of butterflies were recorded from habitats around the industrial estate, including two priority species (small heath and dingy skipper) however the site does not have habitats that would support these species (grassland with a short, sparse sward) therefore they are not considered further within this assessment.

7. SUMMARY

Table 7 summarises the results and recommendations for the proposed development.

Table 7: Summary Table

Habitat/Species	Result	Recommendations/Enhancement
Designated Sites	There is one statutory designated site and four non-statutory designated sites within the desk study search area. Potter Holes LNR/LWS, West Wood LWS and Rockley Woods are all more than 400 m away from the site. Sowell Pond and Westwood Lane Meadows lies approximately 100 m away from the site to the south.	None - no impacts.
Habitats	The site consists of developed land with a sealed surface which has no ecological value and low value modified grassland. However, one mature pine tree, several immature trees and areas of mixed scrub are likely to be lost alongside modified grassland habitats. The semi natural habitats present within the site are small areas of common and widespread habitats and none of the habitats on the site are priority habitats or local biodiversity action plan habitats.	Retained grassland habitats at the site, or off site, should be improved to compensate for the loss of the modified grassland. This should include compensatory tree planting. All other trees should be retained where possible.
Amphibian	There is a known population of GCN present in the wider area however it has been assessed that GCN are unlikely to be present within the site boundary. Habitats within the site are of limited value to other amphibians. No ponds are present within the site boundary.	Develop a method statement for vegetation clearance that sets out the ecological considerations of the works and details the environmentally safe practices of work that must be followed to prevent impacts/harm to GCN.
Reptiles	Habitats at the site are unsuitable for reptiles.	No further surveys required.
Badger	Habitats at the site are unsuitable for badgers and no evidence of this species was recorded during the site survey.	No further surveys required.
Bats	Six individual trees and three tree groups were assessed for their bat roost potential, the trees had no suitability for bats.	No further surveys for bats are required. However, lighting on the site should be minimised, and avoided completely, where possible.

Habitat/Species	Result	Recommendations/Enhancement
	The site was deemed to have low suitability for foraging bats.	No light should be allowed to spill onto the trees within the site.
Birds	Trees and scrub within the site are suitable for breeding birds.	Any vegetation clearance should be undertaken outside the bird nesting season if possible. If this is not possible, they will require an ecologist to check the area immediately prior to their removal.
Otter and Water vole	Habitats at the site are unsuitable for otter and water vole.	No further surveys required.
Hedgehog	Habitats at the site are suitable for this species and it is likely that they will forage and commute across the site.	The site should be maintained in a way to allow hedgehogs to safely commute around the site during the construction phase. All excavations/trenches to be covered or fenced if left overnight. Alternatively, a mammal ramp will be left in to allow animals to escape.
Invertebrates/Butterflies	Habitats at the site are unsuitable for assemblages of invertebrates.	No further surveys required.

8. REFERENCES

AB Ecology (2024) *Company Shop Group, Tankersley, Barnsley: Biodiversity Net Gain Report*. Report Reference 2024/002/02

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Drawings

Drawing 1 – Site Location Plan

Drawing 2 – Local Wildlife Site Boundaries

Drawing 3 – UK Hab Survey Results

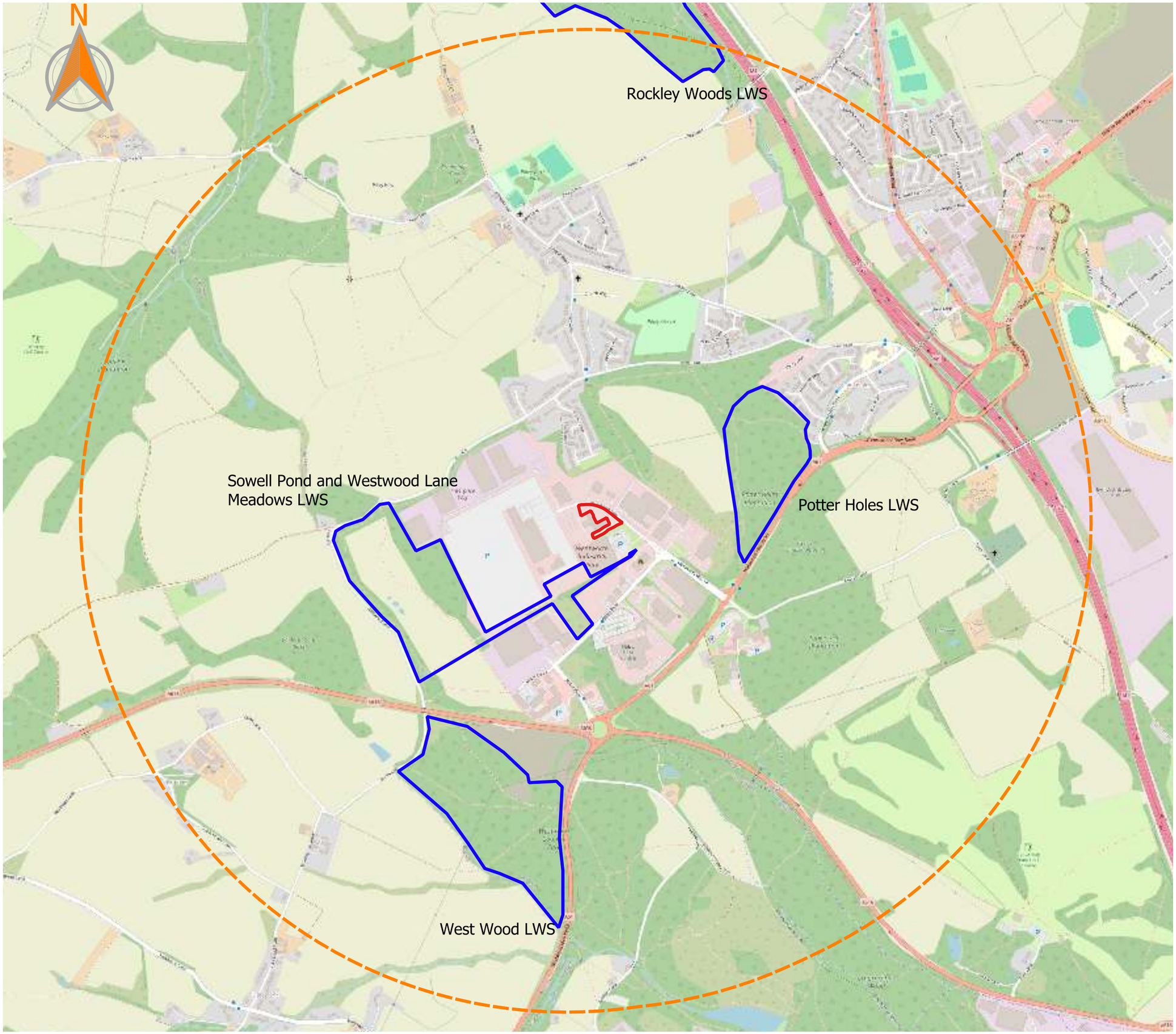
Drawing 4 – Location of Ponds Within 250m

Legend

Site Boundary

RGB Aerial Photography – ©GeoPerspectives (c) Getmapping plc.
Scale @ A3 1:3000

Client: Company Shop Group	
Project: Company Shop Group Preliminary Ecological Appraisal	
Title: Site Location Plan	
Project Number: 2024/002	Date: 26/06/2024
AB Ecology	Drawing Number: 1



Legend

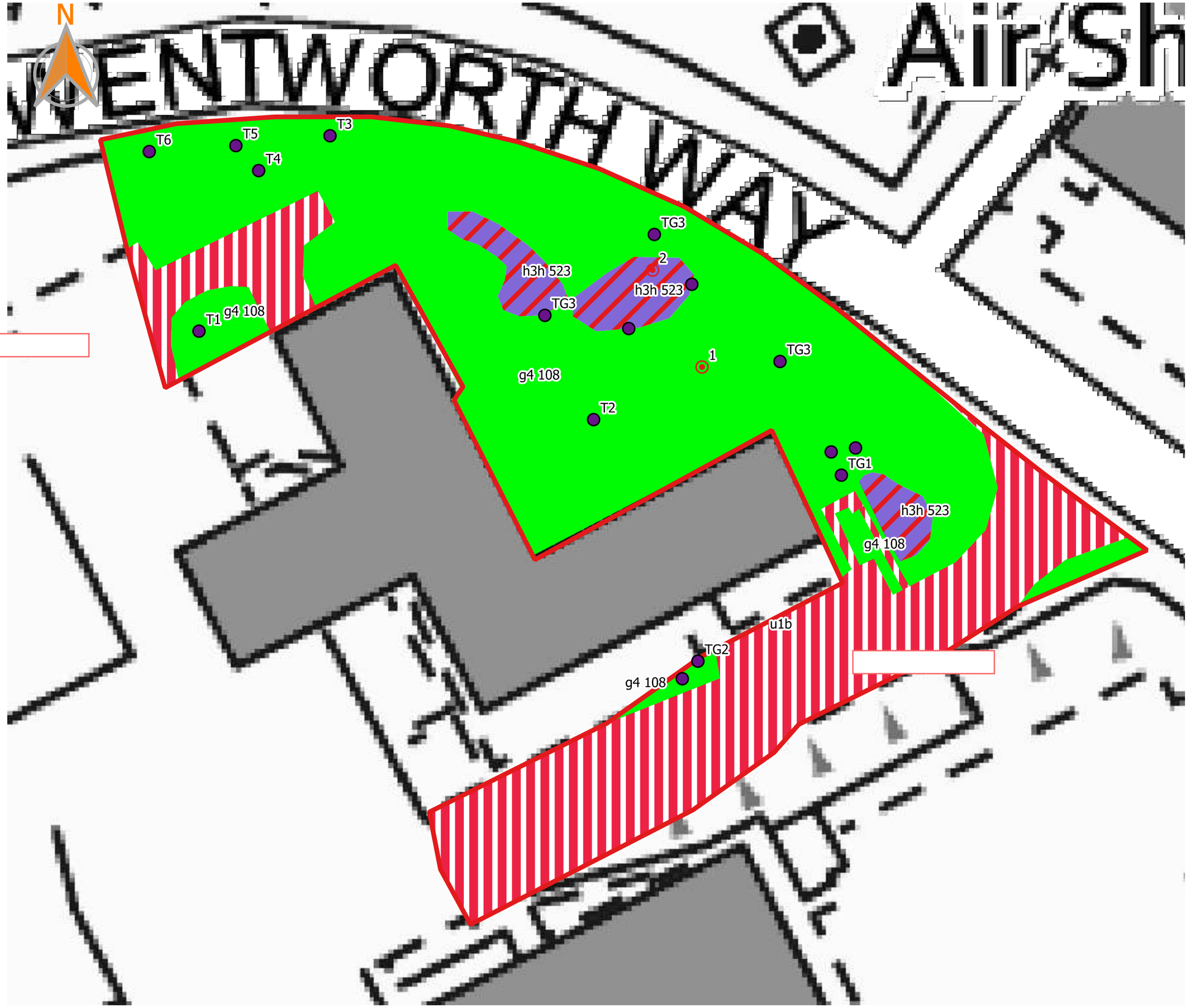
Site Boundary

1.5 km Buffer

Local Wildlife Site (LWS) Boundaries

Basemap is from Open Street Map
Scale @ A3 1:12000

Client	Company Shop Group
Project	Company Shop Group Preliminary Ecological Appraisal
Title	Local Wildlife Site Boundaries
Project Number	2024/002
Date	26/06/2024
AB Ecology	
Drawing Number	2



Legend

- Site Boundary

UKHab — habitats

- g4 - modified grassland
- h3 - mixed scrub
- u1b - developed land. sealed surface
- Individual Trees
- Target Note

Secondary Codes
108 - frequently mown
523 - non-native

T1 - Tree Reference
TG1 - Tree Group Reference

Client: Company Shop Group	
Project: Company Shop Group Preliminary Ecological Appraisal	
Title: UK Hab Survey Results	
Project Number: 2024/002	Date: 26/06/2024
AB Ecology	Drawing Number: 3

Legend

- Site Boundary
- 250m buffer
- Ponds

Scale @ A3 1:2500

Client: Company Shop Group	
Project: Company Shop Group Preliminary Ecological Appraisal	
Title: Location of Ponds Within 250m	
Project Number: 2024/002	Date: 26/06/2024
AB Ecology	Drawing Number: 4

Appendix A

Legislation and Policy

WILDLIFE LEGISLATION

Species Protection

A level of statutory protection is afforded to specific species, largely as a consequence of dramatic declines in populations caused by habitat loss and/or degradation (both direct and indirect impacts) and persecution. In England the various statutes which provide this protection include the following:

- The Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981 (as amended by the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000);
- The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended); and
- Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act (NERC) 2006.

These are further described for specific protected species surveyed for or expected at the site below.

Species of Principle Importance in England

The Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act came into force on 1st October 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. The list has been drawn up in consultation with Natural England, as required by the Act.

The S41 list is used to guide decision-makers such as public bodies, including local and regional authorities, in implementing their duty under Section 40 of the NERC Act 2006, to have regard to the conservation of biodiversity in England, when carrying out their normal functions

There are 943 species of principal importance included on the S41 list. These are the species found in England which were identified as requiring action under the UK Biodiversity Action Plan (UK BAP) and which continue to be regarded as conservation priorities under its successor, the UK Post-2010 Biodiversity Framework.

Great Crested Newt

The great crested newt *Triturus cristatus* is protected under UK and European legislation. Great crested newt is included in Schedule 5 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended), the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 and Regulation 40 and The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017. It is an offence to:

- Deliberately capture, injure or kill a great crested newt;
- Damage or destroy a breeding site or resting place of a great crested newt; and
- Disturb a great crested newt, including disturbance of a great crested newt in such a way as to be likely to affect:

  i) the ability of great crested newts to survive, reproduce or breed, or to rear or nurture their young;

  ii) their ability to hibernate or migrate; and

  iii) to significantly affect the local distribution or abundance of great crested newt.

Provisions are made within the UK legislation to allow for disturbance of great crested newt to take place under licence where works affect the species. The licence is issued by the appropriate statutory authority, which in England is Natural England. Licences can only be granted if there is no satisfactory alternative or if the action authorised will not be detrimental to the maintenance of the population of the species at a favourable conservation status in their natural range. Licences can be issued for scientific, research purposes (including survey work), and for the disturbance of great crested newt in relation to a development.

Bats

All species of bat and their roost are protected under UK and European legislation. Bats are included in Schedule 5 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended), the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 and Regulation 40 and Schedule 2 of The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017. It is an offence to:

- Deliberately capture, injure or kill a bat;
- Damage or destroy a breeding site or resting place of a bat; and
- Disturb a bat, including disturbance of a bat in such a way as to be likely to affect:

  i) the ability of bats to survive, reproduce or breed, or to rear or nurture their young;

  ii) their ability to hibernate or migrate; and

  iii) to significantly affect the local distribution or abundance of bats.

Provisions are made within the UK legislation to allow for disturbance of bats or their roosts to take place under licence where works affect any bat species. The licence is issued by the appropriate statutory authority, which in England is Natural England (NE). Licences can only be granted if there is no satisfactory alternative or if the action authorised will not be detrimental to the maintenance of the population of the species at a favourable conservation status in their natural range. Licences can be issued for scientific, research purposes (including survey work), and for the disturbance of bats in relation to a development.

Birds

All birds are protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended), making it an offence, with certain exceptions (e.g. game birds), to intentionally:

- Kill, injure or take any wild bird;
- Take, damage or destroy the nest of any wild bird while it is in use or being built; and
- Take or destroy the egg of any wild bird.

Schedule 1 of the Act contains a list of birds which are conferred extra protection and for which all offences carry harsher penalties. Under the legislation it is illegal to: intentionally or recklessly disturb a Schedule 1 bird while it is building a nest or is in or near a nest containing eggs or young; and intentionally or recklessly disturb dependent young of such a bird. Examples of species covered under Schedule 1 include: barn owl *Tyto alba*, kingfisher *Alcedo atthis* and little-ringed plover *Charadrius dubius*.

Hedgehogs

Hedgehogs are listed on schedule 6 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act (1981) which makes it illegal to kill or capture wild hedgehogs by certain methods. They are also listed under the Wild Mammals Protection Act (1996), which prohibits cruel treatment of hedgehogs.

Hedgehogs are listed as a species of 'principal importance' under the NERC Act, which is meant to confer a 'duty of responsibility' to public bodies during the planning process.

POLICY

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, 2023) was first published on 27 March 2012 and updated on 24 July 2018, 19 February 2019, 20 July 2021, 5 September 2023 and 19 December 2023. This sets out the government's planning policies for England and how these are expected to be applied. The NPPF states that '*planning policies and decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by*:

- *Protecting and enhancing valued landscapes, sites of biodiversity or geological value and soils in a manner commensurate with their statutory status or identified quality in the development plan;*
- *Recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside and the wider benefits from natural capital and ecosystem services – including the economic and other benefits of the best and most versatile agricultural land, and of trees and woodland;*
- *Maintaining the character of the undeveloped coast, while improving public access to it where appropriate;*
- *Minimising impacts on and providing net gains for biodiversity, including by establishing coherent ecological networks that are more resilient to current and future pressures;*
- *Preventing new and existing development from contributing to, being put at unacceptable risk from, or being adversely affected by, unacceptable levels of soil, air, water or noise pollution or land instability. Development should, wherever possible, help to improve local environmental conditions, such as air and water quality, taking into account relevant information such as river basin management plans; and*
- *Remediating and mitigating despoiled, degraded, derelict, contaminated and unstable land, where appropriate.'*

A list of principles which local planning authorities should follow when determining planning applications is included in the NPPF which includes the following;

- *If significant harm resulting from a development cannot be avoided (through locating on an alternative site with less harmful impacts), adequately mitigated, or, as a last resort, compensated for, then planning permission should be refused;*
- *Development on land within or outside a Site of Special Scientific Interest, and which is likely to have an adverse effect on it (either individually or in combination with other developments), should not be permitted. The only exception is where the benefits of the development in the location proposed clearly outweigh both its likely impact on the features of the site that make it of special scientific interest, and any broader impacts on the national network of Sites of Species Scientific Interest; and*

- *Development resulting in the loss or deterioration of irreplaceable habitats (such as ancient woodland and ancient or veteran trees) should be refused, unless there are wholly exceptional reasons and a suitable compensation strategy exists; and development whose primary objective is to conserve or enhance biodiversity should be supported; while opportunities to incorporate biodiversity improvements in and around developments should be encouraged, especially where this can secure measurable net gains for biodiversity.*

Local Biodiversity Action Plan

The local Biodiversity Action Plan (LBAP) is the Barnsley Biodiversity Action Plan (Barnsley Biodiversity Trust (2009). This plan provides a local response to the UK Government's National Action Plans for threatened habitats and species. The LBAP contributes to national targets wherever these are relevant to the region but also sets local targets. The Barnsley Biodiversity Action Plan contains 20 species action plans and 17 habitat action plans which are considered to be conservation priorities. Each action plan includes targeted actions for relevant organisations, local groups and individuals to help focus the work of the trust in conserving and enhancing these species and spaces so future generations can continue to enjoy them.

Appendix B

Target Notes

Target Note 1

Description: The majority of the site is dominated by frequently mown modified grassland with scattered trees. This habitat surrounds the commercial building and the existing car parking areas.

Common name	**Scientific name**	**DAFOR**[1]
perennial rye-grass	*Lolium perenne*	D
white clover	*Trifolium repens*	F
creeping buttercup	*Ranunculus repens*	O
ribwort plantain	*Plantago lanceolata*	O
dandelion	*Taraxacum officinale* agg.	O
ground ivy	*Glechoma hederacea*	O

[1] DAFOR scale where D-dominant, A-Abundant, F-Frequent, O-Occasional, R-Rare

Target Note 2

Description: On the north eastern side of the site, areas of mixed scrub were present which contained native and non-native plants alongside immature silver birch trees. Scrub species such as dogwood, viburnum, privet and ivy were present.

Common name	Scientific name	DAFOR
silver birch	*Betula pendula*	O
common dogwood	*Cornus sanguinea*	O
common ivy	*Hedera helix*	O
common privet	*Ligustrum ovalifolium*	O
Japanese mahonia	*Mahonia japonica*	O
David viburnum	*Viburnum davidii*	O

Appendix C

Ground Level Tree Assessment for Bats

COMPANY SHOP GROUP - APPENDIX C – GROUND LEVEL TREE ASSESSMENT FOR BATS

Site:	Company Shop Group	**Date:**	06 February 2024	**Weather:**	Light rain showers
		Surveyor	Rachel Blackham		

Tree Reference	Grid Reference	Species	Age Class	Stem Diameter (at breast height)	Potential Roost Features	Suitability	Photo
TG1	SK337996	Two Swedish whitebeam *Sorbus intermedia*	Mature	0.4 m	No suitable features for roosting bats recorded.	None	
TG2	SK337996	Two ornamental Cherry *Prunus sp.*	Semi-mature	0.15 m	No suitable features for roosting bats recorded.	None	

COMPANY SHOP GROUP - APPENDIX C – GROUND LEVEL TREE ASSESSMENT FOR BATS

Tree Reference	Grid Reference	Species	Age Class	Stem Diameter (at breast height)	Potential Roost Features	Suitability	Photo
TG3	SK337997	Group of trees – including two silver birch *Betula pendula*, sycamore *Acer pseudoplatanus* and oak *Quercus robur*	Semi-mature	0.2 - 0.3 m	One knot hole in a silver birch but low down (less than 0.5 m in height) which makes it less likely to be used by bats; a search of the hole revealed no evidence of bats. No other features.	None	
T1	SK336997	One red oak *Quercus rubra* (rear of two trees in photo)	Semi-mature	0.35 cm	No suitable features for roosting bats recorded.	None	

COMPANY SHOP GROUP - APPENDIX C – GROUND LEVEL TREE ASSESSMENT FOR BATS

Tree Reference	Grid Reference	Species	Age Class	Stem Diameter (at breast height)	Potential Roost Features	Suitability	Photo
T2	SK337997	Pine *Pinus* sp.	Mature	0.6 m	No suitable features for roosting bats recorded.	None	
T3	SK336997	Rowan *Sorbus aucuparia*	Semi-mature	0.2 m	No suitable features for roosting bats recorded.	None	No photo.
T4	SK336997	Ornamental Cherry	Semi-mature	0.5 m	No suitable features for roosting bats recorded.	None	No photo.
T5	SK336997	Rowan *Sorbus aucuparia*	Semi-mature	0.15 m	No suitable features for	None	No photo.

COMPANY SHOP GROUP - APPENDIX C – GROUND LEVEL TREE ASSESSMENT FOR BATS

Tree Reference	Grid Reference	Species	Age Class	Stem Diameter (at breast height)	Potential Roost Features	Suitability	Photo
					roosting bats recorded.		
T6	SK336997	Rowan *Sorbus aucuparia*	Semi-mature	015 m	No suitable features for roosting bats recorded.	None	No photo.

T = Tree

TG = Tree Group