Newlands Developments

Parkside, Hoyland

ECOLOGICAL APPRAISAL

August 2020

This report contains sensitive information regarding protected species and should not be placed directly within the public domain. This report is available upon request from the LPA to bona-fide organisations for the purposes of determining the relevant planning application.

FPCR Environment and Design Ltd
Registered Office: Lockington Hall, Lockington, Derby DE74 2RH
Company No. 07128076. [T] 01509 672772 [F] 01509 674565 [E] mail@fpcr.co.uk [W] www.fpcr.co.uk

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CONTENTS

TABLES

APPENDICES

FIGURES

1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1.1 This report provides an assessment of ecological value of land at Parkside, east of Sheffield Road, Hoyland and has been prepared by FPCR Environment and Design Ltd. on behalf of Newlands Developments.

1.2 No statutory or non-statutory designated sites will be significantly impacted by the proposed development.

1.3 The land was dominated by poor semi-improved grassland and arable habitat of negligible to low ecological value and bordered by native hedgerows, scrub, trees and garden boundaries. The boundary hedges are native species dominated and a habitat of principal importance under S 41 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act (NERC) 2006.

1.4 All hedgerows will be retained along with boundary trees at the north and north eastern boundaries.

1.5 Bat activity surveys, including transect and passive monitoring were undertaken in August and trees were assessed for bat roost potential. Low levels of bat activity largely from common pipistrelle were recorded in association with the north-eastern and south-western boundaries. A single tree along the northern eastern boundary as identified as having the potential to support roosting bats. This tree would be retained within the proposals.

1.6 No evidence of badger was recorded within the site or suitability adjacent its boundaries (where accessible) and no records of badger were returned in the vicinity.

1.7 Some limited suitable reptile habitat was recorded at the south western boundary and best practice recommendations for vegetation removal have been made to minimise harm should low numbers of reptiles be present.

1.8 Breeding and winter bird surveys as well as monthly bat activity surveys undertaken on land west of Sheffield Road (for application ref. 2020/0647) have been reviewed to inform assessment. The proposed site provides some limited suitability for farmland birds such as yellow hammer. While this suitability will be lost much of the suitable bird nesting habitat associated with field boundaries will be retained. Recommendations include the creation of species-rich grassland that will retain suitability for notable species recorded in the area. The site provides a limited extent of suitable habitat for winter birds foraging in the surrounding farmland. Proposals will retain some interest for wintering birds including grassland and new native scrub planting. Overall proposals are not expected to have a significant impact on local bird populations but may favour notable species such as starling and house sparrow.

1.9 Given the extent and suitability of the habitats recorded local bat and bird populations are not considered likely to be significantly impacted by proposed development and do not represent a constraint.

1.10 While proposed losses, particularly in relation to the link road required across the southern and south western boundary will severe habitat linkages to the south connectivity will be retained around the proposed sites northern and eastern boundary.

2.0 INTRODUCTION

2.1 This report has been prepared by FPCR Environment and Design Ltd. on behalf of Newlands Developments and provides an assessment of the ecological value of land at Parkside located to the east of Sheffield Road, Hoyland (central grid ref. SK 3606 9979) herein referred to as the 'Site'.

Proposals

2.2 This report has been prepared to inform an outline planning application for: *'Provision of access, earthworks to provide development plateau for future football pitches, laying out of archery pitch, provision of temporary portacabin for changing facilities and temporary car parking'.*

Context

2.3 The Site comprise a field of poor semi-improved grassland and part of an arable field, located on the southern edge of Hoyland. Urban areas lie to the north and north east of the Site, with arable land to the east and south beyond Sheffield Road (A6135).

2.4 The grassland field which forms the majority of the Site is used for informal recreation including dog walking. The majority of the grassland boundary is formed by fencing with localised shorter sections of hedgerow present. Additional habitats are limited to a small number of semi-mature and mature trees occurring in association with boundary features. Beyond to the south the arable field section is unbounded except to the north east and south west by native hedge and the verge of Sheffield Road respectively.

3.0 METHODOLOGY

Desk Study

3.1 In order to compile existing baseline information, relevant ecological data was requested from Barnsley Biological Records Centre (BBRC) and data from Multi Agency Government Information Centre (MAGIC[1]) was reviewed

3.2 Further inspection, using colour 1:25,000 OS base maps (www.ordnancesurvey.co.uk) and aerial photographs from Google Earth (www.maps.google.co.uk), was also undertaken in order to provide additional context and identify any features of potential importance for nature conservation in the wider countryside.

3.3 The search area for biodiversity information was related to the significance of sites and species and potential zones of influence, as follows:

- 5km around the Site for sites of International Importance (e.g. Special Areas of Conservation (SACs), Special Protection Areas (SPAs), Ramsar sites).
- 2km around the Site for sites of National or Regional Importance (e.g. Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs))

[1] Defra Multi Agency Government Information Centre website available at: https://magic.defra.gov.uk/MagicMap.aspx [accessed 18.08.20]

- 1km around the Site for sites of County Importance and species records (e.g. Local Wildlife Site, proposed Wildlife Sites and protected, and/or notable species).

Field Survey

Habitats

3.4 The Site was subject to an Extended Phase 1 Habitat Survey in accordance with the standard survey methodology (JNCC, 2010[3]) on 10th August 2020 to map the broad habitat types and identify key features with potential to provide greater value for wildlife.

3.5 Hedgerows were surveyed using the Hedgerow Evaluation and Grading System (HEGS)[4]. This method of assessment includes noting down canopy species composition, associated ground flora and climbers, structure of the hedgerow including height, width and gaps, associated features including number and species of mature trees, banks, ditches and grass verges.

3.6 Each hedgerow is given a grade using HEGS with the suffixes '+' and '-', representing the upper and lower limits of each grade respectively. These grades represent a continuum on a scale from 1+ (the highest score and denoting hedges of the greatest nature conservation priority) to 4- (representing the lowest score and hedges of the least nature conservation priority) as follows:

- Grade 1 – High to very high value
- Grade 2 – Moderately high to high value
- Grade 3 – Moderate value
- Grade 4 – Low value

3.7 Hedgerows graded 1 or 2 are considered to be a priority for nature conservation.

3.8 Hedgerows were also assessed against the Wildlife and Landscape criteria contained within Statutory Instrument No: 1160 – The Hedgerow Regulations 1997 to determine whether they were likely to qualified as 'Important Hedgerows' under the Regulations.

Protected Species

3.9 During the survey, observations, identification and signs of any species protected under Part 1 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) (WCA), the Protection of Badgers Act 1992 and the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended) were noted. Any sightings, evidence of, or suitable habitats for other protected fauna, species of principal importance under the Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006 or local Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) or otherwise notable species including breeding birds were recorded during the visit.

[3] JNCC (2010), Handbook for Phase 1 habitat survey - a technique for environmental audit

[4] Clements, D.K., & Tofts, R.J.(1992). Hedgerow Evaluation and Grading System (HEGS): A methodology for the ecological survey, evaluation and grading of hedgerows. Countryside Planning and Management

Bats

Tree Roost Assessment

3.10 Trees within the Site were assessed for their suitability to support roosting bats by a licenced and experienced bat ecologist (Natural England Licence no. 2020-48320-CLS-CLS). Potential Roosting Features (PRF) which were sought (Based on P16, British Standard 8596:2015 Surveying for bats in trees and woodland, October 2015[6]) included: manmade holes, woodpecker holes, cracks/splits, loose or flaking bark, matted ivy stems over 50mm diameter and other hollows or cavities.

3.11 Certain factors such as orientation of the feature, its height from the ground, the direct surroundings and its location in respect to other features may enhance or reduce the potential value.

3.12 Trees were classified into general bat roost potential groups (negligible, low, medium or high) based upon the presence of suitable features and classification and assessment of such features is based upon guidance set out in Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines (BCT, 2016[7]).

Foraging/commuting Habitat Assessment

3.13 As part of the Phase 1 habitat survey, an initial assessment of the suitability of the Site for foraging and commuting bats was made. This included consideration of the structure and connectivity of hedgerows, the presence of tree cover and woodland edge habitat and overall connectivity of these features to suitable linear habitat networks offsite.

Transect Survey

3.14 A transect survey was undertaken during the summer comprising a walked route sampling the key potential bat foraging habitat within the Site as determined in advance of the survey. The survey was conducted during suitable conditions on 17th August 2020, absent of rain and with only a light breeze. Cloud cover was 30-50%.

3.15 The survey was undertaken in accordance with the guidelines (BCT, 2016). The route was walked at a steady pace and when a bat passed by, the species, time and behaviour was annotated on a plan. This information provides a general view of the bat activity present and identifies the key foraging areas and commuting routes. Point counts lasting 10 minutes were used to allow additional sampling time along the route.

3.16 Echo Meter Touch 2 Pro was used in conjunction with a Samsung Galaxy (android smart phone) to identify bat calls and record data (in full spectrum) for confirming identification later as necessary.

Static Survey

3.17 Passive monitoring was undertaken using an automated logging system (SM4BAT FS detectors (Wildlife Acoustics Inc.)) with its output saved to an internal storage device. One static unit was deployed on site for 5 consecutive nights in August 2020 within suitable bat foraging habitat adjacent Sheffield Road at the Site's western boundary.

[6] BSI Publications (2015) *BS 8596:2015 Surveying for bats in trees and woodland – Guide*. BSI Standards Publication. London.
[7] Collins J. (2016) Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists – Good Practice Guidelines (3rd Edition). Bat Conservation Trust.

3.18 In accordance with best practice, the detector was programmed to record continuously 30 minutes before sunset and until 30 minutes following sunrise. The output from detectors was subjected to computer analysis using Kaleidoscope data analysis software package. Desktop data indicates the weather conditions were generally suitable during the static survey period.

3.19 The detector units record sound files of up to 12 seconds in length before a new file is created. The analysis of the SM4BAT FS files recorded can highlight the presence of more than one bat where recorded simultaneously on the same sound file. However, it is not possible to determine whether consecutive sound files have been recorded as the result of several different bats passing the detector as they commute across the landscape or by one bat repeatedly triggering the detector as it forages in close proximately for an extended period. Therefore, each sound file is counted as a single bat registration. The number of sound files recorded does however reflect the relative importance of the location of the detector by calculating the bat registrations per hour.

Limitations

3.20 Where bat calls could not be identified to species level, for example due to the lower quality of those recordings or where there are similarities between species echolocation calls (particularly for Myotis and Nyctalus species) making a definite identification difficult, a likely species identification is provided. This is based on the features displayed by the calls when analysed using the Kaleidoscope data analysis software package and taking into account the geographical location of the Site and the habitats present.

4.0 RESULTS

Desk Study

4.1 Please refer to Figure 1: Desk Study Results for designated sites and protected and notable species.

Designated Sites

4.2 The Site is not covered by any statutory designation and no international nature conservation designations were recorded within 5km.

4.3 Potter Holes Local Nature Reserve (LNR) is designated for recreation within semi-natural and replanted woodland and lies approximately 1.5km west of the site and Elsecar Reservoir LNR is designated for recreation within willow carr and wetland and lies approximately 1.6km east of the Site.

Non-statutory Designations

4.4 One non-statutory site has been identified within 1km of the Site. Skier's Spring Wood Local Wildlife Site (LWS) is located approximately 550m south east of the site and is designated for its ancient semi-natural woodland.

Protected & Notable Species

4.5 The below summarises records that have been returned by BBRC and are annotated on Figure 1. For conciseness only records from the last 20 years are included.

Mammals

4.6 Records of common pipistrelle *Pipistrellus pipistrellus*, pipistrelle species *Pipistrellus sp.* and brown long-eared bats *Plecotus auritus* were provided in the vicinity of the Site and included a roost record of the latter species from approximately 1m west, beyond the M1.

4.7 Hedgehog *Erinaceus europaeus* have been recorded in association with existing residential development of Hoyland to the north.

Amphibians

4.8 A single record of a great crested newt (GCN) *'nymph'* was provided on farmland west of Sheffield Road - location described as *'Tankersley Common'* in 2013, approximately 700m from the Site.

Invertebrates

4.9 Records of notable invertebrates in the search area included white-letter hairstreak *Satyrium w-album* from Bell Ground (wood) approximately 700m south west of the Site and within SK3699 (noted as Skiers Spring Wood) south of the site; and Dingy skipper *Erynnis tages* from close to Skiers Spring Wood LWS approximately 750m south.

Birds

4.10 Birds including yellowhammer *Emberiza citrinella*, lapwing *Vanellus vanellus*, house sparrow *Passer domesticus* and song thrush *Turdus philomelos* have been recorded in the vicinity of the Site.

Habitats

4.11 Habitat descriptions of the Site are provided below, the locations of the habitats described can be found on Figure 2. Please refer to Appendix A for botanical and B for photographs.

4.12 The following habitat features were recorded within the Site:

- Scrub
- Broadleaved and conifer trees
- Poor semi-improved grassland
- Tall ruderal herb
- Arable
- Hedgerows
- Hard standing

Scrub

4.13 Patches of mature scrub occur along the south western Site boundary with Sheffield Road and the central boundary diving the grassland and arable fields. Species present include hawthorn *Crataegus monogyna*, elm *Ulmus sp.* dog-rose *Rosa canina*, elder *Sambucus nigra* and bramble *Rubus fruticosus agg.*

Trees

4.14 Mature boundary trees recorded included a group of three; two common lime *Tilia vulgaris* and one common ash *Fraxinus excelsior* adjacent the north west corner of the Site beside Sheffield Road and further specimens within the grassland field edge bordering Sheffield Road included sycamore *Acer pseudoplatanus*, ash and silver birch *Betula pendula*. A mature multi-stem sycamore was also present along the south western boundary with Sheffield Road. Apparently self-set semi-mature trees associated with fence lines and offsite residential gardens at the northern and southern grassland field boundaries included sycamore and pedunculate oak *Quercus robur*. None of these trees supported significant signs of aging such as rot holes, stem cavities or dead/damaged limbs of any significant size.

4.15 A single mature hedgerow tree (T1), a pedunculate oak, was recorded at the north eastern boundary and noted to support a rot hole in the upper main stem and is described in more detail within the faunal section.

4.16 At the south western boundary Target Note 1 indicates the location of a narrow stand of wild cherry *Prunus avium* self-set along a fence line for approximately 30m and without a distinct ground flora and varied in age from saplings to more mature examples. A single specimen (a Cypress species) was recorded at the northern boundary with existing residential gardens.

Poor Semi-improved Grassland

4.17 A grassland field was uncut at the time of survey with a sward height of approximately 50cm. The sward is dominated by creeping bent *Agrostis stolonifera* and Yorkshire fog *Holcus lanatus*. Limited dead thatch was recorded and the north margin supported a short-mown grass path dominated by perennial rye-grass *Lolium perenne*. The central field area supported frequent perennial rye-grass and occasional red fescue *Festuca rubra agg.* Excluding undesirable herbs such as creeping buttercup *Ranunculus repens* and broad-leaved dock *Rumex obtusifolius* wildflower cover was around 5-10% and included occasional meadow buttercup *Ranunculus acris*, common sorrel *Rumex acetosa* and lesser stitchwort *Stellaria graminea*; and rare ribwort plantain *Plantago lanceolata,* common knapweed *Centaurea nigra* and yarrow *Achillea millefolium.*

4.18 A short-mown semi-improved grassland verge approximately 1m wide bordered Sheffield Road. Red fescue and perennial rye-grass were noted to be occasional though cover was difficult to determine due to the short-mown treatment of the habitat. In patches at the eastern edge associated with bramble scrub that had escaped cutting false oat-grass *Arrhenatherum elatius* was noted. Rosettes of low growing herbs including ribwort plantain and autumnal hawkbit *Scorzoneroides autumnalis* occurred occasional to frequent particularly at the western edge. Common knapweed and creeping cinquefoil *Potentilla reptans* were also occasional.

Tall Ruderal

4.19 One metre margins of tall herbs occur along the northern and south-western boundaries of the grassland field. Common nettle predominated and a patch of rosebay willowherb *Chamerion*

angustifolium was also noted. Russian comfrey *Symphytum uplandicum* was noted as a garden escape at the northern boundary. Japanese knotweed *Reynoutria japonica* was recorded at two locations (highlighted by Target Note 2); a small stand (approximately 3m x 3m) and within the margin of the grassland field; and to the north west of this and immediately offsite a larger stand (approximately 7m x 8m) that had been strimmed and exhibited curled leaves possibly as a result of herbicide treatment.

Arable

4.20 A section of heavily cultivated arable in the south supported a crop of barley. With the exception of a narrow ruderal margin at the north west boundary the crop ran right to the edges of the field.

Hedgerow

4.21 Four native dominant hedgerows were recorded bordering the northern and north eastern edges of the arable and grassland compartments. All features were dominated by hawthorn *Crataegus monogyna.* H2 also supported several non-native shrubs including snowberry *Symphoricarpos albus,* box-leaved honeysuckle *Lonicera pileata* and a cotoneaster *Cotoneaster sp* (a suspected Schedule 9 listed species). Connectivity was poor with only two hedgerows connecting to another feature, these two features (H3 and H4) were more bushy and dense than H1 and H2 and supported associated hedge-bank features. Table 1 below provides a summary of each feature.

Table 1: Hedgerow Descriptions

Hedge No.	Structural Features (approx. dimensions W = width, H = height)	Total Canopy Species	HEGS Score
1	2-4m H x 2.3m W. trimmed garden hedge, No connections.	1	3
2	2-4m H x 2.3m W. trimmed garden hedge, single standard tree, No connections.	5 (excluding non-native species)	-3
3	2m H x 2-3m W, trimmed, two mature trees, hedge bank, One connection.	3	3
4	4+m H x 2-3m W, trimmed, hedge bank, one connection	3	3

Hardstanding

4.22 A short parking bay to the side of Sheffield Road cuts into the grassland verge at the south western boundary and supports bare gravel and some limited hardstanding clear of vegetation.

Fauna

Reptiles

4.23 Habitats within the Site provided very limited suitability for reptiles. The large grassland field was of a homogenous structure and the associated boundary habitats, including scrub and tall ruderal lacked any graded interface with basking opportunities for this group. Scrub and hedgerow margin associated with field compartments and at Sheffield Road verge was characterised by a trimmed edge where any more natural graded margin had been largely managed out. Scrub margin at the south western corner of the site interfacing between the arable field and bank of the road verge supported some graded bramble scrub with a south east facing edge. The site boundary habitat here provided some limited suitability for reptiles.

4.24 Target Note 3 highlights the location of several discrete stone piles providing some limited suitability for sheltering and hibernating reptiles within patches of mature, shading scrub.

Badgers

4.25 No signs of badger were found within or associated with suitable boundary habitat or adjacent suitable areas that were accessible to survey. The Site provided some suitable foraging and sett creation habitat associated with the boundary at Stead Lane.

Birds

4.26 Hedgerows and other boundary features including mature trees and scrub provided some limited suitable nesting and foraging habitat for a range of bird species including potential value for farmland birds. Given its location close to existing housing and regular use for recreational dog walking the single grassland field was considered to provide limited opportunities for ground nesting birds.

Great Crested Newts

4.27 Habitats including scrub, hedgerows and grassland provided some suitability for terrestrial newts however no suitable breeding habitat was recorded within the site or identified within its vicinity. Scoping of ponds to inform development west of Sheffield Road (Land West of Sheffield Road, Hoyland ref. 2020/0647) ruled out a single pond shown on OS mapping south east of the site at Springwood Farm. A visit to the feature in early spring 2020 found it to comprised a shaded section of ditch with limited water supporting a moderate flow and subsequently it is considered unsuitable for breeding great crested newts.

Bats

Tree Roost Potential

4.28 A single tree T1, was noted to provide moderate potential for roosting bats. The tree is a mature pedunculate oak *Quercus robur* with a rot hole at the top of its main stem approximately 6m from the ground. The feature comprised what appeared to be a main stem cavity with an open hole at the top facing upwards. The entrance was largely free of clutter and some deadwood was visible protruding from the opening.

Foraging and Commuting Suitability

4.29 Linear vegetation at the periphery of the proposed Site (largely its north eastern and south western boundaries) provided some suitability for foraging and commuting bats with links via hedgerows and roadside vegetation, to woodland south and east of the site. Linear habitat outside the Site boundary, particularly vegetation associated with Stead Lane further east provided greater suitability for bats.

Transect Survey

4.30 Figure 3 provides results of the August transect survey. Bats recorded were associated with the north eastern boundary hedgerows and suitable habitat at the Sheffield Road verge. The survey started at 20:29 and ended at 22:29. Between 20:49 and 21:01 activity at the north eastern boundary was of a commuting common pipistrelle and continuous foraging from both common and soprano pipistelles *Pipistrellus pygmaeus*. Activity at the boundary with Sheffield Road was recorded from 21:32 to 22:26 and was mostly from common pipistrelle bats including commuting and continuous foraging. Five contacts from commuting noctule *Nyctalus sp* and soprano pipistrelle were also recorded along this boundary. Activity from common pipistrelle bats accounted for the majority of bat activity.

Static Survey

4.31 The single static was located close to Sheffield Road verge at the boundary between the grassland field and arable habitat (See Figure 3). The data summarised below is broadly consistent with transect data in showing that common pipistrelle bats dominate the recorded activity and soprano pipistrelle are the next most recorded species though accounting for only about 5% of total registrations. Species considered more sensitive to artificial light, Myotis species and brown long-eared bats were less well represented and made up about 1% and 0.3% of registrations respectively. Total registrations of just over 300 for five nights in summer is considered a low level of activity and is likely to reflect the limited suitability of the broken line of scrub and tree cover at the boundary with Sheffield Road.

Table 2: Static Data Summary - Summer

Species	**No. Registrations**	**%**
Common Pipistrelle	650	90.028%
Soprano Pipistrelle	36	4.986%
Pipistrelle Species	16	2.216%
Myotis Species	7	0.970%
Nyctalus Species	6	0.831%
Noctule	5	0.693%
Brown Long-eared	2	0.277%
Total	**722**	

5.0 DISCUSSION & RECOMMENDATIONS

Statutory Designations

5.1 Potter Holes LNR and Elsecar Reservoir LNR are 1.5km and 1.6km from the site respectively and designated for semi-natural woodland and wetland. Given the distance from the proposed development and lack of similar habitats within the site proposals are not considered likely to significantly impact these designations.

5.2 Proposals for recreation facilities on the site are not likely cause an increase in recreation pressure at these LNRs.

Non-statutory Designations

5.3 Losses of grassland and arable are not considered likely to impact the ancient semi-natural woodland of Skier's Spring Wood LWS, which is 550m from the proposed development. Native hedgerow and broadleaved trees will be largely retained at the site boundaries, particularly those at the north eastern boundary with connectivity to the LWS

5.4 Given the proposals are for recreation facilities it is not at all likely they will lead to an increase in recreation to Skier's Wood LWS.

Habitats/Flora

5.5 The degree to which habitats receive consideration within the planning system relies on a number of mechanisms, including:

- Inclusion within specific policy (e.g. veteran trees, ancient woodland and linear habitats in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) or non-statutory site designation,
- Identification as a habitat of principal importance for biodiversity under Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act (NERC) 2006 or identification as a Priority Habitat on the local Biodiversity Action Plan (LBAP).

5.6 The small section of arable field within the Site supported no field margins and is considered to be of negligible ecological value. The grassland and scrub habitats were dominated by common and widespread species and considered to be of low biodiversity value.

5.7 Habitat creation proposed as part of the green infrastructure scheme, including species-rich grassland will provide compensation such that significant impacts to local wildlife are not considered likely.

5.8 Several stands of Japanese knotweed, a plant listed on Schedule 9 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) were recorded at the north site boundary. To avoid committing an offence under the above act it is recommended that the plant be subject to treatment and removal by a licenced and experienced specialist contractor to prevent its spread as an unintended result of proposed works.

5.9 All the boundary hedgerows are native species dominant and therefore of principle importance under S41 (NERC Act) habitat although they are not considered to represent particularly good examples of the habitat. All boundary hedgerows will be retained as part of the proposals, including their associated trees. All should be protected from development works by suitable barriers in

accordance with BS5837 as set out in the associated Arboricultural Assessment[8]. It is recommended that existing gaps between hedgerows be filled where feasible within the design with additional species-rich hedgerow planting.

5.10 To avoid indirect harm to retained habitats and the soils of areas proposed for new habitat creation site contractors will be guided by the following Guidance for Pollution Prevention[9] (GPP) best practice:

- GPP 21: Pollution incident response planning; and
- GPP 22: Dealing with spills;
- GPP 4: Treatment and disposal of wastewater where there is no connection to the public foul sewer;
- GPP 13: Vehicle washing and cleaning;
- GPP 19: Vehicles: Servicing and Repairs;

Protected/Notable Species

5.11 Consideration was given throughout the survey to the potential presence of protected species. Principal pieces of legislation protecting wild species to be considered are Part 1 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) (WCA) and the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (Habitats Regulations). Some species, for example badgers, also have their own protective legislation (Protection of Badger Act 1992) and are also considered. The impact that this legislation has on the Planning system is outlined in ODPM 06/2005 Government Circular: Biodiversity and Geological Conservation – Statutory obligations and their Impact within the Planning System.

5.12 This guidance states that as the presence of protected species is a material consideration in any planning decision, the presence or otherwise of protected species, and the extent to which they are affected by proposals is established prior to planning permission being granted. Furthermore, where protected species are present and proposals may result in harm to the species or its habitat, steps should be taken to ensure the long-term protection of the species.

5.13 In addition to protected species, those of principal importance for the purpose of conserving biodiversity under the NERC Act 2006 (previously UK BAP priority species) should also be considered. These are recognised in the NPPF which advises that when determining planning applications, LPA's should aim to conserve and enhance biodiversity by applying a set of principles including:

- If significant harm resulting from a development cannot be avoided……, adequately mitigated, or, as a last resort, compensated for, then planning permission should be refused;
- Development proposals where the primary objective is to conserve or enhance biodiversity should be encouraged.

5.14 The implications that various identified species or those that are thought reasonably likely to occur (or where their presence cannot at this stage be entirely ruled out) may have for development of the site are outlined below:

[8] FPCR Environment and Design Ltd (2020) *Parkside Hoyland – Arboricultural Assessment*. For Newlands Developments.
[9] Cedrec – legislation made simple. www.cedrec.com/news/index.htm?news_id=26159. [accessed 12.05.20].

Reptiles

5.15 All common reptile species are partially protected under Sections 9(1) and 9(5) of Schedule 5 of the WCA. This legislation includes protection from intentional killing or injury.

5.16 The Site supports some limited potential for reptiles largely associated with bramble scrub and some stone heaps at the south western boundary and one discrete area within the arable field section. Suitability at the south western boundary has some connectivity with suitable habitat within woodland to the south. Targeted reptile survey was undertaken in 2020 for an associated planning application (ref. 2020/0647) on Land West of Sheffield Road, Hoyland. A single grass snake was recorded at an arable field boundary west of the proposed site (separated by Sheffield Road). No reptile records have been returned in the consultation data for the vicinity of the Site.

5.17 The limited suitable habitat to be lost at the south western boundary will be subject to removal in accordance with best practice to minimise harm to any reptiles should they be present. This would include:

- Passive displacement shall only be undertaken during suitable weather conditions, i.e: daytime temperature 18^{o}C or higher, within the reptile active season (mid-March to mid-October)
- Grassland will first be strimmed directionally to a height of 100mm and 1-2 hours later it will be reduced to 50mm. Hedgerow/scrub will be cleared in the same way. All strimming will be carried out from the centre of the working areas towards the retained areas of habitat.
- All arisings will be completely removed from the working area to prevent potential areas of refugia from being used by reptiles moving across the area.
- Further operations will only continue once common reptile species have been confirmed to be absent from the working area by the supervising ecologist immediately prior to any ground works.

5.18 The above process would be supervised by an ecologist and where suitability for sheltering/hibernating reptiles, such as stone heaps (including those within the arable field, should they be lost or further isolated), are present these will be hand search by the ecologist before vegetation removal continues. In the event a reptile is found it will be carefully removed to suitable habitat adjacent the site.

Badgers

5.19 No evidence of badgers was recorded within the site or adjacent its boundaries and no records of this species were returned within the search area. Badgers are not considered to represent a constraint to development.

Birds

5.20 A suite of winter and breeding bird surveys undertaken on more extensive arable, grassland and hedgerow habitats in 2019/20 on land the other side of Sheffield Road (Land West of Sheffield Road, Hoyland planning ref. 2020/0647). Habitats there supported more extensive dense and mature hedgerows, mature scrub (although mostly not associated with road verges) and larger open fields. The boundary features were recorded to support breeding farmland specialists and

Birds of Conservation Concern (BoCC) Red List[10] species, yellowhammer *Emberiza Citrinella* and linnet *Carduelis cannabina*. Central field compartments supported more limited suitability for the species recorded including BoCC Amber and Red List species dunnock *Prunella modularis*, house sparrow *Passer domesticus*, song thrush *Turdus philomelos* and starling *Sturnus vulgaris*. Ground nesting species skylark *Alauda arvensis* and lapwing *Vanellus vanellus* (both on BoCC Red List) were recorded breeding at field centres west of Sheffield Road.

5.21 The proposed development site east of Sheffield Road supports a more limited extent of boundary hedgerow and scrub. All hedgerow habitat, including the more structurally diverse examples (supporting mature trees) at the north eastern boundary will be retained. The existing grassland field at the centre of the proposed Site is considered largely unsuitable for ground nesting birds such as skylark and lapwing due to regular disturbance from dog walkers.

5.22 While some suitable bird nesting habitat at the south western boundary will be lost to proposals the outline green infrastructure proposals include new native scrub, tree and hedgerow planting to compensate for these losses. Species-rich wildflower grassland for creation in association with proposed sports pitches and new native scrub will retain interest for species such as house sparrow, starling, dunnock and song thrush within the proposed site.

5.23 The farmland west of Sheffield Road was found to provide overwintering and foraging opportunities for a variety common and widespread generalist species including flocks of thrushes, black-headed gull and corvids as well as low numbers of farmland specialists mentioned above. Existing residential (north of the new proposed site) was also noted to provide overwintering habitat for starling and house sparrow. The proposed site east of Sheffield Road provides some of the same habitats with a restricted extent of grassland and new scrub planting, so while a similar species assemblage may be expected populations would be more reliant on habitats in the surrounding countryside including arable, woodland and hedgerows to the south.

5.24 Proposals are not expected to have a significant impact on local bird populations and while suitability for some birds such as yellowhammer would be lost, the proposals will provide enhancement for other notable birds recorded in the local area such as starling, house sparrow and song thrush.

5.25 All nesting birds are protected under the WCA. Any removal of woody vegetation including hedgerow, scrub and trees should therefore occur outside of the bird breeding season (March to August inclusive) to minimise the risk of disturbance to nesting birds. If this is not possible such vegetation should be checked prior to removal by a suitably experienced ecologist. If active nests are found, vegetation will be left untouched and suitably buffered from works until all birds have fledged. Specific advice should be sought prior to undertaking the clearance.

Great Crested Newts

5.26 Suitable breeding habitat was absent from the site and its vicinities. Targeted GCN survey in spring 2020 on ponds west of Sheffield Road (Land West of Sheffield Road, Hoyland planning ref. 2020/0647) found GCN to be absent and therefore they are considered reasonably unlikely to be present at the proposed development site and do not represent a constraint.

[10] Eaton MA, Aebischer N, Brown A, Hearn R, Lock L, Musgrove A, Noble D, Stroud D and Gregory RD (2016) Birds of Conservation Concern 4: the population status of birds in the United Kingdom, Channel Islands and the Isle of Man. British Birds 108, pp708-746

Bats

5.27 A single bat potential tree (T1) was identified at the north eastern site boundary and will be retained under the proposals and habitat connectivity maintained. If plans change and the tree is to be lost or otherwise impacted (through isolation) then further survey such as aerial inspection would be recommended.

5.28 A single transect and static survey recorded generally low levels of bat activity considered unremarkable for the summer period and reflect the limited suitability of the habitats present. Activity from common pipistrelles dominated, findings which are consistent with monthly survey results from similar habitat west of Sheffield Road (Land West of Sheffield Road, Hoyland planning ref. 2020/0647). For comparison transect surveys undertaken in May, June and July over arable and grassland fields west of Sheffield Road recorded similar levels of activity associated with boundary hedgerows and woodland with activity also dominated by common pipistrelles.

5.29 Under the proposal's loss will be sustained to scrub and trees cover adjacent the existing Sheffield Road to provide a new link road. All the hedgerows and other mature tree cover at the north and north eastern boundaries will be retained with connectivity via offsite hedgerows to woodland south of the Site and proposed native planting will provide additional suitability for bats.

5.30 Proposed scheme should have regard to best practice industry guidance (BCT, 2018[11]) for lighting including:

- Reducing height of lighting columns;
- Placing lighting away from areas of interest, such as woodland edge;
- Use of directional lighting;
- Limiting lighting proposals to the minimum required;
- Having lights not operational when not required; and
- Use of white rather than yellow lighting.

5.31 The proposed link road will be created to adoptable road standards with the potential to cause severance of connective habitat going south beside Sheffield Road, including through artificial lighting. Proposals should have regard to above best practice lighting guidance. It is also recommended that structural planting is provided to screen roadside lighting from the proposed site and limit light spill onto retained and new green infrastructure.

5.32 Provided the above recommendations are implemented and suitable bat foraging and commuting habitat is maintained the proposals are not considered likely to have a significant impact of local bat populations.

[11] Bat Conservation Trust and Institute of Lighting Professionals (2018) *Guidance Note 08/18 Bats and artificial lighting in the UK – Bats and the Built Environment series*. Institute of Lighting Professionals

Recommendations for Site Design

5.33 Detailed site design will provide a corridor of green infrastructure through the sports facilities and around its northern and north eastern boundary. Proposed habitats should include the following:

- Native scrub block planting supporting at least five species per planting at appropriate locations fringing the retained and new boundary habitats and sports infrastructure.
- Species-rich wildflower grassland managed to varying heights to provide a graded edge with new scrub and retained hedgerows.
- Dense structural buffer planting to screen roadside lighting as necessary from other green infrastructure.
- Native hedgerows supporting at least five shrub species per 30m section
- Consideration of wildlife pond creation planted with native emergent and submerged species to bring additional wildlife value.

5.34 Hedgehogs have been recorded within the vicinity of the site and to ensure suitable habitats including species-rich grassland, scrub and hedgerows are accessible to them any fencing proposed that would otherwise block access to these habitats should be provided with suitable access holes at least 13cm x 13cm.

5.35 Provision of long-term wildlife sensitive management of the above green infrastructure would be recommended such as may be detailed in an appropriately worded condition to secure wildlife benefits.

Appendix A: Botanical Species Lists (Key: D – dominant, A – abundant, F – frequent, O – occasional, R – rare, L – local, P - present)

Common Name	Scientific Name	SI Grassland Field	SI Grassland Verge
Annual Meadow-grass	Poa annua	R	-
Autumnal Hawkbit	Leontodon autumnalis	-	O
Broad-leaved Dock	Rumex obtusifolius	R	-
Cock's-foot	Dactylis glomerata	R	R
Common Bent	Agrostis capillaris	R	-
Common Bird's-foot-trefoil	Lotus corniculatus	-	R
Common Knapweed	Centaurea nigra	R	O
Common Mouse-ear	Cerastium fontanum	R	-
Common Ragwort	Senecio jacobaea	R	R
Common Sorrel	Rumex acetosa	O	-
Common Vetch	Vicia sativa	-	R
Cow Parsley	Anthriscus sylvestris	R	-
Creeping Bent	Agrostis stolonifera	D	-
Creeping Buttercup	Ranunculus repens	R	-
Creeping Cinquefoil	Potentilla reptans	-	O
Creeping Thistle	Cirsium arvense	-	R
Dandelion	Taraxacum officinale agg.	R	-
False Oat-grass	Arrhenatherum elatius	R	R
Greater Plantain	Plantago major	R	-
Groundsel	Senecio vulgaris	-	R
Hogweed	Heracleum sphondylium	-	R
Hop Trefoil	Trifolium campestre	-	R
Lady's Bedstraw	Galium verum	-	R
Lesser Stitchwort	Stellaria graminea	O	-
Meadow Buttercup	Ranunculus acris	O	-
Meadow Foxtail	Alopecurus pratensis	R	-
Mugwort	Artemisia vulgaris	-	R
Oxeye Daisy	Leucanthemum vulgare	-	F
Perennial Rye-grass	Lolium perenne	F	O
Red Fescue	Festuca rubra agg.	O	O
Ribwort Plantain	Plantago lanceolata	R	F
Rough Meadow-grass	Poa trivialis	R	-
Smooth Sow-thistle	Sonchus oleraceus	-	R
Spear Thistle	Cirsium vulgare	R	R

Common Name	Scientific Name	SI Grassland Field	SI Grassland Verge
Timothy	Phleum pratense sens.lat.	R	-
White Clover	Trifolium repens	R	-
Yarrow	Achillea millefolium	R	F
Yorkshire-fog	Holcus lanatus	D	-

Common Name	Scientific Name	H1	H2	H3	H4
a cotoneaster	Cotoneaster sp.	-	R	-	-
Ash	Fraxinus excelsior	-	R	R	-
Box-leaved Honeysuckle	Lonicera pileata	-	O	-	-
Elder	Sambucus nigra	-	R	-	R
Hawthorn	Crataegus monogyna	D	D	D	D
Holly	Ilex aquifolium	R	-	-	-
Pedunculate Oak	Quercus robur	-	-	R	-
Silver Birch	Betula pendula	-	-	R	-
Snowberry	Symphoricarpos albus	-	O	-	-
An Elm	Ulmus sp.	-	R	-	-

Appendix B: Photographs

Photograph 1: SI grassland Field

Photograph 2: SI grassland verge

Photograph 3: Trees in grassland boundary at Sheffield Road

Photograph 4: Tree T1

Key

- Site Boundary
- 1KM Buffer
- 2KM Buffer

Designated sites

- Local Wildlife Sites (LWS)
- Local Nature Reserves (LNR)

Bats

- Common pipistrelle
- Pipistrelle sp.
- Brown long-eared bat
- Unidentified Bat Sp.

Mammals

- Hedgehog

Invertebrates

- White-letter Hairstreak
- Dingy Skipper

Amphibians

- Great Crested Newt

Birds

- Blackbird
- Bullfinch
- Dunnock
- Fieldfare
- Goldfinch
- Green Woodpecker
- Grey Wagtail
- House Martin
- House Sparrow
- Indet. Sparrow
- Kestrel
- Mistle Thrush
- Song Thrush
- Starling
- Swallow
- Swift
- Willow Tit
- Yellowhammer

client
Newlands Developments

project
Parkside,
Hoyland

drawing title
SITE LOCATION & CONSULTATION RESULTS

scale 1:17000 | drawn HJF / AWB | issue 1/9/2020

drawing / figure number **Figure 1** | rev

FPCR Environment and Design Ltd, Lockington Hall, Lockington, Derby, DE74 2RH ■ t:01509 672 772 ■ f:01509 674 565 ■ e: mail@fpcr.co.uk ■ w: www.fpcr.co.uk

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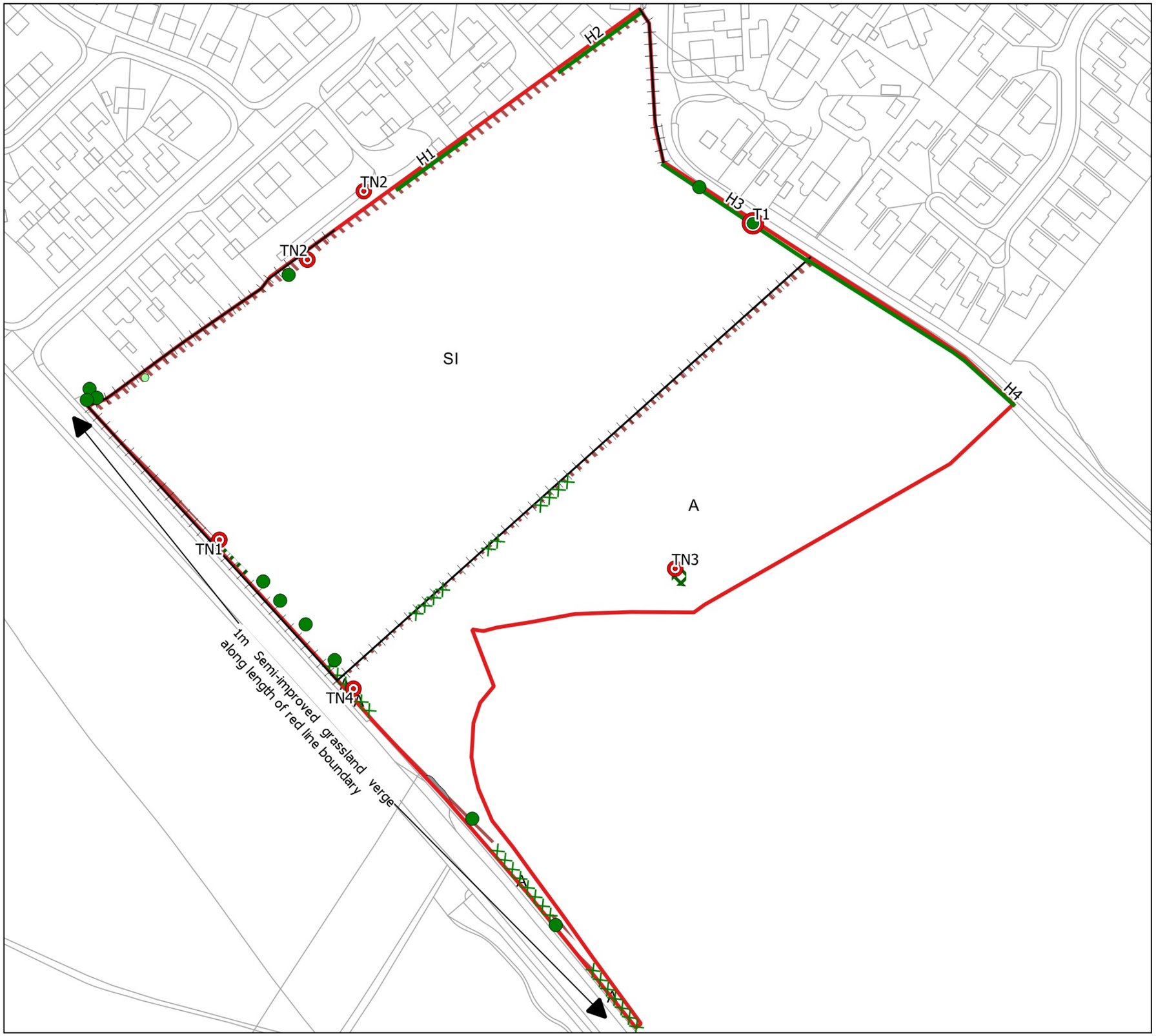
Key

- Site Boundary

Habitats

- Built Environment: Buildings/hardstanding
- A Cultivated/disturbed land - arable
- Other tall herb and fern - ruderal
- SI Poor semi-improved grassland
- Scrub - dense/continuous
- Hedgerow
- Fence
- Scrub - scattered
- Tree with bat potential
- Target note (with ref)
- coniferous trees
- Broadleaved tree



client
Newlands Developments

project
Parkside,
Hoyland

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PHASE 1 HABITAT PLAN

scale @ A3
1:1500

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Figure 2

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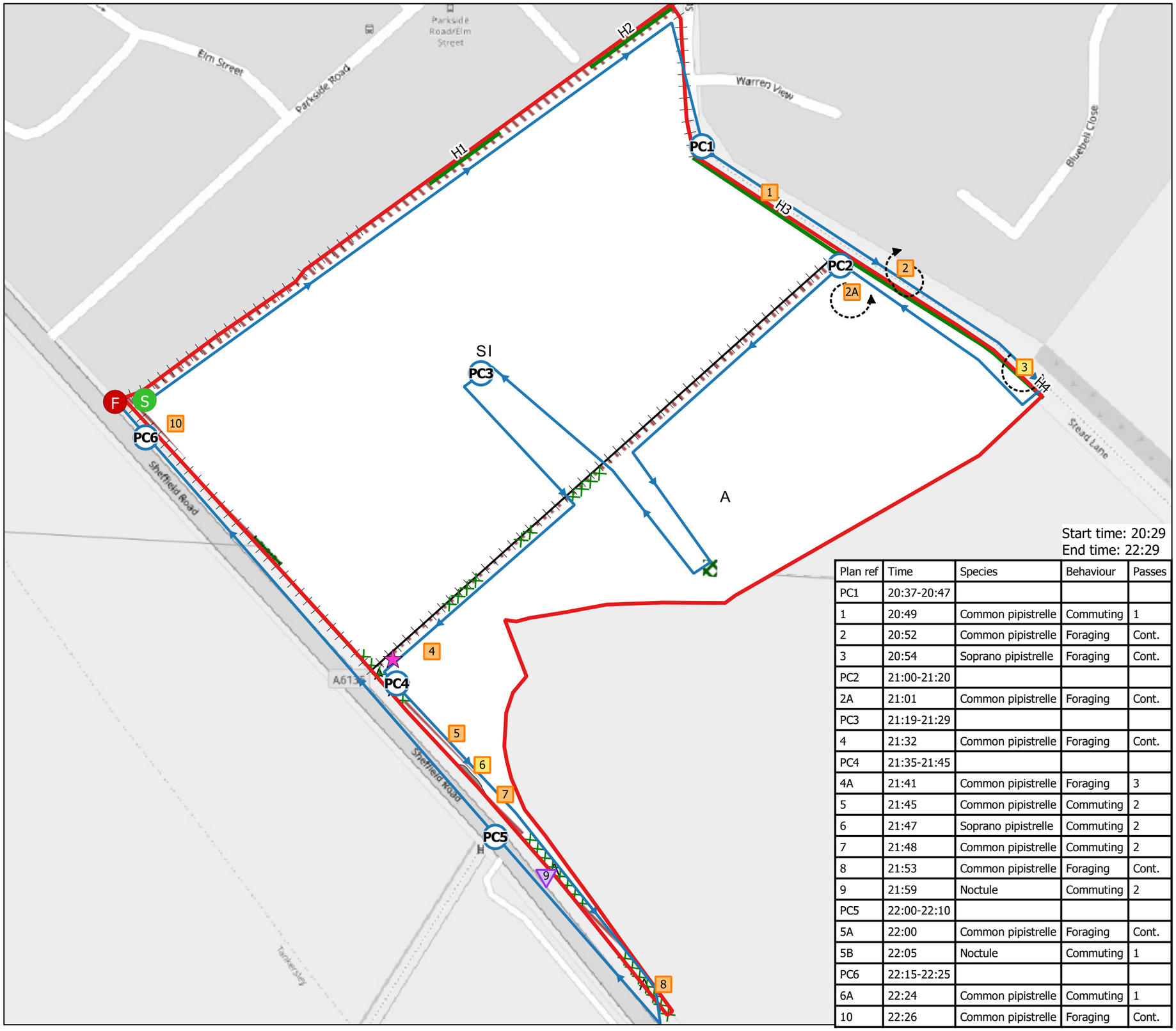

Start time: 20:29
End time: 22:29

Plan ref	Time	Species	Behaviour	Passes
PC1	20:37-20:47			
1	20:49	Common pipistrelle	Commuting	1
2	20:52	Common pipistrelle	Foraging	Cont.
3	20:54	Soprano pipistrelle	Foraging	Cont.
PC2	21:00-21:20			
2A	21:01	Common pipistrelle	Foraging	Cont.
PC3	21:19-21:29			
4	21:32	Common pipistrelle	Foraging	Cont.
PC4	21:35-21:45			
4A	21:41	Common pipistrelle	Foraging	3
5	21:45	Common pipistrelle	Commuting	2
6	21:47	Soprano pipistrelle	Commuting	2
7	21:48	Common pipistrelle	Commuting	2
8	21:53	Common pipistrelle	Foraging	Cont.
9	21:59	Noctule	Commuting	2
PC5	22:00-22:10			
5A	22:00	Common pipistrelle	Foraging	Cont.
5B	22:05	Noctule	Commuting	1
PC6	22:15-22:25			
6A	22:24	Common pipistrelle	Commuting	1
10	22:26	Common pipistrelle	Foraging	Cont.

Key:

- Site Boundary
- Flight Arrow
- Start point
- Finish point
- Point Count Locations (with ref.)
- Transect Route
- Static Detector Location

Bat Contacts (with ref.)

- Common Pipistrelle
- Soprano Pipistrelle
- Noctule

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client
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project
Land West of Sheffield Road, Hovland

drawing title
BAT TRANSECT AND STATIC DETECTOR LOCATION PLAN (18/08/20)

scale @ A3 1:1500 | drawn AMS | issue 20/8/2020

drawing / figure number **Figure 3** | rev **9295**

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