Whitcher Wildlife Ltd.
Ecological Consultants.

HOPTON FARM, SHAFTON.

MAP REF: SE 39169 11137

PRELIMINARY ECOLOGICAL APPRAISAL.

Ref No: **240409/3.**

Date: **14th May 2025.**

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TABLE OF CONTENTS.

1. INTRODUCTION.

1.1. An outline planning application is to be submitted for the development of the site at Hopton Farm, Shafton.

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

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

1.4. The initial site survey was carried out on 10th April 2024 and a dusk emergence survey on 10th July 2024. This report outlines the findings of those surveys and makes appropriate recommendations.

1.5. Appendices I to III of this report provides additional information on specific species and are designed to assist the reader in understanding the contents of this report.

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2. SURVEY METHODOLOGY.

2.1. Prior to visiting the site, the survey area was cross referenced to maps and aerial photographs to give a general idea of the habitats and potential issues within the area and to identify potential access and walking routes.

2.2. The survey area was walked where access was agreed and public rights of way were used where no access was agreed. All habitats within and immediately around the survey area were documented and the dominant species within that habitat listed in line with the UK Habitat Classification methodology to identify the broad habitat types throughout the survey area.

2.3. The survey area and immediate surrounding area was thoroughly searched for evidence of badger (*Meles meles*) activity by looking for the following signs in line with Harris S, Cresswell P and Jefferies D (1989). *Surveying Badgers*. Mammal Society: -

* Badger setts.
* Badger latrines or dung pits.
* Badger snuffle holes and evidence of foraging.
* Badger paths.
* Badger prints in areas of soft mud.
* Badger hairs caught on fencing.

2.4. The survey area was searched for watercourses and where found all watercourses within the survey area and for approximately 50m in each direction were thoroughly searched for evidence of water vole (*Arvicola amphibius*) activity by looking for the following signs, in line with Rob Strachan, Tom Moorhouse and Merryl Gelling (2011). *Water Vole Handbook: Third Edition*: -

* Water vole burrows.
* Water vole faeces and latrines.
* Water vole feeding stations.
* Water vole runs.
* Water vole prints in areas of soft mud.
* Water vole lawns.
* Predator field signs.

2.5. The survey area was searched for watercourses and where found all watercourses within the survey area and for approximately 50m in each direction were thoroughly searched for evidence of otter (*Lutra lutra*) activity by looking for the following signs

in line with the P Chanin (2003). *Monitoring the Otter* and *Conserving Natura 2000 Rivers: Monitoring Series No10 Guidelines: -*

* Otter prints in soft mud.
* Otter spraints.
* Otter Holts.

2.6. The survey area was searched for watercourses and waterbodies. Where found, and where safe to enter the water, all were thoroughly searched for the presence of crayfish, for approximately 50m in each direction of the site, by searching under rocks and logs. Where stated, crayfish traps were also deployed into the watercourse. All survey work was carried out in accordance with the *Conserving Natural 2000 Rivers Monitoring Series No 1, Protocol for Monitoring the White Clawed Crayfish*.

2.7. The survey area was searched for mature trees and derelict buildings and where found these were checked for potential bat roosting sites in line with Collins, J. (ed.) (2023) *Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines (4th edition)* by looking for the following signs: -

* Holes, cracks or crevices.
* Bat Droppings.

2.8. The land immediately adjacent to the survey area was assessed for bat roosting potential and bat foraging potential. Connective routes and flight lines were also assessed whilst on site and using maps of the area.

2.9. The area within 500m of the survey site was cross referenced to maps to highlight all ponds close to the site. Where possible, all ponds identified were accessed using agreed access or public rights of way to assess the potential for great crested newts (*Triturus cristatus*) to be present.

2.10. The survey area was assessed for the potential for reptiles and suitable reptile habitats. Where applicable the area was also searched for the presence of reptiles.

2.11. Where appropriate, the habitat within and surrounding the survey area was searched for species such as hazel, oak, honeysuckle, bramble and other species which may provide potential habitat for hazel dormice (*Muscardinus avellanarius*). Field signs such as feeding remains and nests were also searched for where possible, in line with P Bright, P Morris and T Mitchell-Jones *the Dormouse Conservation Handbook 2nd Edition*.

2.12. Where appropriate, the area within and surrounding the survey area was assessed for its potential to house habitat for red squirrels. Field signs of red squirrels were searched for at least every 50m, looking for any dreys, feeding signs or sightings of red squirrels.

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

2.14. This document is prepared in line with The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). This sets out the government policy on biodiversity and nature conservation and places a duty on Planning Authorities to give material consideration to the effect of a development on legally protected species when considering planning applications. The NPPF and the Planning Practice Guidance on "Natural Environment" also promote sustainable development by ensuring that developments take account of the role and value of biodiversity and that it is conserved and enhanced within the development.

2.15. This report is prepared in line with the Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act that came into force on 1st Oct 2006. Section 41 (S41) of the Act requires the Secretary of State to publish a list of habitats and species which are of principal importance for the conservation of biodiversity in England.

2.16. This survey was caried out by Derek Whitcher who has over twenty years' experience of surveying for wildlife and has run his own wildlife consultancy since 1998. He has extensive experience of a wide variety of survey techniques for a variety of species of protected wildlife supplemented by attendance on a wide range of training courses through CIEEM, FSC and BCT. As a member of CIEEM he is committed to continuous professional development, a continual process of learning and career development, a condition of CIEEM membership. He holds current Natural England survey licences for barn owl, bat, great crested newt and white clawed crayfish.

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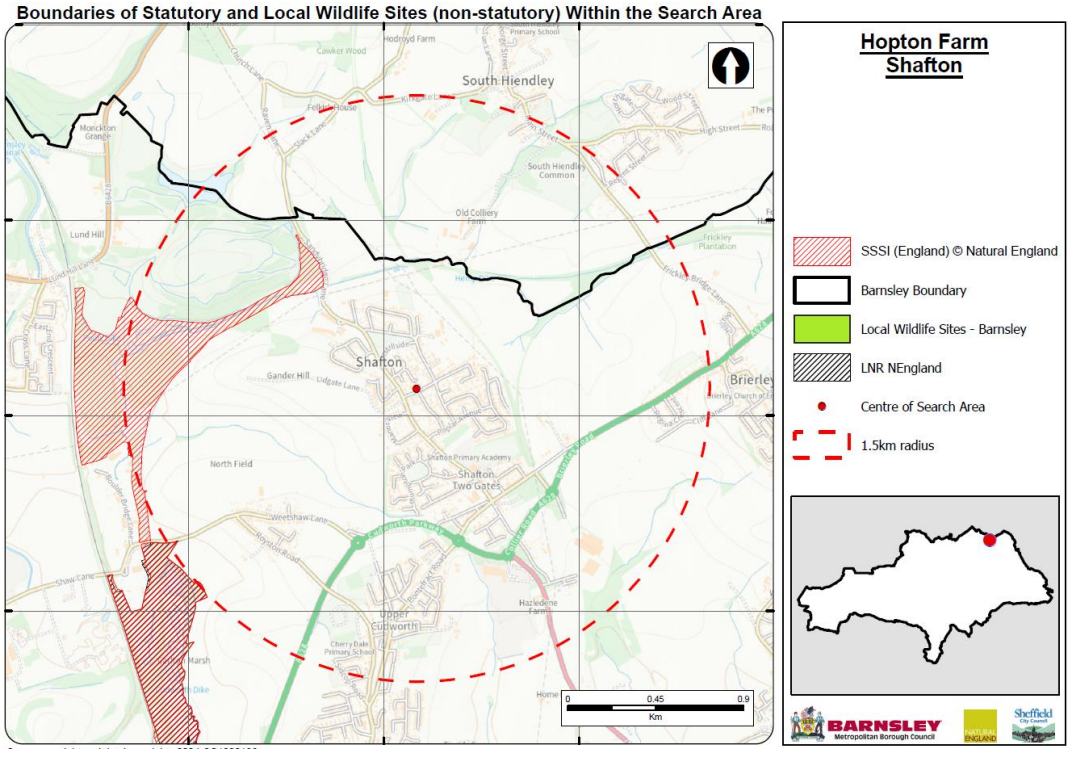
3. SURVEY RESULTS.

3.1. Data Search Results.

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

3.1.2. The map below shows the location of the designated sites within 1.5km of the survey area.



3.1.3. There is one SSSI, part of the Dearne Valley Wetlands SSSI to the west of the survey area but there are no local designated sites in the search area.

3.1.4. The survey area lies within an SSSI Impact Risk Zone, but the development does not fall within the categories of development where Natural England need to be consulted.

3.1.5. The records include great crested newt records on Rabbit Ings, in excess of 800m to the northwest of the search area with a residential area between.

3.1.6. There are abundant bird, insect and reptile records, but these are primarily from within the SSSI and Rabbit Ings.

3.1.7. Likewise, there are small numbers of bat records in the same areas. There are no records of these species close to the survey area.

3.1.8. The data search results from South Yorkshire Bat Group are predominantly on Carlton March Nature Reserve. The only significant roost record is a roost of 57 unspecified bats 1.46km from the survey area.

3.1.9. Consultation with the badger group identified no sett records in the area surrounding the site.

3.1.10. A copy of the data search results is available on request but must not be placed in the public domain.

3.2. The Surveyed Area.

3.2.1. The aerial photograph below shows the location of the site marked with a red arrow and the surrounding area. The site lies within the residential area of Shafton.

3.2.2. The site comprises a house, barns and outbuildings and an old farm complex on Chapel Street, Shafton, as shown shaded in yellow on the map below.

3.3. Description of Habitats.

3.3.1. Appendix IV of this report contains an annotated map marked up with the varying habitats that are on the site. The primary habitats on and adjacent to the site are: -

- u1b – Developed land, sealed surface including buildings.
- g4 – Modified grassland.
- h3h – Mixed scrub.
- u1e – Built linear feature – fence.
- u1e – Built linear feature – wall.

3.3.2. Biodiversity calculations have been undertaken using the Statutory Biodiversity Metric 4.0, Small Sites Metric. This automatically assesses condition assessments.

3.3.3. u1b –Developed Land, Sealed Surface.

The main area of the site comprises the house and a series of barns and outbuildings with hard surfaced yards between. The photographs below show the buildings and hard standings and these are dealt with in more detail later in this report.

3.3.4. g4 – Modified grassland.

Secondary Code: 201 young, planted tree.

3.3.4.1. There are two areas of lawn present on the site, shown in the photographs below. Species present include predominantly managed grassland species including perennial ryegrass (*Lolium perenne*), common bent (*Agrostis capillaris*), fescue (*Festuca* sp.), with common daisy (*Bellis perennis*), dandelion (*Taraxacum officinale*), creeping buttercup (*Ranunculus repens*), cleavers (*Galium aparine*), chickweed (*Stellaria media*), cow parsley (*Anthriscus sylvestris*) and ribwort plantain (*Plantago lanceolata*).

3.3.4.2. Within the front lawn there is a cherry plum (*Prunus cerasifera*) tree growing, secondary coded 201 for a young, planted tree.

3.3.5. h3h – Mixed Scrub

Behind the garage, in the northwest corner of the survey area, there is an area of mixed scrub. Species present include holly (*Ilex aquifolium*), elder (*Sambucus nigra*), bramble (*Rubus fruticosus*), cherry plum (*Prunus cerasifera*), gooseberry (*Ribes uva-crispa),* forget me not (*Myosotis spp*.), nettle (*Urtica dioica*), cleavers (*Galium aparine*), dandelion (*Taraxacum officinale*) and fools parsley (*Aethusa cynapiu*). There is also a mature ash tree growing on the site boundary, but this is assumed to belong to the neighbour and is therefore not included within the Biodiversity calculations.


3.3.6. u1e - Built Linear Feature

Secondary Codes: 612 Fence, 853 wall.

3.3.6.1. There are timber fences along the western site boundary and around the rear lawned area.

3.3.6.2. There are stone walls on the northern and southern site boundaries.


3.4. Description of Fauna.

3.4.1. No badger setts or field signs were identified anywhere on the site and there are no records of badger setts within 2km of the survey area.

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

3.4.3. There are no ponds close to the site to provide habitat for great crested newts. The closest great crested newts in the data search results are in excess of 800m from the site with barriers to movement in between.

3.4.4. There are a number of buildings present on the site. The position of each of these is shown below and each of these were assessed for bat roost potential separately below.

3.4.4.1. A, The House.

3.4.4.1.1. The existing house is a detached dwelling with a stone front wall to the roadside and with stone walls that are rendered and painted cream on all other sides. The roof is pitched with gable end walls and is covered with slates.

3.4.4.1.2. There is a single storey extension on the northern end with a mono-pitched roof also covered with slates and a single storey sun lounge on the end of that.

3.4.4.1.3. There was no internal access to this building during this initial survey.

3.4.4.1.4. Occasional slipped slates were present on the roof and on the western gable of the house an area of rendering had come loose and was hanging, providing a potential roost opportunity.

3.4.4.1.5. The house was therefore assessed in accordance with the Bat Conservation Trust Good Practice Guidelines to have a Low potential for roosting bats.

3.4.4.2. Outbuilding B.

3.4.4.2.1. Outbuilding B is a single storey storage shed. The walls are constructed from brick with a timber panel on the gable end wall and the roof is pitched and covered with interlocking concrete tiles.

3.4.4.2.2. The walls and the roof of the building were fairly sound with no cracks or gaps in the walls and no slipped or missing tiles to provide opportunities for roosting bats.

3.4.4.2.3. Internally the building was open, there was a felt lining under the tiles although there were occasional tears in that felt.

3.4.4.2.4. No bats or bat field signs were found inside or outside this building and the building was assessed to have negligible potential for roosting bats in accordance with the Bat Conservation Trust, Good Practice Guidelines.

3.4.4.3. Outbuilding C.

3.4.4.3.1. Outbuilding C is a single storey storage shed. The walls are constructed from stone and the roof is pitched and covered with interlocking concrete tiles.

3.4.4.3.2. There were no gaps, cracks or crevices in the external walls and all interlocking roof tiles were in position. There were no external bat roosting opportunities and no bats or bat field signs were found.

3.4.4.3.3. There was no internal access to this building during the survey.

3.4.4.3.4. This building was assessed to have negligible potential for roosting bats in accordance with the Bat Conservation Trust, Good Practice Guidelines.

3.4.4.4. Barn D.

3.4.4.4.1. Barn D is a large, two-storey barn with stone walls on all sides except the western wall and that is brick. The front of the barn is exposed while the rear or northern wall is internal to Barn E. This is all shown in the four photos below.

3.4.4.4.2. The roof is pitched and covered with flat concrete tiles. These are all in place and in good condition.

3.4.4.4.3. On the northern side of the building, inside Barn E, there is a set of steps leading to the western end of the upper floor of Barn D. There are no windows, so the barn is open to the elements. The roof is lined with a felt lining beneath the tiles.

3.4.4.4.4. No bats or bat field signs were found in the western end of the barn but access to the eastern end is through a door that is obstructed by stored materials that prevent access.

3.4.4.4.5. As there are open windows providing access into the barn and as it cannot be fully inspected, Barn D was assessed to have a Low potential for roosting bats in accordance with the Bat Conservation Trust, Good Practice Guidelines.

3.4.4.5. Barn E.

3.4.4.5.1. Barn E is a large, Dutch barn with blockwork lower walls and with corrugated cement sheet cladding above.

3.4.4.5.2. The roof is pitched and comprises a metal frame and corrugated cement sheet cladding.

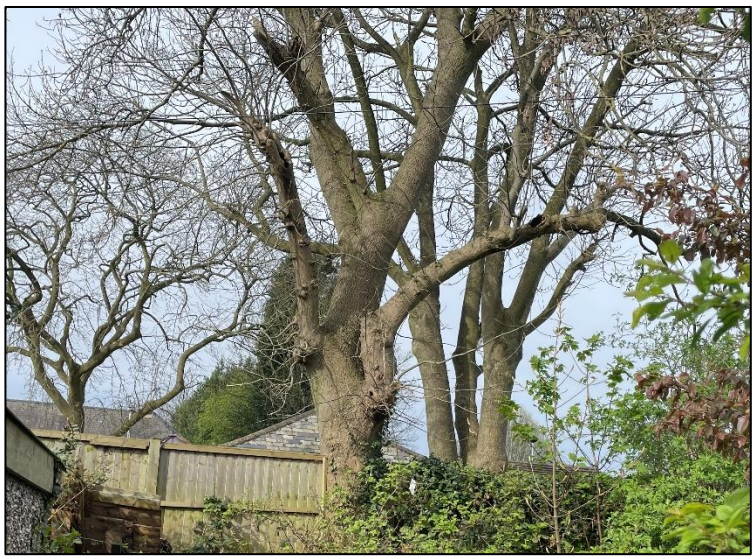
3.4.4.5.3. Barn E is unsuitable for roosting bats and was therefore assessed to have a negligible potential for roosting bats in accordance with the Bat Conservation Trust, Good Practice Guidelines.

3.4.4.6. Garage F.

3.4.4.6.1. Garage F is a standard, prefabricated garage as shown below.

3.4.4.6.2. The garage is totally unsuitable for roosting bats and was assessed to have negligible potential for roosting bats in accordance with the Bat Conservation Trust, Good Practice Guidelines.

3.4.5. There were no trees on the site that could provide potential roost features for bats. There is one ash tree in the northwestern corner of the survey area within the fence line that does have holes that provide opportunities for roosting bats. The photographs below show one such hole.



3.4.6. There are no wildlife corridors across the site that would provide commuting or foraging routes for bats. The surrounding area is residential with occasional scattered trees that is assessed to be low value foraging habitat for bats.

3.4.7. The scrub, garden shrubs and the open buildings on the site provide opportunities for nesting birds during the nesting season, which extends from March to August each year. No nests were identified during this survey.

3.4.8. The site is assessed to have minimal potential for reptiles as the site contains no suitable places for shelter and there are no records of reptiles in the data search results.

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

3.4.10. The site is assessed to be totally unsuitable habitat for red squirrels, located outside the natural range for the species.

3.4.11. The only alien, invasive plant species listed on Schedule 9 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act found on the site was Cotoneaster and this was growing as an ornamental species adjacent to the northern lawn. This shrub will need to be removed from site as part of the development.

3.4.12. There are no hedgehog records in the data search results outside Carlton Marsh and none of the records were close to the survey area.

3.4.13. None of the buildings contained evidence to suggest the presence of barn owls.

3.5. Dusk Emergence Survey Results – 10th July 2024.

3.5.1. Four surveyors carried out a dusk emergence survey on the evening of 10th July 2024. Prior to that survey, an internal inspection of the house, Building A was carried out as access was not available during the initial survey.

3.5.2. Two loft spaces were identified, one over the main house and the other, a lean-to roof over the single storey rear extension. The photographs below show the main loft space.

3.5.3. No bats or bat field signs were found in either loft space.

3.5.4. As the main dwelling and the barn were assessed to have low potential for roosting bats, one dusk emergence survey was recommended and subsequently carried out.

3.5.5. The survey was led by Derek Whitcher, who holds a level two Natural England survey licence in respect of bats (2015-13205-CLS-CLS.). He was accompanied by three other surveyors, one who holds a level two Natural England survey licence, and the other two are experienced assistants.

3.5.6. All surveyors were equipped with a Batbox Duet detector and a two-way radio. Seven Anabat Ranger static recorders were deployed around the site to record bat activity for subsequent computer analysis using Anabat Insight Software.

3.5.7. Twelve infra-red cameras and infra-red torches were also set up around the buildings, ensuring that all suitable features were covered. The photographs below show the view of each camera at both the start and end of the survey.

C4.

C5

C6

C7

C8

C9

C10

C11

C12

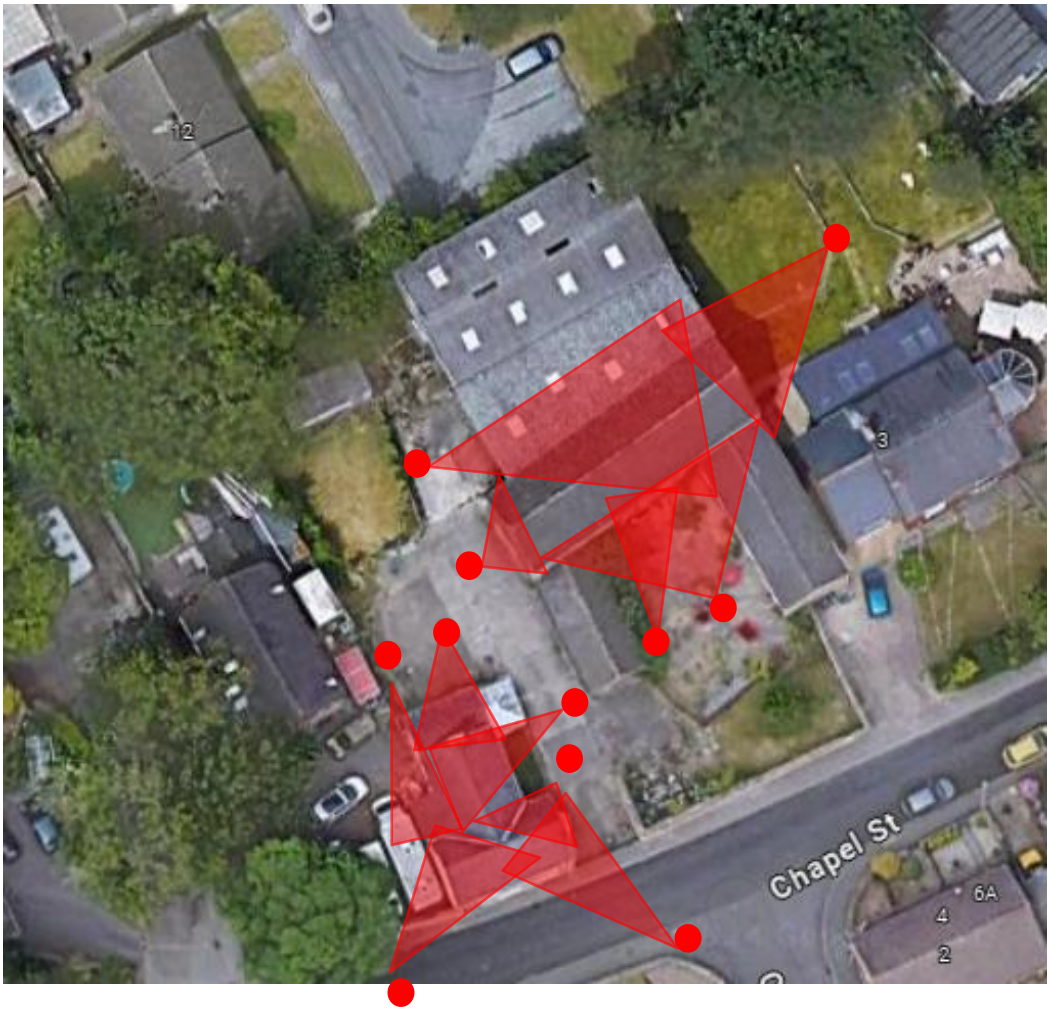
C16

C17

C19

3.5.8. The aerial photograph below shows where the Surveyors (S) and Anabats (A) were located throughout the survey.

3.5.9. The aerial photograph below shows where the cameras were positioned along with their approximate field of view.



3.5.10. The survey was carried out on 10th July 2024. The evening was mild, with a temperature of 16℃ at the start of the survey with a very slight breeze measuring 1 on the Beaufort scale. Sunset was at 21:32 and the survey lasted from 21:00 until 23:03.

3.5.11. The following bat activity was observed by the surveyors.

3.5.11.1. Surveyor 1.

22:01. Common Pipistrelle foraging overhead.
22:04. Common Pipistrelle flew past the western corner of the house, foraging to the south. Ongoing foraging activity to west and south.

Anabat 5 with Surveyor 1 recorded nineteen Common Pipistrelle calls between 22:01 and 22:52.

3.5.11.2. Surveyor 2.

21:27. Common Pipistrelle heard not seen west of the site.
21:28. Common Pipistrelle from the west into the Dutch barn where it remained foraging.
22:00. Common Pipistrelle flew out of the Dutch barn.
22:02. Common Pipistrelle from over top of the barn, flew south towards the road.
22:10. Brief light rain shower.
22:18. Common Pipistrelle flew high over barn roof.
22:22. Common Pipistrelle heard not seen.

Anabat 11 with Surveyor 2 recorded one hundred and thirty-seven Common Pipistrelle calls between 21:42 and 22:58.

Anabat 8 in the entrance to the Dutch barn near Surveyor 2 recorded twelve Common Pipistrelle calls between 21:57 and 23:05.

Anabat 7 inside the Dutch barn recorded one hundred and forty-five Common Pipistrelle calls between 21:28 and 23:04.

3.5.11.3. Surveyor 3.

21:26. Common Pipistrelle heard but not seen.
21:38 Common Pipistrelle foraging over the garden/tree line.
21:40. Common Pipistrelle flew west over barns.
21:40 onwards. Common Pipistrelle continues foraging over the garden/tree line and across to the other side of the barn until the end of the survey.

Anabat 1 with Surveyor 3 failed to record.

3.5.11.4. Surveyor 4.

Surveyor 4 continually monitored the cameras and observed no bat activity.

Anabat 3 to the east of the main house with Surveyor 4 recorded forty-five Common Pipistrelle calls between 22:00 and 22:52 and one Noctule call at 22:52.

Anabat 6 to the south of the main barn recorded twenty-eight Common Pipistrelle calls between 21:56 and 22:57.

3.5.12. Activity during the survey was surprisingly high and with one exception all activity was Common Pipistrelle activity. The main centres of activity were in the trees to the west of the site and within the Dutch barn on site where at least one Common Pipistrelle entered early in the survey and remained foraging all survey.

3.5.13. No bats were seen to enter or emerge from the buildings on the site, either during the survey or from subsequent camera analysis.

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4. BIODIVERSITY NET GAIN.

4.1. Baseline biodiversity calculations have been carried out using the Statutory Metric tool, the current metric at the time of writing this report. The calculations have been completed for area. The condition assessments for each habitat are shown in the attached condition assessment document and the baseline biodiversity values are shown in the attached metric calculation tool as well as being listed below.

4.2. Area Habitats.

Habitat Type	Area in M^2	Distinctiveness	Condition Assessment	Biodiversity Units.
Modified grassland	160	V.Low	N/A	0.064
Developed land sealed surface.	1289	Low	Moderate	0
Scrub	100	Medium	Moderate	0.080
Total	1549			0.144

4.3. The linear biodiversity value of the site prior to any works is 0.144Bu.

4.4. There are no linear habitats present on the site.

4.5. As this is an outline application, there is no requirement to calculate the post development biodiversity values. This will be done at a later stage in the planning process.

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5. EVALUATION OF FINDINGS.

5.1. There is one SSSI, part of the Dearne Valley Wetlands SSSI to the west of the survey area but there are no local designated sites in the search area. There will be no direct impact on these sites.

5.2. The survey area lies within an SSSI Impact Risk Zone, but the development does not fall within the categories of development where Natural England need to be consulted. Therefore, there will be no negative impact on such sites.

5.3. No badger setts or field signs were identified anywhere on the site and there are no records of badger setts within 2km of the survey area. Therefore, there will be no negative impact on the species.

5.4. There is no watercourse close to the site and therefore no habitat for water voles, otters or white clawed crayfish. There will therefore be no negative impact on these species.

5.5. There are no ponds close to the site to provide habitat for great crested newts. The closest great crested newts in the data search results are in excess of 800m from the site with barriers to movement in between. The proposed development will have no negative impact on amphibians.

5.6. There are a number of buildings present on the site.

5.6.1. The house had occasional slipped tiles and an area of loose rendering and there was no access into this building during the survey. Therefore, the house is assessed to have a low potential for roosting bats in accordance with the Bat Conservation Trust Good Practice Guidelines and works to the building could have an impact on any bats roosting there.

5.6.2. Outbuildings B and C are single storey storage sheds. No bats or bat field signs were found inside or outside these buildings and the buildings were assessed to have negligible potential for roosting bats in accordance with the Bat Conservation Trust, Good Practice Guidelines.

5.6.3. Barn D is a two-storey stone barn. No bats or bat field signs were found in the western end of the barn but access to the eastern end is through a door that is obstructed by stored materials that prevent access. Therefore, although the barn is open and airy, Barn D was assessed to have a low potential for roosting bats in accordance with the Bat Conservation Trust, Good Practice Guidelines.

5.6.4. Barn E is a large, Dutch barn with blockwork lower walls and with corrugated cement sheet cladding above. Barn E is unsuitable for roosting bats and was therefore assessed to have a negligible potential for roosting bats in accordance with the Bat Conservation Trust, Good Practice Guidelines.

5.6.5. Garage F is a standard prefabricated garage that is totally unsuitable for roosting bats and is therefore assessed to have negligible potential for roosting bats in accordance with the Bat Conservation Trust, Good Practice Guidelines.

5.6.6. Following a dusk emergence survey carried out by four people with seven Anabat recorders and twelve cameras with infra-red detection, no bats were seen to emerge from any of the buildings on the site. There will therefore be no impact on roosting bats.

5.7. There were no trees on the site that could provide potential roost features (PRF) for bats. There is one ash tree in the northwestern corner of the survey area within the fence line that does have holes that provide opportunities for roosting bats and was therefore assessed to have a potential for roosting bats in accordance with the Bat Conservation Trust, Good Practice Guidelines.

5.8. There are no wildlife corridors across the site that would provide commuting or foraging routes for bats. The surrounding area is residential with occasional scattered trees that is assessed to be moderate value foraging habitat for bats, confirmed by the level of bat activity observed during the dusk emergence survey.

5.9. The scrub, garden shrubs and the open buildings on the site provide opportunities for nesting birds during the nesting season, which extends from March to August each year. Any works between March and August during the nesting bird season, will potentially impact on nesting birds.

5.10. The site is assessed to have minimal potential for reptiles as the site contains no suitable places for shelter and there are few records of reptiles in the data search results. The proposed development will have no negative impact on reptiles.

5.11. The site is assessed to be an unsuitable habitat for hazel dormouse, located outside the natural range for the species. The proposed development will have no negative impact on the species.

5.12. The site is assessed to be totally unsuitable habitat for red squirrels, located outside the natural range for the species. The proposed development will have no negative impact on the species.

5.13. One alien, invasive plant species listed on Schedule 9 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act was found on the site and that was a cotoneaster plant at the side of the back lawn. Provided this is removed in a careful and controlled manner, there will be no negative impact on the spread of such plant species.

5.14. There are no hedgehog records in the data search results outside Carlton Marsh and none of the records were close to the survey area. Therefore, there is unlikely to be an impact on hedgehogs.

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6. RECOMMENDATIONS.

6.1. This Preliminary Ecological Appraisal report is designed to advise the client of the initial survey results so that they may be considered within the site development plan.

6.2. The house and the main barn D have both been assessed to have a low potential for roosting bats. Following a dusk emergence survey, no bats emerged from any of the buildings on site. Therefore, no further surveys are required, no bat mitigation strategy is required and there will be no requirement for a Natural England licence in connection with the proposed works.

6.3. Nevertheless, it is recommended that demolition be undertaken with due care and in the unlikely event a bat is found, the bat should be protected from harm, work should cease at that location and the undersigned contacted for further advice.

6.4. Once the development plans have been finalised, this report must be converted into an Ecological Impact Assessment (EcIA) in support of a full planning application where details of mitigation and ecological enhancements are included, to arrive at an assessment of the residual impact of the proposed development. This should include biodiversity calculations to demonstrate that a 10% increase in biodiversity can be achieved. The EcIA format will be suitable to submit to the Local Authority.

6.5. It is recommended that any vegetation clearance or works to the buildings is undertaken outside the nesting bird season, which extends from March to August. Should any vegetation clearance or works to the buildings be necessary during this time, it must be preceded by a nesting bird survey no more than two days before those works commence.

6.6. It is recommended that the ash tree on the site boundary is retained. If it is to be removed, further bat activity surveys will be required to demonstrate whether the PRFs are used by bats.

6.7. It is recommended that the cotoneaster horizontalis is cut, bagged and disposed of as contaminated waste taking care not to scatter the berries where they could generate new plants.

6.8. It is recommended that a hand search of potential hedgehog refugia is carried out before demolition commences.

6.9. It is recommended that biodiversity enhancements are incorporated into the new dwelling in line with the requirements of the NPPF. It is recommended that integrated bat bricks and integrated swift nest boxes are built into any new dwellings on the site.

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Prepared by:	
Derek Whitcher, BSc, MCIEEM, MCMI	Date: 4th February 2025.

Checked by:	
Ruth Georgiou, BSc, MCIEEM.	Date: 4th February 2025.

Revised by:	
Derek Whitcher, BSc, MCIEEM, MCMI	Date: 14th May 2025.

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Appendix I. NESTING BIRD INFORMATION.

Ecology

The nesting season will vary according to the weather each year but generally commences in March, peaks during May and June and continues until September. It is also worth remembering that some birds nest in trees and scrub, but others are ground nesting or prefer man- made structures or buildings.

Surveys

Nesting bird surveys search for potential nest sites in vegetation, buildings etc. Potential nesting sites are observed over a suitable period of time for bird movements or calling male birds that would indicate the presence of a nest. The presence of a nest can be identified from the field signs without the necessity to see the nest itself, thereby avoiding any disturbance of the nests. The best way to avoid this issue is to plan for vegetation clearance to be carried out outside the bird-nesting season.

Legislation

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

Part 1. -(1) Of the Act states that: - If any person intentionally: - kills, injures or takes any wild bird; takes, damages or destroys the nest of any wild bird while that nest is in use or being built; or takes or destroys an egg of any wild bird, he shall be guilty of an offence.

Part 1. -(5) of the Act states that: - If any person intentionally: - disturbs any wild bird included in Schedule 1 while it is building a nest or is in, on, or near a nest containing eggs or young; or disturbs young of such a bird, he shall be guilty of an offence and liable to a special penalty.

The Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 amends the above by inserting after “intentionally” the words “or recklessly”.

Appendix II. BAT INFORMATION.

Ecology

There are currently 18 species of bat residing in Britain, 17 of which of which are known to breed here. They are extremely difficult to identify in the hand and even more so in flight.

Many species appear to be diminishing in numbers, probably due to habitat change and shortage of food, caused by pesticides, as insects are their sole diet.

As their diet consists solely of insects, bats hibernate during the winter when their food source is at its most scarce. They will spend the winter in hollow trees, caves, mines and the roofs of buildings.

Certain species, particularly the pipistrelle (the commonest and most widespread British bat) can quickly adapt to man-made structures and will readily use these to roost and to rear their young.

Surveys

During walkover surveys, bat roosts can be identified by looking for:

- Suitable holes, cracks and crevices within any building, tree or other structure.
- Bat droppings along walls, window cills, or on the ground.
- Prey remains, such as insect wings.

Further investigations can be made using endoscopes, by carrying out aerial inspections of trees or by conducting bat activity surveys during dusk and dawn over summer months.

Legislation

Bats are protected under Appendix II and III of the Bern Convention (1982), Schedule 5 and 6 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act (1981), Annex IV of the Habitats Directive (some species under Annex II), Annex II of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations (2010) and EUROBATS agreement. Numerous species are

also listed under section 41 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act (2006) making them species of principal importance.

All bats and their roosts are therefore protected in the UK. This makes it an offence to kill, injure or take any bat, to interfere with any place used for shelter or protection, or to intentionally disturb any animal occupying such a place.

The UK has designated maternity and hibernacula areas as Special Areas of Conservation (SAC's) under the Habitats Directive. Implementation of the UK Biodiversity Action Plan also includes action for a number of bat species and the habitats which support them.

Where development proposals are likely to affect a bat roost site, a licence is required from Natural England.

Appendix III. INVASIVE PLANT SPECIES INFORMATION.

Ecology

The Government has acknowledged the problems that can be caused by non-native invasive species. In 2008 the Government launched "The Invasive Non-Native Species Framework Strategy for Great Britain". The strategy provides a framework for a more co-ordinated approach to invasive species management. It seeks to create a stronger sense of shared responsibility across government, key organisations, land managers and the public.

The Non-Native Species Secretariat has been established to oversee the implementation of the strategy. Details of the secretariat including risk assessments and action plans for some species are available at www.nonnativespecies.org.

In general, there are four basic methods of controlling weeds; mechanical, chemical, natural and environmental.

- ***Mechanical control*** *includes cultivation, hoeing, pulling, cutting, raking, dredging or other methods to uproot or cut weeds.*
  Where this method is used all plant material must be considered "controlled waste" and must be disposed of properly.
- ***Chemical control*** *uses approved herbicides.*
- ***Natural control*** *uses pests and diseases of the target weed to weaken it and prevent it from becoming a nuisance.*
- ***Environmental control*** *works by altering the environment to make it less suitable for weed growth, for example by increasing or decreasing water velocity.*

Surveys

A site will be searched for invasive plant species growing on site, from mature plants to new shoots. A site will also be searched for dead stems indicating that plants that may have seasonally died back are present.

Legislation

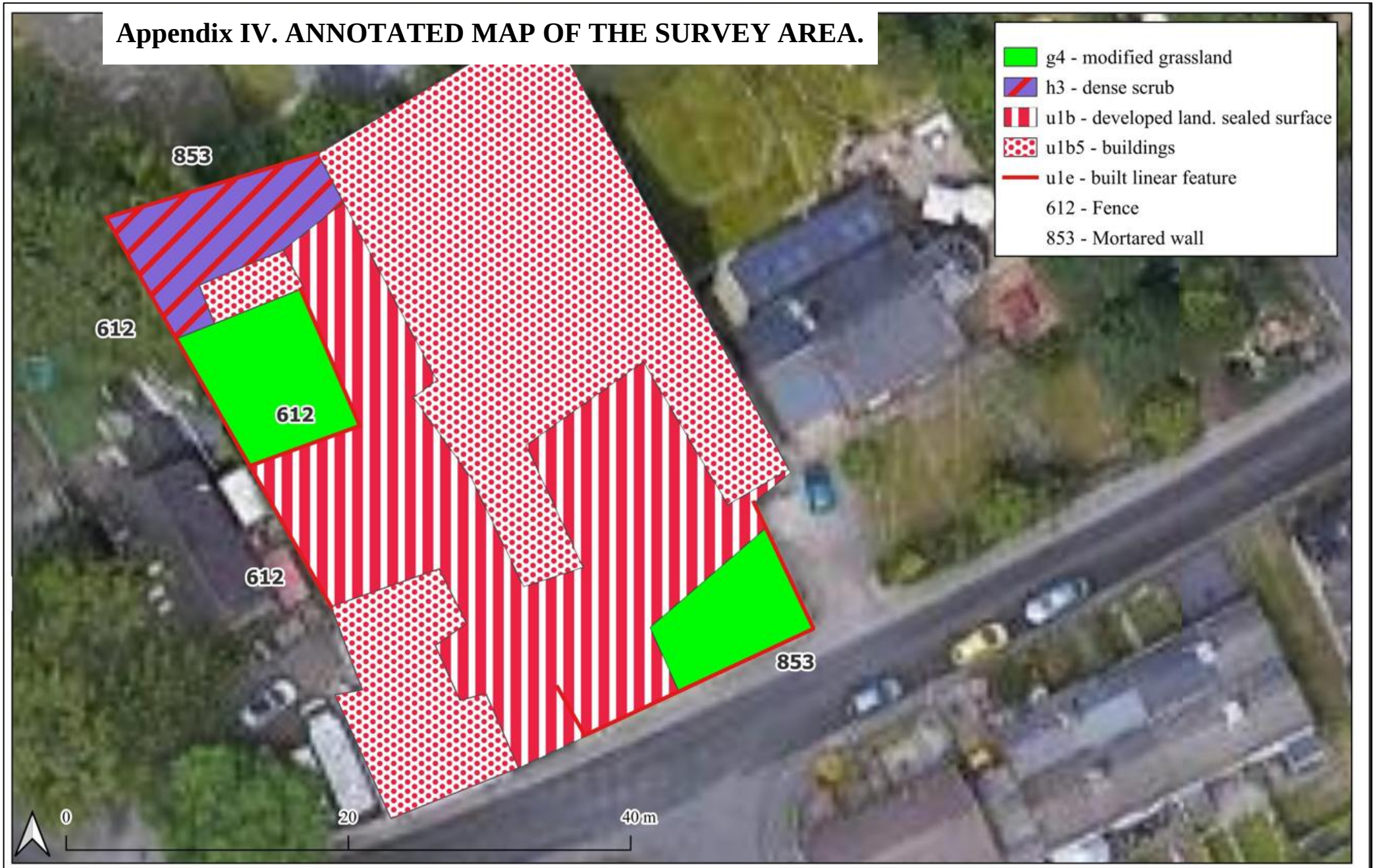
Invasive species listed under Schedule 9 are prohibited from release into the wild. Schedule 9, Section 14(2) prohibits 'planting' or 'causing to grow' in the wild of any plant listed in Part 2 of Schedule 9.

The following is a list of all the species of plant listed under Schedule 9 of The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981.

Common Name	**Scientific Name**	**England & Wales**	**Scotland**
Alexanders, Perfoliate	*Smyrnium perfoliatum*	✓	
Algae, Red	*Grateloupia luxurians*	✓	
Archangel, Variegated Yellow	*Lamiastrum galeobdolon subsp. Argentatum*	✓	
Azalea, Yellow	*Rhododendron luteum*	✓	
Balsam, Himalayan	*Impatiens glandulifera*	✓	
Carolina Water-shield	*Cabomba caroliniana*	✓	✓
Cotoneaster	*Cotoneaster horizontalis*	✓	
Cotoneaster, Entire Leaved	*Cotoneaster integrifolius*	✓	
Cotoneaster, Himalayan	*Cotoneaster simonsii*	✓	
Cotoneaster, Hollyberry	*Cotoneaster bullatus*	✓	
Cotoneaster, Small Leaved	*Cotoneaster microphyllus*	✓	
Creeper, False Virginia	*Parthenocissus inserta*	✓	
Creeper, Virginia	*Parthenocissus quinquefolia*	✓	
Dewplant, Purple	*Disphyma crassifolium*	✓	
False-acacia	*Robinia pseudoacacia*		✓
Fern, Water	*Azolla filiculoides*	✓	✓
Fig, Hottentot	*Carpobrotus edulis*	✓	✓
Garlic, Few-flowered	*Allium paradoxum*	✓	✓
Garlic, Three-Cornered	*Allium triquetrum*	✓	
Hogweed, Giant	*Heracleum mantegazzianum*	✓	✓
Hyacinth, water	*Eichhornia crassipes*	✓	✓
Kelp, Giant	*Macrocystis angustifolia*	✓	✓
Kelp, Giant	*Macrocystis integrifolia*	✓	✓
Kelp, Giant	*Macrocystis laevis*	✓	✓

Kelp, Giant	*Macrocystis pyrifera*	✓	✓
Kelp, Japanese	*Laminaria japonica*	✓	✓
Knotweed, Giant	*Reynoutria sachalinensis*	✓	
Knotweed, Hybrid	*Reynoutria japonica x Reynoutria sachalinensis*	✓	
Knotweed, Japanese	*Reynoutria japonica*	✓	
Knotweed, Japanese	*Polygonum cuspidatum*		✓
Lettuce, water	*Pistia stratiotes*	✓	✓
Montbretia	*Crocosmia x crocosmiiflora*	✓	
Parrot's-feather	*Myriophyllum aquaticum*	✓	
Pennywort, Floating	*Hydrocotyle ranunculoides*	✓	
Pigmyweed, New Zealand	*Crassula helmsii*	✓	✓
Potato, Duck	*Sagittaria latifolia*	✓	
Primrose-willow, Floating	*Ludwigia peploides*	✓	
Primrose, Water	*Ludwigia grandiflora*	✓	
Rhododendron	*Rhododendron ponticum*	✓	
Rhubarb, Giant	*Gunnera tinctoria*	✓	
Rose, Japanese	*Rosa rugosa*	✓	
Salvinia, Giant	*Salvinia molesta*	✓	✓
Seafingers, Green	*Codium fragile*	✓	
Seafingers, Green	*Codium fragile tomentosoides*		✓
Seaweed, Californian Red	*Pikea californica*	✓	✓
Seaweed, Hooked Asparagus	*Asparagopsis armata*	✓	✓
Seaweed, Japanese	*Sargassum muticum*	✓	✓
Seaweeds, Laver (except native species)	*Porphyra sp. except -* *P. amethystea* *P. leucosticta* *P. linearis* *P. miniata* *P. purpurea* *P. umbilicalis*	✓	✓
Shallon	*Gaultheria shallon*		✓
Wakame	*Undaria pinnatifida*	✓	✓
Waterweed, Curly	*Lagarosiphon major*	✓	✓
Waterweeds	*All species of the genus Elodea*	✓	

Appendix IV. ANNOTATED MAP OF THE SURVEY AREA.



Site: Hopton Farm

Reference: 240409

Date: 17.06.2024

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