

**Whitcher Wildlife Ltd.
Ecological Consultants.**



**LAND AT YORKSHIRE HOUSE, SCHOOL
STREET, DEWSBURY.**

OS REF: SE 20403 98130.

ECOLOGICAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT.

Ref No: 231036/EcIA/1.

Date: 5th June 2024.

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1. INTRODUCTION.

1.1. The owner of the parcel of land located just north of Yorkshire House on School Street in Dewsbury, is planning to develop a hotel on the site.

1.2. Whitcher Wildlife Ltd were therefore commissioned to carry out a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal of the site to establish whether there are any other issues that may affect the proposed works.

1.3. That survey was carried out on 15th January 2024. No ecological concerns were identified and therefore, an Ecological Impact Assessment can be produced.

1.4. This report states the impact of the development on the ecological features of the site.

1.5. Appendix I of this report provide additional information on nesting birds and is designed to assist the reader in understanding the contents of this report.

2. SURVEY METHODOLOGY.

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

2.2. The survey area was walked where access was agreed and public rights of way were used where no access was agreed. All habitats within and immediately around the survey area were documented and the dominant species within that habitat listed in line with the UK Habitat Classification methodology to identify the primary habitat types throughout the survey area. All primary habitats are accompanied by secondary codes which are used to add further specific details where necessary. Each primary habitat will be shown individually in the appended annotated map but at the time of writing this report, style files for the new secondary codes have not been created and are therefore not shown.

2.4. The survey area was searched for watercourses and where found all watercourses within the survey area and for approximately 100m in each direction were thoroughly searched for evidence of water vole (*Arvicola amphibius*) activity by looking for the following signs, in line with Dean M, Strachen R, Gow D and Andres R (2016). *The Water Vole Mitigation Handbook (The Mammal Society Mitigation Guidance Series)*. Eds Fiona Mathews and Paul Chanin. The mammal Society, London: -

- * 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 trees and structures 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.

2.10. 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.

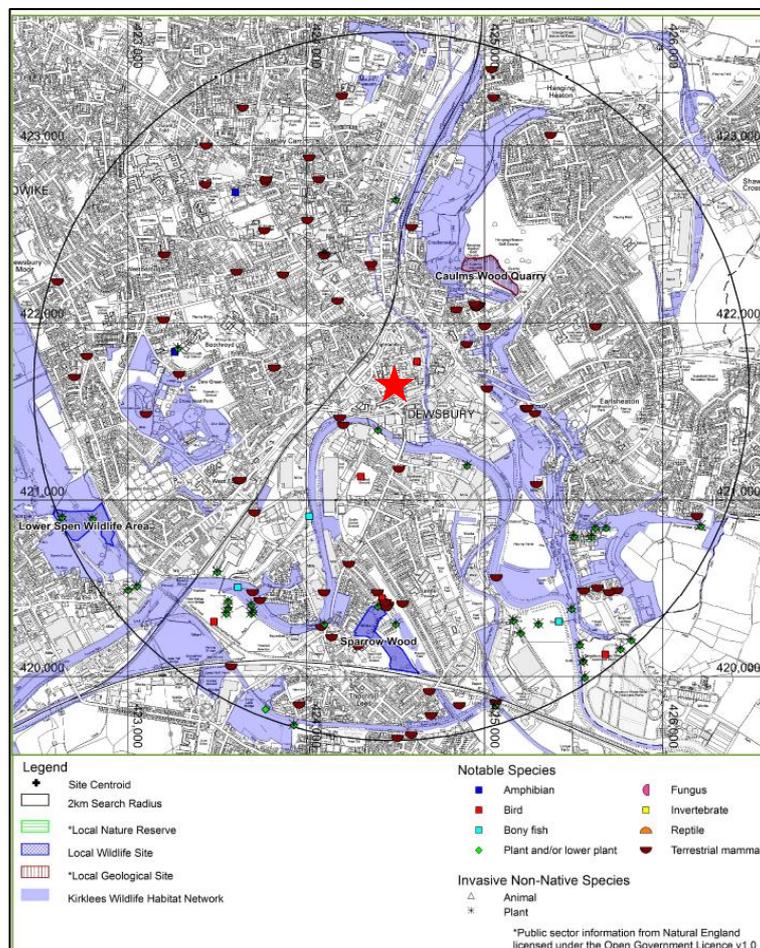
2.16. The survey was undertaken by Mitchel Greenhalgh, an ecological consultant with an array of experience in conducting surveys on a variety of flora and fauna in a professional capacity. Mitchel holds a level two Natural England survey licence in respect of both bats and great crested newts, a NatureScot licence in respect of bats and Natural England class licences for various invertebrates. He is also working towards gaining further survey licences. He has attended courses run by CIEEM and the FSC and also holds a BSc in environmental science attained from the University of Leeds. He is an Associate member of CIEEM and he is therefore committed to continuous professional development.

3. BASELINE ECOLOGY.

3.1. Data Search Results.

3.1.1. A data search request was submitted to the West Yorkshire Ecology Service (WYES) for records of protected species and the location of designated sites within 2km of the survey area.

3.1.2. WYES returned three records of Local Wildlife Sites (LWS) within a 2km radius. These were Caulms Wood Quarry, Sparrow Wood, and Lower Spen Wildlife Area. None of these are relevant to the survey area, as can be seen on the map provided below.



3.1.3. The MAGIC Map website was also checked for the locations of any statutory designated sites. The only sites identified were again, Sparrow Wood and Lower Spen Wildlife Area, which are also Local Nature Reserves (LNR).

3.1.4. WYES returned various bat records within a 2km radius, including records of common and soprano pipistrelle, noctule, brown long-eared bat, Daubenton's bat and other unspecified *Myotis* species. The closest record to the survey area is of an unspecified pipistrelle species along the river Calder, approximately 325m southwest.

3.1.5. WYES also returned a small number of records of both great crested newt and otter, although none of these records are relevant to the survey area.

3.1.6. The data search results can be provided to the client upon request but must not be placed within the public domain.

3.2. The Survey Area.

3.2.1. The survey area comprises a small, private car park, which is currently used mainly for storing materials.

3.2.2. The aerial map below shows the approximate location of the survey area, marked by the red shape.



3.2.3. The further surroundings comprise the urban environment associated with the market town of Dewsbury. Small areas of urban greenery are sporadically present, but sparse and the river Calder is located approximately 210m to the southwest at its closest point.

3.3. Description of Habitats.

3.3.1. Appendix III of this report contains an annotated map marked up with the varying habitats within the site, but secondary codes are not marked on the map due to its scale. The habitats on the site are: -

- u1b – Developed Land; Sealed Surface.
- h3h – Mixed Scrub.
- u1e – Built Linear Feature.

3.3.2. u1b – Developed Land; Sealed Surface.

3.3.2.1. Secondary codes: 804 car park.

3.3.2.1.1. The majority of the survey area is made up of the hardstanding of the car park, although there is also a small rubble pile to the north of the survey area.



3.3.2.1.2. Some ephemeral species can be seen colonising the cracks in the paving, including fescues (*Festuca* spp.), hedge mustard (*Sisymbrium officinale*), cocksfoot (*Dactylis glomerata*), herb Robert (*Geranium robertianum*), smooth sow thistle (*Sonchus oleraceus*), nettle (*Urtica dioica*) and dandelion (*Taraxacum* agg.). A very small amount of bramble (*Rubus* sp.) is also present at the north of the survey area.

3.3.3. h3h – Mixed Scrub.

3.3.3.1. Secondary codes: 32 scattered trees, 847 introduced shrub.

3.3.3.1.1. Along the eastern boundary of the site is a strip of scrub containing mostly non-native species, which have been planted for their amenity value, although a small number of native species are also present. Two mature wild cherry (*Prunus avium*) trees are also present within this habitat.

3.3.3.1.2. Species within this habitat include bramble (*Rubus* sp.), *Pyracantha* sp., Japanese honeysuckle (*Lonicera japonica*), evergreen rose (*Rosa sempervirens*), willow-leaved cotoneaster (*Cotoneaster salicifolius*), dogwood (*Cornus* sp.), and buddleia (*Buddleja davidii*), with an understory of nettle (*Urtica dioica*), cleavers (*Galium aparine*), purple toadflax (*Linaria purpurea*), hairy bittercress (*Cardamine hirsuta*) and smooth sow thistle (*Sonchus oleraceus*). Some immature elder (*Sambucus nigra*) and wild cherry (*Prunus avium*) are also present.



3.3.3.2. There is no condition assessment relevant for introduced shrub, but the condition assessment for the two trees is shown below. The trees both pass four of the six criteria and are assessed as being of moderate condition.

Condition Assessment Criteria		Criterion passed (Yes or No)
A	The tree is a native species (or at least 70% within the block are native species).	Y
B	The tree canopy is predominantly continuous, with gaps in canopy cover making up <10% of total area and no individual gap being >5 m wide (individual trees automatically pass this criterion).	Y
C	The tree is mature (or more than 50% within the block are mature).	Y
D	There is little or no evidence of an adverse impact on tree health by human activities (such as vandalism, herbicide or detrimental agricultural activity). And there is no current regular pruning regime, so the trees retain >75% of expected canopy for their age range and height.	N

E	Natural ecological niches for vertebrates and invertebrates are present, such as presence of deadwood, cavities, ivy or loose bark.	N
F	More than 20% of the tree canopy area is oversailing vegetation beneath.	Y
Number of criteria passed		4
Condition Assessment Result (out of 6 criteria)	Condition Assessment Score	Score Achieved x/✓
Passes 5 or 6 criteria	Good (3)	
Passes 3 or 4 criteria	Moderate (2)	X
Passes 2 or fewer criteria	Poor (1)	

3.3.5. u1e – Built Linear Feature.

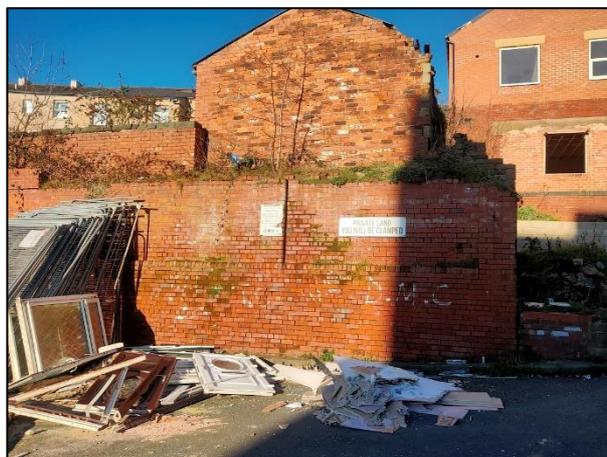
3.3.5.1. Secondary codes: 612 fence.

Metal fencing separates the site from the neighbouring car garage to the west.



3.3.5.2. Secondary codes: 853 mortared wall.

A brick wall is present to the north of the survey area.



3.4. Description of Fauna.

3.4.1. No badger setts or other field signs were identified within the survey and the site provides absolutely no suitable terrestrial habitat for badger.

3.4.2. There are no watercourses on, or close to, the site to provide suitable habitat for otter, water vole or white-clawed crayfish. The closest of these is the river Calder, some 210m southwest of the survey area.

3.4.3. No ponds are present within a 500m radius of the survey area to provide suitable breeding habitat for great crested newts and regardless, the site is completely inaccessible for the species given the surrounding urban environment.

3.4.4. There are some shallow crevices and gaps within the surrounding walls and masonry. However, these were inspected during the survey and found to be largely unsuitable for roosting bats. Regardless, these features will not be affected by the works.

3.4.5. The survey area provides very limited habitat for foraging and commuting bats due to its extreme urban nature.

3.4.6. The survey area provides some small opportunities for nesting birds within the nesting season, which extends from March to August each year.

3.4.7. The survey area provides no suitable habitat for reptiles due to the lack of natural habitat and extreme urban nature.

3.4.8. The survey area lies outside of the known natural home range of red squirrel and hazel dormouse and they were not considered during the survey. Regardless, the site offers no suitability for either species.

3.4.9. No invasive, non-native plant species listed on schedule 9 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act (1981) were identified during the survey.

4. IMPACT ASSESSMENT, MITIGATION AND RESIDUAL EFFECTS.

4.1. Designated Sites.

4.1.1. Assessment.

There are no designated sites in the immediate area around the survey area and therefore, the proposed development of the site will have no impact on such sites.

4.1.2. Mitigation.

No mitigation for the impact on designated sites is planned or necessary.

4.1.3. Residual Effects.

There are no designated sites close to the survey area and therefore, there will be **No Residual Negative Impact** on designated sites.

4.2. Habitats.

4.2.1. Assessment.

4.2.1.1. There are no Priority Habitats as listed under the NERC Act on the site.

4.2.1.2. The total area baseline Biodiversity Units (BU) for habitats on the site is calculated at 0.34 shown in the table below.

Habitat Type	Extent (ha)	Distinctiveness	Condition Assessment	Biodiversity Units
Urban Trees	0.0407*	Medium	Moderate	0.33
Introduced shrub	0.006	Low	N/A	0.02
Developed Land; Sealed Surface	0.059	Low	N/A	0
Total	0.065ha			0.34BU

*Not included within area calculation.

4.2.2. Mitigation.

4.2.2.1. The ecological value of the site is currently extremely low, comprising mainly of introduced shrub and two cherry trees. The cherry trees are to be retained, but the introduced shrub is to be replaced by native scrub, along with an additional 136m² of native scrub which is being planted alongside it and to the north.

4.2.2.2. The table below shows the post works biodiversity score of the development.

Habitat Type	Extent (ha)	Distinctiveness	Condition Assessment	Biodiversity Units
Retained habitats:				
Urban Trees	0.0407*	Moderate	Medium	0.33
Developed Land; Sealed Surface	0.0463	V.Low	N/A	0
Created habitats:				
Mixed Scrub	0.0187	Moderate	Poor	0.07
Total	0.065ha			0.4BU.

4.2.2.3. The development results in a net gain of 0.6BU, equivalent to 17.83%.

4.2.3. Residual Effects.

With the above proposals in place, there will be a small positive impact on habitats at a site level.

4.3. Nesting Birds.

4.3.1. Assessment.

The site offers a small level of opportunity to nesting birds within the nesting season.

4.3.2. Mitigation.

No vegetation clearance will take place within the nesting season, which extends from March to August. If any unforeseen clearance does take place, it will be preceded by a nesting bird survey undertaken by a suitably competent ecologist.

4.3.3. Residual Effects.

With the retention of the introduced scrub, the works will have no residual impact on birds at a site level.

4.4 Other Protected Species.

4.4.1. Assessment.

The site offers no opportunities for any other protected animal species.

4.4.2. Mitigation

No mitigation is necessary in regard to protected species.

4.4.3. Residual Effects.

Therefore, there will be a no residual impacts on protected species at a site level.

5. COMPENSATION AND ENHANCEMENT MEASURES.

5.1. The new hotel will be fitted with an integrated bird box, which will be located high on the southern side, within the brickwork. This will be the Ibstock integrated swift box or similar, tailored to match the external finish of the hotel.



5.2. The new hotel will be fitted with an integrated bat box, which will also be located high on the southern side, within the brickwork. This will be the Habibat Bat Box or similar, tailored to match the external finish of the hotel.



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Mitchel Greenhalgh. BSc, ACIEEM.	Date: 5 th June 2024.

Checked by:	
Derek Whitcher, BSc, MCIEEM, MCMi	Date: 5 th June 2024.

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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”.

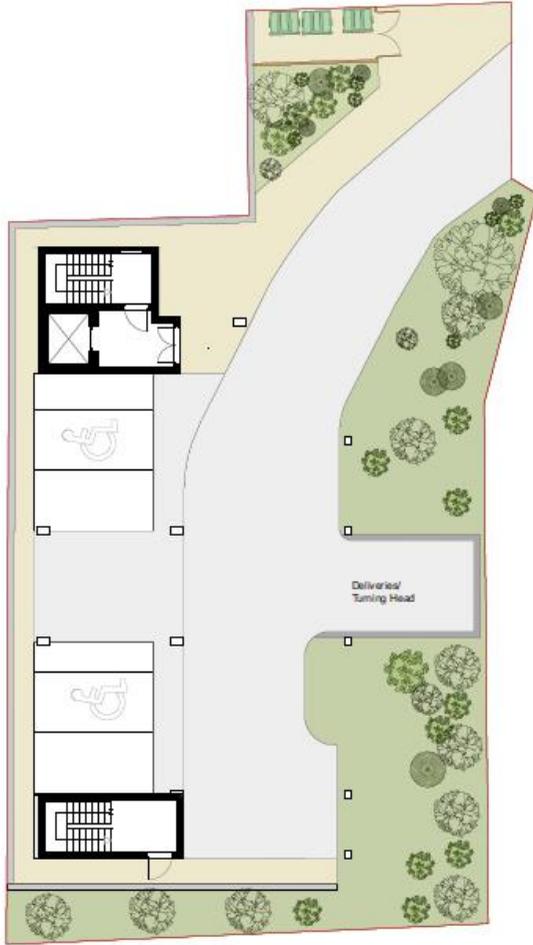
APPENDIX II. ANNOTATED MAP OF THE SURVEY AREA - BASELINE.



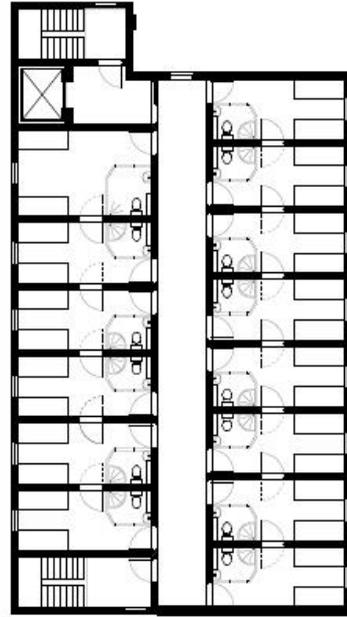
APPENDIX III. ANNOTATED MAP OF THE SURVEY AREA – POST.



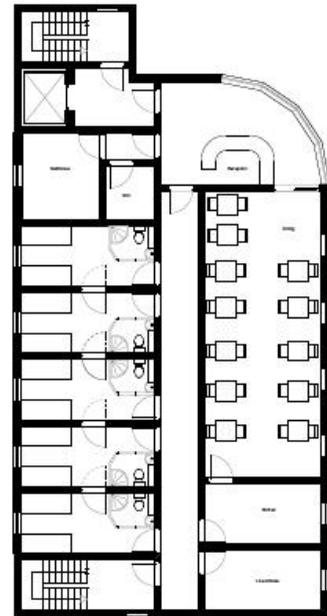
APPENDIX IV. PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT.



Ground Floor Site Plan As Proposed
Scale 1:100
0m 1m 2m 3m 4m 5m



Second and Third Floor Plan As Proposed
Scale 1:100
0m 1m 2m 3m 4m 5m



First Floor Plan As Proposed
Scale 1:100
0m 1m 2m 3m 4m 5m



3D View

5 Rooms x 1 Floors
14 Rooms x 2 Floors
Total 33 Rooms

NOTES:
Any other contributions to be reported to Code L6 immediately.
This drawing and design is the property of Code L6 and is not to be used for any purpose without their consent.

B Land supplied & new development
C 06003
A Site Plan approved C 06003
0m 1m 2m 3m 4m 5m

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Date:	Scale:	Size:
25/10/23	1:100	A1

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