Leymoor Road, Golcar

Preliminary Ecological Appraisal

HABITAT WORKS

May 2025

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Report Title: Leymoor Road, Golcar
Preliminary Ecological Appraisal

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Executive Summary

Habitat Works Limited (Habitat Works) was commissioned in April 2025 by Paul Matthews Architectural to undertake a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA) for an area of land off Leymoor Road, Golcar, Kirklees, West Yorkshire, HD7 4RW (central Ordnance Survey National Grid Reference (OS NGR) SE 09704 16455), hereafter referred to as 'the Site' and as displayed in Figure 1.

The Site boundary is detailed within the Paul Matthews Architectural drawing '*Proposed Block Plan*' (Dwg 24/1047/03a, dated 08/2024). The PEA was required to inform proposals for the construction of a new stable block.

Given that the proposals are confined to the site boundary, and that habitats present on the Site are common and widespread in the local landscape, it is anticipated that the loss of habitat at the Site is of importance to nature conservation at no greater than the site level.

A Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment (BNGA) has already been undertaken by Habitat Works Ltd. to formally assess the impacts the proposals have on habitats on the Site. The findings of the BNGA are detailed within the Habitat Works (2024) report '*Leymoor Road, Golcar – Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment*'. This identifies opportunities to increase the habitat value on the Site post-development and recommend measures necessary to achieve a 10% gain in-line with government policy.

The following is recommended with regards to protected or notable species:

- Pollution Prevention Measures due to the proximity of the Site to an unidentified stream; and
- Works will follow Best Practice Measures (BPM) should be followed with regards to amphibians, badgers, reptiles and invasive species.

1. Introduction

1.1 *Background*

1.1.1 Habitat Works Limited (Habitat Works) was commissioned in April 2025 by Paul Matthews Architectural to undertake a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA)) for an area of land off Leymoor Road, Golcar, Kirklees, West Yorkshire, HD7 4RW (central Ordnance Survey National Grid Reference (OS NGR) SE 09704 16455), hereafter referred to as 'the Site'.

1.1.2 The Site boundary taken from Paul Matthews Architectural drawing '*Proposed Block Plan*' (Dwg 24/1047/03a, dated 08/2024) is shown in Figure 1. The PEA was required to inform proposals for the construction of a new stable block.

1.1.3 This report details the findings of a PEA, comprising a data consultation and UK Habitat Classification survey undertaken in April 2025. Methodologies employed during the surveys are described along with the survey findings, evaluation, assessment and recommendations for any further survey work and/or mitigation/enhancement as required.

1.1.4 Recommendations are made regarding impacts of the proposed development through habitat losses/potential gains on the Site post-development and the retention and protection of key ecological features. The provision of species-specific enhancements is outlined where appropriate.

2. Methodology

2.1 *Data Consultation*

2.1.1 Data consultation was undertaken by Habitat Works with the local records centre; West Yorkshire Ecology Service (WYES) in April 2025 as part of the ecological appraisal process, to determine whether any ecological features of note had previously been recorded within 2 km of the Site. Data requested included:

- Records of protected species;
- Records of national or local Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) species;
- Details of any statutory sites of ecological interest e.g. Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), Special Protection Area (SPA) etc.; and,
- Details of any non-statutory sites of ecological interest e.g. Local Wildlife Site (LWS).

2.1.2 The Multi-Agency Geographic Information for the Countryside (MAGIC) website (http://www.magic.defra.gov.uk) was consulted for information on statutory and non-statutory designated sites of conservation interest, and for the presence of European Protected Species (EPS) mitigation licences for great crested newt *Triturus cristatus* (GCN) and bats within 2 km of the Site. MAGIC was also used to search for information relating to GCN Class Survey Licence Returns and Great Crested Newt Pond Surveys 2017- 2019 within 500 m of the Site.

2.1.3 The Kirklees Biodiversity Action Plan (KBAP) was also consulted for habitats and species afforded particular interest within the local area.

2.1.4 Information returned from MAGIC, WYES and the KBAP with relevant assessments will be incorporated into the report as appropriate. All records will be reviewed, however particular interest will be placed on records within the past 10 years, with records prior to these considered historic.

2.2 *Ecological Walkover Survey*

2.2.1 An ecological walkover survey was undertaken on the 8th May 2025 by Senior Ecologist Joe Travis BSc (Hons) MSc ACIEEM and Graduate Ecologist Eleanor Collier BSc (Hons) following best practice guidelines (UK Habitat Classification System (UKHab) (UKHab Working Group (UKHCWG) 2018)). This survey method aims to define habitats and vegetation types present and provide an indication of their relative abundance. This survey method aims to characterise habitats and communities present and is not intended to provide a complete list of all species occurring across the Site.

2.2.2 The UKHab survey covered land within the Site (as illustrated by the red line site boundary in Figure 1).

2.2.3 Habitats and vegetation types present inside the Site were recorded onto a field map and notable, rare or scarce plant species, including other features of ecological interest, were highlighted using Target Notes (TN). The current management of habitats and associated features were noted and assigned UKHab secondary codes where relevant.

2.2.4 Evidence of protected species or species of nature conservation importance were recorded where present at the time of survey. Habitats or species present that are listed under Section 41 of the NERC Act 2006 or the KBAP were also noted.

2.2.5 Survey findings are detailed in Section 3 and annotated on Figure 1, Target Notes are described in Appendix 2 and Site photographs are provided in Appendix 2.

2.2.6 Plant species recorded were classified according to the subjective method of DAFOR abundance ratings.

The standardised terms are as follows:

- D Dominant
- A Abundant
- F Frequent
- O Occasional
- R Rare

2.3 *Protected and Key Species*

2.3.1 Any evidence of protected species or groups encountered during the survey was recorded. This included observations of field signs and an assessment of the suitability of the habitats present to support protected species. For full details of legislation relating to all habitats and species discussed within this report visit http://www.legislation.gov.uk.

Amphibians

2.3.2 The Site was assessed for its potential to support amphibians, including a detailed GCN assessment. A desk-based search for ponds within 500 m of the Site, which are not separated by a significant barrier to amphibian dispersal, was made using 1:10,000 OS mapping. Habitats within the Site were assessed for their suitability to support amphibians during their terrestrial and aquatic stages where applicable.

Badgers

2.3.3 Signs of badger *Meles meles* activity were sought within the Site and within 30m of the Site boundary, where possible.

2.3.4 The survey followed standard methodology detailed in '*Surveying Badgers*' (Harris *et al*., 1989) and the approach as described in '*The history, distribution, status and habitat requirements of the badger in Britain*' (JNCC, 1990).

2.3.5 The survey focused on areas with topography and/or vegetation typically utilised for sett building, in addition to key habitats typically favoured for foraging such as woodland, hedgerows, ditches and banks.

2.3.6 The survey involved identifying any badger field signs including setts, latrine/dung pits, foraging marks, feeding signs (e.g. snuffle holes), footprints, badger hairs and worn pathways, specifically along linear features and boundaries in the Site.

2.3.7 In the event of identifying badger sett(s), these were examined with key details recorded, including the number of entrances and their status (e.g. active, partially used, and disused). Where present setts identified were categorised using nationally recognised sett classification (main sett, annexe sett, subsidiary sett, outlier sett) where possible (Harris *et al*., 1989).

Bats

2.3.8 Trees and structures within and immediately adjacent the Site were subject to a ground-based assessment for their suitability to support roosting bats during the survey.

2.3.9 An individual structure may have several features of potential interest to roosting bats associated with it, and it is not always possible to confirm usage of a feature by bats due to their transient nature. Consequently, it is customary when undertaking such surveys to assign each feature to a defined category of roosting potential as follows: negligible, low, moderate, high or confirmed (Collins, 2023).

2.3.10 Similar to structures, an individual tree may have several features of potential interest to roosting bats

associated with it and it is not always possible to confirm usage of a feature by bats during a single daytime visit, given their highly transient nature. Consequently, it is customary when undertaking such surveys to assign each feature to a defined category of None, Further Assessment Required (FAR), Potential Roosting Feature – Individual (PRF – I) and Potential Roosting Feature – Multiple (PRF – M) (Collins, 2023).

2.3.11 The Site was also assessed for its suitability for foraging and commuting bats in accordance with good practice guidelines (Collins, 2023).

Birds

2.3.12 In 2021, a re-assessment of Birds of Conservation Concern (BoCC) was published by Stanbury et al. (2021), which defined rare and threatened bird species on two lists (Red and Amber) describing the level of threat to each species of concern. "Red" is the highest conservation priority, with species needing urgent action through to "Green", indicating that the species are relatively unthreatened.

2.3.13 Data consultation data was filtered for WCA 1981 (as amended) Schedule 1 bird species and those species protected under Annex 1 of the EU Directive on the Conservation of Wild Birds, also known as the Birds Directive. Priority species (NERC Act 2006, LBAP) were likewise highlighted and the UK Red List for birds, also known as the BoCC as described above, was also referred to.

2.3.14 During the Site survey any species of birds encountered were recorded. Habitats were assessed for their potential value to nesting, wintering and foraging birds.

Invertebrates

2.3.15 The habitats present on the Site were assessed for their suitability to support invertebrates and incidental observations of invertebrates at and adjacent to the Site were noted.

Reptiles

2.3.16 The habitats present on Site were assessed for their suitability to support reptiles, particularly with reference to their connectivity with other areas of suitable habitat within the wider landscape.

Riparian Mammals and White-clawed Crayfish

2.3.17 A desk-based search for watercourses on or within 30 m of the Site, which are not separated by a significant barrier to dispersal, was undertaken using OS 1:10,000 mapping.

2.3.18 Where access was possible, watercourses were subsequently assessed for their suitability to support otter *Lutra lutra*, water vole *Arvicola amphibius* and white-clawed crayfish *Austropotamobius pallipes*.

Other Key and Notable Species

2.3.19 Whilst on Site habitats were assessed for their potential to support any other nationally, locally scarce or notable species, with particular reference to LBAP species.

2.4 *Invasive Species*

2.4.1 Invasive Non-Native Species (INNS) listed on Schedule 9 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act (1981) (as amended) were recorded and mapped as seen during the survey.

2.5 *Assumptions and Limitations*

2.5.1 A UKHab survey is intended to provide a rapid assessment of habitats present within a site and is not intended to replace detailed vegetation or targeted protected species surveys, where deemed necessary.

2.5.2 In line with CIEEM guidance, this report is valid for a period of 24 months. In the event that works have not

been commenced by May 2027, an update assessment should be undertaken.

2.5.3 Due to the survey being undertaken outside of the optimal survey period, sufficient information to characterise the habitats present in order to assess their likely contribution to the biodiversity interest of the area is usually not possible for all habitats. However, due to the nature of the habitats present, it is considered that this is a valid and fair representation of the habitats present.

3. Findings and Evaluation

3.1 *Site Description*

3.1.1 The Site is located off Leymoor Road, Golcar, Kirklees, West Yorkshire HD7 4RW (central Ordnance Survey National Grid Reference (OS NGR) SE 09704 16455) and comprises a former grazed field which has begun to succeed over with some typical grassland species. The Site location is detailed within Figure 1.

3.1.2 The surrounding land use is a combination of pastures and residential areas along with two reservoirs located within 2km of the Site boundary. Several woodlands exist within 2 km of the Site boundary and a small unnamed stream runs from the northwest of the Site and has been channelled beneath the Site.

3.2 *Designated Sites*

3.2.1 No statutory designated sites were identified using MAGIC within 2 km of the Site.

3.2.2 WYES returned four records of non-statutory designated sites for locations within 2 km of the Site, including three Local Wildlife Sites (LWS) and one Local Geological Sites (LGS).

3.2.3 Table 1 below details the designated sites within 2 km of the Site, while their locations are shown within Figure 2.

Table 1 - Designated Sites within 2 km of the Site

Designated Site	Description from Citation	Approx. Distance & Direction from Site
Non - Statutory		
Huddersfield Narrow Canal (LWS)	Standing open water with value for appreciation of nature. Kingfisher and otter records present.	1.2 km southeast
Shaw Wood (LWS)	Species rich acid woodland with high bluebell cover	1.2 km northwest
Clough Head Quarry (LGS)	Rock is fine to medium-grained, cemented with iron oxides and cross-bedded with sets dipping to the NW. Intersecting troughs showing migration of large linguoid ripples downstream.	1.6 km southwest
Low Westwood Pond (LWS)	Disused Mill Pond with high species diversity in nutrient rich standing water. Previous records of *Luronium natans.*	1.8 km south

3.2.4 The designated sites are considered to be of importance to nature conservation at between the local and national level.

3.2.5 The Site lies within the SSSI Impact Risk Zones for Hatfield Moors SSSI and Thorne, Crowle and Goole Moors SSSI. The Impact Risk Zones for Hatfield Moors SSSI and Thorne, Crowle and Goole SSSI indicate that at the location selected, the proposed development is unlikely to have a harmful effect on either SSSI, and therefore, will not be mentioned further within this report.

3.2.6 Given the distance from the Site to the designated sites, in conjunction with the fact that the proposals are confined to the Site boundary, it is not considered that any of the designated sites will be impacted by the proposals, and as such, designated sites will not be discussed further within this report.

3.3 *Habitats*

3.3.1 Habitats recorded on the Site, their distribution and composition are discussed in order of dominance below. Habitat locations are annotated on Figure 1. Site photographs are displayed in Appendix 2.

g4 Modified grassland

3.3.2 The Site comprises a former modified grassland pasture which has begun to succeed due to the ceasing of grazing.

3.3.3 The dominant plant present on the Site comprised barren brome *Anisantha sterilis*, which was dominating the sward across the Site. A range of other grassland plant species were present including broad-leaved dock *Rumex obtusifolius*, common nettle *Urtica dioica*, cleavers *Galium aparine*, creeping buttercup *Ranunculus repens*, horsetail *Equisetum arvense*, broadleaf plantain *Plantago major,* great willowherb *Epilobium hirsutum,* rush *Juncus sp.,* and meadow foxtail *Alopecurus pratensis*. At the north section of the Site, near the unidentified brook, a substantial amount of Himalayan balsam *Impatiens glandulifera* shoots were identified. Himalayan balsam is an invasive non-native plant listed on Schedule 9 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 .

3.3.4 Modified grassland is not a NERC Act 2006 Section 41 priority habitat nor is it listed within the KBAP. The habitat was considered to be of no greater than site level importance to nature conservation.

u1c Artificial unvegetated, unsealed surface

3.3.5 An access track to the Site is present that is constructed of artificial, unvegetated surfaces. The access track leads into the Site. The Site has no botanical interest but contains a pile of rubble (see target note).

3.3.6 Artificial unvegetated, unsealed surface is not a NERC Act 2006 Section 41 priority habitat nor are they listed within the KBAP. The habitat was considered to be of no greater than site level importance to nature conservation.

3.4 *Species*

Amphibians

3.4.1 WYES returned a total of 49 records of amphibians, 48 of which are historic (outwith the last 10 years), for locations within 2 km of the Site, comprising 28 records of common toad *Bufo bufo,* 19 records of common frog *Rana temporaria*, and two records of palmate newt *Lissotriton helveticus.* The only modern record was of a common frog (deceased) recorded in 2015 approximately 1.9 km south of the Site. The closest record to the Site related to two palmate newts, located approximately 1 km northeast of the Site in 2008 and 2010.

3.4.2 No GCN EPS licence or GCN Class Survey Licence Returns were identified within 2 km of the Site.

3.4.3 The Site location is not eligible in the Natural England GCN District Level Licensing (DLL) scheme.

3.4.4 Three waterbodies are present within 500 m of the Site from a search of Ordnance Survey, all of which are located outwith 250 m of the Site (Figure 3).

3.4.5 No ponds or other water features were identified on the Site. Longwood reservoir is located to the north of the Site within 500 m but a waterbody of this size is unlikely to support GCN due to a lack of aquatic vegetation and a high likelihood of fish presence. Two small ponds were located to the south and southwest of the Site within 500 m but their distance from the Site and the surrounding habitat types make GCN presence on the Site unlikely. However, it should be noted that unidentified ponds/water features may exist within the wider area (within 250 m of the Site). In general, such water features are usually relatively small and are more likely to be used by common amphibians i.e. smooth newt, and/or palmate newt and/or common frog (albeit GCN and common toad may use them in certain circumstances; for example, if there is a larger waterbody close by that supports either of these species).

3.4.6 The terrestrial habitats on the Site are of limited suitability for GCN and common amphibians, with the habitats present on the Site limited in size and offering little sheltering or foraging potential. There is a small rubble pile present on the Site (Figure 1 – TN1) which offers some sheltering opportunities for amphibian species. This area is however small in scale, and located in the southwestern section of the Site, closest to human disturbance from the adjacent footpath and adjacent residential properties.

3.4.7 Given the limited suitability of terrestrial habitats present on the Site, and the absence of good aquatic habitats present on the Site or within 250 m of the Site and limited records within 2 km of the Site provided by WYES, it is considered that GCN are likely absent from the Site and will not be discussed further within this report.

3.4.8 The presence of common amphibian species, albeit unlikely, cannot be ruled out from the Site. Overall, the Site habitats are of no greater than site level value for common amphibians in their terrestrial stage. This is based on the availability of similar and higher quality habitat (including aquatic habitat) in the wider area.

Badger

3.4.9 Due to the persecution of badgers, specific, confidential records have not been provided. However, WYES have confirmed that there are no known badger records within 200 m of the Site. Additionally, WYES confirmed that the nearest sett record is over 2 km from the Site. WYES considered the Site location to falls within the area of '*increased probability of badger activity*'.

3.4.10 No evidence of badger was recorded on the Site during the survey. The Site offers limited sett building potential, such as denser areas of vegetation. The Site habitats are mostly flat further reducing the likelihood of badger establishing a sett on the Site. The Site offers limited opportunities in comparison to other habitats within 2 km which include woodland which is more typically favoured by badgers when establishing a sett.

3.4.11 Badger foraging habitat is limited on site with areas of developed land, sealed surface and modified grassland. Badgers may occasionally cross the Site from time to time as part of a wider territory but given the lack of suitable sett building areas and poor quality foraging habitat, the Site is considered to be of limited value to badgers and no impacts are anticipated to result from the development as proposed.

3.4.12 Given the lack of field signs from walkover survey and the limited scale of the habitats present on the Site, it is considered that the Site is of conservation value to badger at no greater than the site level.

Bats

3.4.13 WYES returned a total of 54 bat records for locations within 2 km of the Site, 25 of which were in the past 10 years. A total of 17 of these records pertained to roosts (five of which are historic), including 13 common pipistrelle *Pipistrellus pipistrellus,* two brown long-eared *Plecotus auritus* and two unidentified bat species. The closest record related to a common pipistrelle roost which is located approximately 710 m northeast of the Site in 2018.

3.4.14 The remaining 37 records, of which 13 are recent, returned related to droppings, flying, foraging or grounded bats and includes brown long-eared bat *Plecotus auritus*, common pipistrelle, noctule *Nyctalus noctula,* soprano pipistrelle *Pipistrellus pygmaeus* and whiskered bat *Myotis mystacinus,* in addition to unidentified pipistrelle species and unidentified myotis species and unidentified bat species. The closest record related to a common pipistrelle bat recorded approximately 249 m south of the Site in 2013. The closest of the recent records pertained to a common pipistrelle recorded approximately 659 m south of the

Site in 2024.

3.4.15 No EPS licences relating to bats was identified using MAGIC within 2 km of the Site.

3.4.16 There are no suitable structures or features present on the Site that have potential to support roosting bats and as such, roosting bats are considered absent from the Site.

3.4.17 The Site offers limited potential for foraging and commuting bats, due to the limited extent and low quality of the habitats present which are dominated by modified grassland. The boundary features to the north of the Site provide some foraging and commuting suitability, however the wider local landscape has habitats of greater quality for commuting and foraging bats, such as woodland edges, areas of scrub, and as such local bats are considered unlikely to be reliant on the limited habitats present on the Site.

3.4.18 Overall, the Site is considered to be of negligible suitability for commuting and foraging bats (Collins, 2023), and the habitats on the Site are considered to be of no more than site level importance for foraging and commuting bats.

Birds

3.4.19 WYES returned a total 113 records comprising 38 bird species for locations within 2 km of the Site. Species returned included three Schedule 1 bird species, as listed within the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) (WCA 1981), 11 Red, 20 Amber and four Green listed BoCC species. Bird species recorded within 2 km of the Site are summarised in Appendix 3.

3.4.20 The Site is unlikely to support ground nesting birds due to its limited size and overlooked nature, being surrounded by residential buildings and scrub which provide vantage points to predatory birds such as corvids. No ground nesting species were observed on the day of the survey and ground nesting birds are not considered to be a likely receptor in relation to the development as proposed.

3.4.21 The residential hedgerows and small scrubby trees located along the northern boundary of the Site have some limited potential to support nesting birds, but as the wider area contains large areas of more optimal habitat to nesting birds including areas of woodland and scrub, the Site is considered to be of importance to breeding birds at site level.

3.4.22 No impacts to birds are anticipated to result from the development and boundary scrub trees and residential hedges will be retained and not impacted by the works.

Invertebrates

3.4.23 WYES returned a singular record comprising one invertebrate species within 2 km of the Site. This field record relates to white ermine moth *Spilosoma lubricipeda* and was located 1.4 km south of the Site in 2016.

3.4.24 The habitats on the Site are unlikely to have offered opportunities for invertebrates, as the flora present was not considered to offer the variety in species, structural diversity and habitat interfaces that would be necessary to support diverse communities of terrestrial invertebrates, especially given the habitat is common and widespread in the local area. The variety of plant species and structures present are sub-optimal overall and unlikely to support notable species or large invertebrate populations but may contribute to foraging opportunities for common species.

3.4.25 The proposed development will require minor loss of low value grassland habitat which is unlikely to impact upon notable invertebrate species. As the wider area surrounding the Site contains extensive areas of habitat of equal or greater value and due to the limited landtake of habitats required to facilitate the

development, the favourable conservation status of the local invertebrate population is unlikely to be impacted by the works.

Reptiles

3.4.26 WYES returned two records of reptiles for locations within 2 km of the Site, both of which were historic. These records comprised two adders *Vipera berus*. The closest record to the Site related to an adder located approximately 380 m northwest of the Site, most recently recorded in 2008.

3.4.27 Overall habitats on the Site currently offer limited suitability for sheltering reptiles with the Site lacking the diversity of habitats typically favoured by reptile species. Adders typically prefer woodland, heathland and moorland habitats and the modified grassland present on site is considered sub-optimal for this species and the presence of adder on site is considered to be unlikely.

3.4.28 There is a small rubble pile present on the Site (Figure 1 – TN1) which offers some sheltering opportunities for reptile species. This area is however small in scale, and located in the southwestern section of the Site, closest to human disturbance from the adjacent footpath and adjacent residential properties.

3.4.29 Given the absence of recent records, the limited suitability and extent of habitats on the Site, and the overall land use of the surrounding area, it is considered that the Site is of no greater than site level importance for reptiles.

Riparian Mammals and White-clawed Crayfish

3.4.30 WYES returned no records of riparian mammals or white-clawed crayfish for locations within 2 km of the Site.

3.4.31 Overall habitats on the Site currently offers limited suitability riparian mammals and white-clawed crayfish. An unnamed stream is culverted beneath much of the Site, however the stream is very close to the source, and does not support the water depth that would typically be expected by these species. There are no other waterbodies or watercourses within 30 m of the Site boundary.

3.4.32 Given the absence of records and suitable habitat, it is considered that riparian mammals and white-clawed crayfish are not a receptor to the proposals, and as such will not be discussed further within this report.

3.5 *Invasive Species*

3.5.1 WYES returned 50 records of invasive species for locations within 2 km of the Site, 27 of which were historic. Invasive species found included: American mink *Neovision vison,* Eastern grey squirrel *Sciurus carolinesis,* Himalayan balsam *Impatiens glandulifera*, Japanese knotweed *Fallopia japonica*, rhododendron ponticum *Rhododendron ponticum* and Signal crayfish *Pacifastacus leniusculus*. The closest record, Japanese knotweed, was located approximately 284 m north of the Site in 2016.

3.5.2 Himalayan balsam was observed within the Site during the survey, present on both the main section of the Site, and off site on either side of the Site on the unidentified stream, as well as much of the surrounding grassland.

4. Impact Assessment, Mitigation and Enhancements

4.1 *Proposals*

4.1.1 Proposals for the Site comprise the partial removal of a small area of *'Modified grassland'* to be replaced by a single storey stable building '*Urban – Developed land, sealed surface*', as detailed within the Paul Matthews Architectural drawing '*Proposed Block Plan*' (Dwg 24/1047/03a, dated 08/2024).

4.2 *Habitats*

4.2.1 Given that the proposals are confined to the site boundary, and that habitats present on the Site are common and widespread in the local landscape, it is anticipated that the loss of habitat at the Site is of importance to nature conservation at no greater than the site level.

4.2.2 A Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment (BNGA) has already been undertaken by Habitat Works Ltd. to formally assess the impacts the proposals have on habitats on the Site. The findings of the BNGA are detailed within the Habitat Works (2024) report '*Leymoor Road, Golcar – Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment*'. This identifies opportunities to increase the habitat value on the Site post-development and recommend measures necessary to achieve a 10% gain in-line with government policy.

4.2.3 The Site is bordered by a small unidentified stream. Although the stream is not subject to the proposals, there is the risk that the stream could be subject to indirect impacts associated with the development. As such, general principles of pollution prevention should be adhered too as detailed within the Guidance for Pollution Prevention (GPP) documents produced by Natural Resources Wales (NRW), Northern Ireland Environment Agency (NIEA) and Scottish Environment Protection Agency (SEPA). These include:

- GPP5 – works and maintenance in or near water (NRW, NIEA and SEPA, 2018);
- GPP21 – pollution incident response planning (NRW, NIEA and SEPA, 2017); and,
- GPP22 – dealing with spills (NRW, NIEA and SEPA, 2018).

4.2.4 Pollution Prevention Guidelines 1 (NRW, NIEA and SEPA, 2013), is now withdrawn but provides a general overview for good practice environmental measures in construction and where followed will assist with protection of the stream:

- Materials shall not be stored within 10 m of any running water or ditch habitat; and,
- Details of the Environment Agency should be stored in the Site office during construction works so that swift contact can be made should any pollution incident occur which may impact watercourses.

4.3 *Protected Species*

Amphibians

4.3.1 GCN are protected under the WCA 1981 (as amended) and the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations (Amendment) (EU Exit) 2019 and are a European Protected Species ("EPS").

4.3.2 Common amphibians are protected under the WCA 1981 (as amended) against sale, barter or exchange of captive animals.

4.3.3 As the presence of common amphibians on the Site cannot be ruled out, it is recommended that Best

Practice Measures (BPM) are implemented during the proposed development works. Any debris present on the Site (TN1) should be dismantled by hand or using hand tools to minimise the potential for harm to common amphibians should they be sheltering within such features. If common amphibians i.e. smooth newt or palmate newt, common frog or common toad are encountered on Site during the works they should be allowed to move away of their own volition. If in immediate danger of injury, they should be carefully moved in gloved hands to an area of safe shelter away from the footprint of works.

4.3.4 In the extremely unlikely event of discovering a GCN on the Site during works, works should cease immediately, and an ecologist should be contacted for further advice.

Badger

4.3.5 Badgers and their setts are protected under the Protection of Badgers Act 1992. It is an offence under the act to kill, injure or take a badger. It is also an offence to destroy, damage or obstruct a currently active badger sett, or to disturb animals within the sett.

4.3.6 Badgers are not considered to be resident on the Site, however they are highly mobile species and have the potential to disperse on to areas of the Site and into working areas. As such it is recommended that the following Best Practice Measures be implemented throughout the works to protect badgers, should they subsequently pass through these areas of the Site. The BPM measures to be followed include:

- Any excavations deeper than 1 m required during the works should be covered overnight. Shallow excavations less than 1 m should have a roughened scaffold board or equivalent placed in them overnight to act as an escape ramp, allowing any animals which may become trapped to exit. Trenches will also be inspected each morning to ensure that no animals have become trapped overnight;
- Food/litter will not be left on Site;
- If in the unlikely event that badgers are encountered during works, then works will cease temporarily and the animal allowed to move away off its own volition. The ecologist will be contacted for advice; and,
- If badgers are suspected to be associated with the Site once construction has commenced, including a suspected badger sett found on or within 30 m of the Site during the works by a contractor, works should cease and an appropriately experienced ecologist should be contacted for advice before continuing.

4.3.7 Additionally, any lighting implemented during the construction stage and upon completion of the development should be directed away from retained vegetated habitats, particularly off-site treelines or scrub lines to allow badgers to continue to use such habitats for foraging and commuting where present locally.

Bats

4.3.8 All species of bat occurring within the UK are included in Schedule 2 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species (Amendment) (EU Exit) Regulations 2019. Under regulation 41 bats are protected from deliberate capture, injury or killing, from deliberate disturbance and from deliberate damage or destruction of a breeding site or resting place (roost).

4.3.9 All UK bats are also included on Schedule 5 of the WCA 1981 (as amended). However, their protection is limited to certain offences. Under the 1981 Act (as amended) it is an offence to intentionally or recklessly disturb bats while they are occupying a structure or place used for shelter or protection, or to obstruct

access to any such place.

4.3.10 Barbastelle *Barbastella barbastellus*, Bechstein's *Myotis bechsteinii*, brown long-eared bat, greater horseshoe *Rhinolophus ferrumequinum*, lesser horseshoe *Rhinolophus hipposideros*, noctule and soprano pipistrelle bats are included as priority species under Section 41 of the NERC Act 2006.

4.3.11 The connectivity of the Site to the wider area through vegetated habitat is not considered to be negatively impacted due to the limited scale of the proposals, in addition to the presence of higher quality foraging and commuting habitat in the wider landscape. Additionally, the proposals include the sewing of a flowering grass mix to be used for grazing, in addition to the planting of individual trees which will increase the value of the Site with respects to foraging bats. As such, further survey in this instance is not considered to be necessary with respect to foraging and commuting bats.

4.3.12 Bat species in the UK are known to be impacted by artificial lighting. In order to avoid impacts associated with artificial light spill on bat flight-lines or foraging habitat, mitigation measures should be implemented whereby the lighting of the proposed development (as well as any temporary lighting to be used during the construction phase) should be designed to avoid light-spill onto suitable surrounding habitats (in particular the site boundary habitats) to safeguard these as foraging and commuting opportunities. It is not anticipated that any additional lighting will be installed on the Site as part of the proposals.

Birds

4.3.13 All wild birds, their nests and eggs are protected under the WCA 1981 (as amended) while a nest is in use or occupied. The nesting bird season is typically considered to fall between March and August (inclusive). Species listed under Schedule 1 of the Act receive additional protection against disturbance whilst occupying a nest site.

4.3.14 The habitats on Site were considered to be of no more than site level importance to local bird populations given the quality of habitat recorded on the Site and the extensive availability of higher quality habitat for nesting birds in the wider area.

4.3.15 To minimise the risk of committing an offence in relation to nesting birds, clearance of any dense vegetation or trees should be programmed to be between September and February inclusive, i.e. to avoid the bird breeding season. If this is not possible, then a nesting bird check (to be undertaken by a suitably experienced ecologist) will be required within 48 hours of habitat removal. If an active nest is found during a nesting bird check, there will be a requirement to establish an exclusion zone around the nest (in consultation with the ecologist) which should be maintained until it has been demonstrated that all fledglings have left the nest and the nest is no longer active. This may require monitoring for periods of at least up to a month dependent on nesting stage. Repeat visits will be required if vegetation removal is not completed within the 48 hour timeframe after the initial nesting bird check.

Reptiles

4.3.16 Common reptile species including grass snake, common lizard and slow worm are protected under Schedule 5 of the WCA 1981 (as amended) against intentional killing or injury.

4.3.17 The site is considered unlikely to support reptile species due to the poor suitability of the grassland habitat present on site and the lack of habitat structures and features across the site. The loss of habitat required to accommodate the proposed stable block is minimal and considered unlikely to impact upon reptiles at greater than the site level.

4.3.18 In the unlikely event that reptiles are present on site, the BMP measured outlined within this report for amphibians will also help to protect any reptiles present on the Site and should be followed as a precaution.

4.3.19 The following BPM should be with regards to reptiles:

- All Site personnel to keep a high level of vigilance for reptiles (and amphibians) during works;
- Good general housekeeping of the Site will be employed. All materials (construction materials/arisings) on Site will be stored in a suitable location at least 5 m away from suitable reptile habitat, e.g. scrub habitats/off-site woodland edge, ideally risen off the ground (e.g. on pallets) or on hard stand/bare ground away from vegetation. Materials arising from the works should be removed from the Site as quickly as possible or placed in a skip or other sealed container immediately if stored on Site. This will avoid colonisation by reptiles and other wildlife and will ensure there is no build-up of debris or other waste which may create suitable habitats for protected species that then has to be removed at a later date; and,
- Should reptiles be encountered works in the area will cease and an ecologist contacted immediately for advice.

4.4 *Invasive Species*

4.4.1 Himalayan balsam was abundant across sections of the Site, however it is also abundant across the unnamed stream catchment, both up and downstream of the Site.

4.4.2 The location of the balsam is outside the footprint of works and will not be disturbed by the development so risk of causing the species to spread off-site is considered to be low. As the plant has been identified within the stream corridor, including upstream of the Site and on adjacent land outside the ownership of the applicant, no specific measures are recommended for trying to manage or control this species on the Site. It is now widely recognised that control of invasive species on watercourses can only be achieved by taking a strategic approach at a catchment level, requiring a commitment from all stakeholders.

4.4.3 Successful management can only typically be achieved by starting on the top of the catchment working in a downstream direction. Efforts to control invasive species on an ad-hoc basis through the catchment is labour intensive, costly and typically fails, particularly with Himalayan balsam which will re-establish from the upstream seed bank, and as such, is not recommended for these works.

4.4.4 Precautionarily, biosecurity measures should be followed during the works, including the cleaning of boots and equipment (e.g. diggers, shovels etc.). All equipment should be cleaned with water and a brush to prevent the inadvertent spread of the species to new locations where it is not currently established.

5. References

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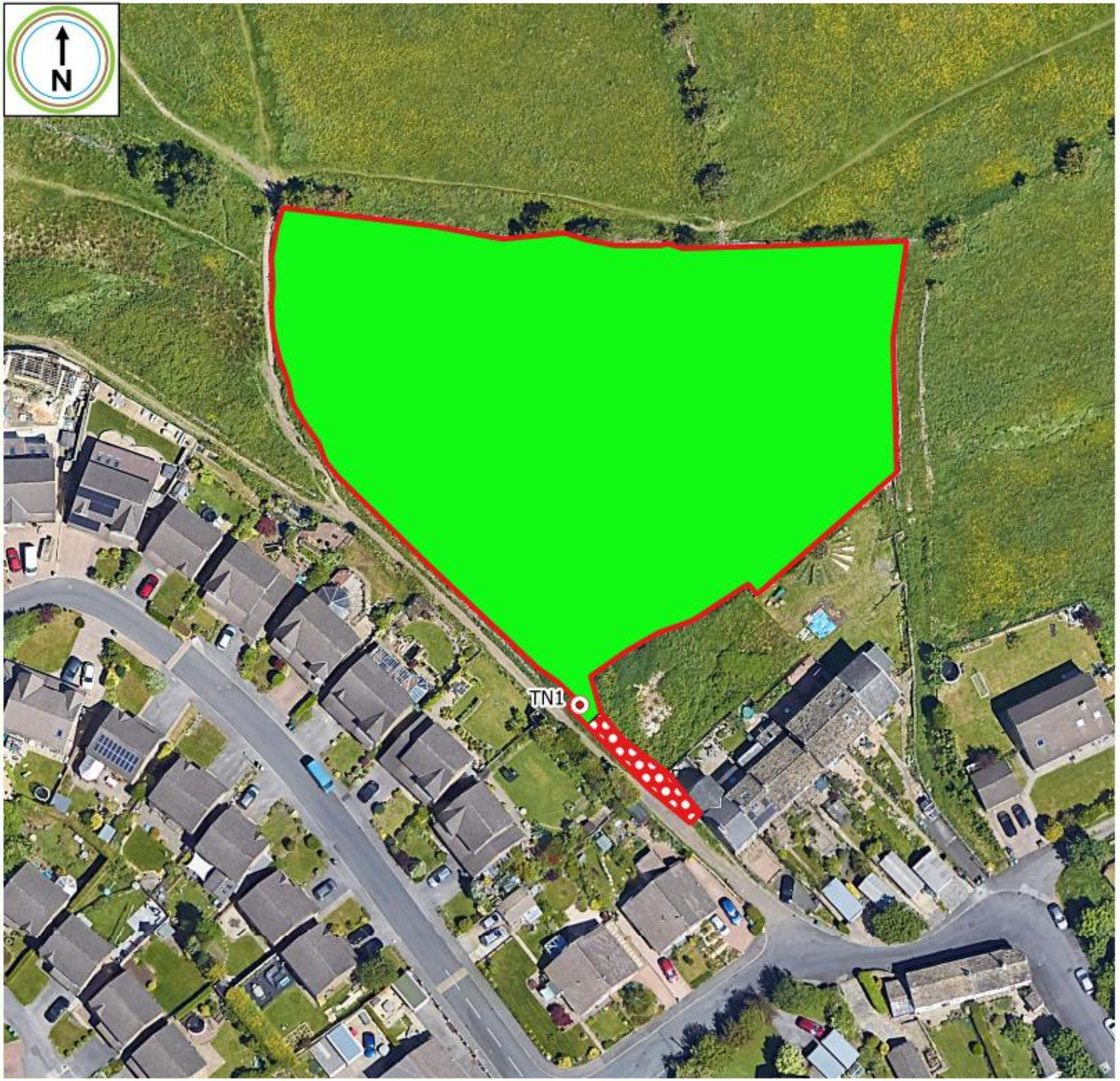
Figure 1. UK Habitat Baseline Habitats Map



Legend

- Site Boundary
- Grassland - Modified grassland
- Urban - Artificial unvegetated, unsealed surface
- Target Note

0 10 20 30 40 m

HABITAT WORKS

Paul Matthews Architectural

Leymoor Road, Golcar

Figure 1
UKHabitats Baseline Habitats Map

Basemap: Copyright Google 2025 | May 2025 | Scale - 1: 2,000 @ A4 | Drawing Reference: 250520/F1/EC

Figure 2. Designated Sites Map

Legend

- Site Boundary
- 2 km Buffer
- Designated Sites
- Designated Sites (Linear)

0 250 500 750 1,000 m

HABITAT WORKS

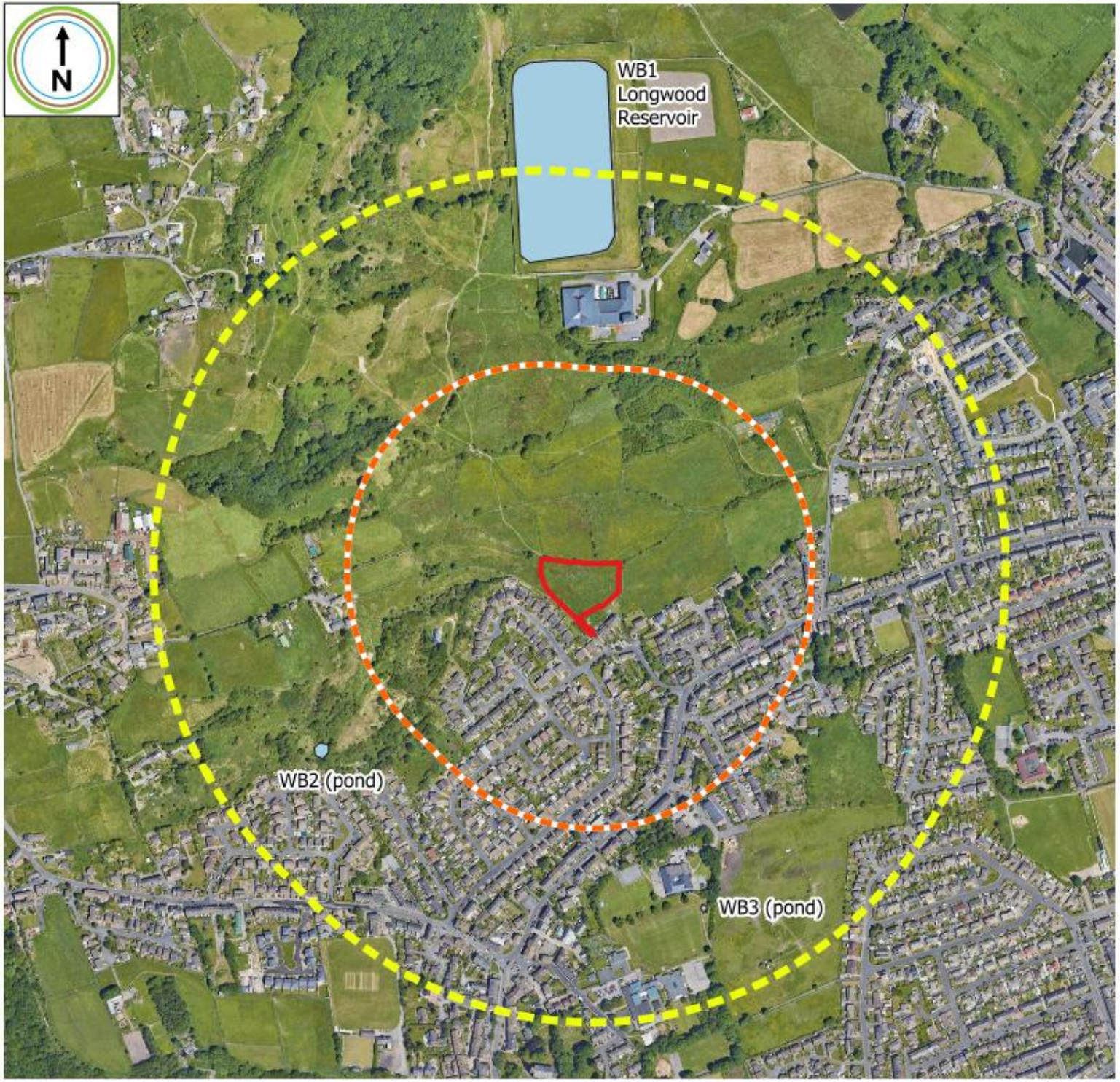
Paul Matthews Architectural

Leymoor Road, Golcar

Figure 2
Designed Sites Map

Basemap: Copyright Google 2024 | May 2025 | Scale - 1: 40,000 @ A4 | Drawing Reference: 250520/F2/EC

Figure 3 – Waterbodies within 500 m of the Site



Legend

- Site Boundary
- 250 m Buffer
- 500 m Buffer
- Waterbody

0 100 200 300 400 m

HABITAT WORKS

Paul Matthews Architectural

Leymoor Road, Golcar

Figure 3
Waterbodies within 500 m of the Site

Appendix 1. Target notes

TN1 – Rubble Pile

Appendix 2. Site Photographs

Photograph 1 – The Site from the northwest corner

Photograph 2 – Rubble Pile (TN1)

Photograph 3 – Unidentified stream (photo taken from northern boundary of the Site, facing off-site)

Photograph 4 – Example of Himalayan balsam

Appendix 3. Bird Species Records Summary

Common Name	Scientific Name	BoCC Status
Redwing	*Turdus iliacus*	Schedule 1, Amber
Fieldfare	*Turdus pilaris*	Schedule 1, Green
Kingfisher	*Alcedo atthis*	Schedule 1, Green
Cuckoo	*Cuculus canorus*	Red
Greenfinch	*Chloris chloris*	Red
House Martin	*Delichon urbicum*	Red
House Sparrow	*Passer domesticus*	Red
Lapwing	*Vanellus vanellus*	Red
Linnet	*Linaria cannabina*	Red
Mistle Thrush	*Turdus viscivorus*	Red
Skylark	*Alauda arvensis*	Red
Spotted Flycatcher	*Muscicapa striata*	Red
Tree Sparrow	*Passer montanus*	Red
Yellowhammer	*Emberiza citrinella*	Red
Bullfinch	*Pyrrhula pyrrhula*	Amber
Coot	*Fulica atra*	Amber
Dipper	*Cinclus cinclus*	Amber
Dunnock	*Prunella modularis*	Amber
Grey Wagtail	*Motacilla cinerea*	Amber
Kestrel	*Falco tinnunculus*	Amber
Mallard	*Anas platyrhynchos*	Amber
Meadow Pipit	*Anthus pratensis*	Amber
Moorhen	*Gallinula chloropus*	Amber
Owl	*Strigiformes*	Amber
Rook	*Corvus frugilegus*	Amber
Snipe	*Gallinago gallinago*	Amber
Song Thrush	*Turdus philomelos*	Amber
Sparrowhawk	*Accipiter nisus*	Amber
Stock Dove	*Columba oenas*	Amber
Tawny Owl	*Strix aluco*	Amber
Willow Warbler	*Phylloscopus trochilus*	Amber
Woodpigeon	*Columba palumbus*	Amber
Wren	*Troglodytes troglodytes*	Amber
Yellow Browed Warbler	*Phylloscopus inornatus*	Amber
Collared Dove	*Streptopelia decaocto*	Green
Goldfinch	*Carduelis carduelis*	Green
Grey Heron	*Ardea cinerea*	Green
Swallow	*Hirundo rustica*	Green