Whitcher Wildlife Ltd.
Ecological Consultants.

LAND ADJACENT TO ASH HOUSE, 240 DUNFORD ROAD, HOLMFIRTH.

OS REF: SE 14592 07459.

PRELIMINARY ECOLOGICAL APPRAISAL.

Ref No: **260303.**

Date: **4th March 2026.**

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1. INTRODUCTION.

1.1. Planning permission is being sought for the development of a new residential dwelling on a parcel of land adjacent to the gardens of Ash House, at 240 Dunford Road in the town of Holmfirth.

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

1.3. The site survey was carried out on 3rd March 2026 and this report outlines the findings of that survey and makes appropriate recommendations.

1.4. The application will be submitted as a self-build and therefore, remains exempt from statutory Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) requirements.

1.5. Appendices I to III of this report provide additional information on protected 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 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.

2.3. 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 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.

2.9. 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. The survey was undertaken by Mitchel Greenhalgh, Managing Director of Whitcher Wildlife and 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 and a NatureScot licence in respect of bats along with class licences for various invertebrates. He is also FISC level 4. He has attended courses run by CIEEM, the Species Recovery Trust, the Field Studies Council and others. He holds a BSc in environmental science attained from the University of Leeds and is an Associate member of CIEEM and therefore committed to continuous professional development.

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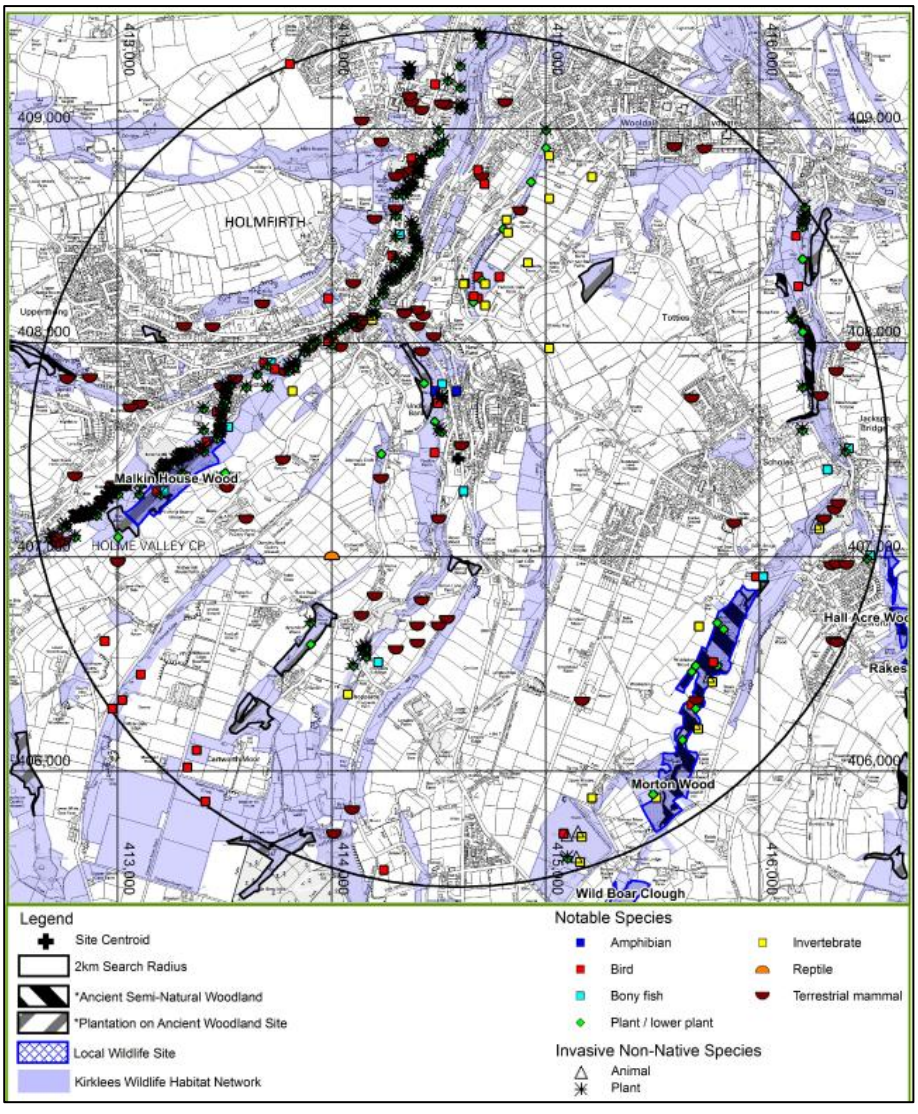
3. SURVEY RESULTS.

3.1. Data Search Results.

3.1.1. A data search request has been submitted to the West Yorkshire Ecology Service (WYES) for records of protected and notable species and the locations of any non-statutory sites.

3.1.2. WYES returned only two records of non-statutory sites within a 2km radius, both of which were Local Wildlife Sites (LWS). These are Malkin House Wood and Morton Wood, neither of which have any relevance to the survey area. The site also lies outside of the Kirklees Wildlife Habitat Network. The below map shows the site in relation to the designated sites and habitat network.



3.1.3. The MAGIC Map website returned no locations of statutory sites within a 2km radius of the survey area, with the closest being Dark Peak Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), located at its closest point, approximately 3km to the southwest of the site. The site lies within Impact Risk Zone (IRZ) 7 of the aforementioned SSSI, but meets none of the criteria deeming it necessary to consult Natural England.

3.1.4. WYES returned only two records of protected species within a 500m radius, the first of which is of great crested newt approximately 350m northwest of the survey area. It appears that the record relates to two ponds at the opposite side of the river Ribble.

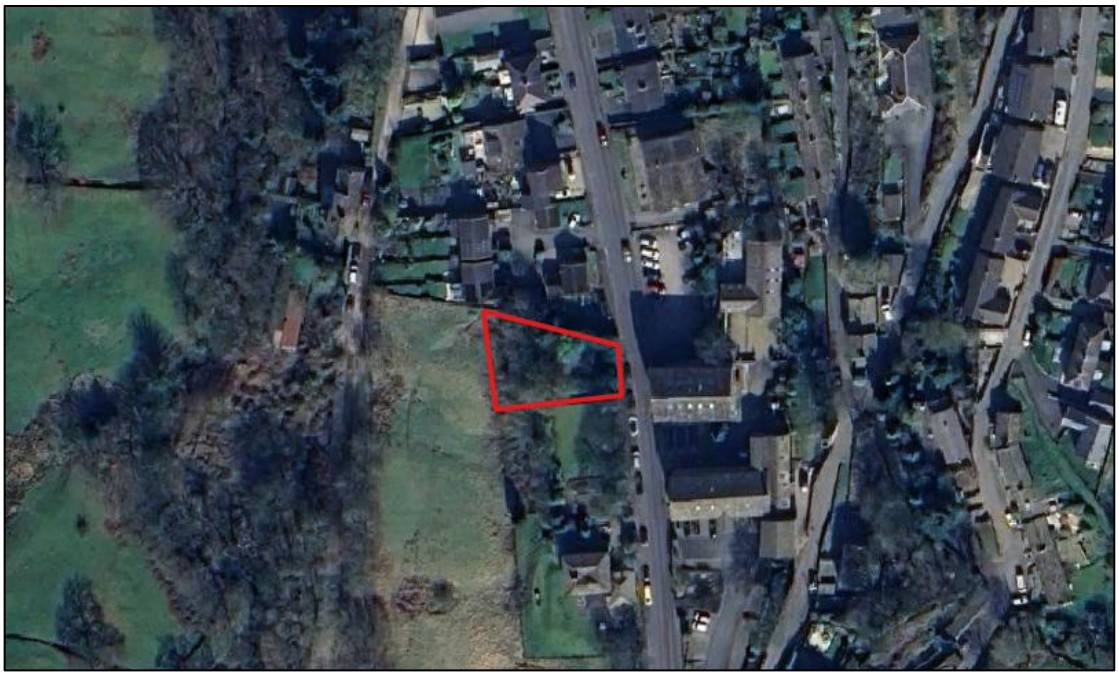
3.1.5. The second record is for badger, approximately 400m from the survey area, but the exact location is not given as it typical of badger records.

3.1.6. WYES also returned records of common bat species, grass snake, lizard and otter, but none of these have any relevance to the survey area.

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

3.2. The Survey Area.

3.2.1. The survey area lies to the north of Ash House at 240 Dunford Road at the southern extent of the town of Holmfirth.



3.2.2. The wider surroundings comprise a mosaic of habitats with the town of Holmfirth to the north and east, open pasture and rough grassland to the immediate west and then the wooded Ribble Valley just west of that.

3.3. Limitations

3.3.1. This survey was carried out during early March and therefore, some plant species may have been missed where they have died back for the winter. However, this is not thought to have limited the classification of the habitats.

3.3.2. The site had largely been cleared in its entirety prior to the survey having taken place which limits the confidence in what habitats and species were present previously.

3.4. Description of Habitats.

3.4.1. Appendix V of this report contains an annotated map marked up with the varying habitats present on the site. The habitats on and adjacent to the site are: -

- h3h – Mixed Scrub.
- u1c – Artificial Unvegetated - Unsealed Surface
- u1b6 – Other Developed Land.
- w1g – Other Broadleaved Woodland.
- h2b – Non-native Ornamental hedgerow
- u1e – Built Linear Feature

3.4.2. h3h – Mixed Scrub.

3.4.2.1. To the very west of the survey area there is a retaining wall, beneath which is a parcel of land that sits lower than the main part of the site. This section of land has been recently cleared of what looks likely to have largely been bramble scrub but now contains nothing but a small number of immature cherry (*Prunus* sp.) and pear (*Pyrus* sp.) trees.

3.4.2.2. Within the centre of this land is a seepage coming from under the retaining wall and extending diagonally northwards to the western boundary. This seepage causes the ground to be waterlogged, and in the absence of the scrub, great willowherb (*Epilobium hirsutum*) and nettle (*Urtica dioica*) are doing well and likely will dominate in the short-term.

3.4.3. u1c – Artificial Unvegetated - Unsealed Surface

3.4.3.1. This habitat comprises the vast majority of the main site which has recently been cleared by machinery. At the time of the survey, bare earth was the dominant habitat although aerial imagery shows it likely to have been scrub / grassland mosaic. Some species still remain around the fringes including bramble (*Rubus fruticosus*), perennial rye grass (*Lolium perenne*), cocksfoot (*Dactylis glomerata*), field woodrush (*Luzula campestris*) and marsh thistle (*Cirsium palustre*). Other species will inevitably have been present too.

3.4.3.2. In the northwestern corner of the site, a large tree has been removed due to its proximity to the neighbouring property and there is a small patch of bamboo also present.

3.4.4. u1b6 – Other Developed Land.

A hardcore access track had been laid from the gate into the site to allow entry for the machinery used for clearance.

3.4.5. w1g – Other Broadleaved Woodland.

Secondary code: 33 line of trees.

Atop the retaining wall, between the main parcel of land on site and the one beneath the retaining wall, lies a row of trees, now heavily topped to only around 5ft in height. These were previously a line of wych elm (*Ulmus glabra*).

3.4.6. h2b – Non-native Ornamental Hedgerow.

A privet (*Ligustrum ovalifolium*) hedgerow runs along the northern and eastern boundary of the site. Cherry laurel (*Prunus laurocerasus*) and holly (*Ilex* sp.). The holly had unusually large oval leaves and is likely a non-native species or cultivar of the native species. This hedgerow too has been severely cut back.

3.4.7. u1e – Built Linear Features.

3.4.7.1. A timber fence runs the length of the southern boundary, separating the site from the gardens of Ash House.

3.4.7.2. As previously mentioned, a stone retaining wall separates the two elevations of the plot.

3.5. Description of Fauna.

3.5.1. Suitable terrestrial habitat is present to the further west of the site, but no badger setts or other field signs were identified within the survey area.

3.5.2. There is no watercourse within the survey area to provide suitable habitat for water vole, otter or white-clawed crayfish. The river Ribble runs approximately 70m to the west, but this is sufficiently distant to deter any species from travelling to the site.

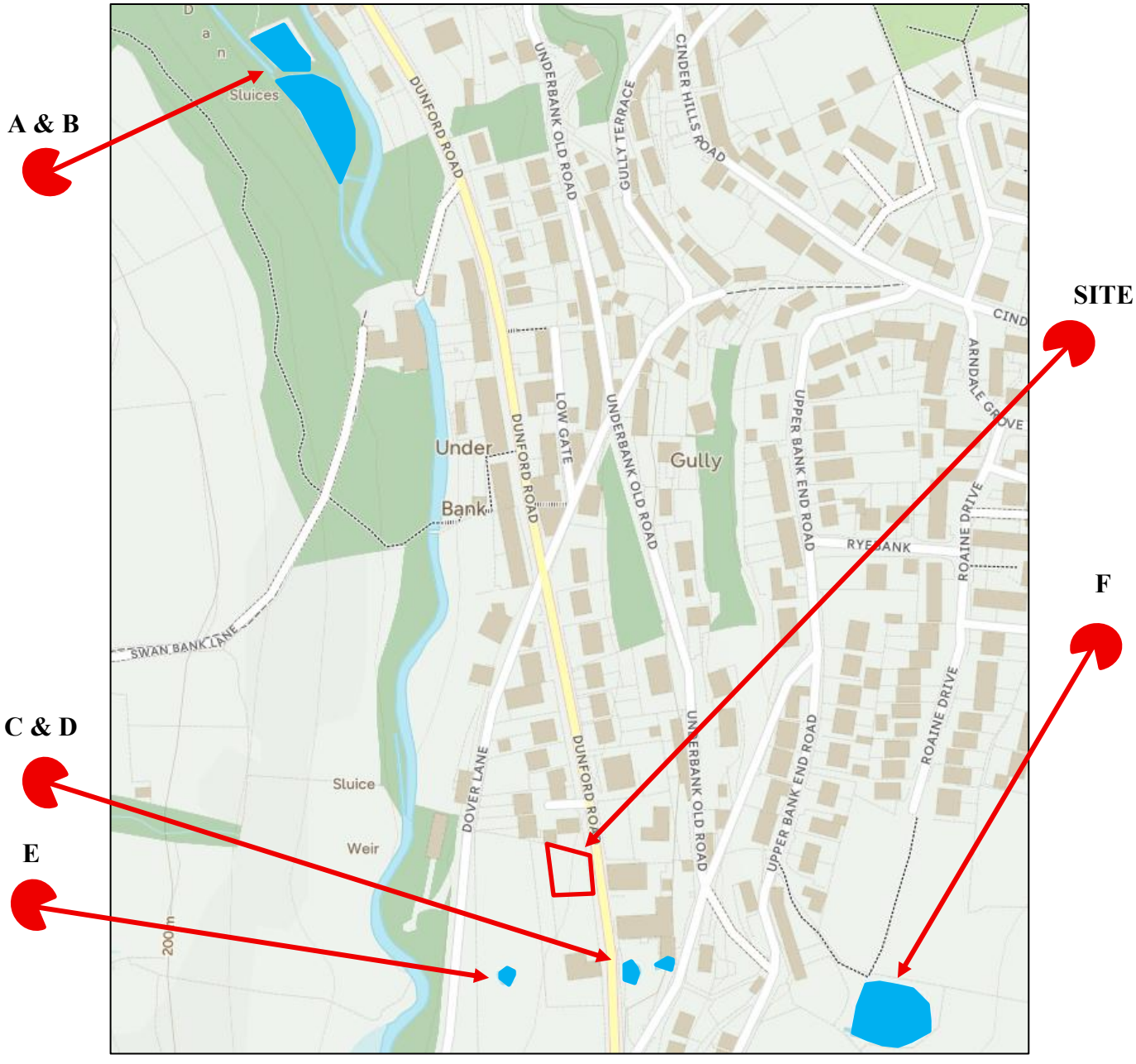
3.5.3. There are no buildings within the survey area to provide suitable habitat for roosting bats. The retaining wall does have gaps within but is low to the ground and until recently has been obscured by dense scrub. Regardless, it will not be impacted by the works.

3.5.4. There are no trees remaining within the survey area which provide suitable roosting opportunities for bats.

3.5.5. The survey area is assessed as providing moderate quality habitat for foraging and commuting bats due to the vegetated habitat providing reasonable commuting habitat. However, the surroundings to the east are rather urban. The best habitat within the vicinity is through the Ribble Valley only a short distance west of the site.

3.5.6. Great crested newts.

3.5.6.1. There are six ponds shown on maps within 500m of the survey area as shown on the Ordnance Survey (OS) map below. These are all labelled and described further.



3.5.6.2. Ponds A & B lie across the opposite side of the river Ribble which will act as a major barrier to movement. There is a record of great crested newt around these ponds but they are discounted due to the presence of the river.

3.5.6.3. Ponds C & D are located a close distance, c. 50m southeast of the site, within the car park of the block of flats. They are ornamental ponds which do offer good aquatic vegetation but no suitable terrestrial habitat immediately surrounding them. Regardless, they are completely fragmented from the site by the very busy Dunford Road. The ponds and road are shown in the images below.

3.5.6.4. Pond E is what appears the best connected to the site and is located only approximately 50m southwest of the survey area. However, when inspected, the pond was found to be dry at the time of the survey. The ground within was still waterlogged so it does appear to hold some water but it is not clear how much and how often, especially considering there has been heavy rainfall in the recent months prior to the survey. Regardless, in the unlikely event that great crested newt did utilise this pond, they would only be able to access the lower elevation section of the survey which will not be impacted by the works, as they would not be able to access above the retaining wall.

3.5.6.5. Pond F was not inspected as it is heavily fragmented from the site by various roads.

3.5.6.6. Overall, it is assessed that the presence of great crested newts within the survey area is very unlikely, with there remaining only some very small chance that they could be present within the western lower section of the site, which regardless will remain unimpacted during the works.

3.5.7. The habitats within the survey area provide suitable habitat for nesting birds within the nesting season, which generally extends from March to August each year, but all vegetation clearance has now been completed.

3.5.8. The survey area provides some suitable habitat for reptile species due to its now open nature and the grasslands to the west, but the habitats within the survey area are far less suitable than those in the nearby environment, especially since the site has been stripped of vegetation. It is considered unlikely that anything other than individual or very low numbers of common reptile species would be present.

3.5.9. The survey area lies outside of the known UK distribution of hazel dormouse and red squirrel and therefore, these species were not considered during this survey.

3.5.10. The survey area provides suitable habitat for hedgehog and other small mammal, although this is now reduced since the vegetation clearance.

3.5.11. Invasive plants species.

3.5.11.1. No invasive, non-native species listed on Schedule 9 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act (1981) were identified within the survey area. However, the client did indicate that *Rhododendron ponticum* had been removed from the eastern boundary of the site during clearance. This seems likely to be true as it is still present in abundance along the roadside boundary of the gardens of ash house, and elsewhere in the gardens.

3.5.11.2. A spreading species of bamboo is present in the northwestern corner of the site, which whilst still in a clump at present, could prove problematic in future. Bamboos are not listed as invasive species on schedule 9 but it is worth noting regardless due to potential further issues.

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4. EVALUATION OF FINDINGS.

4.1. The survey area does not lie within any designated site, and the proposed works will not encroach on or impact any designated site. The survey area lies within SSSI IRZ7, however, the development does not meet the criteria necessary to consult Natural England. Therefore, the proposed works will not impact upon any statutory or non-statutory designated site.

4.2. No badger setts or field signs were identified within the survey area and therefore, with due care, the works will have no impact on badger.

4.3. There is no watercourse within the survey area to provide suitable habitat for water vole, otter or white clawed crayfish and therefore, the proposed works will not impact upon these species.

4.4. There are no buildings or trees within the survey area which provide features suitable for roosting bats which will be impacted by the works. Therefore, the works will have no impact on roosting bats.

4.5. The survey area is assessed as providing moderate quality habitat for foraging and commuting bats. Therefore, suitable precautions will be required to ensure that the proposed works do not impact upon foraging and commuting bats.

4.6. The presence of great crested newts within the survey area is considered very unlikely and therefore, provided precautions are in place during the works, the proposed works are unlikely to impact upon this species.

4.7. The survey area provides some suitable habitat for nesting birds within the nesting season (March to August) and therefore, if any further vegetation clearance works are to take place during this period, there may be a negative impact upon nesting birds.

4.8. The survey area provides some limited suitable habitat for reptiles although far less than the further surroundings. Therefore, suitable precautions will ensure the development has no impact upon reptiles.

4.9. The survey area lies outside of the known UK distribution of hazel dormouse and red squirrel and therefore, the proposed works will not impact upon these species.

4.10. The survey area provides suitable habitat for hedgehog and other small mammals and therefore, suitable precautionary measures will be required to ensure the development has no impact upon these species.

4.11. Although no invasive, non-native species listed on Schedule 9 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act (1981) were identified within the survey area, *Rhododendron ponticum is* known to have been previously present and could grow back. Therefore, further recommendations are made in the following section in regard to invasive species.

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5. RECOMMENDATIONS.

5.1. The habitats on site still provide suitable habitat for nesting birds within the nesting season, which generally extends from March to August each year. Therefore, it is recommended that no further vegetation clearance, or other works which could impact suitable nesting habitat, be carried during the nesting season. If works must be carried out within the nesting season, these should be immediately preceded by a nesting bird survey undertaken by a competent person. Any nests identified must be left undisturbed until the young have fledged.

5.2. There are ponds present close to the survey area, but any impact to great crested newts is deemed unlikely. Therefore, it is recommended that due care is taken by all on-site personnel throughout the works and that the following precautions are implemented:

- Any further vegetation clearance should be kept to a minimum height of 150mm.
- Any tracked machinery or vehicles should be kept to existing hardstanding paths where paths where possible.
- One access / egress to the site should be used and maintained throughout the works to reduce the footprint of the disturbance.
- Any materials should be stored on pallets and not directly on the ground. Any materials needed should then be raised cleanly and not dragged.
- Any refugia on site such as log piles, rocks, leaf litter etc. should remain undisturbed during the works.

In the unlikely event that a great crested newt is found, the works should cease immediately. The newt should be photographed for identification purposes and Whitcher Wildlife Ltd should be contacted for further advice. The above recommendations will also ensure reptiles are protected throughout the works.

5.3. No badger setts or field signs were identified during the survey but badger could be present within the wider area. Therefore, it is recommended that no open excavations are left overnight which could act as a pitfall for badger and other species, and that any pipework on site be capped at the end of each shift.

5.4. It is recommended that should the rhododendron on site return, that is be dug out from the root and disposed of as controlled waste. It would also be wise to remove the bamboo from the site before it begins to spread.

5.5. It is recommended that a sensitive lighting scheme be devised for the development which limits the amount of excess light infringement on the natural habitats located to the west.

5.6. Biodiversity enhancements.

5.6.1. It is recommended that the non-native hedge be removed from the perimeter of the site and replaced with native species which will be more beneficial to native wildlife. This should include berry and nut-bearing species.

5.6.2. It is recommended that the row of wych elms currently heavily topped, be allowed to regrow to a reasonable height and then managed as a hedgerow.

5.6.3. It is recommended that the lower elevation section of the land which is not to be built on, be planted with native scrub species to improve the biodiversity of the site post-works.

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Prepared by:	
Mitchel Greenhalgh BSc ACIEEM	Date: 4th March 2026.

Checked by:	
Ruth Georgiou BSc MCIEEM	Date: 5th March 2026.

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Appendix I. BADGER INFORMATION.

Ecology

Badgers are territorial animals who live in social groups called 'clans'. The territory of these clans can vary in size from 0.2 km^2 to 1.5 km^2 with anywhere between two and twenty Badgers present. In areas where two clans meet territorial boundaries become well-defined, marked by a series of dung pits called latrines. In areas with relatively low Badger populations there will be less competition for territory and the number of territorial markings will be low or even non-existent.

Badgers use paths around their territory repeatedly, following a scent trail from previous use; thus, Badger paths become well worn. These paths are important to the Badgers and obstruction to these paths will interfere with the Badger's movement around their territory.

Badger setts are any structure or place which displays signs of current or seasonal use by a Badger. Within a Badger clan territory there can be several Badger setts which are categorised in the following ways:

- ***Main Sett.*** *There will normally be one main sett in a territory. This will generally be the largest sett in the territory, typically with five or more entrances, will be permanently occupied throughout the year and used as the breeding sett.*
- ***Outlying Sett.*** *These are the smallest setts with generally only one or two entrances. They are intermittently occupied and there can be any number in a territory.*
- ***Annex Sett.*** *A sett of intermediate size, located close to the main sett and connected by well-defined paths. These are occupied for prolonged periods and may be used as a second breeding sett if there are two breeding sows in the clan.*
- ***Subsidiary Sett.*** *A sett of intermediate size, similar to an annex sett but located at some distance from the main sett and not connected to the main sett by defined paths.*

Badgers can mate at any time of year but delayed implantation controls the time of birth. Most cubs are born between January and March but they can be born at any time

between December and June. An average of two to three Badger cubs are born to each sow and will initially be totally dependent on their mother. Cubs do not appear above ground until during April or May when they are 8 – 10 weeks old and are not fully weaned until at least June of each year.

Badgers are omnivorous but their preferred food source is worms and insects. Worms are most abundant in well-grazed pastureland while mixed woodland is a good source of insects and grubs. Badgers have a soft and supple nose with which they snuffle into the ground to find insects. When they do this, they leave distinct round holes known as snuffle holes or grubbings. Badgers easily find worms on the surface of well-grazed pastureland and often leave no visible indications of this foraging.

Surveys

Walkover surveys can be conducted to identify the presence of Badgers within an area. This will identify the presence of any setts, dung pits, paths or foraging activity.

Bait marking techniques can be used to survey Badger territories. This involves feeding Badgers at each sett pellets of different colours over a period of at least two weeks. The colour of pellet found in dung pits and territorial latrines shows what areas each clan of Badgers is occupying.

Legislation

Badgers are protected under Schedule 6 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act (1981) and the Protection of Badgers Act (1992).

This makes it an offence to take, kill or injure a Badger, cruelly ill-treat a badger, use Badger tongs or firearms in the killing or taking (or attempt) of a Badger. It is also an offence to damage, destroy, obstruct access to, or any entrance of, a Badger sett, to cause a dog to enter a Badger sett or disturb a Badger while it is occupying a sett.

Appendix II. 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 III. GREAT CRESTED NEWT INFORMATION.

Ecology

Great Crested Newts breed in ponds and other water bodies. They can begin to migrate to their breeding ponds as early as the first frost-free days in late January with the majority reaching their breeding ponds by mid-March. Timing will be influenced by several factors, primarily evening temperatures above 5^{o}C and rainfall.

The peak egg-laying period is from mid-March to mid-May. The newts will lay their eggs individually, mainly on the leaves of submerged plants. The larva hatch after three weeks and then take another 2-3 months to complete larval development. Adult newts generally leave their breeding ponds from late May onwards.

Once the larvae have completed metamorphosis (the transition from aquatic larvae, efts, to land-adapted juveniles), they emerge from the pond. This emergence begins in late August and generally continues until late October. It takes 2-4 years to reach sexual maturity, during which time the newts will be land based.

Adults and immature newts spend the winter in places that afford protection from frost and flooding. This will generally be underground amongst tree roots, in mammal burrows, or under suitable refuges above ground like deadwood or rubble piles. Hibernation may last from October to February.

Whilst on land, outside the hibernation period, great crested newts will forage at night, taking a wide range of invertebrate prey.

Great Crested Newts therefore spend the majority of their time on land and only visit the ponds for breeding purposes.

Great Crested Newts will travel large distances between ponds and terrestrial refuges. It is recommended that anywhere within 500m of a pond should be treated as potential Great Crested Newt habitat.

Surveys

Walkover surveys will identify the suitability of any ponds within the area for Great Crested Newts by using a HSI assessment. The terrestrial habitat and their links will also be assessed.

Aquatic surveys of newts can be carried out through the trapping of ponds in suitable weather conditions during the breeding season, although these surveys do not provide accurate population estimates.

Terrestrial surveys and exclusions can be conducted between March and September when newts are moving out of breeding ponds.

An experienced surveyor must carry out the surveys and must be in possession of an appropriate Natural England Great Crested Newt survey licence.

It is essential that Great Crested Newt surveys are planned well in advance of any development and ideally before Planning Consent is sought. Surveys can only be carried out at the appropriate time of year and repeat surveys are essential.

Legislation

Great Crested Newts are protected under Appendix II of the BERN Convention (1982), Schedule 5 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act (1981), Annex II and IV of the Habitats Directive, Annex II of the Conservation and Wildlife Regulations (2010) and are listed under section 41 of the Natural Environment and Communities Act (2006) making them a species of principal importance.

This makes it an offence to kill, injure or take any Great Crested Newt, to interfere with any place used for shelter or protection, or to intentionally disturb any animal occupying such a place.

If Great Crested Newts are to be affected by any development, a thorough assessment of the population is essential followed by the design of a comprehensive mitigation package. Only when this has been done can a licence application be submitted to Natural England for approval. It takes 30 working days for a licence application to be determined and the period that mitigation measures take can be measured in months. It is therefore essential to plan well in advance of development commencing.

Appendix IV. ANNOTATED MAP OF THE SURVEY AREA.

Site: Dunford Road, Holmfirth

Reference: 260303

Date: 05.03.2026

Produced by: Mitch Greenhalgh