

Blacker Farm, Emley
Ecological Impact Assessment
8th May 2026



Prepared by:

Middleton Bell Ecology, School House, Green Moor, Sheffield, S35 7DQ

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Site Name: Blacker Farm, Emley	
Local Authority Kirklees Council	Grid Reference SE2398211366
Surveyor Greg Slack MCIEEM	Date of Survey 30/06/2025
Soilscape In an area of slowly permeable seasonally wet acid loamy and clayey soils	Designation of Site None

UK Habitat Classification habitats on Site

Habitats: g3c – other neutral grassland; g4 – modified grassland; h2a6 – Other native hedgerow; h2b – non-native and ornamental hedgerow ; u1b5 - buildings, u1b6 - other developed land, u1c – unvegetated, unsealed surface, and u1f – sparsely vegetated urban land.

Secondary codes: 32 – scattered tree, 33 – line of trees, 828 – vegetated garden.

Protected/Notable Species, Constraints on Site

Bats (roosting), common bird species and potentially also common amphibian species.

1. Summary

- 1.1.1 This Ecological Impact Assessment for a site at Blacker Farm, Emley was commissioned by the planning consultant James Roberts on behalf of Elizabeth Cox at Carter Jonas. The survey was commissioned to inform a planning application for the conversion of one stables building and a kennels to form three dwellings, and the demolition of a second stables building to be replaced by two additional dwellings, and the refurbishment of the existing farmhouse.
- 1.1.2 The red line boundary was approximately 0.65 ha in size. Habitats present within the site included other neutral grassland, modified grassland, sparsely vegetated urban land, developed land, vegetated garden, native and non-native hedgerow, and scattered trees. The site was located on a south-facing hillside between the northern edges of Skelmanthorpe and Clayton West.
- 1.1.3 The site was considered suitable for use by bats, birds, common amphibian species, hedgehogs, and common invertebrate species. A common pipistrelle day roost was confirmed within the farmhouse. The populations of bats were considered to be of up to local importance, while the habitats and other species present were considered to be of no greater than site level importance.
- 1.1.4 The likely unmitigated impacts of the development were:
- The loss of approximately 370 m² of other neutral grassland, approximately 620 m² of modified grassland, and one small cherry tree.
 - The creation of approximately 1130 m² of vegetated garden habitat.
 - The loss of bird nesting habitat and the potential removal of active bird nests.
 - The potential loss of bat roost features and disturbance, killing, or injury of bats.
 - The potential disturbance, killing, or injury of common amphibian species.
 - Increased lighting affecting nocturnal species such as bats and birds.
 - Biosecurity risks associated with the Himalayan balsam on site as well as imported soils, plants, and landscaping materials.
- 1.1.5 The following mitigation and enhancement measures were considered necessary:
- Retention of the confirmed bat roost within the farmhouse with precautionary working methods and toolbox talks to protect bats during the work.
 - External lighting designed to minimise impacts on nocturnal wildlife.
 - Vegetation clearance and demolition works to avoid the bird nesting season or be preceded by checks for active nests.
 - Precautionary measures to protect amphibians during construction works.
 - Removal and management of Himalayan balsam prior to construction.
 - The enhancement of approximately 720 m² of other neutral grassland.
 - The planting of 70 m of species-rich native hedgerow and two new fruit trees.
 - The installation of integrated bat and bird boxes within the new dwellings.
 - The creation of wildlife-friendly flower rich lawns.
- 1.1.6 The development was expected to result in a biodiversity net gain of 0.14 Habitat Units (a 13.33 % gain) and 0.26 Hedgerow Units (a 63.87 % gain).
- 1.1.7 The results of this survey and report are considered valid for a period of 24 months. After this time updated survey work is likely to be required.

2. Introduction

- 2.1.1 This Ecological Impact Assessment for a site at Blacker Farm was commissioned by the planning consultant James Roberts on behalf of Elizabeth Cox at Carter Jonas on 12th June 2025. The survey was commissioned to inform a planning application for the conversion of one stables building and a kennels to form three dwellings, and the demolition of a second stables to be replaced by a further two dwellings. An existing farmhouse will also be refurbished as part of the proposed work. The proposed layout is shown in Appendix 1.
- 2.1.2 The red line boundary was approximately 0.65 ha in size. The development site was located between the northern edges of Skelmanthorpe and Clayton West, West Yorkshire. The site was located on a south facing hillside to the north of Park Gate Dike and Blacker Wood (Figure 1).

Figure 1. The site location as indicated by red line boundary shown



- 2.1.3 The purpose of this report is to present the findings of a desk-based study, UK Habitat Classification survey, and assessment of the site's suitability to support protected or notable species. The report includes consideration of the value, likely impacts and effects of the proposed development on protected and notable species and habitats. Detail on suitable mitigation and compensation measures necessary to avoid or reduce these impacts are included within the report.
- 2.1.4 Key legislation relating to designated sites, protected species, and habitats is detailed in Appendix 2. The implications of legislation are detailed in the body of the report where applicable.

3. Site Description

- 3.1.1 The site consisted of a farmhouse (Building A), large modern barn and stables (Building B), stone stables (Building C), and stone barn and kennels (Building D). The building locations are shown on Figure 2. A hardstanding yard was present between the buildings, with a small garden to the south of the farmhouse, and to the west of the

stone barn. Additional paddocks, one large and one small menage, hedgerows and an access road made up the remainder of the survey area.

- 3.1.2 The site falls within National Character Area 38: The Nottinghamshire, Derbyshire and Yorkshire Coalfield. This National Character Area (NCA) comprises a generally low-lying area, with hills and escarpments above wide valleys, the landscape embraces major industrial towns and cities as well as villages and countryside. Over half of the NCA is currently designated as greenbelt land; this maintains some distinction between settlements and represents areas that are often under pressure for development and changes in land use. Very little of the NCA is designated for geology or nature conservation, but instead the landscape is dotted with many pockets and patches of habitat where species find refuge. This is often on land that was once worked for minerals or occupied by major industry.
- 3.1.3 The Soilscales resource¹ shows the site to be in an area of slowly permeable seasonally wet acid loamy and clayey soils.

4. Methodology

4.1 Data Consultation

- 4.1.1 West Yorkshire Ecology were to request the following information for locations within a 2 km radius of the site:
- Protected and notable species records.
 - The boundaries of non-statutory designated sites of nature conservation interest.
- 4.1.2 A search of the Multi-Agency Geographical Information for the Countryside (MAGIC) website was also undertaken to determine the following for locations within a 2 km radius of the site:
- The boundaries of statutory designated sites of nature conservation interest.
 - The locations of historic European Protected Species (EPS) licences granted by Natural England.

4.2 Field Survey

UK Habitat Classification Survey

- 4.2.1 The site was surveyed on 30th June 2025 using UK Habitat Classification habitat survey methodology (UKHab Ltd, 2023) by Greg Slack MCIEEM. Greg is a competent ecologist with more than 15 years' experience and holds a Natural England bat survey licence (WML-A34-Level 4, 2025-84759-CL20-BAT) and Natural England great crested newt *Triturus cristatus* survey licence (CL08-Level 1, 2015-18073-CLS-CLS).
- 4.2.2 The surveyor methodically covered the site, searching for notable, rare or scarce plant species and evidence of protected species including bats and species of nature conservation importance (including a search of suitable features for signs of bats). The

¹ <http://www.landis.org.uk/soilscales/> [accessed 14th July 2025]

interior of the buildings was checked with particular attention paid to the roof void present in the dwelling. Features of interest are presented on the UK Habitat Classification plan, using Secondary Codes and Target Notes.

- 4.2.3 Aerial photographs (Google Earth, Bing Mapping, and ESRI imagery) and Ordnance Survey mapping were studied to consider the wider context and to look for ecological features that would not be evident on the ground during the walkover survey. This is particularly useful for identifying wildlife corridors and ponds.

Nocturnal Survey

- 4.2.4 Three nocturnal surveys were completed on 15th July, 4th and 6th August 2025. One survey was completed on the farmhouse (Building A), and two nocturnal surveys were completed on the stone stables and kennels (Building C and D) in compliance with the Bat Survey Guidelines (Collins, 2023). No nocturnal survey was undertaken on the large modern barn and stable block (Building B).
- 4.2.5 Two surveyor positions were used to cover the farmhouse, and two were used to cover the stone barn (Building C). Four surveyor positions were used to cover the kennels and stone barn complex (Building D).
- 4.2.6 The surveyor positions are shown on Figure 2. The following personnel conducted the nocturnal surveys and were equipped with Wildlife Acoustics EM Touch bat detectors and tablet recorders:

- Greg Slack;
- Amanda Murphy (Qual CIEEM, WML-A34-Level 2, 2020-47913-CLS-CLS);
- Ian Wright (WML-A34-Level 2, 2023-11218-CLS-CLS); and
- Carl Dixon.

Figure 2. Nocturnal survey plan



- 4.2.7 The night vision equipment used during each survey is shown in Table 1, along with the surveyor's initials.

Table 1. Night vision equipment used during the surveys

Surveyor Position	15 th July 2025	4 th August 2025	6 th August 2025
A1	N/A	CD – Canon XA10	N/A
A2	N/A	GS – Pixfra Arc A613 & Canon XA10	N/A
C1	IW - Panasonic VX980	OP – Nightfox Whisker	N/A
C2	Unsupervised – Guide TK612	JP – Canon XA10	N/A
D1	Unsupervised – Pixfra Arc A613	N/A	OP – Nightfox Whisker
D2	GS – Canon XA10	N/A	GS – Pixfra Arc A613 & Canon XA10
D3	CD – Canon XA10	N/A	CD – Canon XA10
D4	AM – Canon XA10 and Nightfox Whisker	N/A	JP – Canon XA10

- 4.2.8 The emergence surveys continued from 15 minutes before sunset until 1.5 hours after sunset. The camera footage was reviewed as required to check and confirm the observations made by the surveyors.

4.3 Method of Assessment

- 4.3.1 In line with CIEEM guidelines (CIEEM, 2017) the survey results were used to identify any ecological constraints to the proposed development, any further surveys, and any mitigation measures likely to be required. Opportunities for ecological enhancement measures were also included where possible.
- 4.3.2 The value and sensitivity of ecological features present on site were determined based on the guidance provided within 'Guidelines on Ecological Impact Assessment in the UK and Ireland' (CIEEM, 2018). Individual ecological receptors (habitats and species that could be affected by the development) were assigned a geographic level of importance for nature conservation. The highest level is international, decreasing through national, regional, county, local and lastly site importance.

4.4 Biodiversity Calculation

- 4.4.1 The Statutory Biodiversity Metric (Defra, 2023) was used to calculate the ecological impact of this scheme within the context of the red line boundary. This metric uses habitat as a proxy for wider biodiversity with different habitat types scored according to their relative biodiversity value. This value is then adjusted depending on the condition and location of the habitat, to calculate 'biodiversity units'. The Statutory Biodiversity Metric incorporates similar but separate calculations for habitats that require a different method of measurement such as hedgerows, lines of trees, rivers, streams and street trees. Calculations are undertaken in a purpose designed spreadsheet, which provides the main output of the process.

4.5 Survey Limitations

- 4.5.1 Rain showers that were not forecast were recorded throughout the initial nocturnal bat survey. Although the rain was restricted to spots, drizzle, and light rain and was intermittent between dry spells, it could potentially have discouraged a bat from emerging to forage during the survey. The buildings covered during the survey

comprised the stone barn (Building C), and the barn and kennels complex (Building D).

- 4.5.2 Both buildings were relatively open internally. It is anticipated that bats roosting within the buildings would have been extremely likely to emerge and forage internally, at least briefly. Both buildings had large openings (barn doors, unglazed windows etc) that would have allowed the echolocation calls of any bats flying within the buildings to be picked up by the surveyors around the perimeter. It is therefore concluded that while it is possible that a single or low number of bats remained within their roosts during the survey, it is more likely that bats roosting within the buildings would have been recorded by surveyors if present.

5. Ecological Baseline

5.1 Summary

- 5.1.1 The site comprised a farmhouse (Building A), a modern barn and stable block (Building B), a stone barn used as a tack room (Building C), and a second 'U-shaped' stone barn and kennels (Building D). A gravel and hard-standing yard was present between and to the north of the buildings. The site extended along a hard standing track as far as Park Lane to the west. Garden areas were present to the north and south of the farmhouse and horse-grazed paddocks to the south and west (Plate 1 and 2).

Plate 1. The eastern end of the site viewed from the south



Plate 2. The eastern half of the access track at the western end of the site viewed from the south



- 5.1.2 The survey area was used by foraging and roosting bats, common bird species, and potentially common amphibian species (but not likely to include great crested newts), and common invertebrate species.
- 5.1.3 The populations of bats using the site were considered to be of up to local importance. All other habitats and species present were considered to be of no greater than Site level importance.
- 5.1.4 A plan of the habitats recorded within the site is given as Appendix 3 with a list of plant species recorded during the survey given in Appendix 4.

5.2 Designated Sites

- 5.2.1 No statutory designated sites were present within the 2 km desk study area but six locally designated sites were present. A summary of the sites present is included in Table 2, with their location given in Appendix 5.

Table 2. Designated sites

Designation	Name	Description	Distance and direction to site
Local Wildlife Site	Blacker Wood	Oak and sycamore woodland identified as ancient semi-natural woodland. Bluebells <i>Hyacinthoides non-scripta</i> are present but scattered with only small dense patches.	140 south
	Park Gate Dyke	Traditionally managed field of herb rich grassland.	310 m southeast
	High Bridge Wood	An area of plantation woodland with bluebells present in the south and west.	1455 m south
	Hob Royd Shrogg and Miry Greaves Shrogg	Two areas of plantation woodland sloping down towards a stream, Thorpe Dyke. A reasonably species-rich ground flora was present including some bluebells.	1490 m south
	Riding Wood	Area of ancient woodland. Two streams run north from the south and east, and the woodland has areas of hummocky ground with spoil heaps and disturbance from heavy machinery in the central part of the woodland. Areas of bluebell were also present.	1665 m southeast

Designation	Name	Description	Distance and direction to site
	Cliffe Woods Park Quarry	A 50 m long 4 m high quarry face designated for its geological interest.	1815 m east-southeast

- 5.2.2 The eastern end of the site lay adjacent to the Kirklees Wildlife Habitat Network which included the tree line adjacent to the eastern site boundary. The location of the designated sites, the Kirklees Wildlife Habitat Network, and the ancient woodland in the area is shown in a figure provided by West Yorkshire Ecology included as Appendix 5.

5.3 Habitats

g3c – other neutral grassland

- 5.3.1 The area of horse-grazed pasture to the south of the buildings comprised g3c – other neutral grassland (Plate 3).

Plate 3. Area of other neutral grassland to the south of the buildings (viewed from a drone to the south)



- 5.3.2 The area within the red line boundary was subject to the highest footfall as the access between the paddocks and the stables was via this area. The species list and DAFOR scores are taken for the field as a whole as this is considered representative of this area if it was left undisturbed, however, the condition assessment was focused on the area within the red line boundary only.
- 5.3.3 The grass species present comprised dominant red fescue *Festuca rubra*, abundant cocksfoot *Dactylis glomerata*, frequently occurring perennial rye-grass *Lolium perenne*, and occasional Yorkshire fog *Holcus lanatus*.
- 5.3.4 The other species present included areas of locally dominant creeping thistle, occasionally occurring pineapple weed *Matricaria discoidea*, dandelion sp. *Taraxacum* spp., yarrow *Achillea millefolium*, and ribwort plantain *Plantago lanceolata*. Rarely occurring species included common nettle *Urtica dioica*, broad-leaved plantain *Plantago major*, foxglove *Digitalis purpurea*, creeping buttercup *Ranunculus repens*,

herb Robert *Geranium robertianum*, cleavers *Galium aparine*, red clover *Trifolium pratense*, ragwort *Jacobaea vulgaris*, bramble *Rubus fruticosus*, and saplings of the tree species wild cherry *Prunus avium* and elder *Sambucus nigra*.

- 5.3.5 The habitat was considered to be in poor condition as assessed against the Statutory Biodiversity Metric Condition Assessment criteria (DEFRA, 2023). The habitat was not considered to pass Criterion A – requiring the grassland to be a good example of its habitat type. This Criterion is essential for the habitat to achieve moderate or good condition. It would also have failed Criteria E combined cover of species indicative of suboptimal condition and physical damage less than 5% of the total area and F which requires 10 or more vascular plants per m². During the survey an average of 5.3 plant species per m² were recorded.

g4 – modified grassland

- 5.3.6 The area of grassland within the gardens comprised g4 modified grassland (Plate 4). It was also considered that the paddock to the west of the kennels also comprised modified grassland although the composition and management of that area meant that the species composition and condition was different to the lawns.

Plate 4. The area of modified grassland within the lawn adjacent to Building C



- 5.3.7 The grass species present within the lawns comprised abundant Yorkshire fog and perennial rye-grass. Other species comprised frequently occurring dandelion sp., creeping buttercup, common nettle, occasional dock *Rumex* spp., and rarely occurring ribwort plantain, and foxglove.
- 5.3.8 This habitat was considered to be in poor condition. This was principally because the grassland failed Condition Criterion A which states that there must be at least six plant species present per m². An average of four vascular plant species per m² were recorded during the survey across four samples. The example sward is shown in Plate 5 below. A static caravan (Plate 6) was present within this area.

Plate 5. Example sward within the lawn area of g4 modified grassland



Plate 6. The static caravan and medium sized willow located adjacent to Building C in the garden area



5.3.9 The paddock to the west of Building D was heavily grazed by goats *Capra hircus*, a horse *Equus caballus*, pig *Sus domesticus*, and domestic ducks *Anas* sp. (Plate 7).

Plate 7. The paddock to the west of Building D



- 5.3.10 Grass species present were limited to abundant perennial rye-grass with other species comprising frequently occurring dandelion, dock sp., and clover *Trifolium* spp., and occasionally recorded common nettle.
- 5.3.11 This habitat was considered to be in poor condition passing only three of the condition criteria (Criterion C – presence of less than 20 % scrub, Criterion F – cover of bracken is less than 20%, and Criterion G – absence of non-native invasive species).

Secondary Code 32 – Scattered Trees

- 5.3.12 Five scattered trees were present within the garden area to the north of the buildings with a sixth adjacent to the eastern end of the kennels (Building D). Five of the trees had a diameter at breast height of less than 30 cm and, therefore as per Biodiversity Net Gain guidance are not subject to condition assessment. They comprised a willow sp., two cherry sp. and two silver birch. The fifth was a medium sized (diameter at breast height of 30 – 60 cm) willow.
- 5.3.13 The willow was in moderate condition failing only Condition Criteria C (which requires the tree to be mature) and Criteria E (which requires the tree to have natural ecological niches).

H2a6 – Other native hedgerow

- 5.3.14 Four hedgerows/tree lines were present within the site, two of these H3, and H4 were native with H3 classed as 'h2a6 other native hedgerow' and H4 as a line of trees (secondary code 33). These are discussed below.
- 5.3.15 H3 was located to the south of the access track. The hedgerow was c. 3 m tall and 2.5 m wide (Plate 8). The hedgerow was dominated by hawthorn *Crataegus monogyna*.
- 5.3.16 The hedgerow was considered to be in good condition passing all condition criteria (DEFRA, 2023).

Plate 8. H3 viewed from the south



Secondary Code 33 – Line of Trees

- 5.3.17 H4 was a line of trees c. 8 m tall and 1 m wide (Plate 9). Nine of the trees were cherry sp. and two were silver birch. The tree line was considered to be in moderate condition passing all criteria with the exception of Criterion C – the presence of veteran features or natural ecological niches (DEFRA, 2023).

Plate 9. H4 viewed from the south



h2b – Non-native and ornamental hedgerow

- 5.3.18 H1 and H2 were classed as 'non-native and ornamental hedgerows'. H1 was located at the northern end of the boundary between the garden area at the north of the buildings and a paddock to the west of the survey area. H2 was located at the southern end of this boundary.
- 5.3.19 H1 was a short section of hedgerow c. 8 m tall and 2 m wide (Plate 10). It comprised abundant Leyland cypress and hawthorn, and rarely occurring ash, sycamore, holly, silver birch and cherry sp. Occasionally occurring bramble was also recorded.

Plate 10. H1 viewed from the east



5.3.20 H2 was c. 5 m tall and 1 m wide (Plate 11). It comprised abundant Leyland cypress, frequent silver birch *Betula pendula*, and rarely occurring cherry sp *Prunus* sp..

Plate 11. the southern section of Hedgerow 2 viewed from the east



5.3.21 Non-native and ornamental hedgerows are automatically classed as being in poor condition.

u1b5 - buildings

5.3.22 Four buildings were present within the site, the farmhouse (Building A), a large modern barn and stables (Building B), a stone barn (Building C), and a 'U-shaped' stone barn and kennel block (Building D). One additional temporary structure, a static caravan was also present within the site.

5.3.23 The farmhouse was a 'T-shaped' stone building with a two-pitched, blue slate covered roof (Plate 12 and 13). Coping stones were present on the gables. Twelve solar panels

were present on the southern roof pitch. The northern roof pitch had a catslide roof over a single storey section. A small, single-storey brick porch was present in the northwest corner (Plate 12). The porch had a lean-to roof also covered with blue slate. The windows were framed with uPVC, with a uPVC door on the southern elevation, and the external porch door in the northwest corner was wooden.

- 5.3.24 The roof was unlined with a roof void which was split into three sections by supporting stone walls. It was supported by timber purlins and rafters (Plate 14).

Plate 12. The farmhouse viewed from the northwest



Plate 13. The farmhouse viewed from the southeast



Plate 14. The interior of the roof showing the large timber purlin and rafters as well as heavy cobwebs



5.3.25 The large modern barn and stable block (Building B) comprised a central wooden framed barn flanked by stables on the north and southern elevations and a kennel on the eastern end (Plate 15 and 16).

5.3.26 The barn was constructed from a wooden frame clad in corrugated and profiled metal sheets. The stables on the northern side of the building were constructed from concrete blocks. The stables on the southern side were wooden.

Plate 15. Building B viewed from the southwest



Plate 16. Building B viewed from the east



5.3.27 The multi-pitched roof was covered predominantly with profiled metal sheets and corrugated fibre-cement boards in the northeast corner (Plate 17). The roof was unlined and supported by timber rafters and purlins.

Plate 17. The interior of Building B



5.3.28 Building C was a single storey stone barn with a two-pitched roof covered with stone slates (Plate 18). In one location near the southern end, a repair had been effected using profiled metal sheets. Wooden stable doors were present on the southern end of the building and an open vehicle entrance at the northern end of the eastern elevation.

Plate 18. Building C viewed from the southeast



5.3.29 Internally the barn was open to the roof pitch. The roof was unlined and supported on king-post trusses, purlins and rafters (Plate 19).

Plate 19. The underside of the roof at the northern end of the building.



5.3.30 Building D was a 'U-shaped' stone barn and kennel complex (Plate 20, 21 & 22). The barn section was located on the northern side of the building and comprised a two-storey central section with single storey areas at either end, and a second two-storey section at the southeastern corner. The remaining areas were single storey. The single storey section at the south side of the building was predominantly used as kennels with the two-storey sections used for storage.

Plate 20. Building D viewed from the north



Plate 21. Building D viewed from the southeast



Plate 22. Building D viewed from the southwest



5.3.31 The multi-pitched roof was covered with a mix of profiled and corrugated metal sheets, and stone slates as shown on Plate 23. The roof was supported by King-post trusses, timber purlins, and rafters (Plate 24 & 25).

Plate 23. The roof of Building D



Plate 24. The underside of the roof in the kennels section



Plate 25. The underside of the roof in the two-storey barn on the northern side of the building



5.3.32 The suitability of the buildings to be used by protected or notable species is considered in Section 5.4.

u1b6 – other developed land

5.3.33 The area between the buildings comprised hardstanding, including a brick area (Plate 26).

Plate 26. Hardstanding to the north of Building A



5.3.34 Within this area a handful of Himalayan balsam plants were recorded (Plate 27, Figure 3).

Plate 27. Himalayan balsam plants adjacent to Building A



Figure 3. Location of Himalayan balsam



5.3.35 No condition assessment criteria are applicable to this habitat type.

u1c – artificial unvegetated unsealed surface

5.3.36 An area of compacted gravel at the northeastern end of the survey area (Plate 28).

Plate 28. Area of compacted gravel at the northeast corner of the site



5.3.37 No condition assessment criteria are applicable to this habitat type.

u1f – sparsely vegetated urban land

5.3.38 An area of ephemeral and ruderal vegetation including colonising grasses was present on an area of compacted gravel to the southeast of the buildings (Plate 29).

Plate 29. Sparsely vegetated urban land adjacent to the farmhouse



5.3.39 The habitat was considered to be in poor condition passing none of the condition criteria.

5.4 Species and Species Groups

Badger

5.4.1 Badger *Meles meles* records are confidential and are not included in detail here. The survey area was not located within an area of increased probability of badger, no badger records were present within or adjacent to the site. No badger signs were identified during the survey and no setts were recorded within the site or accessible areas within the surrounding 30 m.

- 5.4.2 Badgers can have relatively large territories, but the areas due to be impacted by the development were considered relatively unsuitable for use by this species when compared to the surrounding area.
- 5.4.3 Due to the lack of nearby records and field signs, it was considered unlikely that the site comprised part of the territory of a local badger population.

Bats

- 5.4.4 A total of 50 bat records were returned by West Yorkshire Ecology, with an additional 19 records provided by West Yorkshire Bat Group. The species recorded comprised common pipistrelle *Pipistrellus pipistrellus*, soprano pipistrelle *Pipistrellus pygmaeus*, brown long-eared bat *Plecotus auritus*, and noctule *Nyctalus noctula*. Additional records of bats identified to *Pipistrellus* genus and records of unidentified bat species were also provided.
- 5.4.5 The closest bat records were 'field records' of common pipistrelle, soprano pipistrelle, and noctules dating from 2016 and 2017 in a location c. 415 m south of the site which aerial photographs show to be under development.
- 5.4.6 No European Protected Species Licence applications for bats were identified within the 2 km search area.
- 5.4.7 The habitats within the site were considered to be of above average suitability² for use by foraging bats due to the rural location, extensive grassland and woodland nearby, and the lack of light pollution in the area.
- 5.4.8 Bat surveys of the buildings identified the presence of a common pipistrelle day roost used by a maximum of one bat in the western verge of the catslide roof on the northern side of Building A, the farmhouse (Plate 30).
- 5.4.9 Potential bat roost features were identified within Buildings A, C, and D. Buildings C and D were identified as having moderate bat roost suitability, Building A was identified as having low bat roost suitability, and Building B was identified as having negligible bat roost suitability. The full results of the bat surveys are included in Appendix 6.

² The bat foraging suitability level referred to is taken from professional judgement for that area within which Middleton Bell Ecology usually operates comprising Yorkshire and the surrounding counties to the south and west.

Plate 30. Common pipistrelle day roost location



Birds

- 5.4.10 Eight bird records were returned by the local records centre. None of the records were for the site itself. The closest, was a record of a woodpigeon *Columba palumbus* located c. 200 m south of the site.
- 5.4.11 During the survey the following five species were recorded: woodpigeon, blue tit *Cyanistes caeruleus*, swallow *Hirundo rustica*, house sparrow *Passer domesticus*, and blackbird *Turdus merula*. House sparrows are a Birds of Conservation Concern red list species, wood pigeon are an amber list species.
- 5.4.12 A swallow nest cup was present in Building D, additional bird's nests were also recorded within Building B and C (Plate 31).

Plate 31. Old nest in Building B



- 5.4.13 The habitats present on site were considered to be suitable for foraging by common garden and farmland species. The lack of rare and unusual habitats within the site and

surrounding area meant that it was unlikely to be used, except very occasionally for foraging by rarer bird species.

Reptiles

- 5.4.14 One record of a grass snake *Natrix helvetica* was returned by the local biological records centre. It was located approximately 1480 m to the east of the site and dated from 1914. No other reptile records were provided.
- 5.4.15 The habitats present within the development site were considered unsuitable for year-round or consistent use by reptiles. Given the lack of recent records it is considered unlikely that reptiles would be present in the area.

Amphibians

- 5.4.16 The local record centre returned a total of 124 amphibian records comprising 52 records of great crested newts *Triturus cristatus*, 21 records of smooth newt *Lissotriton vulgaris*, two records of palmate newt *Lissotriton helveticus*, 43 records of common frog *Rana temporaria* and six records of common toad *Bufo bufo*.
- 5.4.17 The closest great crested newt record was located c. 575 m to the southeast of the site. The closest record across other amphibian species was a smooth newt record c. 375 m south of the site on the southern edge of Blacker Wood.
- 5.4.18 The MAGIC Great Crested Newt Class Survey Licence Returns dataset also identified the presence of great crested newt within the desk study area. The closest record was located c. 720 m southeast of the site.
- 5.4.19 No ponds were identified within 500 m of the red line boundary. Given the lack of ponds within 500 m of the site it is considered unlikely that great crested newts would be likely to be present within the site boundaries. It was however considered feasible that other more wide-ranging amphibian species could make some use of the habitats present within the site, particularly the hedgerows and grazed pasture.

Invertebrates

- 5.4.20 The record search returned eight notable invertebrate records. These records comprised two records of white-clawed crayfish *Austropotamobius pallipes*, four beetle records, one record of a small heath butterfly *Coenonympha pamphilus* and one record of a cinnabar moth *Tyria jacobaeae*. The white clawed crayfish records dated from 2003 with the *Lepidoptera* records dating from 2015 and the *Coleoptera* records not having an associated date.
- 5.4.21 It is considered that the habitats present were likely to support an average diversity of invertebrate species. It was considered unlikely that rare species or a particularly diverse assemblage was present, due to the absence of rare habitats on site or within the surrounding area.

Invasive species

- 5.4.22 A total of 48 records of invasive plant and animal species listed on Schedule 9 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act were returned for the desk study area. The plant species comprised 39 Himalayan balsam *Impatiens glandulifera* records, five records of *Rhododendron ponticum* two records of New Zealand pigmyweed *Crassula helmsii*, and one record of variegated yellow archangel *Lamium galeobdolon subsp.*

argentatum. The closest was a record of Himalayan balsam c. 115 m south of the site.

- 5.4.23 The records of Schedule 9 invasive animal species comprised the highly mobile species American mink *Neovison vison*. It was considered unlikely that this species would be present within the site and more likely that they would be broadly restricted to riparian habitats.
- 5.4.24 The survey identified the presence of Himalayan balsam within the site (Figure 3). No other invasive species were recorded within the survey area.

Value of habitats and species

- 5.4.25 No other protected or notable species / species groups were considered likely to use the site. The ecological value of the habitats and species present, or potentially present is given in geographic terms (from site to international value) in Table 3 below.

Table 3. Ecological importance of each habitat, species or species group using the site

Habitat, Species or Species Group	Ecological value
g3c – other neutral grassland	Site
g4 – modified grassland	Site
h2a6 – other native hedgerow	Site
h2b – non-native and ornamental hedgerow	Site
u1b5 - buildings	Negligible
u1b6 – other developed land	Negligible
u1c – artificial unvegetated, unsealed surface	Negligible
u1f – sparsely vegetated urban land	Negligible
Badger	Unlikely to be present
Bats	Local
Birds	Site
Reptiles	Unlikely to be present
Amphibians (not including great crested newts)	Up to site
Invertebrates	Up to site
Invasive species	N/A

6. Assessment

6.1 Proposals

- 6.1.1 The assessment of impacts is based upon conversion of the stone stable building (Building C) and a kennels (Building D) to form three dwellings, and the demolition of the modern stables (Building B) to be replaced by a further two dwellings. The existing farmhouse (Building A) will also be refurbished as part of the proposed work.
- 6.1.2 The existing garden areas will remain intact with one small cherry tree removed from between the kennels and farmhouse. New gardens will be created on areas of existing unvegetated gravel, a paddock comprising modified grassland in poor condition, and an area of paddock comprising other neutral grassland in poor condition. An adjacent area of other neutral grassland in poor condition will be enhanced to provide the required biodiversity net gain. The northern boundary of this grassland will be planted up with a native species-rich hedgerow and two scattered trees will be planted in the southeast corner. The proposed plan for the development is shown in Appendix 1.
- 6.1.3 The presence of the following protected and notable species was identified or has been assumed: bats, birds, and common amphibian species.
- 6.1.4 The non-native, invasive species Himalayan balsam has also been identified within the site boundary.

6.2 Assessment of Impacts

- 6.2.1 The likely unmitigated impacts of the development were considered to comprise:
- The net loss of approximately 370 m² of other neutral grassland.
 - The loss of approximately 620 m² of modified grassland.
 - The planting of approximately 70 m of species-rich native hedgerow.
 - The enhancement of 720 m² of other neutral grassland from poor to moderate condition.
 - The creation of 1130 m² of vegetated garden.
 - The loss of one small cherry tree, and planting of two new fruit trees.
 - The potential loss of bat roost features and the potential disturbance, killing, or injury of any bats present within potential roost features identified.
 - The loss of bird nesting habitat and the potential removal of active birds' nests.
 - The potential disturbance, killing or injury of common amphibian species but not great crested newts.
 - Increased lighting affecting nocturnal species such as bats, and some birds.
 - The potential to spread the non-native species Himalayan balsam.
 - Biosecurity risks as a result of bringing in plants, seeds and soil for landscaping.
 - Without mitigation the proposed development is likely to result in a net loss of 0.14 Biodiversity Net Gain Habitat Units, and a gain of 0.26 Hedgerow Units.
- 6.2.2 Mitigation and enhancement measures have been proposed for the site.

6.3 Mitigation and Enhancement Measures

Further survey

- 6.3.1 Although no further survey is required to determine the likely impacts, pre-works checks for bats and birds may be required depending on timing restrictions, to ensure any individuals present are protected during the works. Pre-works checks and timing restrictions are discussed below.

Biosecurity

- 6.3.2 The Himalayan balsam present within the site should be removed. It is illegal to allow this species to spread in the wild (see Appendix 2). The eradication of these plants should be complete prior to the start of construction. Vigilance, and future treatment to remove plants that recolonise the site may also be needed.
- 6.3.3 An Invasive Species Management Plan is required to identify the measures required prior to, during construction, and as ongoing management. This should be prepared by a specialist invasive species management contractor³.
- 6.3.4 During the landscaping, where additional subsoil or topsoil is required, it should be free of non-native invasive species. All bulk imported soils should be peat free. Seeds and plants should be sourced from a reputable UK supplier such as Mires Beck Nursery, and if possible should be of UK province.

Protecting bats

- 6.3.5 The roost within the farmhouse roof must be maintained during the refurbishment work. If this is not possible, then a bat mitigation licence must be obtained from Natural England and replacement bat roost features installed. A licence application can only be submitted once planning permission has been granted and once any pertinent planning conditions relating to wildlife have been signed off (where feasible to do so).
- 6.3.6 To ensure bats are not killed or injured during the demolition, a toolbox talk must be provided to all construction/demolition staff by an experienced bat ecologist at the start of the construction period. The toolbox talk should identify the presence of the known bat roost to building contractors. The toolbox talk should highlight:
- bat protection legislation,
 - the bat roost locations,
 - identification of signs of bats,
 - the presence and location of the other potential bat roost features identified within the buildings (and any that may be created during the work),
 - how to remove or open up suitable bat roost features where work is required, and
 - what to do in the event a bat is discovered.
- 6.3.7 Most modern roofing and cladding membranes are unsafe for use in areas which may be used by bats. As standard we recommend that a membrane that is safer for bats is used in areas where bats are present. Further information on this issue is included

³ A summary of the resources/guidance available is listed on the Non Native Species Secretariat website: <https://www.nonnativespecies.org/non-native-species/management-guidance/terrestrial-plants-2/#Impatiensglandulifera>

in Appendix 7.

- 6.3.8 External lighting should be carefully designed in line with the Institute of Lighting Professionals Guidance (ILP, 2023), downwards facing or bollard style sensor activated and with no light spill onto site boundaries in order to maintain dark areas near the site for bats to forage and commute. The external lighting should be narrow spectrum and a warm white colour, avoiding white and blue wavelengths (peaking higher than 550 nm).
- 6.3.9 Because of the conservation importance of the roost present (low conservation importance), no post construction monitoring is required.

Protecting nesting birds

- 6.3.10 Nesting birds were recorded within buildings B, C, and D and it is recommended that the start of work to these buildings either avoids the nesting bird season (March to September inclusive), or a check for active nests is undertaken immediately beforehand. If an active nest is present, it must be retained in-situ until the young have fledged. As stated in Appendix 2 active bird's nests are legally protected.

Protecting amphibian species

- 6.3.11 Mitigation measures are recommended to ensure amphibians are protected during the proposed site clearance and construction work. These precautionary working practices are detailed below:
- The removal of any piles of aggregate or other piled materials should be timed to avoid the amphibian hibernation period (November to February).
 - Any excavations (e.g. foundation) should be covered overnight to avoid trapping amphibians. Excavations should be checked carefully for amphibians before recommencing work.
 - Any amphibians present within the working area should be carefully moved to the nearest area of suitable habitat.

Habitat creation/enhancement

Other neutral grassland

- 6.3.12 The area of g3c - other neutral grassland in poor condition will be enhanced to bring it into moderate condition. The area comprises c. 720 m² of habitat at the southeast corner of the site.
- 6.3.13 Horses will be excluded from the fenced off mitigation area. In the first year of management, this area will be cut on at least four occasions, with the arisings removed on each occasion. The purpose of the cuts will be to reduce the soil fertility in this area to allow the less vigorous grasses and herbs to thrive. In the spring following the first year, 150 yellow rattle *Rhinanthus minor* plug plants will be planted in groups of ten. The yellow rattle should prevent the coarse grasses becoming too vigorous in those areas, allowing a wider variety of plant species to establish and thrive.
- 6.3.14 In subsequent years, the plants in the enhancement area will be allowed to grow, flower and seed during the months of May to mid-August (inclusive), without grazing or cutting. The area will always be cut at the end of the growing season (mid to late August). The arisings will be left *in situ* to allow any seeds still present within the cut vegetation to dry and fall to ground. After a week the arisings will be removed.

Additional cuts or grazing may be completed at other times of year (i.e. September to April).

6.3.15 The cutting of paths and small areas of short grass within the mitigation area is encouraged. The plan would be to keep between 20 and 40 % of the area as a shorter sward. Areas of short vegetation could be cut up to once every three weeks.

6.3.16 Signage will be installed to identify the management regime and its purpose.

Scattered trees

6.3.17 Two fruit trees will be planted in the southeast corner of the grassland enhancement area. The trees will be planted a minimum of 5 m apart. They will be managed to achieve moderate condition. It is anticipated that they would achieve Defra Metric Condition Criteria B – canopy cover, D – No adverse impact on tree health by human activities, and F – at least 20 % of the canopy oversails vegetation below.

Vegetated gardens

6.3.18 Within the development, any new areas of lawn to be created will be sown with a grass mix that includes fine grasses and wildflowers that will thrive in short grass⁴. Advice on how to take care of a flower rich lawn is given on the Plant Life website⁵. This will benefit the invertebrates in the local area and the other wildlife such as bats, birds, and amphibians, that feed on them.

Species rich native hedgerow

6.3.19 A new species rich native hedgerow will be planted along the northern boundary of the area of enhanced other neutral grassland. The hedge will comprise a minimum of at least five native woody species. The hedgerow (or each side of the hedgerow) should be cut every other year to allow the plants to flower and produce berries (many woody species don't produce fruit on stems that are less than a year old).

Provision of bat and bird boxes

6.3.20 It is recommended that measures are installed to mitigate for the loss of bat roost and bird nesting opportunities, and to enhance the site for both birds and bats.

6.3.21 One integrated bat box and an integrated bird box should be installed within each dwelling with the exception of the farmhouse where the existing roost should be retained.

6.3.22 Swift *Apus apus* bricks are the most appropriate integrated bird box option. Boxes should be located as high as possible and ideally not directly over doors or windows.

Lighting

6.3.23 The design of new outside lighting should be carefully considered in line with guidance from the Institute of Lighting Professionals and the Bat Conservation Trust Guidance (ILP, 2023). Where external lighting is required, it must be downwards facing and have a horizontal cut off, i.e. with no upwards component. The lighting should be relatively

⁴ An example of a flower rich short sward seed mix is available from:

<https://www.wildflowerlawnsandmeadows.com/product/wild-flower-lawn-seed-mix/>

⁵ Information on how to mow a lawn to maximise the presence of wildflowers can be found at

<https://nomowmay.plantlife.org.uk/what-is-no-mow-may/wild-flower-lawn/>

low level and have a warm colour tone (i.e. not cold white or blue). Lighting on the rear of the properties should be activated only by PIR sensors.

6.3.24 No lighting should illuminate the integrated bat or bird boxes or the retained bat roost.

6.4 Biodiversity Calculations

6.4.1 The Headline Results output of The Statutory Biodiversity Metric is presented in Appendix 8, based on the proposed site habitats shown in the proposed UK Habitats Map included as Appendix 9, with the additional habitat enhancement identified above. Taking into account the proposed enhancement of the mitigation area, the development is projected to result in a net gain of 0.14 Habitat Units (a 13.33 % gain) and 0.26 Hedgerow Units (a 63.87 % gain).

6.5 Conclusion

6.5.1 No further survey is required in order to fully identify the likely impacts and mitigation requirements.

6.5.2 The proposed development will result in an increase in the amount of green space within the red line boundary and the quality of the habitat available for the wildlife present within the local area. The mitigation and enhancement measures proposed have the potential to result in a slight net gain for bats with a neutral effect for other protected and notable species and no tangible impact on other ecological receptors.

6.5.3 The results of this survey and report are considered to be valid for a period of 24 months. After this time Middleton Bell Ecology should be contacted to determine the need for update survey.

7. References

CIEEM (2017) *Guidelines for Preliminary Ecological Appraisal, 2nd edition*. Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management, Winchester.

CIEEM (2018) *Guidelines for Ecological Impact Assessment in the UK and Ireland: Terrestrial, Freshwater and Coastal and Marine*. Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management, Winchester.

Collins, J. (ed.) (2023) *Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines*. The Bat Conservation Trust.

ILP (2023) *Guidance Note 08/23 Bats and Artificial Lighting At Night*. Bat Conservation Trust and Institute of Lighting Professionals.

DEFRA (2023) *The Statutory Biodiversity Metric User Guide (draft)*. DEFRA.

UKHab Ltd (2023) *UK Habitat Classification Version 2.0* (at <https://www.ukhab.org>)

Appendix 1. Proposed Plan

The eastern end of the proposed development site (including all proposed buildings) is shown in Figure A1.1 below.

Figure A1.1. Proposed building layout



Appendix 2. Relevant Legislation and Planning Policy

Wildlife legislation relating to species is summarised in Table A2.1 below. This legal information is intended for summary only, and the original legal documents should be consulted if a detailed understanding is required.

Table A2.1. Legislation relating to species

Species	Legal Status
European protection	
European Protected Species (EPS) (including bats)	These animal species and their breeding sites or resting places are protected under Schedule 2 of The Conservation of Habitats and Species (Amendment) (EU Exit) Regulations 2019, which makes it illegal to: • Intentionally or deliberately capture, injure or kill any such animal or to deliberately take or destroy their eggs. • Deliberately disturb such an animal. • Damage or destroy a breeding site or resting place of such an animal. • European Protected Species (EPS) licences can be granted by Natural England in respect of development to permit activities that would otherwise be unlawful under the Conservation Regulations, providing that the following 3 tests (set out in the EC Habitats Directive) are passed: • The development is for reasons of overriding public interest. • There is no satisfactory alternative; and • The favourable conservation status of the species concerned will be maintained and/or enhanced. • Under Regulation 9(5) of The Conservation Regulations, Planning Authorities have a legal duty to 'have regard to the requirements of the EC Habitats Directive in the exercise of their functions'. This means that they must consider the above 3 tests when determining whether Planning Permission should be granted for developments likely to cause an offence under the Conservation Regulations. As a consequence, Planning Applications for such developments must demonstrate that the 3 tests will be passed.
National protection	
European Protected Species and other species including adder, grass snake, common lizard, and water vole	These animals receive full protection under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended by the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000), which makes it illegal (subject to exceptions) to: • Intentionally kill, injure or take any such animal. • Intentionally or recklessly damage, destroy or obstruct any place used for shelter or protection by any such animal; and • Intentionally or recklessly disturb such animals while they occupy a place used for shelter or protection.
Schedule 1 birds (including barn owl)	Special penalties relate to offences concerning birds listed on Schedule 1 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended). In addition to the offences detailed above relating to all wild birds, it is

Species	Legal Status
	illegal to intentionally or recklessly disturb any Schedule 1 bird or their dependent young while nesting.
All bird species	All wild birds are protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended by the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000), which makes it illegal (subject to exceptions) to: • Intentionally kill, injure or take any wild bird. • Take, damage or destroy the nest (whilst being built or in use) or eggs of any wild bird.
Invasive species	The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) contains measures for preventing the establishment of non-native species which may be detrimental to native wildlife, prohibiting the release of animals and planting of plants listed in Schedule 9 of the Act. In relation to Schedule 9 plants, it is an offence to plant or otherwise cause these plant species to grow in the wild.

Species and Habitats of Principal Importance

Planning authorities have a duty under Section 40 of the NERC Act 2006 to have regard to priority species and habitats in exercising their functions including development control and planning. In compliance with Section 41 of the NERC Act, the Secretary of State has published a list of species and habitats considered to be of principal importance for conserving biodiversity in England under the UK Post-2010 Biodiversity Framework. This is known as the list of Habitats and Species of Principal Importance (HPI/SPI). The HPI/SPI list is used to guide planning authorities in implementing their duty under the NERC Act.

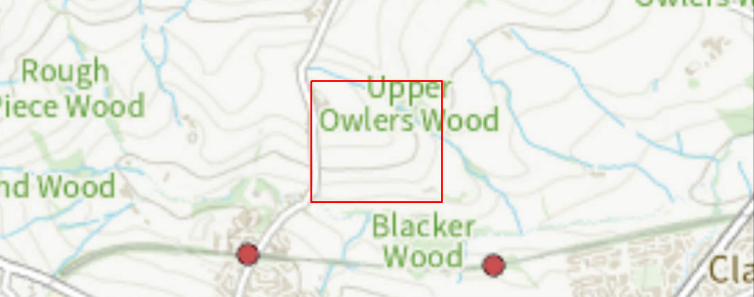
National Planning Policy Framework

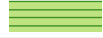
The National Planning Policy Framework for England was revised in 2021. This document states that plans should 'promote the conservation, restoration and re-creation of priority habitats, ecological networks and the protection and recovery of priority species; and identify and pursue opportunities for securing measurable net gains for biodiversity'. It also puts an emphasis on refusing development which would result in the 'loss or deterioration of irreplaceable habitats (such as ancient woodland)' unless there are 'wholly exceptional reasons and a suitable mitigation strategy exists'.

Local Biodiversity Action Plans

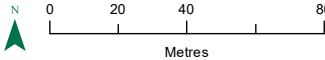
The HPI/SPI list included on Section 41 of the NERC Act 2006 is supported by a series of Local Biodiversity Action Plans (LBAPs), usually set up on a local authority local authority administrative boundary basis. Each LBAP identifies those habitats and species considered to be most important in that area (usually referred to as priority habitats and species). Commonly, an LBAP will identify a number of habitats and species for which "action plans" have been prepared.

Appendix 3. UK Habitat Classification Plan (Baseline)



Survey Information	
	Site boundary (6,987.6m ²)
UK Habitat Survey (Primary Habitats)	
	g3c - Other neutral grassland (1,085.3m ²)
	g4 - Modified grassland (617.3m ²)
	u1b - Developed land; sealed surface (2,913.5m ²)
	u1b5 - Building (748.9m ²)
	u1c - Artificial unvegetated, unsealed surface (702.6m ²)
	u1f - Sparsely vegetated urban land (178.5m ²)
	828 - Vegetated garden (741.5m ²)
	h2a - Native hedgerow (44.7m)
	h2b - Non-native and ornamental hedgerow (24.5m)
	33 - Line of trees (28.2m)
	32 - Scattered tree (6)

Source:
Ordnance Survey © Crown copyright 2026, All rights reserved. License Number 100049837.



PROJECT TITLE
BLACKER FARM, SKELMANTHORPE

DRAWING TITLE
Figure 1. UK Habitat Survey Plan

VER	DATE	REMARKS	Drawn	Checked
3.1	22/04/26	UKHab	MP	GS

DRAWING NUMBER:
MIDDLETONBELLECOLOGY/BlackerFarm/UKHab

SCALE	1:2,200	PLOT SIZE	A3	DATUM	OSGB	PROJECTION	BNG
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Appendix 4. Plant Species Recorded on Site

The plant species and their relative abundance within the habitats present on site are shown in Table A4.1 below.

D = Dominant, **A** = Abundant, **F** = Frequent, **O** = Occasional, **R** = Rare, **L** = Locally

G2c – other neutral grassland; g4 - modified grassland; H – hedgerow; (p) – paddock; (g) – gardens.

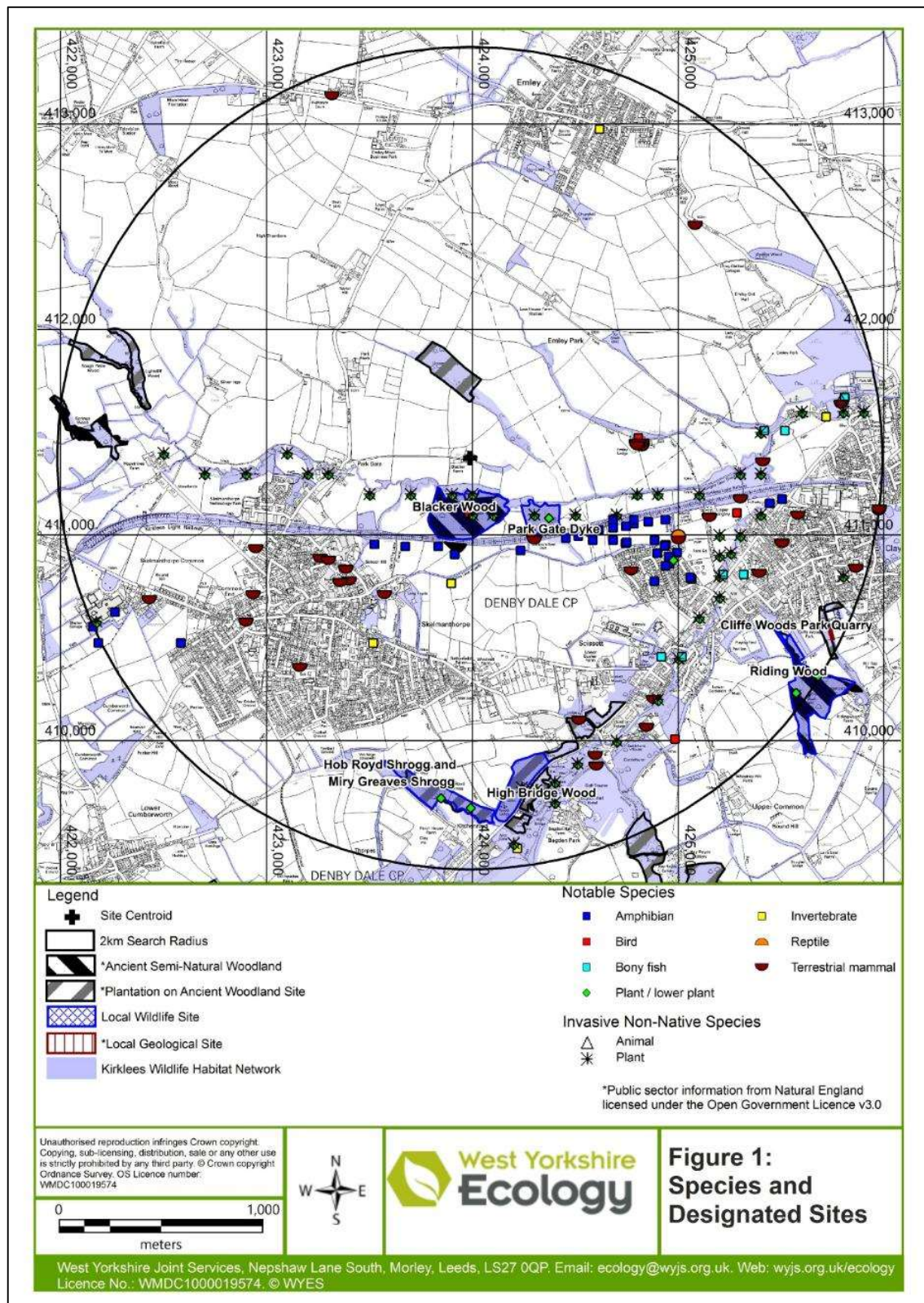
* Saplings

Table A4.1. Plant species recorded and their relative abundance

Common name	Latin name	g3c	g4 (p)	g4 (g)	u1f	H1	H2	H3	H4
cocksfoot	<i>Dactylis glomerata</i>	A			O				
red fescue	<i>Festuca rubra</i>	D			O				
Yorkshire fog	<i>Holcus lanatus</i>	O		A	R				
perennial rye-grass	<i>Lolium perenne</i>	F	A	A					
Leyland cypress	× <i>Cuprocyparis leylandii</i>					A	A		
sycamore	<i>Acer pseudoplatanus</i>					R			
yarrow	<i>Achillea millefolium</i>	O							
creeping thistle	<i>Cirsium arvense</i>	D			R				
foxglove	<i>Digitalis purpurea</i>	R		R	R				
cleavers	<i>Galium aparine</i>	R							
herb Robert	<i>Geranium robertianum</i>	R			R				
ragwort	<i>Jacobaea vulgaris</i>	R			R				
pineapple weed	<i>Matricaria discoidea</i>	O			O				
ribwort plantain	<i>Plantago lanceolata</i>	O		R	R				
broadleaved plantain	<i>Plantago major</i>	R							
creeping buttercup	<i>Ranunculus repens</i>	R		F					

Common name	Latin name	g3c	g4 (p)	g4 (g)	u1f	H1	H2	H3	H4
bramble	<i>Rubus fruticosus</i>	R				O			
curled dock	<i>Rumex spp.</i>		F	O					
dandelion	<i>Taraxacum spp.</i>	O	F	F	R				
red clover	<i>Trifolium pratense</i>	R							
clover sp.	<i>Trifolium spp.</i>		F						
common nettle	<i>Urtica dioica</i>			F					
silver birch	<i>Betula pendula</i>					R	F		O
hawthorn	<i>Crataegus monogyna</i>					A		D	
ash	<i>Fraxinus excelsior</i>					R			
holly	<i>Ilex aquifolium</i>					R			
wild cherry	<i>Prunus avium</i>	R (saplings)					R		
cherry trees	<i>Prunus spp.</i>								A
elder	<i>Sambucus nigra</i>	R							

Appendix 5. Location of Designated Sites Within 2 km

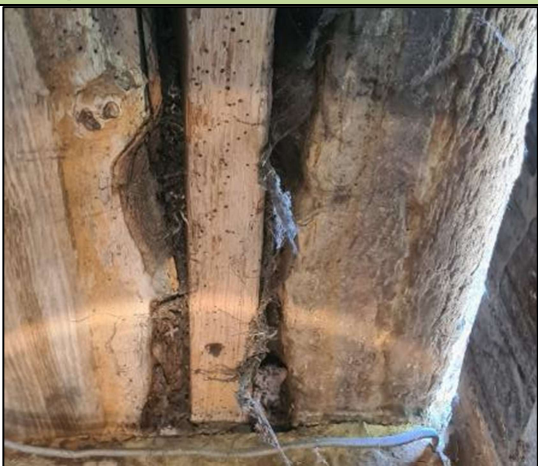


Appendix 6. Bat Survey Results

Internal and External Building Inspections

- 7.1.1 The inspection identified gaps between lintels, between stone slates, around windows and doors, gaps in stonework and gable verges. The potential roost features are shown in Table A6.1, and Figure A6.1.

Table A6.1. Potential Roost Features Recorded

PRF	Building	Example Photo	Description
A			Gap in lintels.
B			Gap between stone slates.
C			Gap around windows / doors.
D			Gap in stonework

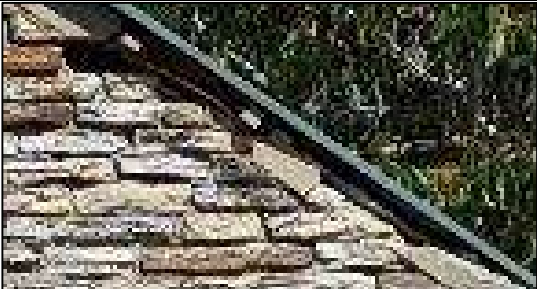
PRF	Building	Example Photo	Description
E			Gap between verge slates
F	D		Gap at wall top/eaves
G	C		Gap under ridge.
H	A		Gap under coping stones
I	D		Missing mortar at verge.

Figure A6.1. Aerial photograph showing the location of potential roost features



15th July 2025 – dusk emergence survey covering Buildings C and D

- 7.1.2 The temperature at the beginning of monitoring was 17 °C, with eight oktas cloud cover and a gentle breeze (Beaufort Scale 3). Rainfall of 0.3 mm was recorded at the beginning of the survey but reduced to occasional spots at 21:45. Additional showers (not forecast), spots, drizzle, or light rain were recorded intermittently throughout the remainder of the survey. The wind strength and cloud cover remained consistent throughout the remainder of the survey, and the temperature dropped slightly to 15°C by the end. Sunset was at 21:28.
- 7.1.3 No bats were recorded emerging from the building during the survey. Bat activity was low and limited to common pipistrelle, with the first pass detected at 21:58 (30 minutes after sunset). Further passes were recorded throughout the survey, including occasional commuting and foraging behaviour, but no emergence was observed or confirmed.

4th August 2025 – dusk emergence survey covering Buildings A and C

- 7.1.4 The temperature at the beginning of monitoring was 14 °C, with zero oktas cloud cover and a moderate breeze (Beaufort Scale four). By the end of the survey the temperature had reduced slightly to thirteen degrees Celsius, while wind speed and cloud cover remained unchanged. No rain was recorded throughout the survey period. Sunset occurred at 20:57.
- 7.1.5 One common pipistrelle was recorded emerging from the northwest corner of the farmhouse (Plate 32) at 21:34 (37 minutes after sunset). A video of the emerging bat is available here: <https://youtu.be/GFDjWUKIXqA>.

Plate 32. Location of the common pipistrelle roost on the verge of the catslide roof



- 7.1.6 Bat activity recorded during the survey was low. Common pipistrelle and noctule were recorded commuting and foraging around the site, with the first activity recorded at 21:31, thirty-four minutes after sunset. A small number of *Myotis* bat passes were recorded later in the survey period, with the first record at 22:05, sixty-eight minutes after sunset.

6th August 2025 – dusk emergence survey covering Building D

- 7.1.7 The temperature at the beginning of monitoring was 15 °C, decreasing to fourteen degrees Celsius by the end of the survey. Conditions were dry throughout, with calm winds (Beaufort Scale zero) and complete cloud cover of eight oktas. Sunset occurred at 20:53.
- 7.1.8 No bats were recorded emerging from the building during the survey. Bat activity within the wider site was low to moderate and was dominated by common pipistrelle, first recorded at 21:16 (twenty-three minutes after sunset). Additional activity was recorded from soprano pipistrelle, brown long-eared bat, noctule, and Leisler's bat as well as unidentified *Myotis* species, all of which were interpreted as commuting or foraging.

Bat Records

- 7.1.9 In accordance with best practice and the requirements of bat licensing, bat records collected during surveys are supplied to the relevant biological record centres and bat groups. The records to be supplied in accordance with this survey are shown below. House names/numbers are not provided by record holding organisations except under very particular circumstances. If you object to the distribution of these records, please let us know.

Date	Species	Site Address	OS Grid Reference	Notes
04/08/2025	Common pipistrelle	Blacker Farm, Emley	SE2398211366	Roost (1 bat) in verge of the catslide roof on the northwest side of the farmhouse.
06/08/2025	Soprano pipistrelle	Blacker Farm, Emley	SE2398211366	Bat in flight
06/08/2025	Brown long-eared bat	Blacker Farm, Emley	SE2398211366	Bat in flight
06/08/2025	Myotis bat species	Blacker Farm, Emley	SE2398211366	Bat in flight
06/08/2025	Noctule	Blacker Farm, Emley	SE2398211366	Bat in flight
06/08/2025	Leisler's bat	Blacker Farm, Emley	SE2398211366	Bat in flight

Appendix 7. Bat Safe Roofing and Cladding Membranes

Standard roof membranes can cause the death of significant numbers of bats. Traditional bitumen coated roofing felt is recommended where roosting bats are expected to be present.

The problem

Standard non-bitumen coated membranes (including almost all breathable membranes) used below roof slates and tiles present a significant problem for bats. Over time, strands are pulled away from the surface of these materials as bats crawl over them. These fuzzy strands are very strong and can tangle and trap bats, sometimes causing the death of bats over multiple years⁶.

One example we have encountered comprised a pipistrelle roost which formed in a building extension constructed in 2009. Over the course of just 13 years the roofing felt degraded to the extent that it trapped and killed more than 10 bats. Fortunately, the problem in this roost was identified and remedial work was undertaken to replace the roofing membrane in 2022.

Plate A7.1. Four dead pipistrelles tangled in breathable roofing membrane



Although a new roof might be considered to lack potential bat access points, that is often not the case. Roofs covered with stone slates almost always have gaps large enough to be accessed by bats, this is often also the case where imitation stone slates are used. On older buildings the uneven roof timbers and/or building design also often results in gaps on wall tops and between slates. Even on new builds it is often possible for bats to access potential roosts via features such as dry verge capping. Some bats can access a space no wider than a biro pen, therefore it is not surprising that they can find their way into most buildings.

Safe roofing membranes (and membranes behind cladding)

From a bat perspective, the best membrane option for areas where roosts are expected comprises traditional hessian-backed Type 1F bituminous felt. This product has been widely and safely used as a secondary weather barrier since approximately the 1950s/1960s. Wooden sarking has also been used for many decades and if appropriately treated, is safe for

⁶ Wearing S. Essah E., Gunnel K. & Bonser R. (2013) Double jeopardy: the potential for problems when bats interact with breathable roofing membranes in the United Kingdom. Architecture and Environment

use in bat roosts. Wooden sarking also has the benefit of providing adding additional insulation and is usually breathable.

At the time of writing (and to our knowledge) three products have passed the 'snagging propensity' test; and are approved by Natural England for use in bat roosts. This test attempts to replicate the wear and tear which results from bats crawling over the membrane. The approved products are: TLX BatSafe^{7,8}, SIGA Majcoat 350, and Partel Exoperm Duro 300 Fuse. Although they have passed this test, it is unclear how these membranes will degrade in the medium and long term, particularly in larger bat roosts. Therefore we do not recommend that they are used for roosts with multiple bats, and particularly for large (maternity roosts). An additional product, SIGA Majcoat 200 SOB Diffusion, passed the test for its upper surface only. This product should not be used in known bat roosts or locations where bat mitigation is to be installed. Although none of these products are considered to be as safe as traditional Type 1F bituminous felt, they may provide an option for roofs where future bat use cannot be ruled out, and a breathable solution is required.

Additional considerations

In recent years a fairly substantial proportion of the lofts we have surveyed which had existing breathable felt, were found to have been damaged by wasps (Plate A7.2). The wasps appear to have chewed holes in the felt and formed nests. This doesn't appear to be a problem associated with traditional bitumen coated roofing felt. Any holes within roofing felt are likely to significantly reduce its functionality as a secondary weather barrier. Where bats or birds come into contact with breathable roofing membranes, they can also damage it causing it to leak, they can also significantly reduce the breathability of the felt in that location.

Plate A7.2. Damage to a breathable roofing membrane adjacent to a wasp nest



Traditional bituminous Type 1F roofing felt is a non-breathable product and therefore ventilation is required. Sufficient ventilation can be usually be achieved, even in buildings with vaulted ceilings, however, some consideration during the design stage is required. Products to increase the ventilation within roofs where bituminous Type 1F felt has already been installed are also available.

⁷ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/bats-apply-for-a-mitigation-licence#full-publication-update-history:~:text=Use%20of%20safe%20roofing%20membranes>

⁸ TLX BatSafe requires all joints and cut edges to be taped in order to prevent the fraying of bare edges.

Appendix 8. Biodiversity Net Gain Headline Results

The Biodiversity Net Gain Final Results show a net gain of 0.14 Habitat Units (a 13.33 % gain), and a gain of 0.26 Hedgerow Units (a 63.87 % gain).

Blacker Farm

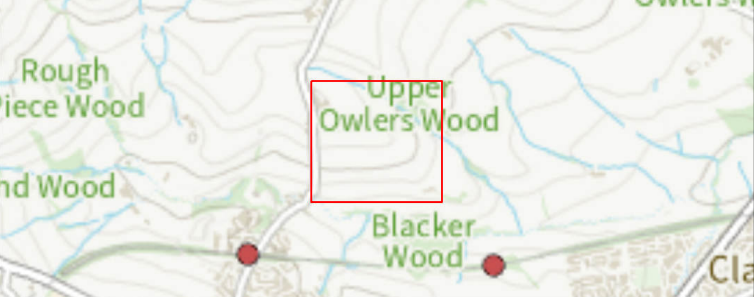
Return to results menu

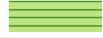
Headline Results

Scroll down for final results 

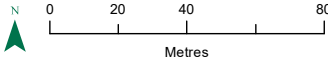
On-site baseline	Habitat units	1.03		
	Hedgerow units	0.41		
	Watercourse units	0.00		
On-site post-intervention (Including habitat retention, creation & enhancement)	Habitat units	1.17		
	Hedgerow units	0.66		
	Watercourse units	0.00		
On-site net change (units & percentage)	Habitat units	0.14		
	Hedgerow units	0.26		
	Watercourse units	0.00		
Off-site baseline	Habitat units	0.00		
	Hedgerow units	0.00		
	Watercourse units	0.00		
Off-site post-intervention (Including habitat retention, creation & enhancement)	Habitat units	0.00		
	Hedgerow units	0.00		
	Watercourse units	0.00		
Off-site net change (units & percentage)	Habitat units	0.00		
	Hedgerow units	0.00		
	Watercourse units	0.00		
Combined net unit change (Including all on-site & off-site habitat retention, creation & enhancement)	Habitat units	0.14		
	Hedgerow units	0.26		
	Watercourse units	0.00		
Spatial risk multiplier (SRM) deductions	Habitat units	0.00		
	Hedgerow units	0.00		
	Watercourse units	0.00		
FINAL RESULTS				
Total net unit change (Including all on-site & off-site habitat retention, creation & enhancement)	Habitat units	0.14		
	Hedgerow units	0.26		
	Watercourse units	0.00		
Total net % change (Including all on-site & off-site habitat retention, creation & enhancement)	Habitat units	13.33%		
	Hedgerow units	63.87%		
	Watercourse units	0.00%		
Trading rules satisfied?	Yes ✓			
Unit Type	Target	Baseline Units	Units Required	Unit Deficit
Habitat units	10.00%	1.03	1.14	0.00
Hedgerow units	10.00%	0.41	0.45	0.00
Watercourse units	10.00%	0.00	0.00	0.00

Appendix 9. UK Habitats Plan Showing The Proposed Site



Survey Information	
	Site boundary (6,987.6m ²)
UK Habitat Survey (Primary Habitats)	
	g3c - Other neutral grassland (718.1m ²)
	u1b - Developed land; sealed surface (4,394.9m ²)
	828 - Vegetated garden (1,874.6m ²)
	h2a - Native hedgerow (44.7m)
	h2a - Native hedgerow, newly planted (67.1m)
	h2b - Non-native and ornamental hedgerow (24.5m)
	33 - Line of trees (28.2m)
	32 - Scattered tree (5)
	32 - Scattered tree, newly planted (2)

Source:
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PROJECT TITLE
BLACKER FARM, SKELMANTHORPE

DRAWING TITLE
Figure 2. Proposed Habitat Plan

VER	DATE	REMARKS	Drawn	Checked
1.2	06/05/26	Proposed	MP	GS

DRAWING NUMBER:
MIDDLETONBELLECOLOGY/BlackerFarm/Proposed

SCALE	1:2,200	PLOT SIZE	A3	DATUM	OSGB	PROJECTION	BNG
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