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PRELIMINARY ECOLOGICAL APPRAISAL OF LAND AT NORTON TIMBER LONG LANE SHEPHERDSWELL NR DOVER KENT CT15 7LU. 01 AUGUST 2019

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1. INTRODUCTION

This report contains the results of a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA) of land at Norton Timber Ltd, Long lane, Shepherdswell, Dover, Kent CT15 7LU. The survey and report were commissioned by Terry Norton of Norton Timber.

The ecological survey was carried out by Sean McMinn from Marsh Environmental on the 1st August 2019, a suitably qualified ecologist who is licensed by Natural England for the following, protected species:

- Birds (including barn owls)
- Bats
- Great Crested Newts

2. SITE DESCRIPTION

The area of land at Norton Timber Ltd, Long Lane, Shepherdswell , Dover is located north east of the village of Shepherdswell and set in a rural landscape of open farmland (arable) with some hedgerow. The proposed development site (approximately 1.06ha) consists mostly of short tussocky grassland with patches of bramble scrub throughout and tall ruderal vegetation (nettle, bramble, thistle, willow herb, ragwort). The east and west boundaries of the site are hedged with predominately hawthorn and bramble. The proposed development area is located at approximate grid reference: TR 26882 48776.

Site plan of land at Norton Timber Ltd Shepherdswell Dover.

FIGURE 1: LAND AT NORTON TIMBER LOCATION AND SURVEY AREA

3. METHODOLOGY

Site Survey

A Preliminary Ecological Appraisal of land at Norton Timber, Shepherdswell, Dover, Kent was undertaken on the 1st August 2019. The survey area concentrated on the area of land as defined in red on the site plan and figure 1.

All habitats were described as standard Phase 1 classification (Joint Nature Conservation Committee, 2010, Handbook for Phase 1 Habitat Survey). A basic habitat plan illustrates the results in figure 2.

FIGURE 2: PHASE 1 SURVEY HABITAT MAP OF LAND AT NORTON TIMBER SHEPHERDSWELL

4. RESULTS – WHAT WE FOUND

Objectives

The objectives of this commission were to:

1. **Conduct a baseline ecological survey and appraisal of the above site and identify notable factors/features;**
2. **prepare a 'Phase 1' Habitat Map with Target Notes to recognised standards;**
3. **produce a written summary of results;**
4. **provide appropriate recommendations for mitigation, biodiversity protection/ enhancement, *etc.***

Limitations

It should be noted that, whilst the investigation of the site was appropriately intensive within the intended framework of the commission, and we feel it is unlikely that significant matters have been overlooked, a single visit will inevitably miss species not apparent on the date of survey by reason of seasonality, mobility, habits or chance.

ITEM	OBSERVATIONS
Habitats & vegetation (*NB.* Please be aware that several designated habitat types and many plants enjoy legal protection in Britain.)	
General description	The area of land at Norton Timber Ltd, Long Lane, Shepherdswell , Dover is located north east of the village of Shepherdswell and set in a rural landscape of open farmland (arable) with some hedgerow. The proposed development site (approximately 1.06ha) consists mostly of short grassland with patches of bramble scrub throughout and tall ruderal vegetation (nettle, bramble, willow herb, ragwort). The east and west boundaries of the site are hedged with predominately hawthorn and bramble. The proposed development area is located at approximate grid reference: TR 26882 48776.
Target Note (TN) 1-5 (for location of TNs please see plan above	Large area of scrub, tall ruderal, tussocky grassland providing good nesting bird habitat for a range of bird species and foraging and basking/ habitat for reptiles..
Target Note 6-7	Boundary hedgerows with dense hawthorn and bramble providing good nesting bird habitat for a range of bird species.
Statutory designations (on/near)	Information from MAGIC (Multi-Agency Geographic Information for the Countryside) Information on this site from MAGIC (www.magic.gov.uk) is as follows: The nearest Statutory Designated Sites are the Lydden Temple Ewell National Nature Reserve (NNR) 2.3km south, Lydden Temple Ewell Downs Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) 2.9km south west and Ileden and Oxendon Woods SSSI 2.7km north west at the nearest points.

ITEM	OBSERVATIONS
Non-statutory designations (on/near)	Information from MAGIC (Multi-Agency Geographic Information for the Countryside) Information on this site from MAGIC (www.magic.gov.uk) is as follows: There are no Non Statutory sites within 1km of the land at Norton Timber.
Notable hedgerows, woodland or scrub	The site consists of a significant area of scrub, tall ruderal vegetation (bramble, nettle) with scattered trees that provides suitable nesting habitat for a range of nesting birds.
Ecologically notable trees (e.g. veteran, wildlife significant)[1]	None recorded although the site is impenetrable in places.
Ponds/water courses	There are no ponds located within the development area .
Notable communities	None observed on site.
Notable vascular plants	None observed on site.
Notable bryophytes	None present on site.
Notable lichens	None present on site.
Notable fungi	None present on site.
Other notable habitats/vegetation	None.
Mammals (*NB.* Several species and their habitats have very strict protection in British/European law.)	
Badger	None observed. However may occur in this area.
Otter	None observed: No suitable habitat exists.

[1] Please note that we do not check TPO status as this is a landscape/amenity planning classification.

ITEM	OBSERVATIONS
Other mustelids	None observed.
Bats	There are no buildings on site that have the potential to support roosting bats. There were no trees located on site with any potential to support roosting bats. It is likely that foraging over the site by bats may occur as there are suitable habitats both on site and in the surrounding area.
Water vole	None present on site, no suitable habitats.
Common or hazel dormouse	None present. Considered unlikely in this area.
Deer	None.
Hedgehog	None present.
Shrews	None present.
Others	Other mammals such as fox, rats and mice may use the site for foraging/breeding as suitable habitat exists. There were signs of rabbit activity on site.
Birds (*NB*. With the exception of eleven derogated pest or very common species, the Wildlife and Countryside Act (1981 and amendments) gives protection to all wild birds in Britain from killing, injuring or taking as well as taking, damaging or destroying nests in use or being built, and taking or destroying eggs. Many species are also protected by European and international statutes. [2])	
Schedule 1	No evidence of any Schedule 1 species on site and considered unlikely.
Red list	Yellowhammer and linnet recorded on site during the survey.
Active nests	No active nests found.
Other	Woodpigeon, blackbird, goldfinch, chaffinch, magpie and carrion crow. There are likely to be a greater range of bird species in the general area.
Herpetofauna (*NB.* The grass snake, slow-worm, viviparous (common) lizard and adder (viper) are all protected from intentional killing and injury under Schedule 5, Section 9(1), of the Wildlife and Countryside Act as amended/reinforced by the CROW Act 2000. They are also protected under Schedule 5, Section 9(5) which prohibits selling, offering for sale, possessing or transporting for the purpose of sale, or advertising for sale, any live or dead animal, or any part of, or anything derived from the species. Other species and their habitats have stricter protection at national and European levels.)	
Adder	There is suitable reptile habitat for this species on site.

[2] Please also see http://www.rspb.org.uk/wildlife/birdguide/status_explained.aspx and http://www.bto.org/sites/default/files/u38/downloads/home-news/2011-11/SUKB%202011%20final.pdf for red and amber lists *etc.*, and explanations.

ITEM	OBSERVATIONS
Grass snake	None observed. The dense scrub and tussocky grassland areas are suitable habitat for this species.
Slow-worm	May be present at the periphery of the site around patches of scrub and where the grass sward is higher.
Common lizard	None observed, however may occur around the site as there is suitable habitat around general refugia on site and in adjacent gardens.
Rarer reptiles	None (not found in this area).
Great crested newt	Unlikely as there is no suitable habitat on site.
Natterjack toad	No (not found in this area).
Other amphibia	None.
Fish	
Significant fishery	None present on site.
Other notable fish	None.
Macro-invertebrates (*NB*. Several species enjoy legal protection.)	
Notable assemblage (terrestrial)	None present or indicated on site.
Notable assemblage (aquatic)	None.
Crayfish	None present.
Roman snail	None observed.
Lesser silver water-beetle	None.
Stag beetle	None.
Mining bees	None observed.
Other notable spp or groups	None present on site.
Notable invertebrate habitat	None present on site.

ITEM	OBSERVATIONS
"Invasive" species (There are an increasing number of these being listed by authorities, some subject to regulatory control.)	
Japanese knotweed (or related *Fallopia* spp.)	None present on site.
Giant hogweed	None present on site.
Himalayan balsam	None present on site.
Tree-of-heaven	None present on site.
New Zealand pigmyweed	None present on site.
Floating pennywort	None present on site.
Parrot's feather	None present on site.
Water fern (*Azolla*)	None present on site.
Weeds Act natives (common ragwort, creeping and spear thistles, curled and broad-leaved docks)	Spear thistle, broad leaved dock and ragwort on site.
Other exotics that may cause problems such as *Rhododendron ponticum, Buddleia davidii*.	Buddleia recorded.
Invasive animals (signal crayfish, killer shrimp, oak processionary moth, harlequin ladybird, zebra mussel, grey squirrel *etc.*)	None recorded.
Phytophthora ramorum and other serious plant diseases (sudden oak death, *etc*.)	None observed on site.
Policy	
Are there any known conflicts with local planning biodiversity policy	If a population of reptiles is present then there may be a conflict
Are there any known conflicts with national planning biodiversity policy	If a population of reptiles is present then there may be a conflict.

ITEM	OBSERVATIONS
Are there any known conflicts with European or international biodiversity policy	N/A

GEOLOGICAL CONSERVATION (Geodiversity is a material planning consideration)	YES/NO	ACTION REQUIRED IF "YES"
Are there any features of geological importance on the development site?	Unknown	
Are there any features of geological importance adjacent to the development site or that might be affected by the development (during or post construction)?	Unknown	

FIGURE 3: PHOTOGRAPHIC RECORD AT NORTON TIMBER YARD.

View south

Scrub & ruderal vegetation

South west boundary

Scrub/grassland & tall ruderal

Hedgerow and scrub

View of South west boundary

View north

General site view

View north east

5. RECOMMENDATIONS

These recommendations are to meet compliance with current legislation, planning policy and best practice as recognised by the various statutory authorities. They are intended to fulfill ecological planning formalities and facilitate the implementation of the project.

FURTHER WORK LIKELY TO BE NEEDED	
From observations of this walk-over examination, is further work likely to be needed regarding notable/protected species, habitats, planning policy, biodiversity duty or related regulatory compliance?	YES

Work required if "yes":	Reason
Reptiles - Surveys will be required to establish presence/absence of reptiles, including a population assessment to inform an appropriate mitigation strategy should reptiles be found.	Legal compliance, protecting herpetofauna
Birds – The scrub, tall ruderal and boundary hedgerow habitats on site provide good nesting/breeding bird habitat for a range of bird species. Without further assessment of nesting birds on site any clearance of these habitats should be undertaken outside the bird breeding season (typically, March – August). If this is not possible then it is recommended that a suitable qualified ecologist checks the site for any active nests before commencement of any vegetation clearance.	Compliance with law protecting active birds' nests
To avoid the risk of infringement of regulations, conduct a pre-clearance search of all areas of the site using suitably qualified ecological scientists under a Marsh Environmental method Statement or one formally pre-agreed by us immediately prior to site stripping to move any vulnerable taxa to safety or allow other necessary precautions to be taken prior to the commencement of development activity.	Legal compliance, especially laws protecting mammals, birds and herpetofauna.
If there are any steep-sided excavations created during construction, please ensure they are covered overnight or provided with ramps to prevent any mammals becoming trapped. Re-fill such excavations as soon as feasible.	Prevention of cruelty.
Avoid unnecessary negative impacts of new lighting at night, *e.g.* on bats, invertebrates, plants, night sky. Minimise the hours when lighting is used, avoid "spillage" by using directional down-lighting, reduce brightness of necessary illumination and keep light from shining on any potential bat roost entries, mammal holes, *etc*.	Reducing ecological impact and compliance with National Planning Policy Framework paragraph 125.
Create new wildlife habitats appropriate to the site's context, *e.g.* through the use of log piles, "wild" corners and native planting; install bird, bat and invertebrate boxes and incorporate these into the project's landscape/building design scheme. (We can provide specific recommendations for models and siting on request, but they must be of good quality and durable.) Bat and bird boxes must be inspected annually and replaced when needed (usually after ten years). The development plans for the site should include the provision of 'hedgehog gates' at the bases of any boundary fencing to allow free movement of hedgehogs	Best practice and compliance with government policy on biodiversity protection and enhancement (see Biodiversity enhancement below).

FURTHER WORK LIKELY TO BE NEEDED	
through the landscape.	
Appoint an Ecological Clerk of Works and formally instruct ("toolbox talk") contractors and site personnel on agreed policies, recommendations and requirements to maintain environmental quality and minimise impacts during construction, generally avoiding unnecessary disturbance and pollution, avoiding vehicle movements and storage of materials on garden/retained greenspace areas. Please see constraints and opportunities section later in this report.	Best practice (BS42020, *etc.*)
Establish "green" roofs and walls on all suitable structures that can accommodate them, ensuring appropriate ecological science input to their management and maintenance.	Green Infrastructure and biodiversity enhancement.
Use native planting (preferably of local origin and reflecting local botany) wherever feasible in all landscaping. Where exotic species are planted, always avoid invasive species and choose those with wildlife value such as for nectar or shelter. (A selection of species is available from us.) Further enhancement measures should include 'filling in' any gaps in the northern boundary hedgerow with locally-sourced saplings of native trees and shrubs.	Biodiversity enhancement and helping to assure "no net loss".
Embody Green Infrastructure protocols in landscaping and ensure ecological linkage out from and into the site. (Please ask us if you require further details.) Please ensure we are provided with the proposed landscape planting plan to verify compliance with Green Infrastructure, Pollinator Policy & Biodiversity Net Gain.	Ecological connectivity and biodiversity protection/ enhancement.
Ensure that the "carbon footprint" of all aspects of the project and its future operation is compliant with current best practice. This may include taking appropriate steps to avoid or reduce the use of fossil fuels, employing scientifically sound carbon offset/CO_2 sequestration and instating renewable energy technologies. Ensure the measures agreed are quantified, independently verified and monitored.	To follow government and international policy on climate change.
Wherever possible, retain mature trees and established native hedgerows on site and at the periphery by designing around them. Protect trees in line with BS5837 and do not remove ivy, mistletoe, standing dead wood, snags or rot unless there is a clear and material safety risk or presence of a serious pathogen. (Ask for advice on pathogens from a qualified silvicultural ecologist if in doubt.)	Tree and biodiversity protection; BS5837: 2012 *Trees in relation to design, demolition and construction.*

6. BIODIVERSITY ENHANCEMENTS

Ecological enhancements should where possible be included in the proposed development plans to contribute towards the intended objectives of planning legislation below:

The UK Government published the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) which states that opportunities to incorporate biodiversity in and around developments should be encouraged—(Para 118).

Biodiversity enhancements for the site could include some of the following:

- Provision of ready-made bird boxes (sparrow terrace timber boxes or house martin nests for instance or mix of open-fronted and hole-nesting boxes constructed from woodcrete suitable for starlings and other hole nesting species).

- Provision of reptile / amphibian hibernacula (as stand alone or within new walls by creating recesses into wall structures).

- Provision of log piles for invertebrates (including stag beetles), reptiles and amphibians.

- Use native planting (preferably of local origin) in all landscaping. Where exotic species are planted, always avoid invasive species and choose those with wildlife value such as for nectar or shelter

- Priority should be given to species and habitats present on the Kent Biodiversity Action Plan species list, and where there is the potential for that species to occur on site.

- The list includes great crested newt, common toad, viviparous lizard, slow-worm, grass snake, adder, house sparrow, tree sparrow, hedgehog, noctule, soprano pipistrelle, brown long-eared bat, brown hare, water vole, harvest mouse, dormouse, otter as well as many more species. https://www.kmbrc.org.uk Design and incorporate Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) in agreement with the Environment Agency or other relevant authority

7. REFERENCES

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