

Preliminary Ecological Survey

Old Joiners Shop, Lartington

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1. Introduction

This is the report of an ecology survey for a planning application for the development of a ruined building into a dwelling with a garage.

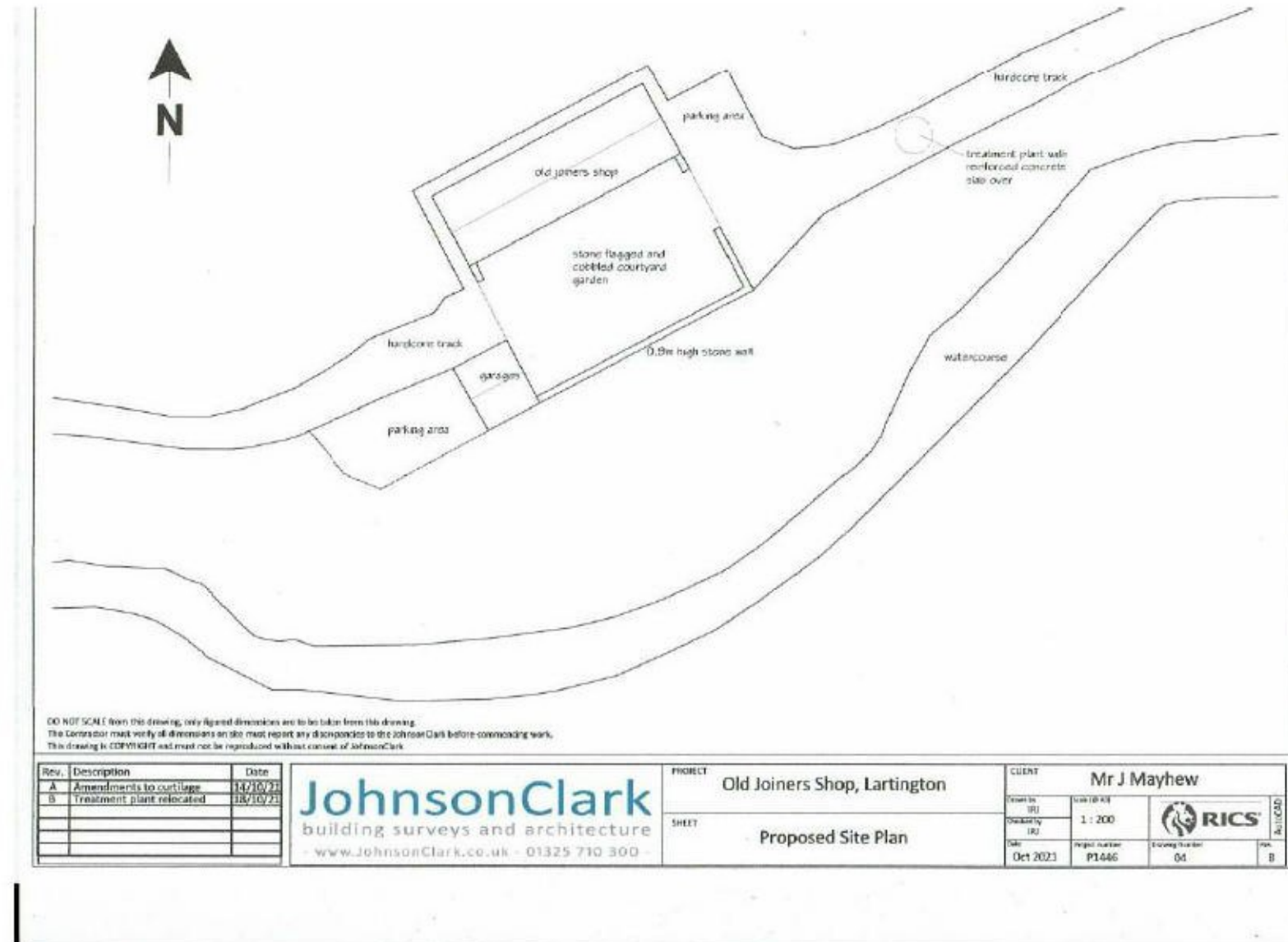


Figure 1, Proposed layout

2. Existing data

Existing biological data was sought from the North East Environmental Records Centre, “ERIC”, the government’s “Magic” mapping system and from other sources such as the Durham Badger Group, Red Squirrels North East and The Botanical Society of Britain and Ireland.

2.1. Habitats

The survey area is within the Lartington Conservation Area.

Waskey Wood Local Wildlife Site, a woodland area, is almost adjacent to the site to the west. Pecknell Wood Local Wildlife Site is 300 metres to the east, connected by the Scur Beck, and Cotherstone Railway Local Wildlife Site, a mixed habitat former railway line, is 300 metres to the north. These sites are illustrated in Figure 2.

2.2. Species

There were no records for the site itself. Nearby records for protected species were-

2.2.1. Otters

Otters have been recorded further downstream on the Scur Beck, which runs adjacent to the site, from 2017 to 2021.

2.2.2 Badgers

Badgers have been noted in Pecknell Wood LWS in 2021 and 2013, and at the Cotherstone Railway LWS in 2014.

2.2.3 Bats

Roosts in woodlands and in buildings within a kilometre radius since 2010 include Pipistrelle, Soprano Pipistrelle, Noctule and Daubenton’s bats.

2.2.4. Hedgehog

A number of Hedgehogs have been recorded as road casualties in Lartington village since 2010.

2.2.5 Schedule 9 Invasive species.

Himalayan Balsam is recorded for further downstream along the Scur Beck.



Figure 2, nearby Local wildlife Sites

3. Survey

The survey was carried out in suitable conditions on 25th June 2021 by John Durkin, an experience ecologist. All areas of the site could be accessed.

4. Results

The site is predominantly woodland, with a central track from a bridge over the Scur Beck at the east end of the site, and the remains of several old buildings along the track. The habitats are shown in Figure 1, and illustrated in the photographs below.

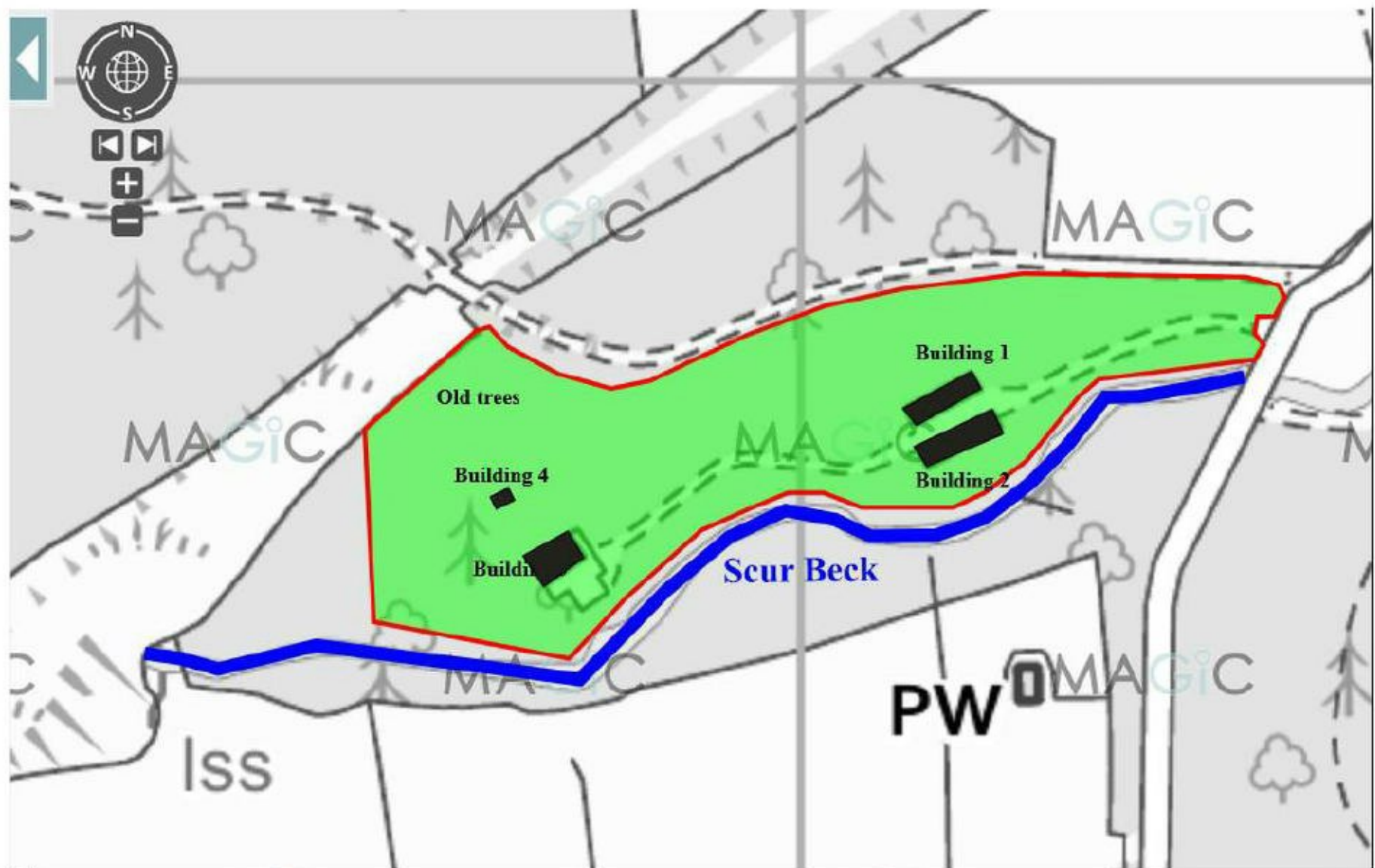


Figure 1, habitats

4.1. Habitats

4.1.1.

The woodland is “estate woodland”, old but not ancient, with native and planted non-native trees and shrubs. There is an “ancient” element in the ground flora, because of the proximity of the Scur Beck. The woodland is rather overgrown, with a strong shrub layer of mixed native shrubs and Rhododendrons.

4.1.2. Buildings

There are 4 buildings, two by the track in the centre of the site, one at the western end of the track, and a fourth just north of this in the woodland. These are numbered in the Figure x and illustrated in the photographs below.

4.2. Species

4.2.1. Otters

The banks of the Scur Beck, which are just outside the application area, were searched for signs of Otters, including holts, tracks, spraint and feeding signs. None were found.

4.2.2. Badgers

The whole site was searched for signs of Badgers, including setts, tracks, spraint and feeding signs. None were found.

4.2.3. Bats

The trees and buildings were assessed for the likelihood of a bat roost being present.

Several trees in the north west part of the site were large and had holes and defects potentially suitable for bat roosts. These should be surveyed if the trees are to be removed. None of the trees along the access track or around the buildings had features suitable for bat roosts.

The buildings were examined for roof spaces and masonry spaces where bats might roost, and for droppings, urine stains, remains of dead bats and the characteristic smell associated with bat roosts. None of these were found. Specifically, for the four buildings marked on the Ordnance Survey map, details were as follows. The four buildings are numbered on Figure x and illustrated below.

Building 1. This is the main building, with stone-built walls, no doors or windows and no roof space. At the time of survey it was in the process of being re-roofed. There was no roof space or wall cavities suitable for a bat roost.

Building 2. Adjacent and to the south of Building 1, a stone and brick building roofed with metal sheeting, with no enclosed roof space. Parts of this building had fallen down.

Building 3. To the west of Buildings 1 and 2, this building consisted of roofless brick walls and had no suitability for bat roosts.

Building 4. To the north of Building 3, this building had fallen down and consisted of debris and part of the roof, lying on the ground.



Building 1 Exterior



Building 1 Interior



Building 2 Exterior



Building 2 Interior



Building 3



Building 4



Potential bat roost tree, example.

4.2.4. Hedgehogs

No Hedgehogs were found during the survey, but the habitat is good for this species and they are likely to be present.

4.2.5. Schedule 9 invasive species

Himalayan Balsam was found in small quantities in wetter areas of the woodland.



Scur Beck, typical view



Entrance drive

5. Avoidance, mitigation, compensation.

The site is a little overgrown with young trees and shrubs since it was last in use, so it will probably be necessary to clear some young trees. This should be done outside of the bird nesting season, mid-February to August, or, if this is not possible, an ecologist should check for nests before work commences.

There are no trees suitable as bat roosts close to the buildings or the access track, only in the north west area of the site. If it is necessary to fell in this area, then bat roost emergence surveys would be required.

The Scur Beck is nearby and is known to be used by Otters. Design and development should take account of this and avoid physical or light disturbance to the stream.

Biodiversity losses here are negligible, amounting to a few square metres of ruderal plants and scrub. The requirement for biodiversity gain can be met by installing artificial bat roosting facilities into the dwelling, either as “bat tiles” or “bat bricks”.

6. Appendix, species lists.

English name	Scientific name
Aegopodium podagraria	Ground-elder
Aesculus hippocastanum	Horse-chestnut
Ajuga reptans	Bugle
Allium ursinum	Ramsons
Alnus glutinosa	Alder
Angelica sylvestris	Wild Angelica
Arctium nemorosum	Wood Burdock
Asplenium scolopendrium	Hart's-tongue
Asplenium trichomanes subsp. Quadrialeans	Maidenhair Spleenwort
Athyrium filix-femina	Lady-fern
Betula pendula	Silver Birch
Brachypodium sylvaticum	False-brome
Capreolus capreolus	Roe Deer
Cardamine flexuosa	Wavy Bitter-cress
Carex pendula	Pendulous Sedge
Chrysosplenium oppositifolium	Opposite-leaved Golden-saxifrage
Circaea lutetiana	Enchanter's-nightshade
Dactylis glomerata	Cock's-foot
Deschampsia cespitosa	Tufted Hair-grass
Digitalis purpurea	Foxglove
Doronicum pardalianches	Leopard's-bane
Dryopteris dilatata	Broad Buckler-fern
Dryopteris filix-mas	Male-fern
Fagus sylvatica	Beech
Ficaria verna	Lesser Celandine
Fragaria vesca	Wild Strawberry
Fraxinus excelsior	Ash
Galium aparine	Cleavers
Geranium robertianum	Herb-Robert
Geum urbanum	Wood Avens
Hedera helix	Common Ivy
Hyacinthoides non-scripta	Bluebell
Ilex aquifolium	Holly
Iris pseudacorus	Yellow Iris
Ligustrum vulgare	Wild Privet
Luzula sylvatica	Great Wood-rush
Mercurialis perennis	Dog's Mercury
Myosotis sylvatica	Wood Forget-me-not
Oxalis acetosella	Wood-sorrel
Picea abies	Norway Spruce
Prunus domestica	Wild Plum

English name	Scientific name
Prunus laurocerasus	Cherry Laurel
Quercus robur	Pedunculate Oak
Ranunculus repens	Creeping Buttercup
Rhododendron ponticum	Rhododendron
Rosa canina agg.	Dog-rose
Rumex obtusifolius	Broad-leaved Dock
Rumex sanguineus	Wood Dock
Rumex sanguineus var. viridis	Wood Dock
Salix caprea	Goat Willow
Sambucus nigra	Elder
Schedonorus arundinaceus	Tall Fescue
Silene dioica	Red Campion
Sorbus aria	Common Whitebeam
Stachys sylvatica	Hedge Woundwort
Talpa europaea	Northern Mole
Taraxacum agg.	Dandelion
Taxus baccata	Yew
Tilia x europaea	Lime
Ulmus glabra	Wych Elm
Urtica dioica	Common Nettle