

Extended Phase One Habitat Survey (Preliminary Ecological Appraisal)

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Prepared for: LSUK developments
Glendale, Heskin.

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1. Introduction

1.1 Background to the project

The client is proposing the re development of the Glendale site in Heskin and is intending to demolish the existing buildings, the full details of which are not yet fully confirmed.

1.2 Site location, context and main habitats

The site is located within Littleborough in Rochdale in a semi urban environment and enclosed by existing residential and commercial land uses. The habitats on site comprises of scattered trees, amenity grassland, marshy grassland and hedgerow habitats including areas of hard standing.

1.3 Report purpose

To prepare a Preliminary Ecological Assessment or Extended Phase One Habitat Survey for the development site following CIEEM guidelines (*Guidelines for Preliminary Ecological Appraisal, April 2013*). The purpose of the report is to provide information relating to the location, extent and distribution and impact on the conservation of wild plants and animals and natural and semi natural habitats affected by development. This report sets out the methods, results and recommendations arising from the above work.

1.3.1 Surveyor information

Simon Brain has attained a Post Graduate Certificate in Biological Recording and has attended residential FSC Field Courses for Land mammal, Songbird Barn Owls (CIEEM) and Advanced Bird Survey Techniques. He holds a NE Class 2 bat license (17334-CLS). He has over ten years experience as a practice ecologist and 30 years experience as an arborist.

2. Desk Study

2.1 Methodology

The desk study collated information on designated statutory and non-statutory wildlife sites within 1km search radii around the proposed development site.

Information on statutory and non-statutory designated sites and legally protected/notable species records were obtained from <http://www.natureonthemap.naturalengland.org.uk/MagicMap.aspx> and contained in section 2.2 below.

2.2 Designated sites, species and habitats - Results Overview

Multi-Agency Geographic Information for the Countryside (MAGIC) website (<http://www.natureonthemap.naturalengland.org.uk/MagicMap.aspx>) has confirmed no statutory designations apply to the site and the site boundaries.

The site is located within SSSI Impact Zone for Wrightington Bar Pasture SSSI which is located 2415m east of site. The development proposal does not appear to conform to those development types that require the LPA to consult Natural England on the likely risks.

Multi-Agency Geographic Information for the Countryside website data has confirmed the following habitats and species apply to the site and its immediate locality:

- There are section 41 habitats listed on the inventory on the site which consist of priority woodland around the site's periphery
- There are numerous areas of listed woodland within the 1km and lowland heath located within 500m of site
- The site is 1250m from the National Habitat Network All Habitats Combined (England) expansion zone
- The site area is covered by the countryside stewardship priority area for lapwing and tree sparrow species.

- There are no important Bird Areas, Seabird considerations, or water and wetland considerations in respect of avian species. The site is 450m south of an upland breeding bird area.
- The closest granted European Protected Species (EPS) license application by Natural England was for bat species approximately 950m from site. No other EPS licenses are within 1km. A single GCN record is located 1.7km from site and 3 other bat licenses have been granted within 2km.

3. Extended Phase One Habitat Survey

3.1 Methodology and survey results

The site was visited on the 5th October 2021 and a survey of the site was conducted using the Joint Nature Conservation Committee (JNCC) Handbook for Phase 1 habitat survey 2010. Distinct habitats were identified and any features of nature conservation interest or habitat areas that were too small to map were subject to a more detailed description in a Target Note (T1 etc) and contained in Appendix 1 – Extended Phase 1 Habitat Survey Mapping and Appendix 2 – Vascular Plant Site List.

3.1.2. Vascular Plants and Habitat

Table 1: Site habitats

Habitat Code	Dominant species	Less frequent species
A..3.1 Broadleaf scattered trees	Quercus robur Fraxinus excelsior Crategus monogyna	Betula pendula Prunus kanzan Fagus sylvatica
J.1.2 Amenity grassland	Festuca rubra Trifolium repens Poa annua Trifolium repens	Plantago lanceolata Ranunculus repens

Target Notes - None taken

3.1.3 Protected and Notable Species (Mammals)

Water Voles

The habitat on the site does not contain running water habitat suitable for the species. Ditches are present throughout the sites periphery, but they are considered unsuitable for water vole.

Bat species

Bats are comprehensively protected under UK and European legislation. Bats are largely ubiquitous there is green infrastructure linking the site to the wider landscape. The site contains optimal foraging habitat on the site and buildings are present that bats could roost in. Trees may need to be removed for development which could contain bat roosts.

Badgers and Hedgehog

Badgers are protected under Schedule 6 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981, and under the Protection of Badgers Act 1992, which prohibits deliberate interference with the animal or its sett. Badger records are present in the LRC data. A standard badger survey was undertaken making checks on site and in the immediate site margins. For example, up to 20m+ from site was checked for signs for field signs of Badger (hair, tracks, prints, dropping or latrines) and no field signs of badger were found. Equally no field signs were found for hedgehog, however suitable foraging habitat does exist due to the presence of trees and grassland and the semi urban nature of the site.

3.1.4 Amphibians

The desktop and field survey exercises indicate no field ponds are located within 400m of the site. There is aquatic breeding habitat associated with the site itself (pond) and foraging, dispersal or hibernating habitat for amphibians to be present.

3.1.5 Birds

All birds with only minor exceptions are protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act (1981), as amended. It is also an offence to disturb birds whilst nesting or displaying breeding behaviour, during the breeding season.

Although no specific bird survey was undertaken the site is unlikely to support a significant amount of grassland and /or farmland birds. Urban birds are more likely to use the site such as house sparrow and starling which are birds of conservation concern.

3.1.6 Vascular Plants

The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 section 13 1(b) affords some wild flowers protection from uprooting. No other IUCN listed, BAP or other notable plants were identified.

3.1.7 Reptiles

All native reptile species in the UK are protected under law from killing or sale. No habitat exists on the site for these species to be present and no LRC records are present.

3.2. Constraints to the Surveys

The timing of the site visit was sub optimal for all species and habitats to be identified within the framework of a Phase 1 survey however the habitats could easily be identified on site and no significant constraints were anticipated.

4. Summary and Impact

4.1 Summary – Protected habitats

The surveys have confirmed that the site does support a habitat protected under Section 41 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities (*NERC*) Act 2006 - Habitats and Species of Principal Importance in England which is listed woodland located around the site periphery.

Summary - Protected species

No evidence of protected species was recorded on site. No other evidence of protected species was found during the site walkover, other than a non-native vascular plant.

Summary – Protected sites

There are no statutory or non-statutory designated sites within the boundaries of the development site or within the site margins. The site is not part of the National Habitat Network All Habitats Combined (England).

Impact – General

The development proposal seeks to construct a new dwelling and associated infrastructure and there is a direct loss of amenity grassland and existing building (possible pond loss) for the footprint of the development.

Impact - Species

The full extent of protected species that may reside on this site will require confirmation following further surveys as recommended in section 4.2. The following general impacts are considered to apply:

Bat species. No significant loss of optimal commuting and foraging. The existing trees and buildings to be removed may contain bat roosts.

Badger / hedgehog. Currently no evidence of badger, hedgehog has potential to be present on site.

Water vole. No impact considered likely.

Amphibians. Potential loss of breeding habitat and some loss of sub optimal commuting and foraging habitat.

Birds. Loss of foraging habitat and disturbance during the breeding season.

Vascular Plants. Loss of vascular plant habitat identified on site is a low-level impact and no non native protected plants were identified

Reptiles. Low-level impact due to site being landlocked and largely inaccessible to reptiles.

4.2 Recommendations for protected species

4.2.1 Mammals

Bat species

A Bat Roost Assessment of all trees and buildings to be removed is required. The Bat Roost Assessment may recommend the need for a summer emergence survey/s on the identified roost features in trees and / or buildings. The site is likely to hold great significance for commuting and foraging bat species.

Badgers / hedgehog

No evidence of these species was found but a pre start check shall be made to ensure no badger activity has developed since this walkover survey. Measures are required to incorporate hedgehog into the development plans.

4.2.2 Amphibians

An amphibian appraisal is required due to the presence of breeding habitat and a EPS GCN approved license within the 1km search areas.

4.2.3 Avian

A breeding bird appraisal / survey will be required prior to any tree to removal ascertain the importance of the site to breeding birds at that time. This may

require hand searching and dawn observations depending upon the time of year.

4.2.4 Vascular Plants

No other further surveys are required for vascular plants.

4.2.5 Reptiles

No further surveys are required for these species.

5. Recommendations, mitigation, enhancement measures

5.1 Recommendations, mitigation, enhancement measures

Mitigation applies to works required to comply with legislation when developing land where protected species reside, or protected habitats are being lost. Enhancement relates to biodiversity improvements often made under the National Planning Policy Framework.

At present there is no evidence of protected species on the site which could be affected by development. Other protected species that may be present on site include bats, amphibians, badgers and hedgehog.

The extent of protected species requires the surveys referred to in section 4.1 and 4.2 to be complete before mitigation can be proposed to support this development. Upon completion of these surveys mitigation, compensation and enhancement measures can be provided and confirmed.

The provision of a Biodiversity enhancement report and a Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment is considered to apply to the site in accordance with the NPPF guidelines and best practice.

Appendix 1 Extended Phase 1 Habitat Survey Map



PHASE ONE HABITAT MAP

KEY

- A.1.1.1 Semi Natural woodland
- + A.2. Scrub
- G 1 Open water (pond)
- J2 Amenity grassland
- J 4 Introduced shrub

Client:
LSUK

Project:
Heskin

Detail:
Phase One Habitat Map

Drawn By:	Date:	Scale:
SB	06.10.2021	NTS

Drg No:	Revision:
TR-01	V1

Appendix 2 Site Vascular plant list

Acer pseudoplatanus
Arrhenatherum elatius
Begonia sp
Bellis perennis
Buddleja sp.
Chamerion angustifolium
Convolvulus arvensis
Corylus avellana
Dactylis glomerata
Epilobium parviflorum
Festuca rubra
Galium aparine
Geranium robertianum
Hordeum glaucum
Iris pseudacorus
Lavendula spp
Lolium perenne
Malus sp
Plantago lanceolata
Poa annua
Prunus lusitanica
Quercus robur
Salix babylonica
Sorbus aucuparia
Ranunculus repens
Ribies sp.
Rubus agg.
Taraxacum officinale
Trifolium repens
Tussilago farfara
Urtica dioica