



**PRELIMINARY ECOLOGICAL
ASSESSMENT
CRIEFF RD PERTH
RAPLEYS LLP**

3/02/2022

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Executive Summary

Gavia Environmental Ltd. (GEL) was commissioned by the Daniel Wheelright, Rapleys LLP on behalf of Lidl Great Britain Ltd to undertake a Preliminary Ecological Assessment (PEA) at a location on Crieff Rd, Perth ("the Site"). The Site is located at NO 09228 24956, in the centre of Perth, Scotland.

The aim of the PEA survey was to record evidence (where present) of any EU or UK protected species around the area of proposed work or within a buffer of 100m, where access was permitted.

The survey was undertaken by Kiera Hamilton, Qualifying Member of CIEEM on 24th January 2022 in near perfect conditions for surveying, with good visibility.

The findings of this survey are to support a planning application for a LIDL supermarket to be built on this site as well as the necessary road changes and car park space.

A PEA was undertaken within the Site red line boundary as well as a buffer of 100 metres, recording all broad habitat types and identifying features which may indicate the presence or absence of protected species. The surveyed area is defined as the area in the Site boundary combined with the buffer area to give a full representation of the nearby habitats.

Nine different Phase 1 habitats were found in the surveyed area, with the largest being Buildings J3.6 which represented 33.36% of the habitat. Tall ruderal C3.1 (15.78%) was the second largest habitat found, followed by J1.2 amenity grassland (12.37%) then J4 Bare ground (12.03%) and J5 other habitat representing the A85 and Crieff Rd (10.82%). Smaller areas of made ground I2.2 (5.78%), short perennial disturbed ground J1.3 (5.48%), semi natural broadleaved woodland greater than 5 metres in height A1.1.1 (3.03%) as well as A.1.2.1 semi natural coniferous woodland (1.35%) were also recorded in the surveyed area. None of these habitats are of protected status.

Historic records of beaver and otter were found during the desk study within 2km of the Site. No sightings of protected species were identified during the walkover survey. There was multiple sightings of rabbit burrows within the Site but as rabbits are not considered a protected species, these were disregarded.

Evidence of bat roosting potential was observed on the broadleaved trees that line the road that comes onto the Site from the south as well as the semi natural broadleaved tree habitat to the north of the Site boundary. A further preliminary bat roost assessment (PRA) is advised to take place to evaluate the potential to disturb any bat roosts in broad-leaved trees that are within 10 metres of the Site boundary. Any trees that are to be felled to allow for the construction of this supermarket will also need a bat PRA completed to identify if there is any potential for roosting bats. This survey can be completed at any time of the year.

1 Introduction

1.1 Aims and Objectives

Gavia Environmental Ltd. (GEL) was commissioned by the Daniel Wheelright, Rapleys LLP on behalf of Lidl Great Britain Ltd to undertake a Preliminary Ecological Assessment at a location on Crieff Rd, Perth ("the Site"). The Site is located at NO 09228 24956, in the centre of Perth, Scotland.

The aim of the PEA survey was to record evidence (where present) of any EU or UK protected species around the area of proposed work or within a buffer of 100m, where access was permitted.

The survey was undertaken by Kiera Hamilton, Qualifying Member of CIEEM on 24th January 2022 in near perfect conditions for surveying, with good visibility.

1.2 Site Description

The Site is found to the north of Crieff Rd, in the centre of Perth at NO 09228 24956. To the north of the Site is St Johnstone Football Club grounds as well as McDiarmid park. To the east and south of the Site is the A85 and residential properties. Tesco Extra supermarket and B&Q DIY Store are some of the commercial properties that are found to the west of the Site.

1.3 Legislation

Refer to Appendix A for full legislation for habitats and protected species.

2 Methodology

2.1 Desk Study

Prior to the field survey, a desk study was undertaken to provide up – to date ecological information on statutory designated sites; habitats; and European and UK Protected Species within 2km of the survey area. The date search covered the past 10 years. The following sources were used:

- A search of publicly available information of the National Biodiversity Network (NBN) available for commercial purposes for evidence of protected species;
- Scottish Biodiversity List; and
- NatureScot Site Link (2021) for statutory and non-statutory designated sites within 2km of the Site

2.2 Preliminary Ecological Assessment (PEA)

2.2.1 Habitats

The PEA was carried out according to the 'Extended Phase 1 Habitat Survey' method, as recommended in the Guidelines for baseline ecological assessment, and Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (CIEEM) guidelines for Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA) (CIEEM, 2017). This level of survey includes the documentation of habitats to a recognised standard and also includes the recording of signs indicating the presence, or likely presence of species that could constitute a material consideration in planning terms. This includes birds, mammals, and any stands of non-native invasive plants (INNS).

An Extended Phase 1 Habitat Survey is a standardised method of recording habitat types and characteristic vegetation, as set out in the Handbook for Phase 1 Habitat Survey – a technique for Environmental Audit (JNCC, 2010).

It should be noted that the Extended Phase 1 methodology does not constitute a full botanical or Protected Species survey but allows a professional judgement to be made on whether further specialist surveys would be advisable – either in relation to the planning application/design stage or subsequently.

2.2.2 Protected Species

The aim of the walkover was to record evidence (if present) of any EU or UK protected species within the survey area. Recommendations are made for further detailed protected species surveys where appropriate.

Survey effort was focused on prominent features such as trees, hedgerows, buildings or structures, and habitat boundaries, all of which provide shelter and commuting routes for wildlife.

2.2.2.1 Mammals

The following field signs were searched for:

- trees and/or structures suitable for roosting bats;
- faeces;
- footprints;
- hair, especially at all restricted passageways through undergrowth or fences;
- scratch posts;
- shelters, dens, setts, holts, dreys or burrows; and

- feeding signs.

Trees on site were inspected visually from the ground, using binoculars, by a suitably experienced ecologist to assess their potential for use by roosting bats and to record field signs for roosting bats, if found. Field signs include any gaps or cavities around the trunk of the tree that could be suitable for roosting bats.

2.2.2.2 Birds

Any birds observed during the survey were recorded. Any bird nests observed in trees were also recorded.

2.2.2.3 Other

Ad hoc observations of notable species were recorded where possible, particularly the presence of any invasive flora and fauna.

All registrations of interest were noted as grid referenced Target Notes using a handheld GPS.

2.3 Limitations

The survey was undertaken in near perfect weather conditions. However, the survey was undertaken out with the breeding bird season and the optimum habitat survey season as per JNCC. This meant that some vascular plant species may be missed due to die back. However, it is not thought that this will pose a constraint on the survey effort or the phase 1 habitat findings.

3 Results

3.1 Desk Study Results

No areas of designation were identified within the Site boundary or within 2km of the Site.

No records of protected species were found with the Site boundary itself. The results of available records for protected species within 2km of the Site boundary within the last 10 years from NBN Atlas are detailed in the table below.

Table 1: NBN Atlas Protected Species Records within 2km of the Site Boundary within 10 years

Species	Number of Records	Last Record
European Beaver (<i>Castor fiber</i>)	48	21/02/2021
Eurasian Otter (<i>Lutra Lutra</i>)	1	15/08/2020
Soprano Pipistrelle (<i>Pipistrellus Pygmaeus</i>)	2	21/03/2021
Eurasian Red Squirrel (<i>Sciurus vulgaris</i>)	46	22/08/2021

3.2 Preliminary Ecological Assessment

3.2.1 Phase 1 Habitats

This section describes the habitats recorded within the Site. Habitats are colour-coded according to the Handbook for Phase 1 habitat survey (JNCC, 2010) and presented in Appendix D. Summary descriptions are included below, and the total area of each habitat recorded within the survey area are presented in Table 2 below. The survey area is defined as the Site plus the 100-metre buffer. A full species list is included in Appendix D.

Table 2: Phase 1 Habitat results of the Survey Area

Phase 1 Code	Habitat	Area (m ²)	Survey Area (%)
A 1.1. 1	Semi Natural Broadleaved Woodland	2,312	3.03
A 1.2.1	Semi Natural Coniferous Woodland	1,031	1.35
C3.1	Tall Ruderal	12,027	15.78
I2.2	Spoil Made Ground	4,411	5.78
J1.2	Amenity Cultivated Grassland	9,431	12.37
J1.3	Short Perennial Cultivated	4,183	5.48
J3.6	Buildings	25,423	33.36
J4	Bare Ground	9,167	12.03
J5	Other Habitat	8,221	10.82
	Total	76,201	100

3.2.1.1 A1.1.1 Semi Natural Broadleaved Woodland

This habitat, representing 3.03% of the overall survey area, is found on the north border of the Site boundary. Species found here include ash trees, common beech, pedunculate oak

and immature elder trees. No nests were noted. The following tagged trees were noted to have bat roost potential from the ground using binoculars:

- 05244
- 05245
- 05246
- 05247
- 05248

3.2.1.2 A 1.2.1 Semi Natural Coniferous Woodland

This habitat, the smallest identified in the surveyed area is found within the Site Boundary to the northwest. It represents 1.35% of the surveyed area and contains species such as cedar and cypress trees. No nests were noted.

3.2.1.3 C3.1 Tall Ruderal

This habitat, the second largest identified represents 15.78% of the surveyed area. This habitat dominates the red line Site area and contains species such as common nettle, rosebay willow herb, curly dock, common thistle and young willow trees that are sporadically found within the tall plants. In this habitat, there was a small standing of boggy water in the northeast corner. Please refer to TN4 in Appendix D and photo 7 in Appendix E Site photographs. Also, noted in this habitat was the presence of a culvert, labelled by TN5, which was channeling standing boggy water. Please refer to photo 9 in Appendix E Site photographs for a photo of the culvert.

3.2.1.4 I2.2 Spoil Made Ground

This habitat representing only 5.78% of the surveyed area is found to the northwest of the buffer. It is heavily dominated by feather mosses (*Brachythacium* spp), with other primary colonizers all heavily grazed on by rabbits. This is made ground which has very stony soil. A water monitoring dip well was identified in this habitat. Please refer to photo 2 in Appendix E Site Photographs.

3.2.1.5 J1.2 Amenity grassland

This habitat offers minimal habitat for protected species, found to act as a border around the Site as well as a park to the east of the buffer. Dominating species were perennial rye grass, common daisy, common dandelion, with common yarrow, common thistle and scotch broom noticed infrequently. This habitat represents 12.37% of the surveyed area. Please refer to photo 3 in Appendix E, Site Photographs.

3.2.1.6 J1.3 Short Perennial Cultivated Land

This habitat is found to the south-west of the surveyed area, representing 5.48%. Low growing species found here is broadleaf plantain, creeping buttercup, common ragwort, white clover, with patches of false oat grass. The stony soil is exposed in places, with the derelict foundations of a building found at TN3, Appendix D.

3.2.1.7 J3.6 Buildings

This is the largest habitat, making up 33.36% of the survey area found in the south and west. This Site is located in the middle of the city Perth, so there is a lot of residential properties surrounding.

3.2.1.8 J4 Bare Ground

Bare Ground (12.03%), made up of concrete remains from the demolition of previous buildings that once stood here. TN2 in Appendix D represents the fenced off pile of rubble /

stones left behind from the demolition. A running tap main resulting in small patches standing water was found during the walkover survey, labelled by TN1, in Appendix D. Please refer to photo 1 in Appendix E Site Photographs.

3.2.1.9 J5 Other Habitat

Other habitat representing 10.82% of the survey area, is for the roads that are found to the east and south of the Site specifically the A85 and Crieff Rd. Please refer to photo 10 in Appendix E Site photographs. There is a road, that runs north from Crieff Rd to give access to the Site which has nine trees acting as a thin border to this road. Specifically the below tags from these single broadleaved trees have got bat roost potential seen from the ground by binoculars:

- 05288
- 05227
- 05225

Please refer to photo 4 in Appendix E Site photographs for bat roosting potential trees as well as road.

3.2.2 Protected Species

No signs of protected mammals were recorded during the survey.

No signs of reptile or amphibian species were recorded during the survey.

No signs of invasive species were seen.

3.2.3 Birds

One European robin and three woodpigeons were identified during the survey amongst the Semi Natural Broadleaved Woodland. No nests were seen.

4 Conclusions and Recommendations

None of the habitats found in the walkover survey are protected.

No sightings of protected species were identified during the walkover survey. There were multiple sightings of rabbit burrows within the Site but as rabbits are not considered a protected species, these were disregarded.

Evidence of bat roosting potential was observed on the broadleaved trees that line the road that comes onto the Site from the south as well as the semi natural broadleaved tree habitat to the north of the Site boundary.

A further preliminary bat roost assessment is advised to take place to evaluate the potential to disturb any bat roosts in broad-leaved trees that are within 10 metres of the Site boundary. Any trees that are to be felled to allow for the construction of this supermarket will also need a bat preliminary roost assessment completed to identify if there is any potential for roosting bats. This survey can be completed at any time of the year.

References

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Appendix A Legislation

Habitats

The EC Directive (at time of UK exit) lists several habitats under Annex 1 which are important for maintaining biodiversity. It is this legislation which is used to create protected sites such as Special Areas of Conservation (SAC) and Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI). SACs aim to protect rare, endangered, or vulnerable habitats (including their flora) such as natural/semi-natural woodland, heaths, mires, and peat habitats such as blanket bog. The legislation requires these sites to be protected from damage and therefore kept in a favorable conservation status.

Protected Species

Badger

Badgers are protected by the Protection of Badgers Act (1992), which protects them against deliberate cruelty and incidental effects of otherwise lawful activities. It is an offence, amongst others, to:

- kill, injure, take, possess, or cruelly ill-treat a badger or attempt to do so;
- damage, destroy or obstruct access to a badger sett or part of a sett; and
- disturb a badger when it occupies a sett.

The Nature Conservation (Scotland) Act 2004 also made the above actions unlawful if carried out recklessly (as opposed to intentionally). The Wildlife and Natural Environment (Scotland) Act (2011) (the WANE Act) has strengthened the protection afforded to badgers further by making it an offence, amongst others, to knowingly cause or permit an unlawful act to be carried out.

Pine marten

Pine martens are legally protected by The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (under schedules 5 & 6) in the UK. In Scotland this is amended by the Nature Conservation (Scotland) Act 2004 and the Wildlife and Natural Environment (Scotland) Act 2011. It is an offence to intentionally or recklessly:

- kill, injure, or take a pine marten;
- damage, destroy or obstruct access to a nest or den – i.e., any structure or place which such an animal uses for shelter or protection;
- disturb such an animal when it is occupying a nest or den for shelter or protection (except when this is inside a dwelling house);
- possess or control, sell, offer for sale, or possess or transport for the purpose of sale any living or dead pine marten or any derivative of such an animal; and
- Knowingly causing or permitting any of the above acts to be carried out is also an offence.

Otter

Otter are legally protected by the EC Habitats Directive (at time of UK exit), which is transposed into domestic law by the Conservation (Natural Habitats, &c.) Regulations 1994 (as amended). The Conservation (Natural Habitats, &c.) Amendment (Scotland) Regulations 2007 enhanced this protection. It is illegal, amongst other offences, to deliberately or recklessly:

- kill, injure or capture an otter;
- disturb or harass an otter;

- disturb an otter in a holt or any other structure or place it uses for shelter or protection;
- disturb an otter in a manner that is likely to significantly affect the local distribution of the species;
- disturb an otter in a manner that is likely to impair its ability to survive, breed or reproduce, or rear or otherwise care for its young; and
- damage, destroy or obstruct access to a breeding site or resting place of an otter.

This does not need to be deliberate or reckless to constitute an offence and is so regardless of whether otters are present or not. The Wildlife and Natural Environment (Scotland) Act (2011) (WANE Act) further strengthened the protection afforded to otters by making it an offence, amongst others, to knowingly cause or permit an unlawful act to be carried out.

Bats

All bat species in the UK are afforded full statutory protection as European protected species listed on Schedule 2 of the Conservation (Natural Habitats, &c.) Regulations 1994 as amended in Scotland, which transpose into Scottish Law in the European Community's Habitats Directive (92/43/EEC). Under the terms of Regulation 39(1), with certain exceptions, it is an offence to deliberately or recklessly:

- harass a wild bat or group of wild bats;
- to disturb a bat while it is occupying a structure or place which it uses for shelter; or protection;
- to disturb a bat while it is rearing or otherwise caring for its young;
- to obstruct access to a breeding site or resting place of a bat, or otherwise to deny the bat use of the breeding site or resting place;
- to disturb a bat in a manner that is, or in circumstances which are, likely to significantly affect the local distribution or abundance of the species to which it belongs;
- to disturb a wild bat in a manner that is, or in circumstances which are, likely to impair its ability to survive, breed or reproduce, or rear or otherwise care for its young; and
- to damage or destroy a breeding site or resting place of such an animal.

All the above protections apply regardless of the stage of the life of the animal in question. Of the 18 UK bat species, ten occur in Scotland: common pipistrelle (*Pipistrellus pipistrellus*), Soprano pipistrelle (*P. pygmaeus*), Nathusius' pipistrelle (*P. nathusii*), Natterer's (*Myotis nattereri*), Daubenton's (*M. daubentonii*), Noctule (*Nyctalus noctule*), brown long-eared bat (*Plecotus auratus*), Leisler's (*N. leisleri*), Whiskered (*M. mystacinus*), and Brandt's (*M. brandtii*) bats.

Amphibians and Reptiles

The Wildlife and Countryside Act (as amended) 1981 covers the protection of all amphibian and reptile species found naturally in Scotland such as common frog *Rana temporaria*, common toad *Bufo bufo*, palmate newt *Lissotriton helveticus*, smooth newt *Lissotriton vulgaris*, common lizard *Zootica vivipara*, slow worm *Anguis Fragilis* and adder *Vipera berus* are given limited protection under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended).

Appendix B Target Notes

Target Note	Grid Reference	Description
1	NO 09149 24986	A running mains tap was noted to be causing standing water within the concrete bare ground.
2	NO 09126 24982	The remains of the previous buildings have been left, with the rubble and stones encased in fencing.
3	NO 09146 24926	The derelict foundations of the previous building with primary colonisers growing all over.
4	NO 09200 25097	Standing boggy water found within the Tall Ruderal habitat in the northeast of the survey area.
5	NO 09219 25089	Culvert with standing boggy water, channeling under the road / McDiarmid Park.

Appendix C Species List

Common Name	Scientific Name
Ash Tree	<i>Fraxinus excelsior</i>
Broadleaf Plantain	<i>Plantago major</i>
Cedar Tree	<i>Cedrus libani</i>
Common Beech tree	<i>Fagus sylvatica</i>
Common Daisy	<i>Bellis perennis</i>
Common Dandelion	<i>Taraxacum officinale</i>
Common Nettle	<i>Urtica dioica</i>
Common Ragwort	<i>Jacobaea vulgaris</i>
Common Thistle	<i>Cirsium vulgare</i>
Common Yarrow	<i>Achillea millefolium</i>
Creeping Buttercup	<i>Ranunculus repens</i>
Curly dock	<i>Rumex crispus</i>
Cypress Tree	<i>Cupressus sempervirens</i>
Elder Tree	<i>Sambucus nigra</i>
False Oat Grass	<i>Arrhenatherum elatius</i>
Rosebay Willowherb	<i>Chamaenerion angustifolium</i>
Pendunculate Oak	<i>Quercus robur</i>
Perennial Ryegrass	<i>Lolium perenne</i>
Scotch Broom	<i>Cytisus scoparius</i>
White Clover	<i>Trifolium repens</i>
Willow Trees sp	<i>Salix sp</i>

Appendix D Preliminary Ecological Assessment Map



Legend

Base Mapping

- Site Boundary
- 100m Buffer
- Target Notes

Phase1

- A1.1.1 - Broadleaved woodland - semi-natural
- A1.2.1 - Coniferous woodland - semi-natural
- C3.1 - Other tall herb and fern - ruderal
- I2.2 - Spoil
- J1.2 - Cultivated/disturbed land - amenity grassland
- J1.3 - Cultivated/disturbed land - ephemeral/short perennial
- J3.6 - Buildings
- J4 - Bare ground
- J5 - Other habitat

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Figure 1: Phase 1 and PEA Results

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Appendix E Site Photographs



Photo 1: J4 hardstand with Target Note 2, the rubble / stones left behind by the demolition of the last buildings in the background

Photo 2: I2.2 Spoil Made Ground, with primary colonisers



Photo 3: J1.2 Amenity Grassland, found in the park to the east of the Site.



Photo 4: Broadleaved trees scattered alongside road to the south of the site with bat roosting potential



Photo 5: J1.3 Short Perennial Habitat with TN3, the foundation remains of an old building in the background.



Photo 6: C3.1 Tall ruderal habitat found to the east of the Site.



Photo 7: Standing boggy water to the northeast of the site within the Tall Ruderal C3.1 Habitat, labelled by Target Note 4



Photo 8: Target Note 1, running water mains tap causing standing water in the hard ground habitat.



Photo 9: TN5 Culvert with standing boggy water.



Photo 10: J5 Other Habitat represented by roads, such as the Crieff Rd shown above.