

Extended Phase One Habitat Survey (Preliminary Ecological Appraisal)

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1. Introduction

1.1 Background to the project

The client is proposing the re development of the site the details of which are yet unknown.

1.2 Site location, context and main habitats

The site is located within in an urban environment and enclosed by existing residential land uses. The habitat on site comprises of scattered trees, amenity grassland and building habitat 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 Bryn Marsh and Ince Marsh SSSI which is located 3575m east / northeast 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.

The site itself is in the Community forest non statutory designation.

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 no section 41 habitats listed on the inventory on the site or adjacent to the site boundaries.
- There are numerous areas of listed woodland within the 1km
- The site area is covered by the countryside stewardship priority area for lapwing, curlew, snipe and redshank species and the area forms part of the Bird Conservation Targeting Project for arable and farmland assemblages of bird species.
- There are no important Bird Areas, Seabird considerations, or water and wetland considerations in respect of avian species.

- The closest granted European Protected Species (EPS) license application by Natural England was for bat species approximately 2850m south of site. No EPS licenses are within 1km.

3. Extended Phase One Habitat Survey

3.1 Methodology and survey results

The site was visited on the 16th February 2022 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	Acer platanoides	Betula pendula Fraxinus excelsior
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.

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 sub optimal foraging habitat on the site as only amenity grassland is present which is intrinsically poor value for invertebrates. Trees may need to be removed for development but those trees on and off site do not contain PRF suitable for roosting bats.

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 no aquatic breeding habitat associated with the site itself and sub optimal foraging, dispersal or hibernating habitat for amphibians to be present. In addition, the site is landlocked.

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.

The area forms part of the Bird Conservation Targeting Project for arable assemblages of bird species including lapwing. The habitats on site are suitable for the breeding bird species. Although no specific bird survey was undertaken the site is unlikely to support a significant amount of grassland and /or farmland birds and is unlikely to be functionally linked to the breeding ground. 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. No non-native invasive (WCA Schedule 9) vascular plants were found.

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.

3.2. Constraints to the Surveys

The timing of the site visit was optimal for all species and habitats to be identified within the framework of a Phase 1 survey.

4. Summary and Impact

4.1 Summary – Protected habitats

The surveys have confirmed that the site does not 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. There are no priority hedgerows on the site.

Summary - Protected species

No evidence of protected species was recorded on site. No other evidence of protected species was found during the site walkover.

Summary – Protected sites

There are no statutory or non-statutory designated sites within the boundaries of the development site or within the site margins.

Impact – General

The development proposal seeks a new development and associated infrastructure and there is likely to be a direct loss of amenity grassland 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. Loss of sub optimal commuting and foraging.

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

Water vole. No impact considered likely.

Amphibians. 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

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 the building is required. The Bat Roost Assessment may recommend the need for a summer emergence survey/s on the identified roost features in the building, the trees do not have PRF and therefore no further work is necessary. The site is not 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

No other further surveys are required for these species.

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, 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 and proposed development

Appendix 2 Site Vascular plant list

Acer platanoides
Bellis perennis
Betula pendula
Chamerion angustifolium
Corylus avellana
Dactylis glomerata
Epilobium parviflorum
Festuca rubra
Galium aparine
Geranium robertianum
Lolium perenne
Plantago lanceolata
Poa annua
Ranunculus repens
Rubus sp.
Rubus agg.
Taraxacum officinale
Trifolium repens
Urtica dioica

Architectural site plan showing a yellow building footprint, a black rectangular area, and a semi-circular yellow area. The plan includes elevation markers, a road labeled 'PRIORY ROAD', and various annotations like 'HS', 'RUBBER', and 'ROADWORKS'. Green circles highlight specific points on the building's perimeter.

- | Station | Easting | Northing | Level |
|---------|------------|------------|--------|
| | 356878.794 | 400202.664 | 63.613 |
| | 356851.946 | 400248.322 | 65.740 |

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