

**Extended Preliminary Ecological Assessment
for a vacant plot at 7 to 11 Carisbrook Avenue
Kirkhams, Whitefield,
Bury District
Greater Manchester**

By

**Dave Bentley
Entomology and Ecology Services**

1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 A vacant site at Carisbrook Avenue, Kirkhams, Whitefield Bury District (SD 8150 0498) was surveyed to the CIEEM Guidelines for Preliminary Ecological Appraisals Second Edition 2017 AND for Biodiversity Net Gain by Dave Bentley Entomology and Ecology Services on 18th June 2024. The site (a “small site”) measures 837 square metres or 0.08 Hectares. The site was previously surveyed by Dave Bentley in January 2016 after the land had been cleared of much of the fencing and woody growth. The site is proposed for a detached house and garden. The hard area is proposed at 390 square metres. The native shrubberies are proposed at 40 square metres and 33 square metres. This leaves a formal garden area of 374 square metres.
- 1.2 David Bentley conducted the survey. He has been in conservation in Bury District since 1983 and has been a professional ecologist since 1993.
- 1.3 The CIEEM Guidelines are explicit in what is required to be assessed and provided:
- * A Habitat Survey Map.
 - * A desk study. In this case the NBN Atlas and iRecord were consulted.
 - * An assessment of the possible presence and likely importance of the following:
 - Plants
 - Fungi
 - Terrestrial and aquatic invertebrates
 - Fish (where relevant, based on an assessment of any watercourses and water bodies present);
 - Amphibians (including both breeding and terrestrial habitat)
 - Reptiles
 - Breeding, wintering and migratory birds
 - Bats (including potential roost sites, and foraging and commuting habitats/features)
 - Other protected or priority mammal species, as relevant.
 - * Mapping of any stands of non-native invasive plant species
 - * Recording of any incidental sightings of priority or protected species, or field signs of such species.
 - * Box 1 of the PEA Guidelines discusses Protected and Priority Species information and this is stated to include Protected and Section 41 Priority Species and Priority Habitats and also Red Data listed taxa and indeed Nationally Scarce taxa, as well as “Birds of Conservation Concern 5” Red (most declining) and Amber listed taxa, with Green taxa being safe. The JNCC Taxon List names the plethora of higher plants, bryophytes, fungi and wild animals, including invertebrates that are considered scarce.

2 SITE HISTORY

- 2.1 The small site is ringed by housing with no connections whatsoever to the countryside or open space. The site has been landlocked since it was developed for housing sometime between

1932 and 1955. Maps from 1955 show greenhouses on the western half of the site, suggesting the site was an allotment. Satellite photos from 2003 show the northern and western parts of the site were then incorporated into the neighbouring gardens. The garden extensions were removed by the mid-2000s. Since the 2016 survey the remains of the concrete fence posts from these garden extensions have been removed or at least hidden by the returning bramble and Cherry and Willow scrub. Vegetation has now returned covering whatever unnatural surfaces were on the ground in 2016. Currently the site is ringed with concrete footed larch lap fences, with only the entrance driveway giving any terrestrial routes onto the site for non-climbing or flying animals. So the site has been and remains isolated, used as a garden, and has been split by multiple larch lap fences. The site is also used as a dumping ground by some households. In 2016 the driveway was found to be paved with concrete slabs for much of its length, ending at some log-edging. No trace of the drive surface is now visible under the vegetation and the concrete slabs may have been take away. The northern boundary was replaced by the adjacent householder since 2016 and the Cherry tree was felled into the site at that time.

3 METHODS

- 3.1 The survey morning was on 16th June 2024. Site access was made by carefully clipping brambles and scrub along the former driveway, then slowly wading through Brambles, alert for potential nesting birds. Each corner of the Bramble dominated plot was reached. All PPE was cleaned beforehand to meet biosecurity needs.
- 3.2 It was a still and partly sunny summer morning.
- 3.3 Plants were examined and noted to DAFOR rating. Photographs and plant samples were collected for further examination. Regard was had to the 2016 survey.
- 3.4 A somewhat representative invertebrate assessment was attempted with a canvas bag net swept over the bramble free area and through bramble flowers and through scrub. The sorting tray was taken through the site tapping vegetation over it. Direct observation was also used. Samples were potted in alcohol and identified under the microscope. There was no surface debris accessible to check for soil invertebrates. This is not a thorough survey but a survey to define the community present.
- 3.5 This is not a breeding bird survey. However observations and sound recordings were made for later expert identification.

4 DESK STUDY

- 4.1 The history of the site as we know it is set out in Section 2.
- 4.2 A search of NBN Atlas and iRecord revealed no records for the site itself. NBN iRecord has only records for the 10km square SD80, which is not much use. NBN has around 40 records for Kirkhams, these being mainly wayside flowers and some common colourful or obvious garden insects.

4.3 However in the locality mammals recorded in these suburbs are Hedgehog (Section 41, Red Data Vulnerable) and Wood Mouse, and others such as Pipistrelle Bat species (Protected species), Brown Rat and Grey Squirrel (alien invasive) are probable. In 2016 gnawed Cherry stones were found under stones show Mice had eaten from them.

4.4 There are no mapped ponds in the vicinity.

4.5 The birds recorded (with their statuses) in the vicinity are:

Swift (Red) – with several recent records over Kirkhams.

4 RESULTS OF FIELD SURVEY

4.1 A Habitat Survey Map is appended below. It is not possible to indicate every location of Schedule 9 invasive aliens Montbretia (*C. x crocosmiiflora*) and Variegated/Spotted Yellow Archangel (*Lamiastrum galeobdolon subsp. argentatum*) as they may be hidden in dense Bramble.

4.2 As can be seen below whilst Bramble is dominant there are numerous other woody species and these have regrown from the 2015 coppicing to add a diverse structure to the scrub. This is h3g Mixed Scrub (with strong and increasing h3d Bramble Scrub). Given the presence of so many alien species it can only be described as being in a poor condition.

4.3 28 native higher plant species and 2 moss species were recorded in the proposed house plot and drive in June 2024; 2 Schedule 9 Alien Invasive plants were recorded; 9 additional alien species are listed on the Global Register of Introduced and Invasive Species - Great Britain. There are two more aliens not yet listed as invasive. The species lists are given below (D = Dominant, A = Abundant, F = Frequent, O = Occasional, R = Rare, V = Very, L = Locally):

4.4 Driveway botany:

Ash tree growing from coppice (dbh 12.5cm – a small tree in BNG terms)

Ash tree (dbh 8.3cm – a small tree in BNG terms)

Ash sapling R

Grey Willow from coppice (dbh 10.5cm – a small tree in BNG terms)

Goat Willow small R

Tutsan VLF

Bramble F

Nettle O

Rosebay Willowherb LO

Great Willowherb LO

Cleavers LF

Pendulous Sedge O

Common Male Fern R

Field Horsetail R

Wood Avens R

Bindweed sp R

Kindbergia praelonga Moss

Butterfly-bush *Buddleja davidii* small (alien)(Global Register of Introduced and Invasive Species - Great Britain) R

Sycamore small (alien)(Global Register of Introduced and Invasive Species - Great Britain) R

French Crane's-bill (alien)(Global Register of Introduced and Invasive Species - Great Britain) O-LF

Himalayan Honeysuckle *Leycesteria formosa* (alien)(Global Register of Introduced and Invasive Species - Great Britain) VO

4.5 Main plot botany:

Wild Cherry (several all under 7cm dbh) LA

Goat Willow (several + at dbh 10cm) LF i.e. two small trees in BNG terms

Goat Willow (several small <7cm dbh) O

Grey Willow small (several all <7cm dbh)O

English Oak (large mature oak unaffected by plans) R

English Oak sapling and small VO

Common Hawthorn (two very small) VO

Bramble A-D

Tutsan VO

Creeping Buttercup R

Rosebay Willowherb O

Great Willowherb OVLF

Nettle OVLF

Nipplewort R

Pendulous Sedge O-F

Herb Robert OVLF

Common Ragwort VO

Broad-leaved Dock VLF

Cleavers OVLF

Red Campion VLF

Water Figwort! VLF

Wood Avens O

Field Horsetail O

Soft Rush O

Red Fescue VLF

Rough Meadowgrass O

Yorkshire Fog R

Creeping Soft-grass O-OVLF

Bindweed sp O

Kindbergia praelonga Moss

Brachythecium rutabulum Moss

Montbretia (Schedule 9 Invasive Alien) O-LF

Variegated/ Spotted Archangel (Schedule 9 Alien Invasive) VLF

Dotted Loosestrife (alien)(Global Register of Introduced and Invasive Species - Great Britain) VLF

Foxes and Cubs (alien)(Global Register of Introduced and Invasive Species - Great Britain)	VO
French Crane's-bill (alien)(Global Register of Introduced and Invasive Species - Great Britain)	OVLf
African Lily <i>Agapanthus</i> (alien)(Global Register of Introduced and Invasive Species - Great Britain)	R
Garden Privet (alien)(Global Register of Introduced and Invasive Species - Great Britain)	R
Henry's Honeysuckle (alien) (Global Register of Introduced and Invasive Species - Great Britain)	R
Green Alkanet (alien) (Global Register of Introduced and Invasive Species - Great Britain)	R
Russian Comfrey (alien)	O-F
Vine (<i>Vitis</i>) (alien) coming over fence	R

4.6 Species not refound from 2016:

Broom
 Broad Buckler Fern
 Creeping Jenny
 Short-fruited Willowherb
 Wavy Bittercress
 Curled Dock
 Dandelion
 White Clover
 Procumbent Pearlwort
 False Oat-grass
 Couch-grass
 Creeping Bent
 Garden Lady's Mantle (alien) (Global Register of Introduced and Invasive Species - Great Britain)
 Spanish Bluebell (alien) (Global Register of Introduced and Invasive Species - Great Britain)

4.7 Fungi – Only Goat Willow Rust Fungus *Melampsora capreatum*, a common fungus, was found and the site will not be of interest for grassland or woodland fungi.

4.8 Invertebrates – All species/taxa encountered are common as the habitat, h3g Mixed Scrub and derelict garden is common, and this is an isolated patch not by a wildlife corridor or adjacent open countryside. There was little edge habitat given the Bramble grows right up to much of the fencing. A more thorough survey would reveal more Bramble patch and garden species. The following were recorded:

Molluscs - Slugs and snails were recorded in 2016 but the ground layer debris was deep in bramble in 2024. In 2024 White-lipped banded Snail and Brown-lipped Banded Snail.

Bugs *Cicadella viridis*, *Tachycixius pilosus*; Common Green Shieldbug; *Anthocoris* sp, *Liocoris tripustulatus*, *Dicyphus epilobii* (Very Local in GM but probably common given the Willowherb

association), *Psallus ambiguous* (Very Local in GM 3rd county record but lives on Hawthorn, Willow etc); Barklouse *Ectopsocus briggsi*; Large Nettle Aphid.

Beetles - Nettle Pollen Beetle *Brachypterus urticae*, *Cantharis pallida* (Local in GM), *Aleocharinae*, *Cionus tuberculosus* Tawny Figwort Weevil (Very Local in GM 2nd county record)

Butterflies and Moths. Just a single Moth noted but more Lepidoptera may appear as the summer progresses. *Geometrid* moths.

Ichneumon wasps, Microwasps, White-tailed Bumblebee, Buff-tailed Bumblebee, Red Mason Bee, Honey Bee, *Lasius niger* Common Black Ant.

Spiders and Harvestmen *Enoplognatha sp*, *Clubiona sp*, *Larinioides sp*, *Theridion sp*,

Common Earwig

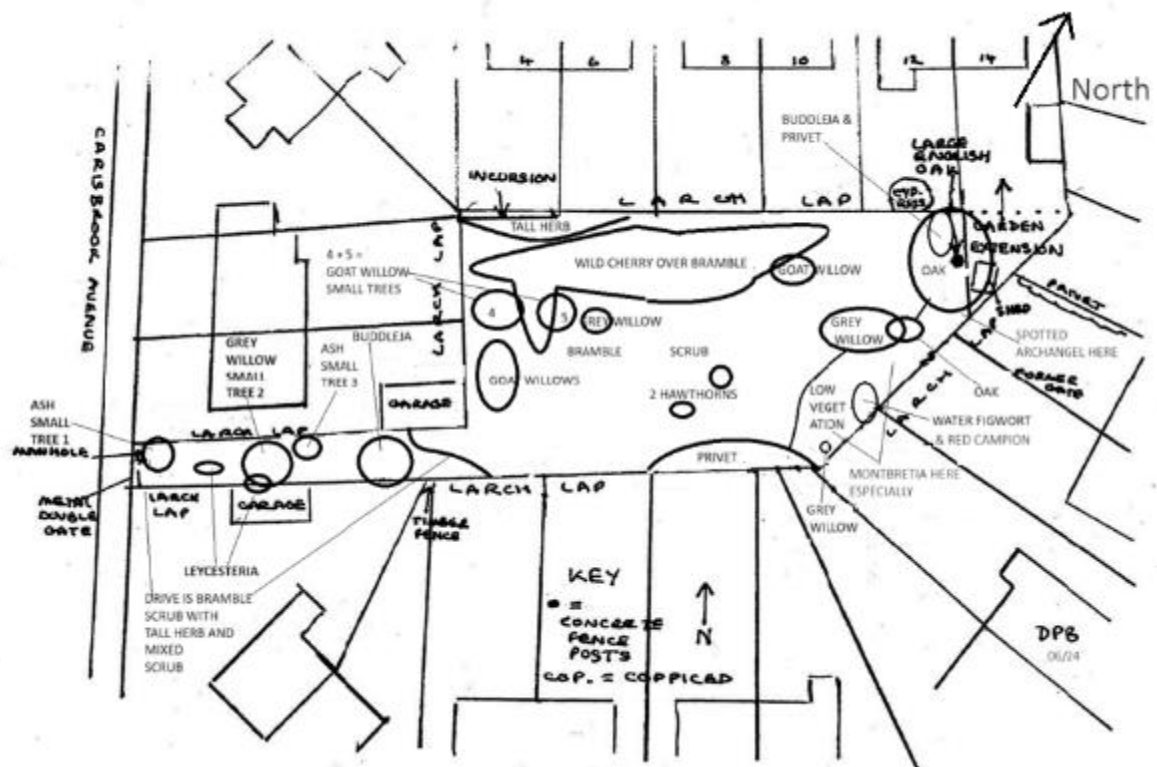
True Flies – Picture-winged Flies *Opomyza sp*, *Lauxaniidae: Meiosimyza rorida*, *Sapromyza zetterstedti* (First Greater Manchester record of this species which was Nationally Notable until 2016. That said Dave Bentley took another in Bury elsewhere this week). There are just 47 UK records on NBN/iRecord), *Poecilolycia vittata* (Very Local in GM, 2nd county record, 45 records on NBN/iRecord) and *Minettia longipennis*. Others of the less well studied groups – Long-legged Flies *Dolichopodidae*, Dance Fly *Platypalpus* spp, Blow Flies *Calliphoridae*, Willow Gall Midge *Iteomyia caprae*, Coffin Flies *Phoridae*.

- 4.9 Fish and amphibians – there are no waterbodies on site and no amphibians were found under debris. There are no ponds on Ordnance Survey maps within 500m metres and there are many barriers to amphibian dispersal. Amphibian distribution is well understood in Bury. A slight wet ditch was found on 2016 but this is now lost to vegetation growth.
- 4.10 Reptiles – nothing seen under debris and the habitat structure is wrong. This is in an old suburban setting far from suitable open countryside. Reptiles (other than dumped Terrapins) are virtually unknown in Bury District (and are unconfirmed where such vague records exist).
- 4.11 Breeding, wintering and migratory birds - The site is mostly Bramble and other scrub making Blackbird and small bird nesting in such habitat a probability, and Bramble provides protection from predation from domestic cats, although cats locally will have an impact on a population's success. Seen or heard during the morning were Wren (Amber listed), a probable nester here, Woodpigeon (Amber listed), Great Tit, Blue Tit, Long-tailed Tit, Blackbird, Robin and Dunnock (Section 41 Priority Species, Amber List) and Magpie. The Dunnock was in the habitat and alarmed and may well have been nesting. House Sparrows (Section 41 Priority Species, Red List) were noisy in a garden across the road. Brambles produce prolific seeds for small birds notably Red-listed seed-eating Greenfinch.
- 4.12 Bats - There are no affected trees or structures on site that could be used by hibernating or roosting Bats. The insects that rise above this site of an evening will be part of the local Bat population's feeding resource.

- 4.13 Other Mammals - The NBN Atlas has records of Hedgehogs in the wider area. Hedgehogs are a Red Data Near Threatened Section 41 Priority Species of Principal Importance and the Local Planning authority has a legal Biodiversity Duty to seek to conserve the species. The dense growth of stiff (and thorny) plant stems suggests a Hedgehog would have difficulty moving about the plot. The site is fully fenced with concrete footed larch lap fencing with only a metal gate allowing possible access and that, when shut, cannot allow Hedgehog entry. It appears to have been properly shut since 2016. Wood Mouse is probably still present and Brown Rat may occur.
- 4.14 There are two Schedule 9 Invasive Alien plants and numerous other invasive alien plants described above.

5 DEVELOPMENT CONSTRAINTS

- 5.1 If the site is to be developed it appears that there needs to be an off-site solution for Biodiversity Net Gain for the loss of the 837 square metres of h3g Mixed Scrub habitat. The site is not a Priority Habitat. There are 5 “small trees” to be removed (2 Ash and 1 Grey Willow in the drive and 2 Goat Willow in the main plot, all last coppiced in 2015).
- 5.2 A suitable planning condition needs to be applied in relation to clearing **any and all** of the vegetation on site in respect of nesting birds. Birds do not just nest in trees and shrubs and the typical planning condition is inappropriate. There are legal duties towards all nesting wild birds and legal responsibilities in regards to conserving Section 41 Priority Species Dunnock. The conservation of the Dunnock is a legal require of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006.
- 5.3 Boltonandburyswifts@outlook.com are happy to advise regarding the new British Standard BS42021 which recommends 1 Swift Brick (universal brick to be used by Sparrows too) per 1 residential property. Some local planning authorities seek new builds to install these via planning conditions. The minimum height at which a box should be installed is 12 feet or 3.6 metres on a north facing wall.
- 5.4 The provision of three nesting boxes for other bird species can also be conditioned. These should be as recommended by the RSPB and not home and garden centre ornaments.
- 5.5 Given the large number of alien invasive plants best course of action might be to herbicide the plot **after it has been cleared in respect of nesting birds**. Given the legal status of two of the species as Schedule 9 Alien Invasives then no soil or plant cuttings should be removed from site until the plants and their bulbs and roots are dead.
- 5.6 The key for the landscaping on this site is to provide a measure of native mixed shrub habitat and some attractive small trees. The suitable small and attractive trees are Wild Cherry *Prunus avium*, Rowan *Sorbus aucuparia*, Holly *Ilex aquilinum*, Aspen *Populus tremula* and Silver Birch *Betula pendula*. Block 837 square metres of shrub habitat can be provided around the garden margins and this can be maintained at a low height or allowed to grow to provide a screen. Suitable species are Hawthorn *Crataegus monogyna*, Holly *Ilex aquilinum*, Hazel *Corylus avellana*, Common Gorse *Ulex europaeus*, Guelder-rose *Viburnum opulus* and Native Dogwood *Cornus sanguinea*. The planting can be supplemented with Black Currant *Ribes*





Driveway (above)



Spotted Yellow Archangel (above)



Water Figwort and Red Campion (above)



Main site from south west corner (above)



Looking towards east boundary (above)



Looking towards north west corner (above)



Looking towards north east corner (above)



Tall herb in north west corner (above)



Looking towards west boundary (above)

