
BOTANICAL SURVEY

LAND OFF LEIGH LANE, BURY



NOVEMBER



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1.0 INTRODUCTION

Site Information

- 1.1 Rachel Hacking Ecology Limited was commissioned in 2022 by Abode Architecture Limited to undertake a botanical survey of land off Leigh Lane, Bury (hereafter referred to as the 'site'). The site is located at O.S. grid reference: SD 7812 1115 (see Figure 1). The site is bordered by woodland and agricultural land in all directions. Elton Brook and a number of reservoirs lie approximately 35m south of the site.

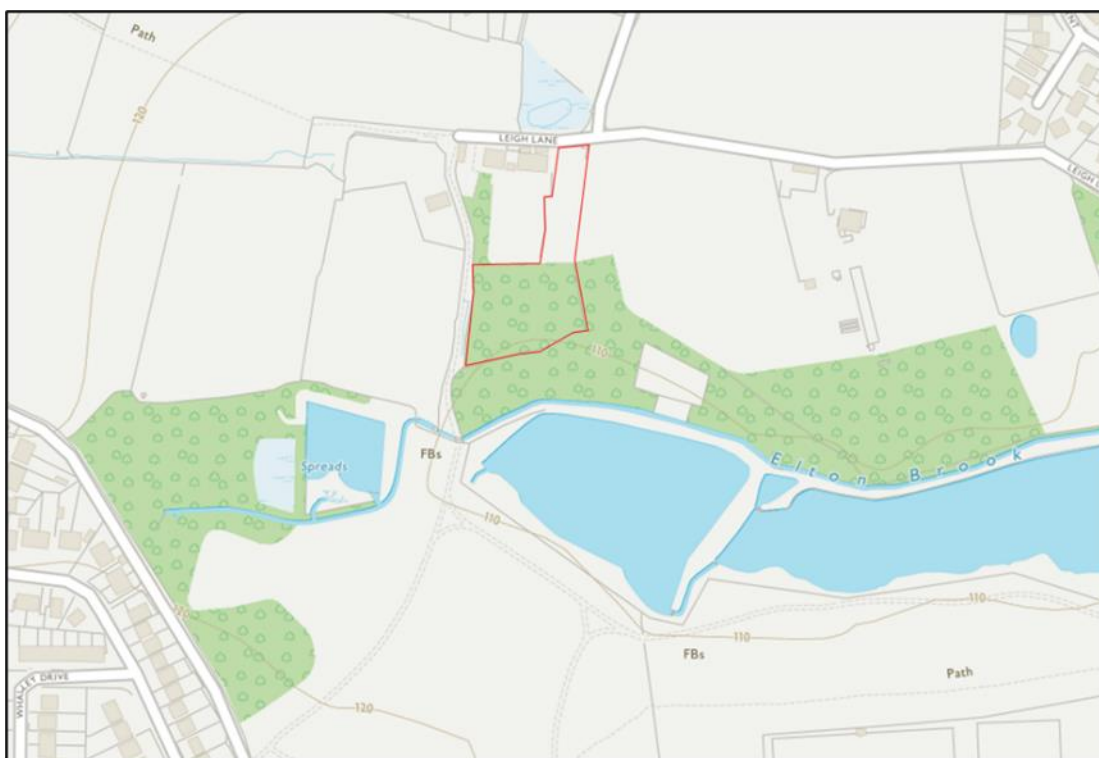


Figure 1 showing the site location (edged in red)

Description of Development

- 1.2 The site will be the subject of a planning application for the construction of two dwellings with access and parking. An Extended Phase 1 Habitat Survey was undertaken in January 2022 (Rachel Hacking Ecology 2022a).
- 1.3 The site lies within Cyrus Ainsworth's Nurseries & Parkers Lodges Site of Biological Importance (SBI). The SBI is privately owned. A previous assessment (Rachel Hacking Ecology 2022b) assessed the impacts of vegetation removal on the integrity of the SBI. This assessment recommended that a botanical survey was undertaken to inform mitigation requirements, including the proposed landscape design.

Biodiversity in Planning

- 1.4 Biodiversity is a material consideration, and Local Planning Authorities have a requirement to consider biodiversity and protected species when determining planning applications. Section 15 of the National Planning Policy Framework (July 2021) gives specific reference to minimising the impacts of development on biodiversity. Local and



Neighbourhood plans also provide guidance towards protecting and enhancing biodiversity, including priority habitats and notable species.

Aims of the Survey

- 1.5 The aims of the survey were to:
- Record the floral species within the site
 - Inform recommendations for the landscape design
 - Inform a Biodiversity Impact Assessment

2.0 METHODOLOGY

Habitat Survey

- 2.1 A habitat survey was undertaken on 18th August 2022 by Simon Holden MCIEEM (Associate Ecologist) and Rachel Watkins (Ecologist). The survey followed standard methodology (JNCC 2010) which comprised recording and mapping habitat types and botanical species. The weather was warm and dry during the survey.

Survey Constraints

- 2.2 August is a sub-optimal time of year to undertake habitat condition assessments of woodland, as floral species associated with higher quality woodlands (i.e. ancient woodland indicators) have generally died-back by then. However, the survey allowed a robust assessment of the dominant species and general condition of the habitats on site and timing has not presented a limitation to the assessment.



3.0 HABITATS

Tall Ruderal

- 3.1 The dominant habitat within the site is tall ruderal vegetation. The areas recorded as bare ground during January 2022 are now extensively colonised by Himalayan Balsam *Impatiens glandulifera* (D) and Japanese Knotweed *Reynoutria japonica* (A) (see Photographs 1 and 2). Other ruderal species include Redshank *Persicaria maculosa* (O), Nettle *Urtica dioica* (F) and Rosebay Willowherb *Chamaenarion angustifolia* (O).



Photograph 1 showing Himalayan Balsam



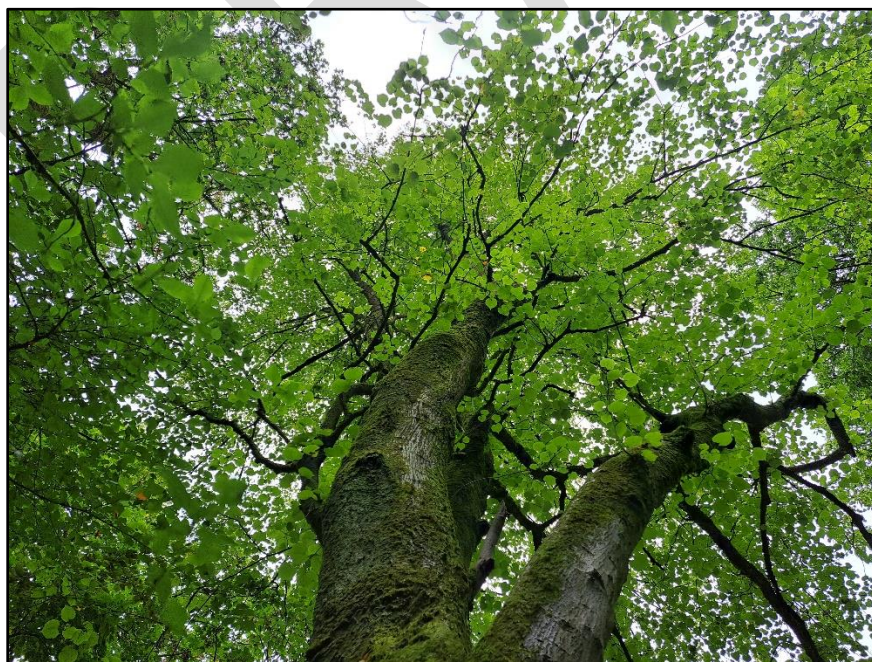
Photograph 2 showing Japanese Knotweed

Scattered trees

- 3.2 Scattered mature trees are present throughout the site (see Photographs 3 and 4). Species comprise Pedunculate Oak *Quercus robur* (F), Beech *Fagus sylvatica* (F), Hawthorn *Crataegus monogyna* (O), Ash *Fraxinus excelsior* (O), Sycamore *Acer pseudoplatanus* (O), Silver Birch *Betula pendula* (O), Horse Chestnut *Aesculus hippocastanum* (O), Goat Willow *Salix caprea* (F), White Poplar *Populus alba* (O), Leyland cypress *Cupressus leylandii* (O), Hazel *Corylus avellana* (O) and Holly *Ilex aquifolium* (O).



Photograph 3 showing scattered trees (adjacent woodland in the background)



Photograph 4 showing a Small-leaved Lime



- 3.3 Ground flora beneath the trees comprises Himalayan Balsam (A), Bramble *Rubus fruticosus* agg. (A), Nettle (A), Ivy *Hedera helix* (F), Creeping Buttercup *Ranunculus repens* (O), Wood Avens *Geum urbanum* (O), Herb Robert *Geranium robertianum* (O), Spanish Bluebell *Hyacinthoides hispanica* (O) and Hairy Bittercress *Cardamine hirsuta* (O).

4.0 SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Summary

- 5.1 The site is currently dominated by invasive ruderal species. It is understood that a treatment plan is being prepared to remove these. The site supports scattered mature trees. No evidence of ancient woodland was identified.
- 5.2 There is currently no understorey beneath the trees and, once the invasive species have been removed, there will be little or no ground flora. The site could be improved through planting and sowing appropriate species to improve the structural and species diversity.

Recommendations

- 5.3 It is recommended that the landscape design includes planting of understorey species including Holly and Hazel. Climbing species such as Honeysuckle and Ivy should be planted close to some of the existing trees.
- 5.4 Ground layer planting should include native woodland species such as Red Campion *Silene dioica*, Wood Anemone *Anemone nemorosa*, Common Dog-violet *Viola riviniana*, Foxglove *Digitalis purpurea*, Primrose *Primula vulgaris* and English Bluebell *Hyacinthoides non-scripta*.
- 5.5 Damper areas to the south would suit species such as Bugle *Ajuga reptans*, Lesser Celandine *Ficaria verna*, Marsh Marigold *Caltha palustris*, Moschatel *Adoxa moschatellina*, Ramsons *Allium ursinum* and Sanicle *Sanicula europaea*.
- 5.6 A pond and/or wet swales would provide additional habitat diversity to the site. These should be designed to have shallow margins to provide suitable habitat for invertebrates and amphibians. Any wetland features should be allowed to colonise naturally, rather than being planted.
- 5.7 Once the landscape design / planting plan has been finalised a Biodiversity Impact Assessment can be undertaken, using the DEFRA metric 3.1, to assess the changes in habitat units resulting from the proposed development.



6.0 REFERENCES

JNCC (2010). Handbook for Phase 1 Habitat Survey-a technique for environmental audit. Joint Nature Conservation Committee, Peterborough.

MAGIC mapping: www.magic.gov.uk. Defra, London

National Planning Policy Framework (July 2021). Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government.

Rachel Hacking Ecology (2022a). *Extended Phase 1 Habitat Survey at Land off Leigh Lane, Bury, Greater Manchester 2022*.

Rachel Hacking Ecology (2022b). Site of Biological Importance (SBI) Impact Assessment for the Land off Leigh Lane, Bury.

