
EXTENDED PHASE 1 HABITAT SURVEY

LAND OFF LEIGH LANE, BURY,
GREATER MANCHESTER

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APPENDIX A: PHASE 1 HABITAT MAP



1.0 INTRODUCTION

Site Information

- 1.1 Rachel Hacking Ecology Limited was commissioned in 2021 by Abode Architecture to carry out an Extended Phase 1 Habitat Survey and SBI Impact Assessment at Land off Leigh Lane, Bury, Greater Manchester. The site is situated south of Leigh Lane, west of Elton, Bury (O.S. grid reference: SD 78125 11151 – see Figure 1). The proposed development site comprises an area of bare ground with scattered trees and spoil heaps. 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.

An Extended Phase 1 Habitat Survey is required to provide an overview of the habitats present within the site and to assess any potential protected species issues on the site.

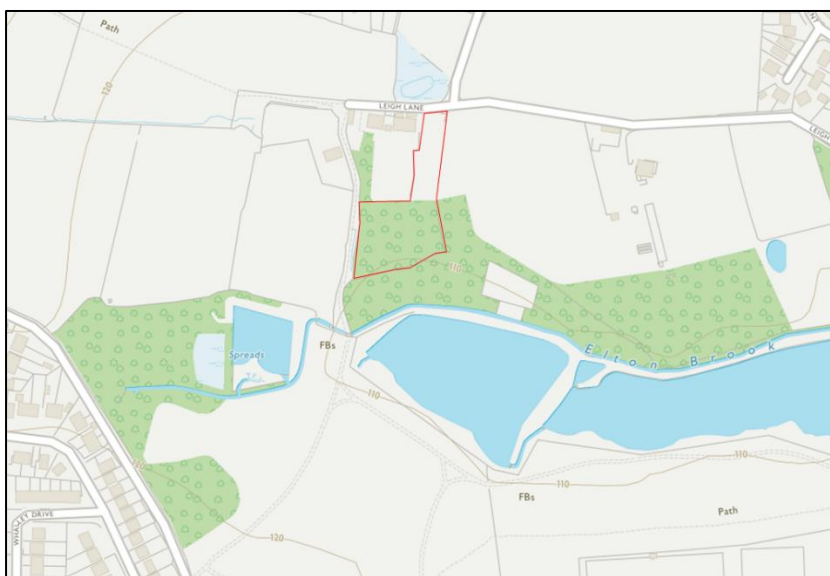


Figure 1 showing the location of the site

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.

Biodiversity in Planning

- 1.3 Biodiversity is a material consideration, and Local Planning Authorities (LPAs) 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.

2.0 METHODOLOGY

Extended Phase 1 Habitat Survey

- 2.1 A Phase 1 Habitat survey was undertaken to JNCC standards (JNCC, 2010). The site was walked and each habitat was assigned a Phase 1 habitat category. Species lists were taken at locations of botanical interest. All botanical nomenclature follows Stace, 2019. A Phase 1 map was produced showing habitat boundaries.
- 2.2 During the Extended Phase 1 survey, the habitats were assessed for their potential to support protected species. This included, for example, looking for signs of Badger activity (e.g. setts, paths, latrines and hairs on fences), assessing any waterbodies on site or near the site for their potential to support Great Crested Newt
- 2.3 The site was also surveyed for invasive, non-native plant species such as Japanese Knotweed and Giant Hogweed.

Personnel and Seasonal Timing

- 2.4 Joe Walters (Ecologist) carried out the extended phase 1 habitat survey on the 14th January 2022. Joe is experienced and fully trained in botanical surveys and protected species assessments. January is a sub-optimal month for botanical work. However due to the habitat types present on the site a thorough assessment could be made at this time. The weather at the time of the surveys was overcast and cold.

Survey Constraints

- 2.5 The site was fully accessible. There were no constraints to the survey.



3.0 RESULTS

HABITATS

- 3.1 The Phase 1 Habitat Map can be found at the back of the report. The habitats on the proposed development site are described below.

Bare Ground

- 3.2 The majority of the site is bare ground which appears to have been recently cleared due to the presence of heavy plant tracks and lack of vegetation (see Photograph 1). The entrance to the site which lies on the northern boundary features a stone track laid over a membrane (see Photograph 2).



Photograph 1 showing the bare ground



Photograph 2 showing the stone track from the northern access

A number of ephemeral pools are present within the bare ground habitat which are simply areas where heavy plant has cleared and rainwater has accumulated (see Photograph 3). No aquatic or marginal vegetation is present.



Photograph 3 showing one of the ephemeral pools within the bare ground habitat

Spoil Heaps

- 3.3 The site features multiple spoil heaps composed of either stone (see Photograph 4), brash and logs, or soil (see Photograph 5).





Photograph 4 showing one of the stone spoil heaps



Photograph 5 showing one of the soil spoil heaps

Scattered Trees

- 3.4 Scattered trees occur across the site (see Photograph 1 above and 6 below). Species include Goat Willow *Salix caprea*, Willow *Salix* sp., Pedunculate Oak *Quercus robur*, Ash *Fraxinus excelsior*, Beech *Fagus sylvatica*, Leyland cypress *Cupressus leylandii*, Yew *Taxus baccata*, Lime *Tilia* sp., and Holly *Ilex aquifolium*.





Photograph 6 showing the scattered trees

Scattered Scrub

- 3.5 Small Cherry Laurel *Prunus laurocerasus* shrubs are present within the north of the site.



Photograph 7 showing the scattered scrub and Holly hedgerow

Intact Hedgerows and Other Boundaries

- 3.6 A small area of Holly *Ilex aquifolium* hedgerow is present at the northern boundary of the site (see Photograph 7 above). The other boundaries are composed of different forms of fencing including panel fences (see Photograph 8) and post and wire fences.





Photograph 8 showing the panel fencing

PROTECTED SPECIES

Great Crested Newt

- 3.7 Great Crested Newt (GCN) *Triturus cristatus* is a European Protected Species under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2019 (Amendment) (EU Exit) and the species is fully protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended).
- 3.8 No pond is present on site. Three reservoirs are present to the south of the site which lie 40m south, 60m south-west, and 150m south-east of the site. These reservoirs will likely house populations of fish.
- 3.9 Two ponds are present within 250m of the site. The nearest lies approximately 5m south of the site. This pond features no marginal and aquatic vegetation and is heavily shaded by tree cover. The Habitat Suitability Index (HSI) was used to assess the pond for suitability for GCN. Due to the poor water quality, lack of marginal and aquatic vegetation, and heavily shaded banks, the pond scored 0.38 which is classed as “Poor” suitability.





Photograph 9 showing the pond which lies 5m south of the site

- 3.10 The other pond within 250m lies 15m north of the site separated by Leigh Lane which is a bare ground track between the site and the pond. This pond was not assessed using an HSI. The site supports suitable Great Crested Newt terrestrial habitat within the spoil heaps and hedgerow bases, these habitats provide cover and hibernating opportunities for Great Crested Newts.

Bats

- 3.11 All bat species are European Protected Species. This is implemented in the UK through the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2019 (Amendment) (EU Exit). Bats are also protected under The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended).
- 3.12 The trees on site were all inspected for bat roosting features, such as cavities, limb damage or peeling bark. No such features were recorded within the trees present on the site.

Badger

- 3.13 Badgers *Meles meles* are protected under the Protection of Badgers Act 1992 and The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended)/The Wildlife and Natural Environment (Scotland) Act 2011. These Acts, for example, make it illegal to disturb a Badger whilst it is in a sett, to kill, injure or take a Badger and to obstruct the entrance to a Badger sett.
- 3.14 No Badger sett was located on the site or immediately adjacent to the site. No evidence of Badger activity such as latrines, hairs or snuffle holes was located on site.

Nesting Birds

- 3.15 All bird species are protected at their nest under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) and The Wildlife and Natural Environment (Scotland) Act 2011.

- 3.16 The scattered trees and intact hedgerow provide habitats suitable for nesting birds. A vacant nest box was recorded on one of the trees on site (see Photograph 10).



Photograph 10 showing the vacant nest box

INVASIVE SPECIES

- 3.17 The majority of the site shows evidence of being vegetated by Japanese Knotweed *Reynoutria japonica* and Himalayan Balsam *Impatiens glandulifera*. Patches of Rhododendron *Rhododendron ponticum* are also present across the site. These species are all non-native, invasive species as listed on Schedule 9 of The Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981 (as amended). The evidence of Japanese Knotweed is present in the form of an intact stand (see Photograph 11) as well as multiple areas of broken stems and leaves across the majority of the site. The evidence of Himalayan Balsam on site is in the form of broken stems (see Photograph 12) which are present across the majority of the site. The Rhododendron is present in the form of a small number of living shrubs (see Photograph 13).



Photograph 11 showing the stand of Japanese Knotweed



Photograph 12 showing the dead Himalayan Balsam stems



Photograph 13 showing one of the small stands of Rhododendron

PROTECTED SITES

- 3.18 No statutory protected sites lie on the site, immediately adjacent to the site boundary, or within 3km of the site. The nearest statutory protected site is West Pennine Moors Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) which lies 4.8km north of the site separated by extensive barrier habitat.
- 3.19 The site also lies within a SSSI Impact Risk Zone, which lists certain types of development that may have a deleterious impact on protected sites nearby. At this distance residential development is not listed as a risk to surrounding statutory protected sites.
- 3.20 The site lies within Cyrus Ainsworth's Nurseries & Parkers Lodges Site of Biological Importance (SBI).

4.0 ASSESSMENT

Habitats

- 4.1 The Phase 1 Habitats present on the site are common throughout the UK. No nationally rare or locally rare plant species were located during the Extended Phase 1 Habitat Survey.
- 4.2 The site is composed entirely of bare ground and spoil heaps which are of limited ecological value as they provide no foraging or commuting opportunities and no source of pollen and nectar for invertebrates. The most ecologically valuable habitats which offer cover from predation, foraging habitat, and a pollen and nectar source for invertebrates is the species-poor intact hedgerow and scattered trees which are largely going to be retained.

Development Context

- 4.3 The development proposals involve the construction of two residential dwellings and the creation of access which will affect the bare ground and spoil heap habitats as well as the felling of a small number of trees. It is recommended a suitable landscaping scheme is created to help mitigate the loss of the trees on site.

PROTECTED SPECIES

Great Crested Newt

- 4.4 No ponds are present on site. The nearest pond which lies 5m south of the site scored “Poor” suitability under the HSI assessment. One other pond is present within 250m of the site boundary.
- 4.5 The hedgerow base and spoil heaps provide potential terrestrial habitat for GCN. Given the lack of impact to terrestrial GCN habitat, no further survey work is required, and Great Crested Newt is not considered to be a constraint on development at this time.

Bats

- 4.6 No structures are present on site. The trees on site were assessed from the ground for their ability to provide bat roosting habitat. No trees on site support suitable PRFs to provide bat roosting suitability and so all trees on the site are deemed to be of negligible bat roosting suitability.

Badger

- 4.7 No Badger sett was located on the site or immediately adjacent to the site. No evidence of Badger activity was located.

Nesting Birds

- 4.8 The site supports suitable habitat for birds within the hedgerow and scattered trees. If any work to these habitats will proceed within the bird nesting season (which is generally March-August), then a nesting bird check will be required immediately prior to any work.

INVASIVE SPECIES

- 4.9 Japanese Knotweed, Himalayan Balsam, and Rhododendron are present on site, which are invasive, non-native species. It is recommended that the plants are removed carefully from site prior to development work and disposed of at a licensed landfill. Or a herbicide regime is started as soon as possible, to eradicate the plants from the site.

PROTECTED SITES

- 4.10 No statutory protected sites lie within the proposed development site, immediately adjacent, or within 3km of the site. The nearest statutory protected site lies 4.8km north of the site. At these distances, and with barrier habitats between the surrounding sites and the proposed development site, there is expected to be no deleterious impact on the protected sites from the development.
- 4.11 The site lies within a SSSI Impact Risk Zone, which lists certain types of development that may have a deleterious impact on protected sites nearby. Residential development is not listed as a concern.
- 4.12 The site lies within Cyrus Ainsworth's Nurseries & Parkers Lodges SBI.

5.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

Summary of Findings

- 5.1 Protected species are a material consideration when a planning authority is considering a planning application. The presence of protected species, the effect of the proposed development and suitable mitigation, if required, must be established before planning permission can be granted. Following the findings from the Extended Phase 1 Habitat Survey, the following surveys may be required:

- **Nesting Birds** - If any work to the introduced shrub, intact hedgerows, scattered trees, or continuous scrub needs to be carried out within the bird nesting season (which is generally March to August), then a nesting bird survey will be required immediately prior to work commencing.

Invasive Species

- 5.2 The Japanese Knotweed, Himalayan Balsam, and Rhododendron should be removed prior to work commencing using a suitable and recommended eradication methodology.

Protected Sites

- 5.3 The site lies within a Site of Biological Importance and as such has had an SBI Impact Assessment created (see *SBI Impact Assessment of Land off Leigh Lane, Bury, Greater Manchester 2022 – Rachel Hacking Ecology Ltd*).
- 5.4 A Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) will need to be created to protect the SBI from being impacted during the construction phase of the development.

Habitat Enhancement

- 5.5 General recommendations to bring biodiversity gain to the site are:
- Soft landscaping should include the provision of native and non-native flowering perennial species, to provide a pollen and nectar source for invertebrates.
 - Bird boxes and/or bat boxes should be erected on the buildings or mature trees where possible including provision of sparrow terraces.
 - Trees and continuous scrub planting of native species should be included within landscaping plans to maintain the continuous woodland belt.
 - Hedgehog holes should be created in any fencing that is included in the proposals.

6.0 REFERENCES

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APPENDIX A PHASE 1 HABITAT MAP



Key

-  Bare Ground
-  Spoil Heap
-  Fence
-  Intact Hedgerow
-  Scattered Scrub
-  Scattered Tree

Phase 1 Map

Land off Leigh Lane, Bury, Greater Manchester

Date: 21/01/2022

Drawn By: JW

NOT TO SCALE

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