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Land adjacent to Field Head, Shepley, Huddersfield

**Ecological Appraisal**

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Produced by **Wildbanks  
Conservation** 

[www.wildbanksconservation.com](http://www.wildbanksconservation.com)

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# 1 Introduction

## 1.1 Preamble

Wildbanks Conservation was commissioned to carry out a Phase 1 Ecology Survey of the small field adjacent to 3 Fieldhead, Shepley prior to the submission of an outline planning application for the construction of 5 residential dwellings on the site.

At the time of writing the design proposal was still being developed with no final design available.

## 1.2 Survey Site Location

The survey site subject to this report is the small field adjacent to 3 Fieldhead, Shepley, Huddersfield, HD8 8DR - see *Figure 1: Location Plan*.

## 1.3 Description of Survey Site

See *Section 5: Photographs 1 – 4*.

### Survey Site

The survey site is located on the northern edge of the village of Shepley approximately 8km south east of Huddersfield city centre.

It is a small horse grazed field ~ 0.2ha in size - with houses and private gardens along the south, east and west boundaries and a large private garden along the northern boundary.

Although some self-sown, silver birch *Betula pendula* and wild cherry *Prunus avium* trees are present at the south and west of the site and a predominantly hawthorn hedge *Crataegus monogyna* delineates the northern boundary the site is almost entirely comprised of a poor semi improved grassland dominated by cocks foot *Dactylis glomerata*, Yorkshire fog *Holcus lanatus* and false oat grass *Arrhenatherum elatius*.

### Wider Landscape

The conurbation of Shepley lies to the south, east and west of the survey site with the north side is bounded by a large private garden with an open rural landscape of arable fields and pasture divided by hedgerows beyond.

A large area of woodland – composed of Upper & Lower Stones Wood, Round Wood, Shepley Mill Wood and Gelder Wood is located 700m to the north of the site and separated from it by arable fields.

## 1.4 Outline of the Proposed Development

The proposed development is for the construction of 5 residential properties, including access at the site.

However, at the time of writing, the design was at an early stage and detailed design proposals yet to be agreed.

## 2 Methodology

### 2.1 Desk Study

The following sources were contacted / used for existing ecological data.

- West Yorkshire Ecology (WYE) (biological records centre) to request information of protected species and designated sites within 1km of the study site.
- Multi Agency Geographic Information for the Countryside (MAGIC)<sup>1</sup>, to identify designated sites within 1km of the survey site and pre-mapped UK BAP Priority habitats and protected species within and adjacent to the survey site.

### 2.2 Phase 1 Habitat Survey

A Phase 1 Habitat Survey was carried out on 19<sup>th</sup> of March 2014, in accordance with the standard Phase 1 Habitat Survey methodology<sup>2</sup>, to identify broad habitat types and features of ecological interest (i.e. ponds / controlled species).

In conjunction with the Phase 1 Habitat Survey, the potential for the site to support legally protected faunal species and/or faunal species of nature conservation importance, e.g. UK and Local Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) priority species was assessed.

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<sup>1</sup> [www.magic.defra.gov.uk/website/magic/](http://www.magic.defra.gov.uk/website/magic/), [www.natureonthemap.naturalengland.org.uk](http://www.natureonthemap.naturalengland.org.uk) & [www.nbn.org.uk](http://www.nbn.org.uk)

<sup>2</sup> JNCC. 2007. Handbook for Phase 1 Habitat Survey – Technique for environmental audit

### 2.3 Bats – Assessment of Potential

The potential of the trees and built structures within the study site to support bats was considered using the surveyors considerable experience and training and the criteria outlined in *Section 7.1: Appendix 1: Tables 7.1a - c*.

Trees were assessed and assigned a category according to their potential to support bats.

- Confirmed or Suspected Roost. Existing Records of bats or evidence of bats observed during site survey.
- Category 1a: – High bat roost potential: Large, well connected trees with multiple, highly suitable features capable of supporting large bat roosts.
- Category 1b: – Moderate bat roost potential: Large, well connected trees with less potential than Category 1a. Multiple suitable features capable of supporting small roosts or individual bats.
- Category 2a: Low bat roost potential: Trees with less potential than Category 1b. Few suitable features with a limited potential to support bats.
- Category 2b: No obvious potential. Trees with no obvious potential. However, due to size/structure/limited views tree may support unobserved features with a limited potential to support individual bats.
- Category 3: –Negligible bat roost potential. Trees with no observed features suitable for roosting bats.

## 3 Results and Evaluation

### 3.1 Desk Study

#### Statutory Sites

- There are no statutory designated sites within 1km of the survey site.

#### Non Statutory Sites

- Upper and Lower Stones Wood are designated as “Site of Scientific Interest” (SSI) and considered to be of countywide importance.

Located ~860m to the north of the survey site and separated from it by arable fields and private gardens. This woodland is part of the Ancient Woodland block located to the south west described below.

- Yew Tree Wood is designated as a Kirklees Site of Wildlife Significance (SWS) and considered to be of local or district wide importance.

Located ~780m south east of the survey site and separated from it by the conurbation of Shepley itself and open arable fields. This wood is also designated as a replanted Ancient Woodland and described below.

#### Ancient Woodland

- A large area of semi natural Ancient Woodland (the connected woodlands of Upper & Lower Stones Wood, Round Wood, Shepley Mill Wood and Gelder Wood) is located 860m to the north of the survey site and separated from it by arable fields and private gardens.
- Yew Tree Wood is an area of replanted woodland is located 780m south east of the survey site and separated from it by the conurbation of Shepley and open arable fields.

#### UKBAP Priority Habitats<sup>3</sup>

There are no recorded UKBAP Priority Habitats within or adjacent to the survey site.

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<sup>3</sup> As mapped on <http://magic.defra.gov.uk/MagicMap.aspx>

## Protected & Notable Species

### Bird Records

There are no records of notable bird species within, or in the vicinity of, the survey site. The closest records pertain to Upper and Lower Stones Wood 860m to the north of the site – OS Grid ref SE186-105.

**Table 3.1a:** Notable Bird Species recorded at Upper & Lower Stones Wood

Notable Bird Records			
Species	Date of Record	Record Type	Designation
Fieldfare <i>Turdus pilaris</i>	1997	Field Record	Sch1_part1 <sup>4</sup> BoCC:Red <sup>5</sup> ;
Cuckoo <i>Cuculus canorus</i>	1997	Field Record	BoCC:Red; UKBAP <sup>6</sup> ; WYBAP <sup>7</sup> ;
Yellowhammer <i>Emberiza citrinella</i>	1997	Field Record	BoCC:Red UKBAP; WYBAP
Spotted flycatcher <i>Muscicapa striata</i>	1997	Field Record	BoCC:Red; UKBAP; WYBAP; Kirklees BAP <sup>8</sup>
House sparrow <i>Passer domesticus</i>	1997	Field Record	BoCC:Red; UKBAP; WYBAP; Kirklees BAP
Grey partridge <i>Perdix perdix</i>	1997	Field Record	BoCC:Red; UKBAP; WYBAP; Kirklees BAP

<sup>4</sup> Listed on Schedule 1, Part 1 of the Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981 – i.e. breeding birds of these species receive special protection.

<sup>5</sup> Listed on Birds of Conservation concern 3 (BoCC) as a Red listed species i.e. Severe declines in UK breeding and non-breeding population; Available at <http://www.bto.org/science/monitoring/psob>

<sup>6</sup> Listed on UK Biodiversity Action Plan: Available at: <http://jncc.defra.gov.uk/page-5705>

<sup>7</sup> Included on West Yorkshire Priority Species List: Available for West Yorkshire Ecology <http://www.ecology.wyjs.org.uk/wyjs-ecology.asp>

<sup>8</sup> Listed on the Kirklees Biodiversity Action Plan: Available at: <http://www.kirklees.gov.uk/community/environment/green/greenkirklees/biodiversity.shtml#biodiversityactionplan>

**Table 3.1a: Notable Bird Species recorded at Upper Stones Wood - continued**

Notable Bird Records			
Species	Date of Record	Record Type	Designation
Bullfinch <i>Pyrrhula pyrrhula</i>	1997	Field Record	BoCC:Red; UKBAP; WYBAP; Kirklees BAP
Woodcock <i>Scolopax rusticola</i>	1997	Field Record	BoCC:Amber <sup>9</sup> ; Kirklees BAP
Song thrush <i>Turdus philomelos</i>	1997	Field Record	BoCC:Red; UKBAP; WYBAP; Kirklees BAP

### Bat Records

**Table 3.1b: Bat Records within 1km of the Survey Site**

Roost Records					
Record Type	Species	Abundance	Location	Distance from site	Record date
Possible roost	<i>Unrecorded</i>	1 juvenile	Stonebridge Walk, Shepley	320 north east	28/06/2005

<sup>9</sup> Listed on Birds of Conservation concern 3 (BoCC) as an Amber listed species i.e. Declines in UK breeding and non-breeding population; Available at <http://www.bto.org/science/monitoring/psob>

### Phase 1 Habitat Survey

The site survey was carried out by an experienced ecologist on the 19<sup>th</sup> March 2014. No limitations to the survey were found, access to all/any buildings was possible and all areas of the site.

#### **Poor Semi- Improved Grassland**

*Phase 1 Habitat Code: B6.*

*See Photos 1, 2 & 4.*

Horse grazed pasture, dominated by grasses such as Cock's foot, Yorkshire fog, red fescue *Festuca rubra* with smaller areas of false oat grass dominated almost the entire site. Few forbs were present within the sward although common competitive species such as dandelion *Taraxicum sp.*, ribwort plantain *Plantago lanceolata* and broadleaved dock *Rumex obtusifolius* were common throughout.

#### **Boundary Hedge**

*Phase 1 Habitat Code: J2.1.2.*

*See Photo 2.*

The northern boundary of the site was delineated by a dense, and somewhat mature, hedge dominated by hawthorn *Crataegus monogyna*, with ivy *Hedera helix* and garden privet *Ligustrum ovalifolium* scattered intermittently throughout. Mature sycamore trees *Acer pseudoplatanus* are present at both the western and eastern extremities of the hedge.

#### **Scattered Trees**

*Phase 1 Habitat Code: A3.1*

*See Photos 3 & 4.*

A small area of very young self-sown ash *Fraxinus excelsior* and cherry *Prunus avium* was present along the north-west boundary, and a small area of silver birch *Betula pendula* trees with scrub below - bramble *Rubus fruticosus agg* and elder *Sambucus nigra* – was located in the south east corner along the boundary of Number 3 Fieldhead.

#### **Scrub**

Two very small areas of bramble scrub were located along the south boundary wall and the west boundary wall.

## 3.2 Fauna

### Birds

No active nests or behaviour indicating breeding was observed

### Assessment of Bat Potential

Two small wooden sheds were present within the study site and both were considered to have a Negligible Potential to Support Bats.

All trees were in in good condition (in relation to features suitable for bats) with no veteran trees present.

None of the trees supported potential features for roosting bats such as holes, cracks, crevices, large areas of lifted bark or coverings of ivy and no evidence of bats was observed. All trees were categorised as:

- *Category 3: Negligible Bat Roost Potential. Trees with no observed features suitable for roosting bats.*

## 4 Recommendations

### 4.1 Breeding Birds

All breeding birds are protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 and disturbance to any species of breeding birds is an offence - see *Section 7: Appendix 2 for full legislative context*.

Therefore, in order to ensure an offence is not committed, works impacting the trees, areas of scrub or northern boundary hedge should be conducted outside the breeding season (1<sup>st</sup> March 30<sup>th</sup> June) or, if this is not practicable, the developer should ensure no active nests are present before works commence.

If active nests are present works may need to be postponed until the chicks have fledged.

### 4.2 Other Recommendations

At the time of writing this Report the site design proposal was at an outline stage and had not been finalised, it is therefore not possible to present detailed recommendations at this stage.

However, detailed ecological mitigation / enhancements should be incorporated into the final design and presented at the detailed application stage.

Ecological mitigation / enhancements to be incorporated into the final design should, where practicable, include:

1. Retention of hedgerows and trees within and adjacent to the site.
2. A landscape design to retain and create features of ecological interest at the site.

These may include – but not be restricted to:

- Retention and planting of hedgerows and native woody species.

Landscape plantings should be native species and include early and late flowering and fruiting species such as hawthorn and blackthorn *Prunus spinosa* and species giving cover throughout the winter such as privet *Ligustrum sp.* with nectar producing climbing species such as honeysuckle *Lonicera periclymenum* and ivy.

- Retention and creation of botanically diverse grassland areas.

A variety of commercially produced grassland mixes are available to suite most developments and uses. If practicable, a diverse grassland mix should be recommended once the final design has been agreed.

3. Production of a long term management plan to ensure the continuing ecological viability of these landscape features is maintained.

4. Incorporation of permanent biodiversity features within the buildings themselves:

These may include – but not be restricted to:

- Installation of commercially available integrated bat roosts.
- Installation of commercially available integrated bird boxes.

## 5 Photographs

**Photo 1: The site from the south**



**Photo 2: North boundary hedge**



**Photo 3: Looking south towards Fieldhead – birch tree and bramble scrub visible**



**Photo 4: Shed with small area of ash and cherry trees behind**




## 6 Figures

### 6.1 Figure 1: Site Location Plan

## 7 Appendices


### 7.1 Appendix 1: Factors Affecting the Probable Use of a Site by Bats

**Table 7.1a:** Assessing the Probability of a Building being used by Bats.

Bat Potential	Locational Features
<p>Higher bat roost potential</p>  <p>Negligible bat roost potential</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Disused or largely undisturbed</li> <li>• Hanging tiles or wood cladding, esp. on south facing walls</li> <li>• Rural setting</li> <li>• Close to water or woodland</li> <li>• Pre 20<sup>th</sup> century / early 20<sup>th</sup> century construction</li> <li>• Traditional stone or timber construction</li> <li>• Large complex buildings or structures</li> <li>• Suitable foraging areas adjacent or close by</li> <li>• Adjacent commuting corridors / linear features to foraging areas</li> <li>• Gaps between masonry blocks and bricks</li> <li>• Holes in the walls caused by missing bricks and mortar.</li> <li>• Spaces / gaps under the eaves or in soffits</li> <li>• Gaps in the roof tiles and gable ends</li> </ul> <hr/> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Active industrial setting</li> <li>• Urban setting with few feeding areas</li> <li>• Over 400m from woodland or water</li> <li>• Modern construction of steel and sheet materials</li> <li>• Modern well maintained buildings with few potential access points</li> <li>• Shaded roof (if no other heat source (i.e. boiler) present)</li> <li>• No adjacent vegetation</li> <li>• No suitable foraging areas adjacent or close by</li> <li>• No adjacent commuting corridors / linear features to foraging areas</li> <li>• No / few gaps between masonry</li> <li>• No holes in walls / roof/ soffits/eaves</li> </ul>


Adapted from Table 5.1- Bat Mitigation Guidelines JNCC. 2004 & Table 8.2 - Bat Surveys- Good Practice Guidelines BCT. 2012.

**Table 7.1b: Factors affecting the probable value of development sites for bats.**

Value for bats	Features within or adjacent to the site
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Lower</b></p>  <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Higher</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No features likely to be used by bats (roosting, foraging or commuting)</li> <li>• No suitable foraging habitat</li> <li>• Small number of potential roost sites in buildings or trees (i.e. probably not maternity roost or hibernacula).</li> <li>• Isolated foraging habitat not connected to the wider landscape by linear features such as water courses, tree lines etc.</li> <li>• Site is close to known bat roosts.</li> <li>• Bats recorded or observed using an area for foraging or commuting close to a potential roost.</li> <li>• Site is connected with the wider landscape by strong linear features that could be used by commuting bats e.g. river valleys, streams or hedgerows.</li> <li>• High quality habitat for foraging bats e.g. broad leaved woodland, tree lines watercourses and grazed parkland</li> <li>• Buildings or trees with many potential roost sites</li> <li>• Presence of structures with particular significance for roosting bats (e.g. mines, caves, tunnels, ice houses &amp; cellars).</li> </ul>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Confirmed Presence</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Evidence indicates that a building, tree or other structure is used by bats e.g.</li> <li>• Bats seen roosting or observed flying from a roost or freely in the habitat</li> <li>• Droppings, carcasses feeding remains etc. found</li> <li>• Bats heard "chattering" inside the roost on a warm day or at dusk.</li> </ul>

*Adapted from Table 4.2 - Bat Surveys- Good Practice Guidelines (BCT. 2012)*

**Table 7.1c: Assessing *the potential of trees to support bats***

Bat Potential	Features of trees
High bat roost potential    Negligible bat roost potential	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Veteran trees</li> <li>• Large cavities and crevices</li> <li>• Major dead limbs</li> <li>• Heavily ridged and lifting bark</li> <li>• Trunks covered by ivy on mature trees</li> <li>• Very close to hedgerows, woodland or major water courses</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mature trees</li> <li>• Small / superficial cavities and crevices</li> <li>• Minor dead limbs but no obvious cavities / lifting bark / splits</li> <li>• Lifting bark on main trunk</li> <li>• Trunks covered by ivy on semi-mature trees / clean trunks.</li> <li>• Some distance from hedgerows, woodland or major water courses</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Young trees</li> <li>• No visible cavities or crevices.</li> <li>• No major dead limbs</li> <li>• No lifting bark</li> <li>• No ivy on the trunk</li> <li>• Tree isolated, not close to hedgerows, woodland or water courses</li> </ul>

Adapted from Table 5.1 Bat Mitigation Guidelines. (JNCC 2004)

Using the surveyors significant experience and the criteria in Table 7.1c above, all trees within or adjacent to the survey site were categorised according to their potential to support bat<sup>10</sup>

- Confirmed or Suspected Roost.
- Category 1a: – High bat roost potential: Large, well connected trees with multiple, highly suitable features capable of supporting large bat roosts.
- Category 1b: – Moderate bat roost potential: Large, well connected trees with less potential than Category 1a. Multiple suitable features capable of supporting small roosts or individual bats.
- Category 2a: Low bat roost potential: Trees with less potential than Category 1b. Few suitable features with a limited potential to support bats.
- Category 2b: No obvious potential. Trees with no obvious potential. However, due to size/structure/limited views tree may support unobserved features with a limited potential to support individual bats.
- Category 3: Negligible bat roost potential. Trees with no observed features suitable for roosting bats.

<sup>10</sup> Categories and descriptions adapted from Bat Conservation Trust (BCT). 2012. Bat Surveys: Good Practice Guidelines. BCT, London. Box 8.2 p65.

## **7.2 Appendix 2: Legislative Context**

### **Breeding Birds**

All birds, their nests and eggs are protected under Section 1 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981. Under the current legislation it is an offence, with certain exceptions to:

- Intentionally kill, injure or take any wild bird.
- Intentionally take, damage or destroy the nest of any wild bird whilst it is in use or being built.
- Intentionally take or destroy the egg of any wild bird.
- Intentionally or recklessly disturb any wild bird listed on Schedule 1 while it is nest building, or at a nest containing eggs or young, or disturb the dependent young of such a bird.