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By email only

Dear Nick,

Re: Update Ecology Survey – 230 Cumberworth Lane, Denby Dale, HD8 8PR.

Introduction

This letter presents the results of an ecological walkover survey of the above site in order to update the findings and recommendations from the previous ecology survey undertaken by Quants Environmental Ltd in 2014. As such, this document should be read in conjunction with the following report:

- *230 Cumberworth Lane, Denby Dale. Ecological Appraisal* (Quants Environmental Ltd, November 2014).

The development proposals have not changed since the survey work was undertaken in 2014. The appraisal was conducted in relation to the proposed demolition of existing buildings on the site which will be replaced by residential properties.

The aim of the site visit was to gather sufficient information on the habitats and fauna within the site to enable an interpretation of the ecological value of the land to update the survey undertaken in 2014.

Figure 1: Proposed development area (outlined red). Aerial Imagery Dated 2016. (Grid ref. SE 22518 08938)



Methodology

The site was subject to an ecological walkover survey on 23rd August 2018 by Gemma Longman ACIEEM of Quants Environmental Ltd. The visit was completed using extended Phase 1 habitat survey techniques as defined in the standard methodology¹.

In addition, the site was searched for evidence of protected/notable fauna e.g. badgers and assessed in terms of its potential to support protected / notable fauna including species listed within European, national and local legislation and policies such as badger, great crested newts and bats.

The site visit was completed within the optimal period for extended Phase 1 habitat surveys (May to September). Sufficient botanical information was collected for the purposes of the assessment. Sufficient information was also gathered on protected / notable species in terms of the likelihood of occurrence at the site (as far as is reasonably possible).

The weather conditions at the time of survey were: 17°C, dry, wind bft 1 (Beaufort Scale) with excellent visibility.

Overall it is considered that sufficient information has been collected to enable a comparative assessment with data collected in 2014 and there were no significant constraints to achieving the

¹ JNCC, (2010), *Handbook for Phase 1 habitat survey - a technique for environmental audit*, ISBN 0 86139 636 7.

purpose of the assessment.

Survey Findings

Statutory / Non-Statutory sites

The closest designated site known as Kirklees – Sites of Wildlife Significance Wither wood is located ~70m north-east. Wither Wood is situated ~70m north-east of the site and is an ancient replanted woodland containing a mix of woodland types including: W8 neutral woodland, W10 acid woodland and some planted mixed woodland.

Site Description-Habitats

The habitats on site have remained largely unchanged. The site is ~0.6 hectares the majority of which comprises hard-standing. The site contains a large industrial unit towards the east of the site and a mast with ancillary cabins surrounded by a large metal fence to the north of the site. The industrial unit is a large, steel framed and concrete block construction with corrugated metal sheet facades and a corrugated metal sheet roof.

The site is entirely hard standing with occasional construction debris and spoil heaps. The site is bordered by a stone wall and Cumberworth Lane to the north-east; a stone wall and an area of young trees to the north-west; an area of scrub dominated by bramble *Rubus fruticosus* to the south-west; and, a wooden post/metal wire fence separating the site from pastorally grazed land to the south-east.

Stands of mainly ruderal species are located on the site margins, particularly towards the south-west of the site. Species include: cock's-foot *Dactylis glomerata*, perennial rye grass *Lolium perenne*, common bent *Agrostis capillaries*, ragwort *Jacobaea vulgaris*, broadleaved dock *Rumex obtusifolius*, bramble *Rubus fruticosus*, foxglove *Digitalis purpurea*, dandelion *Taraxacum officinale*, spear thistle *Cirsium vulgare*, rosebay willowherb *Chamerion angustifolium*, hawkbit *Leontodon sp.*, mugwort *Artemisia vulgaris*, white clover *Trifolium repens* and broom *Cytisus scoparius*, as well as silver birch *Betula pendula* and willow *Salix sp.*

Birds

No evidence of nesting birds was observed within the buildings on the site. The habitat within the site provides limited nesting opportunities for birds. The bounding vegetation provides suitable nesting bird habitat and a variety of common garden birds are expected to nest within the trees and scrub to the south-west and south-east of the site.

Bats

The condition of the buildings remains unchanged since the previous survey in 2014. Due to construction type (concrete block, steel frames and steel facades), the buildings on the site do not provide typical roost features for bats. The concrete walls of the large industrial unit are in a good state of repair. All buildings within the site are considered to be of negligible bat roost potential.

The hard-standing habitat within the site provides negligible value for foraging and commuting bats; however, the treelines bordering the north-west and south-west of the site provide foraging and commuting habitat with connectivity to the wider area.

Great Crested Newt

A single waterbody is located ~420m west of the site and is situated within quarry works.

The intervening land including arable land, woods and a residential estate provide barriers to dispersal. Due to the lack of connectivity between the site and the pond it is considered highly unlikely that great crested newts would use the site during their terrestrial phase.

Reptiles

A single record for grass snake located > 1 km from the site was provided by West Yorkshire Ecology.

The treeline, soil bunds, piles of debris/wood and scrub habitats bordering the site provide a degree of potential habitat for common reptiles i.e. grass snake. Given the scrub and woodland habitats bordering the site provide suitable connective habitat to the wider area, there is a low possibility of a small number of individual reptiles occurring on the boundary habitats of the site.

Other Fauna

No evidence of badger was observed within or adjacent to the site. The site does not support or border suitable features likely to be used by water vole or otter i.e. watercourses, ditches or waterbodies. As such, these species are unlikely to be affected by the proposed development.

Conclusions & Recommendations

Statutory / Non-Statutory sites

Due to the distance, intervening habitats and nature of the development, no impact on protected sites is predicted.

Habitats

The site comprises hard standing with industrial units and contains very limited biodiversity value which is restricted to colonising vegetation on the site margins and through cracks in concrete. The majority of habitat of value is located on the boundaries of the site.

Recommendations

It is recommended that the boundary habitats, i.e. scrub and woodland are retained and enhanced to provide connectivity for wildlife.

The biodiversity of the site can be enhanced with a basic landscaping scheme. Any planting scheme is recommended to use British native species and preferably of local provenance. Species recommended for inclusion in a planting scheme include hawthorn *Crataegus monogyna*, rowan *Sorbus aucuparia*, blackthorn *Prunus spinosa*, elder *Sambucus nigra*, hazel *Corylus avellana*, oak *Quercus robur*, dogwood *Cornus sanguinea* and holly *Ilex aquifolium*.

Birds

The site is considered to have negligible potential to support nesting birds. However, the scrub and young trees bordering the site provide nesting opportunities for common garden nesting birds.

Recommendations

Any works affecting the trees/scrub directly adjacent to the site (including trimming) should be

undertaken outside of the bird nesting period of March to August (inclusive). If this is not possible, works within these areas during the bird nesting period (March to August inclusive) should be supervised by a suitably qualified ecologist. The supervising ecologist will advise all site personnel of the potential presence of nesting birds, their legal protection and the need to minimise disturbance of nesting birds. The supervising ecologist will also check for active bird nests prior to works during March-August. In line with current legislation (The Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981), if active nests are present, these must be retained in situ undisturbed by the works until the nests are no longer active.

To enhance the site for nesting birds it is recommended that a variety of durable bird boxes are attached to boundary trees. It is recommended that at least 2x common garden nesting bird box (such as the 1B Schwegler bird box) are installed within the site. Nest boxes should be angled so that they face away from the prevailing wind (usually south-westerly in the UK) and should be placed >2m above ground level. Bird boxes can be purchased through a variety of web sources including <http://www.wildcareshop.com> & <http://www.nhbs.com>.

Bats

All buildings within the site were found to provide negligible bat roost potential. In addition, the site contains negligible value in terms of foraging and commuting habitats. However, the bordering treelines/hedgerows are well connected to a network of similar linear habitats suitable for bat foraging and commuting, and as such are of value to bats.

Recommendations

A basic landscaping scheme would improve the value of the site itself for bats (as above).

There is an opportunity to enhance the site for bats through provision of roosting opportunities within the new build by installing bat boxes/bricks. Bat box designs which are recommended include the Bat Conservation Trust approved integrated custom brick facing design by Habibat (www.habibat.co.uk/). Other suitable bat bricks are available from different manufacturers, e.g. Schwegler 1FR. The fixed position for bat boxes/bricks should be located underneath the eaves and/or just below the gable ridge of the dwelling and located away from excessive light spill. The integration of bat boxes should offer potential ecology accreditation within a housing scheme.

Artificial lighting can cause disturbance to bats; it is therefore recommended to avoid/minimise external lighting in close proximity to any existing or newly planted treelines. A wildlife sensitive lighting strategy should be produced at the detailed design stage for the scheme. This should be in accordance with Bats and Lighting in the UK; Bat Conservation Trust; Version 3, May 2009.

Reptiles

The majority of suitable habitat for reptiles is limited to the boundaries of the site. Any works affecting boundary habitats; i.e. clearance of scrub and debris piles will adhere to the method statement enclosed at the foot of the document.

Other Fauna

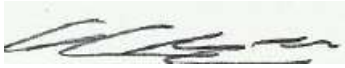
No significant impacts on other protected/notable species such as GCN or badger are predicted.

Recommendations

In the interest of animal welfare, it is recommended that during construction any deep excavations

should be either fenced-off, covered overnight or fitted with an exit ramp to avoid the trapping of mammals.

Kind regards,



Gemma Longman
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Senior Ecologist

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Enc. Photographs and Reptile Method Statement

Photo 1: Front of site. North-east aspect



Photo 2: Looking west along north boundary of the site showing bounding habitat with encroaching vegetation.



Photo 3: Looking north-east across site



Photo 4: Example habitat for reptiles (Loose rubble/rocks)



Reptile Method Statement

Timing

- Timing - reptiles hibernate during the winter, as such, any ground works within areas suitable for hibernating reptiles (e.g. piles of debris/wood), should be undertaken outside of the hibernation period (usually November to March) and when temperatures are greater than 5°C.

Pre-Construction

- A COPY OF THIS METHOD STATEMENT WILL BE KEPT ON SITE AT ALL TIMES.
- All piles of debris/wood will be removed from the site by hand 48hrs prior to any works (with consideration to Timing (above)).
- Any vegetation clearance on the boundary/within the site will be directionally strimmed to encourage the movement of any reptiles present into habitats outside of the site. This vegetation will be strimmed and cut back to approximately 6 inches above ground level with hand tools to remove cover at least 1 week prior to the start of any site works.
- Cut vegetation will be left for a resting period of 48hrs before being cleared from the site. Vegetation must be removed from the site to avoid creating potential refuges for reptiles.
- Any scrub will be removed in a two-staged approach. Scrub will be cut down to root level and removed from the site after a 48hr rest period.

Construction Works

- Construction materials must be stored on pallets or similar so they are raised off the ground to minimise the risk of reptiles seeking refuge therein.
- Where possible, excavations must not be left overnight unless securely covered or provided with an earth or timber ramp not less than 300mm wide and no steeper than 45 degrees (to allow for escape of reptiles and other trapped animals). Any excavations should be checked each morning before any works begin on the site to be checked for trapped animals.
- In the unlikely event that a reptile is captured during the works, it should be safely moved to the woodland edge c. 100 m south-west of the site.

Conclusion

Given adherence to this method statement, it is considered highly likely that there will be no significant impacts on the viability of potential reptile populations within the area. It is also considered highly unlikely that reptile populations would be significantly affected by the proposed development through disturbance, killing or injury. Provided this Method Statement is adopted, it is considered that the following aims will be achieved:

- No offences will be committed during the development work (probability of an offence being committed: very low).
- The strategy will ensure that the favourable conservation status of reptiles will not be adversely affected (probability of adversely affecting the favourable conservation status: negligible).