

Preliminary Ecological Appraisal

BE-511.1a

Holmfirth Boarding Kennels and Cattery



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Site address	Holmfirth Boarding Kennels and Cattery, Greenfield Road, Holmfirth, Huddersfield HD9 3XF
Grid reference	SE 10500 08155
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Client	Elaine Suanders
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Executive Summary

Bagshaw Ecology Ltd have been requested by Elaine Saunders to carry out a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal of the site at Holmfirth Boarding Kennels and Cattery, Greenfield Road, Holmfirth, Huddersfield HD9 3XF (site centroid grid reference SE 10500 08155), in relation to a planning application.

The site survey was carried out on 5th June 2017 by Amy Reddick.

The immediate surrounding area is predominantly agricultural farmland and woodland. Several designated sites were recorded within 1km of the site and tree cover in the surrounding area is high due to the presence of adjacent woodlands. There is good terrestrial connectivity leading to and from the site. The survey found the site to consist predominantly of amenity grassland and hard standing, of negligible ecological importance.

The scoping survey found three buildings on site. All three of the buildings were of breezeblock construction with corrugated metal roofs. None of the buildings had separate roof voids and were all well-lit and open. No signs indicative of bats were observed and the buildings are considered to have negligible potential for roosting bats. Therefore, no further considerations regarding bats are recommended.

It is recommended that no removal or trimming of hedges be undertaken during bird nesting season (1st March – 31st August). If this is not possible, a nesting bird check should be carried out prior to removal, and works should only commence if it is determined that no nesting birds are present.

It is recommended that the ecological value of the site is enhanced through the incorporation of two bird boxes into the development proposals.

1. Introduction

Background

- 1.1. Bagshaw Ecology Ltd have been requested by Elaine Saunders to carry out a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal of the site at Holmfirth Boarding Kennels and Cattery, Greenfield Road, Holmfirth, Huddersfield HD9 3XF (site centroid grid reference SE 10500 08155).
- 1.2. The purpose of the report is to identify the habitat types on the site, along with the presence or absence of any protected or notable species. The ecological impact of any proposed development is assessed, and mitigation, management and aftercare proposals are suggested when appropriate.

Site Details

- 1.3. The site is accessed off the north of Greenfield Road in Holmfirth. The site is bordered by deciduous woodland to the north, plantation woodland to the south and west and residential properties to the east.
- 1.4. The site is approximately 0.14ha in size, and comprises a kennels, cattery and the surrounding gardens.



Figure 1. Aerial imagery of site and surrounding area (Google Earth Pro, 2017)

Development Proposals

- 1.5. The development proposals are to demolish the existing buildings and to build a residential property on the site.

2. Legislation and Policy

- 2.1.** The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended), makes it an offence to:
- Deliberately or recklessly injure, kill or capture any animal species protected under Schedule 5 of the act.
 - Deliberately or recklessly kill, injure or take any wild bird; to take, damage or destroy the nest of any wild bird while occupied or being built, or to take or destroy the egg of a wild bird. Additional protection is afforded to bird species listed under Schedule 1 of the Act.
 - Intentionally pick, uproot or destroy any wild plant included in Schedule 8 of the act.
- 2.2.** The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010 makes it an offence to deliberately capture, kill or disturb any animal protected under Schedule 2 of the regulations. It is also an offence to damage or destroy a breeding site or resting place of an animal, even if the animal is not present at the time.
- 2.3.** The UK Biodiversity Action Plan (UKBAP) includes a list of 943 national priority species and 56 habitats of principal importance, with all species and habitats having specific action plans defining the measures required to ensure their conservation. Although the UKBAP has since been superseded by County Biodiversity Plans, it remains a useful point of reference.
- 2.4.** Section 41 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act (NERC) 2006 requires that any public bodies take into consideration any species and habitats listed in the UKBAP when implementing their duty and exercising any normal functions.
- 2.5.** The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) states that planning decisions should aim to protect or enhance biodiversity and conservation interests, and where possible any development should aim to increase net gains in biodiversity.

3. Methods

Ecological Data Search

- 3.1. The Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs' (DEFRA) Magic Maps website was consulted as to any land based designations within 1km of the site.
- 3.2. Aerial imagery was assessed to give an appraisal of the surrounding land use.

Site Survey

- 3.3. The habitat survey and mapping exercise was carried out on 5th June by Amy Reddick BSc (Hons) an assistant ecological consultant, with experience of carrying out habitat and protected species surveys, and who is an accredited agent under the licence of David Watts BSc (Hons) MCIEEM, an ecological consultant and licensed bat worker (2016-24731-CLS-CLS).
- 3.4. The study area was surveyed in accordance with JNCC (2010) guidelines. Habitat types were assigned an alphanumeric code, and target notes were made identifying important species, along with the presence of potential habitats for any protected or notable species.
- 3.5. Habitats and species present on or adjacent to the site were assessed using CIEEM's (2016) guidelines. Ecological features were classed as being of either international, national, regional, district, local, low or of negligible importance (see table 3.1).

Table 1 Importance of Ecological Features

Value of feature	Key examples
International	• Internationally designated sites (SPA, pSPA, SAC, cSAC, pSAC, Ramsar site, Biogenetic Reserve, or an area which meets designation for such sites. • Internationally significant and viable areas of a habitat type listed in Annexe 1 of the Habitats Directive. • Any regularly occurring, globally threatened species. • A regularly occurring population of an internationally important species, which is threatened or rare in the UK.
National	• A nationally designated site (SSSI, NNR), or an area which has met the published selection criteria. • A regularly occurring significant number/population of a nationally important species (e.g. listed on the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended)). • A feature identified as being of critical importance in the UK BAP.
Regional/County	• Viable areas of key habitat identified in the regional or county BAP. • A regularly occurring significant population/number of any important species important at regional/county level. • Sites of conservation importance which exceed the district selection criteria but which fall short of SSSI selection guidelines.
District	• Areas of habitat identified in District/City/Borough BAP. • Sites that the designating authority has determined meet the published ecological selection criteria for designation. • Sites/features which are scarce within the District/City/Borough. • A regularly occurring significant population/number of any important species important at District/City/Borough level.

Value of feature	Key examples
Local	• Areas identified in a Local BAP. • Sites/features which are scarce in the locality or which are considered to appreciably enrich the habitat resource within the local context (e.g. species-rich hedgerows). • Local Nature Reserves. • Any populations, species or habitats of local importance.
Low/Site	• Habitats of moderate to low diversity which support a range of locally and nationally common species, the loss of which can be easily mitigated.
Negligible	• Habitats of no ecological value, the removal of which requires no mitigation.

3.6. The buildings on site were surveyed using methodologies prescribed by Collins (2016), Mitchell-Jones (2004) and Mitchell-Jones and McLeish (2004). This involved an inspection of the exterior and interior of the buildings. Any structural features with potential for use by roosting bats were recorded and any suitable access points were identified. Any direct evidence of bats, such as scratch marks, oil stains, droppings and feeding remains were also identified.

3.7. Taking account of the structural features of the buildings, and the surrounding habitat, the buildings were assigned a level of roost suitability based upon professional judgement (see table 3.2).

Table 2 Bat Roosting Potential in Buildings

Roosting potential	Criteria
Confirmed Presence	Presence confirmed by the survey.
High	Buildings that have many areas suitable for roosting with a large number of potential access points. These are normally in sheltered locations, subject to low variation in temperature. Buildings with good potential could be used for a whole range of roosts including maternity roosts.
Medium	Buildings with a smaller number of areas suitable for roosting, but still supporting features that could be attractive to bats and potentially support maternity roosts.
Low	Buildings with limited roosting opportunities but which could be used on a sporadic or occasional basis which are unsuitable for maternity roosts. Buildings that would otherwise be medium to high potential but have reduced value due to other factors such as exposed location, separation from nearby foraging, or presence of strong lighting.
Negligible	Buildings which appear unsuitable for roosting bats due to a clear lack of roosting spaces such as voids etc. and/or absence of suitable access points.

4. Results

Constraints

- 4.1. The site survey was conducted inside the optimum period for Phase 1 Habitat surveys. Some species are only visible at certain times of the year, and may not have been present during the survey.

Designated Sites

- 4.2. A search on Magic Maps (DEFRA, 2017) found several designated and notable habitats within 1km of the Site, including:
- One Good Quality Semi-Improved Grassland Priority Habitat.
 - One Lowland Dry Acid Grassland Priority Habitat.
 - Three Lowland Heathland Priority Habitats.
 - Three Upland Heathland Priority Habitats.
 - Thirteen Deciduous Woodland Priority Habitats.
 - One Grass Moorland Priority Habitat.

Habitats

- 4.3. The immediate surrounding area is predominantly agricultural farmland and woodland. The tree cover in the immediate area around the site is high due to the presence several woodlands adjacent to the site.
- 4.4. Habitat types, as defined by JNCC (2010) on the site include:
- **A1 Woodland:** Adjacent to the south and west of the site was mixed plantation woodland of Scot's pine *Pinus sylvestris*, pedunculate oak *Quercus robur*, beech *Fagus sylvatica* and rowan *Sorbus aucuparia*. Other species include holly *Ilex aquifolium*, hawthorn *Crataegus monogyna*, common bracken *Pteridium aquilinum*, bird cherry *Prunus padus* and bilberry *Vaccinium myrtillus*. Semi natural deciduous woodland consisting predominantly of pedunculate oak and rowan was located adjacent to the river to the north of the site.
 - **B6 Poor Semi-Improved Grassland:** A relatively species poor grassland adjacent to the north of the site and south of the plantation behind the kennels, dominated by meadow foxtail *Alopecurus pratensis*, cock's foot *Dactylis glomerata*, Yorkshire fog *Holcus lanatus* and sweet vernal *Anthoxanthum odoratum*. Other species found here included: creeping buttercup *Ranunculus repens*, common nettle *Urtica dioica*, sheep's sorrel *Rumex acetosella*, broad leaved dock *Rumex obtusifolius*, soft rushes *Juncus effusus* and bilberry.
 - **J1.2 Amenity Grassland:** Kennel exercise field adjacent to the west of the kennel and the areas adjacent to the hardstanding surrounding both the kennels and cattery. Intensively managed and regularly mown species poor grassland consisting of perennial rye-grass, dandelion, common daisy and other common species.
 - **J2.3 Hedgerow with trees:** Alongside the eastern boundary of the site and in the garden adjacent to the cattery. Primarily a mixture of rhododendron *Rhododendron sp.* and hawthorn *Crataegus monogyna* with some sycamore *Acer pseudoplatanus* and holly trees. Other species included creeping buttercup, common nettle and rosebay willowherb *Chamerion angustifolium*.
 - **J4 Hardstanding:** Areas directly outside buildings and the road leading onto the site.

4.5. For further details, see Appendix B: Phase 1 Habitat Map.

Bat

4.6. DEFRA (2017) holds no records of granted European Protected Species Licenses within 1km of the site.

4.7. The bat scoping survey found three buildings on the site:

- Building A, the cattery to the west of the site. The building was a U shape with a half pitch corrugated metal roof. The walls were constructed of breezeblock, which were in good condition with no visible gaps observed. The wooden fascias were well sealed. The interior of the building was divided into twenty separate pens and was completely open on one side. There was no roof void and some sections of the roof were plastic allowing further light into the separate pens. The interior of the building was open and well lit. No features suitable for roosting bats were observed.
- Building B, the kennels to the south of the site. The building was of breezeblock construction with a pitched corrugated metal roof. Along the south and north aspects of the building were wire mesh runs allowing access into the interior of the building via dog flaps. The wooden fascias on the gables of the building were well sealed. The interior of the building was divided into twenty-two pens with a central corridor and feed room. There was no roof void and the central area of the roof was constructed of clear plastic, allowing light into the building. No features suitable for roosting bats were observed.
- Building C, a small isolation kennel located in the central area of the site. The building was of breezeblock construction with an inverted pitched corrugated metal roof. The exterior of the building was in good condition with no visible gaps observed and the wooden fascias were well sealed. There was some access into the building under the corrugated metal roof on the north aspect. The interior of the building was divided into two pens and there was no separate roof void. No features suitable for roosting bats were observed.

Other Mammals

4.8. No signs of any mammal species were observed on the site.

4.9. There are no riparian habitats on or adjacent to the site suitable for water voles or otters *Lutra lutra*.

Reptiles and Amphibians

4.10. A search on aerial imagery (Google Earth Pro, 2017) revealed one pond 40m northeast of the site. It is possible that there are ponds within gardens of nearby properties, which are not visible from aerial imagery. A Habitat Suitability Index (HSI) for great crested newt was conducted on the pond.

4.11. The HSI score of 0.28 indicated that the pond was poor habitat for great crested newts. The pond was also home to two sturgeon and was completely covered by netting preventing access into the pond.

Table 3. Great Crested Newt Habitat Suitability Index (HSI) (Oldham et al, 2000)

Pond Grid Ref		SE 10500 08155
SI No	SI Description	SI Value
1	Geographic location	1
2	Pond area	0.05
3	Pond permanence	0.9
4	Water quality	0.67
5	Shade	1
6	Water fowl effect	1
7	Fish presence	0.01
8	Pond Density	0.1
9	Terrestrial habitat	0.33
10	Macrophyte cover	0.3
HSI Score		0.28
Pond suitability		Poor

Bird Species

4.12. The hedges and woodland adjacent to the site provide suitable habitat for nesting birds. Common bird species were observed on and flying over the site during the survey.

5. Assessment

- 5.1. The surrounding area is predominantly agricultural farmland and woodland. There is good terrestrial connectivity to and from the site.
- 5.2. As the habitats on site mainly consist predominantly of amenity grassland and hardstanding, the site is considered to be of negligible ecological importance.
- 5.3. All three of the buildings on site were open and well-lit with no separate roof void. It is concluded that all of the buildings have negligible potential for roosting bats.
- 5.4. The site provides suboptimal habitat for reptiles and amphibians, consisting predominantly of amenity grassland and hardstanding. There is one pond located within 250m of the site containing fish, and which provides poor habitat for great crested newts.
- 5.5. The hedgerows bordering the east of the site and behind the cattery provide suitable habitat for nesting birds.

6. Conclusion and Recommendations

- 6.1.** As the habitats on site are of negligible ecological importance, no further surveys or mitigation is considered necessary.
- 6.2.** As the buildings on site is considered to have negligible potential for roosting bats, no further surveys are necessary and they may be removed without any further consideration for roosting bats. IN the unlikely event that any bats are found during demolition works, all works should cease and a licensed bat worker should be contacted immediately.
- 6.3.** As the development proposals only effect habitat which are of negligible importance for great crested newts and the pond provided poor habitat, no further surveys or mitigation in regard to this species are considered necessary.
- 6.4.** It is recommended that no trimming or removal of hedges be undertaken during bird nesting season (1st March – 31st August). If this is not possible, a nesting bird check should be carried out prior to removal, and works should only commence if it is determined that no nesting birds are present.
- 6.5.** In accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework, it is recommended that the ecological value of the site is enhanced through the incorporation of two bird boxes into the development proposals. Bird boxes of type Schwegler 1MR Avianex should be hung on existing trees at a height between 1.5 and 5m, in a sheltered location and with clear flight paths to the entrances.

7. References

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- Oldham, R. S., Keeble, J., Swan, M. J. S., & Jeffcote, M. (2000). Evaluating the suitability of habitat for the great crested newt (*Triturus cristatus*). *Herpetological Journal*, 10(4), 143-156.
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Appendices

Appendix A: Photographs



Plate 1: East aspect of the cattery



Plate 2: North and west aspects of the cattery



Plate 3: Interior of cattery pen



Plate 4: Cattery corridor



Plate 5: Amenity grassland and garden with hedge adjacent to cattery



Plate 6: North aspect of the kennels



Plate 7: Kennel exercise area



Plate 8: South aspect of kennels



Plate 9: Interior of kennels



Plate 10: East aspect of isolation kennel



Plate 11: North aspect of isolation kennel



Plate 12: Interior gaps in the roof of the isolation kennel



Plate 13: Semi-improved grassland adjacent to site



Plate 14: Mixed plantation woodland adjacent to site



Plate 15: Deciduous woodland adjacent to grassland



Plate 16: Hedge on the east boundary of the site



Plate 17: Entrance to site and hardstanding

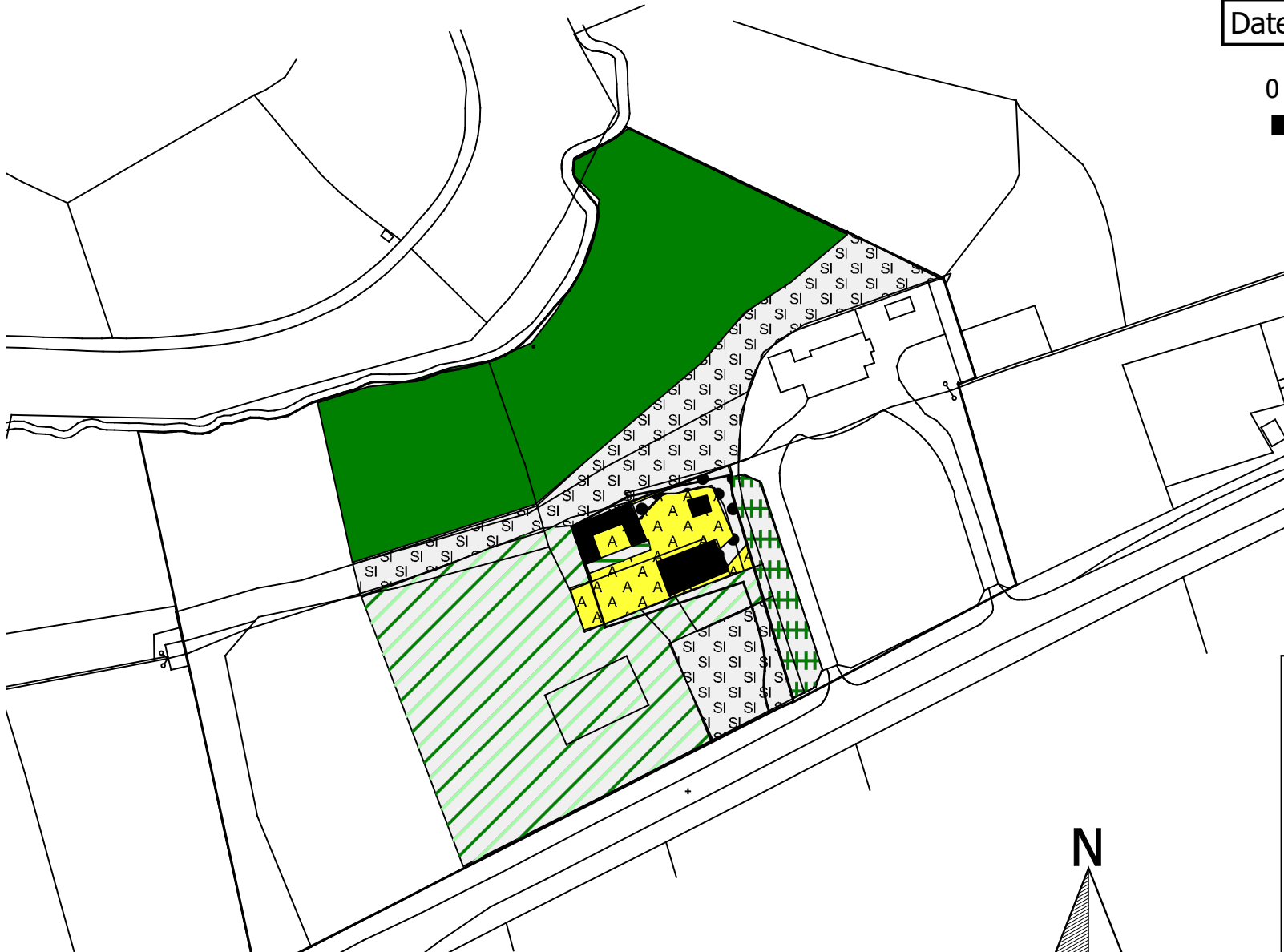


Plate 18: Pond near to site

Appendix B: Phase 1 Habitat Map

Site name:	Holmfirth Boarding Kennels
Client:	Elaine Saunders
Drawn by:	Amy Reddick
Date:	8th June 2017

0 25 50 75 100 m



Key

Phase 1 Habitats:

-  A1.1 - Broadleaved woodland
-  A1.3 - Mixed plantation woodland
-  B6 - Poor semi-improved grassland
-  J1.2 - Amenity grassland
-  J2.1.2 - Intact hedge
-  J2.3.2 - Hedge with trees
-  J3.6 - Buildings
-  J4 - Bare ground