
PRELIMINARY ECOLOGICAL APPRAISAL DENBY LANE, HUDDERSFIELD

Sept 2022

Rev 1: Dec 2023



Environment & Ecology Ltd

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Status	Date	Approved by:
PEAR	05/10/2022	Ione Bareau MCIEEM
Rev 1 - revised application area, site layout, and site clearance.	5/12/2023	N/A

Site:

Land at Denby Lane,
Grange Moor,
Huddersfield
WF4 4EF

Dates:

Initial survey: 10th August 2022

Repeat survey: 5th December 2023

Client:

Yorkshire Country Properties,
Suite 3
39 Huddersfield Road
Holmfirth
HD9 3JH

Client's agent:

N/A

Local Planning Authority:

Kirklees

MAB ref:

2022-1394

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Summary

A preliminary ecological appraisal PEA of land off Denby Lane comprising a data search and extended Phase 1 habitat survey using UK HABs methodology, was undertaken in 2022. A site walkover took place in 2023 after the site had been cleared for access, the 2022 was used for the baseline and forms the basis of the PEA and impact assessment.

There was no indication of presence of badger setts, water voles, freshwater crayfish, or any protected or notable plants within the development site. There is also a negligible risk of great crested newt presence, and no further survey effort is considered necessary. There will be no likely significant effect on protected species or protected habitats as a result of the proposed development. There are no designated sites on or adjacent to the site.

There was no potential bat roost habitat on site, but likely usage by foraging bats.

The development site included an area of self-seeded scrub & young self-seeded woodland which had developed on mining spoil. There was also some privet and native hedgerow. These habitats were of value to nesting birds; site clearance took place outside of nesting season.

A separate BNG report has been prepared. Due to the site layout there is little opportunity for on-site habitat creation and there will be a requirement for off-site credits due to the high baseline score.

2 Introduction

MAB Environment and Ecology Ltd was commissioned by Yorkshire Country Properties to undertake a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA) of land off Denby Lane to accompany a planning application for housing development.

The site is located near Grange Moor. Location of the centre of the site is approximately:

- Easting = 422354
Northing = 416221
- Grid Ref = SE223162
- Latitude = 53°38'30.44"N
Longitude = 1°39'42.63"W

The site location is shown on Figure 1 and red line planning application boundary in Figure 2.

The objectives of this report are to:

- Identify species and habitats on site, with particular reference to protected and notable species
- Detail the need for any further ecological survey work
- Assess the potential impact of the proposed development on habitats and protected or notable species
- Identify potential opportunities for biodiversity enhancement
- To outline any necessary or recommended mitigation and compensation proposals

MAB Environment and Ecology Ltd is a registered practice of the Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (CIEEM), and all staff and follow the Institute's Code of Professional Conduct when carrying out ecological work.

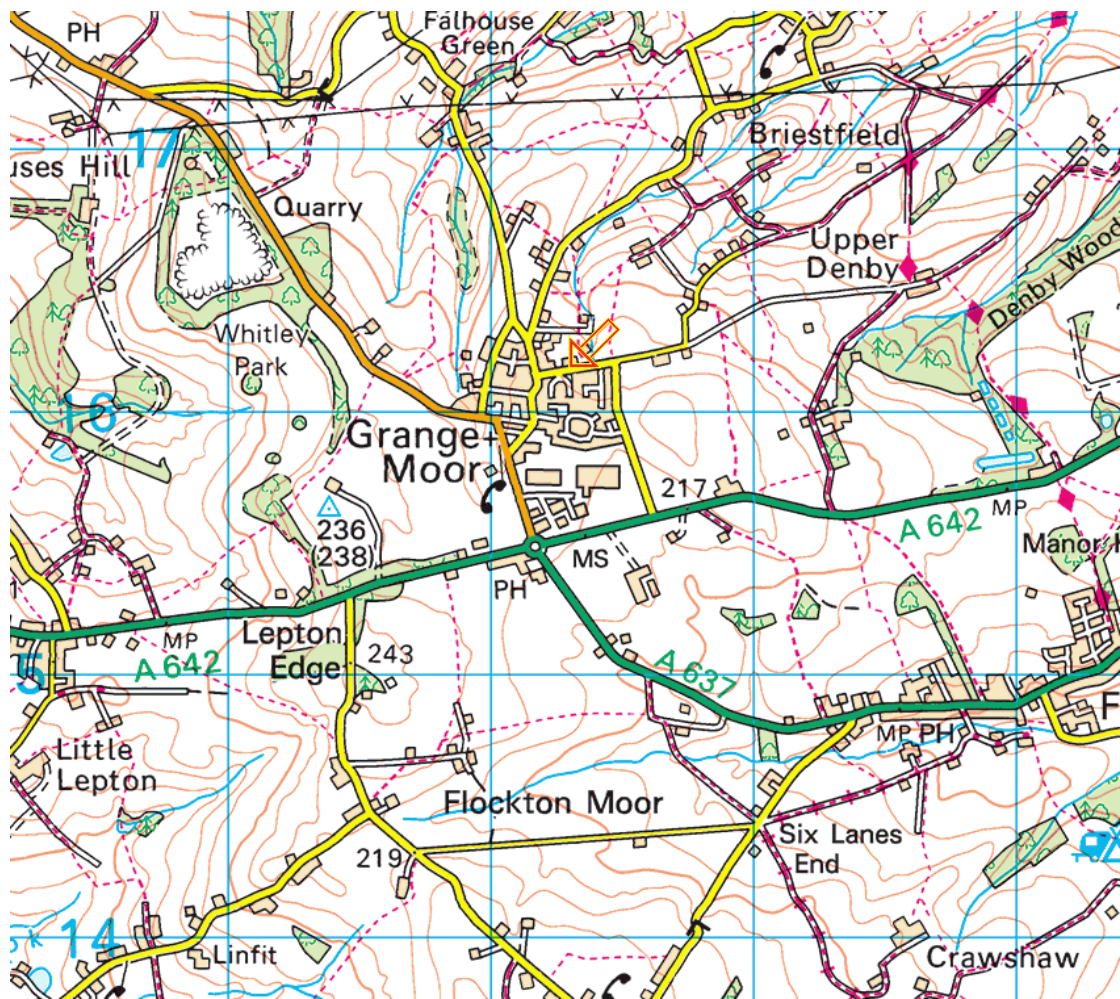


Figure 1: Site location 1:50,000.



Figure 2 Site plan as existing with red line showing area subject to planning permission.

3 Methodology

3.1 Desktop study

3.1.1 West Yorkshire Ecology were commissioned to provide records of protected or notable species within 2km of the site. The search was extended to include any statutory, non-statutory sites and notable habitats. The PEA Report in 2021 commissioned biological records from West Yorkshire Ecology; those results remain valid and are used for this report.

3.1.2 DEFRA's interactive MAGIC map was used for a baseline assessment of available environmental information of over 300 datasets including Priority Habitats & Species inventories, Designations, Environmental & Historic Landscape Agreements, SSSI impact zones, and Wildlife Licenses.

3.1.3 Aerial imagery from Ordnance Survey, Google Earth, and government websites 'MAGIC' and were used to search for ponds within 500m of the site.

3.2 Field survey

3.2.1 Giles Manners CEnv MCIEEM, a director of MAB Environment & Ecology Ltd. Giles has been a professional bat ecologist since 2004 and has a Class Survey Licence WML CL20 (Bat Survey Level 4) registration number 2015-10306-CLS-CLS, alongside a Class Licence WML CL16 (Volunteer Bat Roost Visitor Level 2) – Natural England trainer license 2015-10305-CLS-CLS. Giles is also licensed by NE to survey for GCN's - Class Licence WML-CL08 (Great Crested Newt Class 1) registration number 2014-5604-CLS-CLS. He is also a zoologist of over 20 years' experience, a full member of the Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management and a Chartered Environmentalist.

3.2.2 UK HABS habitat survey of the site was conducted following standard published guidelines (Butcher et al, 2020). This involved a walkover of the site, mapping all habitats present which fell into the appropriate Minimum Mapping Units (MMU). MMU's were decided upon pre survey. Small scale MMU's = Area 25m², linear feature 5m. Large scale MMU = Area 400m², Linear feature 20m. The survey was extended to include records of protected or notable fauna and the habitats were evaluated for their potential to support such fauna. Any invasive plant species listed on Schedule 9 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act were also recorded.

3.2.3 Hedgerows within or forming the external boundaries to the site which have a continuous length of or exceeding 20m were surveyed in accordance with the Hedgerow Regulations 1997. Survey results were used to determine whether any of the hedgerows meet criteria listed in Part II of Schedule 1 and would therefore be deemed an 'important' hedge under the regulations. Hedgerows forming the boundary of the curtilage of a dwelling-house are not covered by the regulations and were not surveyed. Hedgerow assessment criteria are appended.

3.2.4 Trees marked for removal, or which may be directly affected by the development scheme were assessed during the day from the ground using close focusing binoculars and a halogen torch (500,000 candle power). Features such as woodpecker holes, splits, cracks, rot holes, dense ivy, and peeling bark were looked for which are commonly used by bats for roosting and for shelter. Any features were then inspected

for any signs of bat use, including scratches or staining around potential access points, bat droppings bats, and the sounds / smells of bat roosts.

3.2.5 Other trees within the site and areas of vegetation were also assessed for value to bats and birds, and their importance as foraging and commuting habitat.

3.2.6 The location of the site and the surrounding habitat were also assessed for value to bats. This includes proximity of the site to good bat foraging habitat such as woodland and water bodies and if the site is linked to such habitats by linear features like hedgerows, woodland edges or rivers which bats use to commute around the environment.

3.2.7 All signs of breeding bird activity were looked for.

3.2.8 Habitat evaluation for reptiles was undertaken focusing on potential areas for reptile basking in sheltered locations. Potential refugia such as rabbit burrows, brash piles, cracks and gaps in rocks, stone piles etc were noted. Throughout the walkover survey, the site was walked slowly looking out for reptiles and listening for any rustles in the undergrowth.

3.2.9 The site was surveyed for evidence of badgers. Field signs include setts (noting number of entrances and evidence/level of recent activity); latrines; well-worn pathways; footprints; snuffle holes; hairs caught in boundary fences; scratching posts; smells.

3.2.10 Habitat evaluation for hedgehogs was undertaken; hedgehogs may seek shelter in vegetation under hedges, and some hedgerows may be suitable habitats for summer breeding nests and winter hibernacula. Field signs (e.g., tracks, droppings) were also looked for.

3.3 Constraints and Limitations

There were no constraints on the survey in relation to access to the site. The survey was outside of the nesting season.

4 Baseline ecological conditions

4.1 Designated sites

In 2021 biological records from West Yorkshire Ecology were commissioned; those results remain valid and are used for this report. There are no statutory or non-statutory designated sites on or within 1km of the site boundary.

4.2 Habitats

4.2.1 Surrounding Habitats

The site is adjacent to an area of broadleaved woodland to the east, with scattered trees and grassland to the north; to the south and west are built-up.



Figure 3 Aerial imagery of the site with surrounding habitat

There are no ponds on or adjacent to the site.

4.2.2 Habitats on site 2022

UK Habs survey

Metadata

Minimum mapping unit (MMU)	100m ² & 25m
Survey Level	Level 5
Edition of UK Habs	Professional Edition V2.1
Secondary Codes	All
OS Mapping Projection	EPSG:2770
Map Scale	OS Mastermap
Timing	August 2022
Surveyor	Giles Manners MCIEEM CEnv of MAB Ecology
Existing datasets	



Figure 8 – UK Habs map.

Target note	Description	UK Habs Code (v1)	Notes on potential faunal /habitat value	Photo refs
1	Domestic garden – in use. Not affected by development.	U1 231	N/A	8
2	Mosaic scrub / woodland / tall ruderal / bracken on old mining site. Self-seeded trees c 35 years old with ash, sycamore, silver birch, and beech. Shrub species include non-natives: snowberry, cherry plum, bramble, hawthorn, elder. Ruderal species: nettle, creeping thistle, false oat grass, cocksfoot, rosebay willowherb, hogweed, Agrostis sp., male fern, bracken.	U1a 10 11 12 13 102	Nesting bird.	1-4
3	Area appears to be an old vegetable patch – dominated by bracken and bindweed.	U1a 12	Negligible	6 & 7
5	Stone wall – some retaining, all in poor condition. To the north is under canopy of neighbouring garden conifers.	U1e 67	Refuge for amphibia; nesting for wren.	5

Table 1: Target notes



Image 1



Image 2

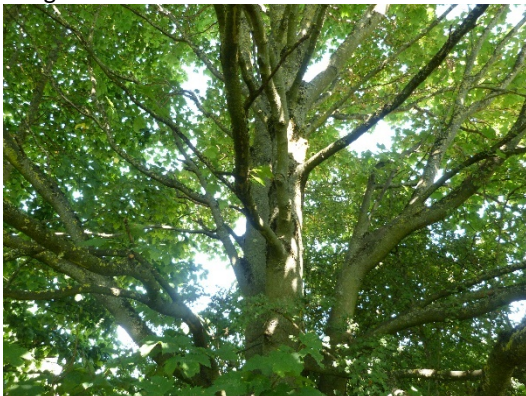


Image 3



Image 4



Image 5



Image 6



Image 7



Image 8

4.3 Assessment of habitats 2022

Mosaic scrub woodland with tall ruderal vegetation is a common habitat type within the locality and the loss will not cause a significant ecological effect within the Kirklees area. The trees are self-seeded and have a maximum age of around 40 years old – none of these trees have any bat roost potential. The mosaic habitat is on historically disturbed ground, part of a disused mine, which is the most likely explanation for the absence of diverse ground flora. The value of the habitat is mostly for nesting and foraging birds.

UK Habs v 2 (2023) classifies this habitat as broadleaved woodland, rather than “open mosaic on previously developed land” as per UK Habs v1 (2022).

The site is also partially bounded by semi-derelict dry-stone walls, these act as wildlife features, often for amphibia and nesting birds especially wren. The hedges are largely non-native privet, with a small section of native species-poor.

4.4 Assessment of protected and priority species 2022

4.4.1 Plants

No protected or priority plant species were noted during the initial site assessment, with all species noted being common semi-improved grassland or scrub species. There was no evidence to suggest the presence of any protected or priority species. No non-native invasive species were noted, though several non-invasive garden escapes are present such as cherry plum and snowberry.

4.4.2 Invertebrates

The scrub woodland and stone walls will also have had some value to invertebrates.

4.4.3 Amphibians

The likelihood of GCN presence is scoped out due to the distance of the site from ponds. It was noted that the closest commutable route to a pond from this site is around 450m, and therefore there is no requirement for any further consideration of great crested newts (GCN) in relation to this development. See referenced PEA report for further detail.

Toads are a possible presence due to adjacent gardens which may provide some suitable habitat such as micro-ponds.

4.4.4 Reptiles

There are no local records of reptiles. Some of the site provides suitable habitat for common lizard or slow worm for example, such as stone walls, however it was mostly under dense shade, which reduces suitability.

4.4.5 Birds

Suitable nesting habitat for birds is available across the site particularly in bramble scrub. A breeding bird survey was not possible during this survey commission. A range of common species was observed during the Phase 1 survey, particularly Blackbird, Dunnock, Wren, Song Thrush, Blue Tit, Great Tit, and Robin.

4.4.6 Bats

There are no potential bat roost features on site – the trees are too young to have developed suitable features and there are no buildings.

The site is likely to have value to foraging and commuting bats, especially the woodland edges which tend to be used for commuting to a large degree. Woodland species such as brown long-eared bats are likely to forage within the scrub woodland.

4.4.7 Badgers

There are no badger setts on site, and no sign of badger usage was found. The data search has returned no local records for badger. The adjacent woodland provides potential habitat for a sett, and precautionary approach should be taken towards the possibility of badgers crossing the site during development.

4.4.8 Other Mammals

The stream on the eastern boundary is culverted and therefore there is no possibility of water voles.

Hedgehog are likely to be present.

4.5 Habitats present in 2023

The walkover survey in 2023 found the site in a state of recent regeneration following clearance during the winter of 2022/2023. All hedgerows, trees and shrubs have been removed and chipped. There were no signs of badger or other mammals. The site was largely too disturbed for nesting birds, but likely to be used in spring 2024 if not kept clear.

A selection of images is presented below, showing regenerating stumps of ash, sycamore and beech, with ground flora dominated by species typical of highly disturbed ground such as rosebay willowherb, bramble, false oat grass, nettle, and spear thistle.

The assessment of impact and ecological constraints remains based on 2022 baseline in order to give a true assessment of the impact of the development.



Image 1P1080072



Image 2P1080074



Image 3P1080075



Image 4P1080079



Image 5P1080081



Image 6P1080082



Image 7P1080087



Image 8P1080089



Image 9P1080091



Image 10P1080095



Image 11P1080097



Image 12P1080098



Image 13P1080101



Image 14P1080102

6 Ecological constraints based on 2022 baseline

6.1 Designated sites

There will be no impact on designated sites.

6.2 Habitats

There will be 100% loss scrub / woodland / tall ruderal mosaic. Stone walls may be retained in part or in full.

6.3 Species and species groups

6.3.1 Invertebrates

No significant effect.

6.3.2 Amphibians

No impact on GCN; minor impact on toads.

6.3.3 Reptiles

No likely impact.

6.3.4 Birds

Removal of scrub mosaic will result in the loss of bird breeding habitat and there is a high risk of disturbance to nesting birds if works are conducted during the breeding season.

Impact on birds negative at a local level.

6.3.5 Bats

There will be loss of foraging habitat (scrub / woodland mosaic).

There may be an impact on commuting route as a result of disturbance of woodland edge by illumination.

6.3.6 Badgers

There will be no impact on badgers. No evidence of use was found on site, or within the immediate surrounding area.

6.4 Revised constraints on 2023 baseline

The site is very recently cleared so further impacts will be limited; however, the regeneration of trees, shrubs and scrub is rapid, therefore by March 2024 there will be potential impact on nesting birds, and the mitigation for impact on birds remains as per 2022 condition.

7 Further ecological surveys

It is not considered necessary for there to be any additional surveys to assess the ecological value of the site.

Pre-start surveys for badger presence may be required if the site is left fallow for any significant period of time.

Woodland edge monitoring of bat activity may be useful if disturbance impacts on commuting bats cannot be successfully mitigated.

8 Mitigation and Compensation

Lighting should not affect the woodland edge to prevent impact on nesting birds and foraging bats.

All removal of tree, shrubs and stone walls should take place between September and February inclusive, to prevent impact on nesting birds.

Stone walling should be retained as much as is possible.

Impact on hedgehog can be mitigated by including connectivity between gardens and across the boundaries. Also hedges and habitat piles can be included on the boundaries.

There is little scope for compensatory habitat within the development boundary other than gardens, boundary hedges and communal open space, all of which will be limited. Off-site mitigation may be required to compensate for the loss of scrub woodland as bird nesting habitat, and improved grassland.

9 Opportunities for ecological enhancement

There are opportunities within the development for bird nesting habitat, particularly nesting swifts and house sparrows, which can be integrated into the development. Hedges and drystone walls will benefit nesting birds.

In areas of public open space a neutral grassland mix can be sown with scattered trees, which will provide some foraging habitat for birds.

The majority of biodiversity off-set will be off-site due to site constraints.

10 References

Butcher, B., Carey, P. , Edmonds, R. , Norton, L., and Treweek, J. (2020). UK Habitat Classification – Habitat Definitions V1.1 at <http://ukhab.org>

Butcher, B., Carey, P. , Edmonds, R. , Norton, L., and Treweek, J. (2020). The UK Habitat Classification User Manual Version 1.1 at <http://ukhab.org>

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CIEEM (2018) Guidelines for Ecological Impact Assessment in the UK and Ireland: Terrestrial, Freshwater, Coastal and Marine. Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management, Winchester.

Conservation of Habitats and Species (Amendment) (EU Exit) Regulations 2019
<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukxi/2019/579/regulation/1/made>

National Planning Policy Framework 2018:
<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/revised-national-planning-policy-framework#revised-national-planning-policy-framework>

Appendix 2: Biological Records taken from 2021 PEA Report
