

Extended Phase One Habitat Survey (Preliminary Ecological Appraisal)

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Prepared for: Your Housing
Halsnead, Lickers Lane.

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1. Introduction

1.1 Background to the project

The client is proposing the re development of the Halsnead site (Lickers Lane) site in Prescott comprising of new residential dwellings and associated infrastructure.

1.2 Site location, context and main habitats

The site is located within Prescott in Knowsley in a semi urban environment and enclosed by existing residential and commercial land uses. The habitat on site comprises of scattered trees, marshy grassland, semi natural woodland, scrub and amenity grassland.

1.3 Report purpose

To prepare a Preliminary Ecological Assessment or Extended Phase One Habitat Survey for the development site following CIEEM guidelines (*Guidelines for Preliminary Ecological Appraisal, April 2013*). The purpose of the report is to provide information relating to the location, extent and distribution and impact on the conservation of wild plants and animals and natural and semi natural habitats affected by development. This report sets out the methods, results and recommendations arising from the above work.

1.3.1 Surveyor information

Simon Brain has attained a Post Graduate Certificate in Biological Recording and has attended residential FSC Field Courses for Land mammal, Songbird Barn Owls (CIEEM) and Advanced Bird Survey Techniques. He holds a NE Class 2 bat license (17334-CLS). He has over ten years experience as a practice ecologist and 30 years experience as an arborist.

2. Desk Study

2.1 Methodology

The desk study collated information on designated statutory and non-statutory wildlife sites within 1km search radii around the proposed development site.

Information on statutory and non-statutory designated sites and legally protected/notable species records were obtained from <http://www.natureonthemap.naturalengland.org.uk/MagicMap.aspx> and contained in section 2.2 below.

2.2 Designated sites, species and habitats - Results Overview

Multi-Agency Geographic Information for the Countryside (MAGIC) website (<http://www.natureonthemap.naturalengland.org.uk/MagicMap.aspx>) has confirmed no statutory designations apply to the site and the site boundaries.

The site is located within SSSI Impact Zone for Mersey Estuary RAMSAR/SSSI which is located 6575m south of site. The nearest Local Nature Reserve is Thatto Heath Meadow located 4555m north east. The development proposal does not appear to conform to those development types that require the LPA to consult Natural England on the likely risks.

The site itself is in the Community forest non statutory designation.

Multi-Agency Geographic Information for the Countryside website data has confirmed the following habitats and species apply to the site and its immediate locality:

- There are section 41 habitats listed on the inventory on the site (Woodland to northern boundary but not extending the entire length of the boundary (stops short of eastern boundary)
- There are numerous areas of listed woodland within the 1km
- The northern half of the site is within the National Habitat Network All Habitats Combined (England) Zone 1.
- The site area is covered by the countryside stewardship priority area for lapwing, curlew, snipe and redshank species and the area forms part of

the Bird Conservation Targeting Project for arable and farmland assemblages of bird species.

- There are no important Bird Areas, Seabird considerations, or water and wetland considerations in respect of avian species. The site is 450m south of an upland breeding bird area.
- The closest granted European Protected Species (EPS) license application by Natural England was for bat species approximately 1450m east of site. No EPS licenses are within 1km. The nearest Great Crested Newt Class Survey Licence Returns (England) is 4250m west.

3. Extended Phase One Habitat Survey

3.1 Methodology and survey results

The site was visited on the 28th September 2022 and a survey of the site was conducted using the Joint Nature Conservation Committee (JNCC) Handbook for Phase 1 habitat survey 2010. Distinct habitats were identified and any features of nature conservation interest or habitat areas that were too small to map were subject to a more detailed description in a Target Note (T1 etc) and contained in Appendix 1 – Extended Phase 1 Habitat Survey Mapping and Appendix 2 – Vascular Plant Site List.

3.1.2. Vascular Plants and Habitat

Table 1: Site habitats

Habitat Code	Dominant species	Less frequent species
A.1.1.1 semi natural woodland	Acer pseudoplatanus	Tilia sp Salix caprea
A.3.1 Broadleaf scattered trees	Salix caprea Acer pseudoplatanus	Betula pendula

A.2 Scrub	Acer psuedoplatanus Salix caprea Ilex aquafolium	Betula pendula Alnus glutinosa
B. Marshy Grassland	Juncus effusus Iris psuedocorus	Chamerion angustifolium Epilobium parviflorum
J.1.2 Amenity grassland	Festuca rubra Trifolium repens Poa annua Trifolium repens	Plantago lanceolata Ranunculus repens

Target Notes

T1 – Japanese Knotweed position

3.1.3 Protected and Notable Species (Mammals)

Water Voles

The habitat on the site does not contain running water habitat suitable for the species.

Bat species

Bats are comprehensively protected under UK and European legislation. Bats are largely ubiquitous there is green infrastructure linking the site to the wider landscape. The site contains sub optimal foraging habitat on the site as mainly amenity grassland is present which is intrinsically poor value for invertebrates. Trees may need to be removed for development which could contain bat roosts. No buildings are present on site for roosting bats.

Badgers and Hedgehog

Badgers are protected under Schedule 6 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981, and under the Protection of Badgers Act 1992, which prohibits deliberate interference with the animal or its sett. Badger records are present in the LRC data. A standard badger survey was undertaken making checks on

site and in the immediate site margins. For example, up to 20m+ from site was checked for signs for field signs of Badger (hair, tracks, prints, dropping or latrines) and no field signs of badger were found. Equally no field signs were found for hedgehog, however suitable foraging habitat does exist due to the presence of trees and grassland and the semi urban nature of the site.

3.1.4 Amphibians

The desktop and field survey exercises indicate a pond is located within 500m of the site and marshy grassland is located on site. There is no aquatic breeding habitat associated with the site itself and sub optimal foraging, dispersal or hibernating habitat for amphibians to be present. In addition, the site is landlocked.

3.1.5 Birds

All birds with only minor exceptions are protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act (1981), as amended. It is also an offence to disturb birds whilst nesting or displaying breeding behaviour, during the breeding season.

The area forms part of the Bird Conservation Targeting Project for arable assemblages of bird species including lapwing. The habitats on site are suitable for the breeding bird species. Although no specific bird survey was undertaken the site is unlikely to support a significant amount of grassland and /or farmland birds. Urban birds are more likely to use the site such as house sparrow and starling which are birds of conservation concern.

3.1.6 Vascular Plants

The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 section 13 1(b) affords some wild flowers protection from uprooting. No other IUCN listed, BAP or other notable plants were identified. A single non-native invasive (WCA Schedule 9) vascular plants were found (Japanese Knotweed) and target noted.

3.1.7 Reptiles

All native reptile species in the UK are protected under law from killing or sale.
No habitat exists on the site for these species to be present.

3.2. Constraints to the Surveys

The timing of the site visit was optimal for all species and habitats to be identified within the framework of a Phase 1 survey.

4. Summary and Impact

4.1 Summary – Protected habitats

The surveys have confirmed that the site does not support a habitat protected under Section 41 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities (*NERC*) Act 2006 - Habitats and Species of Principal Importance in England. There are no priority hedgerows on the site.

Summary - Protected species

No evidence of protected species was recorded on site which included starling (UK Red List). No other evidence of protected species was found during the site walkover, other than a non-native vascular plant.

Summary – Protected sites

There are no statutory or non-statutory designated sites within the boundaries of the development site or within the site margins but priority habitat is present. The site is part of the National Habitat Network All Habitats Combined (England) expansion zone 1.

Impact – General

The development proposal seeks to construct residential dwellings and associated infrastructure and there is a direct loss of amenity grassland for the footprint of the development.

Impact - Species

The full extent of protected species that may reside on this site will require confirmation following further surveys as recommended in section 4.2. The following general impacts are considered to apply:

Bat species. Loss of sub optimal commuting and foraging. Some existing trees to be removed may contain bat roosts.

Badger / hedgehog. Currently no evidence of badger, hedgehog has potential to be present on site.

Water vole. No impact considered likely.

Amphibians. Some loss of sub optimal commuting and foraging habitat. Sub optimal and isolated breeding habitat.

Birds. Loss of foraging habitat and disturbance during the breeding season.

Vascular Plants. Loss of vascular plant habitat identified on site is a low-level impact and a single non native protected plant was identified

Reptiles. Low-level impact due to site being landlocked and largely inaccessible to reptiles.

4.2 Recommendations for protected species

4.2.1 Mammals

Bat species

A Bat Roost Assessment of all trees to be removed is required. The Bat Roost Assessment may recommend the need for a summer emergence survey/s on the identified roost features in trees. The site is not likely to hold great significance for commuting and foraging bat species.

Badgers / hedgehog

No evidence of these species was found but a pre start check shall be made to ensure no badger activity has developed since this walkover survey. Measures are required to incorporate hedgehog into the development plans.

4.2.2 Amphibians

An amphibian appraisal is required for these species.

4.2.3 Avian

A breeding bird appraisal / survey will be required prior to any tree to removal ascertain the importance of the site to breeding birds at that time. This may require hand searching and dawn observations depending upon the time of year.

A breeding bird appraisal has been carried out in 2021 which identified breeding bird potential and identified the sites importance as lower than district level because 18 species were identified. Since the survey the grassland and trees are removed for grouting works and the site is less suitable for breeding birds.

NOTE: Fuller, R.J 1980 devised a method for assessing the ornithological interest of sites for conservation based on the number of breeding species

(confirmed and probable) recorded by a survey in which the following categories are used to prescribe importance: district 25-49 / county 50-69 / regional 70-84 / national 85 plus.

4.2.4 Vascular Plants

No other further surveys are required for vascular plants. A non-native eradication plan is needed for Japanese Knotweed.

4.2.5 Reptiles

No further surveys are required for these species.

5. Recommendations, mitigation, enhancement measures

5.1 Recommendations, mitigation, enhancement measures

Mitigation applies to works required to comply with legislation when developing land where protected species reside, or protected habitats are being lost. Enhancement relates to biodiversity improvements often made under the National Planning Policy Framework.

At present there is some evidence of some protected species on the site (Starling), which could be affected by development. Other protected species that may be present on site include bats, badgers and hedgehog.

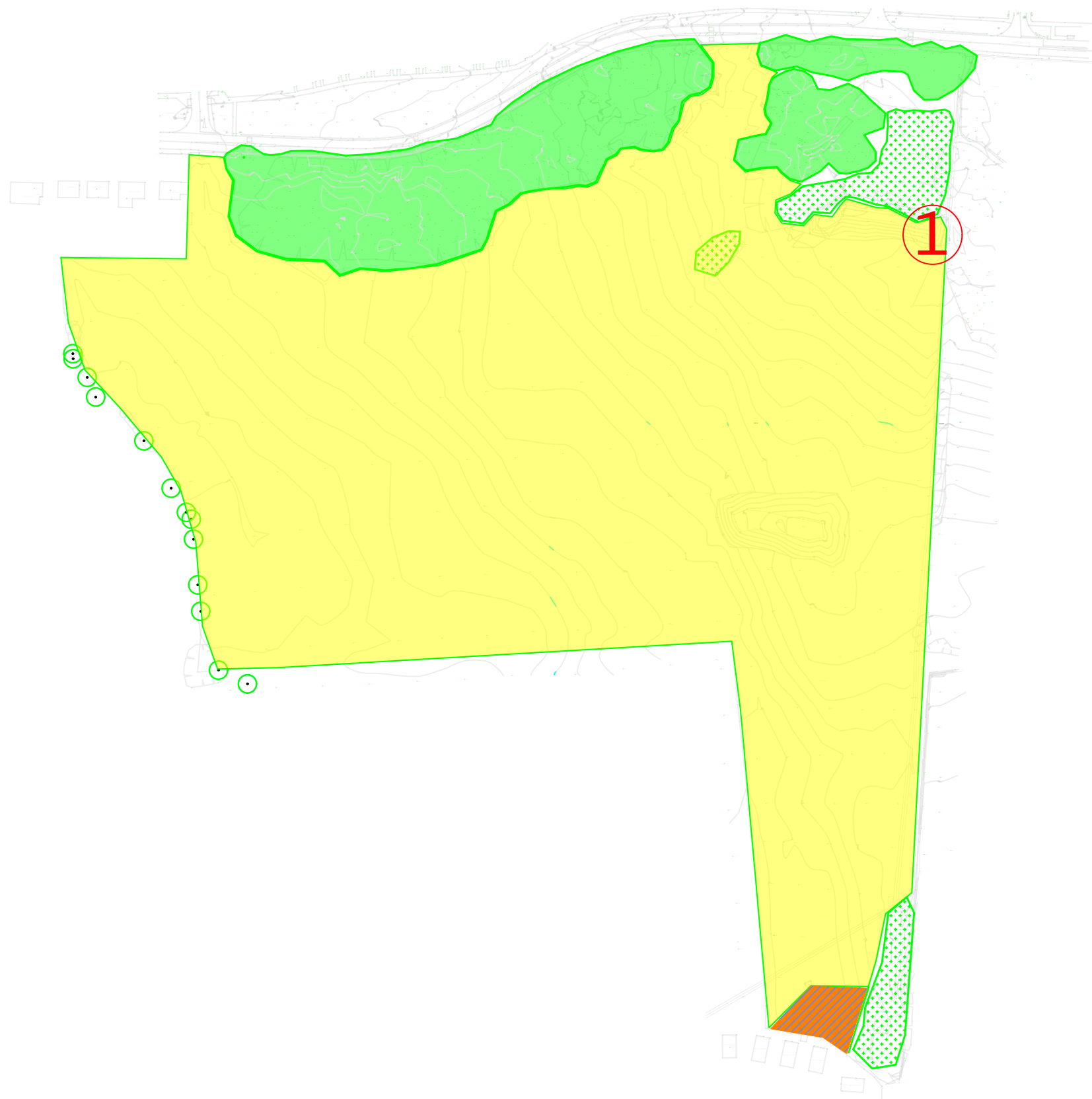
The extent of protected species requires the surveys referred to in section 4.1 and 4.2 to be complete before mitigation can be proposed to support this development. Upon completion of these surveys mitigation, compensation and enhancement measures can be provided and confirmed.

The provision of a Biodiversity enhancement report and a Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment is considered to apply to the site in accordance with the NPPF guidelines and best practice.

Appendix 1 Extended Phase 1 Habitat Survey Map

Appendix 2 Site Vascular plant list

Acer pseudoplatanus
Alnus glutinosa
Arrhenatherum elatius
Bellis perennis
Betula pendula
Buddleja sp.
Chamerion angustifolium
Convolvulus arvensis
Corylus avellana
Dactylis glomerata
Epilobium parviflorum
Ilex aquafolium
Iris psuedocorus
Juncus effusus
Fallopia japonica
Festuca rubra
Galium aparine
Geranium robertianum
Lolium perenne
Plantago lanceolata
Poa annua
Ranunculus repens
Ribies sp.
Rubus agg.
Salix caprea
Sorbus aucuparia
Taraxacum officinale
Tilia x europaea
Trifolium repens
Urtica dioica



PHASE ONE HABITAT MAP

KEY

-  A.1.1.1 Semi Natural woodland
-  A.3.1 Broadleaf scattered trees
-  A.2. Scrub
-  B.5 Marshy grassland
-  J.1.2 Amenity grassland

 Target Notes. Refer to Preliminary Ecological Appraisal

Client:

YH

Project:

Lickers Lane

Detail:

Phase One Habitat Map

Drawn By:

SB

Date:

24.10.2022

Scale:

NTS

Drg No:

TR-01

Revision:

V1