
EXTENDED PHASE 1 HABITAT SURVEY

LAND OFF SALLEY STREET,
LITTLEBOROUGH, ROCHDALE



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1.0 INTRODUCTION

Site Information

- 1.1 Rachel Hacking Ecology Limited was commissioned by Mr Tony Rollins to carry out an Extended Phase 1 Habitat Survey of land off Salley Street, Littleborough, Rochdale (O.S. grid reference: SD 94422 18701 – see Figure 1). The proposed development site currently comprises areas of marshy grassland, poor, semi-improved grassland and tall, ruderal herb. The site is surrounded by rough pasture and moorland.

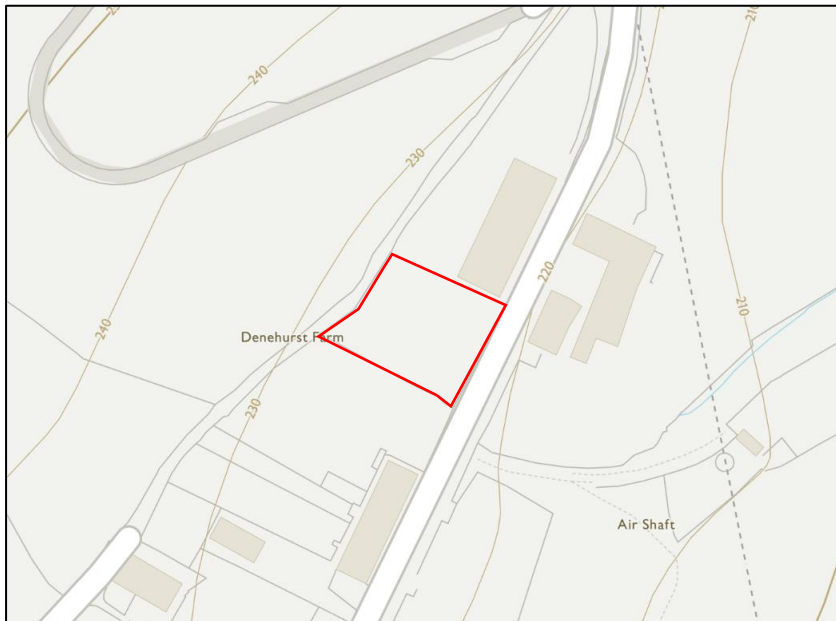


Figure 1 showing the location of the site

Description of Development

- 1.2 The site will be the subject of a planning application for the construction of a single 15m x 15m agricultural building and associated access.

Biodiversity in Planning

- 1.3 Biodiversity is a material consideration, and Local Planning Authorities (LPAs) have a requirement to consider biodiversity and protected species when determining planning applications. Section 15 of the National Planning Policy Framework (July 2021) gives specific reference to minimising the impacts of development on biodiversity. Local and Neighbourhood plans also provide guidance towards protecting and enhancing biodiversity, including priority habitats and notable species.



2.0 METHODOLOGY

Extended Phase 1 Habitat Survey

- 2.1 A Phase 1 Habitat survey was undertaken to JNCC standards (JNCC, 2010). The site was walked and each habitat was assigned a Phase 1 habitat category. Species lists were taken at locations of botanical interest. All botanical nomenclature follows Stace, 2019. A Phase 1 map was produced showing habitat boundaries. An Extended Phase 1 Habitat Survey is required to provide an overview of the habitats present within the site and to assess any potential protected species issues on the site.
- 2.2 During the Extended Phase 1 survey, the habitats were assessed for their potential to support protected species. This included, for example, looking for signs of Badger activity (e.g. setts, paths, latrines and hairs on fences), assessing any waterbodies on site or near the site for their potential to support Great Crested Newt.
- 2.3 The site was also surveyed for invasive, non-native plant species such as Japanese Knotweed and Giant Hogweed.

Seasonal Timing

- 2.4 The Extended Phase 1 Habitat Survey was undertaken on the 26th August. August is within the optimal time of year for botanical surveys and a thorough assessment could be undertaken. The weather at the time of the survey was warm, dry with light cloud.

Survey Constraints

- 2.5 The site was fully accessible and there were no survey constraints.



3.0 RESULTS

HABITATS

- 3.1 The Phase 1 Habitat Map can be found at the back of the report. The habitats on the proposed development site are described below.

Poor, Semi-improved Grassland

- 3.2 This habitat is located along the northern and southern site boundaries and is the most abundant habitat on site (see Photograph 1). The grassland is currently unmanaged. Abundant grass species include Yorkshire Fog *Holcus lanatus* and Perennial Rye-grass *Lolium perenne*. Soft Rush *Juncus effusus* also occurs across this habitat, spreading from the neighbouring marshy grassland habitat. Herbaceous species present comprise Broad-leaved Dock *Rumex obtusifolius*, Ribwort Plantain *Plantago lanceolata*, Creeping Thistle *Cirsium arvense*, Common Ragwort *Jacobaea vulgaris*, Dandelion *Taraxacum officinale* agg., Creeping Buttercup *Ranunculus repens*, Common Sorrel *Rumex acetosa*, Yarrow *Achillea millefolium*, Knotgrass *Polygonum aviculare*, Pineappleweed *Matricaria discoidea*, Cat's ear *Hypochaeris radicata* and Harebell *Campanula rotundifolia*.



Photograph 1 showing the poor, semi-improved grassland

Tall, Ruderal Herb

- 3.3 This habitat is located in the southern corner of the site and small areas around one of the sheds and along the northern boundary (see Photograph 2). Dominant species include Common Nettle *Urtica dioica*, Broad-leaved Dock *Rumex obtusifolius*, Creeping Thistle *Cirsium arvense*, Willowherb species *Epilobium* sp., False Oat-grass *Arrhenatherum elatius*, Foxglove *Digitalis purpurea* and Cock's-foot *Dactylis glomerata*.





Photograph 2 showing an area of tall, ruderal herb

Scattered Tree

- 3.4 Overhanging scattered Sycamore *Acer pseudoplatanus* trees are located off site, parallel to the eastern boundary (see Photograph 3).



Photograph 3 showing the overhanging trees located off site

Marshy Grassland

- 3.5 This habitat is located across the centre of the site, either side of the running water (see Photograph 4). The habitat is dominated by *Juncus* sp with Broad-leaved Dock *Rumex obtusifolius*, Creeping Thistle *Cirsium arvense* and Common Ragwort *Jacobaea vulgaris* also present.





Photograph 4 showing an area of marshy grassland

Running Water

- 3.6 A small watercourse dissects the site from the western site boundary to the eastern site boundary. The watercourse is dominated by marshy grassland species and the channel was not visible. No aquatic vegetation is present and it is considered the watercourse dries out seasonally.

Boundaries

- 3.7 Fencing marks most of the boundary edges of the site, as well as a dry stone wall along the eastern boundary.

PROTECTED SPECIES

Great Crested Newt

- 3.8 Great Crested Newt *Triturus cristatus* is a European Protected Species (EPS) under the Conservation of Habitats and Species (Amendment) (EU Exit) Regulations 2019 and the species is fully protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended).
- 3.9 No waterbodies exist on the site or within 250 metres of the site boundary. The sites tall, ruderal herb, poor, semi-improved grassland and marshy grassland habitats provide suitable Great Crested Newt terrestrial habitat.

Bats

- 3.10 All bat species are European Protected Species. This is implemented in the UK through the Conservation of Habitats and Species (Amendment) (EU Exit) Regulations 2019. Bats are also protected under The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended), the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 and the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act (NERC, 2006).



- 3.11 No trees or suitable buildings are located on site. The sheds are considered to provide no suitable roosting habitat for bats and are therefore discounted.

Badger

- 3.12 Badgers *Meles meles* are protected under the Protection of Badgers Act 1992 and The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended). These Acts, for example, make it illegal to disturb a Badger whilst it is in a sett, to kill, injure or take a Badger and to obstruct the entrance to a Badger sett.
- 3.13 No Badger sett was located on the site or immediately adjacent to the site. No evidence of Badger activity such as latrines or snuffle holes was located on site.

Nesting Birds

- 3.14 All bird species are protected at their nest under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended).
- 3.15 The sheds on site provide potential nesting habitat for birds. The sites other habitats lack suitability for passerine or ground nesting birds.

INVASIVE SPECIES

- 3.16 No invasive, non-native species as listed on Schedule 9 Part II (plants) of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) are located on or immediately adjacent to the site boundaries.

PROTECTED SITES

- 3.17 No statutory or non-statutory protected sites lie on the site or immediately adjacent to the site boundary. One statutory protected site is located within 2.5km of the site boundary. This is South Pennine Moors Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), Special Area of Conservation (SAC) and Special Protection Area (SPA). This is located approximately 450 metres east of the site boundary at the nearest point.
- 3.18 The site lies within a SSSI Impact Risk Zone, which lists certain types of development that may have a deleterious impact on protected sites nearby. The proposals do not trigger any of the potential risks listed in Natural England's criteria.
- 3.19 The nearest non-statutory protected site is Rochdale Canal (Scowcroft to Warland) Site of Biological Importance (SBI). This is located approximately 275m east of the proposed development site at its nearest point.



4.0 ASSESSMENT

HABITATS

- 4.1 The Phase 1 Habitats present on the site are common throughout the UK. No nationally rare or locally rare plant species were located during the Extended Phase 1 Habitat Survey.
- 4.2 The site comprises poor, semi-improved grassland, tall, ruderal herb and marshy grassland. These habitats offer a source of pollen and nectar for invertebrates and cover and foraging habitat for wildlife.

Development Context

- 4.3 The development proposals, at the time of this report was written, involve the loss of all the habitats on site. A suitable landscaping scheme implemented on site will help to mitigate for the loss of the existing habitats on site.

PROTECTED SPECIES

Great Crested Newt

- 4.4 No waterbodies exist on the site or within 250m of the site boundary. The site offers suitable terrestrial habitat for Great Crested Newt. However, given there is no breeding habitat in the locality, Great Crested Newt is not considered to be a constraint on development at this time.

Bats

- 4.5 No suitable bat roost habitat is located on site. The site lacks linear features bats may use for foraging and commuting. The trees parallel to the eastern boundary may provide suitable foraging and commuting habitat for bats.

Badger

- 4.6 No Badger sett was located on the site or immediately adjacent to the site. No evidence of Badger activity was located. Badgers are not considered to be a constraint on development.

Nesting Birds

- 4.7 The sheds on site offer suitable bird nesting habitat. It is recommended the demolition/removal of the sheds be undertaken outside the bird nesting season (which is generally March – August) unless a nesting bird survey is undertaken first.

PROTECTED SITES

- 4.8 No statutory or non-statutory protected sites lie within the proposed development site or directly adjacent to the site boundary. The nearest statutory protected site, South Pennine Moors SSSI, SPA and SAC, lies approximately 450 metres east of the site boundary, on the opposite side of the valley. Expanses of rough pasture, residential



housing, scattered woodland and Rochdale Canal SBI lie between the proposed development and the protected site. Given the distances involved, the buffer habitats between the sites and the small scale nature of the proposals, it is considered that the proposed development would have no deleterious effect on the protected sites.

- 4.9 The nearest non-statutory protected site is Rochdale Canal (Scowcroft to Warland) SBI. This is located approximately 275m east of the proposed development site in the valley below. It is considered, at this distance and with the buffer habitats present between the proposed development site and the SBI, there will be no deleterious effects on the non-statutory protected site.



5.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

Further Surveys

5.1 Protected species are a material consideration when a planning authority is considering a planning application. Following the findings from the Extended Phase 1 Habitat Survey, the following survey may be required depending on the timing of the site clearance work:

- **Nesting Bird** - It is recommended the demolition/removal works of the sheds on site is carried out outside the nesting bird season (generally March – August). If the works needs to be carried out within the bird nesting season, then a nesting bird survey will be required immediately prior to work commencing.

Habitat Enhancement

5.2 General recommendations to bring biodiversity gain to the site are:

- Soft landscaping should include the provision of native and non-native flowering perennial species, to provide a pollen and nectar source for invertebrates.
- Bird and bat boxes should be erected on the newly constructed building or retained trees where possible.
- Trees planting of native species where practically possible.
- ‘Hedgehog holes’ to be incorporated into the fencing of the site.

6.0 REFERENCES

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APPENDIX A PHASE 1 HABITAT MAP

