

11th October 2022

SOUTH HEYWOOD COMMERCIAL – PLOT 3 UPDATED ECOLOGICAL WALKOVER

Collington Winter Environmental Ltd are lead Project Ecologists on the wider South Heywood development and were instructed to undertake an Updated Ecological Walkover of the land specific to Plot 3 to ensure all ecological constraints have been noted, and a current ecological representation of the site could be provided. The survey and letter statement was completed to inform the proposed outline planning application for the construction of a logistics led building with a larger floor space quantum but of identical use to that already approved on the site with the red line of the approved Hybrid Planning Permission of the site. There is an existing approved planning application at the site, where a previous ecology survey and assessment was completed and found to be acceptable.

METHODOLOGY AND OBJECTIVES

The walkover was undertaken on 19th September 2022 by Katie Bird MEnvSci, ACIEEM, Principal Ecologist at Collington Winter Environmental Ltd. The project has been overseen by Olivia Collington BSc (Hons), MEnvSci, CEnv, Director at Collington Winter. Olivia has been the lead ecologist on the wider South Heywood Scheme since 2012. Olivia has a high level of knowledge on the site, and its changing ecological features over the years.

The objectives of the Updated Ecological Walkover are as follows:

- Identify the major habitats present
- Understand how and if habitats have changed since previous assessments
- Ascertain the presence or potential presence of any legally protected or notable species
- Identify any mitigation required and recommendations for enhancements

This letter has been produced as an updated walkover, and not a full Preliminary Ecological Appraisal. The walkover survey was undertaken broadly in line with standard methodology as detailed in “JNCC Handbook for Phase 1 Habitat Survey” (2010). However, given this was an updated walkover as opposed to a detailed Preliminary Ecological Appraisal, specific detail as to flora present was not undertaken. A broad overview of habitats type present was undertaken with key species identified.

SURVEY RESULTS

The South Heywood Plot 3 Commercial Plot is separated into three separate field parcels, separated by native hedgerows.

FP1 to the south borders the main river to the south of the site and is previously arable ploughed land. At the time of survey, it comprised ruderal/ ephemeral species which have colonised the previous bare ploughed ground. Species present included Yorkshire fog (*Holcus lanatus*), cocks foot (*Dactylis glomerata*), rye grass (*Lolium perenne*), broad leaved dock (*Rumex obtusifolius*), crested dogstail (*Cynosurus cristatus*), sow thistle (*Sonchus arvensis*), Himalayan balsam (*Impatiens glandulifera*), goosefoot (*Chenopodium sp*), chickweed (*Stellaria media*), common nettle (*Urtica dioica*), foxglove (*Digitalis sp*), field bindweed (*Convolvulus arvensis*), common hogweed (*Heracleum sphondylium*), shepherd's purse (*Capsella bursa-pastoris*), coltsfoot (*Tussilago farfara*) and corn spurge (*Euphorbia segetalis*). The habitats were more grass dominated down the bank towards the stream, and more ruderal dominated within the field parcel itself.

FP2 and FP3 is located to the north of Plot 3 and were previously ploughed cropland fields, which have become colonised by grasses and ephemeral/ ruderal species with similar composition to FP1 above, with the addition of the following species being identified; common dandelion (*Taraxacum officinale*), creeping buttercup (*Ranunculus repens*), chickweed, barley (*Hordeum vulgare*), scentless mayweed (*Tripleurospermum inodorum*), ribwort plantain (*Plantago lanceolata*), greater plantain (*Plantago major*) and field mustard (*Brassica rapa*).

The fields were separated by native hedgerows dominated by hawthorn, with scattered elder also present. Bracken (*Pteridium sp.*), bramble (*Rubus fruticosus*), common nettle, Himalayan balsam, common hogweed and grasses made up the understorey and ground flora.

To the north of Plot 3, Brightley Brook is present which extends east to west. Habitats surrounding the brook were tall ruderal and included creeping thistle and Himalayan balsam. The brook itself remains largely unchanged from previous surveys.

SPECIES NOTABLE TO ASSESSMENT

BIRDS

Lapwing (*Vanellus vanellus*) and skylark (*Alauda arvensis*) are known to utilise the habitats within Plot 3. In addition, the hedgerows around the fields and scattered trees to the south of the site will provide value for breeding passerine species. Barn owl (*Tyto alba*) are known to use the wider South Heywood site for foraging and could use the habitats within Plot 3. No trees with suitability for barn owl are present within Plot 3.

BATS

The habitats within the site have value for foraging bats, by way of the vegetated fields which will attract invertebrate prey, as well as the presence of two watercourses to the north and south of the plot. In addition, the hedgerows and watercourses are anticipated to act as suitable commuting features for bats within the local area. Bat activity

surveys using static detectors were undertaken in 2020 by Collington Winter, which found common pipistrelle (*Pipistrellus pipistrellus*), soprano pipistrelle (*Pipistrellus pygmaeus*) and noctule (*Nyctalus noctule*) present within the site and found bats to use the easterly and central hedgerow within Plot 3 for commuting. The sites value for commuting bats has not significantly changed since these surveys.

TERRESTRIAL MAMMALS

No badger (*Meles meles*) setts or field signs of badger were identified during the survey, however badger are known to be present within the wider area, and are likely to use the site for commuting and foraging.

The site holds value for European Hedgehog (*Erinaceus europaeus*) and the species are anticipated to be present within the hedgerow habitats.

WATER VOLE AND OTTER

Previous surveys of Brightly Brook and the southern watercourse have been undertaken for water vole (*Arvicola amphibius*) and otter (*Lutra lutra*) in 2018 and 2020 with no evidence of the species recorded. The watercourses remain unchanged, and no field signs were recorded during the survey. The species remain likely absent from the site.

AQUATIC INVERTEBRATES

Aquatic Invertebrate surveys were undertaken on the watercourses in 2020 by Collington Winter Environmental Ltd and was found to be species poor with no legally protected or rare aquatic invertebrates located. The BMWP scores show Brightley Brook has a biological quality of “poor” which indicates a polluted watercourse, with the southern watercourse scoring “very poor” indicating it is heavily polluted. The watercourses remain largely unchanged from the 2020 survey.

COMMON AMPHIBIANS

No waterbodies are present within Plot 3, and the watercourses both hold flowing water making them unsuitable for breeding amphibians. However, the terrestrial habitats could support common amphibians.

MITIGATION RECOMMENDATIONS

- It is recommended that nesting bird checks are undertaken prior to vegetation clearance within the breeding bird season (March – August), in accordance with the planning condition.
- In order to prevent ground nesting birds establishing nests in the spring, it is recommended that the site is made unsuitable over the winter period. This will involve strimming vegetation and turfing areas, creating constant disturbance through late winter and early spring to deter ground nesting birds from returning to the site.
- Common amphibians are likely to be present on site and use the areas of long grassland and scrub as terrestrial habitat. Therefore, the following Precautionary Working Methods should be adopted during site clearance.
 - Site contractors inducted as to these working methods.

- The methods detailed in Section 5.6 Reptiles, adhered to in order to avoid accidentally killing or injuring common amphibians.
- If common amphibians are located, they should be removed by hand to a suitable location outside of the working area.
- No evidence of badger was found within the site; however, the local area was assessed as having suitability for the species and therefore a precautionary approach will be undertaken.
 - No works should be undertaken after dark, and any security lighting left overnight should avoid lighting the boundaries of the site, in particular, the southern boundary.
 - Any excavations should be covered or battened at a 45-degree angle to facilitate escape overnight. All excavations should be inspected each morning to ensure no animals have become trapped.
 - Topsoil mounds will not be stored on site which could be used by badgers to excavate new setts. Any topsoil mounds required will be inspected daily by site workers.
 - If a badger sett is identified, the ecologist should be contacted immediately for further advice. All works within 20 m of a potential sett should cease immediately until advice has been sought.
- Some hedgerows will require removal to facilitate development, however new replacement planting (as previously approved under the Hybrid Planning Permission and retained within the Parameters Plan) is proposed, along with significant areas of linear woodland blocks along the high-pressure gas pipeline which will create a significant linear feature through the site. This will connect the site with Blightley Brook to the west, and other agricultural habitats to the east.
- Proposed construction lighting is to follow the protocols outlined in the Institute for Lighting Engineers document “Guidance for the Reduction of Obtrusive Lighting” (2005) and BCT’s “Bats and Artificial Lighting in the UK” (2018) to minimise disturbance and sky-glow off site.
- No lighting during construction is to be aimed towards boundary features, the water courses or retained hedgerows.
- Lighting is to be pre-fixed to the buildings to ensure that unmitigated impacts of lighting on the surrounding areas is diminished.
 - Warm white tones are preferable to blue toned lights (3000k)
 - LED light will be used where applicable as they produce less UV.
 - Lights will be downward facing and positioned to avoid light spill skywards.
- A series of bat boxes should be installed post development to provide roosting locations for bats. No roosting opportunities are currently present on site, and thus the addition of bat boxes will provide a significant benefit to the local bat population.
- The watercourses are to be retained, with small areas requiring reprofiling to facilitate the works. It is recommended that the following working methods be adhered to when working within or adjacent to the watercourses:
 - All works should adhere to best practice guidance regarding pollution when working near water (PPG 5).

- Works within the water channel should be limited and works undertaken from the banks where appropriate.
- All machinery and personnel should be disinfected (with wildlife friendly product) prior to and after entering the watercourse.
- All refueling of machines should be undertaken a minimum of 20 m from the bank of the watercourses.
- No works are proposed within 8m of the southern watercourse, however, should works be required a Flood Risk Activity Permit (FRAP) will be sort from the Environment Agency. Notwithstanding, all best practice pollution measures to be detailed within a Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) to prevent negative impacts to the watercourses.

Yours sincerely



Olivia Collington BSc (Hons), MEnvSc, CEnv

Director // Principal Ecologist

For and on behalf of Collington Winter Environmental

Feature	Photograph
Ruderal habitats mixed with grassland which comprise FP1 to the south of Plot 3.	
Northern fields were dominated by grass with some ruderal species.	
Native species poor hedgerow	

Southern watercourse with Himalayan balsam present.

