



1st September 2026

Calliard's Mill – Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA) Letter Statement

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1.1. Collington Winter Environmental Ltd was commissioned by Mr Harry Seed to produce a PEA Letter Statement for the site at Calliard's Mill, Smithy Bridge, OL15 8HW. This report has been prepared to inform planning permission the site where the existing building would be split into terraced houses.
- 1.1.2. The author of this report is Michael Boucher, Consultant Ecologist at Collington Winter Environmental Ltd and overseen by Associate Director Katie Bird who is highly experienced managing schemes and has produced many ecological reports to inform planning management plans.

2. METHODOLOGY

2.1. VEGETATION AND HABITAT ASSESSMENT

- 2.1.1. An Ecological Appraisal of the site was undertaken by Shona Bancroft, Ecological Project Manager. The survey was undertaken on the 28th July 2026. The weather was cloudy (5/8 oktas), with no precipitation, wind speed 1 and 19°C.
- 2.1.2. The walkover survey was undertaken broadly in line with standard UK HAB Methodology, Version 2 (2023). The assessment is undertaken with consideration of methodology as per "Preliminary Ecological Appraisal" (CIEEM, 2018).
- 2.1.3. A UK HAB Plan has been produced and is presented in Appendix 7.2 of this report. Standard methodology has been used, though adjustments have been made based on judgement to demonstrate habitats in a clearer manner, or where standard guidance does not fit the conditions found on site.

2.2. FAUNA ASSESSMENT

- 2.2.1. A search for signs of protected and notable species of fauna was undertaken during the site walkover. This included both field signs of species, as well as potential for species to be present based on habitat availability.

2.2.2. The searches broadly included the following:

- Assessment of waterbodies on site and within 250m of the site boundary, and terrestrial habitats for suitability to support notable amphibians.
- Searches for field signs of, and habitat suitability for bats.
- Suitability of habitats to support reptiles, and searches for incidental field signs.
- Searches for field signs of badger (*Meles meles*), including setts, mammal paths, snuffle holes, badger hair and latrines to indicate activity.
- Searches of watercourses for signs of water vole (*Arvicola amphibius*), white-clawed crayfish (*Austropotamobius pallipes*) and otter (*Lutra lutra*), and assessment of habitat availability for the species.
- Assessment of the suitability of habitats to support notable birds and recording any field sightings of birds during the walkover.
- Assessment of the sites ability to support notable invertebrates and flora.
- Searches for non-native invasive species.

3. ON SITE HABITATS

3.1. G4 MODIFIED GRASSLAND

3.1.1. A small area of modified grassland was located within the site. The grassland comprised a relatively species-poor sward, with common nettle (*Urtica dioica*) abundant and cock's-foot (*Dactylis glomerata*), creeping buttercup (*Ranunculus repens*), spear thistle (*Cirsium vulgare*), colt's-foot (*Tussilago farfara*) and common ragwort (*Jacobaea vulgaris*) also recorded. Himalayan balsam (*Impatiens glandulifera*) was also present within the grassland. The habitat supported seven recorded plant species and was assessed as being of poor condition.

3.2. U1F SPARSELY VEGETATED URBAN LAND

3.2.1. Areas of sparsely vegetated urban land were present within the site, comprising areas of vacant or derelict ground with a relatively open and varied ruderal flora. Species recorded included ribwort plantain (*Plantago lanceolata*), rosebay willowherb (*Chamaenerion angustifolium*), false oat-grass (*Arrhenatherum elatius*), pineappleweed (*Matricaria discoidea*), common nettle, bramble (*Rubus fruticosus* agg.), prickly sow-thistle (*Sonchus asper*), broad-leaved willowherb (*Epilobium montanum*), creeping buttercup, selfheal (*Prunella vulgaris*) and spear thistle. Himalayan balsam and bracken (*Pteridium aquilinum*) were also recorded. The habitat was assessed as being of moderate condition.

3.3. INDIVIDUAL TREES

3.3.1. A number of individual trees were present within the site, comprising predominantly medium-sized sycamore (*Acer pseudoplatanus*) trees, with diameters at breast height ranging from approximately 30–60 cm. The trees were generally assessed as being in good condition, although the smaller tree (T33) was assessed as being of moderate condition.

4. SPECIES SUITABILITY

4.1. Flora

- 4.1.1. The site supports limited botanical interest, with the modified grassland assessed as being of poor condition and the sparsely vegetated urban land assessed as being of moderate condition. The recorded flora was predominantly common and widespread species associated with ruderal and disturbed habitats, including ribwort plantain, rosebay willowherb, false oat-grass, common nettle, bramble, creeping buttercup and selfheal. No notable botanical species were recorded within the habitats surveyed and it is not considered further within the assessment.

4.2. Amphibians

- 4.2.1. The habitats within the site provide limited opportunities for amphibians due to the absence of suitable ponds or other standing water habitats. The areas of rougher vegetation, ruderal habitat and ground cover may provide some limited opportunities for terrestrial foraging and sheltering amphibians; however, the overall suitability of the site is considered low. The adjacent River Roch may provide some connectivity through the wider landscape but was too fast flowing to be suitable for breeding purposes. No ponds were located within 250 m of the site, as this is considered to be the upper dispersal limit for crested newt, ponds outside of this distance are not considered.

4.3. Reptiles

- 4.3.1. The site provides some opportunities for common reptile species, particularly within the areas of sparsely vegetated urban land and rougher grassland, which provide areas of vegetation, bare ground and potential basking and refuge opportunities. The site is well connected to habitats of greater value, whilst the nearby River Roch will provide suitable commuting and foraging opportunities, should reptiles be present locally. However, the relatively small area of suitable habitat and disturbed nature of the site mean that its overall suitability for reptiles is considered low.

4.4. Invertebrates

- 4.4.1. The site provides some opportunities for common invertebrates, particularly within the sparsely vegetated urban land and modified grassland, where a range of flowering and ruderal plant species provides nectar and foraging resources. However, the habitats are relatively small and species-poor, and no features of particular importance for invertebrates were identified. The habitats within the surrounding area are considered to be of greater value. The site is therefore considered to have low suitability for notable invertebrate assemblages.

4.5. Birds

- 4.5.1. The habitats provide opportunities for common bird species for foraging and sheltering, particularly the individual trees, ruderal vegetation and areas of bramble. The trees and any dense vegetation also have

potential to support nesting birds during the breeding season. However, overall, due to the limited extent of these habitats, the wider site is considered to have low suitability for foraging and nesting birds.

4.5.2. The southwestern aspect of the building was covered in dead ivy which had pulled away from the brickwork. Birds were observed utilising this feature during the preliminary roost assessment with further ivy cover found on the remaining aspects of the building.

4.5.3. The trees are due for retention under current plans, however any vegetation clearance relating to the building should be undertaken outside the main bird nesting period or preceded by an appropriate nesting bird check.

4.6. Bats

4.6.1. The site provides some opportunities for bats, primarily through the individual trees and vegetated areas which may provide foraging and commuting habitat. The adjacent River Roch will be of importance for foraging and commuting bats within the local area.

4.6.2. The building was subject to a separate Preliminary Roost Assessment and bat survey (20-3364 Calliard's Mill, Smithy Bridge, OL15 8HW PRA and NBS Draft), the findings of which did not identify any bat roosts within the building. The detailed assessment of the building's suitability and the results of the bat surveys are provided within the separate PRA and Bat Survey Report. The site is therefore considered to provide notability for roosting bats, with some limited opportunities for foraging and commuting.

4.6.3. No trees are proposed for removal during development and therefore a ground level tree assessment is not considered necessary.

4.7. Badger

4.7.1. The site provides some limited opportunities for badger (*Meles meles*) to forage and commute, particularly within the areas of sparsely vegetated urban land and modified grassland. However, the site is relatively small, disturbed and largely surrounded by developed land, with limited areas of suitable cover for sett construction or prolonged use. No suitable features for badger setts are identified within the habitats described, and the proposed works will retain the existing trees and surrounding habitats. The site is therefore considered to have low suitability for badger. The adjacent River Roch and retained vegetation may provide some connectivity with the wider area, although the proposed 10 m buffer will help minimise disturbance to these features during construction.

4.8. Hedgehog

4.8.1. The areas of rough vegetation, bramble and sparsely vegetated land provide some suitable habitat for hedgehogs. Given the relatively small and disturbed nature of the site, it is considered to provide low

suitability for hedgehog, although individuals may use the site intermittently as part of the wider urban landscape.

4.9. Brown Hare

4.9.1. The site provides negligible suitability for brown hare due to its small size, urban setting and lack of extensive open grassland or arable habitats. The limited areas of grassland are unlikely to provide sufficient open habitat to support a resident population, although occasional transient use cannot be completely excluded.

4.10. Water Vole

4.10.1. The adjacent River Roch provides a potential habitat corridor for water vole; however, no assessment of the watercourse itself is provided within the supplied habitat information. The 10 m buffer that will be maintained from the River Roch during construction will substantially reduce the potential for direct disturbance to the watercourse and its banks, should water voles be present. On this basis, the site is considered to have low suitability for water vole, with the proposed buffer providing protection to the adjacent watercourse during construction.

4.11. Otter

4.11.1. The adjacent River Roch may provide a potential commuting and foraging resource for otter, particularly as part of the wider watercourse network. However, the terrestrial habitats within the site are considered to provide negligible suitability for otter, and no evidence of otter activity is identified within the supplied information. A 10 m buffer will be maintained from the River Roch during construction, reducing the potential for disturbance, damage to bankside habitat and pollution impacts to the watercourse.

4.12. Invasive Non-Native Flora

4.12.1. Himalayan balsam (*Impatiens glandulifera*) was recorded within both the sparsely vegetated urban land and modified grassland. The species is an invasive non-native plant and is particularly relevant given the proximity of the adjacent River Roch, as seeds can be dispersed downstream. Appropriate measures should therefore be implemented to prevent the spread of Himalayan balsam during site clearance and construction, including avoiding unnecessary disturbance of affected areas and ensuring that arisings and soil containing plant material are managed appropriately.

5. MITIGATION

5.1. Construction Environmental Management Plan

5.1.1. An ecology-focused Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) should be implemented throughout the construction period. The CEMP should define the construction working area and include measures to prevent unnecessary encroachment into retained habitats, control pollution and runoff, and

ensure that materials, fuels, spoil and construction waste are stored appropriately and away from the adjacent River Roch.

5.2. Protection of the Adjacent River Roch

5.2.1. It is understood following consultation with the Client that a minimum 10 m easement will be maintained between the adjacent River Roch and the Site. Provided this 10 m buffer is retained and no works are undertaken within the easement, direct impacts on the canal corridor are anticipated to be avoided.

5.3. Protection of Retained Trees and Habitats

5.3.1. Where feasible, mature and well-established trees should be retained and protected through development. This will allow for the continuity of ecological niches typically present in such features. The retention of boundary woodland, hedgerows and treelines will protect commuting features for local fauna.

5.3.2. Generally, the protection measures of retained trees will be through use of temporary protective demarcation fencing to protect the trees. The fencing must extend outside the canopy of the retained trees and must remain in position until all plots have been developed to ensure protection is provided throughout the construction phase.

5.3.3. The fencing will be in accordance with BS 5837:2012 Trees in Relation to Design, Demolition and Construction: Recommendations.

5.3.4. It is recommended that replacement tree planting at a 1:3 ratio is required to compensate for loss of any trees. It is recommended that the planting comprises native species and species known to be of value for the attraction of wildlife. This will include fruiting and flowering species.

5.4. Lighting

5.4.1. External lighting should be designed in accordance with the guidance outlined in the Institute for Lighting Engineers document "Guidance for the Reduction of Obtrusive Lighting" (2005) and BCT's "Bats and Artificial Lighting at Night" (2023) to minimise light spill onto retained woodland, tree lines and the canal corridor.

5.4.2. An External Lighting Scheme has not been produced on the writing of this report. As such, the following recommendations are to be considered within the scheme during its condition, to minimise impacts of lighting. The recommendations are as follows:

- Keep site lighting to minimum levels.
- Luminaries should lack UV elements and preferably LED lighting with a warm white light should be used over cool white light (ideally <2700Kelvin).
- Lighting should feature peak wavelengths greater than 550nm.

- Light placement should be downward facing to prevent excess horizontal or vertical light spill.
- The use of integrated fittings such as cowls, shields, louvres and hoods, that effectively contain light spill from unintended areas.
- The use of hard landscaping features to block light and create dark corridors.
- Avoid illuminating habitats of value.
- Use of timed security lights should be set on motion-sensors and using short, 1-minute timers, to minimise light use.
- Column heights of lighting can be considered to minimise light spill.

5.5. Nesting Birds

5.5.1. Any vegetation management should be undertaken outside of the breeding bird season (March to September, inclusive). If this is not possible, a suitably qualified ecologist should undertake a nesting bird check no more than 48 hours prior to removal. If nesting activity is observed, the nest(s) should be left in situ until the young have fledged. A suitable buffer will be maintained and determined by the ecologist.

5.6. Invasive Non-Native Flora

5.6.1. Himalayan balsam (*Impatiens glandulifera*) has been recorded within the site. Given the proximity of the adjacent River Roch and the potential for the species to spread through disturbance or downstream dispersal, appropriate measures should be implemented to prevent its further spread during construction. Himalayan balsam should not be unnecessarily disturbed, and any removal should be undertaken using appropriate methods, with plant material and potentially contaminated soil managed to prevent the spread of the species to unaffected areas or the adjacent watercourse. It is recommended that a non-native invasive species specialist is contacted and an appropriate plan drawn up.

5.7. Protection of Terrestrial Fauna

5.7.1. Excavations and trenches should not be left open overnight where practicable. Where this cannot be avoided, suitable means of escape should be provided, such as a sloping edge or timber plank, to prevent animals becoming trapped. Any temporary materials, waste or other features capable of providing shelter should be stored appropriately and checked prior to being moved.

5.8. Bats

5.8.1. The separate Preliminary Roost Assessment and bat survey report identified no bat roosts within the existing mill building. Consequently, no specific bat mitigation is considered necessary in relation to the building beyond adherence to the recommendations of the separate bat report. Should bats or evidence of bats be unexpectedly encountered during the works, works in the immediate area should cease and an appropriately qualified ecologist should be contacted for further advice.

6. CONCLUSION

6.1.1. The proposed development involves the remodelling of the existing mill building to create eight residential properties, together with the partial conversion of the sparsely vegetated land to the rear to provide car parking. Most of the site's existing ecological features, including the surrounding habitats and individual trees, will be retained. The habitats within the site are of generally low ecological value, with the sparsely vegetated urban land providing some opportunities for common wildlife and the retained trees providing additional habitat value. The separate Preliminary Roost Assessment and bat survey identified no bat roosts within the existing building.

6.1.2. Subject to the implementation of the mitigation and precautionary measures outlined within this report, including protection of the adjacent River Roch through retention of a 10 m buffer, protection of retained trees and habitats, appropriate measures for nesting birds, control of Himalayan balsam, sensitive lighting and general measures to protect terrestrial fauna, the proposed development is not anticipated to result in significant adverse effects on ecological features. Overall, the development is considered capable of proceeding without significant adverse effects on biodiversity, subject to the recommendations set out within this report.

6.1.3. The red line boundary of the site measures 0.1969 ha, new guidance effective 6th August 2026 states that:

'Developments of 0.2 hectares or below

From 6 August 2026, BNG does not apply to planning applications for developments where the site area within the red line boundary is 0.2 hectares or below.'

6.1.4. The site also contains no priority habitats within the redline boundary and therefore is exempt from Biodiversity Net Gain requirements.

Yours sincerely,

Michael Boucher MSc

Consultant Ecologist