

EXTENDED PHASE 1 HABITAT SURVEY OF SHALLCROSS FOUNDRY, WHALEY BRIDGE, DERBYSHIRE

2014



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1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Rachel Hacking Ecology Limited was commissioned in 2014 by Barbara & Chris Morris to carry out an Extended Phase 1 Habitat Survey of Shallcross Foundry, Whaley Bridge (O.S. grid reference: SK0162580188). The site is due to be the subject of a planning application to redevelop the site and create residential dwellings.
- 1.2 An Extended Phase 1 Habitat Survey is therefore required to provide an overview of the habitats present within the site and to assess any potential protected species issues on the site.

Site Description

- 1.3 The site is situated in Whaley Bridge which is a rural town in the High Peak district of Derbyshire. The site is bound to the west and north by Elnor Lane and The Coppice respectively and pastoral fields to both the east and south of the site.
- 1.4 The habitats on site comprise of mown grassland, broad-leaved trees, ruderal vegetation, buildings and hardstanding. In the wider landscape the site is surrounded by residential properties with mature gardens, pastoral field and patches of broad-leaved woodland.

Aims of Survey

- 1.5 The aims of the survey were to:
- Describe and map the habitats present on the site,
 - Assess the potential for protected species to be present on the site or just outside the immediate site boundary,
 - Identify where further survey may be necessary.

2.0 METHODOLOGY

- 1.1 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, 2010. A Phase 1 map was produced showing habitat boundaries.
- 1.2 During the 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 and assessing the potential for any buildings or mature trees to be used by bats.

Personnel and timing

- 1.3 Anthony Nickson undertook the survey on 12th September 2014. The weather on the day of the survey was warm and dry. September is a sub-optimal month for botanical survey, however, due to the types of habitats on site it was deemed that an accurate assessment of the site could be made.
- 1.4 Anthony is experienced in undertaking habitat and protected species work and is also a full member of the Chartered Institute of Ecological and Environmental Management (MCIEEM).

3.0 RESULTS

HABITATS

- 3.1 The Phase 1 Habitat Map can be found at the back of the report. The habitats on the site are amenity grassland, broad-leaved plantation, scattered trees, tall ruderal herb, buildings and hardstanding.

Amenity Grassland

- 3.2 The grassland to the east of the site is amenity grassland (see Photograph 1). This habitat is species-poor and is managed through a regular mowing regime to produce a short sward. The species within the grassland include Perennial Rye-grass *Lolium perenne*, Red Fescue *Festuca rubra*, Creeping Buttercup *Ranunculus repens* and Dandelion *Taraxacum officinale* agg.



Photograph 1 showing the amenity grassland

Broad-leaved plantation / Scattered trees

- 3.3 An area of broad-leaved plantation woodland exists to the west and south of the site along the steep embankment (see Photograph 2). The tree species include Sycamore *Acer pseudoplatanus*, Ash *Fraxinus excelsior* and Pedunculate Oak *Quercus robur*. The ground flora is limited and includes Bramble *Rubus fruticosus* agg. and Ground-elder *Aegopodium podagraria*. There are also several scattered trees located throughout the site. The broad-leaved trees are mainly Sycamore *Acer pseudoplatanus* with other species including Elder *Sambucus nigra*, Willow *Salix* spp. and Hawthorn *Crataegus monogyna*.



Photograph 2 showing broad-leaved woodland at south of site

Tall, Ruderal Herb

- 3.4 Along the northern and southern boundaries of the site are patches of tall ruderal herb (see Photograph 3) which is dominated by Rosebay Willowherb *Chamerion angustifolium*, Himalayan Balsam *Impatiens glandulifera*, Common Nettle *Urtica dioica* and Bramble *Rubus fruticosus* agg. Other species within the tall ruderal habitat include Broom *Cytisus scoparius*, Cock's-foot *Dactylis glomerata*, Creeping Thistle *Cirsium arvense*, False Oat-grass *Arrhenatherum elatius*, Greater Willowherb *Epilobium hirsutum*, Ground-elder *Aegopodium podagraria* and Hedge Woundwort *Stachys sylvatica*.



Photograph 3 showing the tall ruderal habitat to the north of the site

Buildings

- 3.5 Shallcross Foundry comprises of four buildings which were constructed in the 1940s. All of the buildings are constructed of brick with either corrugated asbestos or flat roofs. The buildings have not been maintained since the closure of the foundry and have come into disrepair.



Photograph 4 showing the main foundry building

Hardstanding

- 3.6 Hardstanding on site consists of bitumen and gravel road surfaces and access tracks.

PROTECTED SPECIES

Bats

- 3.7 All bat species are European Protected Species under the Conservation (Natural Habitats etc.) Regulations 1994, updated and consolidated by the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations (2010). 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). It is an offence to disturb or damage a bat roost.
- 3.8 A daytime bat survey of the four buildings which form Shallcross Foundry was undertaken on 28th June 2013 (see *Daytime Bat Survey at Shallcross Foundry, Whaley Bridge, Derbyshire, June 2013 - Rachel Hacking Ecology Limited*) followed by activity surveys in summer 2014 (see *Bat Activity Surveys at Shallcross Foundry, Whaley Bridge, Derbyshire 2014 - Rachel Hacking Ecology Limited*). The surveys have determined that one of the buildings has been used as a Brown Long-eared bat feeding perch. Droppings characteristic of Brown Long-eared bats were found during the daytime inspection. No bats were seen emerging from the building or re-entering during the activity surveys.

Badger

- 3.9 Badgers 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.
- 3.10 No Badger sett was located within the site boundary or immediately outside the site boundary. No evidence of Badger activity could be located during the survey, such as latrines, mammal paths or snuffle holes.

Reptiles

- 3.11 Adder, Common Lizard, Slow Worm and Grass Snake are fully protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended).
- 3.12 No evidence of reptiles was recorded during the site survey. It is considered that the habitats on site are unfavourable for reptiles. There are few basking spots as the site is mainly shaded by woodland, scrub, scattered mature trees and buildings or from the steep slopes. The north-facing slope does not provide suitable basking habitat. There is minimal hibernation habitat on site for reptiles.

Great Crested Newt

- 3.13 Great Crested Newt *Triturus cristatus* is a European Protected Species (EPS) under the Conservation (Natural Habitats etc.) Regulations 1994. This is implemented in the UK through the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010 and the species is fully protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended).

- 3.14 No waterbodies exist on site. No waterbodies could be located within 250 metres of the proposed development. Limited potential terrestrial Great Crested Newt habitat exists on site.

Nesting Birds

- 3.15 All bird species are protected at their nest under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended).
- 3.16 The broad-leaved woodland, scattered trees and buildings have the potential to support nesting birds.

4.0 ASSESSMENT

HABITATS

- 4.1 The 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. The site offers limited ecological value.
- 4.2 The broad-leaved plantation woodland offers nesting and roosting habitat for birds. The scattered trees and buildings also provide potential nesting sites for birds.

PROTECTED SPECIES

Bats

- 4.3 A number of bat surveys have been carried out at Shallcross Foundry. Evidence to suggest a bat roost exists at Shallcross Foundry is limited. It is likely that one of the buildings supports a Brown Long-eared bat feeding perch (see the 2013 and 2014 bat survey reports for further information). Further survey work may be required if development works are delayed. A European Protected Species licence may be required prior to redevelopment of the site once planning permission has been granted.

Badger

- 4.4 No Badger setts were located within the site boundary or immediately outside the site boundary. No evidence of Badger activity could be located. Badgers are not thought to be a constraint on development and no further Badger survey work is required.

Reptiles

- 4.5 No evidence of reptiles was recorded during the site survey. The site provides sub-optimal habitat for reptiles, due to the mainly shaded and overgrown nature of the site. The surrounding intensively farmed pastoral fields and residential development also provide unfavourable habitat. No further Reptile survey work is required.

Great Crested Newt

- 4.6 No waterbodies exist on the site. No ponds exist within 250 metres of the site. The site is fairly isolated from suitable Great Crested Newt terrestrial habitat, being surrounded by improved grassland and residential development. No Great Crested Newt survey work is required and Great Crested Newt is not considered to be a constraint on development.

Nesting Birds

- 4.7 The site supports suitable nesting habitat for birds, within the broad-leaved plantation, scattered trees and buildings.

- 4.8 Nesting birds can be somewhat mitigated for by allowing no works to be carried out to any potential nesting habitat within the bird nesting season (which is generally March to August). If any work needs to proceed within the bird nesting season, then a nesting bird survey will be required immediately prior to any work commencing.

5.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 5.1 The presence of protected species is a material consideration when a planning authority is considering a planning application. The presence of protected species and the affect of the proposed development must be established before planning permission can be granted. Under the current proposals, no further protected species work is necessary.

Bats

- 5.2 Bat survey work, results and suggestions for mitigation are included in separate reports (see *Daytime Bat Survey at Shallcross Foundry, Whaley Bridge, Derbyshire, June 2013* and *Bat Activity Surveys at Shallcross Foundry, Whaley Bridge, Derbyshire 2014 - Rachel Hacking Ecology Limited*).

Nesting Birds

- 5.3 If any works are to be carried out to potential bird nesting habitats within the bird nesting season (March to August) then a bird nest survey will be required immediately prior to the works commencing.

Habitat enhancement and creation

- 5.4 It is recommended that a habitat enhancement and creation scheme is designed into the Masterplan, which could include the following:
- The planting scheme should include native berry-bearing and nut-bearing species.
 - A number of bird and bat boxes should be erected on new buildings to provide potential for nesting birds and roosting bats in the future.

6.0 REFERENCES

Bat Mitigation Guidelines, English Nature, A J Mitchell-Jones A J, 2004

Bat Surveys: Good Practice Guidelines, 2nd Edition, Bat Conservation Trust, L Hundt, 2012

JNCC. Phase 1 Habitat Survey – a technique for environmental audit, JNCC, Updated 2010.

Preston, C.D., Pearman, D. & Dines, T. (2002). New Atlas of the British and Irish Flora. Oxford University Press.

Stace, C. A. (2010). New Flora of the British Isles, 3rd Edition. Cambridge University Press.

PHASE 1 HABITAT MAP

KEY

-  Amenity Grassland
-  Bare Ground (Hardstanding)
-  Broad-leaved Plantation Woodland
-  Existing Building
-  Tall, Ruderal Herb

Phase 1 Habitat Map

Shallcross Foundry, Whaley Bridge, Derbyshire

Drawn by: RJH Date: 02/10/14

NOT TO SCALE

Rachel Hacking Ecology Limited

