

Site Inspection Report

Site / Works: Albion Road, New Mills
Carried Out By: Michael Brown
Date of site visit: 10th June 2015
Ref: A087263
Purpose: Update habitat assessment



Background

In October 2014 WYG was commissioned by Kirkland Developments Limited to undertake an extended Phase 1 habitat survey of land off Albion Road, New Mills (hereafter referred to as the 'site') to support a hybrid planning application for the development of a discount foodstore, industrial unit, car parking for New Mills Newtown railway station and associated works.

During the survey WYG confirmed the following habitat types to be present on site, concluding that there were no priority habitats present within the site boundaries:

- Hardstanding with encroaching ephemeral/short perennial vegetation;
- Scattered scrub;
- Tall ruderal margins; and
- Broadleaved scattered trees.

However as the survey was completed in October, which is outside of the optimum survey season for habitat surveys (generally considered to be April – September), Derbyshire Wildlife Trust requested that an updated survey be undertaken in the optimum survey window:

"The [WYG Extended Phase 1 Habitat] report has concluded that no Habitats of Principal Importance/BAP priority habitats are present on the site. We are not satisfied that an adequate botanical assessment of the areas of ephemeral/short perennial vegetation has been undertaken, given the limitations associated with the timing of the survey visit, in order to be confident that the areas of ephemeral/short perennial vegetation on the site do not meet the definition of Open Mosaic Habitat on Previously Developed Land (OMHPDL) priority habitat. We would advise that a more detailed assessment of these areas is required in order to determine the presence or otherwise of OMHPDL priority habitat on the site.

Therefore on 10th June 2015, an updated survey was carried out which included the compilation of a botanical species list and an assessment of the site against a number of specific criteria for OMHPDL as set out in Table 1 (http://jncc.defra.gov.uk/PDF/UKBAP_PriorityHabitatDesc-Rev2011.pdf).

Table 1 Qualifying Criteria for Open Mosaic Habitats on Previously Developed Land

	Criteria
1	The area of open mosaic habitat is at least 0.25 ha in size
2	Known history of disturbance at the site or evidence that soil has been removed or severely modified by previous use(s) of the site. Extraneous materials/substrates such as industrial spoil may have been added.
3	The site contains some vegetation. This will comprise early successional communities consisting mainly of stress tolerant species.
4	The site contains unvegetated, loose bare substrate and pools may be present
5	The site shows spatial variation, forming a mosaic of one or more of the early successional communities plus bare substrate within 0.25 ha

Results

Fifty six species of plant were recorded growing in the barer areas. Of these, seven were identified as being indicative of OMHPDL habitat type in the Northwest:

- Mugwort *Artemisia vulgaris*
- Wavy hair-grass *Deschampsia flexuosa*
- Cat's ear *Hypochaeris radicata*
- Black medick *Medicago lupulina*
- Ribwort plantain *Plantago lanceolata*
- Red clover *Trifolium pratense*
- Coltsfoot *Tussilago farfara*

With a further four species identified to genus level (due to available specimens / condition of specimen) which if identified to species level may also be included:

- Mouse-ear *Cerastium sp.* (if common mouse-ear *Cerastium fontanum*)
- Orchid *Dactylorhiza sp.* (if Southern marsh orchid *Dactylorhiza praetermissa*, more likely to be common spotted or northern marsh orchid)
- Horsetail *Equisetum sp.* (if field horsetail *Equisetum arvense*)
- Rush *Juncus sp.* (if hard rush *Juncus inflexus*)

It was noted that whilst some species were indicative of early succession these species did not form significant recognised succesional communities (http://jncc.defra.gov.uk/PDF/UKBAP_PriorityHabitatDesc-Rev2011.pdf). Further to this all species which were recorded on site are commonly found in the Northwest. Table 2 addresses each individual criterion, note **all five** criteria must be met to qualify as OMHDPL.

Table 2 OMHPDL criteria applied to June 2015 Survey data

	Criteria	Result	Qualifies?
1	The area of open mosaic habitat is at least 0.25 ha in size	The entire site is 1.1 ha and the majority is hardstanding with ephemeral / short perennial.	✓ Quality of mosaic considered to be limited.
2	Known history of disturbance at the site or evidence that soil has been removed or severely modified by previous use(s) of the site. Extraneous materials/substrates such as industrial spoil may have been added.	The site has been covered with hardstanding and used for lorry and container storage in the recent past. The town of New Mills is historically noted for its mills rather than other industrial uses. No evidence of soil disturbance, removal or modification.	X
3	The site contains some vegetation. This will comprise early successional communities consisting mainly of stress tolerant species.	The site contains scattered ruderals plus open grassland at the far end beyond the hardstanding.	✓
4	The site contains unvegetated, loose bare substrate and pools may be present.	The substrate varies from concrete/tarmac, to gravel to fairly bare clay. No pools noted.	X
5	The site shows spatial variation, forming a mosaic of one or more of the early successional communities plus bare substrate within 0.25 ha.	The site contains one of the early successional communities plus bare ground is present in a given 0.25 ha space.	✓ only one successional plant community present

As set out in Table 2 whilst the habitat does meet some of the defining criteria it does not clearly meet all of the criteria and therefore does not fall under the definition for this habitat type.

It is therefore considered that the original classification of the habitat on site as "hardstanding with encroaching ephemeral/short perennial vegetation" was correct and that no priority habitats are present on site.

If you require any further information please do not hesitate to contact me.

For WYG Environment Planning Transport Ltd.



Rachel Kerr MCIEEM CEnv

Principal Ecologist

ecology.manchester@wyg.com

Tel: 0161 872 3223