

HABITAT MITIGATION, ENHANCEMENT & MANAGEMENT PLAN

LAND OFF MARSH LANE, NEW MILLS,
DERBYSHIRE

2017



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1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Rachel Hacking Ecology Limited was commissioned in 2017 by Forrest to produce a Habitat Mitigation, Enhancement & Management Plan for a site off Marsh Lane, New Mills, Derbyshire.
- 1.2 Planning permission was granted for the site in January 2017 by High Peak Borough Council for the construction of 37 residential units, together with associated access, car parking and landscaping (planning reference: HPK/2016/0476).
- 1.3 As part of the planning permission, a number of conditions were attached. Condition 16 deals with the biodiversity of the site and states that: "Prior to the commencement of development (excluding demolition or land remediation works) a detailed mitigation, enhancement and management plan shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The management plan shall provide details on the biodiversity measures that will be incorporated into the proposed development. These shall include details of a proposed planting scheme, details of how the dry heath/acid grassland will be retained/protected and managed, details of where mature trees/scrub will be retained, details of a sensitive lighting scheme to protect foraging bats and how features for nesting birds and bats will be incorporated into the proposed housing. This plan shall be supported by appropriate drawings showing the location of retained and created habitats and other biodiversity features and a timetable for implementation. Thereafter the approved management plan shall be implemented in full and in accordance with the approved timetable".
- 1.4 Condition 21 deals with the quarry rock face and states: "Prior to the commencement of development (excluding demolition and land remediation works) a scheme for the alteration, maintenance and protection of the quarry rock face shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Thereafter the development shall proceed in accordance with the approved scheme".
- 1.5 Various ecology surveys have been undertaken at the site by Rachel Hacking Ecology, including an Extended Phase 1 Habitat survey, a reptile survey and nesting bird surveys. The existing site supports a small amount of dry heath/acid grassland, individual trees, scrub and bare ground.
- 1.6 This management plan aims to discharge the planning conditions 16 and 21. Whilst Condition 21 deals with mainly an engineering and safeguarding issue, suggestions will be made to avoid deleterious impacts on the quarry rock face, from an ecological perspective.

2.0 OBJECTIVES

Objective One – Planting Scheme

Reason: to provide trees and shrubs beneficial to wildlife and beneficial for the amenity value of the site.

Objective Two – Dry Heath/Acid Grassland Mitigation

Reason: to ensure the dry heath/acid grassland is protected by translocation and enhanced on the development site.

Objective Three – Tree/Scrub Retention

Reason: to retain valuable nesting habitats for birds.

Objective Four – Sensitive Lighting Scheme

Reason: to protect any foraging bat habitat.

Objective Five – Nesting Bird and Bat Roost Provision

Reason: to provide nesting and roosting opportunities within the new dwellings.

3.0 MANAGEMENT PRINCIPLES

- 3.1 If a protected species (e.g. Great Crested Newt or a reptile) or evidence of protected species (e.g. large mammal holes) is discovered at any time during the construction period, then work must stop and an experienced ecologist be contacted immediately for guidance.

Objective One - Planting Scheme

- 3.2 Huttons Landscapes produced a landscaping plan and planting scheme for the planning application (see Huttons drawing no: H.16.1067.100). This plan details the plant varieties to be used. The shrubs include flowering varieties such as Escallonia, Lavender and Ceanothus. The tree species include flowering varieties such as Bird Cherry and Wild Cherry and nut-bearing Hazel. These varieties and species of shrub and tree are beneficial to wildlife.

Objective Two – Dry Heath/Acid Grassland Mitigation

- 3.3 The dry heath/acid grassland is located at the top of the quarry face, at the southern end of the site (see Figure 1 – Phase 1 Habitat Map).

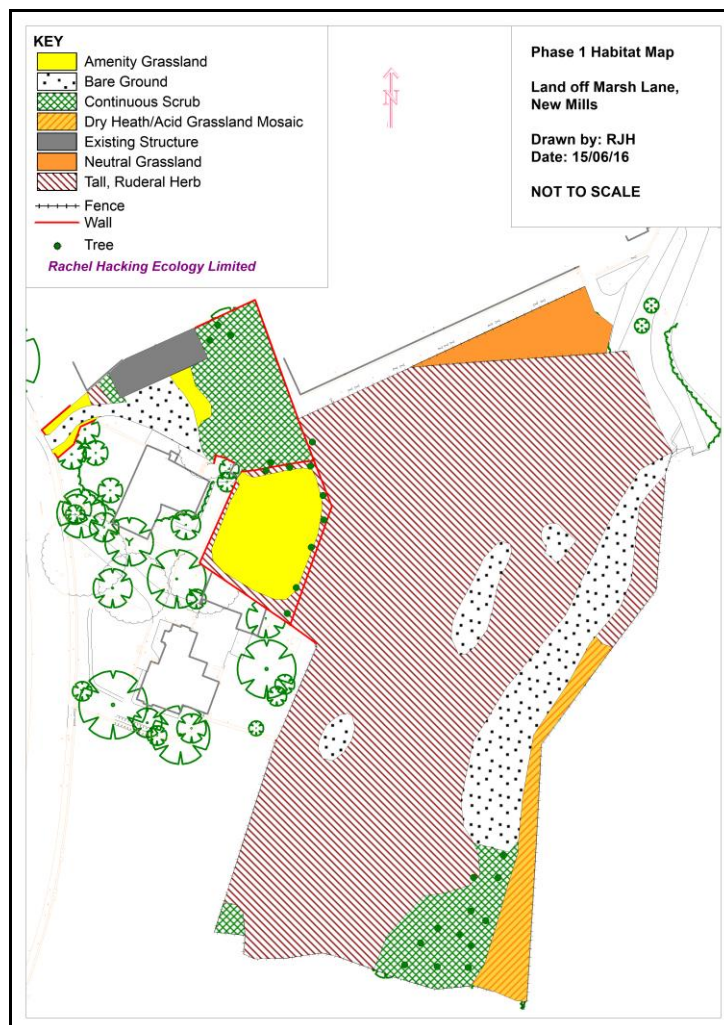


Figure 1 – Habitat Map

- 3.4 The dry heath/acid grassland is located on a rock outcrop adjacent to the public right of way (see Photograph 1) and on part of the vertical rock face. Due to the engineering works required on the site, agreed in conjunction with High Peak Borough Council, the rock outcrop will need to be levelled and the quarry face scraped. Therefore, the dry heath/acid grassland will require translocation prior to the engineering works commencing.



Photograph 1 showing the dry heath/acid grassland habitat on the rock outcrop

- 3.5 The heathland will be translocated to an area of flat ground adjacent to the rock outcrop; the receptor site. The flat ground currently comprises amenity grassland and Bramble *Rubus fruticosus* agg. scrub (see Photographs 2 and 3). The receptor site is species-poor, with no protected species constraints. Further receptor land exists to the north along the edge of the public right of way. This is currently amenity grassland.



Photograph 2 showing the receptor site



Photograph 3 showing the scrub at the receptor site

3.6 The dry heath/acid grassland translocation will follow the following protocol:

- The existing habitats on the donor site and receptor site will be destructively searched immediately prior to translocation by an experienced ecologist. If any reptile, or other animal, is found, the animal will be moved onto the heathland habitat adjacent to the development site to the south.

- The receptor site will be cleared of vegetation using a digger. The grassland and scrub will be carefully scraped and removed from the site.
- The dry heath/acid grassland will be carefully scraped from the rock outcrop and rock face using a digger. As much soil as possible will be included in the scrape, to translocate the seed bank as well as the vegetation. If it is not possible to scrape vegetation from the rock face, the heather will be swept with the digger, to collect seeds and brash, which can be added to the receptor site.
- The dry heath/acid grassland turfs and soil will be carefully laid onto the receptor land. The new habitat will be watered well to aid establishment.
- Any seed or brash collected will be spread over the receptor site following the turfs being laid.
- Following the translocation, the new habitat area will be monitored. If the translocated habitats do not establish, heather seed will be sourced from a reputable, local supplier, along with an acid grassland seed mix and spread over the translocation site, to aid establishment of the target habitat.

Objective Three – Tree/Scrub Retention

- 3.7 A Tree Survey Schedule and Tree Protection Plan has been drawn up by Cheshire Woodlands (see Cheshire Woodlands report and drawing: 8390-SS2 & 8390-P-TP1 Rev B). These detail the trees and shrubs to be retained. These will be protected during the construction. The protected trees include mature Beech *Fagus sylvatica* and Sycamore *Acer pseudoplatanus* along with groups of native shrubs and scrub. These provide nesting habitat for birds and will continue to do so following completion of construction.

Objective Four – Sensitive Lighting Scheme

- 3.8 The following documents have been used to design the lighting scheme:
- Bats and Lighting in the UK - BCT May 2009.
 - Guidance Notes for the Reduction of Obtrusive Light GN01:2011 - Institute of Lighting Engineers
- 3.9 The lighting scheme will follow the following principles:
- Security and amenity lighting will only be used where absolutely necessary.

- Low pressure sodium lamps will be used, not mercury or metal halide lamps. Security lights will be no greater than 2000 lumens (150W).
- The lamps will be fitted with cowls, hoods, louvres or shields to direct light downwards and avoid lightspill. The main beam angle will be not more than 70°.
- On security lighting associated with the dwellings, movement sensors should be used to prevent lights being switched on for longer than necessary.
- The lighting will not be aimed at the rock faces or at any of the boundaries of the site, to protect the retained vegetation and protect potential bat foraging habitat.

Objective Five – Nesting Bird and Bat Roost Provision

Bird Boxes

- 3.10 Please refer to Figure 2 at the back of this report for indicative bird box locations.

The following bird boxes will be erected onto the dwellings on the site:

- 2 x Schwegler Sparrow Terrace
- 2 x Schwegler Woodcrete Open Front nest box
- 2 x Schwegler Woodcrete 32mm-hole nest box
- 2 x Schwegler Woodcrete 26mm-hole nest box

- 3.11 The bird boxes will be positioned at least 2 metres off the ground. None of the boxes will be positioned facing north. The bird boxes chosen are known to be rugged and are guaranteed by the manufacturer for 25 years.

- 3.12 The boxes will be monitored every 2 months and checked for signs of breakage or weather deterioration and will be replaced if no longer useable.

Bat Boxes

- 3.13 Please refer to Figure 2 at the back of this report for indicative bat box locations.

The following bat boxes will be provided on the site:

- 2 x Schwegler 2F Woodcrete Bat Box
- 4 x Schwegler Type 27 Brick Box

- 3.14 The 2F bat boxes will be positioned onto the external facades of the new dwellings following completion. The bat boxes will face south, south-east or south-west.

- 3.15 The Type 27 brick boxes will be built into the external walls of the new dwellings. These should not face north.

- 3.16 The bat bricks will be monitored every 6 months and will be replaced if broken.

Rock Face Protection

- 3.17 The quarry rock face will be cut back and loose material will be removed. Due to the nature of the gritstone, further maintenance may not be required, although fencing may be used to prevent rock falls. From an ecological perspective, non-intervention following the cut will allow pockets within the rock face to vegetate naturally. No ecological management plan is required for the rock face.

4.0 MONITORING AND WORK PROGRAMME

- 4.1 The dry heath/acid grassland translocation will take place in summer 2017. This will be monitored in 2018.
- 4.2 The mature trees and shrubs to be retained will be protected during the construction period 2017/2018.
- 4.3 The nesting bird provision and bat roost provision will be incorporated onto the site during construction (bat bricks) and post-construction (bat boxes and bird boxes).
- 4.4 The lighting scheme will be incorporated onto the site during construction.
- 4.5 The planting plan and landscaping will be developed during and post-construction.

FIGURE 2 – BIRD BOX AND BAT BOX PROVISION (INDICATIVE LOCATIONS)

