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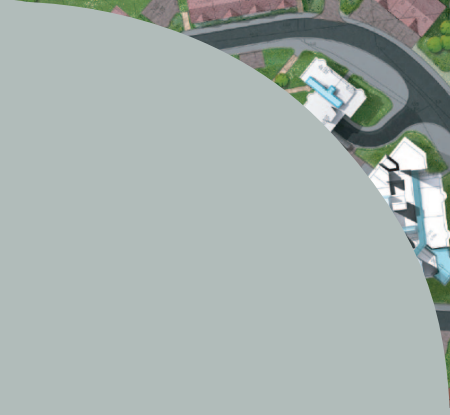
Environmental Planning & Design



09 May 2008

George Street Health Centre, Glossop, Derbyshire

Ecological Appraisal

C3125_01

DRAFT

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Quality Assurance – Approval Status

This document has been Prepared and checked in accordance with Waterman CPM's IMS (BS EN ISO 9001: 2000 and BS EN ISO 14001: 2004)

Author	Date
Approved	
QA Checked	
CCFF Sent	☐

Contents

Summary

S1 Waterman CPM Ltd (WCPM) has been instructed by Morgan Ashurst Plc to carry out an Ecological Appraisal of land at George Street Health Centre, Glossop, Derbyshire. This report sets out the results of a desk based assessment and an extended Phase I habitat survey carried out in April 2008.

S2 The aim of the assessment is to map and describe the habitats present within the Site as well as identifying any potential or actual protected/notable habitat and species constraints within and adjacent to the site. Key ecological receptors have been evaluated with respect to legislative, policy and nature conservation considerations with reference to the Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (IEEM) guidelines for Ecological Impact Assessment (EcIA).

S3 The Site is not covered by, or immediately adjacent to, an area covered by a European or National statutory designation, such as a Special Area of Conservation (SAC) or Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI). The nearest site with statutory designation is the Peak District Moors, which has Special Protection Area (SPA), SAC and SSSI designation status. This is situated approximately 2km to the east of the Site and it is considered that this would not be directly affected by development at the Site.

S4 The habitats within the Site include buildings and hardstanding, amenity grassland, mature trees and hedgerows. These are considered to be of negligible ecological value. Provided that these habitats are retained or, where necessary, the loss mitigated, then development would not contravene policy.

S5 The Glossop Brook runs to the south of the site and has the potential to provide commuting and foraging opportunities for bats. Further survey work is recommended to clarify the use of the Site by bats in order to support a planning application. Provided suitable mitigation is implemented, then the local bat population can be maintained in accordance with the relevant legislation.

S6 A survey for white-clawed crayfish and water voles is recommended prior to a planning application as the watercourse running south of the Site is considered to hold potential for these species. Should these species be present, a suitable mitigation strategy will require implementation in order to allow development to proceed.

S7 In summary, the findings to date suggest that there are no significant ecological issues which would represent an absolute constraint to development at the Site. However, it will be necessary to undertake further survey work to ensure that the development is not contrary to ecological policy or to current wildlife legislation.

Section 1 Introduction

1.1 This report, prepared by Waterman CPM Ltd (WCPM) on behalf of Morgan Ashurst Plc, details the findings of an ecological appraisal carried out in April 2008 at George Street Health Centre, Glossop, Derbyshire (hereafter referred to as 'the Site'). The Site is approximately 0.2 hectares (ha) in area, centred on Ordnance Survey Grid Reference SK032939 and is located 120m south of the Glossop Town Centre, bordered in the south by Glossop Brook.

1.2 A planning application is to be submitted for redevelopment of the Health Centre on the Site.

1.3 The purpose of this Ecological Appraisal is to:

- Identify ecological issues that could constrain any proposed development of the Site;
- Where potential issues have been identified, for instance the presence of legally protected species, make recommendations for further survey work to confirm whether such issues exist;
- Assess the consequences of any redevelopment in relation to relevant national and local policy; and
- Make recommendations for mitigation and enhancement where appropriate.

Section 2 Methodology

Desk Study

2.1 A data trawl was undertaken in April 2008 for a search area of 2km radius, centred at the Site. The agencies and organisations contacted are as follows:

- Derbyshire Biological Record Centre (DBRC);
- Derbyshire Wildlife Trust;
- Derbyshire Bat Group;
- High Peaks Badger Group;
- The County Bird Recorder;
- The Derbyshire Reptile and Amphibian Group; and
- The Botanical Society of the British Isles (BSBI).

2.2 The MAGIC (Multi-Agency Geographic Information for the Countryside) website[1] was consulted to identify any sites subject to statutory protection under national or European/International nature conservation legislation within 5km of the Site.

2.3 The national and local Biodiversity Action Plans (BAPs) were also consulted to identify those habitats or species on which nature conservation action is being targeted.

2.4 Information supplied by these organisations has, where relevant, been incorporated into the following account with due acknowledgement.

2.5 At the time of writing only the High Peaks Badger Group, the Derbyshire Reptiles and Amphibian Group and the BSBI have responded to the requests for data.

Extended Phase I Habitat Survey

2.6 The Site was surveyed using a technique based upon Phase I survey methodology (NCC, 1990)[2]. This 'extended' Phase I technique provides an inventory of the basic habitat types present and allows identification of areas of greater potential which require further survey. As such areas identified can then be examined in more detail.

2.7 The survey was undertaken by Dr Rosalind King of WCPM on 8th April 2008.

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[1] www.magic.gov.uk

[2] Joint Nature Conservation Committee (2007). *Handbook for Phase I habitat survey - a technique for environmental audit*. JNCC, Peterborough.

2.8 The weather conditions were overcast, 3°C with a slight breeze and although cool for the time of year, were considered suitable for survey at this site.

Evaluation

2.9 Ecological resources were evaluated using the IEEM guidance for Ecological Impact Assessment (EcIA) in the United Kingdom (UK)[3]. The level of value of specific ecological receptors is assigned using a geographic frame of reference, with international value being most important, then national, regional, county, district, local and lastly, within the immediate Zone of Influence (ZoI) of the proposals only (this may be the Site itself or a larger area).

2.10 Value judgements are based on various characteristics that can be used to identify ecological resources or features likely to be important in terms of biodiversity. These include site designations (such as SSSIs), or for undesignated features, the size, conservation status (locally, nationally or internationally), and the quality of the ecological resource. In terms of the latter, 'quality' can refer to habitats (for instance if they are particularly diverse, or a good example of a specific habitat type), other features (such as wildlife corridors or mosaics of habitats) or species populations or assemblages.

[3] Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (2006) *Guidelines for Ecological Impact Assessment in the United Kingdom (Version 7, July 2006)*. http://www.ieem.org.uk/ecia/index.html. Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management, Winchester.

Section 3 Legislation and Planning Policy Context

3.1 Specific habitats and species receive legal protection in the UK under various pieces of legislation, including:

- The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (WCA) (as amended);
- The Conservation (Natural Habitats &c.) Regulations 1994 (as amended);
- The Countryside and Rights of Way (CRoW) Act 2000;
- The Hedgerows Regulations 1997;
- The Protection of Badgers Act 1992; and
- The Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006.

3.2 Where relevant, the assessment takes account of the legislative protection afforded to specific habitats and species.

National Planning Policy Guidance/Statements

3.3 The relevant adopted policy at the national level is set out in PPS9 (2005)[4] and is central Government's guidance on nature (and geological) conservation. It sets out the key principles of ensuring that the potential impacts of planning decisions on biodiversity and geological conservation are fully considered. These include:

- The need for up-to-date assessments;
- The aim of maintaining and enhancing, restoring or adding to biodiversity and geological conservation interests;
- The need to take a strategic approach to the conservation, enhancement and restoration of biodiversity and geology; and
- The principle of planning decisions should be to prevent harm to biodiversity and geological conservation interests and this may include consideration of mitigation/compensation measures, implemented where appropriate using planning controls.

3.4 PPS9 provides guidance as to the protection of statutorily designated sites, including international sites, National Nature Reserves (NNR) and SSSIs, as well as non-statutory regional and local sites. PPS9 also addresses development and wildlife issues outside these sites and seeks to ensure that planning policies minimise any adverse effects on wildlife.

3.5 PPS9 requires that opportunities for improving biodiversity within developments should be maximised. It states that development proposals provide many opportunities for building-in beneficial biodiversity features as part of good design and also suggests that networks of natural habitat should be protected and repaired, and the fragmentation and isolation of natural habitats avoided.

[4] ODPM (2005) Planning Policy Statement 9: Biodiversity and Geological Conservation. HMSO

3.6 PPS9 seeks protection of species that are protected by law. It also places emphasis on local authorities to further the conservation those Habitats of Principal Importance (HoPIs), or those habitats supporting Species of Principal Importance (SoPIs), which are identified in Section 74 of the CRoW Act 2000.

3.7 PPS9 requires that adverse effects of development on SoPI should be avoided through planning conditions or obligations and that planning permission should be refused where harm to these species, or their habitats, may result unless the need for, and benefits of, the development clearly outweigh the harm.

Regional Policy

Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS) for the North West (2003)

3.8 The Regional Spatial Strategy for the North West provides a broad development strategy for region. The following policies within the Strategy are considered relevant.

3.9 Policy ER5 Biodiversity and Nature Conservation is the relevant policy within the RRS. It sets out that:

"Planning authorities and other agencies in their plans, policies and proposals will afford the strongest levels of protection to:

- **sites with international and national nature conservation designations in the Region, encompassing: Ramsar Sites, Special Protection Areas, Special Areas of Conservation, National Nature Reserves and, Sites of Special Scientific Interest; and**

- **statutorily protected species.**

Planning authorities and other agencies in their plans, policies and proposals should ensure that the overall nature conservation resource in the North West is protected and enriched through conservation, restoration and re-establishment of key resources by:

- **affording the highest level of protection and management to those resources which are important and irreplaceable within practical timescales;**

- **ensuring that there is no net loss in the value of other biodiversity resources in the Region;**

- **returning key biodiversity resources to viable levels by promoting the restoration and re-establishment of habitats and species populations in accordance with the targets set out in the UK and Local Biodiversity Action Plans. In identifying areas for habitat restoration and re-establishment, particular attention should be paid to reversing habitat fragmentation and species isolation and ensuring the appropriate management of wildlife corridors that are important for the migration and dispersal of wildlife. In implementing the above, local authorities should**

set out a coherent and functional ecological framework which identifies priority biodiversity resources, areas of land which have the potential for returning these resources to viable levels and wildlife corridors; and

- applying the principle of enhancing the quality of life set out in Policy DP2 when considering all new development proposals which will impact on biodiversity."

"Planning authorities and other agencies in their plans, policies and proposals must take into account the Regional Biodiversity Audit38, English Nature's Regional Biodiversity Targets in Appendix 1, the Local Biodiversity Action Plans and initiatives related to the implementation of National Biodiversity Action Plans."

"In identifying the regional distribution and sub-regional concentrations of priority habitats and species English Nature's Natural Areas profiles provide an effective framework that is related to variations in the character of the landscape:

- Although built-up areas usually have fewer designated sites, certain habitats are characteristic of the conurbations and support a range of species which otherwise would not prosper.

- The rural lowlands contain the largest concentration of raised bogs in England with extensive areas found particularly in the Solway Basin, but also found in Cheshire. Ponds are a distinctive feature of lowland Cheshire and the Lancashire plains, supporting amphibians like the great crested newt and also the water vole, both of which are UK priority species. The Cheshire meres and mosses are particularly important in this respect. Lowland heath is another important natural habitat but this has become highly fragmented and its restoration will be vital for priority breeding species, like the nightjar.

- The distinctive earth heritage of the rural uplands creates another stronghold for many priority habitats and species. Limestone and sandstone rivers like the River Eden support such priority species as otters and white clawed crayfish, while the carboniferous limestone hills that flank Morecambe Bay have both limestone pavements and grasslands. The natural lakes, heathlands and ancient oak woods of the upland areas are home to a number of priority bird species.

- Around a third of the sand dunes in England can be found in the North West and approximately one-fifth of the English total are situated along the Sefton Coast. These dunes, together with coastal and estuarine salt marshes, support a number of endangered species, including the natterjack toad and the sand lizard. Elsewhere sediments dominate the shores. Morecambe Bay has the largest continuous area of inter-tidal flats in Britain and the sandflats and mudflats that stretch along the length of the North West coast provide feeding and roosting grounds for waterfowl."

The North West Plan - Draft Regional Spatial Strategy for the North West of England

3.10 A Draft Regional Spatial Strategy for the North West of England was submitted in March 2006. When it is adopted it will replace the current Spatial Strategy for the North West. The following policies within the Strategy are considered relevant.

3.11 Policy EM1 – Integrated Land Management:

"Plans, strategies, proposals and schemes should deliver an integrated approach to land management, based upon detailed character assessments and landscape strategies derived from the North West Joint Character Area map137. With regards to specific elements of integrated land management, the following should be taken into account:

Biodiversity

Plans and strategies should seek to deliver a 'step-change' increase in the region's biodiversity resources, by delivering the regional biodiversity targets for maintaining, restoring and expanding priority habitats, and delivering the habitat and species targets of the Local Biodiversity Action Plans138. This should be done by protecting, expanding and linking areas for wildlife within and between the locations of highest biodiversity resources, and encouraging the protection, conservation and improvement of the ecological fabric elsewhere.

Broad locations where there are greatest opportunities for delivering these targets are shown on the Indicative Biodiversity Resource and Opportunities Diagram (see Diagram 11.1). Local authorities should:

- **Seek to develop a more detailed representation of this spatial information for use in their Local Development Frameworks; and**
- **Develop functional ecological frameworks that seek to address habitat fragmentation and species isolation, working together to address cross-border issues within the region such as in the Pennines, Solway Firth, the River Dee**
- **Estuary and the Cheshire Meres and Mosses."**

3.12 Policy EM3 – Green Infrastructure;

"Plans, strategies, proposal and schemes should:

- **Identify, promote and deliver multi-purpose networks of greenspace, particularly where there is currently limited access to natural greenspace or where connectivity between these places is poor; and**
- **Integrate Green Infrastructure provision within existing and new development, particularly within major development and regeneration schemes."**

Supplementary Planning Documents

3.13 The North West Green Infrastructure Guide (Sept 2007) has been prepared to support the Green Infrastructure (GI) policy (EM3) in the emerging North West Plan (see above). It provides more detailed information on the concept of GI and initial guidance on producing a GI[5].

3.14 Action for Sustainability (AfS) is the North West's Regional Sustainable Development Framework and is used to inform sustainability appraisals of regional plans and strategies. It currently consists of two documents; the AfS Framework Document and AfS programme document[6].

Local Policy

3.15 The High Peak Local Plan (adopted March 2005) provides a development strategy for the High Peak area. The following 'saved' policies within the Plan are considered relevant:

"OC4 - Landscape Character And Design

Planning Permission will be granted for development considered appropriate in the Countryside provided that its design is appropriate to the character of the landscape."

3.16 Appropriate design of development shall accord with the characteristics of the type of landscape within which it is located including having regard to and conserving:

"the type and distribution of wildlife habitats"

OC8 - Sites of Importance For Nature Conservation

"Development which individually or cumulatively with other development may affect a proposed or designated Site of European Importance will be subject to rigorous examination and will only be permitted where:

- **there are no imperative reasons of over-riding public interest for the development such as human health or public safety or for beneficial consequences of primary importance for nature conservation.**
- **there is no alternative solution; and**

[5] http://www.greeninfrastructurenw.co.uk
[6] http://www.nwra.gov.uk/whatwedo/

Development in or likely to affect Sites of Special Scientific Interest will be subject to special scrutiny and will only be permitted where:

- measures are put in place to ensure the protection and enhancement of the site's nature conservation interest.

- the reasons for development clearly outweigh the nature conservation value of the site itself; and

Development likely to have an adverse effect on Local Nature Reserves, a Derbyshire Wildlife Register site or a Regionally Important Geological Site will only be permitted where:

- measures are in place to ensure appropriate mitigation and compensatory measures including the management of such provision

- it can be clearly demonstrated that there are reasons for the proposal that outweigh the need to safeguard the substantive nature conservation value of the site;"

OC10 - Trees and Woodlands

"Planning Permission will be granted for development, provided that:

- it will not result in the loss of, or materially injure the health of, a woodland (in whole or in part) or other significant individual, group or area of trees, unless required in the interests of safety, good tree management or a wider scheme of conservation and enhancement; or

- exceptionally, where loss or injury is accepted, adequate replacement planting, in terms of numbers, species, planting density and location, will be provided as part of the development

Conditions will be imposed, and/or planning obligations sought, to ensure adequate protection and management of individual, groups and areas of trees and woodlands which are important for landscape, amenity, recreation or nature conservation reasons."

Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP)

3.17 Following The Convention on Biological Diversity (1992), the UK BAP[7] was published in 1994 and updated in 2007[8] to guide national strategy for the conservation of biodiversity through Species Action Plans (SAPs) and Habitat Action Plans (HAPs), which set conservation targets and objectives. Most areas now possess a local BAP (LBAP) to complement the national strategy where priority habitats and species are identified and targets set for their conservation. BAPs are the key nature conservation initiative in the UK, working at national, regional and local levels.

3.18 BAPs for the North West region are set out in the RSS for the North West and provide the region's response to the UK's National BAP, setting out conservation actions and objectives for features of importance in the North West region.

3.19 Glossop is covered by the Peak District BAP, entitled 'A Living Landscape – Biodiversity Action Plan for the Peak District'. This provides the region's response to the UK's National BAP, setting out conservation actions and objectives for features of importance in the Peak District Region.

3.20 Plans from the UK the Peak District BAP will be referenced where relevant.

[7] (1994*) Biodiversity The UK Action Plan*, HMSO, London
[8] http://www.ukbap.org.uk/NewPriorityList

Section 4 Baseline Conditions and Evaluation

Site Context

4.1 The Site is situated approximately 120m south of Glossop Town centre and covers approximately 0.2 ha. The surrounding land use includes a dilapidated glove factory to the south, an area of scrub to the west, an area of woodland to the east, the Glossop Brook to the south east and residential housing to the north.

4.2 The Site lies within the 'Urban Mersey Basin' Natural Area. Natural Areas have been developed by Natural England (NE) and group together areas of similar bio-geographic character, often with a similar geology, landscape or land-use, over the whole of England.

4.3 The following description of the relevant Natural Area is taken from the NE website[9]:

"The Urban Mersey Basin is one of the most densely populated parts of the country. Central to this area are the Rivers Mersey and Irwell with an associated network of canals, rivers and valleys, around which the major cities and industries have developed. The Urban Mersey Basin supports a varied assemblage of habitats and species, though many of the habitats have been modified and created by human activity and these include ponds, canals and subsidence flashes.

Of particular significance are the populations of great crested newts which occur in large numbers, reflecting the widespread network of ponds.''

Designated Sites

Statutory Sites

4.4 The Site is not covered by any statutory or non-statutory nature conservation designations.

4.5 Consultation of the government's MAGIC website has confirmed that there are five sites with national statutory nature conservation designations within 5km of the Site:

[9] http://www.english-nature.org.uk/science/natural/na_search.asp

- The South Pennine Moors Special Area of Conservation (SAC), lies 2km to the east of the Site and is designated as a SAC due to the presence of the following Annex 1 habitats**:"4030 European dry heaths, 7130 Blanket bogs, 91A0 Old sessile oak woods with Ilex and Blechnum in the British Isles, 4010 Northern Atlantic wet heaths with Erica tetralix and 7140 Transition mires and quaking bogs"**;
- The Peak District Moors (South Pennine Moors Phase I) special Protection Area (SPA) lies 2km to the east of the site;
- The Dark Peak SSSI is over 30 000ha in area and lies 2km to the east of the Site. The NE citation number is 1003028;
- Ludworth Intake SSSI, is approximately 5.27ha in area, and situated 4.5km south west of the Site. The NE citation number is 2000211;
- The Local Nature Reserve (LNR) called Great Wood is located 4.5km west of the Site. A description of the site is taken from the Tameside Website.

  "Great Wood Local Nature Reserve is one of the few remaining ancient woodland sites in Tameside and so it is of special conservation value. Once part of the great Longdendale Forest, parts of the woodland are over 400 years old. Most of the trees are oak, but in places there are birch, alder beech and willow that add to the variety. Dead and dying trees are as important as live ones and the dead wood provided food and shelter for spiders, millipedes, beetles and fungi. In turn these are eaten by the birds and bats that live in Great Wood. In the clearings in the wood you will find wildflowers like bluebells, red campion and wood sorrel."

4.6 LNR's are notified under Section 21 of the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949 by local authorities. They are not necessarily of great ecological value, and are intended for public appreciation and enjoyment of wildlife. The LNR designation does not afford special protection, although LNRs are protected under PPS9.

4.7 The above LNR is not designated as an SSSI and hence it is assumed that, in terms of its ecological value, it is of no greater than county value.

Non-statutory Sites

4.8 At the time of writing no information has been received regarding non-statutorily designated sites.

Habitats

4.9 The habitats on Site comprise buildings and hard-standing, amenity grassland, hedgerows and trees. The Glossop Brook borders the site to the south east and will be considered here as it falls within the likely ZoI. A detailed description of these habitats is provided below and should be read in conjunction with **Plan 3125/02** which illustrates the broad distribution of habitats within the Site.

Buildings and Hard-standing

4.10 The majority of the Site is comprised of buildings and hard-standing. The main building on-Site is the Glossop Health centre, and is a one to a two storey flat

roofed brick and rendered cladding building constructed in a 1960's style. Windows on the building are single glazed.

4.11 The hard-standing on-site is mainly used as parking, with some areas as walkways around the building. Towards the south east of the car park, the hard-standing is beginning to degrade and young ash (*Fraxinus excelsior*) saplings are growing through. In addition a stand of the invasive weed, Japanese knotweed (*Fallopia japonica*) has established in the south east of the Site (see **Plan 3125/02**). The areas of building and hard-standing have negligible ecological value as they have no inherent ecological features, offer limited opportunity for wildlife and are common in the local area.

Amenity Grassland

4.12 Areas of amenity grassland are located to the south east of the Site, and behind the buildings to the east and north (see **Plan 3125/02**). Species present include red fescue (*Festuca rubra*), Yorkshire fog (*Holcus lanatus*), dandelion (*Taraxacum officinale*), ragwort (*Senecio jacobaea*) and rosebay willowherb (*Chamerion angustifolium*). In some areas, particularly under the standard trees to the south east of the Site, the grass is sparse and hawthorn (*Crataegus monogyna*), holly (*Ilex aquifolium*) and ash seedlings have established. The amenity grassland is considered to be of negligible ecological value as it is common in the local area, offers limited opportunity for wildlife and can easily be recreated.

Hedgerows and Trees

4.13 A managed beech (*Fagus sylvaticus*) hedgerow runs along approximately half of the north border of the site. Occasional holly seedlings were noted amongst the hedgerow with ivy (*Hedera helix*) and bramble at the north east edge of the hedge. The hedgerow is considered to be of negligible value although they may provide foraging and nesting opportunities for bird species (see below).

4.14 Unmanaged and sycamore and ash saplings, that appear to have self-seeded, form a sparse linear scrub feature running along the south boundary of the Site. This is considered to be of negligible value.

4.15 There are eight semi-mature to mature trees within the Site. The species include alder (*Alnus glutinosa*), ash, sycamore (*Acer pseudoplatanus*), an hornbeam (*Carpinus betulus*) and an ornamental weeping ash (*Fraxinus* sp.). Three mature sycamore overhang the Site, although they lie outside the site boundary, rooted in the supporting wall of the Glossop Brook. The mature trees are considered to be of negligible value as they are common in the local area, and can be easily recreated. However the trees may provide foraging and nesting opportunities for bird species (see below).

Watercourses

4.16 The Glossop Brook runs along the south east boundary of the Site. The banks have been heavily modified effectively canalising the Brook. There are vertical pilings as bank support on the southern bank, and large block supports on the northern bank. It is approximately 2m wide and 0.5m deep with a stony bed. The water is clear and fast flowing with numerous riffles. There is little bankside vegetation due to the brook having been canalised. The stream is considered to be of local value as it.

The stream also holds potential for white-clawed crayfish (*Austropotamobius pallipes*) and water vole (*Arvicola terrestris*) (see below).

Fauna

Badgers

4.17 There are records of eleven badger setts within a 2km radius of the Site, with the nearest being located 1.8km to the south of the Site. As most of the Site is hard-standing and provides no suitable habitat for a sett, and no sign of badger use was noted during the survey, it is considered unlikely that badgers use the site.

Bats

4.18 The data search has not returned any records to date, however the Site is likely to hold some potential for foraging bats, as the Glossop Brook is considered to provide suitable commuting corridors for foraging bats. The buildings and trees on-Site are not considered to hold potential for roosting bats due to the age and construction of the building and the size of the trees.

4.19 All bats and their roosts are strictly protected under European and UK legislation. This makes it an offence to kill or injure bats, disturb bats using a roost or cause damage to a bat roost.

Birds

4.20 The data search has not returned any records to date. The Site hedgerows and standard trees are likely to provide foraging and nesting opportunities for a range of common bird species.

4.21 All birds, their nests and eggs are protected by law under Part 1 of the WCA 1981 (as amended).

Reptiles

4.22 The Derbyshire Reptile and Amphibian Group hold one record of a grass snake (*Natrix natrix)* within 2km of the Site.

4.23 The Site was considered to offer limited opportunity for reptile species due to the lack of suitable habitat.

4.24 All British reptile species are protected under the WCA 1981 (as amended), making it an offence to kill or injure them.

Water voles

4.25 The data search has not returned any records to date, however the survey identified potential habitat for water voles between the bricks of the north bank of the canalised Glossop Brook.

4.26 Water voles are fully protected under Schedule 5 of the WCA 1981 (as amended) which makes it an offence to kill, injure or take them from the wild. It is also an offence to damage, destroy or obstruct access to any structure that water voles use for shelter or protection, or to disturb water voles while utilising such an area.

White Clawed Crayfish

4.27 The data search has not returned any records to date, however, the stream is considered to hold potential for white-clawed crayfish due to the stony substrate and clear, fast running water.

4.28 The white-clawed crayfish is protected under Schedule 5 of the WCA 1981 (as amended) in respect of taking from the wild and sale only.

Section 5 Discussion and Recommendations

Potential Impacts

Statutory and Non-statutory Sites

5.1 Given that the Site is due to remain as a Health centre, and there are buffers between the Site and the statutory and non-statutory designated sites, development of the Site is not considered likely to have a significant impact on Statutory and non statutory designated sites in the immediate vicinity.

Habitats

5.2 The buildings and hardstanding, amenity grassland, hedgerows and trees considered to be of negligible ecological value. It is, therefore, considered that no significant ecological losses will result from the permanent loss of these habitats within the proposed development.

5.3 The hedgerows within the Site are not considered to be of high ecological value; however, they should be retained where possible. Both the hedgerows and trees are likely to provide opportunities for nesting birds and, given that all birds, their nests and eggs are protected by law under Part 1 of the WCA 1981 (as amended), any development work should be undertaken outside the breeding season (March – September, inclusive). Where possible, all mature trees should be retained.

5.4 The watercourse has the potential to support protected species, namely, white-clawed crayfish and water vole, and as such should be protected unless further survey work confirms that this is not the case.

5.5 The development of the Site is not considered likely to result in unacceptable impacts to off-site habitats.

5.6 There will be opportunities to enhance retained habitats in accordance with the UK and Peak District BAP and local and regional planning strategies.

Fauna

Badgers

5.7 As badgers are not considered to be using the Site, no further survey work is recommended.

Bats

5.8 The survey and data search has identified that bats are likely to be using the Site for foraging and commuting.

5.9 The Glossop Brook and associated trees are likely to provide commuting and foraging opportunities for bats, and bat activity surveys should be undertaken to determine this. Surveys can be undertaken between May and August, inclusive. It is recommended that lighting be kept to a minimum along the Glossop Brook to reduce disturbance to bats utilising this area as a commuting route or for foraging. An appropriate mitigation strategy can be drawn up, if necessary, following a bat activity survey.

5.10 There are opportunities to provide enhanced roosting opportunities for bats through the supply of bat boxes across the development and through new landscape planting. In addition, the provision of new buildings with built in bat roost structures may provide further roosting opportunities for bats.

Birds

5.11 The mature trees and hedgerows within the Site are considered to provide some potential nesting, foraging and sheltering opportunities for birds.

5.12 As previously mentioned, it is recommended that removal of vegetation on-site should avoid the bird nesting season (March to August, inclusive) unless a survey by an experienced ecologist confirms that no nesting birds are present immediately prior to removal. Retained trees and hedgerows should be appropriately fenced and protected during site development.

5.13 Enhancement measures, such as the planting of berry bearing species and the provision of nest boxes, will increase the value of the Site for local bird species.

Reptiles

5.14 The Site is considered to offer limited potential to reptile and as such no further surveys are recommended.

Water Vole

5.15 Surveys for water vole should be undertaken to determine presence of these species in the ZoI. Two surveys should be conducted, between mid-April and September inclusive.

White-clawed Crayfish

5.16 Surveys for white-clawed crayfish should be undertaken to determine presence of these species in the Brook. Surveys for white-clawed crayfish could be combined with watervole surveys and should be undertaken between July and September, inclusive. Given the sensitivity of white-clawed crayfish to poor water quality, if they were discovered, a construction method statement will need to be implemented to ensure that any population is not adversely affected.

Section 6 Conclusion

6.1 The Site has limited intrinsic ecological value, with the exception of the mature trees, hedgerows and the watercourse. Development of the Site has potential to directly affect species that are of conservation significance at the local and national level and, therefore, the following additional surveys would be required prior to a planning application:

- Bat activity survey of the Glossop Brook;
- Water vole survey; and
- White-clawed crayfish survey.

6.2 The methodology for these surveys should be agreed with the local planning authority and NE in advance of commencement.

6.3 In summary, the findings to date suggest that there is no ecological constraint to the principle of development at the Site. However, it will be necessary to undertake the measures set out above to ensure development is not contrary to ecological policy or to current wildlife legislation.

Plan

Habitat Features
(3125/02 04/08 RK/LS)

Car Park and entrance to George Street Health Centre

Rear of George Street Health Centre showing amenity grassland and trees along Glossop Brook

- Site boundary
- Buildings
- Hardstanding
- Fence
- Hedgerow
- Trees
- Ornamental shrubs
- Scrub
- Amenity grassland
- Watercourse
- Japanese Knotweed

Offsite Habitats

W Woodland
RG Rough Grassland
AG Amenity Grassland

Glossop Brook, with retaining wall and row of sycamore trees

N

0 100 200 300 400 500metres

Drawing Title **Habitat Features**

Client Morgan Ashurst Plc

Project George Street Health Centre, Glossop, Derbyshire

Scale As shown

Drawing No 3125/02

Date 04/08 RK/LS

Checked

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