

EXTENDED PHASE 1 HABITAT SURVEY OF 29 BERRY BROW, CLAYTON BRIDGE, MANCHESTER

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1.0 **INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1 Rachel Hacking Ecology Limited was commissioned in 2020 by Clarkes Bespoke Design Limited, to undertake an Extended Phase 1 Habitat Survey of 29 Berry Brow, Clayton Bridge, Manchester. The site will be the subject of a planning application for the construction of a residential dwelling, with associated garden and driveway.
- 1.2 The site is situated at the rear of 29 Berry Brow, north of Berry Brow in Clayton Vale, Manchester (O.S. grid reference: SJ 89025 99546 – see Figure 1). The site currently comprises an overgrown area between gardens and residential dwellings on Berry Brow. In the wider environment, the site is within a residential area, with Clayton Vale and the River Medlock to the south.
- 1.3 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.

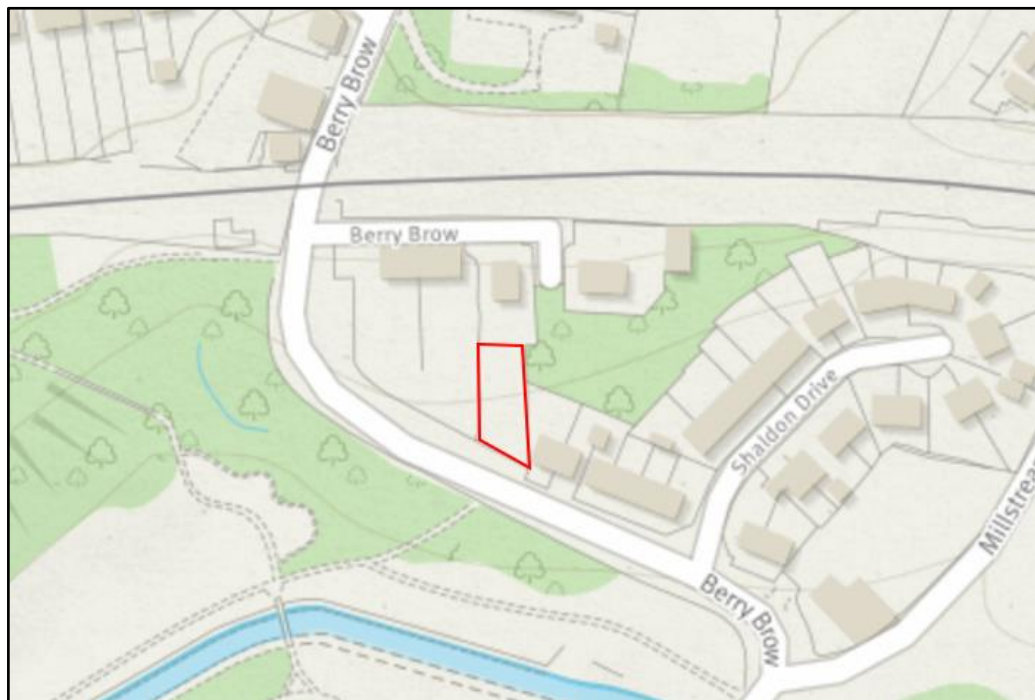


Figure 1 showing the site within the red line boundary

2.0 METHODOLOGY

- 2.1 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, 2019. A Phase 1 map was produced showing habitat boundaries.
- 2.2 During the Phase 1 survey, the habitats were assessed for their potential to support protected species. This included, 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.
- 2.3 The site was also surveyed for invasive, non-native plant species such as Japanese Knotweed and Giant Hogweed.
- 2.4 Rosie Fisher (Ecologist) undertook the survey on 24th January 2020. The weather was overcast. Rosie has over five years of experience conducting habitat and protected species surveys and is fully trained. January is a sub-optimal time of year for botanical surveys, however due to the habitats present on site a thorough assessment could be undertaken. Protected species assessments can be undertaken at any time of year. There were no constraints to the survey as the site was fully accessible.

3.0 **RESULTS**

HABITATS

- 3.1 The Phase 1 Habitat Map can be found at the back of the report. The habitats present are described below. The majority of the habitats match the findings of the 2016 survey.

Continuous Scrub / Tall Ruderal Vegetation Mosaic

- 3.2 The site comprises a mosaic of tall, ruderal herb species intermixed with scrub species (see Photograph 1). Tall, ruderal species occurring frequently include Broad-leaved Dock *Rumex obtusifolius*, Great Willowherb *Epilobium hirsutum*, Common Ragwort *Jacobaea vulgaris*, Creeping Buttercup *Ranunculus repens* and Wood Avens *Geum urbanum*. Species occurring less frequently include Broad-leaved Willowherb *Epilobium montanum*, Hedge Mustard *Sisymbrium officinale*, Cleavers *Galium aparine* and Common Nettle *Urtica dioica*. Scrub species present frequently include Bramble *Rubus fruticosus* agg., Field Rose *Rosa arvensis*, Dogwood *Cornus sanguinea* and Hawthorn *Crataegus monogyna*. Tree saplings are present, concentrated in the south of the site include Wild Cherry *Prunus avium*, Horse Chestnut *Aesculus hippocastanum* and Ash *Fraxinus excelsior* (see Photograph 2).



Photograph 1 showing the continuous scrub / tall, ruderal mosaic on site



Photograph 2 showing the tree saplings in the south of the site

Trees

- 3.3 Scattered trees are present along the site boundaries (see Photograph 3). These are mainly semi-mature. Tree species include Ash *Fraxinus excelsior*, Beech *Fagus sylvatica*, Sycamore *Acer pseudoplatanus*, Wild Cherry *Prunus avium* and Pedunculate Oak *Quercus robur*.



Photograph 3 showing the scattered trees on site

Spoil

- 3.4 A spoil heap is present in the north-west of the site (see Photograph 4), as well as scattered throughout the site. This includes brash, rubble and other waste materials.



Photograph 4 showing the spoil heap in the north-west of the site

Boundaries and Other Habitats

- 3.5 Wooden fencing lines the site boundary on the north, south, west and part of the eastern boundaries. A section of the eastern boundary is also lined by a brick wall and the north of the eastern boundary is open to an area of scrub off site. A damaged container is present in the south of the site (see Photograph 5), large sections of the walls are missing, and ruderal species are colonising.



Photograph 5 showing the damaged container on site

PROTECTED SPECIES

Badger

- 3.6 Badgers *Meles meles* are protected under the Protection of Badgers Act 1992. This Act, for example, makes 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.
- 3.7 No evidence of Badger activity such as latrines or feeding remains was located on the site. Mammal digging is present around the container on site, this is concluded to be Fox *Vulpes vulpes* due to the size and scent of the digging. No Badger setts were located within the site or on the immediate site boundaries.

Bats

- 3.8 All bat species are protected species listed under the Conservation of Habitats and Species (Amendment) (EU Exit) Regulations 2019. Bats are also protected under The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended).
- 3.9 No buildings are present on site. The container holds **negligible** bat potential due to the large sections of missing walls, poor thermal capacity of the metal construction and the lack of crevices to provide shelter. The trees on site are mainly semi-mature and were inspected from the ground. A Beech *Fagus sylvatica* tree in the north-west corner features a rot hole (see Photograph 6). This has potential to support a bat roost. A Sycamore *Acer pseudoplatanus* on the west of the southern site boundary is covered in dense Ivy *Hedera helix* (see Photograph 7). This is a potential bat roosting feature. No evidence of bat use was found in either tree. These trees require further survey.



Photograph 6 showing rot holes in the Beech on site



Photograph 7 showing the dense ivy on Sycamore

- 3.10 Bats use linear landscape features, such as hedgerows and tree lines for foraging and commuting. The site supports tree lines around the site boundaries, it is possible bats use the tree line on the eastern and southern site boundaries for foraging.

Great Crested Newt

- 3.11 Great Crested Newt (GCN) *Triturus cristatus* is a protected species listed under the Conservation of Habitats and Species (Amendment) (EU Exit) Regulations 2019 and the species is fully protected under The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended).
- 3.12 No ponds exist on site or within 250 metres of the site. A large waterbody is present 210m north-east of the site. This is connected to flowing water and is likely to be stocked with fish. It is separated from the site by a railway and residential development. The site supports suitable terrestrial habitat for Great Crested Newt within the scrub, and tall ruderal vegetation.

Nesting Birds

- 3.13 All bird species are protected at their nest under The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended).
- 3.14 The trees and scrub on site, provide suitable nesting habitat for nesting birds.

INVASIVE SPECIES

- 3.15 No species listed in Schedule 9 Part II (plants) of The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) are present on site.

PROTECTED SITES

- 3.16 No statutory or non-statutory protected sites lie within the site or immediately adjacent to the site. The nearest statutory protected site lies 15m south of the site; south of Berry Brow. This is Clayton Vale Local Nature Reserve (LNR). It comprises a woodland valley that lines the River Medlock. Three further statutory designated sites lie within 3km of the site. The Rochdale Canal Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) lies 1.4km north of the site. This is important for its aquatic flora and standing water habitats. Hollinwood Branch Canal lies 2km east of the site. This is designated an LNR and a SSSI and is important for its mesotrophic standing water.
- 3.17 Three locally designated sites lie within 500m of the site. Brookdale Clough West and Brookdale Clough East are Sites of Biological Importance (SBI) that lie 200m north of the site, separated from the site by residential development, a railway and roads. These are important for their woodland habitats and bird populations. A section of Clayton Vale is also designated as an SBI. This lies 430m west of the site and is separated from the site by Berry Brow and Clayton Vale LNR. It is important for its ponds and wetland habitats.
- 3.18 The site lies within an SSSI Impact Risk Zone. This lists development types that may have an impact on designated sites nearby. Residential development is not listed as a concern.

4.0 ASSESSMENT

HABITATS

- 4.1 The Phase 1 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.
- 4.2 The habitats on site offer limited ecological value. The scrub and tall, ruderal mosaic offer cover for small mammals and a source of pollen and nectar for invertebrates. The scrub and trees offer nesting habitat for birds. All of the habitats are species-poor.

Development Context

- 4.3 The proposed development will cause the loss of all the habitats on the site, with the exception of some of the boundary trees which will be retained. The scheme has the potential to improve the biodiversity of the site through appropriate landscaping to include soft planting, trees and boundary features, plus the provision of gardens. The loss of scrub and trees, which are bird nesting habitat, can be mitigated for by the provision of bird nest boxes on the new dwelling.

PROTECTED SPECIES

Badger

- 4.4 No Badger sett was located on the site or immediately adjacent to the site. No evidence of Badger activity was found, such as latrines. Badger is not considered to be a constraint on development at this time.

Bats

- 4.5 Two trees on site were found to hold potential bat roosting features. A Sycamore tree in the south-west of the site holds a cover of Ivy dense enough to be used by roosting bats. This tree will be removed as part of the development. An aerial tree assessment is recommended on this tree to look for evidence of bat use. The Beech in the north-west corner of the site is to be retained, therefore no further survey work is necessary. No other trees on site support features which could be used by roosting bats. The damaged container on site provides negligible bat roost potential due to its lack of cover for bats. No other structures are present on site. The linear features of the site, such as the tree line on the east is to be retained, offering bat foraging and commuting habitat. The boundaries can be enhanced through planting.

Great Crested Newt

- 4.6 No ponds exist on the site. One waterbody lies within 250m of the site. This holds no connectivity to the site and is separated by infrastructure and houses. It is unlikely that this pond would be suitable for Great Crested Newts due to its large size and likely presence of fish. The site supports suitable terrestrial habitat for Great Crested Newt, within the scrub, which offer foraging and commuting habitat. However, given the

lack of breeding habitat in the locality, Great Crested Newt is not considered to be a constraint on development and is reasonably unlikely to occur on site. No further Great Crested Newt survey work is considered to be necessary.

Nesting Birds

- 4.7 Suitable nesting habitat for birds is present within the scrub and trees on site. In general, nesting birds can be mitigated for by allowing no works to potential nesting habitats to be carried out within the bird nesting season (which is generally March – August) unless a nesting bird survey is undertaken first.

PROTECTED SITES

- 4.8 No statutory or non-statutory protected sites exist on the site. The nearest statutory protected site lies on the opposite side of Berry Brow (Clayton Vale LNR). This leads onto a section of Clayton Vale which is also designated locally. The site lies within a SSSI Impact Risk Zone which does not list the development type proposed as a concern to designated sites nearby. The adjacent designated site should be protected during construction with a Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP). A habitat buffer is recommended to be left along the south of the site, along the road to further protect the designated site.

5.0 **RECOMMENDATIONS**

Further Survey

- 5.1 Protected species are a material consideration when a planning authority is considering a planning application. The presence of protected species, the effect of the proposed development and suitable mitigation, if required, must be established before planning permission can be granted. Following the findings from the Extended Phase 1 Habitat Survey, no protected species surveys are required. However, depending on the timing of the works, the following may be required:

- **Nesting Birds** - If any work to the scrub or trees needs to be carried out within the bird nesting season (generally March to August), then a nesting bird survey will be required by experienced personnel immediately prior to work commencing. Any active nests found must be protected with an adequately sized buffer zone.
- **Bats** – An aerial tree assessment is recommended on the Sycamore to be affected by the development, to inspect the identified Potential Roost Features for presence / likely absence of roosting bats.

Protected Sites and Adjacent Habitats

- 5.2 A Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) is recommended to be implemented, to prevent the construction phase having a detrimental impact on Clayton Vale Local Nature Reserve adjacent to the site. This should include details of prevention of run-off, noise and dust and a sensitive lighting scheme.

Habitat enhancement and creation

- 5.3 During the soft landscaping design, the following measures should be implemented to enhance the biodiversity value of the site:
- Where planting is proposed, this should include the provision of native and non-native flowering perennial, annual and shrub species, to provide a pollen and nectar source for invertebrates.
 - Bird and/or bat boxes could be erected onto the new development.
 - Tree planting – where practical, native tree species should be planted.

6.0 REFERENCES

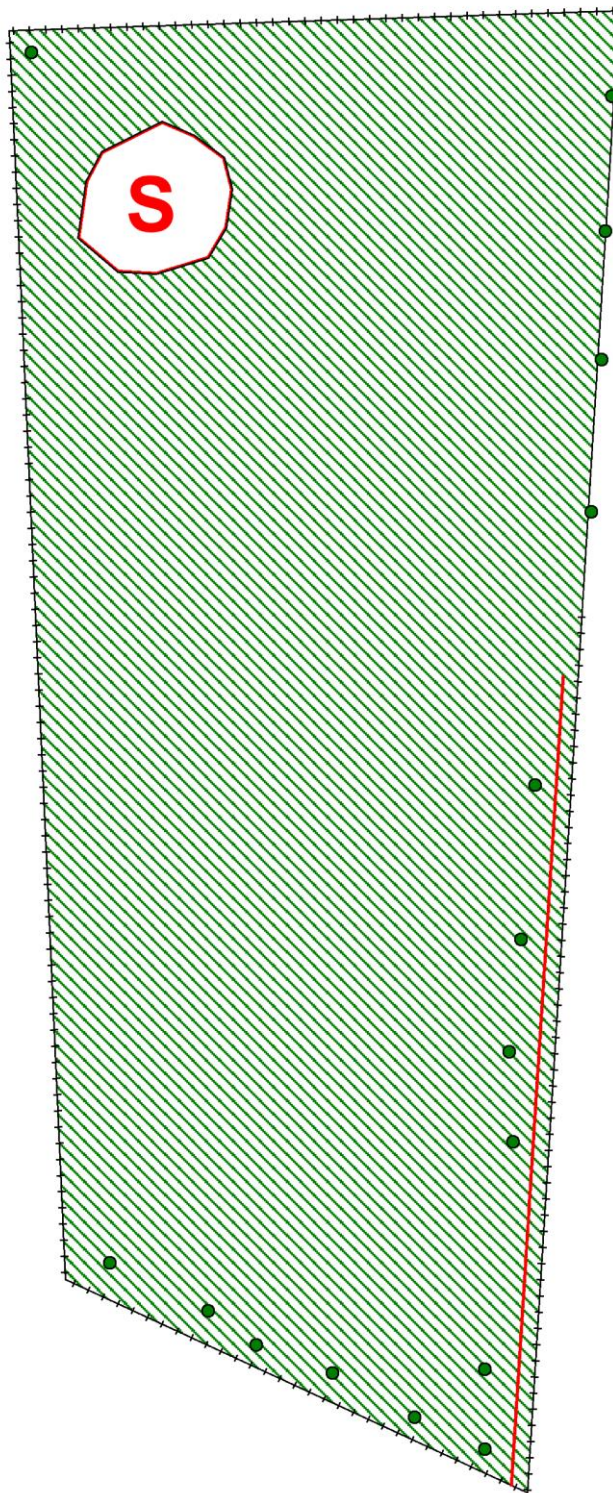
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PHASE 1 HABITAT MAP



Key

-  Continuous Scrub / Tall, Ruderal Herb Mosaic
-  Spoil
-  Tree
-  Fence
-  Wall

Phase 1 Habitat Map

29 Berry Brow, Clayton Vale,
Manchester

NOT TO SCALE

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Drawn by: RF
Date: 05/02/2020



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