ECOLOGICAL CONSTRAINTS APPRAISAL

SITE 1, SOUTH STREET, MANCHESTER

REC REFERENCE: 103019EC1R1

REPORT PREPARED FOR: AEW ARCHITECTS

DATE: AUGUST 2017



National Consultancy, Locally Delivered

A CONCEPT LIFE SCIENCES COMPANY

Issue/revision	Issue 1	Revision 1	Revision 2	Revision 3
Remarks	Draft	Updated		
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Project number	103019EC1R0	103019EC1R1		

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Site Address	Site 1, South Street, Manchester, M11 2EX
Grid Reference	SJ 881 975
Site Area	Approx. 0.6 ha
Current Site Use	The site comprises an area of amenity grassland with scattered trees.
Adjacent Site Use	The site is situated within central Manchester adjacent to the south of Openshaw Park.
Results	The site comprised an area of amenity grassland with scattered trees.
Conclusions and Recommendations	The site was found to have some ecological value for birds. No further surveys are required.

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

Resource And Environmental Consultants Ltd (REC) have been commissioned by AEW Architects to undertake an Ecological Constraints Appraisal at Site 1, South Street; hereafter referred to as the 'site'. The proposals comprise the development of residential houses and bungalows.

1.2 Site Description

The site comprises an area of amenity grassland bound by roads. Openshaw Park is located adjacent to the north of the site. Residential House are located to the west of the site. Commercial units are located to the east and the south.

Please refer to figure 1.1 below for an approximate site location plan.

Figure 1.1. Site Location Plan



1.3 Objectives

The purpose of the Ecological Constraints Assessment was to identify:

- The major habitats present;
- The potential for legally protected species to be present; and

- Additional ecological surveys likely to be required.

The Ecological Constraints Assessment included a desktop review and a site walkover. The results of this review were used to assess the nature conservation importance of the site. The potential for each habitat to support protected species was also noted. An Ecological Constraints Assessment does not constitute a full survey for protected species to standard survey methodologies, but is used as a tool to recommend which surveys are required for protected species (or other species of significant nature conservation interest). Recommendations for further ecological surveys, if necessary, are made at the end of the report.

2. SURVEY METHODOLOGY

2.1 Data Search and Consultation

The desktop study involved conducting database searches for statutory and non-statutory designated sites, legally protected species and features of interest within and immediately surrounding the site within a 1 km radius. The central grid reference of the site (SJ828479) was used as the central point of all searches. The baseline conditions were based on a review of existing available information including:

- MAGIC (Multi-Agency Geographical Information for the Countryside) website;
- Ordnance Survey mapping (to identify potentially notable habitats);
- Aerial photography (e.g. google mapping);
- Local Biodiversity Action Plan (LBAP); and,
- UK Biodiversity Action Plan (UKBAP).
- Local Biological Records Centre

2.2 Ecological Walkover

An ecological walkover of the site was carried out on 09th August 2017 by Celia Barlow BSc (Hons) MSc GradCIEEM. Weather conditions were warm, and dry. The main habitats within the site were recorded and these are illustrated in picture format within Section 3.2. The survey followed the 'Preliminary Ecological Appraisal' methodology as set out in the 'Guidelines for Preliminary Ecological Appraisal' (Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management, 2012). The site walkover provides information on the habitats in the survey area and identifies actual or potential presence of legally protected or otherwise notable species/habitats within or immediately adjacent (up to 30 m) to the site.

Plant names follow 'New Flora of the British Isles' (Stace, 2011). The common and scientific name of each of the botanical species is provided when first mentioned in the text, but only the common name is stated thereafter. All species identified during the site survey are listed in Appendix 1. In addition to establishing the baseline ecological interest within the area, the survey intended to identify areas where further surveys may be required, during the appropriate season.

2.3 Protected Species Assessment

The potential of the site to support legally protected or national/local BAP species was assessed from field observations carried out during the site walkover and combined with the results of the desk top study. The likelihood of occurrence of any protected and/or invasive species is ranked as follows and relies on habitat suitability and an evaluation of existing data:

- **Negligible** – while presence cannot be absolutely discounted, the site includes very limited or poor quality habitat for a particular species or species group. There may be no local returns from a data search and the surrounding habitats are considered unlikely to support wider populations of a species/species group. The site may also be outside or peripheral to the known natural range for a species/species group;

- **Low** – habitats within the site are of poor to moderate quality for a given species/species group. There are few or no returns from the data search, but presence cannot be discounted on the basis of national distribution, the nature of surrounding habitats, habitat fragmentation or recent on-site disturbance, etc.

- **Medium** – habitats within the site are of moderate quality providing opportunities for a given species/species group. Desk study reveals local occurrence or site is within the national distribution and with suitable surrounding habitat. Factors limiting the likelihood of occurrence may include small habitat area, habitat isolation, and/or disturbance; and,

- **High** – habitats within the site are of high quality for a given species/species group. Desk-top study provides evidence of local occurrence. The site is within/peripheral to a national or regional stronghold and/or has good quality surrounding habitat and good connectivity.

3. RESULTS

3.1 Data Search and Consultation

The site comprises an area of amenity grassland bound by roads. Openshaw Park is located adjacent to the north of the site. Residential Houses are located to the west of the site. Commercial units are located to the east and the south. An active railway line is located approximately 470 m to the south of the site. This may act as a commuting resource for avian species such as birds and bats. Birds and bats are anticipated to be present within the local area.

Consultation with Defra's MAGIC map website identified two areas of Deciduous Woodland UK BAP Priority Habitat, the closest of which is located 700 m to the south east of the site. No ponds were identified within 250 m of the site boundary.

3.1.1 Statutory and non-statutory sites

The desk study did not highlighted the presence of any Statutory or Non Statutory Designated Sites within the search area however the proposed development sites lies within the Impact Risk Zone of Hollinwood Branch Canal Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) and Local Nature Reserve (LNR).

3.1.2 Notable species

Consultation with Greater Manchester Local Record Centre (GMLRC) indicated that there were a number of species records in the study area. These included:

Amphibians –

No records of amphibians were identified during consultation with GMLRC.

Avifauna-

Consultation with the local records centre identified a record of little ringed plover (*Charadrius dubius*) located approximately 770 m west of the proposed development site. Dunnock *(Prunella modularis*) and house sparrow (*Passer domesticus*) records were also identified within the search area.

Bats-

Consultation with GMLRC identified the presence of common pipistrelle (*Pipistrellus pipistrellus*), pipistrelle species (*Pipistrellus sp.*) and noctule (*Nyctalus noctula*) bats within the 1 km search area.

Flora-

One record of grasswrack pondweed (*Potamogeton compressus*) was identified during consultation. This record was associated with Ashton Canal located approximately 670 m north of the site.

Invasive species -

No records of invasive species were identified during consultation with GMLRC.

Invertebrates –

No records of invertebrates were identified during consultation with GMLRC.

Reptiles –

Consultation with the local records centre identified one record of slow worm (*Anguis fragilis*) located approximately 1 km north east of the site boundary associated with an allotment.

Terrestrial mammal –

No records of terrestrial mammals were identified during consultation with GMLRC.

3.2 Habitats

The site consisted of an area of amenity grassland. Species present included perennial rye grass (*Lolium perenne*), cocks foot (*Dactylus glomerata*), white clover (*Trifolium repens*), common dandelion (*Taraxacum officinale*), daisy (*Bellis perennis*), ragwort (*Jacobaea vulgaris*), ribwort plantain (*Plantago lanceolata*), red fescue (*Festuca rubra*), smooth sow thistle (*Sonchus oleraceus*), spear thistle (*Cirsium vulgare*), wild oat grass (*Avena barbata*), creeping buttercup (*Ranunculus repens*), broadleaf plantain (*Plantago major*), creeping cinquefoil (*Potentilla reptans*) and broadleaved dock (*Rumex obtusifolius*).

Scattered trees were present within the site. Species included beech (*Fagus sylvatica*), sycamore (*Acer pseudoplatanus*), ash (*Fraxinus excelsior*), buddleia (*Buddleja davidii*), cherry (*Prunus avium*), silver birch (*Betula pendula*) poplar *(Poplus sp.*) and crack willow (*Salix fragilis*).

3.3 Protected species

Amphibians

No ponds were identified within 250 m of the site boundary. The site did not support any significant suitable terrestrial opportunities for the species. The site has been assessed as negligible to support amphibians.

Avifauna

The site provides some opportunities for breeding birds, in particular passerines which may use the scattered trees for nesting. However, the features present are common and widespread within the local area and as such the site is considered to have local (within the zone of influence) value with regards to birds.

Flora (native and non-native)

No notable species were identified within the site during the survey.

Invertebrates

There is no potential to support significant numbers of notable invertebrate species, however the site is anticipated to support a small range of common invertebrates.

Terrestrial mammals

The site provides good opportunities for foraging bats by way of the scattered trees and grassland. It is anticipated that the habitats on site will attract invertebrate prey for bats.

During the site survey a visual assessment of all trees and buildings within and adjacent to the site was undertaken to determine their potential to support bat roosts (as per the categories listed within the Good Practice Guidelines; Collins, 2016). All trees on site were in good condition and were assessed as negligible to support roosting bats.

No burrows or other evidence of terrestrial mammals were located during the site survey.

Reptiles

The habitats on site are predominantly unsuitable for the species, lacking the structural diversity necessary to support reptiles.

4. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

4.1 Designated sites

No non statutory designated sites were identified. One statutory site was identified however it is not anticipated that the proposed plans will have an effect on this site due to the small scale of the development.

4.2 Habitats

The habitats on site were predominately amenity grassland; this was assessed to be of negligible ecological value. Scattered trees were present within the site boundary and were assessed as being of limited ecological value to birds and bats.

4.3 Protected Species

The compensatory measures or further ecological surveys are recommended to ensure the proposed works are compliant with current wildlife legislation are detailed below. Note, these surveys are only recommended if these habitats are affected by the proposed works.

Avifauna

It is recommended that any vegetation removal is undertaken outside of the breeding bird season (generally considered to be March to September inclusive). However, should these works be required within the breeding bird season then it is recommended that a check for breeding birds is undertaken by a suitably experienced surveyor prior (within 24 hours) to works commencing. If a nest (or nest in construction) is found, a suitable stand-off area should be maintained until the young have fledged

It is recommended that a series of multi-purpose bird and bat boxes be installed within the site post development to enhance the sites opportunities for breeding birds. It is also recommended that any planting for landscaping or amenity purposes use native and species rich plants of local provenance to increase the sites value as a foraging resource.

5. REFERENCES

- Collins J (2016). Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines, 3rd editio
Conservation Trust.
- JNCC (2004). The Bat Workers Manual. 3rd Edition.
- Mitchell-Jones A, J, (2004). Bat Mitigation Guidelines, English Nature, Peterborough.