

14 December 2011

Reedley Planning
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To Whom It May Concern,

RE: Law Farm, Simonstone, Burnley – Extended Phase 1 Habitat Survey

Bowland Ecology was commissioned to undertake an extended phase 1 habitat survey at Law Farm, Higher Trapp Lane, Simonstone (NGR: SD 779 350). A site visit was conducted on the 9th December 2011, by James Segar MSc BSc (Hons). Proposals at the site are for the widening of an access track and increase of the visibility splay. The site area is approximately 0.01 ha.

The survey followed Phase 1 habitat survey methodology (JNCC, 1993). This involves walking the whole site, mapping and describing each habitat present (for example; woodland, grassland, scrub). A colour coded map of the habitats on site is produced (Appendix 2), with corresponding target notes of ecologically interesting features (Appendix 1). The survey was extended such that evidence of fauna and faunal habitat is also recorded (for example; droppings, tracks or specialist habitat such as ponds for breeding amphibians). The extended Phase 1 habitat survey is a modified version of the Phase 1 habitat survey and follows the approach recommended by the Guidelines for Baseline Ecological Assessment (IEA, 1995). The survey area included the footprint of the proposals along with a buffer area 30m wide. A desk study was also carried out using the MAGIC website (<http://magic.defra.gov.uk/>) and the National Biodiversity Network (www.nbn.org.uk). A search for BAP habitats within the study area was made using Nature on the Map (www.natureonthemap.naturalengland.org.uk). The desk study search area included the site and a 1.5km buffer surrounding the site. Although the survey was not carried out at the optimal time of year, conditions were such that a sufficient ecological assessment of the proposals was possible, given the scale of the works.

A search of MAGIC showed that no statutory protected sites or local nature reserves were located within 1.5km of the proposals. A search of nature on the map showed lowland dry acid grassland, a UK and Lancashire BAP habitat to be present approximately 750m south and approximately 950m north west of the proposals. A search on the National Biodiversity Network Gateway did not reveal any relevant protected or notable species records within the 10km grid square SD73.

The works involve removal of a stone wall, a fence, and a small area of scrub. The road and visibility splay will then be widened into the adjacent field and a new boundary will be built. The majority of impacted habitat is species poor grassland dominated by common grassland species including fescue (*Festuca* sp.), Yorkshire fog (*Holcus lanatus*), common sorrel (*Rumex acetosa*), common mouse ear (*Cerastium fontanum*) and creeping buttercup (*Ranunculus repens*). The sward is short, heavily grazed and dominated by grasses. A small

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stand of hawthorn (*Crataegus monogyna*) scrub is also present within the footprint of the works and will be removed. No ground flora is present except for a small amount of grazed grassland along the edge of the scrub. It is in a disturbed location, adjacent to the farm entrance and within a heavily grazed field. Although the scrub is not considered to have high ecological value within the surrounding area, it does provide potential breeding bird habitat. The wall to be removed forms the boundary of the species poor grassland field at the north of the proposals. The wall is in good condition, the mortar is generally intact and it is not colonised with plant species. It is considered to have a low ecological value within the context of the surrounding area. Small areas of amenity grassland will also be lost due to the enlargement of the visibility splay. These areas are considered to have a low ecological value within the context of the surrounding area.

To the south of the access track the wall, farmhouse and gardens will not be impacted by the proposals. The garden is dominated by amenity grassland and ornamental shrub. Two semi-mature trees are also present, a bird cherry (*Prunus avium*) and a silver birch (*Betula pendula*). The introduced shrub is dominated by laurel (*Prunus laurocerasus*), *Buddleja* sp. and *Cotoneaster* sp.. Although this area is not impacted by the proposals, there is potential for trimming to be required for access. Although the introduced shrub is not considered to have high ecological value within the surrounding area, it does provide potential breeding bird habitat.

Opposite the proposed works, to the east of Trapp Lane, a stand of semi-natural broadleaved woodland, a species poor field and a small stream are present. Although these features are not included within the proposals, they were surveyed to assess any potential indirect impacts. The woodland is dominated by alder (*Alnus glutinosa*) and beech (*Fagus sylvatica*) with a dense understorey of *Rhododendron* sp. and snowberry (*Symphoricarpos albus*) restricting the development of ground flora. Although this area will not be impacted by the proposals, some canopy braches overhang the road and therefore may be subject to removal for access. None of the trees with overhanging branches provided potential bat roost habitat as there were no suitable features, however, they do provide potential breeding bird habitat. The stream is shallow, has a sand and stone base with short but steep earth banks approx 0.5m high. No aquatic vegetation is present and emergent vegetation is limited to a small stand of reed canary grass (*Phalaris arundinacea*) and scattered soft rush (*Juncus effusus*). The fast flowing stream does not provide suitable otter, water vole or white clawed crayfish habitat. Although it is considered that the proposals are unlikely to impact the stream, Environment Agency (EA) pollution prevention guidelines should be adhered to if there is any potential for sediment from the works entering the stream, in particular pollution prevention guideline 5 (PPG5).

No ponds were present within 250m of the proposals and therefore it is considered unlikely that amphibians will be impacted, including great crested newts.

To conclude, it is considered that the habitats to be impacted by the proposals are of low ecological value within the context of the surrounding area. The impacts are also considered to be low; the loss of a small area of species poor grassland, the loss of a small, disturbed stand of scrub and the loss of a stone wall. With the exception of breeding birds, no protected species impacts are envisaged by the proposals. To mitigate any impact to breeding birds, all tree or scrub clearance works should be completed between September and February, outside the breeding bird season. The loss of a small stand of breeding bird habitat in an exposed and disturbed location is not considered significant within the context of the surrounding habitats. If there is potential for sediment to enter the stream, EA PPG5 should be implemented during the works. No other protected species issues were identified during the survey.

Yours Faithfully,



James Segar MSc BSc (Hons).
Ecologist

December 14, 2011

REFERENCES:

IEA (1995) *Guidelines for Baseline Ecological Assessment*. Chapman and Hall.

Joint Nature Conservation Committee (1993). *Handbook for Phase 1 Habitat Survey: A technique for environmental audit*. JNCC

Legal Informative

Birds

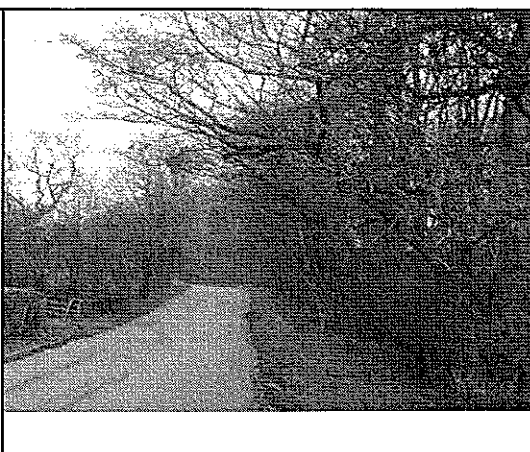
All birds, their nests and eggs are protected by The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) and it is thus an offence, to:

- Intentionally kill, injure or take any wild bird;
- Intentionally take, damage or destroy the nest of any wild bird whilst it is in use or being built;
- Intentionally take or destroy the egg of any wild bird;
- Use traps or similar items to kill, injure or take wild birds;
- Intentionally or recklessly disturb any wild bird listed on Schedule 1 while it is nest building, or at a nest containing eggs or young, or disturb the dependent young of such a bird.

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Appendix A

TN	Description	Photograph
1	Small stand of scrub adjacent to the farm entrance. Comprised of hawthorn (<i>Crataegus monogyna</i>), the stand is in a disturbed location between a heavily grazed field and the farm entrance. The stand is relatively small and does not act as a significant corridor between habitats Although the ecological value is low in the context of the surrounding habitats, it does provide potential breeding bird habitat.	
2	A mature hedgerow dominated by dogwood (<i>Cornus sanguinea</i>), hawthorn and dog rose (<i>Rosa canina</i>). Ground flora is limited to small stands of ivy (<i>Hedera helix</i>), creeping buttercup (<i>Ranunculus repens</i>) and immature elder (<i>Sambucus nigra</i>). The hedgerow provides potential breeding bird habitat.	
3	Small area of introduced shrub dominated by laurel (<i>Prunus laurocerasus</i>), <i>Buddleja</i> sp., and <i>Cotoneaster</i> sp.. Other non-native garden plants are also present within the garden. Amenity grassland is also present within the garden along with two semi-mature trees; a bird cherry (<i>Prunus avium</i>) and a silver birch (<i>Betula pendula</i>). The shrub provide potential breeding bird habitat.	
4	Shallow, rocky field drain flowing along the edge of a field, adjacent to the road verge opposite the farm entrance. No aquatic vegetation is present and emergent vegetation is limited to a small stand of reed canary grass (<i>Phalaris arundinacea</i>), and scattered soft rush (<i>Juncus effusus</i>). Adjacent to the stream a small, immature hedgerow is present. The stream is shallow, with a rock and sand base and does not provide suitable habitat for otter (<i>Lutra lutra</i>), water vole (<i>Arvicola amphibius</i>) or white clawed crayfish (<i>Austropotamobius pallipes</i>).	

5	Area of semi-natural broadleaved woodland to the east of Trapp Lane. Dominated by alder (<i>Alnus glutinosa</i>) and beech (<i>Fagus sylvatica</i>) the understorey is dominated by dense stands of <i>Rhododendron</i> sp. and snowberry (<i>Symphoricarpos albus</i>). Large canopy branches overhang the road in places. Although none were considered suitable to provide potential bat roost habitat due to the lack of suitable features, the trees do provide potential breeding bird habitat.	
6	Heavily grazed, species poor grassland adjacent to the entrance track. Species present are dominated by common agricultural species such as fescue (<i>Festuca</i> sp.), Yorkshire fog (<i>Holcus lanatus</i>), bent grass (<i>Agrostis</i> sp.), creeping buttercup (<i>Ranunculus repens</i>), common sorrel (<i>Rumex acetosa</i>) and common mouse ear (<i>Cerastium fontanum</i>).	

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Appendix B

