

EXTENDED PHASE 1 HABITAT SURVEY OF
LAND OFF HENTHORN ROAD, CLITHEROE,
LANCASHIRE

2017



**RACHEL
HACKING
ECOLOGY**

Bowden Hall, Bowden Lane, Marple, Stockport, Cheshire, SK6 6ND

Tel: 0161 465 8971 Mobile: 07734 296424

mail@rachelhackingecology.co.uk

www.rachelhackingecology.co.uk

CONTENTS

1. INTRODUCTION	2
2. METHODOLOGY	3
3. RESULTS	
HABITATS	4
PROTECTED SPECIES	8
INVASIVE SPECIES	9
PROTECTED SITES	9
4. ASSESSMENT	10
5. RECOMMENDATIONS	12
6. REFERENCES	13
PHASE 1 HABITAT MAP	

1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Rachel Hacking Ecology Limited was commissioned in 2016 by The Strategic Land Group Limited to carry out an Extended Phase 1 Habitat Survey of land off Henthorn Road, Clitheroe, Lancashire. The site will be the subject of an outline planning application for residential development, including up to 25 units with associated access and an attenuation pond. This is for Phase 2 of an existing residential development to the north. An Extended Phase 1 Habitat Survey is required to provide an overview of the habitats present within the site and to assess any potential protected species issues on the site.

Site Description

- 1.2 The site is located off to the south-west of the Clitheroe town centre and lies south of Henthorn Road (O.S. grid reference: SD732406 – see Figure 1). The proposed development site lies within the eastern half of the site and currently comprises permanent pasture. Mature trees and hedgerows exist on boundaries of the site. Pendleton Brook borders the site to the south. A railway line borders the site to the east. To the north lies a construction site. Further agricultural land lies to the north-west and west of the site.

Aims of Survey

- 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, 2010. 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, for example, 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. Pendleton Brook was also assessed for its suitability to support Water Vole and Otter. This included searching the banks for evidence of Water Vole activity such as burrows, latrines, feeding remains and paw prints and searching for evidence of Otter activity such as holts and spraints.
- 2.3 The site was also searched for the presence of invasive, non-native plant species such as Japanese Knotweed and Giant Hogweed.
- 2.4 Dr. Rachel Hacking (Principal Ecologist), with assistance from Ben Crossthwaite (trainee Ecologist), carried out the survey on 22nd February 2017. The weather during the survey was cool with showers. Rachel has over sixteen years of experience in habitat and protected species surveys. February is outside of the optimum survey period for habitat assessments. However, given the type of habitats present on the site, a full assessment could be made at this time. There were no constraints to the survey and the site could be fully accessed.

3.0 RESULTS

HABITATS

- 3.1 The Phase 1 Habitat Map can be found at the back of the report. The habitats on site are described below.

Species-poor Semi-improved Grassland

- 3.2 The majority of the site supports semi-improved grassland (see Photographs 1), which is species-poor. It appears to be managed by grazing although no livestock were present during the survey. The species within the grassland include Yorkshire Fog *Holcus lanatus*, Creeping Bent *Agrostis stolonifera*, Perennial Rye-grass *Lolium perenne*, Creeping Buttercup *Ranunculus repens*, Ribwort Plantain *Plantago lanceolata* and Common Sorrel *Rumex acetosa*. Within the grassland to the east, outside of the red line boundary, Pignut *Conopodium majus* occurs sporadically within the sward. Beneath the tree canopies along the river edge and the northern boundary of the site, species typical of shade occur, including Lesser Celandine *Ranunculus ficaria* and Lords and Ladies *Arum maculatum*.



Photograph 1 showing the semi-improved grassland looking west

Marshy Grassland

- 3.3 Outside of the red line boundary, a small patch of marshy grassland exists next to Pendleton Brook. Here the grassland supports Soft Rush *Juncus effusus* and ruderal species such as Cow Parsley *Anthriscus sylvestris*.



Photograph 2 showing the marshy grassland

Flowing Water

- 3.4 Pendleton Brook flows along the southern boundary of the site (see Photographs 3 and 4). The brook is species-poor and no aquatic vegetation was found during the survey. The banks comprise grassland or bare mud. The water level was high during the survey.



Photograph 3 showing Pendleton Brook next to the red line boundary



Photograph 4 showing Pendleton Brook further west

3.5 Hedgerows

Species-poor hedgerows exist along the northern boundary of the site. These comprise mainly mature Hawthorn *Crataegus monogyna* and Hazel *Corylus avellana*. The hedgerows support gaps in places. A Leylandii hedge exists on an adjoining property in the far north-eastern corner of the site.

3.6 Trees and Scattered Scrub

Mature trees exist along the northern boundary of the site (see Photograph 5) and along the banks of Pendleton Brook. One mature tree exists on site (see Photograph 6). The majority of the trees are Ash *Fraxinus excelsior* with some Horse Chestnut *Aesculus hippocastanum*, Sycamore *Acer pseudoplatanus* and Alder *Alnus glutinosa*. Scattered scrub exists in places. This comprises individual mature Hawthorn *Crataegus monogyna*.



Photograph 5 showing the trees along the northern boundary of the site



Photograph 6 showing the Ash tree on site

PROTECTED SPECIES

Great Crested Newt

- 3.7 Great Crested Newt *Triturus cristatus* is a European Protected Species (EPS) under the Conservation (Natural Habitats etc.) Regulations 1994. This is implemented in the UK through the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010 and the species is fully protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended).
- 3.8 No waterbodies exist on the entire site. No ponds exist within 250 metres of the site. The site supports limited terrestrial habitat for Great Crested Newt, within the hedgerows and tree belts. The majority of the site is short grassland, which is not considered to be optimum terrestrial habitat for Great Crested Newt.

Bats

- 3.9 All bat species are European Protected Species under the Conservation (Natural Habitats etc.) Regulations 1994. This is implemented in the UK through the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010. Bats are also protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended), the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 and the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act (NERC, 2006). It is illegal to disturb or damage a bat roost.
- 3.10 No built structures exist on site. The mature trees on site were inspected from the ground. Some appear to support shallow cavities and limb damage and some are covered in Ivy *Hedera helix*, although the Ivy is not considered to be dense enough to support bats. Bats use linear features to forage and commute along and therefore, it is possible that bats forage and commute along the tree belts and Pendleton Brook.

Badger

- 3.11 Badgers *Meles meles* are protected under the Protection of Badgers Act 1992 and The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended). These Acts, for example, make 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.
- 3.12 No Badger sett was located on the site, or within 30 metres of the site, during the survey visit. No evidence of Badger activity was located on the site or within 30 metres of the site.

Water Vole

- 3.13 Water Vole *Arvicola amphibius* is fully protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended). This act, for example, makes it illegal to intentionally kill, injure or take (capture) a Water Vole or intentionally or recklessly damage, destroy or obstruct access to any structure or place which Water Voles use for shelter or protection or disturb Water Voles while they are using such a place.

- 3.14 No suitable Water Vole habitat exists on the site. No evidence of Water Vole activity was located along Pendleton Brook during the survey. The banks were searched for burrows, latrines, feeding remains and foot prints. The majority of the banks of the brook are not considered to be suitable to support Water Vole burrows. The water levels appear to fluctuate. Some banks have partially collapsed, towards the eastern end of the site. Other banks of the brook are shallow.

Otter

- 3.15 Otter *Lutra lutra* is a European Protected Species under the Conservation (Natural Habitats etc.) Regulations 1994. This is implemented in the UK through the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010. Otter is also protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended).

- 3.16 No field signs of Otter could be located during the survey, such as spraints or footprints. No areas suitable for an Otter holt were found.

Nesting Birds

- 3.17 All bird species are protected at their nest under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended).

- 3.18 The trees, mature scrub and hedgerows offer suitable nesting habitat for birds. The site itself is not considered to be suitable for ground-nesting birds. A public right of way exists along the southern half of the site and this is frequently used by dog walkers.

INVASIVE SPECIES

- 3.19 No invasive, non-native species were located on site, or immediately adjacent to the site, during the survey.

PROTECTED SITES

- 3.20 No statutorily protected or non-statutorily protected sites exist on the site or immediately adjacent to the site. No statutorily protected sites exist within 2km of the site. The nearest non-statutory protected site is the River Ribble Biological Heritage Site (BHS) which lies over 500 metres to the north-west of the site, on the other side of Henthorn Road.

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 main habitat within the proposed development site is species-poor grassland, managed by grazing. This offers limited ecological value but does provide a limited source of pollen and nectar for invertebrates. The mature trees and hedgerows offer ecological value, by providing wildlife corridors and nesting habitat for birds.

Development Context

- 4.3 The construction zone of the development proposals includes the **western** half of the site. The banks of Pendleton Brook and the brook itself will be protected through an easement from the development zone, which will include the retention of the public right of way.
- 4.4 The majority of the mature trees will be retained. Two trees are to be felled within the red line application boundary. These are a northern boundary Ash tree (T26) and the Ash tree on site (T30) (see TPM Landscape Tree Survey Report which refers to the trees and from which the tree numbers are taken). A further two trees are recommended for felling to the east of the red line boundary (T11 and T16). The loss of these trees can be mitigated for by planting native trees elsewhere on the site (e.g. on the northern boundary of the site where gaps currently exist).
- 4.5 Given the buffer zone between the construction zone and Pendleton Brook and the protection and enhancement of the boundary habitats, it is not considered that there will be a detrimental effect on any ecologically valuable habitat on site. The scheme has the opportunity to bring biodiversity gain to the site.

PROTECTED SPECIES

Great Crested Newt

- 4.6 No ponds exist on the site. No ponds exist within 250 metres of the site. The site offers limited terrestrial habitat for Great Crested Newt. Potential terrestrial habitat exists within the boundaries of the site which are to be retained and protected. Due to the lack of suitable breeding habitat in the locality, Great Crested Newt is not considered to be a constraint on development and no further newt survey work is required.

Bats

- 4.7 No structures exist on the site. The majority of the trees on site are to be retained. Two trees are to be felled as part of the development and a further two trees recommended for felling. These trees should be section-felled and/or a daytime bat survey using endoscopes be undertaken of them close to the time of felling. No further bat survey work is considered to be necessary at this time.
- 4.8 Bats are likely to forage along Pendleton Brook and the hedgerow and tree belts. A sensitive lighting scheme should be implemented as part of the development and artificial lighting designed so as to avoid light spillage onto the boundary vegetation and the brook, to protect bat foraging habitat. This can be in the form of cowls on the lights, low-level lighting and only using lighting where absolutely necessary.

Badger

- 4.9 No Badger sett or evidence of Badger activity was located on the site or within 30 metres of the site. No further Badger survey is required and Badgers are not considered to be a constraint on development at this time.

Water Vole

- 4.10 No evidence of Water Vole was located during the survey. Pendleton Brook is considered to be sub-optimal habitat for Water Vole, due to the structure of the banks and the lack of aquatic vegetation. The brook, and its banks, are being protected and enhanced by an easement from the development. Therefore, no deleterious effects are expected on the watercourse. No further Water Vole survey work or mitigation is required.

Otter

- 4.11 No field signs of Otter could be located during the survey. The canal and its banks are not being affected by the development proposals. No further Otter survey work or mitigation is considered to be necessary.

Nesting Birds

- 4.12 The site supports suitable nesting habitat for birds. If work to the trees, mature scrub or hedgerows will proceed within the bird nesting season (generally March-August), then a nesting bird check will be required immediately prior to any work. Nesting birds can be somewhat mitigated for by allowing no works to be carried out to suitable nesting habitats within the bird nesting season.

5.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

Protected Species

- 5.1 Protected species are a material consideration when a planning authority is considering a planning application. The presence of protected species, the affect 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, the following may be required:

- **Nesting Birds** - If any vegetation clearance work needs to be carried out within the bird nesting season (generally March to August), then a nesting bird survey will be required by site personnel immediately prior to work commencing.

- 5.2 Site clearance should be undertaken with care. If any protected species or evidence of protected species is discovered at any time during site clearance or construction then work must temporarily cease and an ecologist be contacted for advice.

Pendleton Brook

- 5.3 An easement from the brook has been designed into the development proposals. This buffer zone will aim to prevent any pollution from the development reaching the canal. If necessary, the construction can be undertaken using a Construction Ecological Management Plan (CEMP), to further protect the watercourse.

Habitat Enhancement

- 5.4 It is recommended that the following measures are taken into account to increase the biodiversity of the site.
- Soft landscaping should include the provision of native and non-native flowering perennial species and/or berry-bearing shrubs, to provide a pollen and nectar source for invertebrates and a food source for birds and small mammals.
 - A sensitive lighting scheme should be adopted, to avoid unnecessary lighting of potential bat foraging and commuting corridors such as site boundaries and Pendleton Brook.
 - Where possible, bird and bat boxes could be erected onto any retained mature trees. These boxes should be situated approximately 2 metres off the ground and facing south, south-east or south-west.

6.0 REFERENCES

JNCC. *Phase 1 Habitat Survey – a technique for environmental audit*, JNCC, Updated 2010.

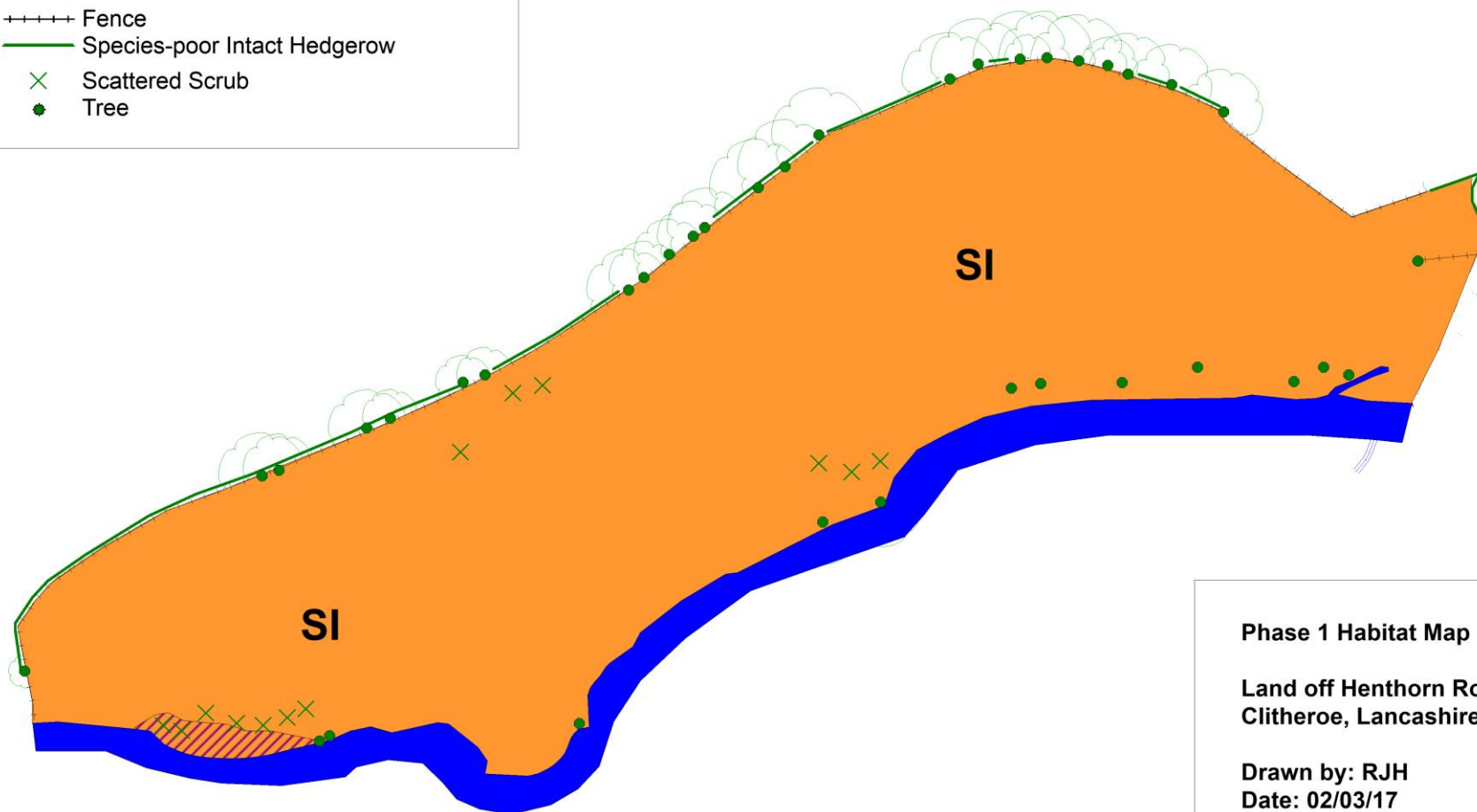
Preston, C.D., Pearman, D. & Dines, T. (2002). *New Atlas of the British and Irish Flora*. Oxford University Press.

Stace, C. A. (2010). *New Flora of the British Isles, 3rd Edition*. Cambridge University Press.

PHASE 1 HABITAT MAP

KEY

-  Flowing Water
-  Marshy Grassland
-  Species-poor Semi-improved Grassland
-  Fence
-  Species-poor Intact Hedgerow
-  Scattered Scrub
-  Tree

**Phase 1 Habitat Map**

Land off Henthorn Road,
Clitheroe, Lancashire

Drawn by: RJH
Date: 02/03/17

NOT TO SCALE

Rachel Hacking Ecology Ltd.