



PRELIMINARY ECOLOGICAL APPRAISAL

- Land at Clerk Laithe Lodge, Newton-in-Bowland, Lancashire -

PRELIMINARY ECOLOGICAL APPRAISAL

- Land at Clerk Laithe Lodge, Newton-in-Bowland, Lancashire -

A report for

Peter Hitchen
Architects

Peter Hitchen Architects Ltd

Marathon House
The Sidings Business Park
Whalley
Clitheroe
BB7 9SE

Report authors



PENNINE Ecological

24 The Highgrove
Heaton
Bolton
BL1 5PX

Tel/Fax. (01204) 844545

email: bob@pennineecological.co.uk

web: www.pennineecological.co.uk

Robert N. Leatham B.Sc. (Hons.), P. dip.

June 2020

PRELIMINARY ECOLOGICAL APPRAISAL

- Land at Clerk Laithe Lodge, Newton-in-Bowland, Lancashire -

CONTENTS	PAGE NO.
PART 1	INTRODUCTION:
1.1	Reasons for Survey.....1
1.2	Site Location1
1.3	Site Status.....2
1.4	Survey Constraints3
PART 2	SURVEY RESULTS:
2.1	Vegetation / Habitat Survey.....4
2.2	Protected Species Surveys.....8
PART 3	ECOLOGICAL EVALUATION & RECOMMENDATIONS:
3.1	Evaluation of Survey & Recommendations.....10
PART 4	REFERENCES:
4.1	References.....12
APPENDIX 1:	<i>Site Photographs</i>
	<i>Map 1: Extended Phase 1 Habitat Survey</i>

PART 1 INTRODUCTION:

1.1 REASONS FOR SURVEY:

PENNINE *Ecological* have been commissioned to undertake a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal and protected species surveys / assessment of Land at Clerk Laithe Lodge, Newton-in-Bowland, Lancashire.

The study includes a vegetation and badger survey together with assessment for other potential protected species issues.

The report includes a full evaluation of the ecological significance of the survey findings.

The surveys are required due to proposals for a farm shop and associated amenity features, parking and landscaping. The proposed site plan is shown below;



1.2 SITE LOCATION:

The site is located approximately 500m north of the village of Newton-in-Bowland in a rural location off the B6478 Slaidburn Road. The sites central National Grid Reference is SD 6984 5094.

A Google Earth image of the site/survey area is shown below;



1.3 SITE STATUS:

A desk top consultation study with Lancashire County Council was not undertaken for this study. However searches for statutory sites were undertaken as follows;

Statutory Sites:

Details of statutory sites were sought from the Natural England web site search:

<http://www.natureonthemap.naturalengland.org.uk/MagicMap.aspx>

The site falls within the Forest of Bowland Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB). Further details are provided on the following link; <https://landscapesforlife.org.uk/about-aonbs/aonbs/forest-bowland>

Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) Impact Risk Zones (IRZ's):

The site falls within distant SSSI Impact Risk Zones (IRZ's) associated with Bell Sykes Meadows SSSI, approximately 2.12km north east of the site. However the nature / size and scale of the development does not require notification to Natural England. are provided on the following link;

<https://designatedsites.naturalengland.org.uk/UnitDetail.aspx?UnitId=1022957>

There are no other statutory wildlife sites within 500m of the site.

1.3.2 Non-Statutory Sites:

There are no known County Biological Heritage Sites (*BHS*) associated with the site. There may be sites within 500m of the site's boundaries however this would require verification by a desk top consultation with LCC.

1.4 SURVEY CONSTRAINTS:

The survey was conducted on 15th June 2020 which is an optimal time for Extended Phase 1 Habitat Survey.

There were no constraints to protected species surveys / assessments and the site was fully accessible.

PART 2 SURVEY RESULTS:

2.1 EXTENDED PHASE 1 HABITAT SURVEY:

2.1.1 Extended Phase 1 Habitat Survey Methodology:

An Extended Phase 1 Habitat Survey (*Nature Conservancy Council 1990*) of the study area was undertaken on June 15th 2020. The site's habitats were mapped and higher vascular plant species were recorded and given abundance values according to the standard DAFOR scale, where:

D	=	Dominant
A	=	Abundant
F	=	Frequent
O	=	Occasional
R	=	Rare

Where appropriate these values can be prefixed by the letter L (locally) or V (very), to provide more subtle biogeographical data.

2.1.2 Habitats Present:

A1.1.2 Mixed plantation woodland
A2.2 Scattered scrub
B2.2 Semi-improved neutral grassland
B4 Improved grassland
B6 Poor semi-improved grassland
C3.1 Tall ruderal herb
J2.2.2 Defunct species-poor hedge
J2.4 Fence
J2.5 Wall
J4 Bare ground (with sparse short perennial vegetation on margins)

2.1.3 General Description:

The area affected by development is approximately 50m x 40m in maximum dimensions and is dominated almost entirely by improved cattle grazed pasture and hard standing gravel access areas / bare ground.

For context purposes a wider area around the site was included within the survey, as defined on Map 1, Appendix 1 and on the aerial image on page 2 of this report.

The proposed development area is improved cattle grazed pasture with a small area of tall ruderal herb dominated by common nettle in the south west corner of the field. The

grassland is dominated by perennial rye-grass, Yorkshire-fog and crested dog's-tail with some ruderal herb colonisation.

In terms of the habitats in the wider surrounding area these are unaffected by development and include two areas of semi-mature broadleaved woodland planted by the landowner over the last 10-15 years. A mix of native species have been planted and include; pedunculate oak, ash, silver birch, rowan and guelder rose.

A very small patch of grassland at the site entrance supports a good diversity of species including; common knapweed, meadow vetchling and crosswort. The area is fenced from grazing and the majority of the compartment is dominated by a tall rank sward of false oat-grass.

A recently planted hedge with beech, hawthorn, hazel and willow species is present along Slaidburn Road.

2.1.4 Target Notes:

Target Note 1: Improved Grassland:

This habitat dominates the footprint of the proposed development site and comprises cattle grazed improved pasture. The following species were recorded.

<u>Species:</u>	<u>Abundance:</u>
Perennial rye-grass	D
Crested dog's-tail	A/F
Yorkshire-fog	F
Meadow foxtail	F
Creeping buttercup	F
White clover	F
Cock's-foot	VLF
Common nettle	VLF
Creeping thistle	O
Broad-leaved dock	O
Common mouse-ear	O
Common sorrel	O/R
Smooth sow-thistle	R
Eyebright species	R (one plant in field corner)

Target Note 2: Semi-improved Neutral Grassland (*field margin / outside development area*):

A very small patch of grassland at the site entrance supports a good diversity of species including; common knapweed, meadow vetchling and crosswort. The area is fenced from grazing and the majority of the compartment to the rear is dominated by a tall rank sward of false oat-grass. This Target Note relates only to the grassland margin with the gravel hard standing, approximately 8m x 2m in extent.

The following species were recorded;

<u>Species:</u>	<u>Abundance:</u>
False oat-grass	A
Meadow foxtail	F
Yorkshire-fog	F
Meadow vetchling	LF
Black knapweed	LF
Crosswort	LF
Yarrow	LF
Red fescue	LF
Rough meadow-grass	O
Germander speedwell	O
Bush vetch	O
Soft-rush	O/R
Cow parsley	O/R
Meadowsweet	O/R
Hogweed	R

Target Note 3: Semi-mature Broadleaved Plantation Woodland (*outside development area*):

A linear area of semi-mature broadleaved woodland along the western margin of the survey area and planted by the landowner over the last 10-15 years. The woodland surveyed is approximately 100m x 14m and fenced from grazing.

Trees / shrubs present include; rowan, silver birch, ash, pedunculate oak, cherry species, hazel and rarely guelder rose. The ground flora reflects previous management as improved pasture and is dominated by Yorkshire-fog and smooth meadow-grass with colonising ruderal herbs such as common nettle.

Target Note 4: Semi-mature Broadleaved Plantation Woodland (*outside development area*):

An area of semi-mature broadleaved woodland is present in the north eastern corner of the survey area and was planted by the landowner over the last 10-15 years.

Trees / shrubs present include; ash, pedunculate oak, cherry species and goat willow. The ground flora reflects previous management as improved pasture and is dominated by Yorkshire-fog with colonising ruderal herbs such as common nettle.

2.2 PROTECTED SPECIES SURVEYS:

During the Habitat Survey additional surveys were undertaken where appropriate for the presence of other potential protected species. The following surveys were undertaken.

2.2.1 Badger Survey:

Method:

A badger survey was undertaken of the site. The badger survey used standard techniques for establishing the use of the site by badger, and includes searches for evidence of badgers including:

- Setts
- Pathways
- Footprints
- Latrines
- Foraging areas
- Scratching posts
- Boundary searches for runs, pathways and latrines.

The survey results are outlined below.

Results:

Sett Search:

The survey found no setts on site.

Search for Foraging Signs and Pathways:

The site was thoroughly searched for badger pathways and signs of foraging. No sign of badger activity was found therefore it can be concluded that the species is not using this area for foraging or commuting.

Boundary Search:

All of the boundaries of the site were walked and examined for potential runs, pathways and latrines. The search found no evidence to suggest badger activity along any of the site boundaries.

The absence of any activity signs indicates that badgers are not entering the site. The absence of latrines indicates a lack of territorial activity in the near vicinity of the site.

2.2.2 Bats:

During the survey an assessment of bat roost potential and foraging habitats was undertaken. Bats are comprehensively protected by European legislation.

There are no structures affected by the development that have potential to support bat roosts.

2.2.3 Other Protected Species:

Issues in relation to other potential protected species where no specific survey was undertaken are assessed in the following section.

PART 3 ECOLOGICAL EVALUATION & RECOMMENDATIONS:

3.1 EVALUATION OF SURVEY & RECOMMENDATIONS:

The following section evaluates the site in relation to statutory/non-statutory sites, protected species and species/habitats listed on the former UK Biodiversity Action Plan Priority List, Section 41 Species/Habitats of Principal Importance in England (NERC) Act 2006, and the Lancashire Biodiversity Action Plan.

3.1.1 Statutory Sites:

The site falls within the Forest of Bowland Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB).

3.1.2 Biological Heritage Sites/non statutory designations:

There are no known non-statutory sites (*Biological Heritage Sites*) within 500m of the site. This would require verification from a desk top study.

3.1.3 Sites Habitats & Higher Plant Species:

The following habitats are affected by the development:

- Improved grassland
- Bare ground / gravel with sparse short perennial plant communities.
- Small area of tall ruderal herb

The woodland and hedgerow on the sites eastern boundary are all Section 41 NERC Act habitats and Lancashire BAP Habitats. These are unaffected by the development and were planted by the landowner as significant biodiversity enhancement features.

Recommendations: Habitats & Higher Plant Species:

There are no requirements for further surveys.

3.1.4 Protected Species:

Badgers:

Badgers are protected under Schedule 6 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981, and under the Protection of Badgers Act 1992, which prohibits deliberate interference with the animal or its sett.

The survey found no evidence of historic, recent or current use of the site by badgers for foraging, commuting or occupation and the species is considered to be absent.

Recommendations: Badgers;

There are no issues in relation to badgers arising from the development. No further surveys are required.

Bats:

Bats are comprehensively protected by European legislation.

There are no features affected by development capable of supporting bat roosts.

The site is located in a farmland location with many surrounding hedgerows, woodlands and open grassland providing high quality bat foraging habitats. In terms of the site the hedge and woodland boundaries provide very good bat foraging habitat.

Recommendations: Bats;

All areas of woodland on site and the roadside hedge are retained and not affected by development, therefore no further action is required. However note the recommendations below in relation to lighting and woodland / hedgerow boundaries.

In all cases illumination of the woodland / hedgerow boundaries must be avoided. Where lighting is required this must be low level, directed downwards away from the boundary woodland / hedgerows and of low intensity.

Great Crested Newt:

Great crested newt is comprehensively protected under European legislation. There are no ponds or suitable waterbodies within 250m of the site, the species accepted terrestrial range.

Recommendations: Great Crested Newt (GCN);

There are no issues in respect of GCN or any other amphibians.

Birds:

All breeding birds (*with only minor exceptions*) are protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act (1981) as amended.

None of the habitats affected by development are suitable for supporting breeding birds.

Recommendations: Birds;

There are no issues in respect of breeding birds.

PART 4 REFERENCES:

4.1 REFERENCES:

Nature Conservancy Council (1990) *Handbook for Phase 1 Habitat Survey – A Technique for Environmental Audit*. Nature Conservancy Council.

Rose, F. (1981) *The Wildflower Key*. Warne.

Stace, C., (1997) *New Flora of the British Isles (Second edition)*. Cambridge University Press.

Web Sites:

Google Earth.

MARIO.

Natural England – Nature on the Map.

APPENDIX 1:

Map 1: Extended Phase 1 Habitat Survey

Site Photographs

Site Photographs: 15th June 2020



Site entrance.



Site entrance.



Site entrance.



Site entrance / proposed parking area.



Looking north from the site entrance.



Southern end of the site.



Target Note 1: Improved grassland and approx. location of proposed farm shop.



Tall ruderal habitats at southern end of the site.



Target Note 1: Improved grassland and approx. location of proposed farm shop.



Target Note 3: Broadleaved plantation woodland on western boundary, planted by the landowner.



Target Note 1: Improved grassland and approx. location of proposed car parking.



Target Note 3: Broadleaved plantation woodland on western boundary, planted by the landowner.



Target Note 1: Improved grassland looking south across the approximate location of proposed farm shop.



Target Note 1: Improved grassland looking south towards the approximate development location, as indicated.



Target Note 1: Improved grassland looking east across the approximate location of proposed farm shop / parking area.



Target Note 4: Broadleaved plantation woodland in the north east corner of the survey area, planted by the landowner.



Target Note 1: Improved grassland looking south towards the approximate development location, as indicated.



Target Note 4: Broadleaved plantation woodland in the north east corner of the survey area, planted by the landowner.



Target Note 1: Improved grassland looking south towards the approximate development location, as indicated.



Target Note 1: Improved grassland / bare ground looking south west across development location.



Target Note 1: Improved grassland looking south towards the approximate development location, as indicated.



Target Note 1: Improved grassland looking south west across development location.