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PRELIMINARY ECOLOGICAL APPRAISAL

- Land off Slaidburn Road, Waddington, Lancashire –

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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.

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PART 1 INTRODUCTION:

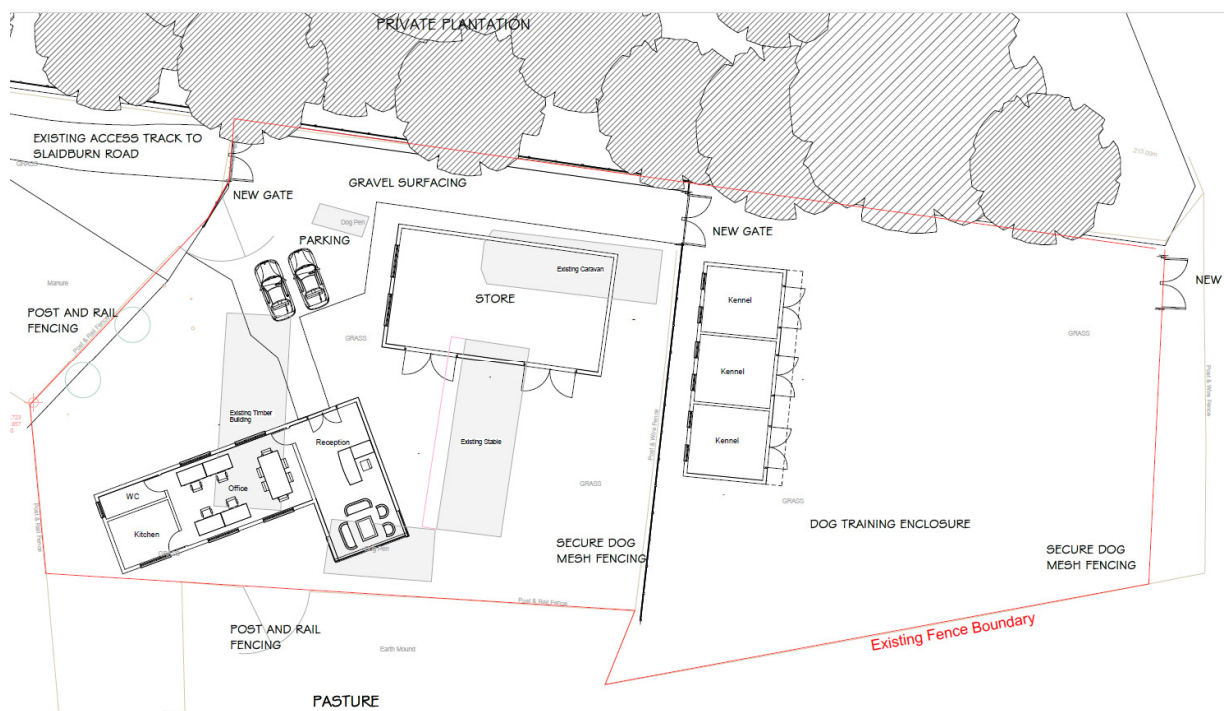
1.1 REASONS FOR SURVEY:

PENNINE *Ecological* have been commissioned to undertake a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal and protected species surveys / assessment of Land off Slaidburn Road, Waddington, 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.

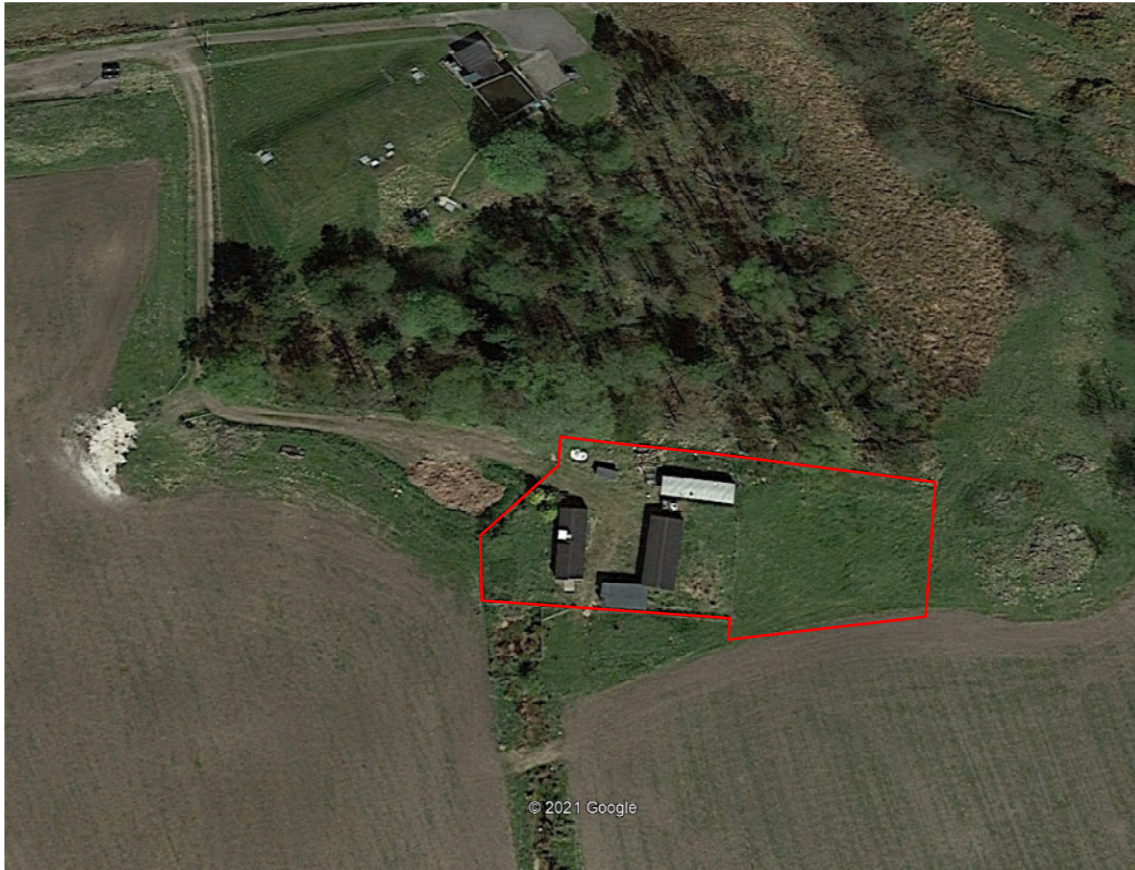
The surveys are required due to proposals for a new dog training facility. The proposed site plan is shown below;



1.2 SITE LOCATION:

The site is located approximately 2.5km north of the village of Waddington in a rural location off the B6478 Slaidburn Road. The site is accessed via a rough track to the east of Slaidburn Road. The sites central National Grid Reference is SD 7230 4603.

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 does not fall within any SSSI Impact Risk Zones (IRZ's).

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 27th January 2020 which is a sub-optimal time for Extended Phase 1 Habitat Survey. However given the nature of habitats on the site (mainly improved grassland types) this is not considered a significant constraint. All habitats on site were accurately identified and classified.

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 January 27th 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:

- A2.2 Scattered scrub
- A3.1 Scattered broad-leaved tree
- A3.2 Scattered coniferous tree
- B6 Poor semi-improved grassland
- C3.1 Tall ruderal herb
- J1.4 Introduced shrub
- J2.4 Fence
- J3.6 Building

2.1.3 Site Description:

The area affected by development is approximately 65m x 25m in maximum dimensions and is dominated by poor semi-improved grassland. The grassland is dominated by Yorkshire-fog and cock's-foot, other occasional / locally frequent species present include the following; perennial rye-grass, common bent, ribwort plantain, dandelion species, dock species, common nettle, creeping thistle, great willowherb and soft-rush. The site is fenced.

Some marginal stands of tall ruderal herb are present typically comprising; common nettle, great willowherb, dock species and creeping thistle.

Four small cypress species and a single immature rowan are present on the western boundary.

Several timber store / stable buildings are present along with a caravan.

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.

The timber frame buildings are single skin timber / corrugated iron sheet roof. The buildings were inspected externally and internally for evidence of / potential for bats. The buildings have no potential roost features (PRF's). The buildings are defined as having negligible bat roost potential.

The site is located in a farmland location with surrounding hedgerows, woodlands, stream corridors and open grassland providing high quality bat foraging habitats. In terms of the site the woodland plantation boundary on the northern boundary provides very good bat foraging habitat.

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:

- Poor semi-improved grassland
- Tall ruderal herb

There are no Section 41 NERC Act habitats/species or Lancashire BAP Habitats/species affected by the proposed development.

Species recorded on site are common, widespread and of site value only.

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 surrounding hedgerows, woodlands, stream corridors and open grassland providing high quality bat foraging habitats. In terms of the site the woodland plantation boundary on the northern boundary provides very good bat foraging habitat.

Recommendations: Bats;

There are no requirements for further surveys.

In all cases illumination of peripheral areas of the site must be minimised to avoid light spillage. Where lighting is required this must be low level, directed downwards away from the woodland on the northern boundary and of low intensity. The following principles will apply;

- In all cases illumination of the woodland boundary habitat to the north will be avoided.
- Where and if lighting is required this will be directed internally within the site avoiding spillage towards boundary habitats.
- The use of low powered sodium lights or similar will be used and these will be fitted with cowls / covers that prevent lateral light spillage towards boundary habitats.
- Wherever possible and only if required low level (1-1.5m high) bollard lighting will be used.
- If required lights will be fitted with timer controls that minimise the duration of lighting.

Lighting requirements will follow guidance provided by the Bat Conservation Trust.

<https://www.theilp.org.uk/documents/guidance-note-8-bats-and-artificial-lighting/>

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. The conifer trees and rowan tree along with the timber stable building have potential to support breeding birds.

Recommendations: Birds;

No strategic bird surveys are required. However before any development and in order to minimize impacts on birds any disturbance/removal of trees or the stable building should take place outside of the breeding season, i.e. between September 1st and February 28th. Following the removal of any trees piles of brash should be removed from the site, failure to do so could provide potential nest sites if left in situ until the following breeding season.

If removal of the trees / stable is envisaged during the breeding season, then checks should be made to establish any nesting or breeding activity, prior to removal.

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: 27th January 2021



Site entrance viewed from the west.



Timber stables with negligible bat roost potential.



Site entrance / western boundary viewed from the west.



Timber stables / store with negligible bat roost potential.



Caravan on site.



Timber stables with negligible bat roost potential.



Timber stables / store with negligible bat roost potential.



Southern site boundary viewed from outside the site.



Timber store with negligible bat roost potential.



Looking east along the sites southern boundary.



SW site boundary viewed from outside the site.



Looking west along the sites northern boundary with the plantation woodland.



Looking SW across the site from the NE boundary.