



PRELIMINARY ECOLOGICAL APPRAISAL

PROPOSED CAR PARK EXTENSION, [REDACTED] SAMLESBURY AERODROME LANCASHIRE

Preliminary Ecological Appraisal

Proposed Car Park Extension [REDACTED] Samlesbury Aerodrome Lancashire

A report for

[REDACTED] (Operations) Limited
Infrastructure & Facilities Services
Samlesbury Aerodrome (S609)
Balderstone
Blackburn
Lancashire
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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 REASON FOR SURVEY

PENNINE ecological have been commissioned by [REDACTED] [REDACTED] (Operations) Limited, to undertake a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal of a parcel of land at [REDACTED] [REDACTED], Salmesbury, Aerodrome.

The assessment is required due to proposals to extend the existing car park which is situated to the immediate west of the site.

A biodiversity survey and report has been completed to provide a baseline of the site conditions and to determine whether the proposals would result in significant impacts to protected habitats or species.

This report addresses potential ecological impacts which may arise from the proposals. This includes;

- Habitat assessment (UKHabs survey).
- Badger survey.
- Preliminary bat roost assessment of buildings and trees.
- Potential breeding bird issues associated with the site.
- Great Crested Newt Assessment
- Any other protected or notable species issues associated with the site.

1.2 SITE LOCATION

The site is located on land south of the A59 at Salmesbury Aerodrome, Balderstone, Blackburn, Lancashire, BB2 7LF. The survey area central National Grid Reference is SD 62382 31521. An aerial image of the area subject to survey is shown below.

Figure 1.1: Aerial image of [REDACTED] Extension survey area, [REDACTED] Samlesbury



2. METHODOLOGY

2.1 DESK SURVEY

Due to the size and nature of the development site, a data search with the local record centre was not undertaken. However a freely available desk based data search was undertaken on 20/02/2025.

The Multi Agency Geographical Information Centre www.magic.gov.uk was referred to in respect of statutory sites, GCN licence returns, and European Protected Species Licences (EPSL) issued in respect of GCN and bats.

In addition, Pennine Ecological's dataset was referenced which contains extensive records of species and habitats associated with [REDACTED] Salmesbury. In particular, a previous Phase 1 Habitat Survey has been undertaken of the site which includes the [REDACTED] Extension survey area (Pennine Ecological, 2023).

It should be noted that species records over 500m of the site are not reproduced here as they are considered to have no association with the site and are beyond the sphere of influence for this proposal.

2.2 HABITAT SURVEY

A UK Habitat Classification (UKHabs) survey (UKHab Ltd, 2023) of the habitats within the red line boundary was undertaken on 19/02/2025. The site's habitats were mapped, and vascular plant species were recorded and given a DAFOR ((Dominant (D), Abundant (A), Frequent (F), Occasional (O), Rare (R)) score. Each habitat was given a distinctiveness and habitat condition score (Pennine Ecological, 2025). Secondary codes have been applied where required to describe the primary habitats. Habitats have been mapped using the fine-scale minimum mapping unit.

2.3 PROTECTED SPECIES SURVEYS

2.3.1 Badger Survey

A badger survey was undertaken of the site and up to 50m from the site boundary (where access permitted) and followed standard survey guidance (Harris et al., 1989, and Roper, 2010). 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.

2.3.2 Preliminary Bat Roost Assessment

There are no buildings within the site. Two trees within the site were subject to a ground level tree assessment. The surveys were undertaken following the methodology outlined in Bat Conservation Trust: Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists, Good Practice Guidelines (2023).

An assessment of the habitat in relation to bats was completed for the site.

2.3.3 Breeding Bird Assessment

The site was assessed for its potential to support breeding birds. This included identifying any evidence of current or historic nesting within the site.

Any bird activity within the site was recorded whilst undertaking the site survey.

2.3.4 Great Crested Newt Assessment

The site was evaluated by means of desk study and the surveyor's specialist knowledge of the species, in particular its terrestrial habits and breeding requirements.

2.3.5 Other Protected and Notable Species

Consideration was given to other protected and notable species potentially present. The following species / species groups have been scoped out for further assessment, with brief reasoning provided below:

- Riparian Mammals – There are no watercourses within 100m of the site. The habitats present on site are of no value for water vole. Due to the lack of connectivity to any watercourses, riparian mammals are considered to be absent from the site and locally.

- Reptiles – The site is a small parcel of habitat situated adjacent to two car parks and a road. Although the site provides suitable habitat for reptiles, the site is surrounded by a heavily urbanised / modified habitats which are subject to high levels of disturbance. There is limited connectivity to any suitable reptile habitat in the wider landscape. There are no known reptile populations within vicinity of the site. Due to the sites isolation from suitable habitat in the wider landscape, reptiles are considered likely absent from the site and locally.
- Invertebrates – The site is primarily tall forbs and bramble scrub and whilst the site does provide suitable habitats for invertebrates, due to the size and the location of the site (i.e. surrounded by heavily urbanised / modified habitats), the site is not considered to be of significant value (Buglife, 2015). It is considered highly unlikely that the site supports a notable assemblage of invertebrates.

These species are not discussed further within this report.

2.4 SURVEY CONSTRAINTS

The site survey was conducted on 20/02/2025. It is acknowledged that this is outside of the optimal survey window for habitats. For the majority of the site, this was not considered to be a constraint, as the habitats were easily identifiable with sufficient information collected to complete an accurate condition assessment.

For the area of *g3c5 Arrhenatherum neutral grassland*, the previous survey undertaken by Ian Ryding (Pennine Ecological) in July 2022 was referred to. The site conditions in 2025 were found to be consistent with those recorded in 2022. As such, the 2022 data was used to fulfil the species list and allow for an accurate condition assessment to be completed of this habitat.

Full access to the site and adjacent land was possible and all other surveys were undertaken without constraint.

There are considered to be no limitations to the evaluations and recommendations provided within this report.

3. RESULTS

3.1 DESK STUDY

3.1.1 Statutory Sites

There are no statutorily designated sites within 2km of the proposal site.

3.1.2 Non-Statutory Sites

There are no known non-statutory sites within 500m of the site.

3.1.3 Protected / Notable Habitats and Species

There MAGIC search found no protected or notable habitats or species within the site or within 500m of the site.

No protected species records within 500m of the site have been recorded by Pennine Ecological (Pennine Ecological, 2023).

3.2 HABITAT SURVEY

3.2.1 Habitats Present

- g4 Modified grassland
- g3c5 Arrhenatherum neutral grassland
- g3 (16) Tall forbs
- h3d Bramble scrub
- u1b6 Other developed land; sealed surfaces
- N/a Individual trees

3.2.2 General Description

The site comprises a small, vegetated area, approximately 40m x 60m that is situated between two existing tarmac car parks (east and west). A road is located to the south of the site.

The majority of the area has been left unmanaged and is now established with tall forbs and bramble scrub. A small area of g3c5 grassland had recently been mown and is subject to ongoing maintenance.

A narrow strip of g4 modified grassland (amenity grassland) is located along the perimeter of the site, adjacent to the pavement,

Two small alder trees are located on the south boundary of the site, within the patch of bramble scrub. Localised patches of dogwood are also located within this area.

Habitats of botanical interest are target noted below.

(i) Target Note 1: g3c5 Arrhenatherum neutral grassland

Recently mown area of grassland that has historically been categorised of semi-improved. The sward appears to have high percentage of forbs, as well as abundant moss cover. Although a comprehensive species list was not possible, the species that could be identified, were consistent with findings of the July 2022 survey. Species recorded during the 2025 survey include:

Tufted hair grass (A), false oat-grass (A), red fescue (A), springy turf-moss (A), silverweed (F), selfheal (LF), ribwort plantain (LF), vetchling species (O), common knapweed (O).

The grassland habitat has been assessed as being in poor condition (Pennine ecological, 2025).

(ii) Target Note 2: g3 (16) Tall forbs

The majority of the site comprises an area of tall forbs which has formed as a result of low / no management of the area. Patches of dogwood are located within the area of tall forbs. Species recorded include:

Tufted hair grass (LA), hard rush (LA), reed canary-grass (LA), greater willowherb (F), and selfheal (F).

The area of tall forbs has been assessed as being in moderate condition (Pennine ecological, 2025).

3.3 PROTECTED SPECIES SURVEYS

3.3.1 Badger Survey

(i) Setts

The survey found no setts on site or within 50m of the site.

(i) Foraging Signs and Pathways

No sign of badger activity was found on site or within 50m of the site.

(ii) Boundary Search

The search of the boundaries 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.

3.3.2 Preliminary Roost Assessment

The two alder trees on site were inspected for suitable cavities. The trees are young / immature trees and lack any cavities.

The trees are considered to possess 'No' bat roost potential.

(i) Bat Habitat Suitability

The site comprises a mosaic of tall forbs, scrub and grassland. Whilst the habitats are suitable for foraging bats, the site is very small and surrounded by developed land. The site is situated within the [REDACTED] site and is subject to high levels of light pollution from the buildings, street lighting and security lighting. There is limited connectivity to more suitable bat habitat in the wider landscape.

Overall, the habitat associated with the is considered to be of negligible suitability for bats.

3.3.3 Bird Assessment

No evidence of current or historic bird nesting evidence was recorded within the sites vegetation.

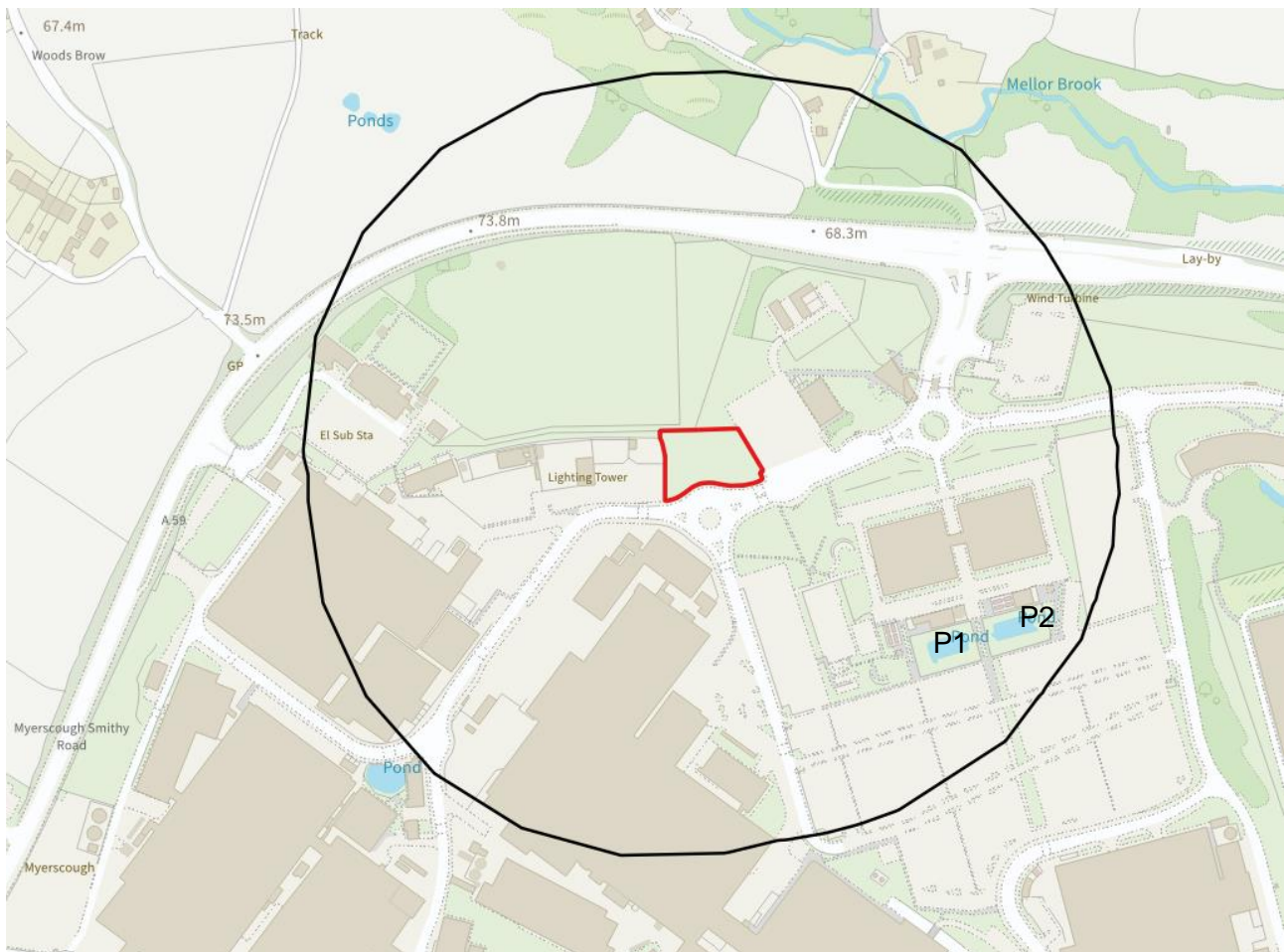
The site provides limited nesting opportunities for birds due to the exposed nature of the site (being surrounded by car parks and roads, with limited cover). The trees are immature and unsuitable for nest building.

The site has limited suitability for nesting birds.

3.3.4 Great Crested Newts

There are two ponds located within 250m of the site. Pond 1 is located 163m south of the site and Pond 2 is located 192m south of the site.

Figure 3.1: Ponds within 250m of the site



The two ponds are balancing ponds and known to have fish within. The ponds are separated from the site by buildings, hard surfaces and amenity grassland, all habitats which are hostile for GCN and likely to significantly inhibit any potential movement of amphibians between the ponds and the site.

The ponds are also separated from the site by a road which, although not considered a barrier to dispersal, is in frequent use and likely to be a significant deterrent for amphibian movement.

There is considered to be no ecological connectivity between these two ponds and the site and therefore the presence of GCN within the site can be discounted.

For context, an additional pond is located approximately 260m south west of the site. This is a former marl pit which is inundated with fish. A few summers ago, the pond was found to be so densely populated with fish that a large number had to be removed from the pond for welfare reasons. The pond is considered to be highly unsuitable for GCN.

4. EVALUATION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

4.1 DESK STUDY

4.1.1 Statutory Designated Sites

There are no statutorily designated sites within 2km of the site.

The Natural England (NE) Impact Risk Zone (IRZ) tool¹ has been reviewed and states that there is no requirement to consult NE for this proposal.

(i) Recommendations: Statutory Designated Sites

Due to the scale and nature of this proposal there is no requirement for any further assessment or consultation.

4.1.2 Non-statutory Designated Sites

There are no known non-statutory sites within the site.

(i) Recommendations: Non-statutory Designated Sites

Due to the scale and nature of this proposal there is no requirement for any further assessment or consultation.

4.2 HABITATS

The existing habitats on site are of very low to medium distinctiveness. The majority of the site comprises tall forbs and scrub which have established due to the absence of any regular management of the area. A small area of g3c5 grassland has recently been mown and is more species diverse than the remainder of the site.

Due to the size and condition of the habitats on site, the value of the current sites habitats cannot exceed 'site' ecological value, with impacts not extending beyond the land directly affected by the proposals.

The development will need to ensure appropriate compensation for the loss of habitats.

(i) Recommendations: Habitats

¹ GIS tool developed by Natural England to make a rapid initial assessment of the potential risks posed by development proposals to statutorily designated sites

Appropriate habitat enhancement and creation measures will be required to compensate the loss of any habitat which is of low distinctiveness or higher. The compensation measures will need to ensure there is a measurable 10% net gain overall.

It is recommended that a Statutory Biodiversity Metric Calculation is completed to support this application.

4.3 BADGERS

No evidence of badger activity was found within the site or the wider area during the survey.

It is concluded that badger are absent on site and locally.

(i) Recommendations: Badgers

There are no requirements for any further surveys or assessment.

4.4 BATS

Bats are comprehensively protected under European legislation (Conservation of Habitats and Species (Amendment) (EU Exit) Regulations 2019).

There are no buildings on site. The two alder trees were found to have no bat roost potential.

The value of the site for bats is considered to be of 'site' ecological value.

(i) Recommendations: Bats

There are no requirements for any further surveys or assessment.

4.5 BIRDS

All breeding birds (with only minor exceptions) are offered various levels of protection under the Wildlife and Countryside Act (1981) as amended.

There are very limited opportunities for nesting within the site. The site is exposed and subject to moderate levels of disturbance from the adjacent car parks, pavements and roads.

The site is capable of supporting a bird assemblage of up to 'site' ecological value.

(i) Recommendations: Birds

There are no requirements for any further surveys or assessments.

4.6 GREAT CRESTED NEWTS

Great crested newts are comprehensively protected under European legislation (Conservation of Habitats and Species (Amendment) (EU Exit) Regulations 2019).

There are two ponds located within 250m of the site. Both ponds are balancing ponds and are known to be populated with fish. The presence of fish reduces the likelihood of the pond being utilised by GCN due to the predation risk posed by fish.

Furthermore, there is also considered to be no ecological connectivity between the ponds and the site due to the hostile habitats between the site and ponds, and the presence of a well-used access road which would further inhibit amphibian movement towards the site.

All ponds have been scoped out for further assessment and it is concluded that GCN are absent from the site and locally.

(i) Recommendations: GCN

There are no requirements for further surveys or assessments.

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Appendix A: UKHabs Map



		UKHabs Survey:	
Figure 1: UKHabs Map		g3c5 – Arrhenatherum neutral grassland	u1b6 – Other developed land
Study Date: 20/02/2025		g4 – Modified grassland	N/a – Individual tree
Scale: 1:700		g3 (16) – Tall forbs	Target Notes
		h3d – Bramble scrub	Survey Area
			Condition Assessment Reference