PRELIMINARY ECOLOGICAL APPRAISAL

Land at Higher Standen Farm
Clitheroe
Lancashire

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A report for

Trustees of The Standen Estate

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PART 1: INTRODUCTION:

1.1 REASONS FOR SURVEY:

Pennine Ecological have been commissioned by the Trustees of The Standen Estate, to undertake a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal of land at Higher Standen Farm, Clitheroe, Lancashire.

The study is required in association with a submission for Pre-Application advice regarding a residential development on the site.

The surveys were undertaken by Ian Ryding a surveyor with over 37 years' experience in a wide range of ecological survey and assessment.

1.2 SITE LOCATION:

The site is located at the south-west end of Higher Standen Drive, Clitheroe, Lancashire, BB7 1FT.

Central grid reference SD 7467 4068.

The location of the study area is shown on Map 1 in the appendix.

1.3 SURVEY METHODOLOGY:

The methodology applied is as follows.

1.3.1 Habitat Survey:

A Habitat Survey to UKHab standard methodology was undertaken of the site on the 4th October 2024. The site's habitats were fully mapped and higher vascular plant species (where present) 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 the above values can be prefixed by the letter L (locally) or V (very), to provide more subtle biogeographical data.

A Biodiversity Metric 3.0 condition assessment of the habitats present is provided in the appendix.

1.3.2 Preliminary Bat Roost Assessment:

The Preliminary Roost Assessment (PRA) was undertaken on the 4th October 2024 following the methodology outlined in *Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines (4th edn)* Collins, J. Bat Conservation Trust (2023).

There are no buildings on the site, therefore the survey included standard non-intrusive searches for potential roosts in the single tree on the site .

The tree was surveyed from ground level using close focusing Leica Trinovid 8x32 binoculars, by an experienced preliminary assessor of bat roosts and an accredited agent on Mr Stuart Macpherson's Natural England Class 2 bat licence (2021-10079-CL18-BAT).

1.3.3 Other Species:

During the survey, observations relating to the potential presence of badger was also undertaken. The potential presence of great crested newt (GCN) on the site and in the local area was also evaluated.

Evaluation relating to the potential presence of breeding birds and reptiles on site was also made. The off-site stream on the western boundary was surveyed and evaluated in respect of otter and water vole.

1.3.5 Surveyor Experience:

The surveyor and author of this report, Ian Ryding, has over 37 years' experience in ecological survey and evaluation. Key skills include the following.

- Extended Phase 1 Habitat Survey/Preliminary Ecological Appraisal and National Vegetation Classification Survey.
- Highly proficient field botanist, including some difficult plant groups.
- Mammal surveys including surveys for badger, water vole, otter, brown hare and preliminary bat roost assessment.
- Breeding and wintering bird survey.
- Expert witness delivering proof of evidence in respect of nesting birds at public inquiry in 2018 and 2020.
- Extensive experience in great crested newt (GCN) survey, evaluation, licensing and mitigation. Natural England Class Licence WML-CL08 held.
- Ecological Evaluation and Impact Assessments in association with large scale commercial development and civil engineering.

1.4 SURVEY CONSTRAINTS:

A PRF in a tree on the site couldn't be fully assessed, therefore a constraint applies.

The grasslands contained sufficient evidence of species and their relative abundance to enable their classification and evaluation.

There were no other significant constraints to the survey.

PART 2 SURVEY RESULTS:

2.1 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

- The site has no statutory or non-statutory designations.
- Salthill & Bellman Park Quarries (SSSI) and Salthill Quarry (LNR) are located 1.7km and 1.67km north of the site respectively. There are no other biological statutory sites within 2km.
- There are four Biological Heritage Site (BHS) within 0.75km - 1.7km of the site.
- The proposals affect a pair of abandoned improved fields that once formed part of a dairy farm.
- The habitats affected by the proposal are very common on a national-local scale and are of 'site' value only.
- The survey identified the presence of sensitive habitats abutting the western boundary. Whilst these habitats are off-site their integrity should be maintained during construction.
- The evaluation in relation to GCN has concluded that the likelihood of GCN presence locally is remote and that GCN is highly unlikely to be impacted by the proposals.
- The PRA identified a feature in T1 that could indicate the presence of a potential bat roost, the tree is evaluated as FAR and inspection of the feature identified is required.
- The field affected has no ground-nesting bird potential, however, the tree and scattered scrub have the potential to very low numbers of common nesting birds of 'local' value only.
- The survey revealed no evidence of use of the site or areas abutting the site by badger, otter or water vole.

2.2 DESK BASED STUDY:

Statutory Sites:

The Multi Agency Geographical Information Centre www.magic.gov.uk was referred to in respect of the biological statutory sites.

Salthill & Bellman Park Quarries (SSSI) and Salthill Quarry (LNR) are located 1.7km and 1.67km north of the site respectively.

The distances provided above are the approximate nearest point of each site to the proposal boundary.

All other biological statutory sites are >2km from the site.

Following the end of the Brexit transition period, the sites of international nature conservation importance are now known as the national site network (previously Natura 2000 sites).

The national network sites include Special Protection Areas (SPAs) and Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) and are of exceptional importance in relation to rare, endangered or vulnerable species and/or habitats.

Non-statutory Sites and Protected Species Records:

It was decided in advance that the decision to request data from Lancashire Environmental Record Network (LERN) to obtain details of any biological records relating to the site, would be based on the findings of the survey.

In this instance, it was confirmed that the site has no non-statutory designations, and the evaluation showed that the effect of the proposal was restricted to the site, and that the site was of 'site' value only.

Reference to Magic data showed that there are no GCN Class Survey Licence Returns, no granted EPSL and no GCN Pond Survey 2017-2019 records within 3km of the site.

Magic data shows three granted EPSL (bats) within 2km (approx.) of the site as outlined below.

- EPSL (2018-2023) – common pipistrelle and soprano pipistrelle 0.37km south of the site.
- EPSL (2015-2020) – common pipistrelle 1.55km from the site.
- EPSL (2015-2020) – soprano pipistrelle 1.87km from the site.

In addition to the above, Pennine Ecological's dataset collated from the many surveys undertaken and observations made by the company since 1996 were also referred to.

Desk based studies were undertaken to establish the presence of ponds within a 250m radius of the site, as part of a scoping study relating to great crested newt (GCN)

Pennine Ecological data revealed the following information.

Biological Heritage Sites:

- Salthill Quarry Biological Heritage Site (BHS) is located 1.7km north of the site.
- Primrose Lodge BHS is located 0.75km west of the site.
- Clitheroe Castle Knoll is located 0.85km north-west of the site.
- Barrow Clough Wood BHS is located 0.88km south-west of the site.

There are no other BHSs within 1.8km of the site.

2.3 HABITAT SURVEY:

2.3.1 General Description:

The site of the proposed development is composed of two small improved fields separated by a post and wire fence.

The grassland displays signs of abandonment and lack of management.

A single semi-mature sessile oak is located roughly centrally within the study area.

The site abuts a narrow strip of secondary woodland in a shallow clough along its western boundary. A new school has been constructed to the north, and to the east a new road and housing development is present.

The new road continues south of the site beyond which are a series of abandoned fields.

2.3.2 Habitat Survey Target Notes:

Survey locations, Target Notes and the proposed working area locations are shown on Map 1 in the Appendix. Note: All species nomenclature follows Stace, C. (1996) 'New Flora of the British Isles' - definitive English names.

Target Note 1:

UKHabs Classification Reference: g4 Modified grassland.

A pair of species-poor improved fields that display signs of abandonment through lack of management.

The grasslands are dominated by creeping bent with locally abundant Yorkshire fog and perennial rye-grass.

The cessation of management and edaphic conditions has allowed creeping bent to predominate, and a thick thatch that has formed from its stolons, virtually eliminating all other species from the sward except for a few pre-existing grasses and herbs.

A few scattered immature grey willow occur on the western boundary, and stands dominated by common nettle and creeping thistle are also present (g16).

A small area near to the site entrance has been resown with what appears to be a rye-grass-dominated amenity seed mix.

The habitat does not qualify as a Habitat of Principal Importance.

The grassland is assessed as being in poor condition.

Species:	**Abundance:**
Creeping bent	D
Common nettle	VLD
Creeping thistle	VLD
Yorkshire-fog	VLA
Creeping buttercup	VLA
Broad-leaved dock	F-LA
Silverweed	VLF
Perennial rye-grass	VLF
Hairy sedge	VLF
Soft-rush	VO

Target Note 2: OFF SITE

UKHabs Classification Reference: w1 Broadleaved and mixed woodland & h2 Native hedgerow

This area has been target-noted as it directly abuts the site and needs to be considered to avoid any adverse impacts on the habitat during construction.

This area was once a narrow, linear, hedged, enclosure but has developed into a mature, secondary, semi-natural broadleaved woodland along the course of a small tributary of Pendelton Brook.

Mature, native, defunct hedgerows with trees run along the eastern and western boundaries, whilst the land between contains a shallow stream with developing canopy trees and a well-developed understorey.

There is a native flora which includes several ancient woodland indicator species.

As the habitat is off-site it is only briefly described and a basic species list is provided below.

The species contained within the hedgerows and the land between have been amalgamated to form the species list provided.

Species:	**Abundance:**
<u>Canopy:</u>	
Ash	LD
Sycamore	F
Alder	LF
Field maple	O
<u>Understorey:</u>	
Blackthorn	LA
Hazel	LA
Hawthorn	F
Wych elm	O
Cherry sp.	O
<u>Ground flora:</u>	
Ivy	LD
Dog’s mercury	LA
Wood avens	F
Broad buckler-fern	F
Male-fern	F
False brome	LF
Bramble	LF
Scaly male-fern	O
Hart’s-tongue fern	O

Photographs showing the general conditions on the site are provided below.

Site Photographs - Habitats:

Photograph 1: Typical view of the site looking east from the western boundary. Note very uniform grassland.

Photograph 2: Typical view of the site looking south along the western boundary.

Photograph 3: Typical view of the site looking north along the western boundary.

Photograph 4: Typical view of the site looking west from the new road. Note localised development of tall ruderal herb communities.

Photograph 5: Looking north-west towards the solitary oak (T1).

Photograph 6: Looking north-west from the site entrance, with the re-sown area and access track visible.

Photograph 7: Looking south-west along the new road with the site on the right.

Photograph 8: Typical view of the stream and secondary woodland described in TN2.

2.4 PRELIMINARY BAT ROOST ASSESSMENT:

The preliminary bat roost survey was undertaken on the 4th October 2024 following the methodology outlined in *Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines (4th edn)* Collins, J. Bat Conservation Trust (2023)

There are no buildings on the site and the survey included standard non-intrusive search for potential roosts in the only tree on the site (T1).

2.4.1 BAT LEGISLATION:

All British bats and their roosts* are afforded protection under Schedule 5 of the Wildlife & Countryside Act (1981) (as amended) and are listed in Schedule 2 of The Conservation of Habitats and Species (Amendment) (EU Exit) Regulations 2019 (SI 2019/579).

When dealing with cases where a European Protected Species (EPS) (all UK bats) may be affected, a planning authority is a competent authority within the meaning of the Regulation 7 of the Regulations, that has a statutory duty as the local authority to have due regard to the provisions of the Regulations in the exercise of its functions.

Use of buildings by roosting bats:

a) Summer breeding roost (May-August)
b) Hibernation roost (October-March)
c) Transitional or temporary roost (Mainly spring/summer months)

*The term 'roost' is generically referred to as a place that bats might use at any time of the year, however it should be noted that under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations (2019) (EU Exit) (Regulation 43 (d) the term roost is not used but refers to "*a breeding site or resting place of such an animal"* and is afforded legal protection. The roost, breeding site or resting place of bats, which ever terminology is used is legally protected whether or not bats are in occupation.

General Description:

The tree (T1) is a semi-mature sessile oak located centrally within the site.

The tree is 45cm diameter at breast height (dbh).

There is a single horizontal branch approx. 3-4m off the ground that has a mature rot hole.

The hole can receive rainwater directly from above, nevertheless the feature must be regarded as having the potential to be a roost.

Site Photographs – Bats:

Photograph 9: T1 general view.

Photograph 10 : T1 general view.

Foraging:

The site has limited foraging value which is restricted to the edge of the woodland that runs along the western boundary of the site. The woodland whilst fragmented connects to mature parkland and woodland associated with Standen Hall 200m south of the site.

2.5 GREAT CRESTED NEWT EVALUATION:

2.5.1 General Context:

There are no ponds on-site and one pond within 250m, which is the Fish Pond at Standen Hall.

The Fish Pond is situated 235m from the site in the formal grounds of the hall, and has a substantial block of mature broad-leaved woodland next to it.

The status of GCN in this pond isn't known but given its size 0.2ha and its history the presence of GCN is considered to be unlikely.

Were GCN present then they would naturally gravitate towards the woodland during their terrestrial phase. Migration to the site would be considered to be highly unlikely.

2.5.2 On-site Habitats:

The habitats affected by the proposal are predominantly improved grassland that has been abandoned within the last few years.

2.5.3 Habitats Off-site:

The habitats off-site are characterised by similar abandoned fields as well as substantial tracts of land currently undergoing development.

The Fish Pond has 3.9ha of mature woodland within 100m, and other large blocks of woodland beyond 100m.

Conclusions:

The only pond within 250m of the site is the Fish Pond at Standen Hall which was present in the 1840s.

Reference to the first edition OS data shows that no field ponds were present in this area historically, and that the few field ponds that existed within 1km of the site are no longer present.

Consequently the site is isolated from any GCN populations due to a general historical absence of ponds locally, as all ponds within 1km were infilled/drained many years ago.

The Fish Pond would have contained fish which may still be present. Given the absence of ponds historically in the area, and the Fish Pond's use, it is considered highly unlikely that GCN would have been able to colonise the pond, and for a sustainable population to establish itself.

Based on the evaluation provided above, the likelihood of GCN presence in the Fish Pond is considered to be remote, as is the risk of the proposals impacting GCN or its habitat.

2.6 EVALUATION OF OTHER FEATURES:

2.6.1 Breeding Birds:

It can be confirmed that the site is unsuitable for ground-nesting birds due to its small size and the presence of a thick thatch of creeping bent that carpets the ground.

In addition, the presence of overbearing trees along the western boundary and on-site restrict the site's value further as these are features that are avoided by typical ground-nesting species such as skylark and lapwing.

The oak tree and scattered willow scrub have very restricted nesting bird potential, which at best is likely to be limited to one or two pairs of common species only.

2.6.2 Badger:

Methodology:

A badger survey of the site was undertaken on the site which was searched for the following features.

- Setts
- Foraging areas
- Paths and runs
- Latrines
- Scratching posts/trees

Survey Results:

<u>Setts:</u>

The survey found no setts on or adjacent to the site where access allowed

Foraging areas:

The survey of the grassland found no evidence of badger foraging.

Paths and runs:

The site and its boundaries were searched for runs and pathways which were found to be absent.

Latrines:

The site and its boundaries were searched for latrines which were found to be absent.

Conclusions:

No evidence of badger activity/occupation was found during the survey and based on the lack of badger signs, the species is considered to be absent on the site.

2.6.3 Otter:

Otter are known to be resident throughout the River Ribble, and it is inevitable that given the recovery of the population throughout the county, that otter will traverse the nearby Pendleton Brook and possibly its un-named tributary that runs along the western boundary of the site.

Whilst the tributary is located off-site, the watercourse was surveyed to determine if there was any sign that the species uses the area.

The stream corridor was searched for the presence of holts, spraints, couches, feeding remains and footprints.

The survey found no sign of otter on the reach abutting the site, and no feature that might be used as a potential holt.

In addition, it was noted that the stream is very shallow and at best only capable of supporting very small fish, for example stickleback, stone loach and possibly bullhead. Small eels might also be present in low numbers.

There was evidence of high levels of canine disturbance locally along the stream.

2.6.4 Water Wole:

Precautionary checks for water vole were undertaken in the small tributary that abuts the western boundary.

Searches for voles, burrow, latrines, feeding stations and footprints were undertaken.

The survey found no sign of water vole on the reach abutting the site, and the conditions for the species are considered to be highly suboptimal for the following reasons.

- Very shallow water.
- Excessive shade and lack of emergent/aquatic vegetation.
- Localised high levels of canine disturbance.
- Potential predation by domestic cats.

2.6.5 Reptiles:

The site is composed of a former improved dairy field, and given its history, location and general structure, it is considered highly unlikely that reptiles will be present on the site.

PART 3 SUMMARY EVAULATION & RECOMMENDATIONS:

3.1 SUMMARY EVALUATION OF FINDINGS:

The field survey and evaluation of the site revealed the following information.

3.1.1 Vegetation/habitats:

The proposal will directly affect an area of improved grassland that has been unmanaged for several years which has led to rankness generally.

The habitats affected are of 'site' value only.

3.1.2 Bats:

The survey has shown that no buildings are affected and the PRA has determined that further assessment is required (FAR) in T1 to determine suitability for roosting bats.

3.1.3 Great Crested Newt:

There are no ponds on-site and three ponds within 250m of the site.

The off-site ponds are large butyl and/or clay-lined irrigation lagoons located 40m, 146m and 180m from the site. All are of recent or relatively recent origin.

Only Pond 1 was visited which revealed a HSI score of 0.46 which rates as 'poor'.

Reference to the first edition OS data shows that no ponds were present in this area historically, and that the few field ponds that existed within 1km of the site are no longer present.

Consequently the three off-site ponds are isolated from any GCN populations due to a general historical absence of ponds locally, as all ponds within 1km were infilled/drained many years ago.

Between 250m and 1km of the site the current ponds are largely irrigation lagoons and an artificially-stocked fishing pond is also present. All of which provide suboptimal/unsuitable conditions for GCN, as does the network of ditches and drains which contain sticklebacks, eels and other coarse fish.

Based on the evaluation provided above, the likelihood of GCN presence in any of the waterbodies locally is considered to be remote, and the risk of the proposals impacting GCN or its habitat is also considered to be remote.

3.1.4 Birds:

The field affected has no ground-nesting bird potential as the conditions are highly sub-optimal for those species.

The oak tree and scattered willow scrub have very restricted nesting bird potential, which at best is likely to be limited to one or two pairs of common species only.

3.1.5 Badger:

No evidence of badger activity was found on-site during the survey, therefore the species is absent on site and no adverse impacts are predicted.

3.1.6 Otter:

Whilst no evidence of otter activity was found on the off-site tributary during the survey, it is possible that otters might occasionally traverse the reach whilst foraging or commuting.

So long as the stream corridor is not physically affected, then no impacts on otter are predicted.

3.1.7 Water Vole:

No evidence of water vole activity was found during the survey, and given the prevailing the conditions observed the possibility of water vole colonsing the reach is considered to be remote.

Therefore the species is absent and no adverse impacts are predicted.

3.1.8 Reptiles:

The site is composed of a former improved dairy field, and given its history, location and general structure, it is considered highly unlikely that reptiles will be present on the site.

3.2 RECOMMENDATIONS:

The following section outlines any mitigation or precautions required in respect of the survey findings.

3.2.1 Vegetation/Habitats:

The development of the site will require a Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment to determine the level of compensation required in relation to the proposals

Consider protection of off-site hedgerow/woodland habitats by root protection areas.

3.2.2 Great Crested Newt:

No impacts on GCN or its habitat are predicted, and no further surveys are recommended.

However, If any animal suspected to be a GCN is found at any time during construction, then all work must stop and a suitably licenced GCN ecologist called for advice on how the development can proceed without offence.

3.2.3 Bats:

No buildings are affected by the proposal and the survey found that further assessment is required in relation to T1.

It is recommended that T1 is retained within the proposed development, however, if this isn't possible then further survey will be required.

In line with the recommendations provided in the BCT Good Practice Guidelines (2023), the surveys must be undertaken prior to determination of the application.

See BCT guidance on Table 4.2 below.

Table 4.2. Guidelines for assessing the suitability of trees on proposed development sites for bats, to be applied using professional judgement.

Suitability	Description
NONE	Either no PRFs in the tree or highly unlikely to be any
FAR	Further assessment required to establish if PRFs are present in the tree
PRF	A tree with at least one PRF present

It is advised that the tree is inspected by a suitably licenced bat ecologist and the hole physically examined, an endoscope should be employed if necessary.

If the survey is able to confirm that suitability is 'none', then the development can proceed without further survey.

If a PRF is present the ecologist will advise on the appropriate level of survey.

All mitigation will be based upon the findings of the tree inspection.

It should be noted that installation of new lighting as part of the development scheme will exceed current levels, and could have a negative impact upon foraging/commuting bats that might be present locally. Particularly if increased light spillage occurs in areas that are currently relatively free from illumination, for example along the tree line on the western boundary.

There are several measures that can be used to offset impacts upon bats where lighting is unavoidable. These include consideration of the light source used and luminaire design, and accessories to direct light at its intended target. Numerous software programmes are currently available which can be used inform lighting plans, demonstrating how lighting decisions will illuminate a site. Refer to the Bat Conservation Lighting Guidelines for further information.

It is advised that a simple lighting plan is produced to ensure light spillage is controlled, and the potential foraging/commuting route along the western boundary remains unlit.

3.2.4 Birds:

Breeding Birds:

The tree has the potential to support nesting birds, therefore if this tree is to be removed, then it is advised that this feature is removed outside of the nesting season during September-February inclusive.

If this isn't possible, and removal is required between March-August inclusive, then pre-felling checks by a suitably experienced ecologist is required.

Also see Section 3.2.3 above.

To compensate for the loss of potential nests, it is recommended that a minimum of two 32mm 'woodcrete/woodstone' nest boxes are provided and If possible fixed to trees on the western field boundary. Vivara Pro Seville or Schwegler 1B are suitable for this purpose.

However, if this isn't possible then integrated nest boxes built into some of the new properties should be considered as an alternative.

3.2.5 Badger:

Badgers are absent on site and in the surrounding area and no further surveys or precautions recommended.

3.2.6 Otter:

Whilst no evidence of otter activity was found on the off-site tributary during the survey, it is possible that otters might occasionally traverse the reach whilst foraging or commuting.

So long as the stream corridor is not physically affected, then no impacts on otter are predicted and no precautions are advised.

3.2.7 Water Vole:

No evidence of water vole activity was found during the survey, and the conditions for the species were found to be highly sub-optimal. Therefore the species is absent, no adverse impacts are predicted, and no precautions are required.

3.2.8 Reptiles:

The site has been evaluated as being highly unlikely to support reptiles, therefore no further surveys are required.

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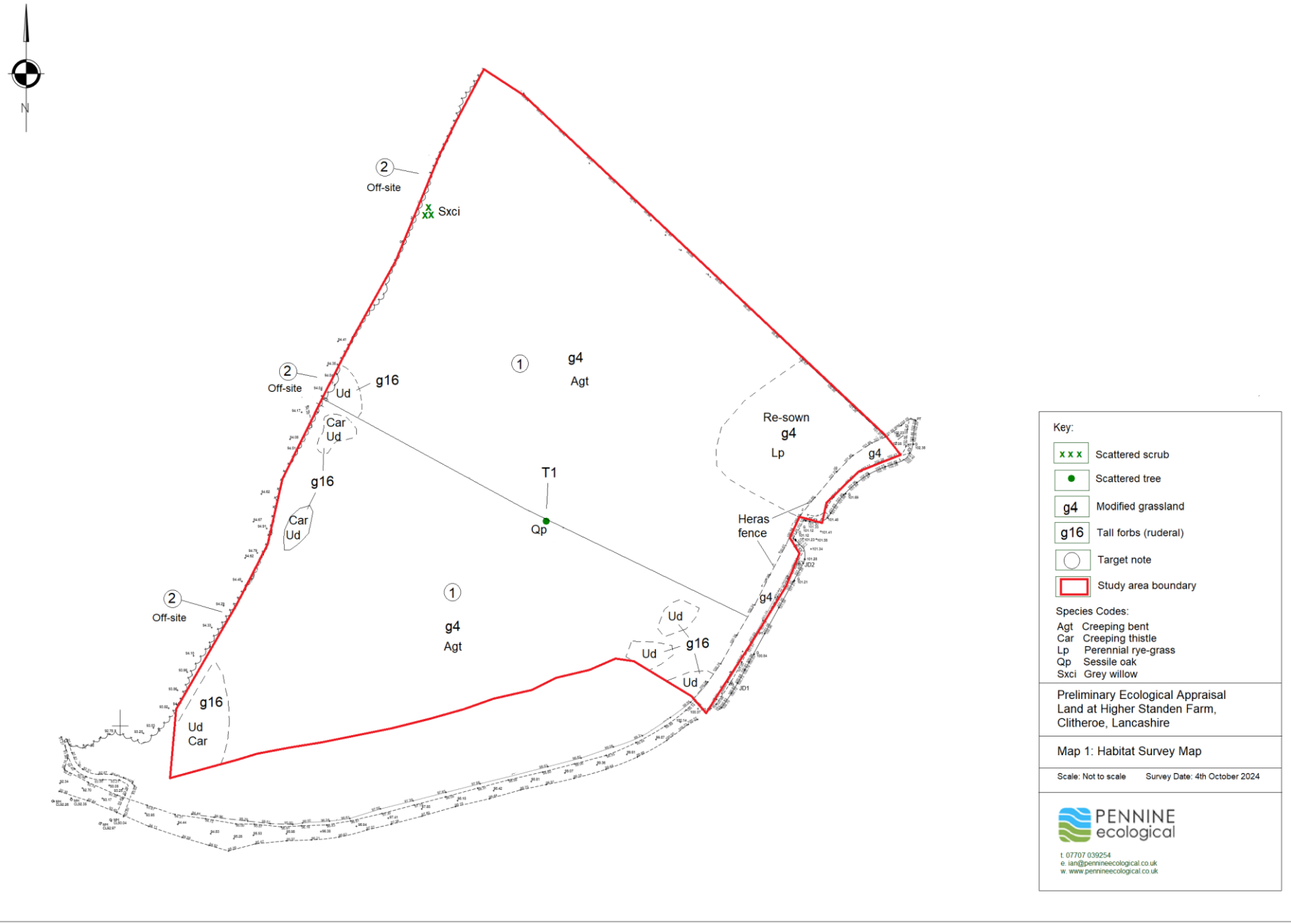
APPENDIX:

Map 1: Habitat Survey Map

Biodiversity Metric 3.0: Condition Assessment


N
2
Off-site
Sxci
2
Off-site
g16
Ud
Car
Ud
g16
Car
Ud
1
g4
Agt
T1
Qp
Re-sown
g4
Lp
g4
Heras
fence
g4
2
Off-site
1
g4
Agt
Ud
g16
Ud
Ud
g16
Ud
Car
Key:
x x x Scattered scrub
Scattered tree
g4 Modified grassland
g16 Tall forbs (ruderal)
Target note
Study area boundary
Species Codes:
Agt Creeping bent
Car Creeping thistle
Lp Perennial rye-grass
Qp Sessile oak
Sxci Grey willow
Preliminary Ecological Appraisal
Land at Higher Standen Farm,
Clitheroe, Lancashire
Map 1: Habitat Survey Map
Scale: Not to scale
Survey Date: 4th October 2024
PENNINE ecological
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Biodiversity Metric 3.0: Condition Assessment

The following section provides the condition assessment for the habitat present and described in the habitat survey.

Target Note Number: 1

UKHab Category and Code: Modified Grassland g4

General Description:

Very uniform abandoned dairy grassland with <6 species per m². Secondary habitat tall forbs (g16) present with undesirable species at locally significant levels, and evidence of vehicular movement and re-sowing of disturbed areas recorded locally within the area.

Condition Assessment Score:

The grassland has <6 species per m², therefore this habitat is categorised as 'poor (1)'

Condition Sheet: GRASSLAND Habitat Type (low distinctiveness)	
UKHab Habitat Type(s)	
Grassland - Modified grassland	
Habitat Description	
See UKHab	
Condition Assessment Criteria	
1	There must be 6-8 species per m^2. Note - if a grassland has 9 or more species per m^2 it should be classified as a moderate distinctiveness grassland habitat type. **NB - this criterion is non-negotiable for achieving good condition.**
2	Sward height is varied (at least 20% of the sward is less than 7 cm and at least 20 per cent is more than 7 cm) creating microclimates which provide opportunities for insects, birds and small mammals to live and breed.
3	Some scattered scrub (including bramble) may be present, but scrub accounts for less than 20% of total grassland area. Note - patches of shrubs with continuous (more than 90%) cover should be classified as the relevant scrub habitat type.
4	Physical damage evident in less than 5% of total grassland area, such as excessive poaching, damage from machinery use or storage, damaging levels of access, or any other damaging management activities.
5	Cover of bare ground between 1% and 5%, including localised areas, for example, rabbit warrens.
6	Cover of bracken less than 20%.
7	There is an absence of invasive non-native species (as listed on Schedule 9 of WCA, 1981) and undesirable species[1] make up less than 5% of ground cover.

Condition Assessment Result	Condition Assessment Score
Passes 6 or 7 of 7 criteria including non-negotiable criterion 7	Good (3)
Passes 4 or 5 of 7 criteria; OR Passes 6 of 7 criteria excluding non-negotiable criterion 7	Moderate (2)
Passes 0, 1, 2 or 3 of 7 criteria	Poor (1)

Notes
Footnote 1 - Species considered undesirable for this habitat type include: Creeping thistle *Cirsium arvense*, spear thistle *Cirsium vulgare*, curled dock *Rumex crispus*, broad-leaved dock *Rumex obtusifolius*, common nettle *Urtica dioica*, greater plantain Plantago major, white clover *Trifolium repens*, cow parsley *Anthriscus sylvestris*.