

Preliminary Ecological Appraisal

Survey site:

Northcote Hotel and Restaurant, Northcote Road, Langho, Blackburn BB68BE

Client:

Northcote Hotel Ltd

Survey date:

08/05/2026

Project:

This report is prepared to inform a planning application with Ribble Valley Borough Council and is described as:

The construction of a new restaurant with associated parking and landscaping.

On the assumption that site conditions and habitats remain unchanged, the results of this assessment will remain valid for 18 months from the date of this survey i.e. until November 2027, in accordance with CIEEM guidance in the lifespan of Ecological Reports and Surveys. This survey and report should be updated if a planning application has not been submitted within this timeframe.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The following is work you will need to commission to obtain planning permission and to comply with legislation. Further information, along with opportunities for biodiversity enhancement, are outlined in the proceeding sections of this report.

Table 1: summary of key findings arising from this survey.

Key Findings
• The proposed works will result in a net loss of biodiversity on site. As the site does not meet one of the exemptions, a Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) assessment will be required to ensure the site delivers the net gain required by the local council. Given the recent site clearance this BNG assessment will need to be undertaken retrospectively. • A Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) may be requested by the LPA via condition. • Vegetation clearance works should be undertaken outside the bird nesting season (March–August inclusive), or a pre-commencement nesting bird inspection by a suitably qualified ecologist will be required prior to works commencing. • A precautionary working method for reptiles, amphibians and hedgehogs will be required during construction due to the suitability of retained habitats on and adjacent to the site. • A pre-commencement ecological walkover for badgers is recommended no more than 4–6 weeks prior to the commencement of works to confirm no new setts have established within or adjacent to the development area. • A low impact lighting strategy will be adopted for the site during and post-development, which will be designed to incorporate the measures laid out in the latest (2023) bat lighting guide Guidance Note 8 Bats and Artificial Lighting¹.

- Biodiversity enhancement measures including bat boxes, bird boxes, bee bricks, native planting and hedgehog connectivity features are recommended as part of the development proposals.

1. INTRODUCTION

The aim of the PEA was to obtain data on existing ecological conditions, and to conduct a preliminary assessment of the likely significance of ecological impacts on the proposed development.

Methodology

PEA survey methodology and legislation can be found in the Arbtech Supplement: [PEA Methodology and Legislation - 2025](#).

Survey Details

The site survey was undertaken on 08/05/2026 by David Hill-Chambers MSc (Hons), BSc (Hons), Graduate Ecologist an ecologist with 3 years of experience.

Table 2: *The weather conditions during the survey.*

Temperature (°C)	Humidity (%)	Cloud Cover (%)	Wind (km/h)	Rain
12.3	74.0	58	8.0	None

Survey Limitations

It should be noted that whilst every effort has been made to describe the baseline conditions within the survey area, and evaluate these features, this report does not provide a complete characterisation of the site. This assessment provides a preliminary view of the likelihood of protected species being present. This is based on suitability of the habitats on the site and in the wider landscape, the ecology and biology of species as currently understood. There were no specific limitations to the survey.

A biological records data search has not been undertaken. However, given the location of the site, the nature of the habitats present and the assessed suitability of the site for protected or notable species, it is not anticipated that the purchase of biological records data will add any significant weight or alter the conclusions and recommendations outlined in this report.

2. SITE LOCATION AND LANDSCAPE CONTEXT

2.1 Summary of Survey Findings

Site Location & Context

The site is centred at National Grid Reference SD 70635 34941 and extends to approximately 1.04ha (development boundary 0.62ha). The site comprises two buildings (B1 and B2), areas of modified grassland, sparsely vegetated land, other woodland; broadleaved, native hedgerow, artificial unvegetated unsealed surfaces and scattered trees. The site is well connected to the surrounding landscape through the presence of hedgerows, trees and woodland habitats. The site is enclosed by wooden fencing and native hedgerows.

The surrounding landscape comprises predominantly managed grassland and areas of deciduous woodland, with commercial and residential buildings scattered throughout, most notably to the south of the site. A review of historic mapping indicates the landscape has remained largely unchanged since the late 1800s. According to available soil data, the underlying soils are described as medium, loamy but locally light, silt-rich, and occasionally heavy clay-rich soils and subsoils.

Priority Habitats

The site contains deciduous woodland. There are a further four within 2km of the site. These comprise ancient & semi-natural woodland, ancient, replanted woodland, lowland fens and lowland meadows.

Designated Sites

Statutory Designations within 2km

There are no statutory designations within 2km of the site.

Statutory Designations within 10km

No national network sites (SAC, SPA, Ramsar) are located within 10km.

SSSI Risk Zone

The site does not fall within the impact risk zone for any Sites of Specific Scientific Interest.

Non-Designated Sites

The presence of non-statutory designated sites within 2km of the site cannot be established without data from the local records centre. Whilst some habitats in the wider landscape may host designations, the immediate environs of the site do not host habitats likely to be of designable quality.

2.2 Foreseen Impacts

No direct impacts to any designated sites will occur as a result of the proposed development. However, due to the proximity of the site to and the possible presence of non-statutory designations in the vicinity, indirect effects such as pollution during construction, or increased recreational pressure, could occur.

2.3 Recommendations

Best practice measures to minimise the possibility of pollution, damage to adjacent habitats must be implemented during construction. A Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) may be requested by the LPA via condition. This should include the following measures:

- Retained trees adjacent to the site will be protected in line with the measures outlined in the British Standard 'Trees in Relation to Design, Demolition and Construction to Construction - Recommendations' (BS 5837) (2012).
- Appropriate buffering between the development zone and retained habitats (e.g. 15m for ancient woodland)
- Use of Heras or other appropriate fencing to prevent encroachment by contractors onto adjacent habitats.

- A Construction Ecological Management Plan (CEMP) will be required, outlining best practice measures to delineate the construction zone and to minimise the possibility of pollution and damage to nearby habitats during construction.

3. ONSITE HABITATS

This section may include further work you will need to commission (if any) to obtain planning permission or comply with legislation for other consent. All clients are expected to read and understand this section, or to contact the lead surveyor for advice.

3.1 Summary of Survey Findings

Modified grassland (g4) - Scattered scrub (10)

The site is covered with grassland comprised of a low variety of common grassland species. This grassland is actively managed via regular mowing, resulting in a short sward of ~5cm. No signs of compaction or damage are present, resulting in areas of bare ground totalling <10% of the site. The species composition is poor, with fewer than 8 vascular plant species present per m2. In accordance with the Statutory Biodiversity Metric Condition Assessment Matrix, the modified grassland was assessed to have a poor condition value.

Table 3a: species abundance for modified grassland.

Abundance	Species
Dominant	Timothy (<i>Phleum pratense</i>)
Abundant	Meadow Buttercup (<i>Ranunculus acris</i>), Creeping Buttercup (<i>Ranunculus repens</i>)
Frequent	Dandelion (<i>Taraxacum</i>), Cuckooflower (<i>Cardamine pratensis</i>), Broad-leaved Dock (<i>Rumex obtusifolius</i>)
Occasional	Mouse ear chickweed (<i>Cerastium fontanum</i>), Common Sorrel (<i>Rumex acetosa</i>), Common Knapweed (<i>Centaurea nigra</i>), Curled Dock (<i>Rumex crispus</i>)

Rare	-
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Sparsely vegetated land (u1f) - Recent Management (517)

An area surrounded by modified grassland, has recently been cleared, resulting in an area of sparsely vegetated urban land. Evidence of the former habitat remains present, with woody stems and cut trunks still visible throughout the area, indicating the habitat was previously dense scrub. Vegetation beginning to recolonise the area includes common nettle and creeping buttercup. In accordance with the Statutory Biodiversity Metric Condition Assessment Matrix, the sparsely vegetated land was assessed to have a poor condition value.

Building (u1b5)

There are two buildings present on-site comprising a small brick-built shed and a recently constructed greenhouse.

Other woodland; broadleaved (w1g)

Along the eastern boundary of the site is a linear area of Woodland dominated by broadleaved species. Species present within this habitat include hawthorn (*Crataegus monogyna*), sessile oak (*Quercus petraea*), sycamore (*Acer pseudoplatanus*), hazel (*Corylus avellana*) and ash (*Fraxinus excelsior*) with an understorey dominated by Ivy. In accordance with the Statutory Biodiversity Metric Condition Assessment Matrix, the other woodland; broadleaved was assessed to have a poor condition value.

Native hedgerow (h2a) – H1

Within the area of modified grassland is a native hedgerow dominated by dog rose (*Rosa canina*), blackthorn (*Prunus spinosa*) and sea-buckthorn (*Hippophae rhamnoides*). Species present within this habitat include rugosa rose (*Rosa rugosa*), dog rose (*Rosa canina*), blackthorn (*Prunus spinosa*) and sea-buckthorn (*Hippophae rhamnoides*). In accordance with the Statutory Biodiversity Metric Condition Assessment Matrix, the native hedgerow was assessed to have a moderate condition value.

Native hedgerow (h2a) – H2

A second hedgerow is present along the boundary of the modified grassland. Species present within this habitat include sea-buckthorn (*Hippophae rhamnoides*), dog roses (*Rosa canina*) and elder (*Sambucus nigra*). In accordance with the Statutory Biodiversity Metric Condition Assessment Matrix, the native hedgerow was assessed to have a moderate condition value.

Native hedgerow (h2a) – H3

Along the western boundary of the site is a linear hedgerow. Species present within this habitat include holly sp. (*Ilex sp.*), beech (*Fagus sylvatica*) and hawthorn (*Crataegus monogyna*). In accordance with the Statutory Biodiversity Metric Condition Assessment Matrix, the native hedgerow was assessed to have a moderate condition value.

Artificial unvegetated, unsealed surface (u1c)

An area previously understood to comprise a vegetable garden has been cleared, with bare soil now present throughout. Surrounding this main area of disturbance are smaller patches of bare ground which also appear to have been recently created. It is understood that these works were undertaken in association with the regeneration and ongoing management of the existing kitchen garden area. In accordance with the Statutory Biodiversity Metric, this habitat is not subject to a condition assessment.

Scattered Trees (32)

20 scattered trees were recorded across the site, comprising a mix of native and non-native species. Among these were several young or semi-mature field maples (*Acer campestre*), a common ash (*Fraxinus excelsior*), and hawthorns (*Crataegus monogyna*), with one hawthorn being small. A small plum tree (*Prunus domestica*) and two others of the same species, alongside a young or semi-mature silver birch (*Betula pendula*), contributed to the younger elements. The mature trees included a very large sycamore (*Acer pseudoplatanus*), two large sycamores, and three medium sycamores, as well as a large copper beech (*Fagus sylvatica*) and two medium copper beeches. Additionally, three medium common beeches, one mature and two young or semi-mature, were noted, alongside a further mature common beech. In addition to the 20 trees on site, recent site clearance has resulted in the felling of at least 17 additional trees varying in size from small to extra-large based on the tree stumps present.

In accordance with the Statutory Biodiversity Metric Condition Assessment Matrix, the trees were assessed as follows:

Table 4: the condition assessment scores for the scattered trees on site.

Tree / Group	Tree Size	Common Name	Condition Score
T1	Small	Field Maple	Moderate
T2	Small	Field Maple	Moderate
T3	Small	Common Ash	Moderate
T4	Small	Hawthorn	Moderate
T5	Small	Hawthorn	Moderate
T6	Small	Silver Birch	Moderate
T7	Small	Plum Tree	Moderate
T8	Small	Plum Tree	Moderate
T9	Small	Plum Tree	Moderate
T10	Medium	Common Beech	Moderate
T11	Medium	Common Beech	Moderate
T12	Large	Copper Beech	Good

T13	Extra Large	Sycamore	Good
T14	Medium	Common Beech	Good
T15	Large	Copper Beech	Good
T16	Large	Sycamore	Good
T17	Medium	Sycamore	Good
T18	Medium	Sycamore	Good
T19	Medium	Copper Beech	Good
T20	Medium	Sycamore	Good

3.2 Foreseen Impacts

No direct impacts to any notable habitats will occur as a result of the proposed development. However, indirect effects such as pollution or habitat damage could occur during construction, whilst encroachment on the grassland by contractors and machinery could result in plants and biodiversity value being dug up or trampled on.

3.3 Recommendations

Best practice measures to minimise the possibility of pollution must be implemented during construction. This should include the following measures:

- Remove only the minimum of habitat required to facilitate the development

- Use of Heras or other appropriate fencing to prevent encroachment by contractors onto retained habitats.
- Protect retained turf and soil resource from destruction and compaction using plastic matting and wooden boarding. Do not store skips and other heavy materials on retained turf.
- Grasscrete, cell web or any other porous surface treatment facilitating recovery of vegetation is preferred to hard standing.

A Construction Ecological Management Plan (CEMP) will be required, outlining best practice measures delineate the construction zone and to minimise the possibility of pollution and habitat damage during construction.

The proposed development may require a Biodiversity Net Gain assessment, to calculate the value of habitats on site and ensure the delivery of a minimum of 10% measurable biodiversity net gain. Given the recent site clearance, the BNG assessment should be undertaken retrospectively.

4. INVASIVE SPECIES

This section may include further work you will need to commission (if any) to obtain planning permission or comply with legislation for other consent. All clients are expected to read and understand this section, or to contact the lead surveyor for advice.

4.1 Summary of Survey Findings

No non-native invasive or otherwise problematic plants were recorded on site or are considered likely to be on site, but, given seasonal limitations and the sites wider context, may be visible at other times of year.

4.2 Foreseen Impacts

None foreseen.

4.3 Recommendations

No further surveys but remain vigilant.

5. FAUNA: BATS

This section may include further work you will need to commission (if any) to obtain planning permission or comply with legislation for other consent. All clients are expected to read and understand this section, or to contact the lead surveyor for advice.

5.1 Summary of Survey Findings

EPSL data and local records

A search of the magic.gov.uk database for granted EPSLs within a 2km radius of the site has been completed. Displaced bats from licensed sites <2km away from the survey site will find alternative habitat either within the mitigation measures implemented as part of the licence or will relocate to other known roosts sites in close proximity to the licensed site. No EPSLs are present within a 2km radius of the site.

There are no Special Areas of Conservation designated for bats within 10km of the site.

Foraging and commuting habitat

Habitats recorded on site are assessed to provide foraging and commuting opportunities for bats in the form of modified grassland, other woodland; broadleaved, native hedgerow and scattered trees, and offsite within 2km including deciduous woodland. These habitats are likely to provide micro-climatic conditions that support invertebrates that will in turn provide foraging opportunities for local bat populations. Most notably, the woodland on site extends beyond the site adding to the continuity of vegetated linear features present in the wider landscape. Bats are well known to utilise linear features to aid navigation whilst travelling between foraging resources and roost sites.

Roosting habitat

Buildings and trees to be impacted by the proposed development were assessed for their suitability to support roosting bats below. There are a total of two buildings on site; a brick-built shed (B1) and a newly constructed greenhouse (B2). Neither building is to be impacted by the development and were therefore to subject to a roost assessment. All 20 trees that remain present on site are also expected to be retained post development,

with no suitable roosting features identified. A number of the trees which have been felled were large mature specimens. It is unknown if any suitability for roosting bats was present.

5.2 Foreseen Impacts

Foraging and commuting habitat

The proposed development has resulted in the felling of at least 17 trees, with no further tree removal anticipated. It is understood that these works were undertaken in association with the regeneration and ongoing management of the existing kitchen garden area. Although these trees have been removed, opportunities for foraging and commuting bats remain present on-site, and no linear commuting feature has been entirely severed due to the retention of native hedgerow boundaries. Given the availability of more extensive foraging and commuting habitat within the surrounding landscape, the loss of these trees is considered likely to be inconsequential to local bat populations.

Artificial lighting

The proposed development may lead to an increase in the amount of current lighting of surrounding habitats or the retained building without mitigation. This may disturb commuting bats.

5.3 Recommendations

Foraging and commuting habitat

No further surveys are required.

Artificial lighting

A low impact lighting strategy will be adopted for the site during post-development which outlines the areas of the site that will be retained as dark corridors. Parameters can be found on the Bat Conservation Trust website: <https://www.bats.org.uk/news/2023/08/bats-and-artificial-lighting-at-night-ilp-guidance-note-update-released>

Suggested biodiversity enhancements

The installation of number two bat boxes at the site will provide additional roosting habitat for bats. Bat boxes should be positioned 3-5m above ground level facing in a south or south-westerly direction with a clear flight path to and from the entrance, away from artificial light.

6. FAUNA: BIRDS

This section may include further work you will need to commission (if any) to obtain planning permission or comply with legislation for other consent. All clients are expected to read and understand this section, or to contact the lead surveyor for advice.

6.1 Summary of Survey Findings

Trees and vegetation

No bird nests were identified within the vegetation on-site, however the native hedgerows, scattered trees and woodland offer both nesting and foraging opportunities. Due to the small size of the site and the extent and type of the habitats recorded, the site is not considered suitable to support a significant assemblage of protected and/or notable birds.

Barn Owls

The site does not appear to provide any suitable nesting sites for barn owls.

6.2 Foreseen Impacts

Trees and vegetation

Native hedgerows H1 and H2 are expected to be lost as part of the proposed development. Although no active bird nests were identified at the time of the survey, the removal of these habitats has the potential to result in the destruction of, or disturbance to, active bird nests should nesting birds establish prior to vegetation clearance works.

Barn Owls

None foreseen.

6.3 Recommendations

Trees and vegetation

Any vegetation removal should be undertaken outside the period 1st March to 31st August. If this timeframe cannot be avoided, a close inspection of the vegetation should be undertaken immediately, by a qualified ecologist, prior to the commencement of work. All active nests will need to be retained until the young have fledged. Precautions should also be taken with machinery and noise levels when working close to any retained habitats so as not to disturb any nearby nesting birds during construction works.

Barn Owls

No further barn owl surveys required.

Suggested biodiversity enhancements

Swift and sparrow boxes should be positioned at the eaves of a building and can be incorporated into the fabric of the building during construction.

7. FAUNA: REPTILES

This section may include further work you will need to commission (if any) to obtain planning permission or comply with legislation for other consent. All clients are expected to read and understand this section, or to contact the lead surveyor for advice.

7.1 Summary of Survey Findings

EPSL data and local records

A review of the MAGIC database returned no granted EPSL records for protected reptiles within 2km of the site.

Habitat suitability

Habitats recorded on site are assessed to provide foraging, commuting, basking and refuge opportunities for reptiles. Within the modified grassland, a number of habitat refugia have been created, consisting of log piles. The woodland and hedgerows provide elevated value for reptiles as these habitats provide a suitable structure for refuge, whilst also providing foraging and commuting opportunities. The site has good connectivity to further suitable reptile habitat in the wider landscape via the woodland. The presence of reptiles on site therefore cannot be discounted.

Wider landscape

The adjacent sections of woodland are of elevated ecological value within the wider landscape and may represent important resources for local reptile populations. These adjacent habitats provide optimal foraging, commuting, and refuge opportunities for reptiles and are well connected to further suitable habitat in the wider landscape. The presence of reptiles utilising these adjacent habitats cannot be discounted.

7.2 Foreseen Impacts

The habitat refugia within the modified grassland, in addition to the woodland will be retained in full post development. However, there remains a low risk that a small number of reptiles could be present in the vicinity of the works. These could be injured or killed without mitigation.

7.3 Recommendations

A precautionary working method will be implemented for widespread reptiles during construction, including the following measures:

- Vegetation will be maintained at a short sward (5cm) to discourage reptiles. OR Grassland will be subject to a two-stage cut (if sward is >10cm) prior to removal in a directional manner, the first cut at 10cm and the second to ground level and maintained as a short sward (5cm) or bare ground throughout construction.
- Removal of any root systems / refugia will be undertaken outside the reptile hibernation season (November – February).
- Any excavations will be covered overnight, or a ramp will be installed to enable any trapped animals to escape.
- Best practice pollution prevention measures will be implemented to minimise impacts to nearby habitats.
- Any chemicals or pollutants used or created by the development should be stored and disposed of correctly according to COSHH regulations.
- If any reptiles are found in the working area these should be allowed to disperse of their own accord or, if at immediate risk, should be moved by hand to a sheltered, vegetated area away from disturbance.
- In the unlikely event that a reptile is identified, works must cease and advice must be sought from a suitably qualified ecologist.

8. FAUNA: AMPHIBIANS

This section may include further work you will need to commission (if any) to obtain planning permission or comply with legislation for other consent. All clients are expected to read and understand this section, or to contact the lead surveyor for advice.

8.1 Summary of Survey Findings

EPSL and survey data

A review of the MAGIC database returned no granted EPSL records for amphibians within 2km of the site. Further, no positive class survey licence return or DLL historic survey data (2017 – 2019) for great crested newts (GCN) were present within 2km of the site. The site is located in an area where District Level Licensing scheme for GCN is available.

Aquatic habitat suitability (including ponds within 500m)

Great crested newts (GCN) exist in metapopulations and are known to utilise ponds and their connecting terrestrial habitat during their life cycle; great crested newts are typically found within terrestrial habitats up to 500m from breeding ponds (Langton et al. 2001). There are no ponds on the site, but a review of aerial imagery (MAGIC and OS Maps) indicates the presence of six ponds within 500m. The closest pond is located 140m S. A pond map showing approximate pond locations is provided in Appendix 6.

Terrestrial habitat suitability

Areas of shrubbery may provide foraging and sheltering opportunities for amphibians. No hibernation opportunities were identified on-site.

8.2 Foreseen Impacts

When georeferencing the proposed development plans over scaled mapping of the site, it is noted that the development area is likely to result in the loss of ~0.2ha of modified grassland. The closest pond located 140m south of the site is not considered functionally connected to the site given

the busy road separating it from the site. The closest pond considered connected to the site is located ~450m west of the site. If great crested newts are present within this pond, when completing the rapid risk assessment published by Natural England (Natural England 2015), the proposed development produces a Green risk score, which states: Offence Highly Unlikely.

8.3 Recommendations

Owing to the nature of the proposed development and the low potential for impacts to great crested newts, further surveys are considered to be disproportionate. A precautionary working method will be implemented for common amphibians during construction, including the following measures:

- A staged approach will be adopted for vegetation clearance, whereby the vegetation will be strimmed to 15cm and left overnight to allow any amphibians to disperse. The vegetation can then be cleared to ground level and must be maintained at this level for the duration of construction to deter amphibians from the working area.
- Any rubble piles will be dismantled by hand outside the amphibian hibernation window and debris and brash will be stored on pallets or removed from the site to prevent amphibians from utilising these areas.
- Best practice pollution prevention measures will be implemented to minimise impacts to nearby aquatic habitats that amphibians could use.
- Any chemicals or pollutants used or created by the development should be stored and disposed of correctly according to COSHH regulations.
- If any common amphibians are found in the working area these should be allowed to disperse of their own accord or, if at immediate risk, should be moved by hand to a sheltered, vegetated area away from disturbance.
- In the unlikely event that a great crested newt is identified, works must cease and advice must be sought from a suitably qualified ecologist.

9. FAUNA: RIPARIAN ANIMALS

This section may include further work you will need to commission (if any) to obtain planning permission or comply with legislation for other consent. All clients are expected to read and understand this section, or to contact the lead surveyor for advice.

9.1 Summary of Survey Findings

A search of the magic.gov.uk database for granted EPSLs within a 2km radius of the site has been completed for riparian animals (otters and water voles). No EPSLs relating to riparian animals are present within a 2km radius of the site.

Habitat suitability

There are no water courses on or connected to the site. There are also no riparian habitats present on site or within an influencing distance.

9.2 Foreseen Impacts

No impacts are anticipated on riparian animals as a result of the proposed development.

9.3 Recommendations

No further surveys for riparian animals required.

10. FAUNA: HAZEL DORMOUSE

This section may include further work you will need to commission (if any) to obtain planning permission or comply with legislation for other consent. All clients are expected to read and understand this section, or to contact the lead surveyor for advice.

10.1 Summary of Survey Findings

EPSL data and local records

A search of the magic.gov.uk database for granted EPSLs within a 2km radius of the site has been completed for hazel dormouse. No EPSLs relating to hazel dormouse are present within a 2km radius of the site.

Habitat suitability

The site lies outside of the known current range for hazel dormice and there are no suitable habitats within the development area. As such it is considered likely that hazel dormice are absent from site.

10.2 Foreseen Impacts

No impacts are anticipated on hazel dormice as a result of the proposed development.

10.3 Recommendations

No further hazel dormouse surveys required.

11. FAUNA: BADGERS

This section may include further work you will need to commission (if any) to obtain planning permission or comply with legislation for other consent. All clients are expected to read and understand this section, or to contact the lead surveyor for advice.

11.1 Summary of Survey Findings

No badger setts were noted on site or within a 30m radius of the site. However, evidence of foraging badgers was noted within the development area. Mammal tracks leading to and from the woodland were identified and lead into the modified grassland and the land behind Northcote hotel. The site was considered suitable for badger sett excavation and foraging habitat.

11.2 Foreseen Impacts

No works will be undertaken within 30m of a badger sett. Modified grassland and individual trees will be removed during construction. The loss of such habitats is likely to be inconsequential to local badger populations owing to their low value and the presence of more extensive habitat locally. However, construction activities could result in the death or injury of badgers, if present. In addition, given the suitability of the woodland (W1) and the presence foraging badgers, there remains a risk that a sett may be created before the development begins.

11.3 Recommendations

Although no badger setts were identified on site during the survey, badgers are a mobile species, and their distribution can change over relatively short periods of time. There remains a risk that new setts could be excavated within the site, or immediately adjacent to it, before development commences. To ensure compliance with the Protection of Badgers Act 1992 and to avoid the risk of disturbance or damage to a newly established sett, it is recommended that a pre-commencement ecological walkover survey is undertaken by a suitably qualified ecologist. This survey should be

completed no more than 4–6 weeks prior to the start of works to confirm the continued absence of badger setts and ensure that the risk to this species remains low.

Owing to the nature of the proposed development and the low potential for impacts to badgers, further badger surveys are considered to be disproportionate. A precautionary working method will be implemented during construction, including the following measures:

- A toolbox talk will be given to contractors regarding the possible presence of badgers at the site.
- A pre-commencement inspection of the site will be undertaken for any new badger activity if works do not commence within three months.
- Heras fencing will be erected around the working area to prevent encroachment into retained habitats where badger setts could be present.
- Any excavations will be covered overnight, or a ramp will be installed to enable any trapped animals to escape.
- The use of night-time lighting will be avoided, or sensitive lighting design will be implemented to avoid light spill on to retained habitats which badgers could use.
- Any chemicals or pollutants used or created by the development should be stored and disposed of correctly according to COSHH regulations.
- In the unlikely event that a badger sett is identified, works must cease and advice must be sought from a suitably qualified ecologist.

Suggested biodiversity enhancements

Planting fruit bearing trees and species-rich grassland to increase foraging opportunities for badgers.

12. FAUNA: INVERTEBRATES

This section may include further work you will need to commission (if any) to obtain planning permission or comply with legislation for other consent. All clients are expected to read and understand this section, or to contact the lead surveyor for advice.

12.1 Summary of Survey Findings

The habitats present on-site, including the modified grassland, scattered trees and woodland likely provide common invertebrates with opportunities to forage and shelter. The site contains no further notable habitats which may provide niches for specialised or protected invertebrates.

12.2 Foreseen Impacts

Scattered trees and modified grassland will be removed during construction. The loss of such habitats could result in a reduction in invertebrate habitat and could result in the fragmentation of the local landscape.

12.3 Recommendations

No further surveys.

Suggested biodiversity enhancements

The incorporation of bee bricks (e.g. Ibstock BeeHabitat or similar alternative brand) into the fabric of the new buildings would provide sheltering opportunities for pollinators. These should be installed 0.5m above ground level on a south-facing elevation with no obscuring vegetation. The site could be further enhanced via the provision of native wildflowers or wildflower turf, which would provide foraging opportunities for invertebrates.

13. FAUNA: OTHER NOTABLE SPECIES

This section may include further work you will need to commission (if any) to obtain planning permission or comply with legislation for other consent. All clients are expected to read and understand this section, or to contact the lead surveyor for advice.

13.1 Summary of Survey Findings

Hedgehogs

The modified grassland and woodland onsite provides foraging and commuting opportunities for hedgehogs.

13.2 Foreseen Impacts

Hedgehogs

Large areas of modified grassland and a number of scattered trees will be removed during construction. The loss of such habitats is likely to be inconsequential to local hedgehog populations owing to their low value and the presence of more extensive habitat locally. However, construction activities could result in the death or injury of hedgehogs, if present.

13.3 Recommendations

Hedgehogs

A precautionary working method will be implemented during construction, including the following measures:

- Any excavations will be covered overnight, or a ramp will be installed to enable any trapped animals to escape.
- The use of night-time lighting will be avoided, or sensitive lighting design will be implemented to avoid light spill on to retained habitats which hedgehogs could use.
- Any chemicals or pollutants used or created by the development should be stored and disposed of correctly according to COSHH regulations.

If any hedgehogs are found in the working area these should be allowed to disperse of their own accord or, if at immediate risk, should be moved by hand to a sheltered, vegetated area away from disturbance.

13.4 Suggested Biodiversity Enhancements

Hedgehogs

The following habitat creation and enhancement opportunities could be incorporated into the proposed development which would be beneficial for hedgehogs:

- Planting fruit bearing trees and species-rich grassland to increase foraging opportunities.
- Creation of brash piles or installation of hedgehog houses in shady areas.
- Installation of gaps under boundary fencing to enable hedgehogs to move freely through the site.

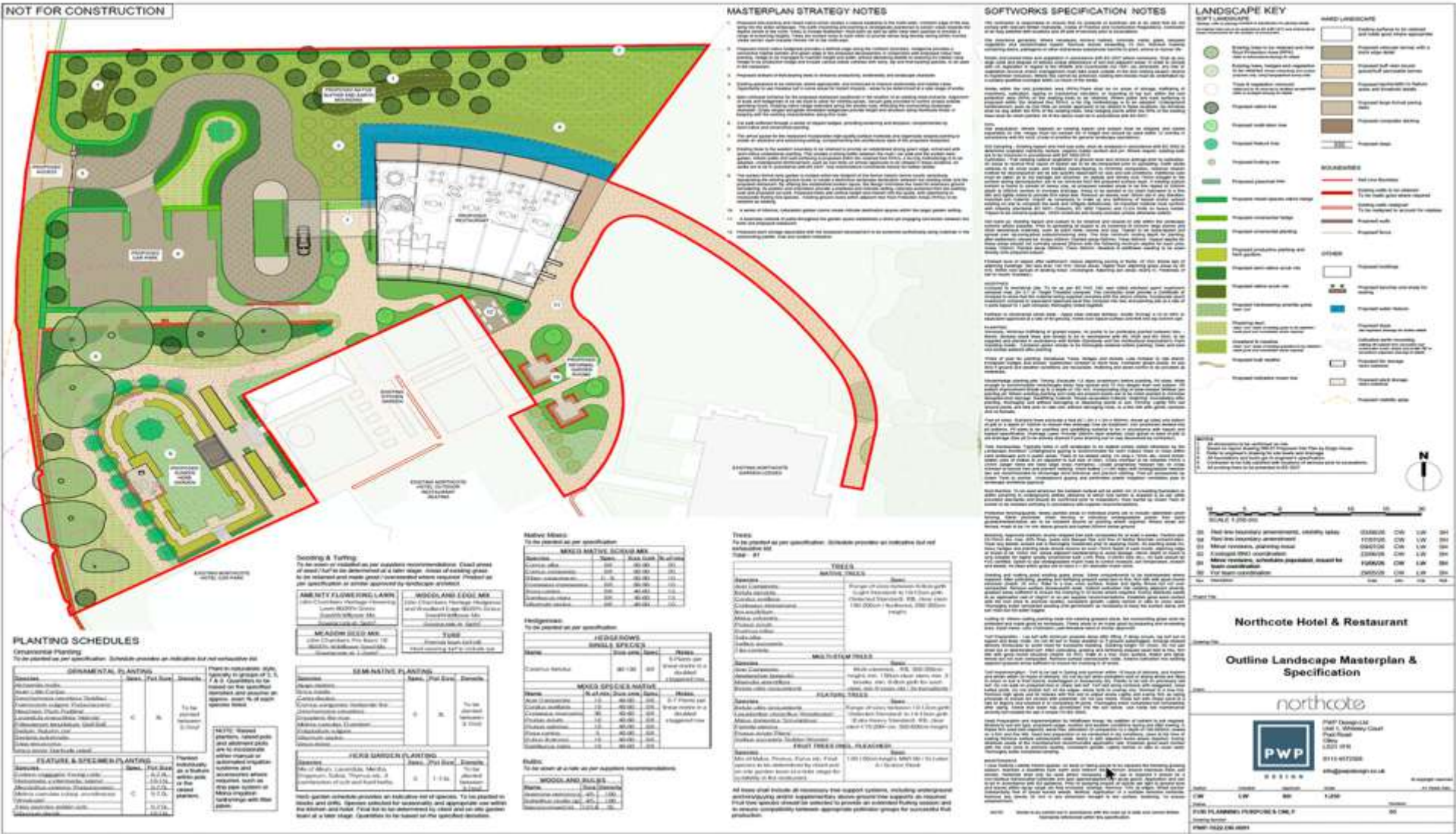
APPENDIX 1: SURVEY/HABITAT MAP



APPENDIX 2: LOCATION MAP



APPENDIX 3: PROPOSED PLAN



APPENDIX 4: HABITAT IMAGES



Modified grassland



Modified grassland



Artificial unvegetated, unsealed surface



Sparsely vegetated land



Other woodland; broadleaved



Native hedgerow – H1



Native hedgerow – H2



Native hedgerow – H3



Scattered trees



Scattered trees



Scattered trees



Evidence of tree felling



Recent site clearance



Recent site clearance



Buildings B1 and B2



Mammal tracks within woodland



Habitat refugia on site



Habitat refugia on site

APPENDIX 5: BASELINE CONDITION SCORE TABLES

Modified grassland (g4) condition assessment.

	Criteria Description	Criteria Passed?
A	There are 6-8 vascular plant species per m2 present, including at least 2 forbs (these may include Creeping thistle <i>Cirsium arvense</i> , spear thistle <i>Cirsium vulgare</i> , curled dock <i>Rumex crispus</i> , broad-leaved dock <i>Rumex obtusifolius</i> , common nettle <i>Urtica dioica</i> , creeping buttercup <i>Ranunculus repens</i> , greater plantain <i>Plantago major</i> , white clover <i>Trifolium repens</i> and cow parsley <i>Anthriscus sylvestris</i>). Where the vascular plant species present are characteristic of medium, high or very high distinctiveness grassland, or there are 9 or more of these characteristic species per m2 (excluding those listed in the previous sentence), please review the full UKHab description to assess whether the grassland should instead be classified as a higher distinctiveness grassland.	N
B	Sward height is varied (at least 20% of the sward is less than 7 cm and at least 20% is more than 7 cm) creating microclimates which provide opportunities for vertebrates and invertebrates to live and breed.	Y
C	Any scrub present accounts for less than 20% of the total grassland area. (Some scattered scrub such as bramble <i>Rubus fruticosus</i> agg. may be present). Note - patches of scrub with continuous (more than 90%) cover should be classified as the relevant scrub habitat type.	Y
D	Physical damage is evident in less than 5% of total grassland area. Examples of physical damage include excessive poaching, damage from machinery use or storage, erosion caused by high levels of access, or any other damaging management activities.	Y
E	Cover of bare ground is between 1% and 10%, including localised areas (for example, a concentration of rabbit warrens). For example, this could include small, scattered areas of bare ground allowing establishment of new species, or localised patches where not exceeding 10% cover.	Y
F	Cover of bracken <i>Pteridium aquilinum</i> is less than 20%.	Y
G	There is an absence of invasive non-native plant species (as listed on Schedule 9 of WCA).	Y
		Total 6/7
	Condition poor due to passing 6 of 7 criteria. Essential criteria (A) not met; condition capped at poor.	

Sparsely vegetated land (u1f) condition assessment.

	Criteria Description	Criteria Passed?
A	Vegetation structure is varied, providing opportunities for vertebrates and invertebrates to live, eat and breed. A single structural habitat component or vegetation type does not account for more than 80% of the total habitat area.	N
B	The habitat parcel contains different plant species that are beneficial for wildlife, for example flowering species providing nectar sources for a range of invertebrates at different times of year.	N
C	Invasive non-native plant species (listed on Schedule 9 of WCA) and others which are to the detriment of native wildlife (using professional judgement) cover less than 5% of the total vegetated area.	Y
BONUS	There is a complete absence of invasive non-native plant species (listed on Schedule 9 of WCA) and others which are to the detriment of native wildlife (using professional judgement).	Y
		Total 2/4
	Condition poor due to passing 2 of 4 criteria.	

Other woodland; broadleaved (w1g) condition assessment.

Category	Good (3 points)	Moderate (2 points)	Poor (1 point)	Score
A. Age distribution of trees	Three age-classes present.	Two age-classes present.	One age-class present.	1
B. Wild, domestic and feral herbivore damage	No significant browsing damage evident in woodland.	Evidence of significant browsing pressure is present in less than 40% of whole woodland.	Evidence of significant browsing pressure is present in 40% or more of whole woodland.	3
C. Invasive plant species	No invasive species present in woodland.	Rhododendron Rhododendron ponticum or cherry laurel Prunus laurocerasus not present, and other invasive species <10% cover.	Rhododendron or cherry laurel present, or other invasive species ≥10% cover.	3
D. Number of native tree species	Five or more native tree or shrub species found across woodland parcel.	Three to four native tree or shrub species found across woodland parcel.	Two or less native tree or shrub species across woodland parcel.	2
E. Cover of native tree and shrub species	>80% of canopy trees and >80% of understory shrubs are native.	50 - 80% of canopy trees and 50 - 80% of understory shrubs are native.	<50% of canopy trees and <50% of understory shrubs are native.	3
F. Open space within woodland	10 - 20% of woodland has areas of temporary open space. Unless woodland is <10ha, in which case 0 - 20% temporary open space is permitted (given the increased ratio of edge habitat to woodland where the woodland is <10ha).	21 - 40% of woodland has areas of temporary open space.	<10% or >40% of woodland has areas of temporary open space. But if woodland <10ha has <10% temporary open space, please see Good category7.	2
G. Woodland regeneration	All three classes present in woodland; trees 4 - 7 cm Diameter at Breast Height (DBH), saplings and seedlings or advanced coppice regrowth.	One or two classes only present in woodland.	No classes or coppice regrowth present in woodland.	1
H. Tree health	Tree mortality 10% or less, no pests or diseases and no crown dieback.	11% to 25% tree mortality and or crown dieback or low-risk pest or disease present.	Greater than 25% tree mortality and or any high-risk pest or disease present.	3

I. Vegetation and ground flora	Recognisable NVC plant community at ground layer present, strongly characterised by ancient woodland flora specialists.	Recognisable woodland NVC plant community at ground layer present.	No recognisable woodland NVC plant community at ground layer present.	1
J. Woodland vertical structure	Three or more storeys across all survey plots, or a complex woodland.	Two storeys across all survey plots.	One or less storey across all survey plots.	1
K. Veteran trees	Two or more veteran trees per hectare.	One veteran tree per hectare.	No veteran trees present in woodland.	1
L. Amount of deadwood	50% of all survey plots within the woodland parcel have deadwood, such as standing and fallen deadwood, large dead branches and or stems, branch stubs and stumps, or an abundance of small cavities.	Between 25% and 50% of all survey plots within the woodland parcel have deadwood, such as standing and fallen deadwood, large dead branches and or stems, stubs and stumps, or an abundance of small cavities.	Less than 25% of all survey plots within the woodland parcel have deadwood, such as standing and fallen deadwood, large dead branches and or stems, stubs and stumps, or an abundance of small cavities.	3
M. Woodland disturbance	No nutrient enrichment or damaged ground evident.	Less than 1 hectare in total of nutrient enrichment across woodland area, and or less than 20% of woodland area has damaged ground.	1 hectare or more of nutrient enrichment, and or 20% or more of woodland area has damaged ground.	3
				Total 27/39
	Condition poor due to scoring 27 of 39 points.			

Native hedgerow (h2a) condition assessment – H1

	Criteria Description	Criteria Passed?
A	Height >1.5 m average along length. (The average height of woody growth estimated from base of stem to the top of the shoots, excluding any bank beneath the hedgerow, any gaps or isolated trees. Newly laid or coppiced hedgerows are indicative of good management and pass this criterion for up to a maximum of four years (if undertaken according to good practice). A newly planted hedgerow does not pass this criterion (unless it is >1.5 m height).)	Y
A	Width >1.5 m average along length. (The average width of woody growth estimated at the widest point of the canopy, excluding gaps and isolated trees. Outgrowths (such as blackthorn <i>Prunus spinosa</i> suckers) are only included in the width estimate when they are >0.5 m in height. Laid, coppiced, cut and newly planted hedgerows are indicative of good management and pass this criterion for up to a maximum of four years (if undertaken according to good practice).)	N
B	Gap between ground and base of canopy <0.5 m for >90% of length. (This is the vertical 'gappiness' of the woody component of the hedgerow, and its distance from the ground to the lowest leafy growth. Certain exceptions to this criterion are acceptable (see page 65 of the Hedgerow Survey Handbook).)	N
B	Gaps make up <10% of total length; and No canopy gaps >5 m. (This is the horizontal 'gappiness' of the woody component of the hedgerow. Gaps are complete breaks in the woody canopy (no matter how small). Access points and gates contribute to the overall 'gappiness' but are not subject to the >5 m criterion (as this is the typical size of a gate).)	N
C	>1 m width of undisturbed ground with perennial herbaceous vegetation for >90% of length: Measured from outer edge of hedgerow; and is present on one side of the hedgerow (at least). (This is the level of disturbance (excluding wildlife disturbance) at the base of the hedgerow. Undisturbed ground is present for at least 90% of the hedgerow length, greater than 1 m in width and must be present along at least one side of the hedgerow. This criterion recognises the value of the hedgerow base as a boundary habitat with the capacity to support a wide range of species. Cultivation, heavily trodden footpaths, poached ground etc. can limit available habitat niches.)	Y
C	Plant species indicative of nutrient enrichment of soils dominate <20% cover of the area of undisturbed ground. (The indicator species used are nettles <i>Urtica</i> spp., cleavers <i>Galium aparine</i> and docks <i>Rumex</i> spp. Their presence, either singly or together, does not exceed the 20% cover threshold.)	Y
D	>90% of the hedgerow and undisturbed ground is free of invasive non-native plant species (including those listed on Schedule 9 of WCA) and recently introduced species. (Recently introduced species refer to plants that have naturalised in the UK since AD 1500 (neophytes). Archaeophytes count as natives. For information on Archaeophytes and neophytes see the JNCC website, as well as the BSBI website where the 'Online Atlas of the British and Irish Flora' contains an up-to-date list of the status of species. For information on invasive non-native species see the GB Non-Native Secretariat website.)	Y

D	>90% of the hedgerow or undisturbed ground is free of damage caused by human activities. (This criterion addresses damaging activities that may have led to or lead to deterioration in other attributes. This could include evidence of pollution, piles of manure or rubble, or inappropriate management practices (for example, excessive hedgerow cutting).)	N
		Total 4/8
	Condition moderate due to passing 4 of 8 criteria.	

Native hedgerow (h2a) condition assessment – H2

	Criteria Description	Criteria Passed?
A	Height >1.5 m average along length. (The average height of woody growth estimated from base of stem to the top of the shoots, excluding any bank beneath the hedgerow, any gaps or isolated trees. Newly laid or coppiced hedgerows are indicative of good management and pass this criterion for up to a maximum of four years (if undertaken according to good practice). A newly planted hedgerow does not pass this criterion (unless it is >1.5 m height).)	Y
A	Width >1.5 m average along length. (The average width of woody growth estimated at the widest point of the canopy, excluding gaps and isolated trees. Outgrowths (such as blackthorn <i>Prunus spinosa</i> suckers) are only included in the width estimate when they are >0.5 m in height. Laid, coppiced, cut and newly planted hedgerows are indicative of good management and pass this criterion for up to a maximum of four years (if undertaken according to good practice).)	N
B	Gap between ground and base of canopy <0.5 m for >90% of length. (This is the vertical 'gappiness' of the woody component of the hedgerow, and its distance from the ground to the lowest leafy growth. Certain exceptions to this criterion are acceptable (see page 65 of the Hedgerow Survey Handbook).)	N
B	Gaps make up <10% of total length; and No canopy gaps >5 m. (This is the horizontal 'gappiness' of the woody component of the hedgerow. Gaps are complete breaks in the woody canopy (no matter how small). Access points and gates contribute to the overall 'gappiness' but are not subject to the >5 m criterion (as this is the typical size of a gate).)	Y
C	>1 m width of undisturbed ground with perennial herbaceous vegetation for >90% of length: Measured from outer edge of hedgerow; and is present on one side of the hedgerow (at least). (This is the level of disturbance (excluding wildlife disturbance) at the base of the hedgerow. Undisturbed ground is present for at least 90% of the hedgerow length, greater than 1 m in width and must be present along at least one side of the hedgerow. This criterion recognises the value of the hedgerow base as a boundary habitat with the capacity to support a wide range of species. Cultivation, heavily trodden footpaths, poached ground etc. can limit available habitat niches.)	Y
C	Plant species indicative of nutrient enrichment of soils dominate <20% cover of the area of undisturbed ground. (The indicator species used are nettles <i>Urtica</i> spp., cleavers <i>Galium aparine</i> and docks <i>Rumex</i> spp. Their presence, either singly or together, does not exceed the 20% cover threshold.)	N
D	>90% of the hedgerow and undisturbed ground is free of invasive non-native plant species (including those listed on Schedule 9 of WCA) and recently introduced species. (Recently introduced species refer to plants that have naturalised in the UK since AD 1500 (neophytes). Archaeophytes count as natives. For information on archaeophytes and neophytes see the JNCC website, as well as the BSBI website where the 'Online Atlas of the British and Irish Flora' contains an up-to-date list of the status of species. For information on invasive non-native species see the GB Non-Native Secretariat website.)	Y

D	>90% of the hedgerow or undisturbed ground is free of damage caused by human activities. (This criterion addresses damaging activities that may have led to or lead to deterioration in other attributes. This could include evidence of pollution, piles of manure or rubble, or inappropriate management practices (for example, excessive hedgerow cutting).)	Y
		Total 5/8
	Condition moderate due to passing 5 of 8 criteria.	

Native hedgerow (h2a) condition assessment – H3

	Criteria Description	Criteria Passed?
A	Height >1.5 m average along length. (The average height of woody growth estimated from base of stem to the top of the shoots, excluding any bank beneath the hedgerow, any gaps or isolated trees. Newly laid or coppiced hedgerows are indicative of good management and pass this criterion for up to a maximum of four years (if undertaken according to good practice). A newly planted hedgerow does not pass this criterion (unless it is >1.5 m height).)	Y
A	Width >1.5 m average along length. (The average width of woody growth estimated at the widest point of the canopy, excluding gaps and isolated trees. Outgrowths (such as blackthorn <i>Prunus spinosa</i> suckers) are only included in the width estimate when they are >0.5 m in height. Laid, coppiced, cut and newly planted hedgerows are indicative of good management and pass this criterion for up to a maximum of four years (if undertaken according to good practice).)	N
B	Gap between ground and base of canopy <0.5 m for >90% of length. (This is the vertical 'gappiness' of the woody component of the hedgerow, and its distance from the ground to the lowest leafy growth. Certain exceptions to this criterion are acceptable (see page 65 of the Hedgerow Survey Handbook).)	N
B	Gaps make up <10% of total length; and No canopy gaps >5 m. (This is the horizontal 'gappiness' of the woody component of the hedgerow. Gaps are complete breaks in the woody canopy (no matter how small). Access points and gates contribute to the overall 'gappiness' but are not subject to the >5 m criterion (as this is the typical size of a gate).)	Y
C	>1 m width of undisturbed ground with perennial herbaceous vegetation for >90% of length: Measured from outer edge of hedgerow; and Is present on one side of the hedgerow (at least). (This is the level of disturbance (excluding wildlife disturbance) at the base of the hedgerow. Undisturbed ground is present for at least 90% of the hedgerow length, greater than 1 m in width and must be present along at least one side of the hedgerow. This criterion recognises the value of the hedgerow base as a boundary habitat with the capacity to support a wide range of species. Cultivation, heavily trodden footpaths, poached ground etc. can limit available habitat niches.)	N
C	Plant species indicative of nutrient enrichment of soils dominate <20% cover of the area of undisturbed ground. (The indicator species used are nettles <i>Urtica</i> spp., cleavers <i>Galium aparine</i> and docks <i>Rumex</i> spp. Their presence, either singly or together, does not exceed the 20% cover threshold.)	Y
D	>90% of the hedgerow and undisturbed ground is free of invasive non-native plant species (including those listed on Schedule 9 of WCA) and recently introduced species. (Recently introduced species refer to plants that have naturalised in the UK since AD 1500 (neophytes). Archaeophytes count as natives. For information on archaeophytes and neophytes see the JNCC website, as well as the BSBI website where the 'Online Atlas of the British and Irish Flora' contains an up-to-date list of the status of species. For information on invasive non-native species see the GB Non-Native Secretariat website.)	Y

D	>90% of the hedgerow or undisturbed ground is free of damage caused by human activities. (This criterion addresses damaging activities that may have led to or lead to deterioration in other attributes. This could include evidence of pollution, piles of manure or rubble, or inappropriate management practices (for example, excessive hedgerow cutting).)	Y
		Total 5/8
	Condition moderate due to passing 5 of 8 criteria.	

Scattered trees condition assessment.

	Criteria	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20
A	Native tree	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
B	Tree Canopy	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
C	Tree Maturity	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	Y	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
D	Tree Health	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
E	Ecological Niches	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	Y	Y	N	N	Y	Y	N	N	N
F	Tree Canopy	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
	Condition	M	M	M	M	M	M	M	M	M	M	M	G	G	G	G	G	G	G	G	G

APPENDIX 6: PONDS



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