

Preliminary Ecological Appraisal Summary Report

Logicor Park Reading, Rose Kiln Court

Presented to Redwood (Light Industrial) Propco Sarl

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2	Final	5 th April 2023	Updated following Client comments	<i>B. Hodgins</i>	<i>J Britt</i>	<i>J Britt</i>
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1.0 Context and Purpose

Delta-Simons Limited ("Delta-Simons") was instructed by Redwood (Light Industrial) Propco Sarl ('the Client') to undertake a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA) off land at Logicor Park Reading, Rose Kiln Court, Rose Kiln Lane, Reading RG2 0BY ('the Site'). The survey was undertaken on the 8th February 2023. The Site is being considered for demolition of the existing building and the construction of three industrial buildings and the provision of a new substation, parking, landscaping, and associated works.

This brief Summary Report is aimed at providing the Client with the initial findings of the PEA and any recommendations for further surveys, avoidance and mitigation requirements, and enhancement opportunities. The purpose of this Report is to inform and shape design proposals.. Once all protected species surveys are complete, and ecological mitigation and enhancement measures have been confirmed, an Ecological Impact Assessment (EIA) report will be prepared to inform a planning submission.

2.0 Methodology

The PEA has been undertaken to the following current guidance: CIEEM (2017), Guidelines for Preliminary Ecological Appraisal; and BS 42020: 2013 Biodiversity. Code of Practice for Planning and Development.

2.1 Legislation and Policy

Where relevant, this appraisal takes account of the legislative protection afforded to specific habitats and species, as well as national and local planning policies.

2.2 Desk Study

A data search was obtained for land within 2 km of the Site centre from the Local Biological Records Centre and assessed. In addition, the MAGIC web page was searched for nationally and locally designated statutory sites within 2 km of the Site and internationally designated statutory sites within 6 km of the Site. Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) Impact Risk Zones (IRZ) affecting the Site have been considered.

2.3 Site Survey

A UK Habitat Classification Survey of the Site was undertaken by a suitably experienced ecologist on 8th February 2023. This was used to identify the range of habitats that are present on the Site using best practice guidelines (UK Habitat Classification User Manual (Butcher et al., 2020)). The habitats identified on the Site were mapped using this new nationally recognised system.



The Site was assessed for its potential for or signs of protected and notable species. Areas with the potential for, or any sightings of, these species have been highlighted on the survey map, where appropriate.

The Site was surveyed for widespread invasive weeds. The location of any such stands were mapped and recommendations made for their treatment, where necessary.

2.4 Limitations of the Survey

There were no limitations to the survey in terms of access, timing and weather conditions.

The baseline conditions described in this report were accurate at the time at which the survey was undertaken. Should at least two years pass by, and/or conditions on-Site/Site usage change prior to the commencement of works, an update survey should be undertaken.

3.0 Results and Recommendations

3.1 Site Descriptions and Surrounds

The Site is centred at Ordnance Survey (OS) grid reference SU 71319 72330, to the south-west of Reading in Berkshire. The Site covers an area of 0.64 ha and comprises an office building and associated hardstanding with scattered trees and areas of introduced shrub. Adjacent to the northern boundary lies Holy Brook, a tree lined watercourse leading to the River Kennet to the east.

3.2 Ecological Receptors Scoped Out

There are no internationally designated statutory sites within 6 km of the Site, nor national or regional statutory designated sites within 2 km of the Site. The Site lies within several SSSI IRZs, however the proposed development does not meet any of the risk criteria identified such that statutory designated sites are not considered to represent a constraint.

Due to a lack of suitable habitat/connectivity to other suitable habitat in the wider area and/or an absence of nearby records in the data search, many protected or notable species are considered likely absent from the Site (including amphibians, reptiles and badgers) and based on the information currently available, only the ecological receptors listed below are considered to be potential important ecological features at the Site.

3.3 Ecological Constraints and Opportunities

Table 1, below summarises the key ecological constraints and opportunities on-Site, based on the PEA site visit and desk study results. Recommendations have been provided for further surveys, avoidance of impacts, mitigation, compensation and enhancements where appropriate. Where necessary, further details have been provided in Section 3.4. The table has been colour coded according to the perceived risk to project costs and/or timescales.

Table 1: Ecological Constraints and Opportunities

Ecological Receptor	Baseline	Recommendations for Further Survey/Assessment	Recommendations in line with Mitigation Hierarchy (where possible at this stage)	Recommendations for Enhancements
Designated Sites	Six non-statutory designated sites lie within 2 km of the Site centre. All of which are designated Local Wildlife Sites (LWS), the closest being Holy Brook which is located immediately adjacent to the northern boundary.	No further surveys/assessment are required.	Avoidance In relation to watercourses, the Local Plan states: <i>"development should be set at least ten metres back from the bank where possible and appropriate. In this case, development refers to buildings, fences and walls as well as laying of non-permeable surfaces. Ideally, unless direct access to or along the waterside is of particular significance on a site, a buffer should be maintained as a natural or semi-natural habitat free from built development, parking areas, private gardens and formal landscaping."</i> Mitigation Standard environmental best practice measures should be applied during the construction and operation phase, including measures to control dust, and to prevent pollution affecting Holy Brook. This can be secured through an appropriate Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP). A sensitive lighting design is required to minimise light spill beyond the northern boundary as far as possible (see additional recommendation details below table).	N/A

Habitats	The majority of the Site comprises of building and hardstanding with small areas of formal landscaping including introduced shrubs and modified grassland, representing low ecological value. Scattered broadleaved trees were noted along the south-eastern boundary and a hedgerow defined a section of the south-western boundary. Further trees bordered the Site and overhung the boundary to the north and west	No further surveys are required.	Avoidance The hedgerow and scattered trees on Site should be retained where possible and following the recommendations of the arboricultural survey. Tree protection must be enforced in accordance with BS 5837 (2012) and the recommendations of the arboricultural survey. Compensation Where retention is not possible, soft landscaping should incorporate appropriate replacement.	Soft landscaping at the Site should maximise opportunities and aim for a net gain in biodiversity
Birds	Habitats featured on the Site suitable for nesting birds, include scattered trees, hedgerow and introduced shrub.	No further surveys are required.	Avoidance The hedgerow and scattered trees should be retained and protected where possible. Where possible vegetation clearance at the Site should be undertaken outside of the main nesting bird season (i.e. clearance carried out between September and February inclusive). Mitigation If works to vegetation are undertaken within March-August inclusive , an experienced ecologist will be required to check the Site habitats prior to removal to check for nesting birds.	Any new vegetation to be planted should be native or of known wildlife benefit, to provide increased foraging and nesting resources for birds. A variety of bird nest boxes could also be included to further enhance the Site

			Compensation The proposed planting plan should include landscapes that will provide opportunities for nesting and foraging birds. An appropriate management plan will be in place in order to ensure retained habitats are managed to maximise foraging opportunities for birds, and to prevent destruction or damage to nests in-use.	
Water Vole and Otters	Holy Brook is considered to provide suitable opportunities for water vole and otter. Whilst previous survey in 2021 did not record any evidence of these species, records associated with Holy Brook and the wider watercourse network were returned by the data search.	Should any works be required within 5 m of Holy Brook further surveys are likely to be required to confirm the presence/absence and any associated mitigation requirements. This comprises up to two surveys (one mid-April-end June, one July-September, with at least two months between visits).	Avoidance Where possible a 5 m buffer should be maintained from the bank tops to avoid potential impacts Mitigation Where works impact the brook or 5 m buffer, mitigation would be determined by the results of the further surveys but may include the requirement for a licence, if the species is found to be affected by the proposed works. A sensitive lighting plan is required to minimise increased light spill on the riparian corridor.	Any enhancement requirements identified as part of a licence (if required) would be determined at the appropriate time
Bats	Neither the building nor any of the trees on Site supported features for roosting bats. However, three off-Site trees that overhang the northern Site boundary were identified to contain features suitable to support roosting bats.	One tree overhanging the northern Site boundary was assessed as having moderate Bat Roost Potential (BRP). Further surveys are programmed for the start of the bat survey season, to inform associated impacts and mitigation given the proximity of proposed works. Two nocturnal surveys are to	Avoidance The hedgerow and scattered trees should be retained and protected wherever possible to maintain suitable foraging habitat. Mitigation A sensitive lighting design is required to minimise light spill beyond the northern boundary as far as possible (see additional recommendation details below table).	Any new vegetation to be planted should be native or of known wildlife benefit, to provide increased foraging and nesting resources for birds. A variety of bat boxes could also be

	The Site itself provided limited opportunities for foraging and commuting bats. However Holy Brook and the treeline bordering the Site to the north and west offer greater habitat value and connectivity to the surrounding landscape.	be undertaken during the peak active bat season (May-August, inclusive) with at least two weeks between visits.	Should any management works be required to the two trees assessed as having low BRP, a precautionary approach must be applied, including pre-commencement checks for evidence of bats by a licenced ecologist. Further mitigation will be informed by the nocturnal bat surveys.	included to further enhance the Site
Invasive Species	Several species of cotoneaster were identified during the site walkover within the introduced shrub areas. Cotoneaster is listed on Schedule 9 of the UK Wildlife & Countryside Act as an invasive species.	No further surveys are required.	Avoidance Appropriate measures must be put in place during Site clearance to prevent its spread off-Site. Any removed shrubs should be appropriately disposed of.	n/a

Red = Further surveys needed, high risk of costs, delay or impact on design

Amber = Moderate risk to project costs or design

Green = No/Low risk to project costs or design

3.4 Additional Recommendation Details

The recommendations below expand upon the above table where necessary.

Bats and Lighting

The detailed lighting plan on-Site should be functional and directional and in line with current guidance (BCT and ILP, 2018). Habitat retained, enhanced or planted for roosting, foraging and/or commuting bats will need to be considered within a suitable lighting plan in order to be used by bats. Where designing with bats in mind:

- Light emitting diodes (LED) should be used, as these typically feature no UV component and as a result are less attractive to invertebrates and less disturbing to bats;
- Only luminaires with 0 % upward light ratio should be used and fitted on the horizontal to avoid excessive up-lighting, back lighting and light spill onto boundary hedgerows and trees;
- A warm white spectrum (ideally under 2700 Kelvin) should be used in order to reduce blue light component, therefore reducing the number of invertebrates attracted to the lights;
- Internal luminaires can be recessed where installed in proximity to windows to reduce glare and light spill;
- The use of specialist bollard or low-level downward directional luminaires to retain darkness above can be considered, although this has certain drawbacks and should only be used as directed by a lighting professional;
- Column heights should be carefully considered to minimise light spill;
- Any external security lighting should be set on motion-sensors and short (e.g. 1 minute) timers;
- Luminaires should feature peak wavelengths higher than 550nm to avoid the component of light most disturbing to bats;
- As a last resort, accessories such as baffles, hoods or louvres can be used to reduce light spill and direct it only to where it is needed; and
- Where habitat needs to be unlit (e.g. important foraging and commuting corridors/roost sites), illuminance should be below 0.2 lux on the horizontal plane and below 0.4 lux on the vertical plane.

4.0 Disclaimer

The recommendations contained in this Report represent Delta-Simons' professional opinions, based upon the information referred to in Section 1.0 of this Report, exercising the duty of care required of an experienced Ecology Consultant. Delta-Simons does not warrant or guarantee that the Site is free of Bats or other protected species.

The behaviour of animals can be unpredictable and may not conform to characteristics recorded in current scientific literature. This Report, therefore, cannot predict with absolute certainty that animal species will or will not occur in apparently suitable locations or habitats or that they will not occur in locations or habitats that appear unsuitable.

No part of the survey included an assessment of the materials and conditions of any buildings. No part of the survey included an asbestos assessment, nor did it represent an appraisal of other deleterious materials or hazardous substances.

This Report was prepared by Delta-Simons for the sole and exclusive use of the Client and for the specific purpose for which Delta-Simons was instructed as defined in Section 1.0 of this Report. Nothing contained in this Report shall be construed to give any rights or benefits to anyone other than the Client and Delta-Simons, and all duties and responsibilities undertaken are for the sole and exclusive benefit of the Client and not for the benefit of any other party. In particular, Delta-Simons does not intend, without its written consent,

for this Report to be disseminated to anyone other than the Client or to be used or relied upon by anyone other than the Client. Use of the Report by any other person is unauthorised and such use is at the sole risk of the user. Anyone using or relying upon this Report, other than the Client, agrees by virtue of its use to indemnify and hold harmless Delta-Simons from and against all claims, losses and damages (of whatsoever nature and howsoever or whensoever arising), arising out of or resulting from the performance of the work by the Consultant.

5.0 References

BS 42020:2013 Biodiversity. Code of Practice for Planning and Development

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