1. Introduction

1.1. This briefing note has been prepared by Waterman Infrastructure & Environment Ltd (Waterman IE) on behalf of Northampton Partnership Homes (NPH). It details the findings of an ecological walkover survey at an area of land known as the Former Moray Lodge Site, Peveril Road, Northampton (hereafter referred to as the ‘Site’).

1.2. The briefing note has been prepared in response to discussions at a pre-planning meeting with NBC where it was stated by the council that ‘although it is considered there is little ecology on the site, we agreed a specialist consultants view on the site ecology or lack of, needs to be stated and included in the planning report’.

1.3. The Site is located at ordnance survey grid reference SP 720 613 to the west of Northampton. The Site is bound by Peveril Road to the south; residential development and gardens to the north and east; and Duston Garage to the west. Beyond this are further areas of residential development; allotments and open space. The location of the Site is provided within Figure 1.

1.4. The Site previously comprised Moray Lodge, an assisted living residence with associated hardstanding and soft landscaping. However, Site clearance and demolition of Moray Lodge has recently taken place.

2. Methodology

Ecological Data Search

2.1. Given the size of the Site and the habitats present at the time of survey (see Section 3 below), an ecological data search for the Site was not considered to be required in this instance.
‘Extended’ Phase 1 Habitat Survey

2.2. An ‘Extended’ Phase 1 habitat of the Site was undertaken on 1st May 2019 using the Joint Nature Conservancy Council (JNCC, 2010) standard ‘Phase 1’ survey technique. The Phase 1 Habitat Survey methodology was ‘Extended’ by undertaking an assessment of the Site to support protected and notable faunal species.

2.3. All habitat types within the Site were mapped (Figure 1). The survey of the Site was conducted under conditions deemed appropriate for survey, being clear, warm and dry.

2.4. Where access allowed, adjacent habitats were also considered to assess the Site within the wider landscape.

Invasive Plant Species

2.5. The list of invasive plant species included on Schedule 9 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) is extensive and these plants are found in a range of different habitats, including aquatic habitats. Any invasive plant species incidentally recorded at the time of the ‘Extended’ Phase 1 Habitat Survey were noted.

3. Results

Habitats

3.1. The following habitat types, described in more detail below, were identified on and directly adjacent to the Site during the ‘Extended’ Phase 1 Habitat Survey:

- Hardstanding;
- Building;
- Bare Ground;
- Bare Earth;
- Rubble Piles;
- Amenity Grassland;
- Intact Hedge;
- Scrub and Overhanging Vegetation;
- Ruderal Vegetation; and
- Overhanging Ornamental Vegetation.

3.2. The habitat descriptions given below should be read in conjunction with Figure 1 and the photographs (Plates) presented in Appendix A.

Hardstanding

3.3. Hardstanding in the form of an access road is present within the west of the Site and is currently used for car parking/storage by Duston Garage.

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Building

3.4. A small newly constructed gas sub-station is present within along the eastern boundary of the Site (Figure 1 and Appendix A, Plate 1). The substation is of red brick construction with a flat bitumen roof. The building is tight fitting and of negligible bat roosting suitability.

Bare Ground

3.5. Bare ground in the form of compacted crushed brick rubble dominates the Site (Figure 1 and Appendix A, Plate 2).

Bare Earth

3.6. An area of bare earth is present within the south-west of the Site. This is likely to have comprised amenity grassland, small patches of which are starting to re-colonise (Figure 1 and Appendix A, Plate 3).

Rubble Piles

3.7. Two linear rubble piles made from the crushed brick of the exiting buildings are present along the east of the southern boundary and west of the Site (Figure 1 and Appendix A, Plate 4).

Amenity Grassland

3.8. As stated above, patches of amenity grassland are beginning to re-colonise the area of bare earth. A strip of amenity grassland is also present along the east of the southern boundary, over which one of the above rubble piles is overlaid.

3.9. Species recorded comprise: creeping cinquefoil *Potentilla reptans*; ragwort *Jacobaea vulgaris*; bristly ox-tongue *Helminthotheca echioides*; common bent *Agrostis capillaris*; cut-leaved cranesbill *Geranium dissectum*; dandelion *Taraxacum officinale*; Yorkshire fog *Holcus lanatus*; ribwort plantain *Plantago lanceolata*; common daisy *Bellis perennis*; red fescue *Festuca rubra*; and creeping thistle *Cirsium arvense*.

Intact Hedge

3.10. An intact leylandii *Cupressus × leylandii* hedge is present along the west of the southern boundary (Figure 1 and Appendix A, Plate 5).

Ruderal Vegetation

3.11. Ruderal vegetation is beginning to colonise bare earth strips along the northern and eastern boundaries.

3.12. Species recorded comprise: shepherd’s purse *Capsella bursa-pastoris*; doves-foot cranesbill *Geranium molle*; rosebay willowherb *Chamaenerion angustifolium*; ragwort; red deadnettle *Lamium purpureum*; and trefoil sp.

Scrub and Overhanging Vegetation.

3.13. Scrub is scattered amongst the bare earth strips along the northern and eastern boundaries. Overhanging vegetation from adjacent properties is also present (Figure 1 and Appendix A, Plate 6).
3.14. Species recorded comprise: ivy *Hedera helix*; dogwood *Cornus sanguinea*; horse chestnut *Aesculus hippocastanum* (sapling); elder *Sambucus nigra*; bramble *Rubus fruticosus* and blackthorn *Prunus spinosa*.

**Overhanging Ornamental Vegetation**

3.15. A large overhanging laurel *Laurus sp.* bush overhangs the north-western corner of the Site.

**Adjacent habitats**

3.16. Shrub and tree species adjacent to the north and east of the Site included cherry, hawthorn, blackthorn, apple, dogwood and elder. These trees were assessed to have negligible potential to support roosting bats.

**Invasive Plant Species**

3.17. No invasive plant species were incidentally recorded on Site at the time of Survey.

**Protected other Notable Fauna**

3.18. The Site offers some but limited opportunities for common species of nesting birds at habitats present including the intact leylandii hedge, vegetation which overhangs the northern and eastern Site boundaries and the shrub and tree species adjacent to the north and east of the Site.

**4. Recommendations and Conclusions**

4.1. As a result of the ‘Extended’ Phase 1 Habitat Survey and the habitats recorded, the Site and the immediate adjacent habitats are assessed as offering negligible ecology value.

4.2. To ensure legal compliance however and given that some habitats on Site have the potential to support nesting birds the following recommendation should be adhered to;

- Any vegetation clearance works with the potential to support nesting birds should be undertaken outside of the nesting bird season (March-August inclusive). Should this not be possible a nest bird check should be undertaken no more than 24hrs prior to removal works being undertaken.
FIGURES

Figure 1: Habitat Features Plan (WIE13695-105-GR-EC-1A)
Figure Title: Habitat Features Plan

File Location: WIE15796-100_GR_EC_1A

Date: May 2019

Site Boundary
Hardstanding
Overhanging Ornamental
Amenity Grassland
Bare Ground
Ephemeral
Tall Ruderal
Scrub and Overhanging Vegetation
Rubble Mounds
Intact Hedge
Building Number

Building

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APPENDICES

1. Photographs

Plate 1: Sub-station building

Plate 2: Bare ground
Plate 3: Bare earth with re-establishing amenity grassland

Plate 4: Rubble pile along southern boundary
Plate 5: Intact hedge

Plate 6: Scrub and over hanging vegetation