Preliminary Ecological Appraisal: Including a protected species assessment

Erection of an outbuilding to be used as gym and store at 7 River Lane, Brampton.

This report is required to accompany a planning permission for erection of an outbuilding to be used as gym and store at 7 River Lane Brampton. The site is made up of existing dwelling and garden land laid to lawn.

Wildlife such as nesting birds, bats, reptiles and great crested newts *Triturus cristatus* are protected by law. Protected and priority species and habitats, are also a material consideration for individual planning decisions under the National Planning Policy Framework 2019.

This study and report complies with the Chartered Institute for Ecology and Environmental Management (CIEEM) 2017 guidelines for Preliminary Ecological Appraisals.

A local biological data search was obtained through Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Environmental Records Centre to search our records of protected, priority and rare species and local wildlife sites.

A search of the Multi-Agency Geographical Information for the Countryside (MAGIC) was also conducted, to check for statutory nature conservation sites.

These results were combined with the findings of the site survey, to assess the risk of ecological issues, relevant to planning, occurring onsite.

The site is positioned in a semi-rural location with residential housing west, lakes and grassland to the east and north and a golf course to the south.

Lake 100m to north and 95m East
Pond of golf course approx 245m north

The closest statutory designated nature conservation site is Portholme Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) and Special Area of Conservation (SAC) located approximately 1.5 km north east and designated for being the largest area of traditionally managed lowland hay meadow surviving in the UK.

Several non-statutory designated nature conservation sites are present within 2km of the site with the closest being Buckden Flood Meadows County Wildlife Site (CWS) located approximately 280m east of the site and designated for neutral grassland lowland flood meadow habitat.

Summary of Local Records

Species	Approximate Location	Year
Mammals		
Common pipistrelle	Brampton	2013
Natterers Bat	Brampton	2013
Soprano pipistrelle	Brampton	2013
Serotine	Brampton	2013
European Otter	Brampton	2014
European Hedgehog	Brampton	2015
Eurasian Badger	Brampton	2014
Birds		
Barn Owl	Brampton	1973
Fieldflare	Brampton	2009
Redwing	Brampton	2014
Grey Partridge	Brampton	2005
Linnet	Brampton	2014
Red Kite	Brampton	2015
Reed bunting	Portholme	2014
Song thrush	Brampton	2014
Yellowhammer	Brampton	2014
Invertebrates & Herpetofauna		
Blood-vein moth	Godmanchester	2008
Cinnabar moth	Brampton	2011
Grey dagger moth	Brampton	2010
Grass snake	Brampton	2012
Common lizard	Brampton	2010
Common toad	Brampton	2013
Great crested newt	Brampton Golf Course	2016

Protected, Priority and Rare Species

Vegetation & Habitats

Vegetated habitats on the site include; short ruder herbaceous plants and rank grasses on disturbed improved soils and a boundary hedgerow/treeline.

Grasses and herbaceous plants observed growing in the garden area/lawn included perennial ryegrass *Lolium perenne*, creeping buttercup, nettle *Urtica dioica ,* cow parsley *Anthriscus sylvestris*, annual meadow grass *poa annua,* lords and ladies *arum maculatum,* ground ivy *glechoma hederacea,* cocksfoot *Dactylis glomerata,* common mouse ear *Cerastium fontanum,* greater celandine *Chelidonium magus,* spear thistle *Cirium vulgare,* doves-foot cranesbill *Geranium molle*, cleavers *Galium aparine,* comfrey S*ymphytum officianle* and ivy H*edera helix.*

Hedgerow/treeline included elder *Sambucas nigra*, lawson cypress, *Chamaecyparis lawsoniana,* sycamore *Acer pseudoplatanus*, cherry *Prunus avium*, oak *Quercus robur*, cherry laurel *prunus laurocerasus* and ash *Fraxinus excelsior*.

No Schedule 9 invasive plants were observed. No protected, priority or other rare plants were observed. The southern boundary hedgerow is considered to be a UK priority habitat though did not meet criteria for an 'Important Hedgerow' under the Hedgerow Regulations 1997. All hedgerows/tree lines on the site are proposed for retention.

Bats

The existing dwelling is relatively modern in construction and well maintained. The dwelling has no potential access points into the building and no potential roost features.

The adjacent buildings are of simple structure, constructed with a metal frame and corrugated sheeting and some breeze and block work. The buildings provide negligible suitability for roosting and mot within the application site.

Overall all the buildings on site supported negligible roosting potential. No signs or evidence of bats were observed associated with buildings.

Trees on the boundary were all either too small in trunk diameter or immature to support features suitable for roosting bats. No signs or evidence of bats were observed associated with the trees.

The site boundary trees is the feature of highest ecological value for foraging and commenting bats and it is very likely the site is visited by foraging/commuting bats during the summer months.

The boundary trees/hedgerow will be retained.

Other Protected or Priority Mammals

The site was conserved low in suitability or potential for many other protected and priority mammals such as badgers *Meles males,* harvest mouse *Micromys minutus,* and brown hare *Lepus europaeus,* though occasional crossing/foraging by hedgehog *Erinaceus europaeus* could not be discounted.

Signs or evidence of such species were not observed on or adjacent to the site.

Reptiles

The site is negligible in suitability for reptiles of any species with little safe basking, foraging and breeding habitat present. The surround habitats were also low in suitability or potential to reptiles though the lakes could provide foreign habitat for grass snakes.

Great Crested Newts & Other Amphibians

The site is negligible in suitability or potential as terrestrial habitat for amphibians of any species. Ponds within the golf course to the south are known to support great crested newts, it is unclear if ponds within the northern half of the golf course (to the north of the site) also support great crested newts. However, these ponds are approximately 250m from the site significantly reducing the risk of great crested newts using these ponds also using the site.

The Natural England Rapid Risk Assessment Tool was consulted to check for risk of impact to great crested newts where land is proposed for impact when ponds beyond 250m support great crested newts. The tool indicated that the risk of impact was Highly Unlikely.

Amphibians were not observed during the site visit.

Birds

Birds observed or heard on or close to the site during the survey included; wood pigeon *Columba palumbus,* rook *Corvus frugilegus,* great tit *Parus major,* blue tit *Cyanistes caeruleus* and magpie *Pica pica.*

All birds recorded were common widespread species and green-listed Birds of Conservation Concern.

The trees and buildings on the site were suitable for low numbers of common nesting birds, though unlikely to be utilised by protected or priority birds for nesting. No signs or evidence of such species were recorded during the survey.

The site generally was considered low in suitability for foraging by protected, priority or rare birds, thought it is unlikely that boundary habitats are occasionally visited by widespread protected and priority birds such as starling, song thrush and fieldfare etc.

Invertebrates

The site was considered negligible in ecological value for invertebrates of conservation concern with common and widespread habitats present with low botanical diversity.

Protected, priority or rare invertebrates were not observed during the survey.

Other Protected, Priority or Rare Species

No signs or evidence of any other protected or priority species were observed on the site, nor were there any particularly suitable habitats present for such species.

Conclusion

The construction zone is small in area and supported common widespread habitats low in ecological value. No signs or evidence of protected, priority or rare species were identified. The risk of presence or significant to such was considered very low.

Therefore further ecological surveys or mitigation are considered necessary.

All trees and hedgerows onsite are to be retained. As the site is for demolition and rebuild, it poses very little ecological risk.