

Our Ref 3610,EC/001Ltr/RF,KL/11-12-18/V1

Date 11 December 2018

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For the attention of Mr Graham McCormick

By Email

[graham@msscott.co.uk](mailto:graham@msscott.co.uk)

Dear Mr McCormick,

## DISS LAWNS, MOUNT STREET, DISS, IP22 4QQ – PRELIMINARY ECOLOGICAL APPRAISAL UPDATE

### 1. INTRODUCTION

#### 1.1 General

Geosphere Environmental Ltd was commissioned by M Scott Properties Ltd, to undertake a re- assessment of the site at Diss Lawns, Mount Street, Diss, IP22 4QQ, based upon a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA) undertaken in 2014 (ref. **R.1**).

#### 1.2 Aims

The re-assessment of the site has been undertaken to provide an up to date appraisal of the ecological features on the site.

#### 1.3 Technical Approach

The recommendations given within this report are in general accordance to CIEEM's Guidelines for Preliminary Ecological Appraisal, (ref. **R.2**), and BS 42020: 2013 Biodiversity standards, (ref. **R.3**). A ecological site walkover has been undertaken in accordance the key principles of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (ref. **R.4**), and Government Circular 05/06: Biodiversity and Geological Conservation – statutory obligations and their impact within the planning system, (ref. **R.5**), to provide an indication of the ecological value of the site and the potential for the site to be used by protected species.

The habitat survey was undertaken in general accordance with JNCC methodology, (ref. **R.6**).

The conclusions and recommendations for further works are in accordance with current legislation and guidance.

## 2. Field survey

An ecological walkover was undertaken on the 6 December 2018. The habitats on site were found to be in a similar condition to the Phase 1 survey undertaken in 2014 (ref. **R.1**), changes include a slight reduction in dense scrub in one area, along with the construction of a fence.

An updated Phase 1 habitat plan, Drawing ref. 3610,EC/001/Rev 0 is enclosed within this report. A brief description of the habitats is provided below, with a sample of the species recorded, a full list of species is recorded in the 2014 PEA (ref. **R.1**).

### 2.1 Habitats within the Development Zone

The site comprised of poor semi-improved grassland, Scattered trees, Dense scrub, and Hedgerows.

The grassland appears to be regularly grazed, with an approximate sward height of 100mm. Predominantly formed of grass species including Perennial Rye Grass, (*Lolium perenne*), Yorkshire fog (*Holcus lanatus*), Cock's foot (*Dactylis glomerata*), and Fescue sp. (*Festuca sp.*), with rare herb species such as Dock (*Rumex sp.*) (TN 1).

There are numerous mature trees, some of which contain splits, loose bark, hollows and deadwood (TN2). The mature trees on site are predominantly English Oak (*Quercus robur*), Horse chestnut (*Aesculus hippocastanum*), Sycamore (*Acer psuedoplatanus*), and Beech (*Fagus sylvatica*) (TN3).

Dense scrub is found around the site margins and along the lines of old hedgerows. the scrub is formed predominantly of Bramble (*Rubus sp.*), with occasional Elder (*Sambucus nigra*), and Hawthorn (*Crataegus monogyna*) (TN4).

The hedgerow comprises predominantly of Hawthorn.

There are two areas containing large piles of woody debris. A single Mutjack deer (*Muntiacus reevesi*) was noted on site.

### 2.2 Outside the Development Zone

The site is surrounded by the urban area of Diss, including residential and commercial properties, and roads. The site is separated from the wider area, with very limited connectivity to the wider arable landscape.

### 3. Habitat Assessment

The site is not considered suitable for Dormouse, Great Crested Newts or Otter and Water Vole. No evidence of badger was noted on site however, the grassland provides suitable foraging habitat.

The poor semi-improved grassland, dense scrub and piles of woody debris are suitable for reptiles, and considered important on a site to local scale.

The trees scrub and hedgerows provide moderate suitability for foraging bats, and breeding birds and considered important on a site to local scale.

The mature trees with suitable features for roosting bats are considered important on a site to district scale. Tree roost potential has been shown on the Phase 1 Habitat Plan in the approximate location of the tree. The tree numbers reference an arboricultural survey undertaken in 2014 (ref. **R.7**).

The scrub provides shelter for Hedgehog.

### 4. Recommendations

Further Surveys required to determine the importance of the habitats for protected species are summarised below:

**Mature trees:** the mature trees on site should be retained and protected following BS 5837 2012 (ref. **R.8**).

**Reptiles:** A reptile survey should be undertaken to determine the presence/absence of reptiles on site. Seven survey visits will be required between April and October. If reptiles are found to be using the site, an area may need to be set aside to create an area of enhanced reptile habitat.

**Bats:** A bat foraging assessment should be undertaken to determine the level of usage of the foraging habitat on site. The habitat has moderate potential for bats, however it is anticipated that the majority of the habitats will be retained and protected during development, and avoidance measures can be incorporated into the design, thus avoiding impact to foraging bats. As such, a survey comprising of 3 survey visits and 1 static visit is recommended between April and October. If avoidance measures cannot be implemented, a survey comprising of 7 visits between April and October should be undertaken.

If trees identified as having roost potential cannot be entirely protected, and avoidance measures implemented, then further surveys should be undertaken to assess the bat roosts within the mature trees.

To avoid impact, no lighting should overspill onto boundary features or tree canopies during construction or within the post construction design.

**Birds:** Any clearance of breeding bird habitat, such as scrub, trees or hedgerows, should be undertaken outside of the breeding bird season (March to August inclusive), alternatively, works should be supervised by an ecological clerk of works.

**Badger:** Precautionary measures should be put in place during construction to avoid impact to badgers. Trenches should be covered at night, and any other harmful chemicals or materials should be stored securely.

**Hedgehog:** Any fences included within the scheme should be designed to be hedgehog friendly, with a gap at the bottom to allow hedgehogs to pass underneath. Ready-made gravel boards are available. Areas of scrub could be retained within areas of public open space to provide hibernation habitat.

## 5. Conclusions

Further surveys will be required to determine the importance of the site for reptiles and bats.

At present the Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment (HELAA) shows the impact analysis for Biodiversity and Geodiversity is currently amber. A development without appropriate mitigation would indeed have a negative impact on biodiversity, should protected species be present and mature trees be removed. However, it should be noted that there is strong potential to design a proposed development which will reduce the impact to bat and reptile habitat on the site to acceptable levels, for example by retaining mature trees, hedgerows and scrub, and creating a wildflower meadow area. These habitats could easily be incorporated into areas of public open space and therefore the HELAA assessment should be considered green for this scheme.

Further Enhancements could also be incorporated into the scheme, such as bird/ bat boxes. Any public open space could be designed to benefit wildlife, with the inclusion of native planting, fruit and berry producing trees, patches of scrub, wildflower meadows and log piles.

Yours sincerely

Authorised by:

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**Enclosures:**












Phase 1 Habitat Plan, Drawing ref. 3610,EC/001/Rev 0  
Target Notes

**References:**

- R.1.** Southern Ecological Solutions (2014) Extended Phase 1 habitat survey, Diss Lawns, Diss, Norfolk, 12-12-14.
- R.2.** R.2. CIEEM (2013) Guidelines for Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (GPEA).
- R.3.** BSI (2013) BS 42020:2013 Biodiversity – Code of practice for planning and development. BSI Standards Limited 2013.
- R.4.** Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) (July 2018) National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF).
- R.5.** ODPM (2005) Government Circular: Biodiversity and Geological Conservation – statutory obligations and their impact within the planning system.
- R.6.** JNCC, (2010). ‘Handbook for Phase I Habitat Survey: A technique for environmental audit’ (reprint). Joint Nature Conservation Committee, Peterborough.
- R.7.** Southern Ecological Solutions (2015) Arboricultural Constraints Report, Diss, 14-01-15.
- R.8.** British Standards Institute (2012), BS 5837 2012: ‘Trees in Relation to Design, Demolition and Construction’.



**Legend**

- |   |  |   |
|---|--|---|
|  Site Boundary           |  Intact Species-poor Hedgerow |  Target Note                         |
|  Semi-improved Grassland |  Scattered Scrub              |  Trees with high roost potential     |
|  Scattered Trees         |  Fence                        |  Trees with moderate roost potential |
|   |  Woody debris                 |  Trees with low roost potential      |

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**SITE**  
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**TITLE**  
 Phase 1 Habitat Survey  
**CLIENT**  
 M Scott Properties

**PROJECT NO.**  
 3610,EC  
**DRAWN BY**  
 ZK

**DRAWING NO.**  
 001/Rev 0  
**CHECKED**  
 RF

**DATE**  
 December 2018  
**SCALE**  
 Not to scale



## ECOLOGICAL TARGET NOTES RELATING TO EXTENDED PHASE I HABITAT SURVEY

### Target Note 1

Photograph showing poor semi-improved grassland in the foreground, which covers most of the site. A pile of woody debris is shown in the centre of the photo, with a line of mature trees in the distance.



### Target Note 2

Photo showing woodpecker holes, which are potential bat roost features within T1.



## ECOLOGICAL TARGET NOTES RELATING TO EXTENDED PHASE I HABITAT SURVEY

### Target Note 3

Photo showing line of mature trees within the site boundary



### Target Note 4

Dense scrub shown on either side of a track to the west of the site.







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