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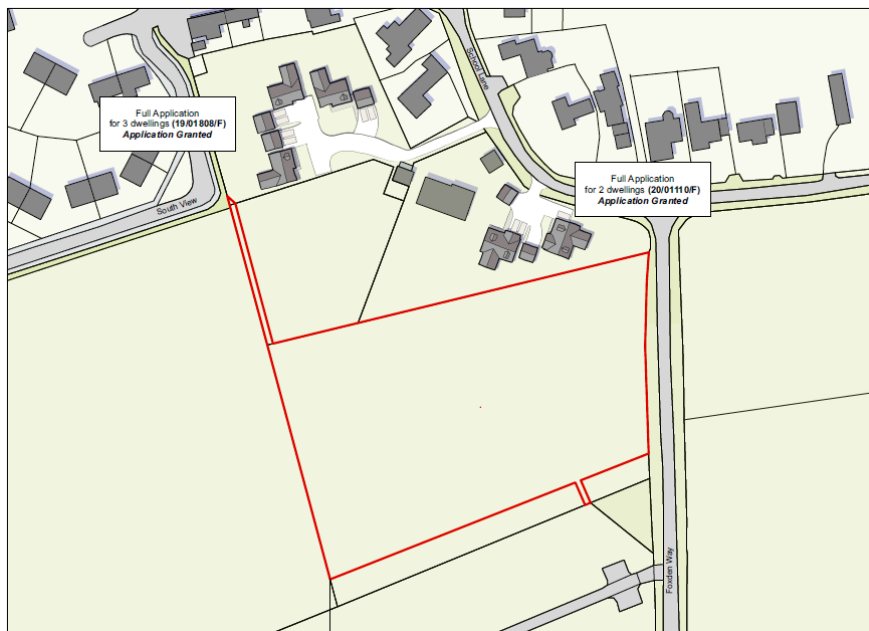
Ref: TT2751-Land adjacent to School Lane-R01-PEA Report-Rev01

## Land adjacent to Foxden Way, Great Bourton, Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA) Report

Dear Russell,

This PEA report has been completed in connection with a proposed development on Land to the south of School Lane and to the west of Foxden Way, Great Bourton, Banbury, OX17 1QY (OS Grid Reference SP45694531). The site consists of a single agricultural (pastural) field and a footpath through a smaller field to the north linking the site to further development of three houses currently under construction and on to the rest of the village, shown in *Figure 1*.

*Figure 1. Proposed development site*



### **PEA Survey**

A detailed PEA survey was undertaken by Gareth Blockley of Turnstone Ecology on 15<sup>th</sup> February 2021. The survey was undertaken in line with BS42020:2013 - Biodiversity Code of practice for planning and development.

Given the scale and nature of the proposals and that all areas of the site could be accessed fully, it is considered that robust assessment of the site had been undertaken.

## **Results**

There are no statutory designated sites within 2 km of the proposed development site (<https://magic.defra.gov.uk/>). Protected species records obtained from Magic Map consist of Brown Long-eared Bat (*Plecotus auritus*) and Common Pipistrelle (*Pipistrellus pipistrellus*) bat licences granted within 2 km of the proposed development site to the north-east and a Great Crested Newt (*Triturus cristatus*) record just over 2 km from the proposed development site to the south-west. No ponds have been identified from available mapping within 250 m of the proposed development site.

The site footprint consists of an improved grassland field bounded on all sides with post and wire fences and hedgerows on the eastern, northern and western sides (*Figure 2*). There is an existing access from Foxden Way on the eastern side of the site.

The species-poor improved grassland field is grazed to a very short sward, so all grasses were not readily identifiable, but grasses were dominated by Annual Meadow Grass (*Poa annua*) with some Cock's-foot Grass (*Dactylis glomerata*). There were very few forb species in the grassland limited to Common Mouse Ear (*Cerastium fontanum*), Creeping Buttercup (*Ranunculus repens*), Creeping Thistle (*Cirsium arvense*) and White Clover (*Trifolium repens*).

The hedgerows are species poor, heavily managed with a poor structure, dominated by Hawthorn (*Crataegus monogyna*) with occasional Ash (*Fraxinus excelsior*), Elm (*Ulmus minor var. vulgaris*), Blackthorn (*Prunus spinosa*), Ivy (*Hedera helix*), and Elder (*Sambucus nigra*). There is a single Ash tree within the western boundary hedgerow. Ground flora under the hedgerows was sparse and limited to Common Nettle (*Urtica dioica*), Cleavers (*Galium aparine*) and Lord and Ladies (*Arum maculatum*). Evidence of Rabbits (*Oryctolagus cuniculus*) was noted in the hedgerows.

There were three piles of topsoil, loose large rubble and debris within the field, presumably storage associated with the development in the adjacent field to the north. These were obviously recent and temporary and are unlikely to be used as refuge for protected species such as Badger (*Meles meles*), common reptile species or amphibians, if they were present on site.

The adjacent field to the north, where potentially a footpath will be located to link the site to the village, was also being used to store materials from the adjacent development. However, is also a species-poor improved grassland bordered by species-poor heavily managed hedgerows.

There were no signs of protected species being present on site and the habitats are of very little suitability for use by protected species, limited to nesting birds in the hedgerow boundaries and potentially commuting animals but the habitats do not provide cover or refuge for long-term use of the site.

Figure 2. Proposed development area and surrounding habitats



### ***Evaluation and Mitigation***

The habitats recorded on site are of poor ecological value and there is no habitat on site suitable for use by protected species except for nesting birds in the boundary hedgerows. No specific mitigation over and above standard mitigation measures undertaken in line with good practice guidance (*e.g.* relating to nesting birds, pollution prevention and management and control of invasive species) is required for the development of the site to protect habitats or species.

It is appropriate for close management of the grassland to continue leading up to the commencement of earthworks with grassland maintained at less than 50 mm through frequent mowing/grazing to deter any protected species from utilising the interior of the site. A pre-commencement walkover survey of the site, within 3 months of construction works commencing should be undertaken, in order to confirm that no protected species that could be harmed by development have moved into the site.

Within any detailed proposals, submitted in due course, external lighting should reflect the Bat Conservation Trust Bats and Lighting in the UK guidance (2018) and measures will include directing lighting away from all new roost locations on the site and the use of downlighting to ensure that suitable foraging and commuting habitats remain unlit.

### ***Enhancement***

The proposed development will include soft landscaping such as trees, shrubs and a water body (*Figure 3*), which will enable ecological enhancement. Planting should involve a mix of native broadleaved species (preferably of local character and local provenance) and encourage native pollinating insects. Mulchings or weed suppressing mats should be used to aid good establishment of woody species. Plants will be monitored for a minimum of 5 years to check establishment and if die-back or failure to establish occurs then re-planting will be required. Re-planting will replace the original species and be of a similar size.

Figure 3. Proposed development



In addition to the above, the following recommendations are also made in order to ensure a net gain to biodiversity:

- Installation of minimum of four integrated bird boxes, for use by species of conservation concern such as House Sparrow (*Passer domesticus*) or Common Starling (*Sternus vulgaris*);
- Installation of minimum of four integrated bat roost features, such as bat access tiles/integrated bat tubes or bricks (if bat access tiles are used breathable roof membranes must **not** be used to prevent entanglement); and
- Provision of 'Hedgehog highways' through cutting 13cm x 13cm channels through closeboard fencing, wherever used, to allow Hedgehogs to move freely through the Site.

In summary the development proposal would impact a field of poor ecological value with the only habitat on site suitable for use by protected species (the boundary hedgerows) remaining as part of the proposal and given the proposed enhancements, , subject to appropriate conditions, the development proposal would overall give rise to ecological benefits.

If you require any further information or have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me on 07766 388837 or at [gblockley@turnstoneecology.co.uk](mailto:gblockley@turnstoneecology.co.uk).

Kind Regards,



**Gareth Blockley**  
Senior Consultant



*Plate 1. The eastern (roadside) boundary*



*Plate 2. Existing site access gateway*



*Plate 3. Improved grassland*



*Plate 4. The southern boundary*



*Plate 5. The northern boundary*



*Plate 6. The western boundary and Ash tree*





*Plate 7. Mound of topsoil storage*



*Plate 8. Pile of debris*



*Plate 9. Mound of earth storage (in adjacent field)*



*Plate 10. The adjacent field to the north*

