

External Memo: technical note

To	Bicester Heritage Ltd
From	Alex Perry, Lepus Consulting
Subject	Updated Phase 1 survey report, March 2014
Code	LC-0062: RAF Bicester Phase II
Date	10 th April 2014
CC	



Summary

This is a technical note to record the results of an ecological survey undertaken on 21st March at RAF Bicester. The work follows last year's extended Phase 1 survey. Specifically the survey concentrated on suitability of some buildings for bats and the condition of the 'pond' at the south of the site. Evidence of bats were found. The 'pond' held no water and is very poor quality as a breeding habitat for amphibians.

Introduction

1. Further to the Phase 1 survey carried out in 2013, the Site was revisited to look at two features at the Site, a pond and a number of buildings to check for bat suitability.
2. The Site lies off the A44221 road and at the junction with Skimmingdish Lane to the north east of Bicester, national grid reference SP593244 (see **Figure 1.1**)
3. The RAF Bicester site is comprised of a parkland area with many tall trees and buildings. The diversity of trees includes several ornamental species as well as British native species. The grassland is regularly mown and the sward height is short in most parts of the redline area.
4. The buildings, which total more than 50 in number, range in size and design. Some buildings previously served as hangars and these buildings have corrugated roofs and brick walls. Smaller buildings that serve as storage units are also brick with varying roof types.
5. The proposed change of use at the Site is being carefully scheduled as part of a long term project by Bicester Heritage (BH). Lepus Consulting are monitoring the site's ecological qualities as the planning of change of use takes place.

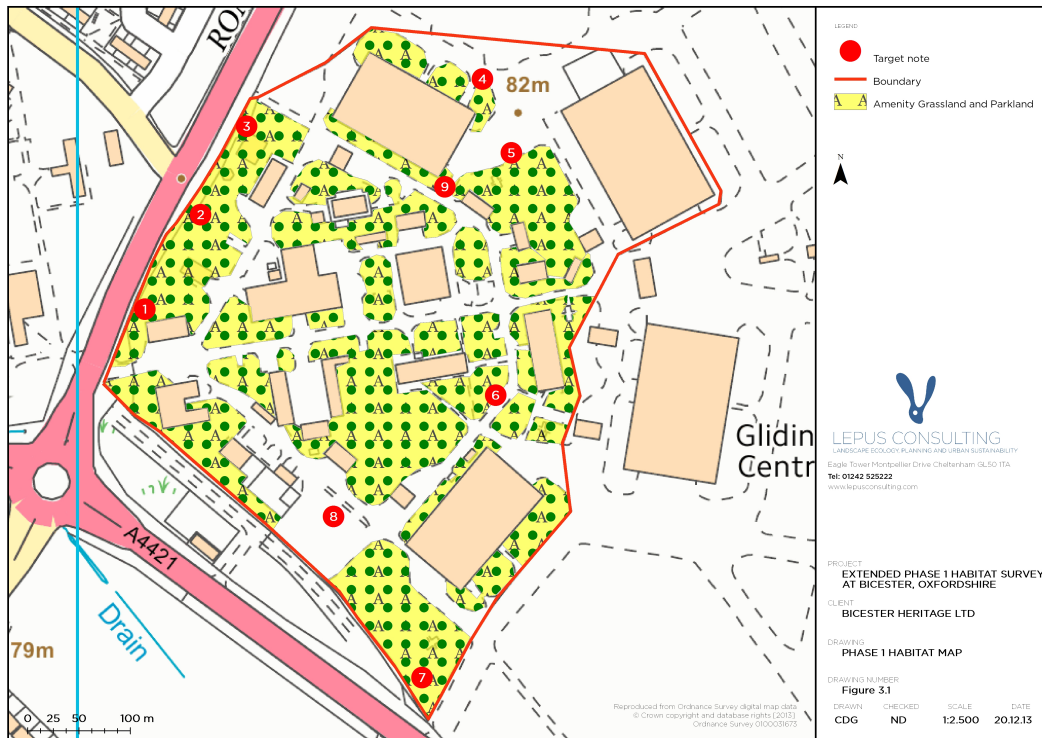


Figure 1.1. Habitat map

Updating the 2013 Phase 1

6. An extended Phase 1 habitat survey was undertaken on 28th May 2013 by a professionally qualified ecologist on behalf of Bicester Heritage Ltd. Ecological data supplied by the Thames Valley Environmental Records Centre informed the survey. Ecological data from a 2km search identified five non-statutory Local Wildlife Sites and protected species in the wider area.
7. The Site contains locally important ecological features, which include suitable habitat for bats, breeding birds and potentially reptiles. Bats were recorded during a search of one of the buildings adjacent to building 87. It was concluded that the proposed changes at this location will not adversely effect the nature conservation interests of the Site.
8. Under similar conditions to the extended Phase 1 survey carried out in 2013, a further two features of the Site were surveyed on 21st March 2014 by two professionally qualified ecologists. A pond located on the southern edge of the Site was surveyed for its potential for amphibians and a number of buildings were explored to check bat suitability.

Survey of buildings for bats

9. The buildings were visited in the daytime and explored by two experienced ecologists. The results of the survey are presented in **Appendix A**.

10. Buildings explored were numbers 83, 90, 91, 92, 93, 94, 96, 97, 98, 99, 100 and 102.
11. Of the twelve buildings surveyed, five will require further bat surveys. These are building numbers 90, 92, 93, 96, 99. All of these five buildings had high potential for roosting bats in the roof structures. In building 93, there was evidence that the building was being used as a night roosting and a feeding site for bat species. Moth wings and droppings were found during the survey.
12. Although all five buildings will require further emergence surveys, building 93 would benefit from the use of a static bat logger to determine activity levels.
13. Following this update, the necessary bat surveys will be carried out. The Site will continue to be monitored as further land use change is planned.

Survey of the Pond

14. The pond was identified in the 2013 survey (see **Target Note 7** on **Figure 1.1**) and was dry at the time of survey with little evidence of aquatic vegetation.
15. The pond was revisited in March 2014 following a period of heavy rain and a wet winter and was now slow flowing. It is thought that this pond is often dry and not suitable breeding habitat for amphibians.

Appendix A

Preliminary bat surveys former RAF Bicester -

All accessible areas of the following buildings were inspected by two ecologists (one licensed to disturb/handle bats) for signs of bats, such as droppings and feeding remains (moth/butterfly wings etc) on the 21 March 2014.

All the buildings are pre-WW2 RAF/military buildings.

Building	Description	Evidence/ Potential for bats	Recommendations
102	Former storage/workshop building constructed from brick with recently re-roofed slate pitched roof and no gaps in tiles. Currently being renovated. 	No evidence - low potential	No further survey
100	Former single storey toilet block constructed from brick with pitched slate roof. Currently being renovated. 	No evidence. Low potential	No further survey
94	Former large garage building with solid brick walls and flat roof.	No evidence and low	No further surveys

		potential to support bats	
92	Former workshop/store constructed from brick and slate/tile pitched roof. Unusual box roof structure with boarding. 	No evidence but high potential for roosting bats in roof structure and ridge	Further emergence surveys required.
91	Former single storey fuel storage tank. Brick construction and flat roof. Only 2m in height. 	No evidence and no potential for bats	No further surveys
93	Former large industrial building with surrounding blast walls. Constructed from concrete and brick with a flat roof.	Evidence of night roost and feeding site (moth wings and bat	Further emergence checks and static bat logger to determine activity levels.

		droppings)	
96	Large single storey work shop building constructed from brick with slate tiled pitched roof. 	No evidence but potential bat roosting areas in the ridge area of the roof.	Further emergence surveys required.
83	Former single storey chemical store constructed from brick with a flat roof. 	No evidence and no potential	No further surveys
90	Large warehouse and workshop buildings with multiple rooms. Pitched slate roof and constructed from brick.	No evidence-potential roost sites in roof area	Emergence surveys required.

			
99	Large warehouse and workshop buildings with multiple rooms. Pitched slate roof and constructed from brick. 	No evidence-potential roost sites in roof area	Emergence surveys required.
97	Small single storey storage buildings currently used by on site contractors. Constructed from brick with flat roof. 	Low potential and no evidence of bats	No further surveys required.
98	Former single storey brick incinerator building with flat roof and large chimney.	Low potential with well-lit interior	No further surveys required.

