SHORTWOOD BUSINESS PARK

ECOLOGICAL REPORT

Ecological Report

An ecological report prepared for Barnsley Metropolitan Borough Council by Chris Hopkinson and Jeremy D. H. Brown on 9th December 2001(This report identifies the various habitats on the site and the species to be found within them) is attatched to this document.

Walkover Survey

A walkover survey was undertaken by Smeeden Foreman Partnership (hereafter SFP) during early January 2002 which confirmed that there are no signs of burrows/sets/earths associated with water voles, badgers or foxes present on site.

SFP are awaiting a response from the local badger group who were contacted during December 2001.

In spring 2002 further assessment will be made once the animals become active.

At the same time a survey of amphibious spawn in the pond will be made which will take into account any necessary proposals for translocation.

In the event of the presence of newts being detected a night-time licensed survey would be recommended to check for protected species of newt.

Much of the site appears to have been recently re-seeded which may mean that current vegetation records are inaccurate.

In spring/early summer of 2002 further assessment will be made which will take into account any necessary proposals for protecting/translocating particularly species rich areas.

Tree Survey

A tree survey carried out by SFP in early January 2002 recommends the felling of two mature *Fraxinus excelsior* (common name ash).

At the time of the walkover ecological survey bat activity could not be assessed. If it is found that bats are active within the trees to be felled during subsequent visits, action should be taken to minimise the impact this would have on the bats.

Trees that are known to be used by bats come under the protection of the Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981 and the Statutory Nature Conservation Organisation (hereafter SNCO) must be consulted before any work is undertaken, which could affect the bats or their roost. Deliberate destruction is therefore illegal but accidental damage would probably fall within the defence of "a lawful operation which could not reasonably have been avoided" provided that the SNCO had been consulted and allowed reasonable time to advise.

Action to minimise impact of tree work on bats:-

- Work is best done in Spring & Autumn when it is least disruptive to the bats life cycle and when they are most able to escape.
- Once felled any roost section should be cut out and strapped to a nearby sound tree in a position similar to it original one.
- If bats are in a crack in a branch kept open by stress, it may need to be wedged in order to prevent the bats being crushed when the weight of the branch is removed.
- Holes may contain bats so care should be taken to avoid cutting through or directly above them.

- If the timber is felled, the roost is not exposed and the bats are unharmed, temporarily seal the roost and seek advice. If help is not available, position the roost off the ground, re-open it and allow the bats to escape naturally.
- If the roost has been exposed and especially if bats have been injured, collect the bats in a secure box or bag (using a glove) and seek advice. Remember that injured bats may need treatment.
- Bat boxes cannot replace natural cavities in trees, but consider providing boxes in forestry conditions where thinning is to take place.

Mr. S. Robinson,
Principal Planning Officer,
Countryside Unit,
Planning Services,
Barnsley Metropolitan Borough Council,
Central Offices,
Kendray Street,
Barnsley,
South Yorkshire,
S70 2TN.

ENVIRONMENT AND
DEVELOPMENT
12 DEC 2001
Reg

31, Chelsea Road,
Sheffield,
S11 9BQ.

9th December 2001.

Dear Mr. Robinson,

'SHORTWOOD BUISINESS PARK'

Location

The site of a former brickworks and adjacent land, situated adjacent to Gig Lane, a dismantled railway adjacent to Shortwood Villas, and the Hoyland by-pass.
Ordnance Survey grid square SE 3501.

Site

The most obvious feature is the large pond situated in approximately the centre of the site. This is surrounded by steep banks some 7 metres or more high, and is presumably the site of a former quarry. The pond contains a large area of Water Horsetail, with Common Reedmace, and a large expanse of open water containing a floating pondweed. Good populations of amphibians occur here, and also Grass Snakes, aquatic invertebrates such as dragonflies, water beetles and the Brown China-mark micro-moth, and sticklebacks. Moorhen apparently breed regularly, and there were a pair of Coot in 2000. Water Voles apparently occurred here but have not been seen in 2001. A Fox earth in the bank was dug out in 2001. Common Sallow, Grey Sallow, and Birch occur on the banks around the pond and provide a roost site for birds.

The rest of the site is mainly rough grassland, large areas of which have been subject to recent disturbance and consequently are sparsely vegetated. The grassland contains scattered orchids, believed to be Common Spotted Orchid and/or Southern Marsh Orchid and/or hybrid Common Spotted/ Southern Marsh. At least one area, adjacent to the pond, contains a number of herbs such as Birdsfoot Trefoil, Black Knapweed, and Ribwort Plantain. Grey Partridge is regular, and Brown Hare occasional. Skylark is believed to breed here and Kestrel is regular. Butterflies and Burnet moths occur. There are several ditches, one of which is substantial with much invasive vegetation and scrub, as well as water and an area dominated by Rushes. The other ditches are shallow and are associated with landscape restoration works.

Significant features are the hedgerows along Upper Hoyland Road and Gig Lane. These lanes form the eastern boundary of the site from the by-pass to the dismantled railway. Both hedges contain at least 7 species, and include species indicative of an old hedgerow. Both hedges have good banks and contain Dog's Mercury, and Ivy; indeed Gig Lane is a sunken lane and also contains mature and semi-mature trees.

Stockwith Lane contains a hawthorn hedge on the southern side, and an area of trees (including mature), scrub, and the remains of a hedge atop a bank which contains scrub and an active Rabbit warren on the northern side.

There is an area of tall scrub in a depression to the north of Stockwith Lane, which contained several roosting Blackbirds on 17th November, and an area of tall scrub with trees adjacent to Gig Lane. The western section of the site contains some Common Gorse (mature), Broom, and Sallow scrub.

Maps indicate the possible presence of a public footpath near the western and southern boundaries of the site, between Upper Hoyland and Hay Green.

Comments

Obviously it would be beneficial for the wildlife associated with the pond for this to remain. If this is not possible is there scope for a smaller pond on the site ? - e.g. would it be possible to take advantage of the poor drainage on the site to situate a pond at 'the bottom' of the site adjacent to the dismantled railway; or alternatively in the area of scrub adjacent to Gig Lane, where some semi-natural habitat could be retained; some kind of physical measures would presumably need to be undertaken to direct amphibians away from the industrial site. Translocation of Orchids and aquatic animals and plants should be possible. Particular care needs to be taken over the presence of Smooth Newts which will either be in the pond or in hibernation on the site.

Apart from the pond, there are good areas of semi-natural habitat on the site and it would be beneficial to retain some, e.g. the existing hedgerows, and the area on the northern side of Stockwith Lane. There is also scope for the provision of some indigenous semi-natural habitat to try to retain butterflies and encourage birds, e.g. wild flower grassland, hedgerows (using the species which exist in Upper Hoyland Road and Gig Lane), scrub (including Gorse which is picturesque and may also have value as an anti-vandal/theft device e.g. around car parks), and trees. Looking at the topography of the site, a gentle slope with steeper banks, would this necessitate development on two levels ? If this is the case, there are good opportunities for wildlife habitats on banks, including wild flowers.

N.B. When development takes place I can see great temptation for material to be bulldozed on to the dismantled railway banking along the northern boundary. This is an excellent area of trees and needs to be protected.

SPECIES LISTS

Selective lists. All species listed alphabetically.

BIRDS (AVES)

Blackbird	2001: inc. several at roost.	Mallard	2001: Regular.
Coot	2000: 1 pair.	Meadow Pipit	2001.
Goldfinch	2001.	Moorhen	2001: Breeding.
Green Woodpecker	2001.	"	1 at least (29-10).
Grey Partridge	2001: Regular.	Reed Bunting	Noted.
Kestrel	2001: Regular.	Skylark	2001: Breeding ?
Linnet	2001.	Sparrowhawk	2001: Regular.
Little Owl	2001.	Teal	Occasional.

MAMMALS (MAMMALIA)

Badger	2000.	Field Vole	Noted.
Bank Vole	2001: 1 (29-10).	Fox	2001: earth.
Bat sp(p).	2001.	Rabbit	2001: breeding.
Brown Hare	2001: occasional.	Stoat	Noted.
Common Rat	Noted.	Water Vole	Formerly at pond.
Common Shrew	Noted.	Weasel	Noted.

REPTILES (REPTILIA)

Grass Snake	2001: Less common since the construction of the by-pass destroyed an adjoining area of apparently good habitat. Formerly very common here with different colour varieties.

AMPHIBIANS (AMPHIBIA)

Common Frog	2001: c50 adults. 1 juvenile (29-10).
Common Toad	2001: c100 adults.
Smooth Newt	2001: c30. 1 adult female in hibernation near pond (29-10).

FISHES (PISCES)

Three-spined Stickleback 2001.

DRAGONFLIES (ODONATA)

Damselfly sp(p). 2001. Darter sp(p). 2001. Hawker sp(p). 2001.

BUTTERFLIES (LEPIDOPTERA)

Comma	2001: common.	Peacock	2001.
Common Blue	2001.	Red Admiral	2001: Immigrant.
Gatekeeper	2001.	Small Copper	2001.
Large Skipper	2001.	Small Skipper	2001.
Large White	2001.	Small Tortoiseshell	2001.
Meadow Brown	2001.	Small White	2001.
Orange Tip	2001.	Wall	2001.
Painted Lady	Immigrant.		

MOTHS (LEPIDOPTERA)

Macro- moths

Broom Moth	2001: Larvae.
Bulrush Wainscot	2001.
Burnet sp(p).	2001: Cocoons.
Cinnabar	2001: Larvae.
Elephant Hawk-moth	2001: Larva.
Puss Moth	2000: Larvae.

Micro- moths

Brown China-mark	2001: Common.
Thistle Ermine	Occasional.

PLANTS

Ash
Bent sp(p).
Birdsfoot Trefoil
Black Knapweed
Blackthorn
Broom
Celery-leaved Buttercup
Cock's foot.
Common Catsear
Common Centaury
Common Gorse
Common Reedmace
Common Sallow
Common Water-plantain
Dog Rose
Dog's Mercury
Elder
Field Maple
Grey Sallow
Hard Rush
Hawthorn
Hazel
Hogweed
Holly
Ivy
Marsh Thistle
Meadow Vetchling
Oak sp(p).
Oxeye Daisy
Pondweed sp.
Red Clover
Ribwort Plantain
Rush spp.
Silver Birch
Water Horsetail
Wych Elm
Yarrow

Acknowledgement

The above records supplied by Chris Hopkinson, except for those dated 29-10-2001 (CH, JDHB) and the plants (JDHB).

Jeremy D. H. Brown.

JDH Brown.