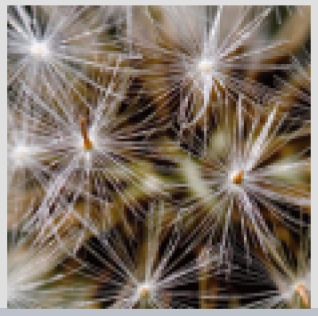
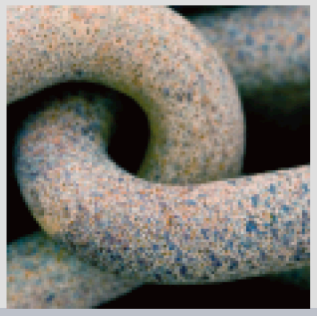
Oughtibridge Mill, Sheffield

Mitigation Proposals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Baker Consultants is an ecology and sustainability consultancy. We work in terrestrial, freshwater and marine environments, providing a range of services for industry, government, developers, public services and utilities.

Baker Consultants comprises a highly experienced team of professional ecologists. We do wildlife surveys - but they are only the first steps in the process for most projects. We are also involved in ecological assessment, environmental law, biodiversity management and design planning.

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Where field investigations have been carried out, these have been restricted to the agreed scope of works and carried out to a level of detail required to achieve the stated objectives of the services. Natural habitats and species distributions may change over time and further data should be sought following any significant delay from the publication of this document.

Report Contents

1. Introduction

1.1 Site Description

1.1.1 Oughtibridge Mill is located on Langsett Road North, Oughtibridge, Sheffield. The central Ordnance Survey grid reference for the site is SK302940.

1.1.2 The application site is bordered to the southwest by Langsett Road North, which has a number of old mill buildings along its length. The River Don bisects the site from west to east, and is flanked with scattered trees and low ground-flora along its banks.

1.1.3 The wider site of Oughtibridge Mill itself consists of approximately 13.79ha of disused industrial buildings and hard-standing, with the River Don flowing through the site, and small areas of tall ruderal vegetation, scrub, rubble patches from demolished buildings and bare ground all present. Wharncliffe Wood borders the mill site to the north and east.

1.2 The Proposed Development

1.2.1 CEG wishes to submit a fresh, full planning application at Oughtibridge Mill for the site access, spine road and vehicular bridge. This follow previous outline and full planning permissions at the site (refs: 16/01169/OUT and 16/01677/FUL).

1.2.2 The location of the proposed vehicular bridge for the new application has moved to the north of its originally proposed site, and additional tree removal is required. As a result, the red line (planning application) boundary of the fresh application has been extended from that of the outline application to include this area.

1.3 Scope of Report

1.3.1 The full planning application for the site access, spine road and vehicular bridge makes no material change to the ecological assessment set out for the previous scheme (16/01169/OUT), which was for:

The demolition of existing buildings and structures and erection of residential development (Use Class C3) with means of site access including a new vehicular bridge and a pedestrian/cycle bridge across the River Don, and associated landscaping and infrastructure works (As amended by drawings received on the 11 and 16 August 2016).

1.3.2 Under the new application, there will be minor treefelling of a few alder and willow trees at the new bridge location. The remaining works will largely take place within areas of current hardstanding with no ecological value. As a result, no further ecological information or assessment is considered necessary in support of this application.

1.3.3 Having set aside the issue of further assessment, this document is intended to provide information on the ecological mitigation measures that will be implemented as part of the access, spine road and vehicular bridge works and within land defined by the new red line boundary for this application.

1.4 Mitigation Measures

1.4.1 As part of the full planning application for the site access, spine road and vehicular bridge, mitigation measures relevant to the proposed scheme are dealt with in this report, as follows:

- Bat roost habitat – including provision of bat boxes in proximity to the bridge
- Provision of nesting and feeding habitats for birds
- Construction method statement for otters

2. Mitigation Proposals

2.1 Bats

2.1.1 Paragraph 5.3.9 of the Oughtibridge ecology report states that:

Replacement roost habitat will be needed to compensate for those to be lost within the [outline] scheme. In addition to this bat boxes could be placed within the riverside trees and Wharncliffe Woods to provide additional roosting locations in the area around the development.

2.1.2 Six large bat boxes will be erected on trees (or poles) in the vicinity of the new vehicular bridge. These will be sited by an experienced and licensed bat ecologist to ensure that the locations are suitable in terms of bat access and flightlines, exposure to sunlight, and separation from the eventual car traffic along the spine road. As space for boxes may be constrained along the river, a smaller number of large 'colony' boxes is proposed, rather than numerous standard size features (Table 1). In addition, self-cleaning designs have been chosen to minimise maintenance requirements.

2.1.3 The boxes will be erected prior to May 2018, to ensure that they are available for bats during the 2018 active season.

Table 1. Proposed bat box designs

2no. Schwegler 67-1FFH	2no. Schwegler 65-1FF	2no. Miramare Woodstone
		

2.1.4 The general location where the bat boxes will be site is indicated in Figure 1 below (these will be within CEG land-ownership):

Figure 1. Proposed bat box siting location in relation to new vehicular bridge

2.2 Birds

2.2.1 Paragraph 5.3.17 of the Oughtibridge ecology report states that:

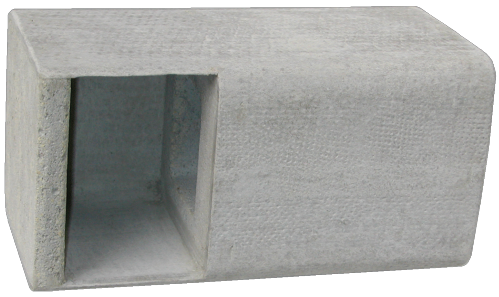
In the design of new gardens and planting regimes, native species of tree should be used, especially fruit bearing species to provide nesting and feeding habitat for birds. In addition, bird boxes should be provided within the Site and in adjacent riparian and woodland habitats. Houses could be fitted with boxes suitable for swift or house martin, and landscaped areas could be furnished with standard boxes as well as those suitable for woodpecker or house sparrow, thus enhancing the nesting habitat potential of the Site.

2.2.2 No gardens are being proposed as part of the current full planning application, so recommendations in this report are limited to provision of bird boxes in the adjacent riparian and woodland habitats. To provide for a range of bird species, a variety of bird boxes will be provided along the river corridor, both upstream and downstream of the new and old vehicular bridge locations. These will be sited by

an experienced ornithologist in locations appropriate to the box design types and the boxes will comprise the following (Table 2):

2.2.3 The boxes will be erected prior to May 2018, to ensure that they are available for birds during the 2018 breeding season.

Table 2. Proposed bird box designs

2no. Schwegler No.19	
5no. Schwegler 1B 32mm 5no. Schwegler 1B 26mm	
3no. Schwegler 2H	

2.3 Otter

2.3.1 As part of the ecological assessment for the outline scheme, a detailed assessment of the River Don was undertaken by suitably qualified ecologists to identify any evidence of otter use. No evidence of otter was identified through the mill site, but there are records of otter in the catchment and it is likely that they will move up and down the river on a regular basis.

2.3.2 The design of the new vehicular bridge over the River Don incorporates a 30m span, with the abutments at bank top level. This means that the existing natural banks will be retained on both sides of the river, allowing free movement of otters underneath the bridge at all water levels. With this design, there is no need to provide special otter ledges or culverts as mitigation.

2.3.3 As the bridge design is suitable to allow continued otter activity through the site, the only additional requirement is to minimise disruption to otter during the construction process from impacts such as noise, construction lighting at night, the use of machinery and human disturbance.

2.3.4 One benefit afforded by the site is that the River Don watercourse has steep banks, which are deeply incised into the surroundings. This means that the normal water level is visually sheltered from activities away from the edge of the river bank, and so construction across the site as a whole is likely to have limited impact on otter activity within the river.

2.3.5 To avoid disturbance to otters, the following recommendations should be included within the construction method statement for the new vehicular bridge and spine road:

i. Otters are generally active at night. It is therefore necessary to restrict any works to the river banks to daylight hours, and night-time construction lighting should be appropriately located or baffled to ensure that there is no light spill onto the river or banks.
ii. Appropriate signage should be erected indicating that the banks are a wildlife area and all people and machinery must be excluded from the banks outside of the immediate work site.
iii. Areas of bank adjacent to the works will be fenced to establish a clearly marked buffer zone from the area of works, and the rest of the bank will be fenced around the development site along the top of the bank. This fencing should be chestnut paling with a 25mm spacing, that will create both a physical boundary to the works to prevent machine access, and will deter otters from entering the works zone.
iv. During construction works, machinery and materials shall not be stored on the bank top (e.g. within 5m). Refuelling and refilling of machinery or tools must also not be undertaken adjacent to the bank. Drip trays should be placed underneath machinery or tools if stored outside overnight, to capture any spillages that may occur.
v. Open trenches left overnight will either be covered or ramped in at least one location to provide a means of escape in case of animals falling in
vi. Where possible, felled trees should be used to create piles of brash and logs on the bank top outside the work area as cover for otters. These can be staked in place to prevent them being moved by flood waters.
vii. Upon completion of the bridge construction, the river banks should be restored to their previous levels and planted using willow stakes taken from

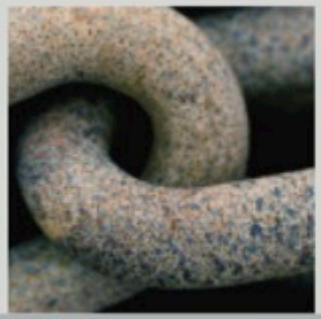
site. These large 'cuttings' will regrow quickly to screen the water course and otters from the new development and will provide resting places for otter. The planting will also help to prevent bank erosion.

viii. In the instance that an otter is identified in the working area, works should cease and an ecologist should be contacted for advice before works can recommence.

2.4 Conclusion

2.4.1 Implementation of these mitigation measures (alongside those relating to lighting, invasive species, etc. set out in other reports relating to the outline consent across the wider site) will ensure that the potential adverse impacts of the proposed scheme will be appropriately managed and minimised. They will provide benefits to birds, bats and otters during the first phase of development of the site and will be further developed in future phases of development.

2.4.2 In relation to the current application for full permission for the site access, spine road and vehicle bridge, the measures included here, implemented during construction, should allow discharge of any relevant planning conditions placed on the scheme.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