Cockle Edge Farm
Scout Dike

Ecological Appraisal

Report Reference: BG051

Prepared for Justin Simms

December 2012

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This report has been produced in a concise and unambiguous format to assist clear decision making.
The survey findings are a true representation of the conditions found at the survey site on the date and time of the survey.
Unless specified otherwise [by the client] all protected species recorded could be sent to the appropriate local records centre/group.

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Report prepared by Chris Needham BSc. (Hons) MSc. MIEEM	December 2012
Report checked by Neil Crofts BSc.	December 2012

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1.0 Report Summary

1) Breeding Birds

Vegetation clearance should be avoided during the breeding bird season (March to August). In the event that this is unachievable then supervision of the clearance works should be undertaken by a suitably qualified ecologist.

2) Bats

There are a number of mature trees along the southern edge of the site but outside the site boundary. The current proposals do not appear to impact these trees. In the event that the proposals alter; resulting in these trees being removed or cut back as part of the development then further surveys will be required.

3) Biodiversity Enhancement

Opportunities may exist to incorporate biodiversity enhancements within the new development. These would typically include the erection of bird and bat boxes and native planting.

2.0 Introduction

Brindle and Green was commissioned by Justin Simms, the owner of the site, to carry out an ecological appraisal on a field at Cockle Edge Farm.

The field is adjacent to Scout Dike Reservoir, Ingbirchworth, Barnsley.

A planning application is to be submitted to create an underground dwelling and a sculpture park.

An ecological appraisal was carried out on the 13th December 2012.

The survey was carried out by:

Christopher Needham BSc. (Hons.) MSc. MIEEM.

3.0 Methodology

The purpose of the survey was to ensure protected species and habitats would not be affected by the proposed development.

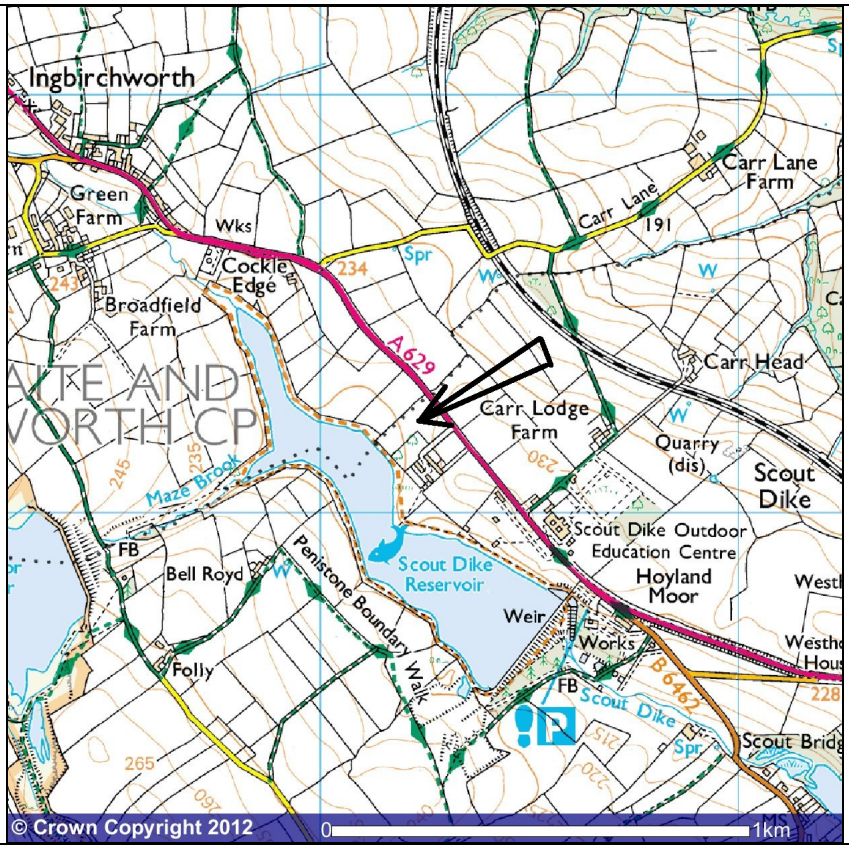
All ecological issues relating to the habitat type were investigated during the survey including:

1. Breeding Birds
2. Specially Protected Amphibians
3. Reptiles
4. Invasive Weeds
5. Botanical Value
6. Bats
7. Badgers
8. Water Voles
9. Otters
10. Trees and Hedgerows
11. Water Courses
12. Protected Areas
13. Biodiversity Enhancement Opportunities

4.0 Location of the Survey Area

Survey area can be found at grid reference
SE 23243 05223

Survey area indicated by black arrow.



Aerial view of the field at Cockle Edge Farm. Survey area outlined in yellow. Surrounding area consists of Scout Dike Reservoir, grass fields used for grazing cattle and to the south of the site a small housing development.

5.0 Photographs and Annotation

View of the survey area looking from the A629 Road down towards Scout Dike Reservoir. The field covers an area of approximately 1.1 hectares.	
View of the survey area from Scout Dike Reservoir looking up towards the A629 Road.	
Adjacent fields used for silage and grazing cattle.	

Along the southern edge of the survey area there is a row of mature trees.	
Some of these trees are sufficiently mature enough to have holes and crevices that could be attractive to roosting bats.	
A small housing estate exists beyond these trees.	

The area is mostly surrounded by dry stone walls. The field (survey area) is used for grazing cattle or silage. The field consists of semi-improved grassland with small patches of herbaceous plants such as Spear Thistle (*Cirsium vulgare*) and Broad-leafed dock (*Rumex obtusifolius*).	
Scout Dike Reservoir lies to the west of the site. The proposed development will not impact the reservoir or the edges of the reservoir.	
A well used footpath separates the survey area from Scout Dike Reservoir.	

6.0 Results and Recommendations

Most ecological issues considered during the survey will not be affected by the proposed development. However, there are three matters that require attention:

6.1) Breeding Birds

6.2) Bats

6.3) Biodiversity Enhancement Opportunities

6.1) Breeding Birds

All nesting birds are protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981, which makes it an offence to intentionally kill, injure or take any wild bird or take, damage or destroy its nest whilst in use or being built, or take or destroy its eggs. Depending on the species, the bird breeding season can start in late February early March and continue through until August.

The site will only have a limited attractiveness for breeding birds. However, species such as Sky Lark (*Alauda arvensis*) and Meadow Pipit (*Anthus pratensis*) could use the site for breeding.

Vegetation clearance should be avoided during the breeding bird season (March to August). In the event that this is unachievable then supervision of the clearance works should be undertaken by a suitably qualified ecologist.

6.2) Bats

In the United Kingdom all bats and their habitats are fully protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981. It is an offence to damage or destroy any bat roost, intentionally or recklessly obstruct a bat roost, deliberately, intentionally or recklessly disturb a bat or intentionally kill, injure or take any bat.

Although no structures or mature trees exist on site there is a row of mature trees adjacent to the southern boundary of the site.

The current proposals do not appear to impact these trees. In the event that the proposals alter; resulting in these trees being removed or cut back as part of the development then further bat surveys will be required.

6.3) Biodiversity Enhancement Opportunities

In March 2012 the Department for Communities and Local Government published the National Planning Policy Framework. This sets out planning policies on protection of biodiversity through the planning system. The document states - opportunities to incorporate biodiversity in and around developments should be encouraged. Opportunities may exist to incorporate ecological enhancement schemes within the new development. The proposed development comprises of an underground dwelling and a sculpture park. Ecological enhancements that could be considered include:

- Large areas of the field are to remain undisturbed. Improvements could be made to these grassland areas with the creation of a species rich meadow.
- The underground dwelling development could incorporate a relatively small separate section for roosting bats.
- Landscaping of the site should include the use of native British plant species.

Any ecological enhancement scheme would require consultation between the architect for the development and an ecological consultant.

7.0 References

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