

APPENDIX 2.6
ECOLOGICAL ASSESSMENT

Homebase Brentford

Ecological Assessment

December 2018

T: 0118 989 10 86
E: info@derekfinnie.com
W: www.derekfinnie.com

20 Soames Place, Mulberry Grove
Wokingham, Berkshire RG40 5AT



COMMISSIONED BY
Berkeley Homes (Urban Renaissance) Limited
Chelsea Bridge Wharf
380 Queenstown Road
London
SW11 8PE

Homebase Brentford

Ecological Assessment

December 2018

Report Ref: DFA18098

Derek Finnie Associates Ltd
20 Soames Place
Wokingham
Berkshire
RG40 5AT

info@derekfinnie.com



CONTENTS

1 INTRODUCTION.....1

1.1 Background..... 1

2 METHODOLOGY2

2.1 Habitat survey 2

2.2 Survey Constraints..... 2

3 SITE DESCRIPTION3

3.1 Phase 1 Survey..... 3

3.2 Fauna 4

4 EVALUATION.....5

4.1 Definition of ecological value 5

4.2 Site evaluation 6

5 SUMMARY7

REFERENCES8

FIGURES

Figure 1. Phase 1 Habitat Map 9



1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

1.1.1 Derek Finnie Associates was commissioned by Berkeley Homes (Urban Renaissance) Limited (BHL) to undertake an ecological assessment of an area of land located at the juncture of Great West Road and Syon Lane in Brentford. The Site is currently in use as a Homebase superstore with associated car parking.

1.1.2 BHL are looking to re-develop the Site, hence wish to assess any potential adverse ecological impacts of the proposal, as well as identify areas where biodiversity enhancements can be achieved. To this end, a baseline ecological assessment of the Site was undertaken December 2018, comprising a Site walk over survey giving special attention to the Site's potential to support protected species.

1.1.3 The following report outlines the methodologies employed throughout the ecological assessment, describes the current ecological status of the site and discusses the ecological constraints to any future development, as well as options for biodiversity enhancement.

2 METHODOLOGY

2.1 Habitat survey

2.1.1 An 'extended' Phase 1 Habitat Survey was carried out on 8th December 2018; this followed the methodology presented by the JNCC (2010). The Phase 1 technique aims to classify each habitat into categories based on the assemblage of plant species present, with the dominant plant species for each habitat being noted. In some cases, sub-divisions or modifications of the standard categories can be made where this is useful in providing further detail.

2.1.2 An 'extended' form of the basic methodology was employed to determine whether any notable or protected species of fauna utilise the study area, in particular badgers, bats, amphibians, reptiles and birds. In the absence of direct evidence of these species, an assessment was made on the potential for the site to support such species.

2.2 Survey Constraints

2.2.1 Phase 1 survey can be undertaken at any time of the year, however species which may flower earlier in the year may have been missed or under recorded in December. Given the habitats present within the Site, this is not considered to be major constraint to the assessment.

2.2.2 Access was available to all areas of the Site.

2.2.3 The assessment was undertaken in line with the latest sectoral guidance produced by the Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (CIEEM), as well as BS 42020: 2013 *Biodiversity – Code of Practice for Planning and Development*.

3 SITE DESCRIPTION

3.1 Phase 1 Survey

3.1.1 The Site is situated to the east of the Great West Road in Brentford with a rail line forming the south eastern boundary of the Site. The surrounding land is dominated by existing residential and commercial properties.

3.1.2 The following Phase 1 habitats were encountered within the Site:

- Scattered trees;
- Introduced shrub; and
- Building and hardstanding.

3.1.3 Each habitat is described in turn below and depicted on Figure 1.

Scattered trees

3.1.4 There are several individual semi-mature trees around the periphery of the Site, set amongst the introduced shrub. Species noted included cherry *Prunus* sp., ash *Fraxinus excelsior* and sycamore *Acer pseudoplatanus*. There is also a line of young oak *Quercus* sp. set within the pavement, outwith the Site boundary, along the south west boundary.

Introduced Shrub

3.1.5 There are various areas of introduced shrub around the periphery of the car park which comprise mainly non-native species, however the occasional patch of holly *Ilex aquilinum*, rose *Rosa* sp. and dogwood *Cornus sanguinea* was noted; butterfly bush *Buddleja davidii* was also recorded throughout the shrub beds.

3.1.6 Some native, ruderal species have begun to exploit the areas under the planted shrubs, with Yorkshire fog *Holcus lanatus*, ivy *Hedera helix*, dandelion *Taraxacum officinale* agg. common nettle *Urtica dioica*, creeping thistle *Cirsium arvensis* and bramble *Rubus fruticosus* agg being noted.

Building and hardstanding

3.1.7 The vast majority of the Site is given over to buildings and hardstanding. A large superstore constructed principally from prefabricated, corrugate metal sheet, occupies approximately half of the Site. Car parking areas, in the form of tarmacked hardstanding, surround the superstore structure on more or less three sides. The south eastern side of the store is given over to a delivery area and garden centre, below which is an underground car park which is currently used to store vehicles from the neighbouring car dealership.

Invasive species

3.1.8 No evidence of Japanese knotweed was encountered throughout the December 2018 survey. However, as this species dies back in winter with only mature stems being visible in winter, its presence within the Site can not be completely discounted.

3.2 Fauna

- 3.2.1 No specially protected species or species of a raised conservation status were encountered throughout the December 2018 survey and the Site was assessed as having negligible potential to support such species due to the domination by building and hardstanding. The store itself is constructed principally from metal; no potential features that could be exploited by roosting bats were noted.

4 EVALUATION

4.1 Definition of ecological value

- 4.1.1 While some level of subjectivity is unavoidable when apportioning value to ecological features and resources, certain parameters and points of reference can be used to help ensure consistency. Those used in this appraisal are explained below.
- 4.1.2 Sites already possessing statutory or non-statutory nature conservation designations will have been subjected to some form of evaluation process in the past, and their importance defined at a geographical scale (e.g. international, national, local). For these, evaluation will generally reaffirm their qualifying attributes, or in some cases may identify where designation may no longer be appropriate.
- 4.1.3 Factors such as extent, naturalness, rarity, fragility and diversity are all relevant to the determination of ecological value, and for the evaluation of sites and habitat features outside designated sites, these and other criteria as described by Ratcliffe (1977), may be applied. Ratcliffe's criteria are integral to the procedure for selecting both Sites of Special Scientific Interest and many non-statutory designation systems in the UK, and therefore remain an accepted standard for site evaluation.
- 4.1.4 In applying these criteria, attention may be drawn to the relative scarcity or abundance of features within the survey area and in the wider geographical context. Some criteria are however absolute and not relative to scale. Ancient woodland, for example, is fragile irrespective of whether it is being considered in an international or local context. Similarly, the value of an otherwise poor habitat may be elevated if it is central to the survival of a rare species.
- 4.1.5 Where evaluation is important for the purposes of informing decisions related to land-use planning and development control, the above approach needs to be supplemented by consideration of whether individual species are subject to legal protection, or whether habitats or species are present which have been identified as 'priorities' for biodiversity conservation in the UK. Planning authorities have a statutory duty to further biodiversity objectives and the presence of such resources may be material to the determination of development control decisions.
- 4.1.6 Further indications of conservation status for individual species are provided by reference to the Red Data Book system, the Vascular Plant Red Data List for Great Britain (Cheffings and Farrell 2006) or for birds by reference to the Birds of Conservation Concern (Eaton et al. 2015) This divides birds into three lists; Red List (birds of high conservation concern), Amber List (birds of moderate conservation concern) and Green List (not of conservation concern).
- 4.1.7 Scales of comparison varying from the international to the context of the local area may be used to define the measure of importance attached to individual features. The definition of geographic terms can vary, but in this evaluation the geographic frame of reference contained within the CIEEM guidelines (CIEEM 2018) is used.



4.2 Site evaluation

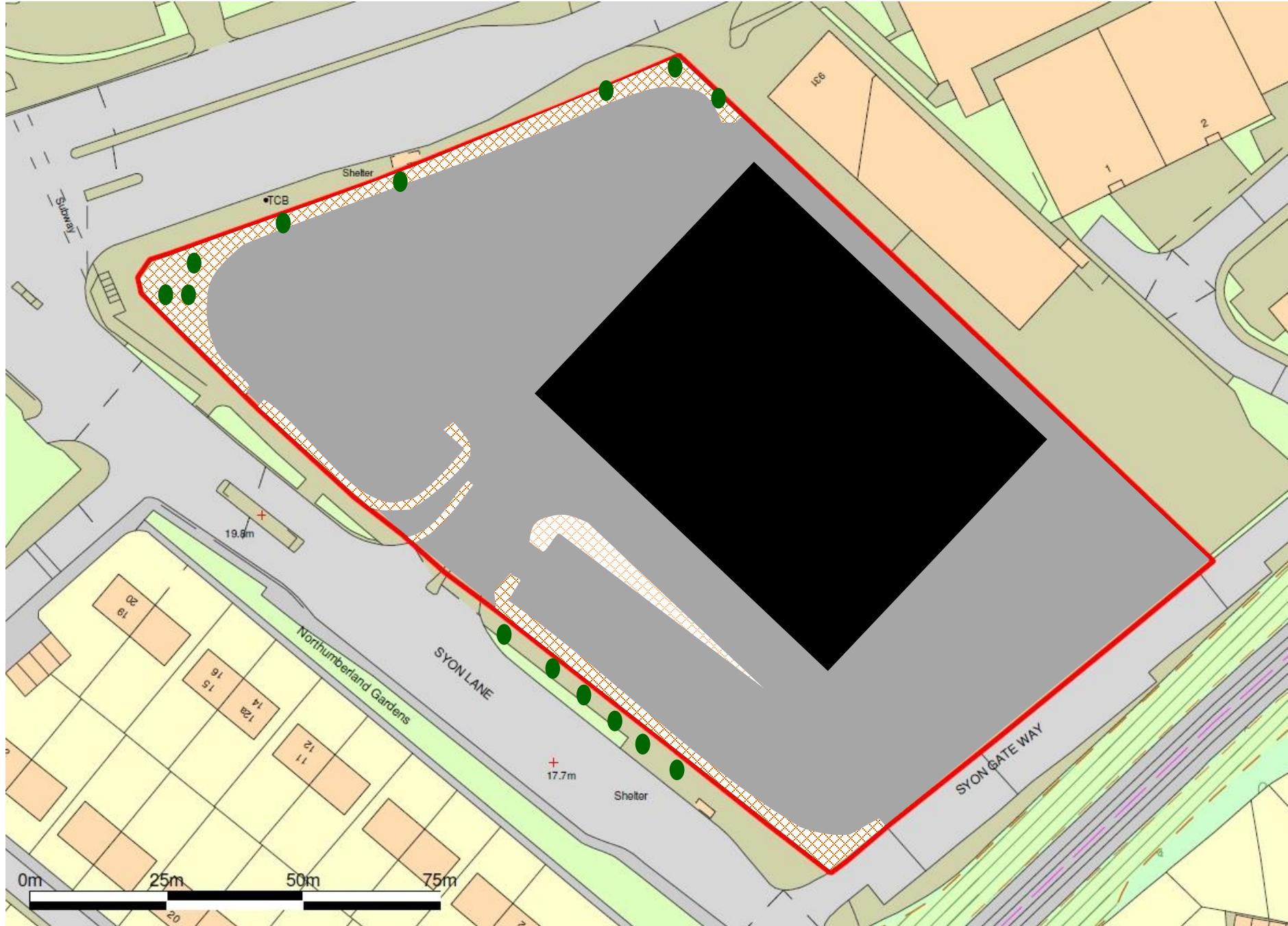
- 4.2.1 No part of the Site or the immediate surrounding area is designated on conservation grounds. Syon Park Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), which is designated as a SSSI as it is the only known area of tall grass washland along the Thames in Greater London, is located some 1.1km to the south east. The Site is outside the SSSI Impact Risk Zone. Richmond Park Special Area for Conservation lies some 4km to the south east which is likely to be outside the zone of ecological influence of the proposed development. However, potential indirect impacts upon Richmond Park may need to be explored further through a Habitat Regulations Assessment.
- 4.2.2 No habitats or species of value were identified within the Site and the Site has been assessed as being of negligible ecological value.
- 4.2.3 No ecological constraints to re-development of the Site have been identified to date. It is likely that biodiversity gains can be delivered through appropriate landscaping within any future development.

5 SUMMARY

- 5.1.1 An ecological assessment, comprising an Extended Phase 1 Habitat survey, was undertaken across the Homebase site in Brentford. The Site was found to comprise building and hardstanding surround by introduced shrub planting.
- 5.1.2 Overall the Site was found to be of negligible ecological value with no ecological constraints to re-development being identified.

REFERENCES

- BCT 2016. *Bat Surveys – Good Practice Guidelines, 3rd Edition*. Bat Conservation Trust, London.
- Bibby, C.J., Burgess, N.D., Hill, D.A. and Mustoe, S.H. 2000. *Bird Census Techniques. Second Edition*. Academic Press
- Charter Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (CIEEM) 2018. *Guidelines for Ecological Impact Assessment in the United Kingdom and Ireland Third Edition*. CIEEM, Winchester.
- Cheffings, C.M. & Farrell, L. (eds), 2005. *The Vascular Plant Red Data List for Great Britain*. Joint Nature Conservation Committee.
- Eaton MA, Aebischer NJ, Brown AF, Hearn R, Lock L, Musgrove AJ, Noble DG, Stroud D, and Gregory RD. 2015. Birds of Conservation Concern 4: the population status of birds in the United Kingdom, Channel Islands and the Isle of Man. *British Birds*. **108**: 7080-746.
- JNCC 2010. *Handbook for Phase 1 habitat survey - A technique for environmental audit*. Joint Nature Conservation Committee, Peterborough.
- Ratcliffe. D.R. 1977 *A Nature Conservation Review (Volumes 1 & 2)*. Cambridge University Press.



Legend:

-  Introduced shrub
-  Hardstanding
-  Building
-  Scattered scrub
-  Site boundary



Do not scale

Drawing No: Figure 1

Title: Phase 1 Habitat Map

Date: December 2018

Project: Brentford

Client: Berkeley Homes



20 Soames Place
Wokingham
Berks RG40 5AT

info@derekfinnie.com