

MAPLE CROSS (SURVEYED 7TH JUNE 2021)

BACKGROUND

- 1.1 Maple Cross has been subject to various ecology and protected species surveys between 2009 and 2018 by a number of ecological consultants. The following assessments were undertaken:
- Reptile Survey and Great Crested Newt Survey by Entec in 2009;
 - Extended Phase 1 Habitat Survey in August 2013;
 - Badger survey in October 2014;
 - Ecology Survey by AMEC Environment & Infrastructure UK Ltd in October 2014;
 - Bat Emergence, Re-entry and Activity Surveys between September 2013 and September 2014;
 - Reptile Survey between August and October 2014;
 - Preliminary Ecological Appraisal by RPS Group PLC in July 2017;
 - Preliminary Ecological Appraisal by Greengage in October 2017;
 - Badger Survey by Greengage in November 2017;
 - Reptile Survey by Wardell Armstrong in 2018;
 - Bat Activity, Emergence and Re-entry Surveys by Wardell Armstrong between April and October 2018;
 - Preliminary Ecological Appraisal by Wardell Armstrong in January 2019;
 - Breeding Bird Survey Report by Wardell Armstrong in February 2019;
 - Preliminary Ecological Appraisal by Greengage in March 2019;
 - Reptile Survey by Greengage between April and May 2019;
 - Riparian Mammal Survey by Greengage between April and July 2014; and
 - Bat emergence/re-entry surveys by Greengage between May and June 2019.
- 1.2 These assessments aimed to establish the ecological value of the site and the presence/likely absence of notable and/or legally protected species in order to inform appropriate mitigation, compensation and enhancement actions in light of proposed development works.
- 1.3 There have been changes in the extent of various habitats in the intervening time, with most notably some scrub habitat having been cleared from much of the centre of the site and one building demolished, however the classification of habitats on site has largely been consistent.

- 1.4 The semi-improved grassland habitats on site have previously been subjected to an NVC survey which reconfirmed that these were relatively species poor, being dominated by aggressive and common species with little diversity, and were not associated with any priority habitats, of low ecological value.

METHODOLOGY

- 1.5 A repeat of the NVC survey was carried with a site survey in the morning of Monday 7th June 2021, under clear, dry and warm weather conditions. This focused on the grassland habitats on site and the Phase 2 botanical survey was conducted in accordance with the methods set out in Rodwell with reference to JNCC (1992) and JNCC (2000).
- 1.6 The surveyor identified five quadrat sampling locations that were considered to be representative of the whole habitat patch. A record was then taken of the plant species found within each quadrat. The census included a measure of the relative frequency with which each given plant species was recorded within the sample, using the Domin scale. On return to the office the survey data were fed into the MAVIS data analysis tool to assign the habitat patches to the relevant NVC habitat types.

LIMITATIONS TO SURVEY

- 1.7 The optimum time for undertaking phase 2 botanical surveys is between late May and August. Access was available and no limitations to the survey were noted.

SURVEYORS EXPERIENCE AND QUALIFICATIONS

- 1.8 Mitch Cooke, who undertook the survey and wrote this report, has a degree in Ecology (Hons), an MSc in Environmental Assessment and Management, and is a full member of CIEEM with over 20 years' experience in ecological survey and assessment. Mitch has set up and developed ecological and environmental teams for over 10 years and has undertaken and managed numerous ecological surveys and assessments. He is the Director at Greengage and manages the team.
- 1.9 This report was written by Mitch Cooke who confirms that the report is in line with the following:
- Represents sound industry practice;
 - Reports and recommends correctly, truthfully and objectively;
 - Is appropriate given the local site conditions and scope of works proposed; and
 - Avoids invalid, biased and exaggerated statements.

GRASSLAND HABITAT DESCRIPTIONS

- 1.11 This is generally a mosaic of acid and neutral grassland. The neutral grassland is variously dominated by False Oat-grass *Arrhenatherum elatius*, Yorkshire-fog *Holcus lanatus* and Red Fescue *Festuca rubra* with a scatter of herbaceous species such as Creeping Cinquefoil *Potentilla reptans*, Common Sorrel *Rumex acetosa*, Meadow Buttercup *Ranunculus acris* and Common Knapweed *Centaurea nigra*.
- 1.12 The acid grassland occupies an area mostly in the centre of the site. It was parched at the time of the survey and dominated by Sheep's-fescue *Festuca ovina* and Common Bent *Agrostis capillaris*. Herbaceous species were limited to a very small area of Sheep's Sorrel *Rumex acetosella*.
- 1.13 The grassland is generally species poor and has weak affinities for the National Vegetation Classification (NVC) communities MG9b *Holcus lanatus-Deschampsia cespitosa* grassland, *Arrhenatherum elatius* sub-community and U1e *Festuca ovina-Agrostis capillaris-Rumex acetosella* grassland, *Galium saxatile-Potentilla erecta* sub-community.
- 1.14 These results reconfirm the previous studies that the grassland community at Maple Lodge lacks this diversity, with just two species of grass and two species of commonly occurring moss present together with a small patch of Sheep's Sorrel. It is not typical of good quality acid grassland and therefore should not be considered within this habitat of principal importance.

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