Land at Honiton Road
Exeter

Preliminary Ecological Appraisal
For

Growen Estates

July 2017

Ecological Consultancy

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Written on 29.07.2017

Reference *HonitonRoadPEA.doc*

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1 Summary

1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide an Ecological Assessment of a proposal by Growen Estates to develop the remains of an enclosure that adjoins Honiton Road. The eastern end of the field has already been developed and a hotel is functioning within that part of the site. The land is accessed from Fitzroy Road, which also provides access into the hotel car park and the Meteorological Office. The primary aim of the ecological survey, on which this assessment is based, was to provide the Local Planning Authority with a **protected and or endangered species mitigation plan**, should one be needed. The second aim of the survey was inform a range of mitigation measures, which are designed to enhance the wildlife and habitat value of the Bloody Corner site. These measures may be incorporated in a Wildlife Management Plan or a Landscape and Ecological Management Plan (LEMP) in due course. The brief included the 'population' of Council wildlife 'trigger' lists.

1.2 The site is made up of a single enclosure of 3.14 ha. The land is being used in 2017 to grow a crop of silage maize. There are narrow grassy margins, running around three sides of the field and the eastern end has been used to store ballast and construction materials. Parts of this area have been colonised by a range of ruderal weeds with weld and bugloss being particularly abundant. Hedges define the northern and southern boundaries, with common elm dominating the former. The southern hedge is made up of a range of native and exotic tree and shrubs. The developer proposes to construct a range of retail outlets within the site. The author has not seen a layout plan for the development has yet to be drawn. Farmland that was part of Hill Barton Farm, which is located to the north and west of the site, has been, or is in the process of being developed to provide new housing estates.

1.3 The Extended Phase 1 Habitat Survey of the site was carried out on the 10th July 2017. Numerous digital images were taken for record purposes and ten of these are provided within **Appendix 1** of this assessment report. The report is written in the form of a Preliminary Ecological Assessment (PEA), which includes a range of mitigation measures that are considered to be appropriate and proportionate. The Devon Biodiversity Records Centre has not been commissioned to provide a data search, since the author has surveyed the site on two previous occasions. The site's ecology is very straightforward and the only features with some habitat value are the hedges, particularly the northern hedge.

1.4 The key impact would be the loss of block of ± 3 ha of intensively cropped arable land and all or parts of the hedge that runs adjoins Honiton Road. Mitigation measures designed to protect and enhance biodiversity will be set out in **Section 7** of this report.

The site has been scoped for the presence, habitat or feeding opportunities for protected species, like breeding birds, bats, badgers, reptiles and amphibians. Provision can be made for birds to nest within the site, once it has been developed.

1.5 There are considered to be no ecological constraints that would prevent the proposed development of the site. It is recommended that a strategy for habitat and wildlife mitigation should be provided in a Wildlife Management Plan or in a Landscape and Ecology Management Plan (LEMP). The plan would address the need for post-construction monitoring and how mitigation provisions would be achieved in perpetuity.

1.6 This PEA report is based on a format devised by the Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management, for the presentation of findings of Ecological Appraisals, Assessments and similar surveys.

1.7 Scoping has shown that the habitat value of the site that would be developed is very limited. Given appropriate mitigation, the site's habitat value could be enhanced. There are therefore no ecological reasons that should prevent the construction of a business and light industrial development in which an adequate amount of green space would be provided and maintained. Habitat mitigation and enhancement should, ideally, be designed to make the developed site more attractive for a greater range of wildlife.

2 Introduction

2.1 The author of this report is Peter Beale, who has been a consultant ecologist since 1990, having worked in a range of habitat management or ecologically related posts since 1964. He has carried out numerous site surveys and ecological appraisals during the last twenty-five years. He holds a Diploma in Countryside Management, is a Chartered Environmentalist and a Fellow of the Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management.

2.2 The client is Growen Estates and Sunflower Ecology is providing ecological and biodiversity enhancement advice.

2.3 The site is made up of a block of ± 3 ha of arable land, which is partially surrounded by hedges. The northern hedge is a farm boundary feature that is dominated by common elms with one common oak. However, this hedge lies outside the boundary of the Growen Estates holding. The Exeter to Exmouth railway runs along the western side of the site.

2.4 It is understood that it is the owner's intention is to develop the site to provide a range of retail outlets. The adjoining landowner should, if possible, be persuaded to retain the northern boundary hedge. The trees that make up the hedge are at risk of dieback from elm disease but it is an important feature. The root suckers and the oak in the hedge would survive and the former would regrow as trees over time. It may be necessary to remove all or part of the southern hedge, where it runs alongside the **A3105**.

2.5. To the best of the his knowledge, no other ecological surveys have been carried out, or reports written up about this site, other than by the author in 2010 and 2013, in order to identify its ecological value.

2.6 Purpose of the report :-

- To identify any key ecological constraints implicit in the proposed development
- To inform master-planning to allow significant ecological effects either to be avoided, or to be minimised, wherever possible
- To identify the need for and allow for appropriate mitigation or compensation measures to be incorporated

3 Biodiversity and planning legislation

3.1 Local Planning Authorities are now charged with the responsibility for protection of endangered species, under the European Union Habitats Directive on the Conservation of Natural Habitats and of Wild Fauna and Flora (Council Directive 92/43/EEC). This Directive was implemented, initially, in the UK by the Conservation (Natural Habitats & Conservation) Regulations 1994 (Statutory Instrument No 2716) amended in 2007. These Regulations were updated and consolidated, within the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010. They have subsequently been amended within the Conservation of Habitats and Species (Amendment) Regulations 2012 (Statutory Instrument 2012 No.1927). The presence of a protected species is a **material consideration**, when a local authority is considering a planning application that could affect any protected species.

3.2 " However, bearing in mind the delay and cost that may be involved, developers should not be required to undertake surveys for protected species unless there is a reasonable likelihood of the species being present **and** affected by the development " Defra circular 01.2005 *Biodiversity and Geological Conservation – Statutory Obligations and their Impact Within the Planning System* 2005. This Circular remains in force, in terms of the *caveat* set out above.

3.3 Obligations placed on owners of land to comply with UK wildlife legislation, European Habitats Regulations and Directives while they are using the land in any way, have been taken into account and referred to, where directly relevant, within this report.

3.4 Local Authorities have a duty to maintain and enhance biodiversity within developments they permit. Local Planning Authorities will seek to produce a net gain in biodiversity by requiring developers to design wildlife into their plans and to ensure that any unavoidable impacts are appropriately mitigated for. The importance of habitat enhancement has been identified within Section 40 (1) of the *Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act* (2006) and in paragraphs 109 & 118 in the *National Planning Policy Framework* (March 2012)

3.5 The author scoped the site to identify the presence or dependent use of the site by protected or notable species, but none were recorded during the survey visit.

All species of bats are protected under Schedules 5 and 6 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (and as amended) and they are also protected under Schedule 2 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010. Bats are listed under Appendix III of the Bern Convention and Annex IV of the EC Habitats Directive. Bats and their habitats are also listed under Appendix II of The Bonn Convention. Together this legislation makes it an offence to kill or injure bats or damage or destroy a place of shelter or protection (e.g. a roost site). There is, however, no evidence that any bats roost in any of the semi-mature trees that grow in two of its boundaries. A very limited amount of bat foraging would be affected since most of the site is very open. Any foraging is likely to the concentrated along the northern field margin.

It would be unlawful to disturb any wild birds, their eggs or chicks while they are nesting. Some birds may nest in the hedges that partially surround the two enclosures. So, it would be prudent, if and when the need arises, to clear any lengths of hedge outside the bird-nesting season (1st March – 31st August). Any hedgerow removal, including short lengths of hedge, that has to be carried out during any part of the nesting season would need to be overseen by a suitably qualified ecologist, to ensure that no nesting birds would be disturbed.

Badgers and their setts are afforded legislative protection. It would be unlawful to disturb a badger sett, particularly by blocking entrances whilst the badgers are using a sett or are likely to return to it at any time during the year. There were, however, no signs of badger activity within the site on the 10th July or during previous site surveys.

The only other specific legislation or regulations referred to in this report are the Hedgerow Regulations 1997. The northern boundary hedge is dominated by native trees and shrubs and is a Biodiversity Action Plan feature. It is, however, not sufficiently species-rich to be considered as 'important', within the meanings set out in the Hedgerow Regulations. This hedge lies outside the boundary of the Growen Estates enclosure.

4 Biodiversity and ecological survey methodology

4.1 The Devon Biodiversity Records Centre has not been commissioned to provide a data search, since the site has been surveyed by the author on two previous occasions, it is very straightforward and the only features with ecological and habitat value are the hedges, particularly the northern hedge. No part of the site has been designated or defined for its wildlife value.

4.2 To the best of the his knowledge, no other ecological surveys have been carried out, or reports written up about this site, other than by the author, in 2010 and 2013, in order to identify its ecological value.

4.3 Recognised extended Preliminary Ecological Appraisal methods were used to carry out the site survey on the 16th June 2017. The sky was clear and sunny, with occasional cloud and the temperature was warm. The site's suitability for use by protected species was scoped, but it was not possible to carry out detailed bat, dormouse, breeding bird, reptile and amphibian surveys on that occasion. The need for any specific surveys, if any, will be addressed in **Sections 5.5** and **Section 6** of this report.

An extended Phase 1 habitat survey was carried out, using techniques set out within JNCC's Manual *Handbook for Phase 1 Habitat Survey a technique for environmental audit* (2010). Vegetation types and topographic features have been mapped on the basis of habitat definitions and colour codes (Berol Verithin) as set out within the Manual.

4.4 This PEA report is based on a format devised by the Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management, for the presentation of findings of Ecological Appraisals and similar surveys.

4.5 Other than the fact that full bat, dormouse, breeding bird, reptile and amphibian surveys could not be carried out during the site survey visit on the 16th June, there were no limitations on survey efficacy for the site's botany or for scoping its potential as a habitat for protected animal species.

5 Ecological conditions, habitats and species

5.1 The majority of the 3.14 ha field has been cultivated to produce a crop of silage maize. Some areas a the eastern end of the site are covered with ballast or bare ground with ruderal weeds as shown in images 0374 & 0396. The northern boundary hedge is an old farm boundary that lies outside the site. The hedge that separates the site from the **A3015** is made up a combination of native and exotic trees and shrubs. The whole of this hedge has been trimmed back to a box shape. There are no trees within the field, but numerous semi-mature common elms and one oak tree grow in the northern hedge.

It has been concluded, as a result of this and previous surveys, is that the ecological value of the arable field and its narrow margins is very limited. The mitigation that would need to be provided, were the proposed development to be permitted, would serve to enhance the habitat value of site as a whole (see **Section 7**).

5.2 It is understood that it is the owner's intention is to develop a range of retail outlets within the site.

5.3 The field is located within the eastern outskirts of Exeter and all of the land that surrounds the site has now been developed. It is considered that development would have no adverse impact on any sites that have been designated or defined for their wildlife value. Retail outlets would not generate any recreational use and possible impact on the Exe Estuary SSSI or the East Devon Pebblebed Commons SAC. By the same token, development of the site would have no deleterious impacts on county wildlife sites or unconfirmed wildlife sites. The site can no longer be considered to be part of any green corridor that would provide a connecting link for wildlife, due to development that now surrounds it.

5.4 Habitats within the site are described in greater detail in **Sections 5.5.7 – 5.5.10**, to follow.

5.5 Plants, animals and impacts on them

5.5.1 Breeding birds There was evidence or any territorial behaviour that indicated nesting activity by any birds on the 10th July. It is possible that wood pigeons may have been nesting in the hedge that forms the northern boundary of the field. Elm hedges are likely to be less attractive to nesting birds than, for example thorn hedges, because of the way in which the branches grow. It can, however, be anticipated that other bird species, like blackbirds and wrens will nest in the northern hedge and in scrub that grows on the railway embankment that lies beyond the western boundary. Removal of all or part of the southern hedge is likely to be necessary, either to provide access into the site or a new road frontage. Any hedge removals that have to be carried out during any part of the nesting season 1st March – 31st August would need to be overseen by a suitably qualified ecologist, to ensure that no nesting birds would be disturbed.

5.5.2 Bats There are no buildings or trees within the site that would offer bat roosts. Maize is an exotic grass, which is pollinated by wind or rain splash and is therefore unattractive to native insects. The site is therefore likely to be unattractive to foraging bats. The northern hedge, which contains semi-mature trees offers the best foraging opportunities. The same may also apply to the mature birch, sycamore and sallow bushes that grow on the top of the railway embankment.

The Meteorological Office commissioned a detailed bat survey, which was carried out in 2011. This concluded that the preferred foraging areas with the Met Office grounds were around the ponds, the wildflower meadow and the damp hollow on the eastern side of the site. The western perimeter was chosen for recording on seven occasions, because hedges are often used as commuting corridors between roosts and foraging sites. It became evident from the results of the surveys carried out that virtually no records of foraging bats were made near western perimeter, which is close to the Honiton Road site.

5.5.3 Dormice The site is totally isolated from any woodlands or hedges that might hold a breeding population of dormice and connectivity to large blocks of woodlands is non-existent. There is a lack of suitable vegetation within the site, of the type that could provide these rodents with both cover and sources of food. There are no records of dormice having been observed within the vicinity of the site. It is concluded that this site is unsuitable for dormice.

5.5.4 Badgers The author looked for evidence of badger activity on the site, but no tracks, snuffle holes or dung pits were recorded. Badgers are able to live in urban areas and they a noted as being attracted to ripening maize cobs. It is recommended that the edges of the field near the railway line should be scoped in the early autumn, to identify any signs of badger activity. There are, however, no sett within the site.

5.5.5 Reptiles and amphibians This site is totally unsuitable of reptiles or amphibians, given the way in which it has been cultivated for many years. There is no standing water on the site that might be attractive to breeding amphibians. The site may be in a great crested newt consultation zone, but these zones cover large areas. Most of the land in these zones does not, however, provide habitats that would be attractive to these newts.

5.5.6 Notable and protected invertebrates No notable or protected invertebrates were recorded during the site survey. Meadow brown, gatekeeper and peacock butterflies were recorded, but these are common species, whose larva feed on a range of grasses and nettles.

5.5.7 Herbaceous site vegetation The site has very little vegetation outside the hedges and the area of scrub that lies between the western end of the site and the railway line. There is a very thin strip of highly disturbed grassland running between the base of the northern hedge and the edge of the cultivation, but this is of limited ecological value. Weld and bugloss were recorded as abundant in disturbed areas at the eastern end of the site. Ragwort, common mallow, annual nettle, greater mullein, scarlet pimpernel, scentless mayweed, sow thistle, creeping and spear thistles and hard rush were also recorded in areas that had been disturbed. Stinging nettles, red campion, cow parsley, burdock, woody nightshade, hogweed, arum lily, ground ivy, germander speedwell, self heal, cleavers, creeping buttercup and common mouse-ear were noted along the southern side of the hedge. Ivy is abundant within the hedge. All these plants are common.

5.5.8 Shrubs and hedges The most valuable hedge, in ecological and landscape terms, runs along the northern boundary. It consists of 280 metres of elm hedge with small amounts of hawthorn and dogrose. There is one semi-mature oak tree in the hedge. There are numerous elm suckers growing out on the field side of the hedge. The stems of elm (*Ulmus procera*) are very susceptible to die-back when they have grown to a diameter of > 25 cms. The hedge lies outside the boundary of the site that is the subject of this report

Half of the 210 metres of hedge that defines the southern edge of the field is made up of cherry laurel with some hazel, field maple and exotic white dogwood (*Cornus alba*). The other half was planted with native trees and shrubs like ash, field maple, hazel, hawthorn, blackthorn, dogrose and common dogwood The whole hedge has been trimmed back to a box shape.

The ecological value of these hedges is limited, though the northern hedge also has some landscape value as a screen. Its screening value is likely to be ephemeral due to the continuing susceptibility of the young elms to fungal disease.

5.5.9 Trees There are no trees within the site. One sycamore, one birch and a group of sallows grow on the boundary between the field and the railway line. The northern hedge is made up almost exclusively of young common elms and there is one oak tree in this hedge.

5.5.10 Streams, ponds and wetlands There are no streams, ponds or wetlands within this site.

5.5.11 Biodiversity Action Plan species The author was unable to identify any biodiversity action plan features within the field, other than the northern hedge which is a BAP feature.

6 Recommendations for additional survey work

6.1 It was the author's professional opinion that it will not be necessary to carry out any additional surveys, since this has been the third occasion on which the author has carried out ecological surveys of this site. Habitat conditions and ecological opportunities have remained virtually unchanged. Its overall habitat value is low and not further surveys would be justifiable. The one exception would be a survey in the early autumn to determine whether badgers are attracted to ripening maize cobs in the site.

6.2 The site has been scoped carefully, to identify features of ecological interest within it. So long as:-

- No more hedges are removed than is absolutely necessary
- The northern hedge is retained and then managed appropriately

Then, the proposed development would have a very limited ecological impact.

It is considered that sufficient is known about the site's ecological value, to inform a draft mitigation strategy that would enhance the biodiversity value of the site. This mitigation strategy can, however, only be indicative and 'in principle' until a final site layout and landscape proposals have been drafted. The City Council would probably condition the production of a Wildlife Management Plan or a LEMP

7 Assessment of effects, biodiversity conclusions, including ecological constraints, mitigation and enhancement

7.1 The author considers that there are no significant ecological constraints that would prevent the developer's proposal to construct business premises or light industrial units within the site, which it totally surrounded by other development. However, the overall impact of the proposal to develop the site cannot be assessed until layout and landscape plans have been drawn up.

7.2 The survey has indicated that there are no roosting opportunities for bats within any part of the site that would be developed. Foraging is likely to be limited by a lack of suitable vegetation, being largely restricted to boundary features, particularly the northern hedge. Light-spill onto hedges is unlikely to be an issue within this particular site. Any security or road lighting should be conditioned, to keep light-spill to an absolute minimum.

7.3 The amount of mitigation that is actually needed to compensate for habitat losses is limited by the nature of the vegetation that grows within site. However:-

> Local Authorities have a duty to maintain and enhance biodiversity within developments they permit. Local Planning Authorities will seek to produce a net gain in biodiversity by requiring developers to design wildlife into their plans and to ensure that any unavoidable impacts are appropriately mitigated for.

7.4 The Indicative Site Layout will need to show the extent to which boundary hedges would be retained. The northern hedge is a BAP feature. It is recommended that the layout should show the planting of a new native species hedge between the site and the grounds of the adjoining hotel.

7.6 Given the fact that there are a) few bat records for this area and b) that the site is now surrounded development on all sides, it is recommended that it would not be necessary for provision to be made for bat roosts on any of the business premises or industrial units.

7.7 It is, however, recommended that a range of ten open-fronted and hole bird nest boxes should be installed on buildings that are located on the northern side of the site.

7.8 The greatest biodiversity gain is likely to be made in any green open spaces and landscaped areas within proposed development.

7.9 A limited amount of monitoring during the construction period and post-construction monitoring of the developments within the site would be desirable. Ideally, a suitably qualified ecologist who also has some landscape design experience should carry out such monitoring during planting, in conjunction with a landscape architect. The primary purpose of ecological site supervision would be to make sure that provision of nest boxes, tree and shrub planting, creation of green open spaces and other forms of mitigation provision are carried out in accordance within the recommendations provided within the landscape plan or a LEMP.

8 Overall conclusions

8.1 It will not be possible to identify the impacts of the proposed development, until an indicative layout had been drawn that would show features like retention of hedges, creation of green open spaces and landscape plantings. It is recommended that the layout should show the planting of a new native species hedge between the site and the grounds of the adjoining hotel.

8.2 The extended Phase 1 habitat survey and scoping has shown that the habitat value of the arable field and its narrow margins is limited. The northern hedge is of landscape and habitat value, but it lies outside the boundary of the site to which this report refers. Given appropriate mitigation, which would include enhancement of the site boundaries and the creation of green open spaces, there are no ecological reasons that should prevent the construction of a range of retail premises within this urban site.

8.2 Ecological losses would be insignificant, if the site is developed as proposed. Landscape plantings should ideally combine native tree and shrubs and exotic species, which have a proven valued to wildlife – for example sources of nectar and pollen. It is recommended that a landscape plan for the development site should incorporate provisions specifically designed to create and enhance habitats for wildlife. It is further recommended that the ecological element would be based on an expanded version of **Section 7** above or in a Landscape and Ecological Management Plan (LEMP).

9 References

HMSO Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 – as amended

HMSO The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010 - as amended

HMSO Habitats Directive (92/43/EC)

HMSO Protection of Badgers Act 1992

HMSO Hedgerow Regulations 1997

Gov. UK The National Planning and Policies Framework 2012

HMSO Government Circular (ODPM 06/2005 & DEFRA 01/2005) *Biodiversity and Geological Conservation – Statutory Obligations and Their Impact within the Planning System*

CIEEM *Guidelines for Ecological Report Writing* Technical Guidance Series (2016)
Appendix A *Model format for Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA)*

British Standards Institution (2013) *BS42020 Biodiversity – A code of practice for planning and development*

Andrew Salisbury *et al* (August 2015). *Enhancing gardens as habitats for flower-visiting aerial insects (pollinators): should we plant native or exotic species ?.* Journal of Applied Ecology

10 Appendices (provided as 5 separate files and not as an integral part of the Ecological Assessment)

1 Digital Images

2 Phase 1 Habitat map & legend

3 Wildlife Checklists

Honiton Road 3.1
Exeter

0373 10.07.2017

This image shows the access road that leads into the site from the service road that serves the hotel and the metrological office. The hotel was constructed within the eastern part of the same enclosure

0374 10.07.2017

The boundary between the hotel's car park and the western part of the enclosure can be seen in this image. The land to the right of the stoned area is down to a crop of maize. View looking south

Honiton Road 3.2

Exeter

0376 10.07.2017

A line of semi-mature common elms marks the northern boundary of the field. Sadly, the elms become susceptible to elm disease when they reach this height and stem girth. The main stems may die, but the trees regrow from root suckers. The hedge is owned by the landowner to the north

0380 10.07.2017

This image shows that some of the common elms have already been lost, but there is a line of dense elm suckers between the semi-mature trees and the maize crop. If the trees were to be coppiced by the adjoining owner and then maintained as a sided and topped hedge, the elms would not be susceptible to the beetle-born disease

Honiton Road 3.3
Exeter

0389 10.07.2017

This image shows that some of the common elms have already been lost, but there is a line of dense elm suckers between the semi-mature trees and the maize crop. View looking north-eastwards

0388 10.07.2017

Some birch, sycamore and willows grow on a low bank that defines the field's western boundary, with the Exeter to Exmouth rail line in a cutting to the right of the bank. The bank is infested by giant blackberry (*Rubus armeniacus*) – and rabbits

Honiton Road 3.4
Exeter

0390 10.07.2017

The field's western boundary can be seen in this image. Rabbit grazing has created the large bare patch in the maize crop. The rabbits live in burrows in the top of the railway bank. Three butterfly species were recorded along the margins of the field

0392 10.07.2017

The southern edge of the field can be seen in this Image. The hedge that separates the field from the **A3015** is a mixture of native and exotic shrubs and trees. There are very few arable 'weeds' growing among the stems of the maize

Honiton Road 3.5
Exeter

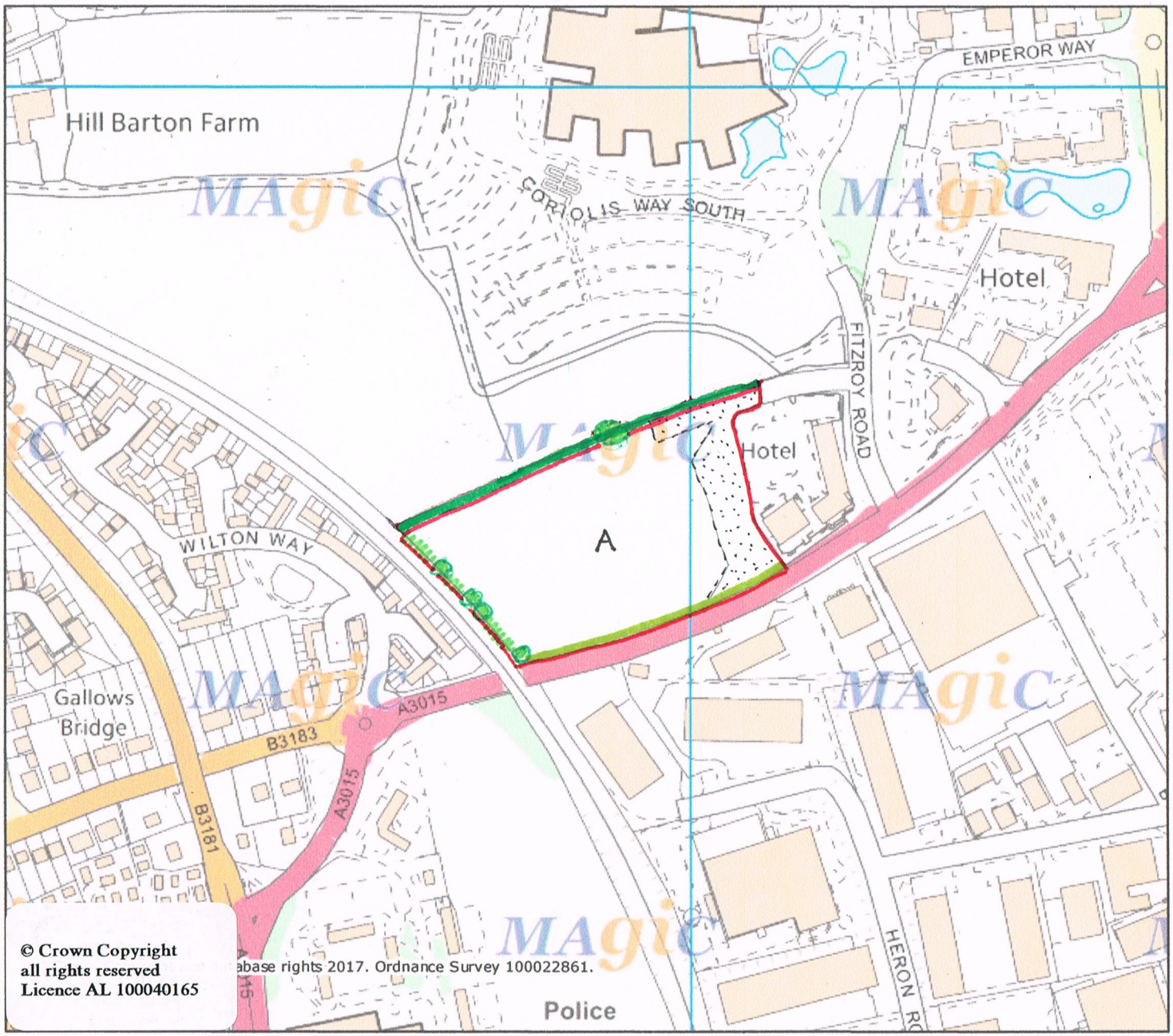
0396 10.07.2017

The south-eastern corner of the field has not been cultivated in 2017 and the ground is poorly-drained. This area is dominated by weld and ragwort, with some spear thistle, greater mullein, hard rush and *Buddleia* seedlings

0397 10.07.2017

This image is a ‘mirror’ of image 0374 on page 1. View looking north. The hotel’s car park is seen to the right of the image

Honiton Road



Honiton Road
Exeter

Phase 1 Habitat Survey

A	Arable
	Bare ground & Ruderal weeds
	Trimmed hedge
	Tall elm hedge
	Individaul trees
	Bramble covered Railway bank
	'Red line'

Peter Beale 29.07.2017

Sunflower International
Ecological Consultancy

Appendix 3

Land adjoining Honiton Road
Plant Habitats & Species Occurrence

Herbaceous site vegetation Virtually the whole site was cultivated to provide a crop of silage maize in 2017. As a result, herbaceous vegetation, other than arable 'weeds', was largely confined to the field margins and the bases of hedges. There is an area of scrub, mainly brambles, between the western end of the site and the railway line. Maize is a wind-pollinated crop, so the plants do not produce nectar or pollen that is attractive to beneficial insects.

Native grasses were limited to a very thin strip of highly disturbed sward made up of annual and perennial meadow grasses, soft grass, couch and false oat-grass. This ruderal sward is of limited ecological value. Weld and bugloss were recorded as abundant in disturbed areas at the eastern end of the site. Ragwort, common mallow, annual nettle, greater mullein, scarlet pimpernel, scentless mayweed, sow thistle, creeping and spear thistles and hard rush were also recorded in areas that had been disturbed, but not cultivated in 2017. Effective weed control within the cropped area resulted in only occasional arable weeds. None of these are notable or threatened.

Stinging nettles, red campion, cow parsley, burdock, woody nightshade, hogweed, arum lily, ground ivy, germander speedwell, self heal, cleavers, creeping buttercup and common mouse-ear were noted along the southern side of the northern hedge. Ivy is also abundant within this hedge. All these plants are common.

Shrubs and hedges The most valuable hedge, in ecological and landscape terms, runs along the northern boundary. It consists of 280 metres of common elm hedge with small amounts of hawthorn and dogrose. There is one semi-mature oak tree in the hedge. There are numerous elm suckers growing out on the southern side of the hedge. The stems of elm (*Ulmus procera*) are very susceptible to die-back when they have grown to a diameter of > 25 cms. It is important to note that this hedge lies outside the boundary of the site that is the subject of this report

The western half of the 210 metres of hedge that defines the southern edge of the field are made up of cherry laurel with some hazel, field maple and exotic white dogwood (*Cornus alba*). The eastern half was planted with native trees and shrubs like ash, field maple, hazel, hawthorn, blackthorn, dogrose and common dogwood The whole hedge has been trimmed back to a box shape. Part of the eastern end of the hedge was removed when the adjoining hotel was constructed.

The ecological value of these hedges is limited, though the northern hedge that lies outside the site also has some landscape value as a screen. Its screening value is, however, likely to be ephemeral due to the continuing susceptibility of the young elms to fungal disease.

Trees There are no trees within the site. One sycamore, one birch and a group of sallows grow on the boundary between the field and the railway line. The northern hedge is made up almost exclusively of young common elms and there is one oak tree in this hedge.

Peter Beale 15.06.2017

Wildlife Checklist (for front of Wildlife Report.)

A.1 Protected and priority species (relates to question 13a in the planning application form).

A tick or cross must be placed in all boxes in column two and then, where there is a tick, all other boxes in that row. The final column only needs to be filled in where this clarifies the location of a species on a large site e.g. location of a great crested newt pond or bat roost. Where species are present this information will be sent to Devon Biodiversity Records Centre.

Location: Honiton Road EXETER **Grid reference for centre of site (6 digit): SX 959 927** **Planning Application reference:**

Name of surveyor: Peter Beale **Year that surveys carried out: 2017**

Species - terrestrial, intertidal, marine	**Walkover shows that suitable habitat present?** Tick or cross	**Detailed Survey needed?**	**Detailed survey carried out and included ?**	**Species Present or Assumed to be present on site** Indicate with P or A and name the species	**Impact on species?**	**Detailed Conservation Action Statement included?** Sets out actions needed in relation to avoidance / mitigation / compensation / enhancement	**NE licence required?**	**Grid reference for specific location of species (if required for large sites)**
Bats (roost)	No							
Bats (flight line / foraging habitat)	Poor	No						
Dormice	No							
Otters	No							
Great crested newts *(*check consultation zone)*	No							
Cirl buntings (check consultation zone*)**	No							
Barn owls	No							
Other Schedule 1 birds	No							
Breeding birds	Wood pigeon	No						
Reptiles	No							
Native crayfish	No							
Water voles	No							
Badgers	No							
Other protected species e.g. tentacled lagoon worm, native oyster, seahorse, fan mussels	No							
Species of principal importance	No							
Invasive species	No							

- **for information on Devon consultation zones for cirl buntings and great crested newts go to http://www.devon.gov.uk/index/environmentplanning/natural_environment/wildlife/linksfurtherinformation.htm**

A.2 Designations / important habitats / sites of geological importance (relates to questions 13 b & c in the planning application form)

A tick or cross must be placed in all boxes in column two and then, where there is a tick, all other boxes in that row.

Designation **Terrestrial, intertidal, marine**	**Within site or potential impact.** Tick or cross	**Name of site / habitat**	**Detailed Conservation Action Statement included in report ?**	**Relevant organisation consulted & response included in the application?**
Statutory designations				
European designations - Special Area of Conservation (SAC), Special Protection Area (SPA) and RAMSAR site or within Greater Horseshoe consultation zone	No			Natural England
Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs)	No			Natural England
Marine Conservation Zone (MCZ) (*not before 2012)*	No			
Local Nature Reserve (LNR)	No			Relevant Local Authority -
Non statutory wildlife designations				
County Wildlife Site (CWS)	No			
Ancient woodland	No			
Special Verge	No			Devon County Council -
Habitat of Principal Importance / BAP habitat	No			
Local Biodiversity Network (mapped by Devon Wildlife Trust / through Green Infrastructure work)	No			
Non statutory geological designation				
County Geological Site (CGS or RIGS)	No			Devon RIGS group -

Do you need to submit a Wildlife or Geology Report with your planning application?

Please remember that anyone causing a wildlife offence (e.g. destruction of a bat roost) can be prosecuted, irrespective of the planning process. Remember to schedule works to ensure no disturbance to protected species, including nesting birds.

If you are a householder please fill in Part A only below. All other applicants should fill in Parts A and B. The completed table must be included with your application.

If there is a tick in the 'yes' column for Part A you must include a **Wildlife Report** with your application. If there is a tick in the 'yes' column for Part B you must include a **Geology Report** with your application. Both reports must be produced by someone with suitable qualifications and experience.

For further information on the Reports, including a list of consultants, go to www.devon.gov.uk/wildlife

Wildlife and Geology Trigger Table

PART A - TRIGGERS FOR A WILDLIFE REPORT	**Yes**	**No**	**Office use**
1. The application proposal: Honiton Road EXTER SX 959 927			
i. Involves demolition of a building.		**No**	
ii. Involves works to a roof, roof space, weather boarding or hanging tiles e.g. loft conversion, roof raising, extensions.		**No**	
iii. Involves works to a quarry or built structures such as bridges, viaducts, aqueducts, tunnels, mines, kilns, ice houses, military fortifications, air raid shelters, cellars and similar underground ducts and structures.		**No**	
iv. Involves the development of (a) wind turbine(s), including domestic turbines.		**No**	
v. Will illuminate / cause light spill onto, a church, listed building, woodland, field hedge, pasture, watercourse, water body, tree line or a known bat roost.		**No**	
vi. Impacts on a watercourse, intertidal area or standing open water (e.g. ponds, reedbeds) excluding ornamental garden ponds.		**No**	
vii. Removes, or moves, part / all of a native Devon hedge or line of trees (excluding domestic hedges unless > 10m being removed).	**Yes**		
viii. Is within, or may impact on (including impacts on hydrology), a woodland or a substantial area of scrub connected to a woodland or hedge.		**No**	
ix. Involves surgery to or felling of a mature tree with obvious holes, cracks or cavities, dense ivy, deadwood, bird / bat box (i.e features which may be a bat roost).		**No**	

x Involves removal of tussocky (rough) grassland, wet grassland, flower rich grassland or heathland		**No**	
xi. ***** Householders do not need to answer this question. Is within or immediately adjacent to a designated wildlife site (Special Areas of Conservation, Special Protection Area, Sites of Special Scientific Interest, County Wildlife Site, Local Nature Reserve, Special Verge).		**No**	
xii. ***** Householders do not need to answer this question. Involves lighting or removal of a tree line, woodland, hedges, pasture within a Greater Horseshoe Bat consultation zone *(please ask the LPA during pre-ap discussions).*		**No**	
xiii. Householders do not need to answer this question. Site is known to support an invasive species such as Japanese Knotweed. *For more information see www.devon.gov.uk/japanese_knotweed.htm.*		**No**	
PART B – TRIGGER FOR A GEOLOGICAL REPORT - non householders only	**Yes**	**No**	**Office Use**
1. * Application impacts on a geological Site of Special Scientific Interest or County Geological Site (RIGS)		**No**	

* = to find out if your site is in or near a designated site look on http://gis.devon.gov.uk/basedata/viewer.asp?DCCService=greeninfra, or ask the LPA or Devon Biodiversity Records Centre www.dbrc.org.uk (inc. a small charge). For County Geological Sites (RIGS) see also www.devonrigs.org.uk/07DevonSites.html