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Please note—all lodges would be clad with wood and have anthracite door and windows frames and have afoot print of 12.2 m x 6.2 m to suit the approved planning permission





LADYCROSS PLANTATION CARAVAN PARK 2022.

OS REF: NZ 817 080.

PRELIMINARY ECOLOGICAL APPRAISAL.

Ref No:

220282.

Date:

8th March 2022.

NYMNPA

27/07/2022

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1. INTRODUCTION.

1.1. It is proposed to extend an existing caravan/holiday park near Egton, Whitby. This will involve the creation of some new static caravan plots and the construction of new holiday lodges throughout some areas of woodland.

1.2. Whitcher Wildlife Ltd was commissioned to undertake a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal of some of the land on the site during January 2021. Since then, the proposals have been changed slightly to minimise the impacts. Whitcher Wildlife Ltd was therefore commissioned to carry out a repeat Preliminary Ecological Appraisal of the site to include the new area to establish whether there are any issues that may affect the proposed works.

1.3. The repeat survey was carried out on 28th March 2022 and this report outlines the findings of that survey and makes appropriate recommendations.

1.4. Appendices I to III of this report provides additional information on specific species and are designed to assist the reader in understanding the contents of this report.

2. SURVEY METHODOLOGY.

2.1. Prior to visiting the site, the survey area was cross referenced to maps and aerial photographs to give a general idea of the habitats and potential issues within the area and to identify potential access and walking routes.

2.2. The survey area was walked where access was agreed and public rights of way were used where no access was agreed. All habitats within and immediately around the survey area were documented and the dominant species within that habitat listed in line with the JNCC Handbook for Phase 1 Habitat surveys.

2.3. The survey area and immediate surrounding area was thoroughly searched for evidence of badger (*Meles meles*) activity by looking for the following signs in line with Harris S, Cresswell P and Jefferies D (1989). *Surveying Badgers*. Mammal Society: -

- * Badger setts.
- * Badger latrines or dung pits.
- * Badger snuffle holes and evidence of foraging.
- * Badger paths.
- * Badger prints in areas of soft mud.
- * Badger hairs caught on fencing.

2.3. The survey area was searched for watercourses and where found all watercourses within the survey area and for approximately 100m in each direction were thoroughly searched for evidence of water vole (*Arvicola amphibius*) activity by looking for the following signs, in line with Dean M, Strachen R, Gow D and Andres R (2016). *The Water Vole Mitigation Handbook (The Mammal Society Mitigation Guidance Series).* Eds Fiona Mathews and Paul Chanin. The mammal Society, London: -

- * Water vole burrows.
- * Water vole faeces and latrines.
- * Water vole feeding stations.
- * Water vole runs.
- * Water vole prints in areas of soft mud.
- * Water vole lawns.
- * Predator field signs.

2.5. The survey area was searched for watercourses and where found all watercourses within the survey area and for approximately 50m in each direction were thoroughly searched for evidence of otter (*Lutra lutra*) activity by looking for the following signs in line with the P Chanin (2003). *Monitoring the Otter* and *Conserving Natura 2000 Rivers: Monitoring Series No10 Guidelines:* -

- * Otter prints in soft mud.
- * Otter spraints.
- * Otter Holts.

2.6. The survey area was searched for watercourses and waterbodies. Where found, and where safe to enter the water, all were thoroughly searched for the presence of crayfish, for approximately 50m in each direction of the site, by searching under rocks and logs. Where stated, crayfish traps were also deployed into the watercourse. All survey work was carried out in accordance with the *Conserving Natural 2000 Rivers Monitoring Series No 1, Protocol for Monitoring the White Clawed Crayfish*.

2.7. The survey area was searched for trees and structures and where found these were checked for potential bat roosting sites in line with Collins, J. (ed.) (2016) *Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines (3rd edition)* by looking for the following signs: -

- * Holes, cracks or crevices.
- * Bat Droppings.

2.8. The land immediately adjacent to the survey area was assessed for bat roosting potential and bat foraging potential. Connective routes and flight lines were also assessed whilst on site and using maps of the area.

2.9. The area within 500m of the survey site was cross referenced to maps to highlight all ponds close to the site. Where possible, all ponds identified were accessed using agreed access or public rights of way to assess the potential for great crested newts (*Triturus cristatus*) to be present.

2.10. The survey area was assessed for the potential for reptiles and suitable reptile habitats. Where applicable the area was also searched for the presence of reptiles.

2.11. Where appropriate, the habitat within and surrounding the survey area was searched for species such as hazel, oak, honeysuckle, bramble and other species which may provide potential habitat for hazel dormice (*Muscardinus avellanarius*). Field signs such as feeding remains and nests were also searched for where possible,

in line with P Bright, P Morris and T Mitchell-Jones *The Dormouse Conservation Handbook 2nd Edition*.

2.12. Where appropriate, the area within and surrounding the survey area was assessed for its potential to house habitat for red squirrels. Field signs of red squirrels were searched for at least every 50m, looking for any dreys, feeding signs or sightings of red squirrels.

2.13. All surveys were carried out in line with the Chartered Institute of Ecological and Environmental Management (CIEEM) survey standards and advice.

2.14. This document is prepared in line with The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). This sets out the government policy on biodiversity and nature conservation and places a duty on Planning Authorities to give material consideration to the effect of a development on legally protected species when considering planning applications. The NPPF and the Planning Practice Guidance on "Natural Environment" also promote sustainable development by ensuring that developments take account of the role and value of biodiversity and that it is conserved and enhanced within the development.

2.15. This report is prepared in line with the Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act that came into force on 1st Oct 2006. Section 41 (S41) of the Act requires the Secretary of State to publish a list of habitats and species which are of principal importance for the conservation of biodiversity in England.

2.16. This survey was carried out by Ruth Georgiou BSc MCIEEM. Since 2004 Ruth has had experience in a professional capacity as a Wildlife Consultant carrying out ecology surveys and phase I habitat surveys. As a full member of CIEEM Ruth is subject to peer review on an annual basis. Ruth holds Natural England survey licences in respect of bats, great crested newts and white clawed crayfish and has held her own or has been named ecologist on site specific licences for badgers, great crested newts and bats. She also holds a degree in Environmental Science (BSc) and has successfully completed a number of courses run by CIEEM, BCT and FSC in the relative protected species, carrying out phase I habitat surveys and BREEAM assessments.

3. SURVEY RESULTS.

3.1. Data Search Results.

3.1.1. A data search request was submitted to the North and East Yorkshire Ecological Data Centre for records of protected species or designated sites within 2km of the survey area.

3.1.2. The results show there are records of various flowering plant, coniferous tree and ferns within the 2km radius. There are some bird, fish, bat and otter records close to the 2km buffer. None of these records are relevant to the survey area.

3.1.3. The results also show that the survey area lies within the North Yorkshire Moors National Park. There are no other designated sites within 2km.

3.1.4. A full copy of the data search results can be provided upon request but must not be placed in the public domain.

3.2. The Surveyed Area.

3.2.1. The survey area is located in a rural area surrounded by woodland, heathland, arable and grazing fields with a main road to the north and a minor road to the east.

3.2.2. The aerial map below shows the location of the survey area, circled in red, and the surrounding area.



3.2.3. The survey area comprises areas of woodland, part of the caravan park with existing caravan plots and a proposed access route.



3.2.4. The limits of the survey area are outlined in red in the aerial map below.

3.3. Description of Habitats.

3.3.1. Appendix IV of this report contains annotated maps marked up with the varying habitats that are cross referenced to target notes in Appendix V of this report. The habitats on and adjacent to the site are: -

- Mixed Semi-natural Woodland.
- Coniferous Semi-natural Woodland.
- Bare Ground.
- Improved Grassland.
- Building.
- Standing Water.
- Running Water.
- Dry Ditch.
- Species Poor Hedgerow.
- Fence.

3.3.2. Mixed Semi-natural Woodland (W1).



There is one area of mixed semi natural woodland where the static caravan plots will be constructed, that has a mix of scots pine (*Pinus sylvestris*) with some silver birch (*Betula pendula*) and the occasional species such as holly (*Ilex aquifolium*) and oak (*Quercus sp*). The ground flora comprises bramble (*Rubus fruticosus*) and some tufted hair grass (*Deschampsia cespitosa*).

3.3.3. Coniferous Semi-natural Woodland (W2 & W3).



3.3.3.1. The new holiday cabins will be constructed within this habitat and the proposed access to the static caravan plots extends through a section of coniferous woodland (W2). There are also some pockets of coniferous woodland in and amongst the existing areas of campsite (W3).

3.3.3.2. All these areas of woodland are predominantly scots pine (*Pinus sylvestris*) throughout, with some very occasional silver birch (*Betula pendula*).

3.3.3.3. The ground flora throughout these areas of woodland include tufted hair grass (*Deschampsia cespitosa*), common heather (*Calluna vulgaris*), bramble (*Rubus fruticosus*) and the occasional holly (*Ilex aquifolium*) and bracken (*Pteridium sp*) were also identified.

3.3.3.4. There is a network of ditches throughout this woodland. It was not possible to map these due to the complexity of the layout of them. They are predominantly dry and any wet sections of ditch are isolated short sections of very shallow water. The vegetation throughout these channels is a continuity of the woodland ground flora. One section of dry ditch is shown in the photograph below.



3.3.4. Bare Ground.





This habitat has been mapped where there are existing access roads around the caravan park and existing vehicle access tracks leading to the site. It also includes three concrete pads that have been constructed for the siting of new holiday lodges.

3.3.5. Improved Grassland.



There are some areas of improved grassland in the existing caravan park area where some touring caravans have been sited and around some new holiday lodges and concrete pads that have been constructed for new holiday lodges. This grassland is regularly mown and disturbed. It comprises predominantly perennial ryegrass (*Lolium perenne*), fescue (*Festuca sp*) and daisy (*Bellis perennis*).

3.3.6. Building.

There are some buildings within the survey area, which include a large shed and two holiday lodges. The holiday lodges will remain in situ. The large shed will be removed to facilitate the new holiday lodges.

3.3.7. Standing Water.

There is one area of standing water on the site. This is a medium sized pond located at the western end of the mixed woodland habitat. The water is stagnant with dead wood and leaves in the pond and there is duck weed growing across the surface.

