# HAYES BRIDGE RETAIL PARK

## Preliminary Ecological Appraisal

ECO02269
Hayes Bridge Retail Park:
PEA
Final
May 2023

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## Document status

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## Approval for issue

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| Elizabeth White | 25 May 2023 |



Prepared for:

**OXW Hayes Sarl.**

Prepared by:

**RPS**

20 Western Avenue
Milton Park
Abingdon, Oxfordshire OX14 4SH

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

RPS was commissioned by OXW Hayes Sarl. to undertake a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA) of land proposed for redevelopment at Hayes Bridge Retail Park, Uxbridge Road, Hayes. This comprised a desk study, Phase 1 Habitat Survey and an ecological scoping survey which assessed the potential of the site to support species of conservation concern or other species which could present a constraint to the development of the site.

The site was approximately 1 hectare in size and comprised four large commercial retail units and hardstanding (predominantly car parking spaces) with shrub borders, scrub and broadleaved trees.

The proposals for the site include the removal of existing commercial buildings at Hayes Bridge Retail Park, to be replaced by a new commercial unit and office buildings. This will involve the removal and/or alteration of other buildings and existing habitats within the site boundary.

There was one statutory designated site for nature conservation within 2 km of the site: Yeading Meadows Local Nature Reserve (LNR). The closest non-statutory designated site was Yeading Brook, Minet Country Park and Hitherbroom Park Site of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINC) which lay 0.02 km from the site boundary.

The Phase 1 Habitat Survey identified that the site predominantly comprised buildings and hardstanding with areas of introduced shrub, species-poor hedgerows with trees, dense native scrub and scattered broadleaved trees. Yeading Brook, Minet Country Park and Hitherbroom Park SINC ran directly adjacent to the site boundary.

The site and its immediate surroundings provided suitable habitat for breeding birds and low value habitat for foraging and commuting bats.

Mitigation and enhancement measures are recommended to minimise the impact of the proposed development on the adjacent Yeading Brook, Minet Country Park and Hitherbroom Park SINC, nesting birds and bats. Control measures are recommended for cotoneaster species.

In accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (2021) a Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) assessment of the site will be undertaken to assess the habitats on site prior to and post development, to demonstrate how the site will deliver net gain.

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# 1 INTRODUCTION

## 1.1 Purpose and Scope of this Report

1.1.1 RPS was commissioned by OXW Hayes Sarl. to undertake a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA) of land proposed for redevelopment at Hayes Bridge Retail Park, Uxbridge Road, Hayes.

1.1.2 To undertake an initial assessment of the potential ecological impact of the proposals, a desk study, Phase 1 Habitat Survey, and a preliminary protected species assessment were carried out. This is termed as a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal Report (PEAR) in accordance with CIEEM (2017).

1.1.3 The objectives of the PEA were to :

- Undertake a desk-based review of designated sites and records of protected species and other species that could present a constraint;
- Identify, map and assess the habitats present on site;
- Assess the site for potential to support protected species or other species that could present a constraint, and make appropriate recommendations for further survey work if necessary;
- Assess any potential affects the proposed development may have on any designated sites; and
- Provide outline options for mitigation measures as appropriate.

1.1.4 This report pertains to these results only; recommendations included within this report are the professional opinion of an experienced ecologist and therefore the view of RPS.

1.1.5 The surveys and desk-based assessments undertaken as part of this review and subsequent report including the Ecological Appraisal Notes are prepared in accordance with the British Standard for Biodiversity Code of Practice for Planning and Development (BS42020:2013).

## 1.2 Study Area

1.2.1 The site was located at Hayes Bridge Retail Park, Uxbridge Road, Hayes. The site was approximately 1 hectare (ha) in size. The A4020 ran along the Eastern side of the site and the M4 was approximately 1 km south of the site. Yeading Brook, Minet Country Park and Hitherbroom Park Site of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINC) was immediately south of the site (i.e. running parallel to the southern boundary). The National Grid coordinates for the centre of the site are TQ115805.

1.2.2 The site comprised four large commercial retail units and associated hardstanding (predominantly car parking spaces). A planted hedge with trees separated the site from the adjacent Yeading Brook, Minet Country Park and Hitherbroom Park SINC to the south, whilst a second area of planted shrubs and trees separated the site from the adjacent A4020 to the east.

1.2.3 The site was situated within an urban area comprising commercial and industrial land in West London. An area of derelict industrial land lay to the south, whilst one nearby designated site for nature conservation value, Yeading Meadows Local Nature Reserve (LNR) was located to the north west of the site respectively.

1.2.1 The site boundary and other land within the control of the applicant is shown on Figure 1.1.

**Figure 1.1: Site Location Plan**






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## Legend

Site Boundary

| Rev | Description | By | CB | Date |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | |
| | | | | |

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20 Western Avenue, Milton Park, Abingdon, Oxfordshire, OX14 4SH
T: +44(0)1235 821 888 E: rpsox@rpsgroup.com

Client: OXW Hayes Sarl.

Project: Hayes Bridge Retail Park

Title: Site Location Plan

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## 1.3 Development Proposals

1.3.1 The proposals for the site include the removal of existing commercial buildings at Hayes Bridge Retail Park, to be replaced by a new commercial unit and office buildings. This will involve the removal and/or alteration of other buildings and existing habitats within the site boundary .

## 1.4 Legislation and Policy

1.4.1 Relevant legislation, policy guidance and both Local and National Biodiversity Action Plans (BAPs) are referred to throughout this report where appropriate. Their context and application is explained in the relevant sections of this report.

1.4.2 The relevant articles of legislation and guidance are:

- The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF, 2021);
- Hillingdon Local Plan (adopted 2012), policies EM7 and EC2-EC6;
- The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations (Amendment) (EU Exit) 2019;
- The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended);
- The Protection of Badgers Act 1992;
- The Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000;
- The Hedgerow Regulations 1997;
- The Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006; and
- National / Local Biodiversity Action Plan for London.

1.4.3 A summary of legislation relevant to protected or other species identified as potential constraints in this report is provided in Appendix A.

# 2 METHODS

## 2.1 Desk Study

2.1.1 Ecological records within a 2 km radius of the site were requested from Greenspace Information for Greater London (GiGL). Data requests were limited to records for protected species recorded within the last ten years.

2.1.2 This included a review of existing statutory sites of nature conservation interest, such as Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs), Special Protection Areas (SPAs), Special Area of Conservation (SACs) and National Nature Reserves (NNRs), and non-statutory sites, such as SINCs and Local Wildlife Sites (LWSs) within a 2 km radius.

2.1.3 Locations of statutory designated sites were accessed via the government 'MAGIC' website (MagicMap, 2021).

2.1.4 A 1:25,000 OS map was used to identify nearby features such as ponds or green corridors that could be suitable for protected or notable species or provide connectivity to wider areas of suitable habitat off-site.

## 2.2 Ecological Appraisal

2.2.1 The ecological appraisal consisted of two components: a Phase 1 Habitat Survey and a scoping survey for protected species and other species of conservation concern which could present a constraint to development.

2.2.2 The Phase 1 Habitat Survey followed the standard methodology set out by the Joint Nature Conservation Committee (JNCC, 2016), and as described in the Guidelines for Preliminary Ecological Assessment (CIEEM, 2017). In summary, this comprised walking over the survey area and recording the habitat types and boundary features present.

2.2.3 A protected species scoping survey was carried out in conjunction with the Phase 1 Habitat Survey. The site was assessed for its suitability to support protected species, in particular great crested newt (GCN), reptiles, birds, badger, bats, and other species of conservation importance that could pose a planning constraint (including invasive non-native species listed on Schedule 9 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended)).

2.2.4 The surveyors looked for evidence of use including signs such as burrows, droppings, footprints, paths, hairs, refugia and particular habitat types known to be used by certain groups such as ponds. Any mammal paths were also noted down and where possible followed. Fence boundaries were walked to establish any entry points or animals' signs such as latrines. Areas of bare earth were inspected for mammal prints. Areas of habitat considered suitable for protected species or those of conservation interest were recorded.

## 2.3 Phase 1 Habitat Survey

2.3.1 The Phase 1 Habitat Survey was undertaken on 15th September 2021 by Nikki Hulse and Lucinda Clark, both RPS Assistant Ecologists experienced in carrying out such surveys.

2.3.2 Habitats were mapped onto OS base maps using the JNCC Phase 1 Habitat Survey categories. Typical plant species were recorded for each category of habitat and species names followed the nomenclature used in Stace (2010).

2.3.3 Habitats potentially suitable for legally protected and notable species were noted, and any signs of such species (e.g., sightings, tracks, droppings, burrows, etc.) were recorded.

2.3.4 Target Notes were created for any features of interest and are listed in Appendix B.

2.3.5 The Phase 1 Habitat Survey was undertaken in September, which is within the optimal period for this survey type (March to September).

## 2.4 Preliminary Bat Roost Assessment

2.4.1 A ground-level assessment of trees and an external assessment of buildings present within the site boundary was undertaken at the same time as the Phase 1 Habitat Survey.

2.4.2 The surveys comprised ground-based examinations of the trees and buildings in order to:

- Record potential roosting places;
- Assess their suitability for roosting bats; and
- Make recommendations for further bat surveys and mitigation, where required.

2.4.3 The external inspections of the buildings and trees were conducted using binoculars to inspect all areas thought to be suitable for roosting bats. All accessible surfaces were surveyed for signs that indicated bat presence. The suitability of the buildings for roosting bats was assessed by examining structural features.

2.4.4 Structural features that may influence the suitability of a building to support roosting bats include the presence of a roof void, the complexity and size of the roof void, daytime light levels within roof voids and the presence of access points into the building or crevices that provide a roost space (including gaps beneath barge boards, soffits and fascia boards, gaps under lead flashing, gaps within masonry and under loose tiles, ridge-cap tiles gaps, gaps between mortise and tenon joints, window frames, cavity walls, hanging tiles, and cracks in walls).

2.4.5 Trees were assessed as having the potential to support bat roosts if they had features such as holes, cavities, split/broken limbs, trunk hollows, knot holes, flaking bark and woodpecker holes.

2.4.6 When suitable features were identified, they were inspected for signs indicating use or possible use by bats including tiny scratches, staining and flies around the entry points, bat droppings and feeding remains in, around and below entrances, distinctive smell of bats and the smoothing of surfaces around cavities.

2.4.7 The buildings and trees' suitability for roosting bats was also assessed by examining the surrounding habitat. Important habitat features surrounding the structure which may influence bat roost potential include whether the structure is in a semi-rural or parkland location, its proximity to significant linear habitat features such as a watercourse, mature hedgerow, wooded lane, or an area of woodland.

2.4.8 Guidance from the Bat Conservation Trust *Bat Survey: Good Practice Guidelines* (BCT, 2016) on the features of buildings and trees which correlate with their use by bats was considered. Table 2.1 overleaf is taken from the above guidance and describes the category of potential value to roosting bats.

**Table 2.1: Guidelines for assessing the potential suitability of proposed development sites for bats.**

| Suitability | Description of Roosting Habitats | Commuting and foraging habitats |
|---|---|---|
| Negligible | A structure or tree with negligible habitat features on site likely to be used by roosting bats. | Negligible habitat features on site likely to be used by commuting or foraging bats. |
| Low | A structure with one or more potential roost sites that could be used by individual bats opportunistically. However, these potential roost sites do not provide enough features* to be used on a regular basis or by larger number of bats.<br>A tree of sufficient size and age to contain potential roost features but with none seen from the ground or features seen with only very limited roosting potential. | Habitat that could be used by small numbers of commuting bats such as gaps in a hedgerow or un-vegetated stream, but isolated.<br>Suitable but isolated habitat that could be used by small numbers of foraging bats, such as a lone tree (not in a parkland situation) or a patch of scrub. |
| Moderate | A structure or tree with one or more potential roost sites that could be used by bats due to their features* but unlikely to support a roost of high conservation status. | Continuous habitat connected to the wider landscape that could be used by bats for commuting and foraging, such as lines of trees and scrub or linked back gardens, grassland, or water. |
| High | A structure or tree with one or more potential roost sites that are obviously suitable for use by larger numbers of bats on a more regular basis and potentially for longer periods of time due to their features*. | Continuous, high-quality habitat that is well connected to the wider landscape that is likely to be used regularly by commuting and foraging bats, such as river valleys, streams, hedgerows, line of trees, woodland edge, broadleaved woodlands, tree-lined watercourses, and grazed parkland.<br>Site is close to and connected to known roosts. |

*space/size, shelter, protection, conditions, and surrounding habitat.

2.4.9 Preliminary bat roost assessments of trees and buildings can be carried out at any time of year; however, summer surveys are more likely to reveal signs of bat activity.

2.4.10 The locations of the buildings assessed are shown on Figure 3.2.

## 2.5 Limitations

### Desk Based Assessment

2.5.1 The desk study data is third party controlled data, purchased for the purposes of this report only. RPS cannot vouch for its accuracy and cannot be held liable for any error(s) in these data.

### Survey

2.5.2 It should be noted that whilst every effort has been made to provide a comprehensive description of the site, no investigation can ensure the complete characterisation and prediction of the natural environment.

2.5.3 The protected/notable species assessment provides a preliminary view of the likelihood of these species occurring on the site, based on the suitability of the habitat, known distribution of the species

in the local area provided in response to our enquiries and any direct evidence on the site. It should not be taken as providing a full and definitive survey of any protected/notable species group.

2.5.4 The majority of the site was accessible on foot, however the back wall on the south side was fenced off and not accessible. Any areas which were not accessible at the time of the survey were visually scanned using binoculars and an assessment was made using professional judgement.

## Accurate Lifespan of Ecological Data

2.5.5 The majority of ecological data remain valid for only short periods due to the inherently transient nature of the subject. The survey results contained in this report are considered accurate for two years, assuming no significant considerable changes to the site conditions. A verification walkover could be required within this time to identify if the site has changed significantly.

# 3 RESULTS

## 3.1 Designated Sites

3.1.1 There was one statutory designated site for nature conservation value within 5 km of the site, Yeading Meadows LNR which was located 1.18 km from the site.

3.1.2 Fourteen non-statutory designated sites were located within the 2 km search radius of the site. The closest of these was Yeading Brook, Minet Country Park and Hitherbroom Park SINC, located 0.02 km from the site.

3.1.3 A summary of these sites is provided in Table 3.1 below and the location of each site is shown on Figure 3.1.

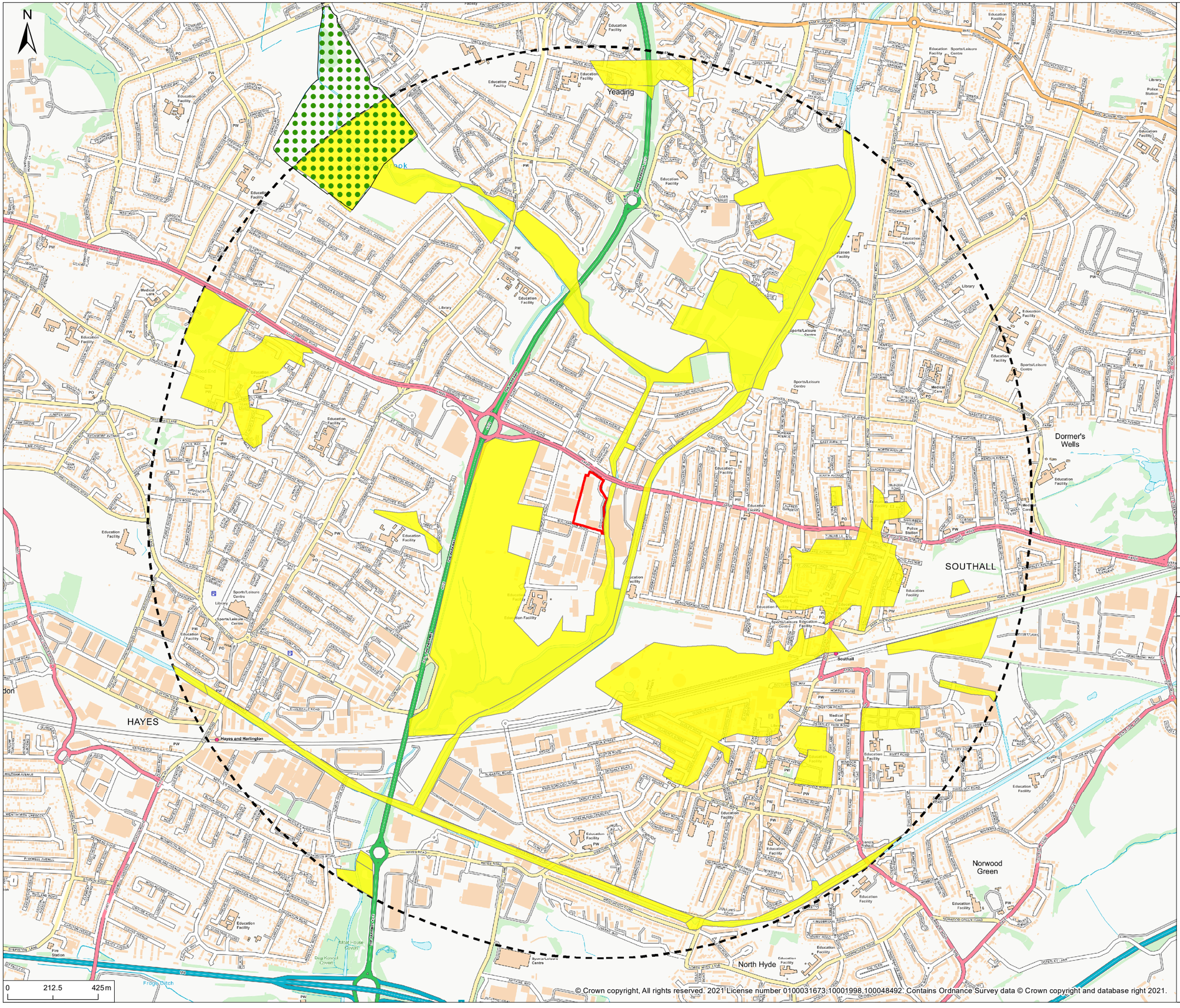
**Table 3.1: Non-statutory designated sites within 2 km of the study area**

| Site name | Type | Approx. area (ha) | Interest Features | Distance from site (km) |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Statutory sites** | | | | |
| Yeading Meadows | LNR | 29.96 | The meadows comprise a wide area of species-rich grassland bordering the shallow Yeading Brook SINC and is located south of Ten Acre Wood. | 1.18 |
| **Non-statutory sites** | | | | |
| Yeading Brook, Minet Country Park and Hitherbroom Park | SINC | 67.86 | Minet Country Park partly comprises mainly of reclaimed derelict land. Much of the country park is recently created rough grassland, with areas of older, more natural meadow with five nationally scarce species of water beetle recorded from seasonal ponds to the north of the site. | 0.02 |
| London's Canals | SINC | 189.66 | London's Canals support a wide range of aquatic flora, amongst which are found a number of locally uncommon species. These include narrow-leaved water plantain *Alisma lanceolatum*, rigid hornwort *Ceratopyllum demersum* and shining pondweed *Potomageton lucens*, all species of clean, clear waters. | 0.14 |
| Willowtree Park | SINC | 32.52 | A mixture of publicly accessible wildlife habitats that include a meadow and wetlands. Areas of lightly grazed horse meadow and areas of grassland dominated by tufted hairgrass *Deschampsia cespitosa*, with interspersed scrub and trees, and, in damper areas, reed canary-grass *Phalaris arundinacea.* | 0.79 |
| Yeading Brook Meadows | SINC | 170.8 | An extensive mosaic of unimproved meadows and pastures divided by hedgerows, on the old floodplain of the Yeading Brook SINC. The grassland varies according to management history and tendency to flooding, although the total flora is extremely diverse. | 1.18 |
| Avenue Road Hedge | SINC | 0.51 | This hedge has been much modified but retains elements that show that it has probably been here for a long time. The hedgerow trees are mainly ash *Fraxinus excelsior*. | 1.29 |
| Cranleigh Park Rough | SINC | 0.14 | Interesting area of developing wasteland vegetation. Crushed glass has been laid down on most of this area recently which has encouraged a diverse range of wasteland plants to colonise. | 1.35 |
| Southall Railsides | SINC | 16.01 | This site includes the rail sides of the Great Western Railway between the Brent River Park North and Southall, along with the goods line going south east from Southall station as far as Three Bridges. Along the tracks themselves there is more ruderal | 1.44 |

| Site name | Type | Approx. area (ha) | Interest Features | Distance from site (km) |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | vegetation than most of the other lines in the borough. | |
| Hortus Cemetery | SINC | 2.64 | Cemetery with nice grassland with abundant populations of some common herbs including yarrow *Achillea millefolium*, common bird's-foot-trefoil *Lotus corniculatus*, and ribwort plantain *Plantago lanceolata.* | 1.49 |
| Lady Margaret Road | SINC | 0.11 | No description provided by data search or online. Given small size it is difficult to identify it from aerial imaging make any inferences on likely habitat. | 1.53 |
| Havelock Cemetery | SINC | 2.24 | Despite the cemetery being in full use and the grass being mown frequently, the grasslands here are very flower rich. Oxeye daisy *Leucanthemum vulgare*, yarrow *Achillea millefolium* and common bird's-foot-trefoil *Lotus corniculatus* are particularly abundant. | 1.53 |
| Southall Park Nature Conservation Area | SINC | 0.33 | Two main habitats occur in this small area of the park, a pond in the south and meadow. The meadow is mown once a year and coarse herbs are competing well with the grasses providing a colourful spectacle and move diversity for invertebrates. | 1.66 |
| St Mary's, Wood End | SINC | 6.8 | A complex of open spaces with a good variety of wildlife habitats providing valuable access to nature in an area lacking in accessible wildlife sites. Habitats include fields, amenity grassland, hedgerows, scrub, a botanic garden, and an artificial pond. | 1.73 |
| Crane Corridor | SINC | 178.05 | For a length of over 5 km, the River Crane is bordered by habitats of remarkable diversity, including woodland, dry pastures, water meadows and areas of open water. Willow-alder woodland occurs in several places, which is a rare habitat in London | 1.85 |

Abbreviations used in Table 3.1: LNR: Local Nature Reserve; SINC: Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation; ha: hectare; km: kilometre

**Figure 3.1: Designated Sites within 2km**





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## Legend

- Site Boundary
- Local Nature Reserve
- Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation

| Rev | Description | By | CB | Date |
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20 Western Avenue, Milton Park, Abingdon, Oxfordshire, OX14 4SH
T: +44(0)1235 821 888 E: rpsox@rpsgroup.com

Client: OXW Hayes Sarl.

Project: Hayes Bridge Retail Park

Title: Designated Sites within 2km

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## 3.2 Species

3.2.1 Records of protected species were obtained from GiGL. A number of species of conservation importance or otherwise notable were recorded within the 2 km search radius of the site. A summary of these records is provided below in Table 3.2.

3.2.2 In order to simplify the results, only records of species from the last 10 years are shown. In addition, only data with a 6 figure grid reference resolution or higher are provided, since locations given at a lower resolution do not allow accurate calculation of distance to the site boundary.

3.2.3 Any species recorded to a lower accuracy have the distances marked with an 'X'.

**Table 3.2: Species records from the last 10 years within 2 km of the site**

| Common name | Scientific name | Nearest distance from site (km) | Year of most recent record | Conservation Status |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Plants** | | | | |
| Greater pond-sedge | *Carex riparia* | 0.45 | 2015 | Local Spp of Cons Conc |
| Dittander | *Lepidium latifolium* | 0.29 | 2015 | NS |
| Rock stonecrop | *Sedum forsterianum* | 1.73 | 2017 | NS |
| Large-leaved lime | *Tilia platyphyllos* | 1.16 | 2020 | NS |
| **Invertebrates - Beetles** | | | | |
| Stag beetle | *Lucanus cervus* | 0.76 | 2020 | NERC S41, UKBAP |
| Black-headed Cardinal Beetle | *Pyrochroa coccinea* | 1.89 | 2017 | Local Spp of Cons Conc |
| **Invertebrates - Butterflies** | | | | |
| Brown argus | *Aricia agestis* | 0.35 | 2019 | NERC S41, UKBAP |
| Small heath | *Coenonympha pamphilus* | 0.35 | 2019 | NERC S41, UKBAP |
| Marbled white | *Melanargia galathea* | 0.35 | 2019 | Local Spp of Cons Conc |
| White-letter Hairstreak | *Satyrium w-album* | 0.61 | 2019 | NERC S41, UKBAP |
| Brown hairstreak | *Thecla betulae* | 0.86 | 2018 | NERC S41, UKBAP |
| **Reptiles** | | | | |
| Slow worm | *Anguis fragilis* | 1.96 | 2012 | WCA5, NERC S41, UKBAP |
| Grass snake | *Natrix helvetica* | 0.8 | 2012 | WCA5, NERC S41, UKBAP |
| **Birds** | | | | |
| Lesser redpoll | *Acanthis cabaret* | 0.58 | 2017 | NERC S41, Red |
| Skylark | *Alauda arvensis* | 0.37 | 2017 | NERC S41, UKBAP, Red |
| Kingfisher | *Alcedo atthis* | 0.45 | 2017 | BDIR, WCA1, Amber |
| Meadow pipit | *Anthus pratensis* | 0.37 | 2017 | Amber |
| Swift | *Apus apus* | 0.37 | 2017 | Amber |
| Stock dove | *Columba oenas* | 0.37 | 2017 | Amber |
| Mute swan | *Cygnus olor* | 0.37 | 2015 | Amber |
| House martin | *Delichon urbicum* | 0.45 | 2014 | Amber |
| Reed bunting | *Emberiza schoeniclus* | 0.37 | 2017 | NERC S41, UKBAP, Amber |
| Kestrel | *Falco tinnunculus* | 0.37 | 2017 | Amber |
| Herring gull | *Larus argentatus* | 0.45 | 2016 | NERC S41, Red |
| Lesser black-backed gull | *Larus fuscus* | 0.37 | 2013 | Amber |
| Linnet | *Linaria cannabina* | 0.37 | 2017 | NERC S41, Red |
| Grasshopper warbler | *Locustella naevia* | 0.45 | 2017 | NERC S41, Red |
| Red kite | *Milvus milvus* | 0.58 | 2019 | BDIR, WCA1 |
| Grey wagtail | *Motacilla cinerea* | 0.45 | 2015 | Red |

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| House sparrow | *Passer domesticus* | 0.41 | 2014 | NERC S41, Red |
| Willow warbler | *Phylloscopus trochilus* | 0.45 | 2017 | Amber |
| Dunnock | *Prunella modularis* | 0.45 | 2014 | NERC S41, Amber |
| Bullfinch | *Pyrrhula pyrrhula* | 0.45 | 2017 | NERC S41, Amber |
| Firecrest | *Regulus ignicapilla* | 0.58 | 2017 | WCA1, |
| Whinchat | *Saxicola rubetra* | 0.45 | 2015 | Red |
| Starling | *Sturnus vulgaris* | 0.37 | 2014 | NERC S41, Red |
| Redwing | *Turdus iliacus* | 0.45 | 2017 | WCA1, Red |
| Song thrush | *Turdus philomelos* | 0.37 | 2017 | NERC S41, UKBAP, Red |
| Fieldfare | *Turdus pilaris* | 0.45 | 2017 | WCA1, Red |
| Mistle thrush | *Turdus viscivorus* | 0.37 | 2017 | Red |
| **Mammals - Bats** | | | | |
| Daubenton's bat | *Myotis daubentonii* | 0.74 | 2014 | EPS, WCA5 |
| Common pipistrelle | *Pipistrellus pipistrellus* | 0.74 | 2016 | EPS, WCA5 |
| Soprano pipistrelle | *Pipistrellus pygmaeus* | 0.74 | 2016 | EPS, WCA5, NERC S41, UKBAP |
| **Mammals - Other** | | | | |
| Hedgehog | *Erinaceus europaeus* | 1.07 | 2020 | NERC S41, UKBAP |

Abbreviations used in Table 3.2: EPS: European Protected Species; WCA1: Wildlife & Countryside Act Schedule 1, part 1; WCA5: Wildlife & Countryside Act Schedule 5; NS: Nationally Scarce; Local Spp of Cons Conc: Local Species of Conservation Concern; NERC S41: Natural Environment & Rural Communities Act Species of Principal Importance; UKBAP: UK Biodiversity Action Plan priority species; BDIR: Birds Directive; Red: Bird Population Status: red; Amber: Bird Population Status: amber.

## Reptiles

3.2.4 Grass snake and slow worm were recorded within the 2 km search area. Grass snake was most recently recorded approximately 1.8 km north west of the site in 2012, whilst slow worm was most recently recorded approximately 2 km north west of the site in 2012.

## Birds

3.2.5 A total of 27 protected or notable bird species potentially relevant to the development were recorded within the 2 km search area. These included four species listed under Annex I of the EC Birds Directive, five species afforded additional protection under Schedule 1 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended), species listed under Section 41 of the NERC Act 2006 and as UK Biodiversity Action Plan (UK BAP) Priority Species, and Birds of Conservation Concern (BoCC) Red and Amber listed species (Eaton *et al.*, 2015).

3.2.6 The majority of these records came from a site approximately 0.4 km from the site boundary, in 2019.

## Mammals (bats)

3.2.7 At least three bat species were recorded within 5 km of the site boundary. A number of other records were provided for bats not identified to species level.

3.2.8 All bat records were for recorded approximately 0.7 km from the site boundary. Daubenton's bat was recorded in 2014. with common and soprano pipistrelle recorded in 2016.

## Mammals (other)

**3.2.9** Hedgehog records were returned within approximately 1 km from the site, in 2020.

## Other Protected and Notable Species

3.2.10 Records for stag beetle, brown argus, small heath, white-letter hairstreak and brown hairstreak butterflies were recorded within 2 km of the site boundary.

3.2.11 There were no invasive, non-native species (i.e. species included on Schedule 9 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended)) recorded within 2 km of the site boundary during the last ten years.

## 3.3 Phase 1 Habitat Survey

3.3.1 The survey results are presented in the form of a map with the habitat types and boundary features marked (Figure 3.2). An explanation of target notes (TN) from Figure 3.2 can be found in Appendix B. Site photographs can be found in Appendix C.

3.3.2 Descriptions of the habitat types and boundary features are detailed below. Habitat descriptions are defined by broad habitat types (JNCC, 2010).

### A2.1 Dense Scrub

3.3.3 An area of dense scrub was present in the south east of the site, with species comprising hawthorn *Crataegus monogyna*, blackthorn *Prunus spinosa* and bramble *Rubus fruticosus*, with scattered trres of semi-mature ash *Fraxinus excelsior,* rowan *Sorbus aucuparia* and cherry *Prunus avium* as described in paragraph 3.3.4 below.

### A3.1 Scattered Broadleaved Trees

3.3.4 Five semi-mature silver birch *Betula pendula* trees were recorded on the site; two on the northern boundary of the site and three located in an area of introduced shrub within the car park (TN1). A semi-mature sycamore *Acer pseudoplatanus* was also present in this area. Three semi-mature cherry trees were identified on the southern boundary of the site (TN2).

3.3.5 A number of semi-mature trees comprising willow *Salix sp.*, cherry and ash were present in a non-native hedgerow present along the eastern boundary of the site.

### J1.4 Introduced shrub

3.3.6 An area of introduced shrub bordered the north of the site, with species including buddleia *Buddleja davidii*, cotoneaster *Cotoneaster spp.,* and box *Buxus spp.*

3.3.7 A smaller area on the north east of the site bordering the entrance to the car park included similar species to that described above, with the addition of cherry plum *Prunus cerasifera*, hawthorn , ivy *Hedera helix*, bramble and semi-mature silver birch.

3.3.8 Small stands of box and cotoneaster were identified throughout the car parking area (TN3).

### J2.3 Hedgerow with trees

3.3.9 A hedgerow measuring approximately 2.5 m high and 2-3 m wide was present directly adjacent to the eastern boundary of the site, acting as a buffer to Yeading Brook, Minet Country Park and Hitherbroom Park SINC. The hedgerow was predominantly common laurel *Prunus laurocerasus*, including occasional semi-mature trees of willow, cherry plum, ash, with buddleia and cotoneaster also present.

3.3.10 A 4 m high hedgerow with trees was present adjacent to the southern boundary of the site with species comprising privet *Ligustrum ovalifolium*, hawthorn, cherry and elder, with box and *Leylandii* shrub.

### J3.6 Buildings

3.3.11 The western section of the site was dominated by a number of large, modern, warehouse-style commercial units, which covered around half the area of the site. The buildings were constructed of concrete, brick and glass with sloping metal fronts and flat roofs, and generally considered to be in good condition.

## J4 Hardstanding

3.3.12 The majority of the site was tarmacked hardstanding, utilised as the car parking area to the front with loading and deliveries to the rear of the site.

3.3.13 The surrounding land around the site boundary was all highly urbanised and an extensive amount of hardstanding was present.

**Figure 3.2: Phase 1 Habitat Plan**






Notes
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## Legend

- Site Boundary
- Target note
- Tree
- Species-poor hedge with trees
- Fence
- Hardstanding
- Building
- Dense scrub
- Introduced shrub

| Rev | Description | By | CB | Date |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | |
| | | | | |

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20 Western Avenue, Milton Park, Abingdon, Oxfordshire, OX14 4SH
T: +44(0)1235 821 888 E: rpsox@rpsgroup.com

Client: OXW Hayes Sarl.

Project: Hayes Bridge Retail Park

Title: Phase 1 Habitat Plan

| Status | Drawn By | PM/Checked By |
|---|---|---|
| DRAFT | MS | NH |
| **Project Number** | **Scale @ A3** | **Date Created** |
| ECO022 6 9 | 1:1,250 | APR 2022 |
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| **3.2** | | - |

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## 3.4 Ecological Scoping Survey

### Plants

3.4.1 Hedgerows and introduced shrub within the site comprised a range of common and widespread species. No priority species listed within the UK BAP or NERC S41 were recorded or are considered likely to have been present.

3.4.2 The overall diversity of the flora recorded during the survey was low and it is considered unlikely that the site would support any protected or notable plant species.

3.4.3 A species of cotoneaster was identified on site, however was not identified to species level. It cannot be proven whether this is a Schedule 9 species under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended). Unless further identification is carried out a precautionary approach should be taken.

### Invertebrates

3.4.4 There was limited suitable habitat on site which had the potential to support invertebrates; hedgerows and introduced shrub within the site were suitable for an assemblage of common and widespread invertebrate species, including many species of butterflies.

### Herpetofauna

#### Amphibians

3.4.5 There were no waterbodies present within the site boundary, however Yeading Brook, Minet Country Park and Hitherbroom Park SINC ran directly adjacent to the site.

3.4.6 The site itself predominantly comprised buildings and large areas of hardstanding which were not considered to provide suitable terrestrial habitat for amphibians, including GCN, due to the lack of shelter, foraging and hibernation opportunities.

3.4.7 Yeading Brook, Minet Country Park and Hitherbroom Park SINC ran adjacent to the east of the site; the brook was not accessed at the time of the survey however, it likely contained flowing water with small amounts of emergent vegetation. The brook was separated from the site via large areas of hardstanding associated with the retail park and surrounding urban developments, which would likely act as a barrier to dispersal in the highly unlikely event that GCN were present in the brook.

3.4.8 Additionally, there were no records for GCN returned in the desk study search.

3.4.9 It is therefore considered that GCN are likely absent from the site and are not considered further in this assessment.

#### Reptiles

3.4.10 The majority of the site comprised large areas of hardstanding which were not considered to offer suitable habitat for foraging, basking or hibernating reptiles.

3.4.11 It is therefore considered that reptiles are likely absent from the site and are not considered further in this assessment.

### Birds

**3.4.12** Hedgerows and shrubs within and adjacent to the site boundary provided suitable habitat for wintering and breeding bird species, with some opportunities for foraging and nesting.

3.4.13 Considering the area and quality of habitats present within the site, the site is considered to be of low value to birds, particularly in the context of the wider landscape.

## Bats

### Bat Roosts

3.4.14 There were no trees identified within or immediately adjacent to the site boundary as being suitable for roosting bats.

3.4.15 The commercial units on site appeared to be in overall good condition with limited opportunities for roosting. Several weep holes were identified on the northern elevation; these features were shallow, with cobwebs present and no signs or evidence of use by bats was present.

3.4.16 Gaps around the shopfront signs and gaps under the metal cladding were identified on the eastern elevations (TN4), however these were too shallow and exposed, and unsuitable as roosting features.

3.4.17 The buildings were therefore considered to have negligible potential to support roosting bats.

### Bat Activity

3.4.18 Considering the habitats present and the location of the site in a highly urbanised setting, the site was considered to comprise low suitability habitat for commuting and foraging bats. More suitable habitat is located off site, to the north west of the site in the area of Yeading Meadows LNR and Yeading Brook, Minet Country Park and Hitherbroom Park to the south west.

## Other Mammals

3.4.19 Considering the area and quality of habitats present within the site, the site is considered to have been of relatively low value to mammals, particularly in the context of the wider landscape

# 4 EVALUATION AND POTENTIAL IMPACTS

## 4.1 Designated sites

4.1.1 There was one statutory designated sites for nature conservation value within 2 km of the site: Yeading Meadows LNR which was located 1.18 km from the site. The LNR is located at a sufficient distance from the site, that no adverse impacts are anticipated.

4.1.2 There were fourteen non-statutory designated sites identified within 2 km of the site. Yeading Brook, Minet Country Park and Hitherbroom Park SINC was located 0.02 km to the east of the site boundary and could be indirectly impacted upon by the proposed development. Any proposals for the site should ensure that the SINC is protected. Mitigation measures are included in Section 5.2 of this report.

## 4.2 Habitats

4.2.1 The site predominantly comprised buildings and hardstanding with areas of introduced shrub, species-poor hedgerows with trees, dense native scrub and scattered broadleaved trees. Habitats immediately adjacent to the site included meadow, brook, scattered trees, hedgerow, and hardstanding.

4.2.2 Habitats recorded within and adjacent to the site were generally common and widespread habitats.

4.2.3 Table 4.1 below summarises the habitat types within the site and outlines the potential impacts of the development proposals to each of these habitats.

**Table 4.1: Summary of potential habitat impacts**

| JNCC Code | Habitat Type | Ecological Importance | Potential impact |
|---|---|---|---|
| A3.1 | Broadleaved scattered trees | Low | Due to the age of the trees, they would be unlikely to support nesting birds but may offer limited foraging opportunities for bats. |
| J1.4 | Introduced shrub | Low | Limited, isolated areas of introduced shrub were not considered to be of significant ecological importance. They may offer some limited foraging opportunities for birds and bats. |
| J2.3 | Species-poor hedgerow with trees | Low | Loss of nesting and foraging opportunity for birds as well as foraging and commuting bats. |
| J3.6 | Buildings | Negligible | Limited opportunities for bats recorded within the commercial units at the time of the survey. |
| J4 | Hardstanding | Negligible | No ecological impact. |

## 4.3 Species

### Plants

4.3.1 The species identified during the Phase 1 Habitat Survey were common and widespread and there were no specially protected or notable plant species identified within or immediately adjacent to the site or are considered likely to have been present prior to development.

4.3.2 A species of cotoneaster was identified on site, however was not identified to species level. It cannot be proven whether this is a Schedule 9 species under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended). Unless further identification is carried out a precautionary approach should be taken. Further details are provided in Section 5 of this report.

## Invertebrates

4.3.3 Habitats within the site were suitable for an assemblage of relatively common and widespread invertebrate species.

4.3.4 No further surveys will be required however recommendations for enhancing the site for invertebrates are provided in Section 5 of this report.

## Birds

4.3.5 Any habitat removed within the development is of potentially low value to breeding and wintering birds (particularly in the context of the much larger areas of higher quality habitat outside of the site).

4.3.6 Mitigation and enhancement measures are recommended in Section 5 of this report to ensure the development does not result in a reduction in the local availability of habitat for wintering and breeding bids.

## Bats

### Bat Roosts

4.3.1 There were no trees or buildings identified within or immediately adjacent to the site boundary as being high quality habitat for roosting bats, however the site did provide some low-value foraging and commuting habitat.

4.3.2 Mitigation measures have been set out in Section 5 below in order to minimise noise and light disturbance on boundary features during construction and operation.

### Bat Activity

4.3.3 Illumination of new parking areas has the potential to result in light spill onto retained habitats of value to foraging and commuting bats.

4.3.4 Mitigation and enhancement measures are recommended in Section 5 of this report to ensure there is no reduction in the area or quality of habitat post-development for foraging and commuting bats.

# 5 MITIGATION AND ENHANCEMENT

## 5.1 Designated sites

5.1.1 There was one statutory designated sites for nature conservation value within 2 km of the site. Yeading Meadows LNR is located a sufficient distance from the site, therefore no adverse impacts are anticipated.

5.1.2 The proposals do not directly affect any non-statutory designated sites. However, Yeading Brook, Minet Country Park and Hitherbroom Park SINC was located 0.02 km to the east of the site, there is some potential for the brook to be indirectly impacted upon via accidental pollution events during any construction activities. Mitigation measures are included in Section 5.2 below.

5.1.3 All other non-statutory designated sites were located further than 1 km from site and considered sufficiently separated from the site that there would be no impact on them.

## 5.2 Habitats

5.2.1 To ensure an overall enhancement in biodiversity value following the development, and to avoid adverse impacts on species which may have used this area, new habitat within or near to the site will be created and areas of retained habitat will be enhanced. This will incorporate plant species of known biodiversity value and will be suitable for species identified within this report. Habitat creation and enhancement will be commensurate with the level of habitat loss/alteration as a result of the proposed development.

5.2.2 During any construction activities, there is a low risk of air- or water-borne pollutants being transmitted to nearby designated sites, however best practice pollution and dust control measures would be required, and this would ensure they would not affect the designated sites.

5.2.3 Good practice guidelines should be adhered to during the construction phase to ensure protection from contamination, dust etc. A Construction Environment Management Plan (CEMP) will be required to capture such practices and will include but may not be limited to:

- Protective fencing installed along retained boundary features adjacent to the site, where they fall outside the construction areas. Best practice guidelines for constructing exclusion zones, barriers and ground protection around trees provided in British Standard 5837:2012 (Trees in Relation to design, demolition, and construction - Recommendations), should be followed where necessary;
- The sensitive siting of construction compounds, access roads and laydown areas away from retained boundary features; and
- A plan produced to ensure that air or water-borne pollution generated during construction is contained and does not affect nearby designated sites.

5.2.4 Due to the implementation of the above measures, significant ecological effects on statutory designated sites are not considered likely.

5.2.5 The NPPF (2021) states that to minimise impacts on biodiversity, planning policies should promote the preservation, restoration, and re-creation of priority habitats.

### Cotoneaster

5.2.6 There are currently five species of cotoneaster included on Schedule 9 Part 2 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended): wall cotoneaster (*Cotoneaster horizontalis*), entire-leaved cotoneaster (*Cotoneaster integrifolius*), Himalayan cotoneaster (*Cotoneaster simonsii*), hollyberry cotoneaster (*Cotoneaster bullatus*) and small-leaved cotoneaster (*Cotoneaster microphyllus*).

5.2.7 The cotoneaster identified on site has the potential to be a Schedule 9 species, therefore it should be accurately identified prior to construction commencing to be certain that it is not a Schedule 9 species. If a Schedule 9 species is identified on site, care should be taken during the construction phase to avoid the spread within or outside of the site.

5.2.8 If required, areas containing cotoneaster should be demarcated and bordered off until such a time where they can be safely removed and disposed.

5.2.9 Options for control are herbicide application or removal. Herbicide control could be incorporated into a site's existing vegetation management. This would be a relatively inexpensive method of dealing with the species.

5.2.10 Mechanical removal is not recommended. Seeds can easily be spread resulting in germination across the site. Mechanical shovels scrape the ground leaving much of the root material in situ, thus remaining material can then rapidly regrow.

5.2.11 If removal is preferred this should be done when the species is not fruiting. Roots and above ground growth should be dug out by hand ensuring all the roots are removed. All plant material should then be chipped and composted on site.

5.2.12 A systemic glyphosate-based herbicide should be used when treating cotoneaster. The herbicide should be applied by foliar application. It is important that the herbicide is applied to the upper and lower surface of the cotoneaster leaves. Some collateral damage to adjacent vegetation should be expected.

5.2.13 Commercial grade glyphosate should be prepared to the standard concentration, as indicated on the label. An appropriate adjuvant should be used to increase the 'stickiness' of the herbicide and enhance the amount of herbicide absorbed by the plants. Glyphosate based herbicides are less likely to harm nearby trees and shrubs than most other herbicides on the market, despite being a broad-spectrum herbicide. This is in part due to the herbicide being rapidly inactivated on contact with soil. Glyphosate is one of the more 'environmentally friendly' herbicides that is effective on cotoneaster.

5.2.14 Glyphosate is primarily absorbed through the leaves and passed down into the stem to the underground root system. Therefore, if there is not enough leaf area, or the plant is damaged and/or unhealthy, then too little herbicide will be absorbed to cause long-term damage to the plant. Consequently, cotoneaster should only be treated when in full leaf.

5.2.15 The optimal time to treat cotoneaster with a glyphosate-based herbicide is June to August. Repeated treatments are occasionally needed in control and management programmes as new plants may continue to germinate from the seedbank. Failing to allow plants to reach an appropriate condition prior to herbicide treatment can increase the amount of time required for treatment, along with associated costs.

## 5.3 Species

### Birds

5.3.1 To minimise the impacts on the breeding bird assemblage within the development boundary, the measures described below should be adhered to.

5.3.2 The clearance of any vegetation and trimming of trees should be undertaken outside of bird nesting season. It should be noted that whilst the main bird breeding season runs between March and September some birds can nest at any time of year.

5.3.3 If this is not possible, a suitably qualified ecologist should be on site to inspect the relevant areas for nesting birds within 48 hours of the vegetation being cleared. If an active nest is present, the nest and the vegetation or built structure within 5m of it will need to be retained until the young birds have fledged.

5.3.4 If the nest proves to be of a species listed under Schedule 1 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended), advice from the inspecting ecologist regarding suitable distances (buffers) to avoid disturbance of the nest and any birds using it should be sought and agreed with clearance contractors. Such buffers will remain in place until the young birds have fledged and left the nest.

5.3.5 As described in Section 5.2, replacement habitat to compensate for the loss of any current habitat should be provided whilst enhancement of hedges would also be of value to a range of species.

5.3.6 Provision of suitable nest boxes on buildings should also be considered, targeting a range of species typical of the habitats present within and adjacent to the site.

### Bats

5.3.7 No trees or buildings were identified within or immediately adjacent to the site boundary as having roosting potential.

5.3.8 The habitats immediately adjacent to the site were considered to provide some low-value foraging and commuting opportunities for bats. These features would be retained in the current proposals.

5.3.9 As described in Section 5.2, replacement habitat to compensate for the loss of any potential habitat will be provided in order to ensure there are no adverse impacts on local bat populations. The installation of additional bat roosting habitat in the form of artificial bat bricks and boxes could be considered in order to enhance the site for bats.

5.3.10 Any lighting to be provided within the development should be designed taking into account potential impacts on bats and other protected species. This should avoid illumination of potential commuting routes and foraging areas such as the hedgerow on the east of the site.

5.3.11 Should any temporary lighting be required at the site during the construction phase, the design will need to include measures to control the amount of artificial lighting and consider the specifications set out in the Bat Conservation Trust guidelines (BCT, 2018) as artificial lighting can affect the feeding behaviour of bats.

5.3.12 The following points should be considered:

- The site is located within a well-lit urban environment, should further lighting be required the guidance provided in Bats and Artificial Lighting in the UK (ILP, 2018) should be followed;
- Where practicable, lux levels should be 0.5 lux or less at the interface with any of these habitats. Where this is not practicable advice from an ecologist should be sought to determine the impact on bats; and
- Timing; where practicable, lighting should be turned off for periods when it is not needed to provide some dark periods.

## 5.4 Enhancement Opportunities

5.4.1 There is a requirement for the development to result in a net gain for biodiversity. Opportunities for retaining and protecting existing high value habitats are sought as a first step. Opportunities for creating new high value habitats either within the site boundary or off site have also been identified.

5.4.2 In addition to the mitigation measures outlined above, opportunities for enhancements will include the provision of green roofs on new buildings and landscape planting of native shrubs and trees to improve the connectivity to nearby habitats and biodiversity of the area.

# 6 CONCLUSIONS

6.1.1 There was one statutory designated site for nature conservation value within 2 km of the site, Yeading Meadows LNR. The LNR is located at a sufficient distance from the site site, no adverse impacts are anticipated.

6.1.2 There were fourteen non-statutory designated sites identified within 2 km of the site. Yeading Brook, Minet Country Park and Hitherbroom Park SINC was located adjacent to the site boundary. Mitigation measures have been provided within this report for the protection of the SINC and other sensitive retained habitats during the construction and operation of the proposed development.

6.1.3 The Phase 1 Habitat Survey identified that the site predominantly comprised buildings with hardstanding and areas of introduced shrub. Hedgerow with trees bordered the west of the site.

6.1.4 The site and immediate surroundings were considered to provide low-value habitat for breeding birds and foraging and commuting bats.

6.1.5 Vegetation clearance should either be cleared outside of the breeding bird season (which runs from March to September) or checked prior to clearance by an ecologist if cleared within this period. Any active nests would need to be retained and protected until they became disused.

6.1.6 No trees or buildings were identified within or immediately adjacent to the site boundary as having bat roosting potential.

6.1.7 The site provided low-value habitat for foraging and commuting bats. Further surveys are not required, however it is recommended that measures are implemented to avoid night-time lighting of areas that could provide flight lines and foraging habitats.

6.1.8 Control measures are recommended for the stand of cotoneaster recorded on the site.

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# APPENDICES

# Appendix A: Relevant Legislation

**Birds**

All birds, their nests and eggs are afforded protection under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981, as updated by the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000. It is an offence to:

- intentionally kill, injure or take any wild bird;
- intentionally take, damage or destroy the nest of any wild bird while it is in use or being built; and
- intentionally take or destroy the egg of any wild bird.

Schedule 1 birds cannot be intentionally or recklessly disturbed when nesting and there are increased penalties for doing so. Licences can be issued to visit the nests of such birds for conservation, scientific or photographic purposes but not to allow disturbance during a development even in circumstances where that development is fully authorised by consents such as a valid planning permission.

**Bats**

All British bat species are fully protected under Schedule 5 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981, as updated by the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000. All British bats are also included on Schedule 2 of The Conservation of Habitats and Species (Amendment) (EU Exit) Regulations 2019 as European Protected Species. It is an offence to:

- intentionally or recklessly kill, injure or capture bats;
- deliberately or recklessly disturb bats (whether in a roost or not); and
- damage, destroy or obstruct access to bat roosts.

A roost is defined as 'any structure or place which [a bat] uses for shelter or protection'. As bats tend to reuse the same roosts, legal opinion is that a roost is protected whether or not bats are present at the time of survey.

A licence will therefore be required by those who carry out any operation that would otherwise result in offences being committed.

The following bat species are listed as being of principal importance for the conservation of biodiversity in England, (commonly referred to as UKBAP Priority species): barbastelle, Bechstein's, noctule, soprano pipistrelle, brown long-eared, greater horseshoe, and lesser horseshoe.

# Appendix B: Target Notes

| TARGET NOTE NUMBER | DESCRIPTION |
|---|---|
| T1 | Scattered trees throughout the site – Silver birch and sycamore located in the areas of introduced shrub |
| T2 | Semi-mature cherry trees located in the hedgerow on the south border of the site |
| T3 | Stands of box and cotoneaster – multiple throughout the site |
| T4 | Weep holes in bricks and gaps around shop signage - observed and ruled out as potential locations for bats |

# Appendix C: Site Photographs

**Photograph 1:** Introduced shrub with scattered trees along the northern boundary of the site.


**Photograph 2:** Additional areas of inroduced shrub planting along the northern boundary of the site.

**Photograph 3 (left):** Introduced shrub with cotoneaster bordering the hardstanding carparking area to the east of the site, potential invertebrate habitat.

**Photograph 4 (right):** Species-poor hedgerow with trees bordering the east of the site providing a buffer area to Yeading Brook, Minet Country Park and Hitherbroom Park SINC.

**Photograph 5 (left):** Species-poor hedgerow with mature cherry trees bordering the south of the site. Potential invertebrate, nesting bird and bat foraging habitat.

**Photograph 6 (right):** Weep hole in brickwork on the north elevation.


**Photograph 7 (left):** Gaps under and around signs on the front of all commercial units.

**Photograph 8 (below):** Gaps under and around metal cladding on the front and corners of all commercial units.