



MR RUSSELL WICKLAND

**Brethren's Gospel Hall, Nyton Road,
Aldingbourne, West Sussex**

- Preliminary Ecological Appraisal Survey
- Preliminary Protected Species Assessment Survey

Planning Issue

Prepared by	GS
Checked by	JJ
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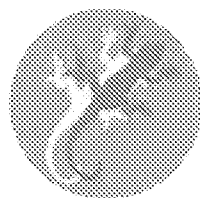
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L I Z A R D

Landscape Design and Ecology

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SUMMARY

Lizard Landscape Design and Ecology has been commissioned by Mr Russell Wickland to undertake a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal Survey and Preliminary Protected Species Assessment Survey of land at the Brethren's Hall, Nyton Road, Aldingbourne, West Sussex (*Grid Reference: SU 924 062 – hereafter referred to as 'the site'*). A preliminary ecological appraisal (PEA) of the site was undertaken on 21st February 2018, to appraise the existing ecological resource within the site and the surrounding area.

The site is L-shaped and comprises a patch of well-used amenity grassland. A large section of the grassland is laid to grass reinforcement cellular paving. The grassland currently appears well-used as additional car-parking and as such is short and worn. The Gospel Hall site is surrounded by nursery glasshouses to the east and west, a hard-surfaced track and paddocks to the south, and paddocks and stables to the north. The proposal site is surrounded by dense ornamental hedge to the south and west, hardstanding car parking to the east, and a mixed species treeline and closeboard fence to the north. The site is of a small size and limited structure with very limited potential for protected species.

No further surveys are recommended at the site; however, should any adjacent vegetation require clearance, this should take place outside the bird nesting season (*bird nesting season: March – August inclusive*) or following inspection by the *Suitably Qualified Ecologist*.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Lizard Landscape Design and Ecology has been commissioned by Mr Russell Wickland to undertake a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal Survey and Preliminary Protected Species Assessment Survey of land at the Brethren's Hall, Nyton Road, Aldingbourne, West Sussex (*Grid Reference: SU 924 062 – hereafter referred to as 'the site'*).
- 1.2 A preliminary ecological appraisal (*PEA*) of the site was undertaken on 21st February 2018, to appraise the existing ecological resource within the site and the surrounding area. The *PEA* comprised a baseline survey conforming broadly to the *JNCC Ecology Phase 1 Habitat Survey protocol*, to identify the existing habitats. In addition, a protected species assessment was undertaken to identify the potential for European and nationally protected species within and adjacent to the land.
- 1.3 The field survey data and analysis contained in this report were undertaken and prepared by George Sayer (*Project Ecologist; PgDip; BSc(Hons); Lizard Landscape Design and Ecology*). The report has been reviewed by Joe Jackson (*Principal; Landscape Architect BA (Hons) LA DipLA CMLI; Lizard Landscape Design and Ecology*).

Site Information

- 1.4 The site is L-shaped and comprises a patch of well-used amenity grassland. A large section of the grassland is laid to grass reinforcement cellular paving. The grassland currently appears well-used as additional car-parking and as such is short and worn. The Gospel Hall site is surrounded by nursery glasshouses to the east and west, a hard-surfaced track and paddocks to the south, and paddocks and stables to the north. The proposed site is surrounded by dense ornamental hedge to the south and west, hardstanding car parking to the east, and a mixed species treeline and closeboard fence to the north. The site is of a small size and limited structure with very limited potential for protected species.
- 1.5 Soils on site are described as *freely draining slightly acid loamy soils*.

Surrounding Landscape

- 1.6 The wider landscape is largely rural. The Gospel Hall is situated to the north-west of the village of Aldingbourne, itself between the larger villages of Tangmere and Westergate, to the east of the City of Chichester. The surroundings are characterised by arable fields, paddocks, nursery glasshouses and solar farms. The residential areas are largely linear formations. The surroundings are generally lightly-wooded; the nearest woodland is 331.0 m to the south-west of the site. The nearest patch of *Ancient Woodland* is located 1126.0 m to the north-east.
- 1.7 Several ponds were identified within 500.0 m of the site boundary. A drain runs 105.0 m to the west of the site. The *Aldingbourne Rife* runs 211.0 m to the west of the site. A farm pond is present at *Sheepwash Farm*, 281.0 m to the south-west of the site. A small pond, known as *Limmer Pond* is present 290.0 m to the south-east. A large garden pond is located 358.0 m to the north-east of the site.

Development Proposals

- 1.8 The proposals are for the replacement of the amenity grassland with a hard-surfaced parking area. The proposals would entail the development of the entirety of the site area.

2.0 SCOPE OF THE SURVEY

- 2.1 The aim of the preliminary ecological appraisal survey has been:
- *To identify and display the main habitat types and plant communities;*
 - *To provide a species list for the major habitats;*
 - *To identify habitats with potential for protected species;*
 - *To provide recommendations for surveys of protected species and / or ecological enhancement / compensation.*
- 2.2 This report establishes the potential ecological resource within the site and outlines where any ecological constraints may occur.

3.0 METHODOLOGY

- 3.1 A preliminary ecological appraisal was undertaken on 21st February 2018, and the site subjected to an ecology survey using guidelines set out in the *Handbook for Phase 1 Habitat Survey – A Technique for Environmental Audit* (JNCC, 2003). This has resulted in a Site Habitat Plan (*Figure No. 01*); *Target Notes* (*Table No. 03*) and Species Lists for Habitat Parcels (*Table No. 02*) for each site area.
- 3.2 Habitats within the land were classified and the presence, or potential presence, of certain protected and / or notable species of flora and fauna were identified. A summary description of the habitat within the site following the *Phase 1 Habitat Survey Methodology* is presented in Section 4.0. This involved identifying features that may be used by protected species, potential foraging areas and other signs of use. Water bodies were recorded wherever possible, within 500.0 metres of the proposed development site.
- 3.3 Due to the field survey consisting of only one site visit, certain species, particularly some of the flowering plants, may not have been visible or may have been otherwise inconspicuous at the time of the survey and hence overlooked. These are accepted constraints associated with the standard *Phase 1 Habitat Survey Methodology*.
- 3.4 The results are summarised and accompanied in large part by photographic evidence contained in *Appendix A – Site Photographs*. Recommendations for further investigation and survey are made in the following report.

4.0 RESULTS

4.1 Desk Study – Background Information

Designated Sites and Habitats

- 4.1.1 The following section outlines the ecological context of the land, describing any designated nature conservation sites in the vicinity of the land. The following designated sites and habitats are not necessarily representative of the existing site's ecology but are indicative of the ecological context of the surrounding area; a factor that may be important when assessing the presence / absence potential of certain species groups.

Statutory Protected Sites

- 4.1.2 The following statutory protected sites are located within 2.0 kilometres (*km*) of the proposed development sites:

Table No. 01 – Statutory Protected Sites

Site	Description	Location
<i>South Downs National Park.</i>	The South Downs National Park Covers over 1600 square kilometres of England's most valued lowland landscapes, including downland, heathland, river valleys, ancient woodland. Within the park are a number of villages, market towns and country estates.	1264.0 m NE

- 4.1.3 The site is located within the *Impact Risk Zone* of *Slindon Bottom SSSI*; the proposed development would not require consultation with Natural England. The proposed new car parking is designed to serve the existing users of the Gospel Hall; The site is within both a Groundwater and Surface Water *Nitrate Vulnerable Zone*. The proposals are likely to increase runoff from the site. It is determined that runoff will be managed through a drainage system connected into the existing drainage system.

Non-Statutory Protected Areas

- 4.1.4 *Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation Importance (SNCIs)* are designations applied to the most important non-statutory nature conservation sites. They are recognised by the *National Planning Policy Framework (2012)* and as such are material considerations when assessing planning applications. No SNCIs are present within 2.0 km of the site; just outside of this area, at 2.1 km from the site is the *Fontwell Racecourse SNCI* – this site supports two areas of calcareous and neutral grassland within the area outlined by the racecourse. The proposals would not have any impact upon this SNCI, which is heavily isolated from the site.
- 4.1.5 The site is neither located adjacent to, or within any SNCI. The development proposals would not have an adverse effect upon any of the above sites due to the current nature of the site, its scale and its separation from these sites.

UK Priority Habitats

- 4.1.6 Within 2.0 km of the site there are *Priority Habitats* of *Ancient and Semi-Natural Woodland, Deciduous Woodland, Traditional Orchard* and *Woodpasture and Parkland*. The site itself does not contain any *Priority Habitat*; the nearest *Priority Habitats* to the site are deciduous woodland. The proposals would not seek to alter or impact the *Priority Habitats*.

UK Priority Species

- 4.1.7 UK priority and protected species of potential relevance to the site proposals include reptiles, amphibians, dormice and badgers. There are no records of reptiles within 2.0 km of the site, however in the wider landscape there are records of reptiles such as slow worm (*Anguis fragilis*). All species of UK reptile are protected against reckless or intentional killing or injuring under *The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended)*.
- 4.1.8 There are no records of great crested newts (*Triturus cristatus*) within 2.0 km of the site. Great crested newts and their resting / breeding sites are protected under *The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017* and *The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended)*.

- 4.1.9 There are no records of hazel dormouse (*Muscardinus avellanarius*) within 2.0 km of the site. The hazel dormouse is fully protected under *Schedules 5 & 6 of The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended)* and *Schedule 2 of The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017*.
- 4.1.10 There are limited records of badgers (*Meles meles*) within 2.0 km of the site, however they are likely to be present locally. Badgers are protected under *The Protection of Badgers Act 1992*.
- 4.1.11 There are records of Hedgehogs (*Erinaceus europaeus*) within 2.0 km of the site. Hedgehog numbers are declining, and they have been a *UK Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP)* species since 2007.

4.2 Field Survey

- 4.2.1 The following habitats and features were recorded within the land and the extended survey area. The general site character has been described along with a brief description of the habitat's physical characteristics. These are shown on the Site Habitat Plan in *Figure No. 01*. Species Lists for Habitat Parcels are listed in *Table No. 03*.

- 4.2.2 Habitats within and adjacent to the land include:

- *Amenity Grassland;*
- *Bare Ground;*
- *Hardstanding;*
- *Intact, Species-Poor Hedge;*
- *Introduced Shrubs;*
- *Coniferous Treeline;*
- *Scattered Trees.*

Site Description (Refer to Appendix A – Site Photographs)**Amenity Grassland**

- 4.2.3 The majority of the proposed site consisted of a patch of amenity grassland, used for additional parking by the Gospel Hall. The sward was heavily worn by tyre tracks and was bare in places. A large section of the grassland is laid to grass reinforcement cellular paving. Within this area the vegetation was dominated by short perennial species such as mouse-ear chickweed (*Cerastium fontanum*) and mosses. In areas not laid to reinforcement, the sward was dominated by perennial rye-grass (*Lolium perenne*) and common daisy (*Bellis perennis*). Margins of the grassland were generally bare, with slightly larger forbs including creeping buttercup (*Ranunculus repens*), mugwort (*Artemisia vulgaris*), common thistle (*Cirsium vulgare*) and common nettle (*Urtica dioica*). The vegetation offered very little ecological value (Refer to Appendix A – Photographs Nos. 01-03).

Bare Ground

- 4.2.4 Adjacent to the grassland and beneath the mixed treeline are areas of bare earth (*created by heavy shading*) and tarmac hardstanding areas. These areas are of no ecological value, being largely devoid of vegetation.

Intact, Species-Poor Hedge

- 4.2.5 The site is surrounded to the west and south by continuous hedges, formed of dense cherry laurel (*Prunus laurocerasus*). In addition, to the east of the site is a small section of hedge largely formed of blackthorn (*Prunus spinosa*). The vegetation would offer some nesting habitat for birds and limited invertebrate habitat (Refer to Appendix A – Photographs Nos. 04-05).

Introduced Shrubs

- 4.2.6 Within the car parking area and adjacent to the site are several discrete patches of introduced shrubs. The shrubs were well-maintained and contained a variety of plants, including deciduous shrubs such as dogwood (*Cornus sanguinea*) and evergreen species such as Portuguese laurel (*Prunus lusitanica*). The vegetation was relatively immature and of limited ecological value (Refer to Appendix A – Photographs Nos. 06-07).

Coniferous Treeline

- 4.2.7 To the northern boundary of the site is a treeline, dominated by large Leyland cypress (*Cupressus x leylandii*). Between the Leyland cypress trees are slender alder (*Alnus sp.*) trees. The alder trees are generally in poor condition, being shaded out by the Leyland cypress trees. The treeline provides some nesting habitat for birds, and the alder trees provide some habitat for fungi and invertebrates. Behind the treeline was a secure closeboard fence (*Refer to Appendix A – Photographs Nos. 08-09*).

Scattered Trees

- 4.2.8 To the edges of the introduced shrub planting, and within the borders of the amenity grassland are a number of small scattered trees. The trees are of both native and introduced species but are immature and largely ornamental in nature. The trees provide some bird nesting potential (*Refer to Appendix A – Photograph No. 10*).

Fauna

- 4.2.9 Within the bare ground, and within the species-poor hedges were a number of holes and signs of mammals digging. A small gap was noted in the fence within the cherry laurel hedge. The gap looked to be used by a mammal accessing the site. No latrines or other signs of badgers using the site, and the evidence would suggest that rabbits or foxes use the site (*Refer to Appendix A – Photographs Nos. 11-12*).
- 4.2.10 A small number of birds, including great tit (*Parus major*) were noted within trees.

5.0 EVALUATION

- 5.1 The site and its surroundings comprise habitats of Amenity Grassland; Bare Ground; Hardstanding; Intact, Species-Poor Hedge; Introduced Shrubs; Mixed Treeline and Scattered Trees. The site itself was limited in size with the majority of habitat being amenity grassland. The plant species on site were generally common and widespread species, and diversity was low; no rare or unusual species were recorded.

- 5.2 The existing buildings and trees on site were assessed for their potential to support roosting bats. The prefabricated buildings on site offer '*negligible*' bat roost potential. The traditional buildings on the site are considered to offer '*moderate*' bat roosting potential. The trees on site offer '*negligible*' bat roosting potential, and '*low*' bat foraging and commuting potential.
- 5.3 The scattered trees on site provide suitable nesting habitat for birds. Should any trees require clearance, it is recommended that this is undertaken outside of the bird nesting season (*bird nesting season is March to August inclusive*) or following inspection by the *Suitably Qualified Ecologist*.
- 5.4 There was no other habitat suitable for other protected species on site. The site presents an opportunity for enhancing the biodiversity within the site and potential enhancement measures are outlined in Section 7.0.

6.0 PROTECTED SPECIES – CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Bats

- 6.1 The trees on site were assessed as having a '*negligible*' potential to support roosting bats, being largely immature and ornamental. The mixed treeline and continuous, species-poor hedges on site were assessed as having a '*low*' potential for commuting and foraging bats. The trees and hedges are proposed for retention. No further surveys are required with regards to bats. Any proposed new lighting should be angled into the site and away from vegetation.

Nesting Birds

- 6.2 All active birds' nests are protected against damage / destruction under *The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended)* therefore, it is advised that clearance of any trees / dense shrubs required take place outside of the bird nesting season (*Season: March - August*) or after careful inspection by the *Suitably Qualified Ecologist* to ensure no active birds' nests are present.

Reptiles and Amphibians

- 6.3 No suitable reptile or amphibian habitat is present on the site. There are a number of water bodies present within 500.0 m of the site, however it is considered highly unlikely that great crested newts would use the site to commute to or from ponds, due to the lack of suitable habitat in adjacent sites. No further surveys are required with regards to reptiles and amphibians.

Badgers

- 6.4 Some evidence of mammals was noted on site; no evidence was found to suggest this was created by badgers. The site would present very limited foraging habitat for badgers, and no badger setts were discovered within the site. No further surveys with regards to badgers are required. Any holes over 30.0 cm deep, and piles of soil should be covered overnight to prevent badgers falling into or excavating into them.

Hazel Dormouse

- 6.5 The only habitat on site with any suitability for hazel dormice is the section of blackthorn hedge. This hedge is much too limited in extent and too isolated to offer any suitability for hazel dormouse. No further survey is required for hazel dormouse.

Others

- 6.6 No habitat suitable for supporting other protected species, such as water voles, was noted on site. No rare / unusual / protected flora was recorded on this site.

7.0 ECOLOGICAL ENHANCEMENTS

7.1 The design of any proposed development should consider ecological enhancements for the benefit of wildlife in line with the *National Planning Policy Framework* and *Local Planning Policy*. Given the nature and scale of the proposals, opportunities for enhancement are limited. Recommendations for ecological enhancements that could be considered as part of development proposals could include:

- *The provision of a nesting box for an appropriate bird species within a tree, wall or fencepost within the site;*
- *Use of a sympathetic lighting scheme across the site, with lighting angled down and away from hedge / tree lines;*
- *Placement of bug hotels such as NHBS Bee and Bug Biome or similar within the hedges or treeline to provide additional habitat for invertebrates.*

8.0 REFERENCES

ARG UK: Advice Note 5: Great Crested Newt Habitat Suitability Index (2010);

English Nature: The Dormouse Conservation Handbook (2nd ed.) (2006);

JNCC: Handbook for Phase 1 Habitat Survey – A Technique for Environmental Audit; (2003);

Collins J (ed): Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines (3rd ed.) The Bat Conservation Trust (2016);

Langton, T.E.S., Beckett, C.L., and Foster, J.P. (2001), Great Crested Newt Conservation Handbook, Froglife, Halesworth;

Mitchell-Jones and McLeish: Bat Workers Manual; JNCC, 3rd Edition (2004);

Streeter, D.: The Most Complete Guide to the Flowers of Britain and Ireland; Harper Collins, London (2010);

www.magic.gov.uk.

Table No. 02 – Species List for Habitat Parcels

Amenity Grassland

Common Name	Scientific Name	DAFOR
Bristly Oxtongue	<i>Helminthotheca echioides</i>	R
Broad-Leaved Dock	<i>Rumex obtusifolius</i>	R
Catsear	<i>Hypochaeris radicata</i>	LD
Common Nettle	<i>Urtica dioica</i>	R
Common Thistle	<i>Cirsium vulgare</i>	F
Cow Parsley	<i>Anthriscus sylvestris</i>	R
Creeping Buttercup	<i>Ranunculus repens</i>	R
Daisy	<i>Bellis perennis</i>	LA
Dandelion	<i>Taraxacum agg.</i>	R
Mosses	<i>Mosses spp.</i>	LD
Mouse-Ear Chickweed	<i>Cerastium fontanum</i>	LA
Mugwort	<i>Artemisia vulgaris</i>	R
Perennial Rye-Grass	<i>Lolium perenne</i>	LD
Selfheal	<i>Prunella vulgaris</i>	LF
White Clover	<i>Trifolium repens</i>	LF

D – Dominant; A – Abundant; F – Frequent; O – Occasional; R – Rare; L – Locally

Introduced Shrubs

Common Name	Scientific Name	DAFOR
Common Dogwood	<i>Cornus sanguinea</i>	LF
Cotoneaster	<i>Cotoneaster sp.</i>	LA
Golden Spindle	<i>Euonymus fortunei</i>	LF
Golden-Twig Dogwood	<i>Cornus sericea 'Flaviramea'</i>	LF
Japanese Spindle	<i>Euonymus japonicus</i>	LF
Portuguese Laurel	<i>Prunus lusitanica</i>	LD
Privet Honeysuckle	<i>Lonicera pileata</i>	LA
Red Robin	<i>Photinia x fraseri 'Red Robin'</i>	F

Scattered Trees, Treelines and Hedges

Common Name	Scientific Name	DAFOR
Alder	<i>Alnus sp.</i>	LF
Beech	<i>Fagus sylvatica</i>	R
Blackthorn	<i>Prunus spinose</i>	LF
Cherry	<i>Prunus sp.</i>	O
Cherry Laurel	<i>Prunus laurocerasus</i>	LD
Elder	<i>Sambucus nigra</i>	R
Elm	<i>Ulmus sp.</i>	R
Himalayan Birch	<i>Betula utilis var. jacquemontii</i>	R
Leyland Cypress	<i>Cupressus x leylandii</i>	LD
Maple	<i>Acer sp.</i>	R
Red Robin	<i>Photinia x fraseri 'Red Robin'</i>	O

D – Dominant; A – Abundant; F – Frequent; O – Occasional; R – Rare; L – Locally

Table No. 03 – Target Notes

Target Note	Description	Description
TN 01	Mammal holes.	Digging holes within the bare ground. These were determined to be caused by rabbits or foxes.
TN 02	Gap in fence.	Gap under the hedge within the cherry laurel hedge. The gap was determined to be used by rabbits or foxes.

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BRETHREN'S GOSPEL HALL, NYTON ROAD, ALDINGBOURNE, WEST SUSSEX
PRELIMINARY ECOLOGICAL APPRAISAL SURVEY
Brethren-ECO-PEA

APPENDIX A – SITE PHOTOGRAPHS

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BRETHREN'S GOSPEL HALL, NYTON ROAD, ALDINGBOURNE, WEST SUSSEX
PRELIMINARY ECOLOGICAL APPRAISAL SURVEY
Brethren-ECO-PEA

APPENDIX A - SITE PHOTOGRAPHS



Photograph No. 1 - Amenity grassland forming the majority of the site. Photo is taken looking south-west.



Photograph No. 2 - Amenity grassland forming the majority of the site. Photo is taken looking east.

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BRETHREN'S MEETING HALL, NYTON ROAD, ALDINGBOURNE, WEST SUSSEX
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APPENDIX A - SITE PHOTOGRAPHS



Photograph No. 3 - The difference between reinforced and unreinforced grassland swards is apparent.



Photograph No. 4 - Continuous cherry laurel hedge surrounding the site.

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APPENDIX A - SITE PHOTOGRAPHS



Photograph No. 5 - Small section of blackthorn hedge to the entrance of the site.



Photograph No. 6 - Introduced shrubs on-site were of little ecological value.

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APPENDIX A - SITE PHOTOGRAPHS



Photograph No. 7 - Introduced shrubs on-site were of little ecological value.



Photograph No. 8 - The coniferous treeline, which offers little ecological value apart from some nesting potential for birds.

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APPENDIX A - SITE PHOTOGRAPHS



Photograph No. 9 - Bare ground and closeboard fence behind the coniferous treeline.



Photograph No. 10 - Scattered trees on-site were largely ornamental and immature.

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APPENDIX A - SITE PHOTOGRAPHS



Photograph No. 11 - Mammal digging holes, determined to be created by rabbits or foxes.



Photograph No. 12 - Gap beneath the fence, determined to be used by rabbits or foxes.

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