



Ref: A086068

Sent by email only to [REDACTED]

20 October 2014

Dear Steve,

Toddington Lane, North Littlehampton – terrestrial invertebrate habitat assessment

Background

The initial extended phase 1 habitat survey for Toddington Lane, North Littlehampton was completed by WYG in 2006 (WYG, 2006). An update Phase 1 survey was completed in 2008. Subsequently, an updated extended ecological constraints walkover was completed at the site in April 2014 to assess whether the habitats at the site had changed and to determine whether the site held potential for other protected species.

Condition 19 of the outline planning permission states that:

Development shall not begin until further ecological surveys have been carried out and submitted to the Local Planning Authority. These surveys shall relate to water voles, bats, birds, invertebrates and reptiles.

WYG ecologist Emily Hare completed an update habitat assessment for notable terrestrial invertebrates in April 2014, this involved assessing the habitats and plant species present on site in line with the extended Phase 1 habitat survey of 2008.

Site location and general description

The site is located at the North Littlehampton Nursery complex, Littlehampton, West Sussex (TQ035039). The majority of the site comprises a nursery complex which is dominated by greenhouses and associated buildings, interspersed with amenity grassland, mature trees, scrub, semi-improved grassland and areas of ornamental planting. An area of floodplain, dominated by unimproved grassland, is present within the northern part of the site, considered to be the most important habitat within the site in terms of conservation importance. This is due to this habitat type being a UK Biodiversity Action Plan priority habitat.

Results of 2014 update extended phase 1 survey

During the ecological constraints appraisal completed by WYG Ecologist Emily Hare in April 2014 the majority of the habitats appeared to remain largely the same as noted during previous surveys (WYG 2006 and 2008). The majority of the nursery site comprises building and hardstanding, in particular greenhouses. At the time of the 2014 ecological constraints survey these were mainly used for growing raspberries, however on subsequent visits to the site for the protected species surveys the greenhouses remained empty as it is understood the nursery had closed. At the time of the 2014 ecological constraints appraisal a number of mobile homes were present between the two western most nurseries; however during subsequent visits to site the mobile homes had been removed.

The areas surrounding the nurseries have limited scope to support notable species, due to the disturbed and 'small industrial' character of the site. The central landscaped area of the site holds a number of mature trees, including weeping willow (*Salix babylonica*), within a mown grass setting. Other trees present within the central landscaped area include; ash (*Fraxinus excelsior*), alder (*Alnus* sp.), willow (*Salix* sp.), silver birch (*Betula pendula*) and Leyland cypress (*× Cupressocyparis leylandii*).



The areas of grassland surrounding the nurseries still appeared to be regularly maintained and short across much of the site, with a low level of species diversity. However, as previously recorded there are strips of longer semi-improved grassland present between some of the greenhouses and areas of hardstanding providing suitable habitats for reptiles (shown on the 2006 Phase 1 Habitat Plan).

The fields at the eastern extent of the site had sheep grazing at the time of the 2014 ecological constraints survey; as such the grass was very short. This land had previously been sheep grazed during the 2008 survey (WYG, 2008). Species present within this semi-improved grassland include; cock's foot (*Dactylis glomerata*), Yorkshire fog (*Holcus lunatus*), meadow foxtail (*Alopecurus pratensis*), Timothy (*Phleum pratense*), annual meadow grass (*Poa annua*) and sweet vernal-grass (*Anthoxanthum odoratum*), with herbs such as thistle (*Cirsium* sp.), common nettle (*Urtica dioica*), creeping buttercup (*Ranunculus repens*), red clover (*Trifolium pratense*) and horsetail (*Equisetum* sp.) in places (refer to the 2008 Phase 1 Habitat Map Area 7). The hedgerows within this area are typically species-poor and fragmented, with little ground flora present due to disturbance created by the sheep. Hawthorn dominates, with bramble (*Rubus fruticosus* agg.) and occasional rose (*Rosa* sp.) also present.

Along the eastern extent of the northern boundary lies a strip of broadleaved semi-natural woodland. The trees are a well established mixture of poplar and willow species with a ground cover of scrub and grasses from the surrounding floodplain.

Bramble scrub has encroached over areas on the floodplain, particularly in the west, along the dry ditch lines and on the northern fringe of the horticultural nursery area. The scrub forms continuous hedge-like features along the ditch sides and has replaced the original hedgerows on the site. The scrub present on site primarily consists of common and widespread species including bramble and elder. The scrub forms scattered patches within or on the edge of the grasslands where management has not occurred recently.

The allotments and the football ground which lie to the south of the railway remain as they did previously. The fields adjacent to the eastern boundary of the allotments comprised tall semi-improved grassland; species present within these fields species present include; thistle, cock's foot (*Dactylis glomerata*), white clover (*Trifolium repens*), yarrow (*Achillea millefolium*), red clover (*Trifolium pratense*), dock sp. (*Rumex* sp.), ribwort plantain, hogweed (*Heracleum sphondylium*), perennial ryegrass (*Lolium perenne*), birdsfoot trefoil (*Lotus corniculatus*) and bindweed (*Convolvulus arvensis*). The northernmost of these three fields had horses grazing at the time of the 2014 ecological constraints survey (refer to the 2008 Phase 1 Habitat map Areas 2 & 6).

The hedgerows and trees preset on site are considered to be of limited value due to the low diversity of woody and ground flora species. Woody species present within hedgerows include hawthorn, elder, willow sp., and Leyland cypress. Ground plant species included ivy, common nettle and bramble. Many of the hedgerows in particular within the sheep grazed fields at the western extent of the site are very gappy (refer to the 2008 Phase 1 Habitat map Areas 2 & 6).

Discussion

Previous terrestrial invertebrate surveys in 2008 are summarised below:

Entomological survey at the site produced a surprisingly limited range of insects, with only two scarce or threatened species recorded:

HYMENOPTERA

mining bee (Andrena labialis):

COLEOPTERA

soldier beetle (Cantharis fusca).



Whilst the soldier beetle is primarily associated with damp grassland habitats, the mining bee is found in dry grassland situations. The bulk of the area of grazing marsh was far drier than originally expected, and it appears that little of this area is subjected to the periodic flooding often associated with this habitat.

It is noteworthy that certain groups of species primarily associated with grazing marsh and wetlands were targeted but not found to be present. This applies particularly to the Brachyceran diptera where no Tabanids (horseflies & clegs) were found and a very limited Dolichopodid fauna was found to be present. Amongst the Stratiomyids (Soldierflies) only generalist species which develop in rotting vegetation were recorded; those species whose larvae develop in aquatic situations were found to be absent. Wetland hoverflies (Syrphidae) were also generally poorly represented, with only one species of Neoascia being recorded and only two wetland Platycheirus species found. Similarly, amongst the Snail - killing flies (Sciomyzidae), many of whose larvae predate on aquatic molluscs, only one species was recorded.

The reasons why these groups were so poorly represented are unclear, but their absence suggests some past deleterious occurrence, particularly since the ditches and water bodies currently appear to be suitable and relatively pollutant free.

Updated habitat assessment

The update assessment of the site found that the habitats predominantly remain as they were during the previous surveys in 2008 (WYG, 2008). The majority of the site that will be directly impacted as a result of the development comprises buildings surrounded by hardstanding, maintained grassland and ornamental planting and as such are considered to be of *Negligible* potential to notable invertebrate species as these habitats are common and widespread in the south-east of England. The part of the site that holds value to notable invertebrate species is the grazing marsh habitat and given the limited invertebrate interest in 2008 and given this habitat will be retained and enhanced through an Ecological Management Plan no further surveys are recommended in relation to this species. A small area of sheep grazed fields along the eastern extent of the grazing marsh habitat will be directly impacted to create sports pitches, however this habitat is grazed closely with limited vascular plants and as such is considered to be of limited value to invertebrates and hence the loss of this habitat is not considered to adversely impact invertebrates at the site.

Continued management of these areas by removal of a hay crop should sustain the existing flora and their attendant insect species.

Whilst it is recognised that recreational access will be introduced to the grazing marsh habitat, defined footpaths are proposed along the southern boundary of the grazing marsh habitat and hence it is not considered that the remaining habitat will be adversely impacted.

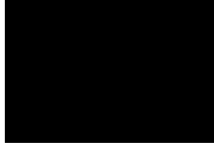
- ✧ Furthermore, it will form part of the Ecological Management Plan but the following enhancements are recommended for invertebrates:
- ✧ Re-instatement of existing dry ditches at the site to wet habitat – consultation is underway with the drainage engineers
- ✧ Creation of log piles and hibernacula (for reptiles) which will also benefit invertebrates
- ✧ Central area which currently comprises buildings, hardstanding and amenity grassland will be seeded with a wildflower seed mix to enhance the entomological interest at the site

It was agreed with West Sussex County Ecologist, Don Baker that given the above, no further invertebrate surveys are required at the site.



Please do not hesitate to contact us if you wish to discuss this further.

Yours sincerely,



Emily Hare
Consultant Ecologist

References

WYG (2006) North Littlehampton, West Sussex: Extended Phase 1 Habitat Survey Report

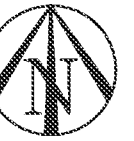
WYG (2008) Phase 1 update of the main North Littlehampton development site (2008)

WYG (2008) North Littlehampton, West Sussex Entomological Survey Report

WYG (2014) Toddington Lane, North Littlehampton – Update extended Phase 1 habitat survey



Appendix A - Plans



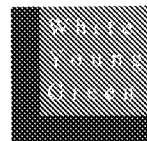
REFERENCE	
	HARD STANDING
	BUILDING
	SEMI IMPROVED GRASSLAND
	MARSHY UNIMPROVED GRASSLAND
	HEDGE WITH TREES
	DENSE CONTINUOUS SCRUB
	SCATTERED SCRUB
	INTRODUCED TREES AND SHRUBS
	OPEN WATER
	BROADLEAVED SCATTERED TREES
	BROADLEAVED SEMI NATURAL WOODLAND
	TARGET NOTES

Rev	Description	By	Chk	App	Date
-----	-------------	----	-----	-----	------

Drawing Title:
PHASE 1 HABITAT PLAN

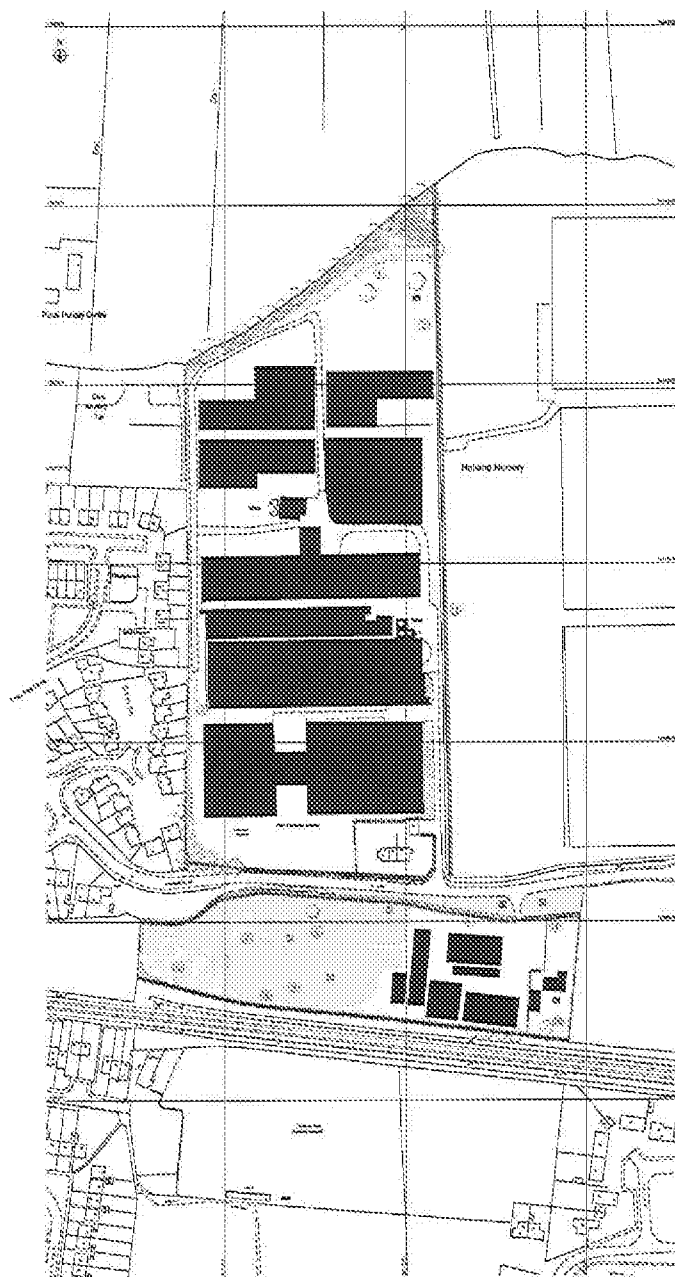
Scale at A3		Drawn By	Date	Checked By	Date	Approved By	Date
1:3750		D. J. B.	MAY 2006	D. H.	MAY 2006	P. M.	MAY 2006
Office	Type	Project No.		Drawing No.		Revision	
40	ENV	E09320		ECO. 01			

White Young Green Environmental Ltd.
Yeoman House
63 Croydon Road
London SE20 7TS
Tel: 020 8659 9959
Fax: 020 8676 9968
e-mail: enviro.london@wyg.com

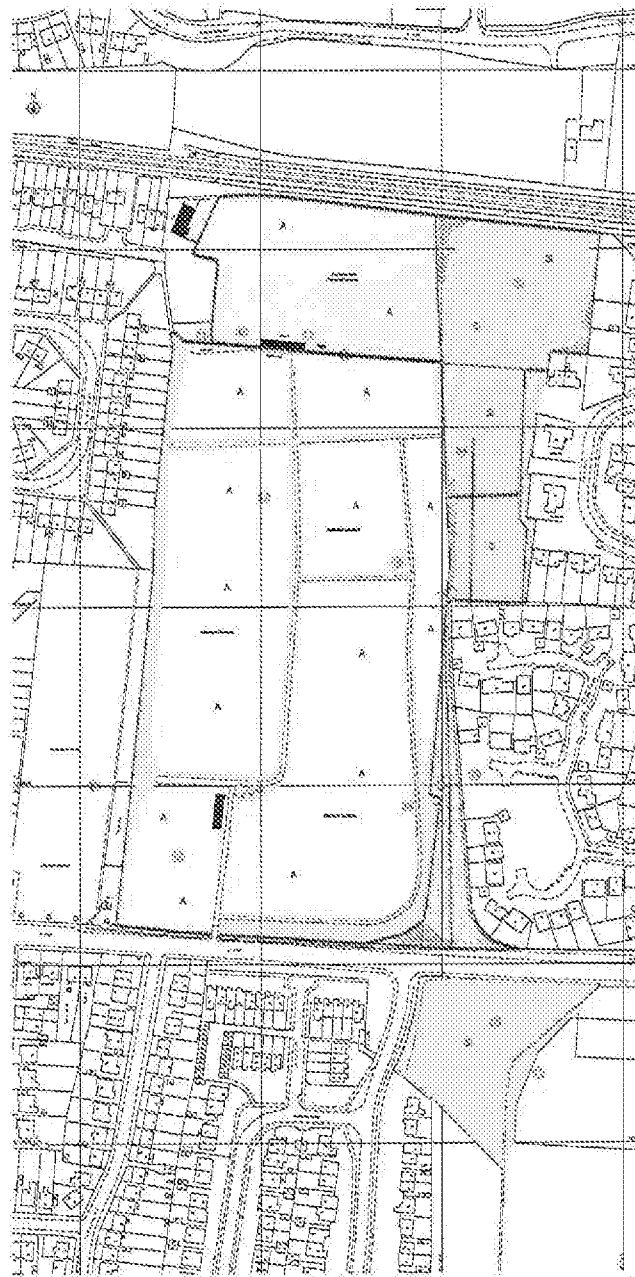


Environmental Consultancy
Civil Structural Mechanical Electrical Process Rail Traffic Environmental Project Management

Project:
NORTH LITTLEHAMPTON
Client:
GREEN CORE GROUP PLC



AREA NORTH OF RAILWAY



AREA SOUTH OF RAILWAY

KEY:

- BUILDINGS
- BARE GROUND
- FENCE
- GRASSLAND - NEUTRAL
- GRASSLAND - AMENITY
- HEDGES & TREES - SPECIES POOR
- HEDGE - INTACT SPECIES POOR
- HEDGE - CONIFER
- HEDGE - DEFUNCT
- TALL RUDERAL
- NON-RUDERAL TALL HERB
- SCATTERED TREES
- SCRUB - DENSE
- SHRUBS - INTRODUCED
- STANDING WATER - MAN MADE
- TARGET NOTE

© PRODUCED 1997 BY THE BODWELL
 SURVEY MAP WITH THE GRANTING OF THE
 COPYRIGHT OF A LANDSCAPE OFFICE
 CROWN COPYRIGHT IS CLAIMED
 LICENSE NO. 1000000

Rev	Description	By	CHK	App	Date
Client: GREENCORE GROUP Plc					
Project: LAND AT NORTH LITTLEHAMPTON					
PHASE 1 HABITAT MAP AREAS 2 & 6					
Project Control No: NH400 Scale: 1:2000 @ A2 Drawn by: JMS Checked by: SR Date: 02/10/2009					
Dwg No: GGP/A044029/HAB/01 Date: 04/08/08					
WYG ENVIRONMENT PLANNING TRANSPORT LTD EMPRESS HOUSE, 12 EMPRESS ROAD LYNCHURST, HAMPSHIRE, SO43 7AE Tel: 023 8028 2025 Fax: 023 8028 2623 E-Mail: enquiries@wyg.com www.wyg.com					

