

Technical Note Ecology

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Introduction

This Technical Note has been prepared by FPCR Environment and Design Ltd on behalf of Crest Nicholson Midlands. Its purpose is to provide the ecological context for a single dwelling full planning application for a redline area that falls within the fully consented 52 dwelling residential development known as Land East of A49, Holmer (Planning Ref: 193296).

Site Context

The redline boundary discussed here and new layout compared with the approved layout, is shown below. The new layout replaces a pumping station with a new dwelling, and will result in the replacement of a small area of amenity grassland with a garden and a minor increase in developed area/sealed surface.



Ecological Baseline

The wider site was surveyed by FPCR for the outline application in 2014 to 2016, which included Phase 1 Habitat, badger, great crested newt and bat activity surveys. Walkovers to re-assess the baseline conditions were also conducted in 2017, 2018 and 2019 by FPCR ecologists. These subsequent surveys showed no material change in baseline conditions from the outline application.

Below is an extract from the original 2014 Phase 1 Habitat Plan of the area in question. H3 has since been removed under the approved Protected Species Construction Method Statement and Great Crested Newt Reasonable Avoidance Measures (FPCR, 2017) in November 2017. At this time, the great crested newt

exclusion fence described as part of the reasonable avoidance measures, was also constructed using a durable hard plastic (remains in place). The target note shown referred to a dung heap, but on subsequent surveys this was shown to be a small area of made-ground with ruderal plants predominantly stinging nettle *Urtica dioica*.



The grassland habitats within the new redline area were as the wider scheme i.e., poor semi-improved grassland, and considered of low botanical value. H6 falls just outside the northern boundary was a native species-poor hedgerow (NERC Section 41 Priority Habitat) consisting of hawthorn *Cretaceous monogyna*, ash *Fraxinus excelsior*, blackthorn *Prunus spinosa* and elder *Sorbus nigra*. It averaged three species a per 30 metres and was narrow, box-cut and grazed by horses. There were no mature trees.

Aside from the potential for common and widespread nesting birds and foraging bats using the hedge, no protected species were recorded in this area. There were no significant ecological constraints within the new full application area.

A good population of great crested newt was recorded by FPCR in a pond 140m north of the site in 2016, and a site wide reasonable avoidance measures are in place (see below).

Impact Assessment

The updated proposals retain H6 and the proposed buffer, and the habitat loss remains restricted to the poor semi-improved grassland as per the previous application. The main change from the previous application is the replacement of informal amenity grassland planted with short-sward flowering lawn mixture, with a residential garden and a small increase in developed area. Given the very small habitat areas being considered, this change is *de minimus* and not significant.

It is recommended that the Protected Species Construction Method Statement and Great Crested Newt Reasonable Avoidance Measures (FPCR, 2017) and Ecological Management Plan (FPCR, 2017) documents submitted with the Reserved Matters application, remain as the live mitigation and enhancement documents for this full application. This will include an updated walkover prior to construction.

Overall, it is not predicted there will be any additional significant ecological impacts as result of the new full application, and with the mitigation from the wider scheme continued to be applied, there will not be a significant ecological effect as a result.