



MKA Ecology Ltd: Preliminary Ecological Appraisal technical summary note

Site	Shepherd's Hill, Parkland Walk
Project number	124422
Client name / address	Jake Jones, Haringey Council
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Summary

Site description:

The Site comprises a pocket of deciduous woodland bisected by a tarmac pathway. The woodland is listed on the Priority Habitat Inventory (National Forestry Inventory, 2020), and contains a mix of sycamore *Acer pseudoplatanus*, ash *Fraxinus excelsior*, silver birch *Betula pendula*, goat willow *Salix caprea* and pedunculate oak *Quercus robur*. A distinct understorey is present throughout much of the woodland, comprising holly *Ilex aquifolium*, hawthorn *Crataegus monogyna*, beech *Fagus sylvatica*, hazel *Corylus avellana*, elder *Sambucus nigra*, privet *Ligustrum vulgare*, yew *Taxus baccata* and wayfaring tree *Viburnum lantana*. The ground flora appears to be dominated by bare ground and leaf litter, with occasional instances of pendulous sedge *Carex pendula*, bramble *Rubus fruticosus* agg., cleavers *Galium aparine*, broad-leaved dock *Rumex obtusifolius*, herb-robert *Geranium robertianum*, wood avens *Geum urbanum*, creeping buttercup *Ranunculus repens*, dog's mercury *Mercurialis perennis*, common nettle *Urtica dioica*, ribwort plantain *Plantago lanceolata*, spear thistle *Cirsium vulgare*, canadian fleabane *Conyza canadensis*, dandelion *Taraxacum officinale* agg., bracken *Pteridium aquilinum* and willowherb *Epilobium* sp.

The Site is bounded by Shepherd's Hill, the A1, Highgate station and residential housing. Parkland Walk Local Nature Reserve (LNR) lies 0.05km south-east of the Site; Queen's Wood LNR lies 0.2km north. Queen's Wood comprises a large area of ancient woodland. The Site is well connected with the designated sites and ancient woodland present in the surrounding area.

An informal BMX track has been created by local residents in a clearing within the woodland.

Development proposals:

The current development proposals involve the creation of a new BMX track in the footprint of the existing track. The existing informal BMX track is currently of health and safety concern to Haringey Council; formalising the track will address this.

Constraints

	<i>Further survey effort required prior to planning application</i>
	<i>No surveys but mitigation/avoidance measures required for project planning/development</i>
	<i>No constraint</i>

Designated sites

☐ Potentially present on site
☒ Potentially present in Zone of Influence (ZOI)
☒ No constraint
☐ Further survey required.
☐ No further survey required but mitigation/avoidance measures necessary.
☒ Notes: Parkland Walk LNR and Queens Wood LNR both lie within 0.2km of the Site. Given the limited scope of the works, however, no impacts on these designated sites are anticipated as a result of the development proposals. Works will be limited to the digging and movement of earth to form new BMX track features.

Habitats of Principal Importance

☒ Potentially present on site
☐ Potentially present in ZOI
☐ No constraint
☐ Further survey required.
☒ No further survey required but mitigation/avoidance measures necessary.
☒ Notes: The woodland within which the Site lies is listed on the Priority Habitat Inventory (National Forestry Inventory, 2020) and is recorded on the MAGIC database as the deciduous woodland, a Habitat of Principal Importance (HPI) listed on Section 41 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act (2006). HPis which have been identified as being the most threatened and require conservation action and protection. No trees should be felled in order to create the new BMX track, with works being strictly limited to the existing track's footprint. For retained woodland and trees, it is recommended that they are protected during the works using root protection fencing around the

root zones in accordance with British Standards BS 5837 2012: Trees in Relation to Construction Recommendations or as otherwise directed by a suitably competent arboriculturalist.

Plants/fungi

☒ Present on site

☐ Potentially present in ZOI

☐ No constraint

☐ Further survey required.

☒ No further survey required but mitigation/avoidance measures necessary.

☒ Notes: Instances of cherry laurel *Prunus laurocerasus*, green alkanet *Pentaglottis sempervirens* and butterfly bush *Buddleja davidii* were identified at the Site. These species are listed as invasive on London's Invasive Species Initiative (LISI). All instances of invasive species should be subject to sensitive removal from the Site, with arisings treated as controlled waste and disposed of appropriately in order to avoid their spread.

Invertebrates

☐ Potentially present on site

☐ Potentially present in ZOI

☐ No constraint

☐ Further survey required.

☒ No further survey required but mitigation/avoidance measures necessary.

☒ Notes: A data search provided by Greenspace Information for Greater London (GiGL), the local environmental records centre, returned a number of records for stag beetle *Lucanus cervus* from within 2km of the Site. Stag beetle are listed on Schedule 5 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act (1981, as amended) and are a London Biodiversity Action Plan Priority Species. The nearest record of stag beetle is located 0.2km west of the Site and dated from 2016; the most recent record for stag beetle is from 2020. A number of deadwood habitat piles are present within the woodland. These provide important habitat features for invertebrates, particularly stag beetle; stag beetle larvae live in deadwood for up to seven years and use it as their primary food source. It is recommended that all deadwood features present at the Site remain in situ. Should the removal of any deadwood features be required in order to facilitate the proposed development, this should be undertaken under ecological supervision.

Fish

☐ Potentially present on site.

☐ Potentially present in ZOI.

☒ No constraint

☐ Further survey required.
☐ No further survey required but mitigation/avoidance measures necessary.
☒ Notes: No aquatic habitats are present at the Site.

Amphibians
☐ Potentially present on site
☐ Potentially present in ZOI
☒ No constraint
☐ Further survey required.
☐ No further survey required but mitigation/avoidance measures necessary.
☒ Notes: No waterbodies are present within 250m of the Site; any water bodies that are present beyond 250m of the Site have no connectivity to the Site due to the various road networks and physical barriers present in the surrounding landscape. The likelihood that the Site supports amphibians is negligible.

Reptiles
☒ Potentially present on site
☐ Potentially present in ZOI
☐ No constraint
☐ Further survey required.
☒ No further survey required but mitigation/avoidance measures necessary.
☒ Notes: The data search returned records for grass snake <i>Natrix helvetica</i> and slow-worm <i>Anguis fragilis</i> within 2km of the Site. The nearest record is located 1.2km west of the Site, dated from 2017; the most recent record is dated from 2018. All native reptiles are protected under Schedule 5 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act (1981) as amended and they are also Species of Principal Importance (SPI) listed on the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act (2006). The woodland understorey and ground flora offers some limited suitability for reptiles. As a precautionary measure, it is recommended that any clearance of this habitat be undertaken in a staged, directional manner so as to safeguard any reptiles that may be present. Full methodology will be included within the to-be-produced EcIA report (MKA Ecology Ltd, 2023 in prep). A number of brash piles and log piles are present within the woodland. These features provide hibernacula for reptiles and should be left in situ where possible. Should the removal of these features be deemed necessary, it is recommended that destructive search methodology is employed. Features should be carefully searched using hand tools as they are disassembled under the direction of a

supervising ecologist. Full methodology will be included within the to-be-produced EcIA report (MKA Ecology Ltd, 2023 in prep).

Birds

☒ Potentially present on site

☐ Potentially present in ZOI

☐ No constraint

☐ Further survey required.

☒ No further survey required but mitigation/avoidance measures necessary.

☒ Notes: The woodland canopy layer and understorey both offer breeding habitat for common nesting bird species. All wild birds, their active nests and eggs are protected under The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended), which makes it an offence deliberately, or recklessly, to kill or injure any wild bird or damage or destroy any active birds' nest or eggs. It is recommended that any vegetation clearance works are undertaken outside of the breeding bird season. Scheduling works between the months of September and February inclusive (i.e. outside of the bird season) would avoid impacts on breeding birds. Where clearance works are required during the breeding bird season (between the months of March and August inclusive), such works can only proceed following the completion of a nesting bird check undertaken by an experienced ornithologist. Any active birds' nest identified during this check must be protected from harm until the nesting attempt is complete. This will require a buffer to be left around the nest, the size of which will depend upon the species involved (as a general rule, this will be 10m in all directions around the nest). Any buffers established as a result of the initial nesting bird check must be subjected to a second check after the original nesting attempt is completed, before such areas can be removed during the breeding bird season.

Bats

☒ Potentially present on site

☐ Potentially present in ZOI

☐ No constraint

☐ Further survey required.

☒ No further survey required but mitigation/avoidance measures necessary.

☒ Notes: Two trees in the woodland (Target Note 1, Figure 1) were noted to support features of low bat roost potential. It is recommended that these trees be retained where possible. Should felling or pruning works be deemed necessary, works should follow 'soft-felling' methodology under the supervision of a suitably licenced ecologist. A full methodology will be included within the to-be-produced EcIA report (MKA Ecology Ltd, 2023 in prep).

Other mammals

☐ Potentially present on site

☐ Potentially present in ZOI

☐ No constraint

☐ Further survey required.

☒ No further survey required but mitigation/avoidance measures necessary.

☒ Notes: Confidential records for badger were returned by the data search. Whilst the Site offers suitability for badger sett building and foraging, no signs of badger presence were identified during the survey. Given the exposed and active nature of the existing BMX track, it is very unlikely that badgers will utilise this area of the Site where the development will be taking place. Should it be the case that works will extend further into the woodland area of the Site, an update badger check should be undertaken immediately prior to the commencement of works.

Opportunities

Habitat creation measures

Description:

The BMX track is currently of limited ecological value comprising largely bare ground and mud/earth banks, with encroaching ground flora at the peripheries. There exists the opportunity to enhance this area for biodiversity.

Undulations in the soil surface create natural surface pools on the existing BMX track. These should be retained and enhanced to provide a water source for invertebrates. Puddled clay could be used to create a natural waterproof lining for the pools. Distributing rocks and stones of various sizes in and around the pools would create different substrate types, creating different habitat niches for a variety of invertebrate species.

The creation of deadwood features at the site will be particularly valuable for invertebrates as a foraging resource, which in turn benefits a range of other species such as hedgehogs and reptiles. This could include rotting roots or tree stumps spread around various locations, including the banks surrounding the leaky dams. The drilling of holes or cutting of notches can add even more value for invertebrates.

Species enhancement measures

Description:

Enhanced opportunities for breeding birds should be created at the Site. Species that might benefit from the introduction of nesting opportunities on this Site include tawny owl *Strix aluco*, spotted flycatcher

Muscicapa striata, firecrest *Regulus ignicapilla* and nuthatch *Sitta europaea*, as well as generalist woodland bird species. Suitable bird boxes will be provided in the to-be-produced EcIA report (MKA Ecology Ltd, 2023 in prep).

The Site has the potential for use by foraging bats. With this in mind, enhanced opportunities for roosting bats should also be provided at the site through installation of bat boxes. Suitable bat boxes will be provided in the to-be-produced EcIA report (MKA Ecology Ltd, 2023 in prep).

The earth banks that will form the BMX jumps should be designed with invertebrates in mind. It is recommended that the south facing aspects of the banks are as steep as possible so as to maximise their ability to absorb heat from sunlight which will provide increased basking opportunities for butterflies and other insect species. Locally sourced deadwood could also be incorporated into the structure of the banks. As discussed above, buried deadwood provides important foraging habitat for a range of invertebrates. Other locally sourced rubble, such as rocks, can also be incorporated into the bank structure so as to create variation in habitat structure. Full details will be included within the to-be-produced EcIA report once the full plans and site layout are known (MKA Ecology Ltd, 2023 in prep).

Next steps

Once detailed plans are known, we will produce an EcIA report for the proposed development to support the forthcoming planning application. The EcIA will follow the best-practice guidelines provided by CIEEM (2022) and will fully evaluate the nature conservation value of ecological features present at the application Site, assess the significance of the effects of the proposed development on these features, and set out confirmed mitigation and enhancement measures.

References

MKA Ecology Ltd (2023, in prep). *Shepherd's Hill, Parkland Walk – Ecological Impact Assessment*. MKA Ecology Ltd: London.

Appendix

Figure 1: UK Habitat Classification Map of the Site



Target Note 1: Tree with low bat roost potential

Invasive Species 1: Cherry laurel

Invasive Species 2: Green alkanet

Invasive Species 3: Butterfly-bush