

**OAKLEY WOOD CREMATORIUM,
NEWBOLD ROAD, LEAMINGTON**

EXTENDED PHASE 1 HABITAT SURVEY

A Report to Warwick District Council

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OAKLEY WOOD CREMATORIUM, NEWBOLD ROAD
LEAMINGTON

EXTENDED PHASE 1 HABITAT SURVEY

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01 OF 02

01 WARWICK DISTRICT COUNCIL
02 MIDDLEMARCH ENVIRONMENTAL

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*The contents of this report are the responsibility of Middlemarch Environmental Ltd.
It should be noted, that whilst every effort is made to meet the client's brief,
no site investigation can ensure complete assessment
or prediction of the natural environment*

Contract Number C100193

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 BACKGROUND

Warwick District Council commissioned Middlemarch Environmental Ltd to undertake an ecological assessment of the woodland burial section of the Oakley Wood Crematorium site, Newbold Road, Leamington Spa. The area surveyed was defined by Debbie Williams, Parks Development Officer, Warwick District Council and is detailed on Middlemarch Environmental Drawing No. C100193-01 in Appendix 2.

To fulfil the above brief to assess the existing ecological interest of the site, a desk study and an Extended Phase 1 Habitat Survey were undertaken.

This report details and provides the following information:

- Desk study
- Extended Phase 1 Habitat Survey

1.2 SITE DESCRIPTION

The site occurs just outside of the village of Bishops Tachbrook on the B4078 road, approximately 4 km south of Leamington Spa, Warwickshire at National Grid Reference SP305595. The site comprises of a number of Chapels and a Lodge set within memorial gardens and woodland with associated car parking and roadways. The site is located within Oakley Wood, a large formerly deciduous wood, which has been mostly felled and replanted in the centre with conifers. To the south lies a rough farm track bordered by hedgerows. On all sides, outside of the woodland, lies agricultural land associated with the neighbouring farms including Oakley Wood Farm, Plestowes Farm and Tollgate Farm. To the west of the site lies a further strip of mature oak woodland. This survey concentrated on a small section of the woodland within the crematorium grounds that is used as the woodland burial area.

2. METHODOLOGY

2.1 DESK STUDY

A desk study was undertaken to determine the nature conservation designations and protected species that have been recorded within 1 km of the site. This involved contacting statutory and non-statutory organisations. Middlemarch Environmental Ltd assimilated and reviewed the desk study data provided by the organisations.

The consultees for the Desk Study were:

- Natural England (Multi-Agency Geographical Information System)
- Warwickshire Local Biological Record Centre
- Habitat Biodiversity Audit

The data collected from these consultees is discussed in Section 3.

2.2 EXTENDED PHASE 1 HABITAT SURVEY

To fulfil the brief of undertaking an ecological assessment of the site, an Extended Phase 1 Habitat Survey was conducted (JNCC, 1993 as amended by IEA, 1995). This is a standard technique for classifying and mapping British habitats. The aim is to provide a record of habitats that are likely to be ecologically important. During the Extended Phase 1 Habitat Survey, the presence, or potential presence, of protected species was also recorded.

The habitats and species detailed in sections 2.1 and 2.2 were assessed to identify the ecological value of the proposed development area and the need for any protected species or additional ecological surveys. The ecological significance of the site was evaluated and the significance of developing the area assessed.

3. DESK STUDY RESULTS

3.1 INTRODUCTION

From the details provided by the consultees, relevant ecological data has been reviewed. The results from these investigations for the site are summarised below in Sections 3.2 and 3.3. All data are provided in Appendix 1.

3.2 NATURE CONSERVATION SITES

There are no statutory protected sites within a 1 km radius of the site. There are six non-statutory sites of nature conservation importance termed 'Ecosites' within 1 km radius of the site:

1. Meadow at Heathcote Farm
2. Footpath at Wasperton Lane near Plestowes House
3. Oakley Wood
4. Ashorne Hill and Park
5. Wiggerland Wood
6. Rough Track Between Ashorne & Oakley Wood

Table 3.1 summarises these sites. Details of these sites are provided in Appendix 1.

3.3 PROTECTED AND BIODIVERSITY ACTION PLAN SPECIES

The desk study identified a number of protected species within 1 km of the site. The species recorded are summarised in Table 3.2. The following sections outline their level of protection. Some of these species are also listed within the Local BAP and/or as priority species within the UK BAP. The absence of records should not be taken as confirmation that the species is absent from the search area.

Badgers

Badgers are protected under Appendix 3 of the Bern Convention (1979), the Protection of Badgers Act (1992), and Schedule 6 of the Wildlife & Countryside Act (1981). Under this legislation it is an offence to:

- Destroy any part of a sett;
- Disturb any part of a sett;
- Obstruct access to or entrances of setts;
- Disturb badgers in occupation of a sett; and,

- Take, kill or injure a badger.

Any works undertaken within 30 m of an active sett will require a Development License from Natural England prior to any works commencing within these 'exclusion zones'.

Bats

All species of British bat are listed in Appendix II of the Berne Convention and various Annexes of the Habitats Directive. They are protected under Schedule 5 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 and Schedule 2 of the Conservation (Natural Habitats, etc) Regulation 1994 (Regulation 38). It is therefore illegal to kill, injure or handle any bat or obstruct access to, destroy or disturb any site that they use.

Birds

All bird species are fully protected throughout the year under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (except those listed on schedule 2, Part 1, game birds, and birds covered by a general licence). The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 states that:

“(1)..if any person intentionally –
(a) kills, injures or takes any wild bird;
(b) takes, damages or destroys the nest of any wild bird
while that nest is in use or being built; or,
(c) takes or destroys an egg of any wild bird,
he shall be guilty of an offence.”

Reptile

All of the UK's native reptiles are protected by law. The two rarest species – sand lizard (*Lacerta agilis*) and smooth snake (*Coronella austriaca*) benefit from the greatest protection.

Common lizard (*Lacerta vivipara*), slow-worm (*Anguis fragilis*), adder (*Vipera berus*) and grass snake (*Natrix natrix*) are protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) from intentional killing or injuring.

Site	National Grid Reference	Summary of Site	Approximate Proximity to Site
Meadow at Heathcote Farm	SP 297 593	Rough meadow, over grown bushy grassland. A ditch/stream runs along the western boundary, pollarded willow along the boundary, yorhshire fog and cock's-foot, hedgerows consist of hawthorn, elder, lime,ash and willow with occasional dead elm.	800m West
Footpath at Wasperton Lane near Plestowes House	SP 297 595	Mousetail exists along the footpath.	800m West
Woodland Area Adjacent to Wasperton Lane	SP 298 596	Potential Site of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINC) mature oak, woodland with ash and occasional sycamore, hawthorn, field maple, holly, hazel, bramble, bluebell, herb Robert, dog violet, red campion, greater stitchwort and wood avens.	800m West
Oakley Wood	SP 305 595	Potential Site of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINC), large formally deciduous wood that has mostly been replanted, the older section has a closed canopy and virtually no ground layer, generally flat and well drained. Part of the site consists of oak, hazel, sweet chestnut, larch, birch, bluebell and bramble.	0m
Ashorne Hill and Park Wiggerland Wood	SP 311 591	Potential Site of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINC), neglected deciduous woodland oak and ash canopy, sweet chestnut, sycamore, silver birch, bracken, bramble and wood sorrel.	900m South East
Rough Track Between Ashorne & Oakley Wood	SP 302 590	The southern part of the track has been selected as a potential Site of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINC), rough grassy track used by cattle and horses boarded by hedgerows, species include liquorice, zigzag clover and crow garlic.	600m South West

Table 3.1 Summary of non-statutory conservation sites Within 1 km of the Site

Scientific Name	Common Name	Number of records	Approximate Distance From Site of Nearest Record	Local BAP	UK BAP	Protection
<i>Natrix natrix</i>	Grass snake	2	100m South			BC3 WCA5
<i>Meles meles</i>	Badger	7	200m South 150m North 400m North East 750m North east 800m North East 900m West 950m North			BC3 PBA WCA6
<i>Myotis nattereri</i>	Natterer's	1	850m South West	√		LBAP BC2 BoC2 ECH4 WCA5 WCA6

Notes: BC3: Berne Convention Appendix 3

BoC2: Bonn Convention Appendix II

ECH4: European Communities Council Annex II

LBAP: Warwickshire Biodiversity Action Plan

PBA: Protection of Badgers Act 1992

WCA5: Wildlife And Countryside Act 1981; Schedule 5

WCA6: Wildlife And Countryside Act 1981; Schedule 6

Table 3.2 Protected Species within 1 km of the Site

4. EXTENDED PHASE 1 HABITAT SURVEY

4.1 INTRODUCTION

The results of the Extended Phase 1 Habitat Survey are presented in Section 4.2. An annotated Extended Phase 1 Habitat Survey Drawing (Middlemarch Environmental Ltd Drawing Number C100193-01 is attached in Appendix 2. This drawing illustrates the location of all the habitat types recorded at the site.

The woodland burial site is situated within Oakley Wood. The site is dominated by plantation mixed woodland with a wide variety of under storey species and fauna present within the survey area. The surrounding landscape was predominantly broad-leaved and coniferous plantation woodland.

4.2 HABITATS

The following habitat types were recorded at the site:

- Mixed plantation woodland

An Extended Phase 1 Habitat Survey drawing illustrating these habitats is given in Appendix 2.

These habitats are outlined below.

Mixed Plantation Woodland

The survey site is dominated by plantation woodland. Mixed plantation woodland is generally considered to be of moderate ecological value, however the surveyed areas of woodland were identified as being of great importance for birds with suitable habitat for both reptiles and mammal species. The woodland was bounded by a fence on all sides. Species include those detailed in Table 4.1.

English name	Scientific name
Bluebell	<i>Hyacinthoides non-scripta</i>
Bracken	<i>Pteridium aquilinum</i>
Bramble	<i>Rubus fruticosus</i> agg.
Bugle	<i>Ajuga reptans</i>
Bulbous buttercup	<i>Ranunculus bulbosus</i>
Burdock	<i>Arctium</i> sp.
Cleavers	<i>Galium aparine</i>
Common chickweed	<i>Stellairia media</i>
Common dog-violet	<i>Viola riviniana</i> .
Crab apple	<i>Malus sylvestris</i>
Dock sp.	<i>Rumex</i> sp.
Douglas fir	<i>Pseudotsuga menziesi</i>
Elder	<i>Sambucus nigra</i>
Foxglove	<i>Digitalis purpure</i>
Greater stitchwort	<i>Stellaria holostea</i>
Hard rush	<i>Juncus inflexsus</i>
Hawthorn	<i>Crataegus monogyna</i>
Hazel	<i>Corylus avellana</i>
Holly	<i>Ilex aquifolium</i>
Honeysuckle	<i>lonicera periclymenum</i>
Male fern	<i>Dryopteris felix-mas</i>
Oak	<i>Quercus petraea</i>
Rowan	<i>Sorbus aucuparia</i>
Red campion	<i>Silene dioica</i>
Rhododendron	<i>Rhododendron ponticum</i>
Scots pine	<i>Pinus sylvestris</i>
Silver birch	<i>Betula pendula</i>
Wood millet	<i>Milium effusum</i>
Wood sage	<i>Teucrium scorodonia</i>
Wood sorrel	<i>Oxalis acetosella</i>
Yellow pimpernel	<i>Lysimachia nemorum</i>

Table 4.1 Flora Species Recorded During Field Survey

4.3 FAUNA

The habitat within the site is potentially of particular value to a range of protected species. However, it should be noted that Extended Phase 1 Habitat Surveys are not specific to protected species and only provide an indication of suitable habitat.

4.3.1 Birds

The woodland area provides valuable habitat for nesting birds. A total of 5 species of bird were recorded during the survey. Table 4.2 shows the species observed at the site at the time of the survey.

Scientific name	English name
<i>Turdus merula</i>	Blackbird
<i>Parus major</i>	Great tit
<i>Garrulus glandarius</i>	Jay
<i>Erithacus rubecula</i>	Robin
<i>Troglodytes troglodytes</i>	Wren

Table 4.2 Birds recorded on site during the field survey

4.3.2 Mammals

A total of 3 species of mammal were recorded during the survey. Table 4.3 shows the species observed at the site at the time of the survey.

Scientific name	English name
<i>Sciurus carolinensis</i>	Grey squirrel
<i>Talpa europaea</i>	Mole
<i>Oryctolagus cuniculus</i>	Rabbit

Table 4.3 Mammals recorded on site during the field survey

A mammal pathway under the northern fence line surrounding the woodland burial site was noted. The woodland provides suitable foraging habitat for badgers.

No other evidence of protected species was noted during the field survey. Although generally in good condition, a number of the trees occurring within the site had features such as peeling bark and may be suitable for bats. Due to the number of trees present within the survey area it is recommended that a detailed initial bat survey is undertaken in order to assess the potential for trees with bat roosting features in further detail. The site also offers potential foraging habitat and commuting routes.

Rabbits were noted as being abundant.

The surveyed area is deemed to provide habitat for a range of other mammal species.

4.3.3 Herpetofauna

No reptiles or amphibians were identified on site during the field survey. Terrestrial habitat suitable for reptiles was identified within the study area.

5. DISCUSSION

This section discusses evidence drawn from the desk study and field survey and assesses the ecological impacts of the proposed works.

5.1 NATURE CONSERVATION SITES

The desk study did not locate any nationally important conservation sites within 1 km of the site.

There are six non-statutory conservation sites within 1 km. The surveyed area falls within Oakley Wood Ecosite. The proposed works will have an adverse impact on this area of woodland through loss of habitat and a subsequent reduction in size of the Oakley Wood Ecosite. It is not considered that any proposed works within the site will have an adverse impact on any of the other Ecosites in the surrounding area.

5.2 HABITATS

Mixed plantation woodland has low to moderate ecological value and supports a variety of species suitable for nesting birds, reptiles and bats. The proposed works will have an adverse impact on the value of this habitat to the detriment of many species, particularly nesting birds

5.3 FAUNA

The potential for likely protected species to be present is discussed below drawing on evidence from the desk study and field visit.

Birds

Five bird species were noted on site at the time of the field survey these can be found in Table 4.2. These species have no particular protection level although any trees or vegetation removal should be carried out after nesting season.

The surveyed area and its surroundings is known as a valuable area for bird species by the West Midlands Bird Club. The loss of woodland habitat is therefore likely to have a significant impact upon a range of woodland bird species.

Herpetofauna

Grass snake *Natrix natrix* were identified in the desk study, two records are present both within 100m of the survey area. The field survey identified the presence of suitable terrestrial habitat for reptiles. Vegetation removal would decrease the habitat present for this species.

Mammals

The desk study provided records of two protected mammal species, badgers and bats. Seven records of badger were present in the desk study and a mammal pathway was noted during the field survey. The records from the desk study data range from between 150m and 900m from the survey site in all directions. As detailed in section 4.3.2 a mammal pathway under the northern fence line surrounding the woodland burial site was noted and the site was deemed to exhibit suitable habitat for use by badgers.

One record of Natterer's *Myotis nattereri* bat was identified by the desk study this was found 850m South West of the survey area. A number of trees at the site had features such as peeling bark and may be suitable for bats. Due to the number of trees present within the survey area it is recommended that a detailed initial bat survey is undertaken in order to assess the potential for trees with bat roosting features.

It is thought likely that the proposed development will have a detrimental effect on mammal species within the site due to loss of suitable habitat.

6. RECOMMENDATIONS

To ensure that best ecological practice is met and that no offences occur under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 Middlemarch Environmental Ltd can offer the following recommendations.

R1 Any vegetation clearance works are to be undertaken outside of the bird nesting season. The bird-nesting season is generally regarded to extend between March and September inclusive but is weather dependent. If this is not possible a suitably qualified ecologist must undertake a nesting bird check prior to clearance commencing.

R2 As the site was deemed to provide ideal habitat for foraging by badgers, a mammal pathway under the northern site fence line, and the species also occurred within the desk study data, it is recommended that a badger survey be undertaken to 30m around the edges of the proposed development area prior to the commencement of any works on site.

R3 It is recommended that a reptile survey be carried out due to the habitats present on site being suitable for reptile species. The desk study showed that grass snakes are present within 100m of the survey site.

R4 Due to the number of trees within the survey area that are likely to be felled it is recommended that a bat survey be undertaken to check for roost features and ensure that the trees are not being used as roosting sites by bat species.

REFERENCES

JNCC, (1993). *Handbook for Phase 1 Habitat Survey: A technique for environmental audit* (reprint). Joint Nature Conservation Committee, Peterborough.

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Multi-Agency Geographic Information Website (2006). *Site Check Report.*
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National Biodiversity Action Plan www.ukbap.org.uk

APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1 Desk Study Data

APPENDIX 2: Extended Phase 1 Habitat Survey Drawing
Middlemarch Environmental Drawing No: 100193-01

APPENDIX 1

Site Check Report

Report generated on June 6 2007.

You clicked on the point:

Grid Ref: **SP305595**

Full Grid Ref: **430500 , 259500**

The following features have been found within 1,000 metres of your search point:

RSPB Reserves (England)

There are no features within your search area.

Ancient Woodland (England)

Theme Name	Wood Name	Grid Reference	Theme ID
ANCIENT REPLANTED WOODLAND	WIGERLANDS WOOD	SP305594	1107791
ANCIENT & SEMI-NATURAL WOODLAND	WIGERLANDS WOOD	SP311592	1107791
ANCIENT & SEMI-NATURAL WOODLAND	WIGERLANDS WOOD	SP311591	1107791

National Inventory of Woodland and Trees (England)

Feature type	Reference date	Update type
CONIFEROUS	310397	
BROADLEAVED	310397	

Local Nature Reserves (England)

There are no features within your search area.

National Nature Reserves (England)

There are no features within your search area.

Biosphere Reserves (England)

There are no features within your search area.

Ramsar Sites (England)

There are no features within your search area.

Special Protection Areas (England)

There are no features within your search area.

Special Areas of Conservation (England)

There are no features within your search area.

Sites of Special Scientific Interest (England)

There are no features within your search area.

Important Bird Areas (England)

There are no features within your search area.

Lowland Grazing Marsh (England)

There are no features within your search area.

Grassland Inventory (England)

There are no features within your search area.

To save the report, select "Save As" from the File menu. Give the report a name of your choice and save it in "Web Page, HTML only" format.

You can then open your report using your web browser software.

APPENDIX 2

TARGET NOTES

1. Gap in fence with mammal pathway.
2. Woodland ride providing habitat suitable for reptiles.
3. Memorial Garden

**MIDDLEMARCH ENVIRONMENTAL
QUALITY ASSURANCE**

**TITLE: OAKLEY WOOD CREMATORIUM
EXTENDED PHASE 1 HABITAT SURVEY**

A Report to WARWICK DISTRICT COUNCIL

Contract Number: C100193

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