

2021 Ecological Survey Addendum for Firepool, Taunton, Somerset



Cotswold Wildlife Surveys

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QUALITY CONTROL

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The information in this report has been prepared in accordance with the Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management's (CIEEM) Code of Professional Conduct. The conclusions and recommendations expressed are reasoned judgements based on the evidence.

Every reasonable attempt has been made to comply with BS42020:2013 *Biodiversity – Code of practice for planning and development*, CIEEM *Guidelines for Ecological Report Writing* (CIEEM, 2017) and Bat Conservation Trust's *Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines* (3rd edition, Collins, 2016). If there has been deviation from recognised practice, justification/explanation has been given.

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SUMMARY

On 13th March 2019, Somerset West and Taunton Council (SWTC) gave conditional outline planning consent for a mixed use development as a re-development of the former cattle market and Priory Bridge Road car park, in the Firepool area of Taunton (Planning Application No. 38/17/0150). Key elements of the re-development are office, hotel and residential accommodation and proposals for a multi-purpose convention centre.

In support of the application, a series of protected species and habitat surveys were carried out between January 2006 and November 2016. More recently, during 2020, an Environmental Statement was prepared on behalf of Somerset West and Taunton Council (SWTC) in relation to the Council's proposed adoption of a Local Development Order (LDO) for the Firepool site in Taunton town centre (hereafter referred to as 'the site'). The results of these surveys are detailed in the following reports:

Knight Ecology, 2009. *Firepool & Priory Bridge Car Park, Taunton, Somerset. Ecological Appraisal & Bat Survey.* 31 pp.

Clarke Bond Geo-Environmental Ltd., 2006. *Ecological Appraisal, Firepool Phase 2, Taunton, Somerset.* 17 pp.

Cotswold Wildlife Surveys, 2009. *Protected Species Survey Report for Project Firepool, Taunton, Somerset.* 33 pp. 319-CWS-01.

Halcrow Group Limited, 2010. *Phase 1 Ecological Appraisal for Firepool, Taunton.* Xxpp.

Cotswold Wildlife Surveys, 2012. *Discharge of ecology condition for application reference 38/10/0214.* 6 pp letter for river bank survey. 319-CWS-02.

Cotswold Wildlife Surveys, 2015. *Updated Nocturnal Bat Survey Report for Firepool, Taunton, Somerset.* 14 pp. 319-CWS-04.

Cotswold Wildlife Surveys, 2017. *Ecological Survey Addendum for Firepool, Taunton, Somerset.* 20 pp. 319-CWS-05.

Cotswold Wildlife Surveys, 2021. *2020 Ecological Survey Addendum for Firepool, Taunton, Somerset.* 26 pp. 319-CWS-10.

The surveys revealed no signs of reptiles or amphibians, no roosting bats, low levels of bat foraging around the site by a small number of common species, no breeding birds, no evidence of Water Vole *Arvicola amphibius* activity due to the presence of American Mink *Mustela vison*, and limited signs of Otter *Lutra lutra* use of the river.

Further to all the surveys above, the site was re-visited in 2021, with an updated Phase 1 Habitat survey carried out on 31st March. This also included an external daytime bat inspection of all remaining buildings on the site.

No evidence of bat activity was found, and the buildings were not identified as bat roosts or hibernation site.

During the survey a variety of birds were observed, including two Species of High Conservation Concern (RSPB Red list); Herring Gull *Larus argentatus* and Starling *Sturnus vulgaris*, two Species of Medium Conservation Concern (RSPB Amber list); Lesser Black-backed Gull *Larus fuscus* and Dunnock *Prunella modularis*, and nine Species of Low Conservation Concern (RSPB Green list); Woodpigeon *Columba palumbus*, Feral Pigeons *C. livia domestica*, Wren *Troglodytes troglodytes*, Robin *Erithacus rubecula*, Blackbird *Turdus merula*, Blue Tit *Cyanistes caeruleus*, Chaffinch *Fringilla coelebs*, Goldfinch *Carduelis carduelis* and Magpie *Pica pica*.

Although no in-use nests were found, Dunnock and Blackbird are both known to breed on the site.

Mallards *Anas platyrhynchos* and Moorhen *Gallinula chloropus* were seen along the river.

There were no recent Otter *Lutra lutra* spraints under the Priory Bridge Road car park bridge, just older spraints, but some fresh scats from American Mink *Mustela vison* were noted.

The river contains Dace *Leuciscus leuciscus*, Chubb *Squalius cephalus*, Bream *Abramis brama* and Carp *Cyprinus sp.*

Brown Rats *Rattus norvegicus* are common along the river banks.

Given the above, no further surveys are considered necessary, although measures will be undertaken to enhance the River Tone corridor for wildlife.

1. INTRODUCTION

In late January 2006, Clarke Bond Geo-Environmental Ltd carried out an ecological appraisal of the Firepool livestock market and Priory Bridge car park, including the River Tone navigation, in Taunton, Somerset.

The objectives of the appraisal were to; collate past survey information on the distribution of habitats and selected species within the site, evaluate the habitats based on the standard Phase 1 Survey Methodology, compile a selective plant species list of any notable species recorded during the site survey, and survey for the presence of any wildlife species afforded special protection under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) or listed in Annex IVa of the European Directive 92/43/EEC occupying or foraging within the site.

Notes were made of casual observation on wildlife but no attempt was made to consistently record the commoner species. The survey period during late January 2006 restricted the scope for reporting of certain species, e.g. breeding birds and invertebrates. This tended to under record their wildlife value at the site, and the evaluation within the report was reliant on past records extracted from the previous studies for these groups.

In June 2009, Knight Ecology was commissioned by Somerset County Council to carry out an ecological appraisal and bat survey of the Firepool site. Visits were made on 15th and 22nd June 2009, from which recommendations for further survey work were made.

These included internal inspections of all the buildings, nocturnal bat surveys (activity and emergence/return), presence or absence surveys for reptiles, and a breeding bird survey.

In July 2009, Cotswold Wildlife Surveys was instructed by DBK Group, to undertake these surveys. Particular attention was paid to bats, reptiles and birds as recommended, but other species were also looked for, including European Otters and Water Voles.

On 10th August 2009, a visit was made to Firepool to carry out a diurnal inspection of the buildings to check for signs of bat occupation. A nocturnal bat emergence survey was then undertaken on 10th August 2009, with dawn swarm surveys on 11th August and 5th September 2009.

No signs of bat occupation were found, and virtually all the built structures and trees were considered unsuitable as bat roost or hibernation sites.

The nocturnal surveys revealed 3-4 Common Pipistrelle Bats flying round the site, mostly along Canal Road and under the livestock buildings. Most of these bats were thought to have emerged from the woodland area along the River Tone and canal to the east of the site.

In addition, a Brown Long-eared Bat was detected briefly in the scrub to the east of the railway sheds, but it was not roosting in any of the buildings, whilst a Noctule Bat *Nyctalus noctula* passed high overhead.

Updated nocturnal bat surveys were later carried out by Cotswold Wildlife Surveys on 20th September 2013 and 19th May 2014, to check for any changes in the status of bat use within the site.

Two Common Pipistrelle Bats were seen flying along Canal Road, and again no bats were seen to emerge from anywhere on the site.

Updated nocturnal emergence and activity surveys were subsequently carried out on 27th May, 16th June, 18th August and 16 September 2020.

The following species were recorded Common and Soprano Pipistrelles *Pipistrellus pygmaeus*, Daubenton's Bat *Myotis daubentonii* and Brown Long-eared Bat *Plecotus auritus*.

Only low levels of activity were noted, with most bats foraging along the River Tone and in Children's Wood to the northeast of the application site beyond the canal lock. Small numbers of Common and Soprano Pipistrelles were noted commuting along Canal Road.

Taking all the evidence into account, the status of bats at Firepool is considered thus:

- Brown Long-eared Bat – foraging site only for a single animal;
- Common Pipistrelle Bats – foraging site only for a small number of animals;
- Soprano Pipistrelle Bats – foraging site only for a small number of animals;
- Daubenton's Bat – small number of animals foraging along the River Tone;
- Noctule Bat – flyovers only.

Given the nature of the bat use on the site, no further surveys or mitigation measures are considered necessary, and a licence from Natural England is not required.

Between 10th August and 11th September 2009 a series of reptile surveys were carried out. No signs of reptiles (or amphibians) were discovered, thus confirming their absence at the site.

However, several of the refugia were in use by Field Voles *Microtus agrestis*.

In 2009 the banks of the River Tone Navigation were also checked for evidence of European Otter and Water Voles.

No field signs of the latter were recorded, but several old spraints from Otters were found under the Priory Bridge Road car park footbridge, along with scats from an American Mink.

Updated checks were made throughout 2020 for signs of aquatic mammals, with a very fresh Otter spraint found under the Priory Bridge Road car park bridge on 16th September 2020.

Older spraints were also present, suggesting regular visits by the animal/s. No further signs of mink were recorded, and they have probably been ousted by the Otters.

The river contains Dace, Chubb, Bream and Carp.

Brown Rats are common along the river banks.

In spring 2020 a breeding bird survey was carried out. Although no in-use nests were found, the following species were confirmed as breeding on the site:

- Dunnock– a pair in the scrub behind the former dwelling at No. 9 Canal Road with a second pair in the scrub along Canal Road south of the GWR building;
- Blackbird– a male gathering food in the landscaped area just south of Priory car park footbridge, with a presumed nest in the ornamental shrubs.

Other species noted but not breeding, included loafing gulls Herring and Lesser Black-backed, Woodpigeon, Feral Pigeons, Grey Wagtail *Motacilla cinerea*, Chiffchaff *Phylloscopus colybita*, Blue Tit, Goldfinch, House Sparrow *Passer domesticus* and Starling. Little Egret *Egretta garzetta*, Mallards and Moorhen were seen along the river.

On 31st March 2021, an updated Phase 1 Habitat Survey was carried out, the results of which are contained in this report.

In England, Scotland and Wales, all **bat** species are fully protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (WCA) (as amended), through inclusion in Schedule 5.

In England and Wales this Act has been amended by the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 (CRoW), which adds an extra offence, makes species offences arrestable, increases the time limits for some prosecutions, and increases penalties.

All bats are also included in Schedule 2 of the Conservation (Natural Habitats, & c.) Regulations 1994, (or Northern Ireland 1995) (the Habitats Regulations), which defines ‘European protected species of animals’.

The above legislation can be summarised thus (Mitchell-Jones and McLeish, 2004):

- *Intentionally or deliberately kill, injure or capture (or take) bats*
- *Deliberately disturb bats (whether in a roost or not)*
- *Recklessly disturb roosting bats or obstruct access to their roosts*
- *Damage or destroy roosts*
- *Possess or transport a bat or any part of a part of a bat, unless acquired legally*
- *Sell (or offer for sale) or exchange bats, or parts of bats*

The word ‘roost’ is not used in the legislation, but is used here for simplicity. The actual wording is ‘any structure or place which any wild animal...uses for shelter or protection’ (WCA), or ‘breeding site or resting place’ (Habitats Regulations).

As bats generally have both a winter and a summer roost, the legislation is clear that all roosts are protected whether bats are in residence at the time or not.

All common **reptiles** (Common Lizard, Grass Snake, Slow-worm and Adder) are afforded legal protection under Schedule 5 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) largely as a consequence of a national decline in numbers associated with persecution and habitat loss. Under the terms of the Act it is illegal to intentionally kill or injure a reptile.

In Britain, all wild **birds**, their nests and eggs are protected under the Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981 (as amended), with the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 extending this protection. There are penalties for:

- ❑ *Killing, injuring or capturing them, or attempting any of these*
- ❑ *Taking or damaging the nest whilst in use*
- ❑ *Taking or destroying the eggs*

Schedule 1 species carry special penalties and it is an offence to even disturb these near the nest.

European Otters are protected under Sections 9.1 and 9.4, Schedule 5 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended), Annex 2 and 4 of the Conservation (Natural Habitats &c.) Regulations 1994 as amended, and are a priority species under the UK BAP. Actions that are prohibited include intentional killing, injuring or taking; and intentional or reckless damage, destruction or obstruction of any structure or place used for shelter or protection.

As of 12 August 2008, **Water Voles** have been given full protection under Section 9 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981.

Offences under Section 9 carry a maximum penalty of a fine up to £5000, imprisonment for up to six months, or both, for each animal in respect of which an offence is committed. It is now an offence to:

- ❑ *Intentionally kill, injure or take (capture) a Water Vole;*
- ❑ *Possess or control a live or dead Water Vole, or any part of a Water Vole or anything derived from a Water Vole;*
- ❑ *Intentionally or recklessly damage, destroy or obstruct access to any structure or place which a Water Vole uses for shelter or protection;*
- ❑ *Intentionally or recklessly disturb a Water Vole while it is occupying a structure or place which it uses for shelter or protection.*

2. METHODOLOGY

2.1 Habitat re-survey

A Phase 1 Habitat Survey was carried out across the whole of the development site. It was conducted using standard JNCC (2003) techniques and methodologies.

The site was visited on the 31st March 2021, in warm and cloudy conditions, with no precipitation and no wind.

2.2 Protected species survey

During the habitat re-survey, the potential for protected and important species was again assessed. This included European Protected Species, legally protected species and Local Biodiversity Action Plan Species (and habitats).

Particular focus was paid to the potential for bats, breeding birds, Otters and Water Voles.

2.3 Constraints

There were no constraints, as earlier visits were carried out during the optimum period for Phase 1 Habitat Surveys (considered to be April to August inclusive), whilst a series of visits were undertaken between May and August 2020, as well as January and September. Furthermore, the variety of habitats on site are limited.

3. RESULTS

3.1 Habitat survey

3.1.1 Habitat descriptions

The following habitats were recorded across the site:

- ❑ Scattered broadleaved trees;
- ❑ Scattered scrub;
- ❑ Poor, semi-improved neutral grassland;
- ❑ Amenity grass;
- ❑ Tall ruderal vegetation;
- ❑ Buildings and hardstanding;
- ❑ Bare ground.

These are shown on the aerial photographs in Appendices 1 and 2 and the Phase 1 Habitat Map in the original Protected Species Report. Current habitats are described below.

Scattered broadleaved and coniferous trees

There were a few scattered trees along Canal Road (Fig. 1) and along the footpaths either side of the River Tone. These included Sycamore *Acer pseudoplatanus*, Silver Birch *Betula pendula*, and a row of hybrid willow trees *Salix sp* in Priory Bridge Road car park (Fig. 2)



Figs. 1 & 2 Scattered broadleaved trees

Scattered scrub

Scattered scrub grew around the boundaries of the site, and was beginning to colonise the large open areas of hardstanding in places.

Small clumps of scrub were present in the narrow strip of land above the retaining wall along Canal Road (Fig. 3).

Species were dominated by Butterfly Bushes *Buddleia davidii*, but also noted was Hawthorn *Crataegus monogyna*, Goat Willow *Salix caprea*, Elder *Sambucus nigra*, and Bramble *Rubus fruticosus*.



Fig. 3 Scattered scrub

Scrub was also present along the River Tone, mainly at the eastern side of the site where the river joined the Bridgewater and Taunton Canal

Poor, semi-improved neutral grassland

Most of the original grassland areas had been overgrown by tall ruderal vegetation, but a few small patches were still present, these found alongside the River Tone (Figs. 4 and 5).



Figs. 4 & 5 Patches of poor, semi-improved grassland

The sward was dominated by Perennial Ryegrass *Lolium perenne*, Creeping Fescue *Festuca rubra*, Cocksfoot *Dactylis glomerata*, meadow-grasses *Poa spp*, and False Oatgrass *Arrhenatherum elatius*, with common wildflowers sparsely distributed, including Creeping Buttercup *Ranunculus repens*, Common Chickweed *Stellaria media*, White Clover *Trifolium repens*, Ribwort Plantain *Plantago lanceolata*, Daisy *Bellis perennis* and Dandelion *Taraxacum* Section *Vulgaris*, amongst others.

Amenity grassland

Since 2017, some of the hardstanding around the Auction House had been replaced with hard wearing amenity grass, with species similar to those above (Fig. 6).



Fig. 6 Amenity grass area

Tall ruderal vegetation

Tall ruderal vegetation had colonised virtually all the grassland areas and was spreading onto the site from the boundaries. This included the former garden of No. 9 Canal Road (Fig. 7) and part of the SISK compound (Fig. 8).

Species included Common Nettles *Urtica dioica*, Curled Dock *Rumex crispus*, Broad-leaved Dock *R. obtusifolius*, Rosebay Willowherb *Epilobium angustifolium*, Hogweed *Heracleum sphondylium*, and Cow Parsley *Anthriscus sylvestris*.



Figs. 7 & 8 Tall ruderal vegetation

Buildings and hardstanding

Just one building remained on the former cattle market site – the auction house. This was a large brick building with a double pitched roof which had recently been replaced (Figs. 9 and 10).

Since 2016, when the building was last inspected, a few small gaps and cavities had appeared around the outside of the structure. These included gaps in the eaves and gable soffits, a couple of holes in the brickwork where pipes had been removed, and gaps around the rear doors.

The soffit gaps varied from 1-5 cm wide, but all were cobwebbed over inside and were clearly not in use by bats (Figs. 11 and 12).

The interior was accessible to bats via the gap around the rear doors, but no evidence of bat activity was found, and it was not suitable for roosting (Figs. 13 and 14).



Figs. 9 & 10 Auction House – front (L) and rear (R)



Figs. 11 & 12 Auction House – examples of soffit gaps



Figs. 13 & 14 Auction House – interior

In addition, there were two other buildings within the site curtilage; the former GWR Goods Office (Fig. 15) and the rowing clubhouse (Fig. 16).

These were all re-inspected externally, but no evidence of bat roosting or signs of bat activity were found. Previous surveys in 2020 revealed no roosting bats, and the buildings were again not identified as bat roosts.

The inspections were undertaken by Andy Warren (Natural England bat licence No. 2015-16489-CLS-CLS).



Fig. 15 GWR Goods Office



Fig. 16 Rowing clubhouse

The majority of the site consisted of hardstanding. Some areas had been re-surfaced and were in use for car parking (Fig. 17), whilst others were partially overgrown with scattered scrub and tall ruderal vegetation. The site also included the Priory Bridge Road car park on the south side of the river, as well as the footbridge over the river. These are used extensively by the public, and no changes since 2016 were noted.



Figs. 17 & 18 Hardstanding (L) and bare ground in SISK compound (R)

Bare ground

In the SISK compound north of Canal Road and south of Trenchard Way, there were areas of bare ground used for storage of plant and materials (Fig. 18).

3.1.2 Flora

The botanical composition of each habitat was typical, and all species recorded were common and widespread. No rare or unusual vascular plants were found, and there were no invasive or notifiable weeds.

3.2 Protected species survey

3.2.1 *Bats*

here were no signs of bat activity or evidence of bat occupation around the outside of any of the buildings on site, and the status of bats is considered unchanged, i.e. just low levels of activity by common species along Canal Road, through nearby Children's Wood and along the river next to the wood.

3.2.2 *Badgers*

There are no signs of Badger activity on the site.

3.2.3 *Otters*

A check of the banks underneath Priory Bridge Road car park bridge revealed no recent Otter spraints, but there was a fresh mink scat (Fig. 19).



Fig. 19 Fresh mink scat

3.2.4 *Water Voles*

No evidence of Water Vole presence was recorded, but Brown Rats were observed frequently along the length of the river.

3.2.5 *Birds*

During the survey a variety of birds were observed, including two Species of High Conservation Concern (RSPB Red list); Herring Gull and Starling, two Species of Medium Conservation Concern (RSPB Amber list); Lesser Black-backed Gull and Dunnock, and nine Species of Low Conservation Concern (RSPB Green list); Woodpigeon, Feral Pigeons, Wren, Robin, Blackbird, Blue Tit, Chaffinch, Goldfinch and Magpie.

3.2.6 *Reptiles*

Reptiles are still considered to be absent, especially as surrounding areas have now been developed, in particular the land to the east.

3.2.7 *Great Crested Newts*

As with reptiles, Great Crested Newts *Triturus cristatus* and other amphibians are thought to be absent.

3.2.8 *Invertebrates*

Since much of the site consists of hardstanding and close mown amenity grass, with just a few areas of semi-natural vegetation, it is concluded that there is low potential for invertebrate assemblages, in particular those species listed as a priority in the UK Biodiversity Action Plan and/or Local Biodiversity Action Plan.

The corridor of the River Tone is more likely to attract invertebrates, but these will be unaffected by the proposed works.

3.2.9 *Other species*

No other protected species were observed during the site visits.

In discussion with a fisherman, the following fish species are present in the river between the weir and the A3038 road bridge: Dace, Chubb, Bream and carp species.

4. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

4.1 Site evaluation

Excluding the river corridor, the site continues to be of limited wildlife interest, this largely restricted to a few loafing gulls and low levels of bat activity by common species along Canal Road and the river.

The river is used by very small numbers of foraging Daubenton's Bats, as well as the two pipistrelles. At least one Brown Long-eared Bat uses Children's wood as a feeding site.

The only buildings left on site have not been identified as bat roosts, whilst none of the trees or bridges contain bat roosts.

Only two species of breeding birds were noted in 2020, both common and widespread (Dunnock and Blackbird), whilst the trees and scrub continue to provide potential nesting sites. The river supports a variety of common and less common bird species.

There was again no evidence of Water Vole activity along the river, with no recent signs of Otter, but a fresh scat from American Mink was noted.

Reptiles and amphibians are still considered to be absent, with no potential for notable invertebrate assemblages.

4.2 Possible impacts of proposed work & recommendations

Given the low species diversity, there will be little ecological impact arising from the development on the site.

The trees and scrub could potentially be used by nesting birds. Since all in-use bird's nests and their contents are protected from damage or destruction, any tree or shrub removal should be undertaken outside the period March to August inclusive. If this time frame cannot be avoided, a close inspection of trees and shrubs to be removed will be undertaken prior to clearance. Work will not be carried out within 5.0 metres of any in-use nest, although this distance could be greater depending on the sensitivity of the species. Any in-use nest will be allowed to fledge before it is disturbed.

At all times care will be taken when stripping the vegetation and topsoil, as small mammals might be present. If any are encountered, they will carefully be captured and released nearby, or allowed to move out of the area on their own accord.

Open trenches could potentially trap wildlife, especially if these fill up with water. Escape routes will therefore be provided if trenches cannot be infilled immediately. These can be in the form of branches or boards placed on the bottom of the trench, with their upper ends above ground level and touching the sides, or sloping ends left in trenches.

In terms of enhancing opportunities for wildlife, it is recommended that bird and bat boxes are erected around the site. These should include Schwegler 2F bat boxes, and Schwegler 1B and 2H bird boxes.

Locations for the boxes should ideally be along the river corridor, but new structures along Canal Road could be utilised if feasible.

Schwegler woodcrete boxes have the highest rates of occupation of all box types. The 75% wood sawdust, concrete and clay mixture allows natural respiration, stable temperature, and durability. They are extremely long lasting and rot- and predator-proof, and will hang from a tree branch near the trunk, or can be fixed to a trunk.

The 2F (Fig. 20) is the most popular general purpose box, particularly attractive to the smaller British bats. It has a simple design with a narrow entrance slit on the front.



Fig. 20 Schwegler 2F bat box

All the boxes will be at least 5.0 m above ground level and clear of any overhanging branches or wires. They will face anywhere from SE to SW to provide differing aspects to suit different weather conditions.

For birds two types of Schwegler tit nest boxes: 1B (26 mm) and 1B (32 mm), and Schwegler 2H open-fronted boxes should be used (Fig. 21).



Fig. 21 Schwegler bird nest boxes 1B (26 mm), 2H and 1B (32 mm)

Woodcrete Nest Boxes come with a 25 year guarantee against rot, weather and natural damage.

The 1B is available with a 26 mm hole for the tit *Parus spp* family and a 32 mm hole suitable for sparrows *Passer spp*.

The 2H is open-fronted for a variety of species such as Robin *Erithacus rubecula*, Wren *Troglodytes troglodytes*, Spotted Flycatcher *Muscicapa striolatum* and Pied Wagtail *Motacilla alba*.

In addition, the use of cowled lighting along the river corridor will help to reduce light spillage, thereby maintaining bat foraging and wildlife commuting routes, whilst the establishment of native tree groups and native riparian planting will significantly improve the corridor for a wide variety of birds, animals and invertebrates.

Otter ledges could also be used under Priory Road bridge at the western side of the site. These are not thought to be necessary under the footbridge connecting the two sides of the site, as there are already wide ledges present which are occasionally used for sprinting by Otters.

It is assumed that these enhancements can be secured by condition and will be detailed in the reserved matters phase submissions.

4.3 Conclusion

Located close to the centre of town, the site has long been part of the inner urban environment, and prior to the recent demolition works, it was under continuous use as a large cattle market. In addition, there were a series of depots between Canal Road and the railway line/station.

Development of the area has been continuing for several years, and apart from the river, which provides a corridor of green infrastructure to the open countryside, the site is now completely enclosed by residential housing and commercial units. As such, the re-development of the site is not thought to have any adverse effect on ecology, as species diversity is low, with all species recorded generally common and widespread. Furthermore, those species which are present are tolerant of the man-made, urban environment, including Otters.

Given the location and nature of the surrounding landscape, other residential schemes in the area will not result in any further loss of biodiversity at the application site.

4.4 Further surveys

No further surveys are considered necessary, although measures will be undertaken to enhance the River Tone corridor for wildlife.

However, if any tree or shrub removal cannot be timed appropriately to avoid the bird nesting season (considered to be March to August inclusive), then further surveys and/or supervision will be required.

5. REFERENCES

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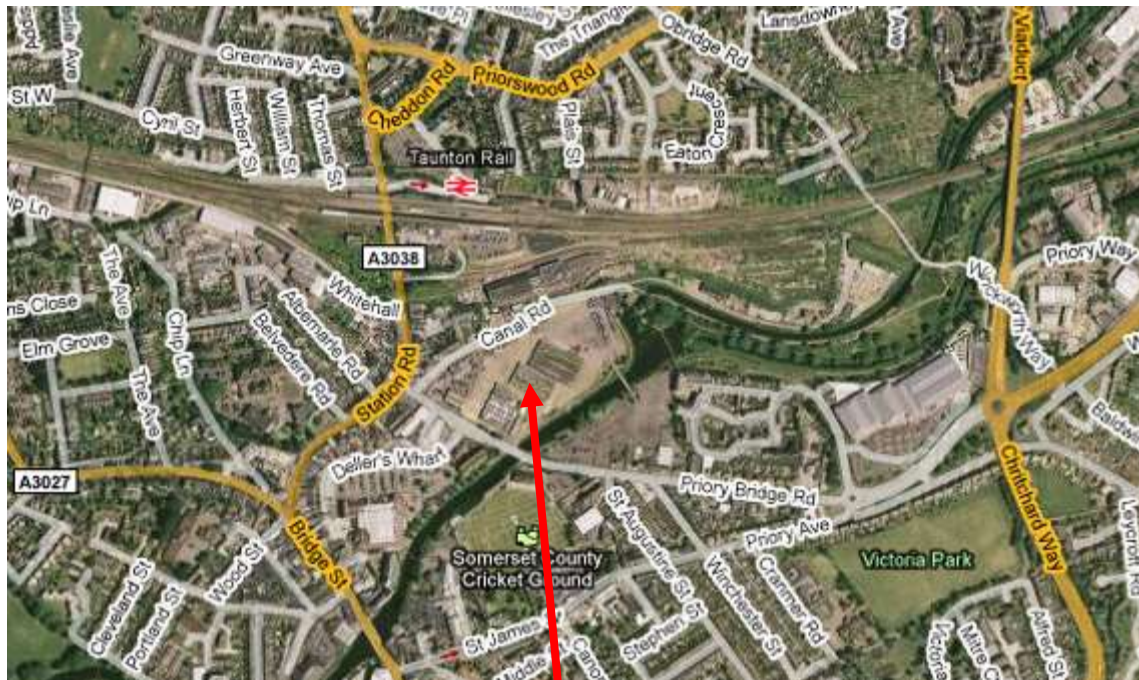
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APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Location plan

Appendix 2: Site plan

Appendix 1: Location plan



Firepool

Appendix 2: Site plan (showing overall area surveyed)



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