

**HITHER GREEN GOLF COURSE,
HITHER GREEN LANE, REDDITCH**

BREEDING BIRD SURVEY

A Report to: Barratt David Wilson Homes Mercia

Report No: RT-MME-153160-04

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REPORT VERIFICATION AND DECLARATION OF COMPLIANCE

This study has been undertaken in accordance with British Standard 42020:2013 “Biodiversity, Code of practice for planning and development”.

Report Version	Date	Completed by:	Checked and approved by:
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The information which we have prepared is true, and has been prepared and provided in accordance with the Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management’s Code of Professional Conduct. We confirm that the opinions expressed are our true and professional bona fide opinions.

DISCLAIMER

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.

Middlemarch Environmental Ltd accepts no responsibility or liability for any use that is made of this document other than by the client for the purposes for which it was originally commissioned and prepared.

VALIDITY OF DATA

The findings of this study are valid for a period of 24 months from the date of survey. If works have not commenced by this date, an updated site visit should be carried out by a suitably qualified ecologist to assess any changes in the habitats present on site, and to inform a review of the conclusions and recommendations made.

NON-TECHNICAL SUMMARY

In May 2021, Middlemarch Environmental Ltd was commissioned by Barratt David Wilson Homes Mercia to undertake a Breeding Bird Survey at the site of a proposed residential development at Hither Green Golf Course located off Hither Green Lane in Redditch. The survey information will form part of the baseline data for the site, and will be submitted in support of a planning application.

The desk study exercise identified no European statutory sites within 5 km of the survey area, one UK Statutory Site within 2 km and two non-statutory sites within 1 km, which were of ornithological interest. The desk study also provided records of three notable bird species (kingfisher *Alcedo atthis*, reed bunting *Emberiza schoeniclus* and house sparrow *Passer domesticus*).

This report assesses the suitability of the habitat at the site for breeding birds and presents the findings of a Breeding Bird Survey undertaken by an experienced field ornithologist. A total of four site visits were undertaken in June and July 2021.

During the breeding bird survey visits, a total of 36 bird species were recorded, of which 21 were confirmed to have bred or probably did so. The remaining 15 bird species were all observed using the habitats within the site or overflying it but were not considered to be breeding within the study area; these species may be breeding in the local vicinity. Findings of the surveys are summarized in Table A.

Total Number of Confirmed/Probable Breeding Species	21
Confirmed / Probable Breeding Species of Principal Importance in England	2 (dunnock and song thrush)
Confirmed / Probable Breeding Local BAP Species	0
Confirmed / Probable Breeding RSPB Red List Species	1 (song thrush)
Confirmed / Probable Breeding RSPB Amber List Species	3 (dunnock, mute swan and stock dove)
Significant Concentrations of Confirmed / Probable Breeding Species	0

Table A: Summary of Breeding Bird Survey Findings

Overall, the site was considered to contain a moderate variety of different habitats such as scrub, woodland and standing water, which enabled the site to support a range of breeding bird species, including some of conservation concern.

The following recommendations have been made to ensure that the site continues to provide suitable habitats/features for breeding birds:

- R1** The boundary features on site should be retained and appropriately managed in order to ensure that the site continues to support a wide range of breeding bird species.
- R2** The provision of nest boxes/features for a range of species is recommended for the site in order to maximise the sites value to as diverse a range of species as possible. Details of the nest boxes and nesting features recommended are provided in Chapter 6.
- R3** Biodiversity enhancement measures, including planting of native species, should be incorporated into landscaping proposals, as detailed in Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (RT-MME-152753-03-Rev A). Once the landscape proposals are finalised a Landscape and Environment Management Plan should be prepared detailing how the retained and created habitats will be managed in the long-term.
- R4** Vegetation and building clearance should be undertaken outside the nesting bird season. The nesting bird season is weather dependent but generally extends between March and September inclusive (peak period March-August).

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 PROJECT BACKGROUND

In May 2021, Barratt David Wilson Homes Mercia commissioned Middlemarch Environmental Ltd to undertake a Breeding Bird Survey at Hither Green Golf Course in Redditch, Worcestershire. This assessment is required to inform a planning application associated with the proposed construction of residential dwellings with associated hard and soft landscaping.

Middlemarch Environmental Ltd has previously carried out the following surveys for Barratt David Wilson Homes Mercia at this site:

- Preliminary Arboricultural Assessment (Report RT-MME-152753-01);
- Arboricultural Impact Assessment (Report RT-MME-152753-02); and,
- Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (Report RT-MME-152753-03 Rev A).

In addition, Middlemarch Environmental Ltd has been commissioned to undertake the following assessments:

- Preliminary Bat Roost Assessment (RT-MME-153160-01);
- Badger Survey (Report RT-MME-153160-02);
- Great Crested Newt Habitat Suitability Index Assessment and eDNA Survey (Report RT-MME-153160-03); and,
- Reptile Survey (Report RT-MME-153160-05).

1.2 SITE DESCRIPTION AND CONTEXT

The site under consideration is an irregularly shaped parcel of land that measures approximately 10 ha in size and is located at Hither Green Golf Course in Redditch, Worcestershire. The site is centred at National Grid Reference SP 0437 6937.

At the time of the survey, the eastern half of the site comprised part of a golf course with areas of plantation woodland. The western section of the site mainly consisted of open unmanaged grassland with hedges, scattered trees and scrub. A large pond was situated towards the northern site boundary and there were four smaller ponds which formed part of the golf course.

The site is bordered to the north by Dagnell End Road and to the east by Hither Green Lane. Residential houses and a continuation of the golf course border the site to the east and fields of grassland, residential dwellings and a public house are present to the north and west. The River Arrow corridor is present to the south of the site with fields of grassland, a cemetery and residential dwellings beyond. The wider landscape to the north, east and west is dominated by agricultural fields and small residential areas. Redditch town centre dominates the landscape to the south.

1.3 DOCUMENTATION PROVIDED

The conclusions and recommendations made in this report are based on information provided by the client regarding the scope of the project. Documentation made available by the client is listed in Table 1.1.

Document Name / Drawing Number	Author
Land off Hither Green Lane Redditch, Proposed Site Layout Rev Q	Urban Design

Table 1.1: Documentation Provided by Client

2. METHODOLOGY

2.1 DESK STUDY

As part of the Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (Report RT-MME-152753-03 Rev A) an ecological desk study was undertaken. The consultee for the desk study was Worcestershire Biological Records Centre.

Middlemarch Environmental Ltd then assimilated and reviewed the desk study data provided by these organisations. Relevant bird data are discussed in Chapter 3. In compliance with the terms and conditions relating to its commercial use, the full desk study data are not provided within this report.

2.2 FIELDWORK METHODOLOGY

The breeding bird survey was conducted in line with specifications detailed by the British Trust for Ornithology (Gilbert, 1998), although the methodology was tailored to site conditions. The methodology is a 'scaled down' version of the Common Bird Census (CBC) approach defined in Gilbert, with four site visits deemed appropriate. The CBC methodology involved walking the entire survey site and passing within 50 m of every point (where vegetation and access allowed). The route was chosen so as to sample all habitats recorded within the survey area.

For each survey visit, the study area is walked at a slow pace in suitable weather conditions to locate and identify all individual bird species within the survey boundaries. Registrations of birds were plotted onto suitably scaled maps on each site visit and all activities were noted i.e. singing, alarm calling, nest-building, feeding young and other behaviours indicative of breeding activities. Subsequent analysis of field maps enabled the approximate territories of species to be calculated and the number of territories of individual species worked out. As specified by the CBC methodology all morning visits were undertaken between 0600 and 0700 British Standard Time (BST), and no later than 0900 BST, avoiding the first hour before sunrise. Timing of the survey visits was also dictated by weather conditions. Therefore, the site was examined only in appropriate weather conditions. None of the visits were conducted in cold weather, heavy rain, poor visibility or strong winds. All surveys were undertaken by experienced field ornithologists.

3. DESK STUDY

3.1 RELEVANT NATURE CONSERVATION SITES

The desk study exercise included a search for statutory and non-statutory nature conservation sites of ornithological interest. A search radius of 10 km was used for European statutory sites, 5 km for UK statutory sites and 2 km for non-statutory sites. Relevant sites for which the citations include information regarding bird species are summarised in Table 3.1.

Site Name	Designation	Proximity to Survey Area	Relevant Bird Information
UK Statutory Sites			
Redditch Woods: Pitcheroak Wood	LNR	1.99 km south-west	An area of oak woodlands with a diverse ground flora augmented by rich grassland in the glades. The site is an important site for nesting birds.
Non-Statutory Sites			
River Arrow	LWS	Adjacent to the southern boundary	Rising from an overflow at Lower Bittell Reservoir, the River Arrow flows south through Redditch to join the River Avon at Salford Priors in Warwickshire. For much of its length it is lined with trees/shrubs and creates an important wildlife corridor through the landscape. It is a particularly valuable feature where it flows through the centre of Redditch where both the river and its attendant valley form a significant green wedge through the town. In combination with a full range of natural features, including fast flowing riffle sequences, these support a reasonable aquatic fauna including kingfishers <i>Alcedo atthis</i> which breed in several places.
Abbey and Forge Mill Ponds	LWS	500 m south-east	A group of four ancient mill and fish ponds arranged around the site of Bordesley Abbey. The pools feed into the River Arrow, which flows to the north of the pool complex, via a narrow outflow stream and are for the most part fringed with a mixture of woodland and grassland. The pools are likely to be important for a range of invertebrates including dragonflies and provide value for breeding birds.
Key: LNR: Local Nature Reserve LWS: Local Wildlife Site			

Table 3.1: Summary of Nature Conservation Sites of Ornithological Significance

3.2 SPECIES RECORDS

Records of bird species within a 1 km radius of the proposed development area provided by Worcestershire Biological Records Centre are summarised in Table 3.2.

Species	No. of Records	Most Recent Record	Proximity of Nearest Record to Study Area	Species of Principal Importance?	Legislation / Conservation Status
Kingfisher <i>Alcedo atthis</i>	1	2015	350 m south-east	-	WCA1i
Reed bunting <i>Emberiza schoeniclus</i>	3	2015	350 m south-east	✓	-
House sparrow <i>Passer domesticus</i>	2	2015	350 m south-east	✓	-
WCA 1i: Schedule 1 Part 1 of Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended). Birds protected by special penalties at all times. Species of Principal Importance: Species of Principal Importance for Nature Conservation in England.					

Table 3.2: Summary of Protected/Notable Bird Species Records Within 2 km of Survey Area

4. BREEDING BIRD SURVEY RESULTS

4.1 INTRODUCTION

The survey visits were undertaken between 8th June 2021 and 27th July 2021 by Mike Doughty-Lee (Ecological Field Manager and Specialist Ornithological Surveyor) and Laura Grove (Ecological Field Manager).

Date	Parameter			
	Temperature (°C)	Cloud (%)	Wind (Beaufort)	Precipitation
08/06/2021	8	0	F1	Nil
28/06/2021	12	100	F3	Light intermittent showers
07/07/2021	16	50	F3	Light intermittent showers
27/07/2021	16	80	F1	Nil

Table 4.1: Dates and Weather Conditions of Breeding Bird Surveys

4.2 SURVEY CONSTRAINTS

Due to the timing of commission by the client, the surveys commenced in early June 2021. It is acknowledged that it is possible that some early breeding species may have already completed their breeding cycles prior to the commencement of surveys. However, based on the findings of the surveys completed, the species recorded using the site, the habitats present and management of the site it is considered unlikely that the site would support a significant population of a notable early breeding species. Therefore, the timings of the surveys is not considered to be a significant survey constraint.

4.3 SURVEY RESULTS

During the survey visits a total of 36 bird species were recorded using this site. Of these species, 21 were either confirmed to have bred or probably did so based on habitat suitability and observed patterns of behaviour. Confirmed and probable breeding species are listed in Table 4.2, and approximate territory locations are plotted on Drawing C153160-04-01 in Chapter 7.

Species	Scientific Name	Conservation Status	No. of Territories
Blackbird	<i>Turdus merula</i>	-	2
Blackcap	<i>Sylvia atricapilla</i>	-	2
Blue tit	<i>Cyanistes caeruleus</i>	-	1
Carrion crow	<i>Corvus corone</i>	-	1
Chaffinch	<i>Fringilla coelebs</i>	-	1
Chiffchaff	<i>Phylloscopus collybita</i>	-	2
Common whitethroat	<i>Sylvia communis</i>	-	2
Dunnock	<i>Prunella modularis</i>	RSPB Amber. Species of Principal Importance.	2
Goldfinch	<i>Carduelis carduelis</i>	-	1
Great spotted woodpecker	<i>Dendrocopos major</i>	-	1
Great tit	<i>Parus major</i>	-	2
Jackdaw	<i>Corvus monedula</i>	-	1
Long tailed tit	<i>Aegithalos caudatus</i>	-	1
Magpie	<i>Pica pica</i>	-	1
Mute swan	<i>Cygnus olor</i>	RSPB Amber.	1
Nuthatch	<i>Sitta europaea</i>	-	1
Robin	<i>Erithacus rubecula</i>	-	3
Song thrush	<i>Turdus philomelos</i>	RSPB Red. Species of Principal Importance.	1
Stock dove	<i>Columba oenas</i>	RSPB Amber	1
Wood pigeon	<i>Columba palumbus</i>	-	1
Wren	<i>Troglodytes troglodytes</i>	-	6

Table 4.2: Confirmed and Probable Breeding Species Recorded (continues)

<p>Key: Notes for RSPB Red List Criteria Species that meet any of the following criteria are red listed: IUCN: Global Conservation Status. Species listed by Birdlife International as being Globally Threatened using IUCN criteria. HD: Historic Decline. A severe decline in the UK between 1800-1995, without substantial recent recovery. BDp: Breeding Population Decline. Severe decline in the UK breeding population size, of more than 50% over the last 25years (BDp1) or the entire period used for assessments since the first BoCC review, starting in 1969 ("longer term") (BDp2). WDp: Non-breeding Population Decline. Severe decline in the UK non-breeding population size, of more than 50%, over 25 years (WDp1) or the longer term (WDp2). BDr: Breeding Range Decline. Severe decline in the UK range, of more than 50%, as measured by number of 10 km squares occupied by breeding birds, over 25 years (BDr1) or the longer term (BDr2). Notes for RSPB Amber List Criteria Species that meet any of the following criteria, but none of the red listed criteria, are amber listed: SPEC: European Conservation Status. Categorized as a Species of European Conservation Concern. Hdrec: Historic Decline – Recovery. Red listed for Historical Decline in a previous review but with substantial recent recovery (more than doubled in the last 25 years). BDMp: Breeding population Decline. As for red list criteria BDp1 and BDp2 but with moderate decline (by more than 25% but less than 50%). WDMp: Non-breeding population Decline. As for red list criteria WDp1 and WDp2, but with moderate decline (by more than 25% but less than 50%). BDMr: Breeding Range Decline. As for red list criteria BDr1 and BDr2 but with moderate decline (by more than 25% but less than 50%). BR and WR rarity. UK breeding population of less than 300 pairs (BR), or non-breeding population of less than 900 individuals (WR). BL and WL Localisation. At least 50% of the UK breeding (BL) or non-breeding (WL) population found in 10 or fewer sites. BI and WI International Importance. At least 20% of the European breeding (BI) or non-breeding (WI) population found in the UK.</p>
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Table 4.2 (continued): Confirmed and Probable Breeding Species Recorded

The remaining species recorded using the site are not considered to have bred, and were using the site as a temporary foraging resource or passing through at the time of the survey visits. Non-breeding species recorded during the survey are listed in Table 4.3.

Species	Scientific Name	Conservation Status
Black headed gull	<i>Chroicocephalus ridibundus</i>	RSPB Amber
Coal tit	<i>Parus ater</i>	-
Collared dove	<i>Streptopelia decaocto</i>	-
Green woodpecker	<i>Picus viridis</i>	RSPB Amber
Greenfinch	<i>Carduelis chloris</i>	-
Grey heron	<i>Ardea cinerea</i>	-
Herring gull	<i>Larus argentatus</i>	RSPB Red
Jay	<i>Garrulus glandarius</i>	-
Lesser black-backed gull	<i>Larus fuscus</i>	RSPB Amber
Lesser whitethroat	<i>Curruca curruca</i>	-
Mallard	<i>Anas platyrhynchos</i>	RSPB Amber
Moorhen	<i>Gallinula chloropus</i>	-
Rook	<i>Corvus frugilegus</i>	-
Starling	<i>Sturnus vulgaris</i>	RSPB Red
Treecreeper	<i>Certhia familiaris</i>	-

Table 4.3: Non-breeding Species Recorded at Hither Green Golf Course

5. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

5.1 SUMMARY OF DESKTOP STUDY FINDINGS

The ecological desk study data collected for the site highlighted the presence of three nearby nature conservation sites for which bird species are listed in the site designation citation.

Redditch Woods: Pitcheroak Wood LNR

The LNR site is, at its nearest point, located approximately 1.99 km south-west of the proposed development site. This LNR site is an extensive area of oak woodlands and is an important site for nesting birds. Whilst no specific species are cited, it is likely that the site supports generalist woodland birds such as chiffchaff, blackcap, long-tailed tit, marsh tit, goldcrest, treecreeper, nuthatch and great spotted woodpecker. Such species are also likely to breed within the woodland and scrub habitats present at Hither Green Golf Course as confirmed during the breeding bird surveys completed.

River Arrow LWS

This LWS site is situated adjacent to the proposed development site. It comprises the River Arrow, which flows south through Redditch and eventually meets the River Avon in Warwickshire. It provides an important wildlife corridor and kingfishers are known to breed at this site. The habitat mosaic present within the Hither Green Golf Course site is considered to be unsuitable for breeding kingfisher, with no suitable aquatic habitat present within the site boundary as the ponds on site do not have vertical banks clear of vegetation which are used by breeding kingfisher. The ponds may offer foraging resources however.

Abbey and Forge Mill Ponds LWS

This site, at its nearest point, is located approximately 500 m south-east of the development site and comprises four ancient mill and fish ponds. The pools are cited as providing value habitat for breeding birds and whilst no species are specifically cited it can be assumed that such habitat provides suitability for common waterfowl such as moorhen, mute swan and mallard. On site, the areas of water present may also provide suitable breeding habitat for such species.

Species Records Within 2 km of Hither Green Golf Course

The desk study data included records of the following bird species within a 1 km radius of Hither Green Golf Course: kingfisher, reed bunting and house sparrow.

Kingfisher is a species that breeds within the banks of watercourses, although the River Arrow is immediately off site at the southern boundary there is no suitable breeding habitat for this species on site, although the waterbodies may offer potential feeding areas. Reed bunting is a bird of marshland and reedbeds, though increasingly breeding in farmland habitats such as hedgerows and cereal crops. Such favourable habitats are absent from the survey area and as such it is unlikely that reed bunting utilise the site for breeding. Breeding habitat for house sparrow tends to consist of enclosed spaces within buildings or bridges. The building on site may provide some suitable breeding habitat for this species.

5.2 SURVEY FINDINGS AND EVALUATION

Breeding Species

The breeding bird surveys highlighted the presence of a range of reasonably common and widespread bird species closely associated with parkland, woodland and scrubland habitats, and their onsite distribution reflected a preference for such areas with territories held along areas of linear woodland and scrub. With the exception of woodland specialists, such as great spotted woodpecker and nuthatch, the remaining recorded species are generalists and exploit a wide range of habitats with a preference for mature gardens and scrub zones.

Of the woodland specialists, one great spotted woodpecker territory was recorded and a single nuthatch territory. Both these species were associated with the plantation woodland located along the south-eastern site boundary. Such species rely on woodland habitat for nesting and foraging purposes.

A single stock dove territory was noted, likely to be nesting on the edge of the line of trees in the north-eastern portion of the site. Stock dove rely on woodland edges with trees mature enough to possess cavities for nesting. They may forage in parkland with a mosaic of habitats similar to that which is present at Hither Green Golf Course, however they show a preference for arable land with winter stubble in the winter months.

Two common whitethroat territories were recorded during the surveys, one in the semi-improved grassland on the western boundary and another on the edge of the scrub on the northern boundary. Such areas, which have proportionately less tree cover, provide suitable habitat for common whitethroat. This warbler has experienced declines in recent years, but is generally still a common and widespread breeding species and can occupy a range of habitats from brownfield sites through to arable farmland as long as scrub, tall ruderal vegetation or hedgerows are present.

A single mute swan territory was recorded on the largest pond on site, present in the northern portion of the survey area. Mute swans will nest in almost any static or slow-flowing fresh or salt water with submerged vegetation, in both rural and urban areas. Therefore, the pond on site is considered to provide suitable breeding habitat for mute swan. This species is on the RSPB Amber List due to a decline following lead poisoning in lowland rivers. However, in recent years the population of mute swans in the UK has increased.

Additional widespread species recorded holding territory at the site included blackbird, blackcap, chaffinch, chiffchaff, robin, song thrush and wren, of which the most notable is song thrush due to its classification as a Red Listed Species of Conservation Concern. This classification is a result of observed declines in the number of breeding birds, but the species remains relatively common and widespread. All of these species, possibly with the exception of chiffchaff, tend to be generalists in their choice of habitat, occurring in a wide range of locations and habitats from intensely urban areas to open farmland. It is considered that as long as dense/scattered scrub together with zones of rough grassland and tall herbage continue to maintain a presence within the proposed development area then all of these species should continue to breed on site.

Non-breeding Species

In addition to the species recorded as breeding or holding territory, a range of additional species were recorded using the site, but are not considered to be breeding within it. This includes some species that are likely to be breeding within the surrounding area, some species that are using the site for foraging purposes and some of species that are considered to be passage migrants.

Three gull species, namely black headed gull, herring gull and lesser black-backed gull were recorded flying over, or briefly alighting on, the site. The site does not provide any suitable breeding habitat for these species.

Waterbird species recorded on a couple of survey dates were moorhen and mallard. Two moorhens were recorded on a single visit although were not recorded again and there was no indication of breeding activity within the study area. A single mallard was also recorded on a single occasion though was not thought to be breeding within the survey area. However, the pond habitats on site do provide suitable breeding opportunities for these species.

Both rook and jay, recorded on single site visits, were thought to have bred off site where suitable nesting habitat occurs.

A single treecreeper was recorded during the first June visit, utilising the semi-natural woodland in the south-western corner of the site. It is likely that this species breeds in the pocket of woodland adjacent to the southern boundary of the study area.

During the June visits, starlings were recorded in the north-eastern portion of the survey area. This species typically breeds in or close to human settlements and therefore are likely to nest within the residential area to the south and east of the survey area. The golf course area is considered to offer suitable foraging habitat.

A single sighting of collared dove was recorded during the June visits, both seen in the pocket of woodland on the southern boundary. It is likely that this species chooses to breed in the surrounding area, which provides parkland, woodland and farmland which are the preferred breeding habitats of this species.

A single greenfinch was recorded during the surveys. This is a species that is typically found on the urban fringe, choosing hedgerows, both native and non-native, in which to nest. The species-poor hedgerow dissecting the site provides some suitable breeding habitat but it is more likely that the species breeds to the east of the survey area where there is a network of hedgerows.

One wading bird species was recorded during the survey visits, namely grey heron. This species is not known to breed on, or adjacent to, the site and was not noted to have been utilising any of the standing water on site.

Three juvenile coal tits were recorded on the north-eastern site boundary during the first July survey visit. This species shows a preference for coniferous woodland/plantation areas and therefore it is likely that this species is breeding in the surrounding area, particularly the woodland to the south of the survey area.

A low number of green woodpeckers were recorded during the surveys. These birds were primarily associated with the woodland in the southern and central portions of the site. It is likely that this species is breeding in the woodland to the south of the survey area and is using the golf course area to forage (this woodpecker species spends a large amount of time feeding on the ground in invertebrates)

Evaluation

In terms of evaluating the site for its breeding bird significance the following criteria have been taken into account:

- The species richness of the bird assemblage of the site, i.e. how many different types of species the site supports.
- The presence of species listed as being of Principal Importance in England, species on local and national Biodiversity Action Plans (BAPs) and Red or Amber listed Species of Conservation Concern.
- The occurrence of significant concentrations of a bird species, particularly if these comprise a significant proportion (1% or more) of the national breeding population.

Table 5.1 presents a summary of the above criteria based on the current field survey data for Hither Green Golf Course.

Total Number of Confirmed/Probable Breeding Species	21
Confirmed / Probable Breeding Species of Principal Importance in England	2 (dunnock and song thrush)
Confirmed / Probable Breeding Local BAP Species	0
Confirmed / Probable Breeding RSPB Red List Species	1 (song thrush)
Confirmed / Probable Breeding RSPB Amber List Species	3 (dunnock, mute swan and stock dove)
Significant Concentrations of Confirmed / Probable Breeding Species	0

Table 5.1: Summary of Breeding Bird Evaluation Criteria, Hither Green Golf Course

Fuller (1980) describes a method for assessing the ornithological interest of sites, whereby the importance is defined by the assemblage of breeding species present. Table 5.2 provides a summary of the geographical valuation criteria identified by Fuller. For the purposes of this assessment, Fuller's geographical levels have been adapted, so that Fuller's "local" importance is assumed to correspond to District importance as described in CIEEM's Guidelines for Ecological Impact Assessment (CIEEM, 2006). Since the publication of the evaluation criteria in 1980, declines have been observed in many bird populations, and for this reason it is therefore judged appropriate to recalibrate the categories slightly to reflect this change.

Level of Importance	Number of Breeding Species	
	Fuller (1980)	Adapted Criteria
Local	25-49 Species	<25
District	-	25-49
County	50-69	50-69
Regional	70-84	70-84
National	85+	85+

Table 5.2: Breeding Bird Assemblage Evaluation Criteria Based on Fuller (1980)

The total of 21 confirmed/probable breeding species identified during the field surveys indicates that the site is likely to be of local value in terms of its breeding bird interest. The majority of species recorded on site are considered to be fairly common and widespread generalist species, with a selection of woodland and scrub specialists.

No significant concentrations of breeding species in either a local or national context were recorded. However, more specialist species which are more susceptible to human disturbance are likely to be impacted by the proposed development. The potential impacts of the proposed development on breeding birds are considered further in Section 5.3.

5.3 POTENTIAL IMPACTS ON BREEDING BIRDS FROM PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

It is understood that the site is the subject of a planning application associated with the construction of residential dwellings and associated hard and soft landscaping. Potential impacts on breeding birds during the construction and operational phases of the development are considered below.

Construction Phase Impacts

The construction phase of the proposed development will result in the clearance of the hedgerow in the center of the site as well as the four smaller ponds of standing water; the larger pond in the north of the site will be retained. It is also anticipated that much of the grassland as well as some areas of dense scrub and local pockets of plantation woodland will be removed. It is understood under current proposals that the majority of the plantation woodland along the eastern site boundary and semi-natural woodland in the south of the site are to be retained, however if these plans alter then appropriate mitigation and compensation measures will need to be implemented.

The current survey has identified that the vast majority of breeding bird territories on site are associated with the field boundary features, therefore the retention and protection of the majority of these features means that many species are likely to continue to breed on site. Loss of self-set trees, scrub and the central hedgerow may result in a temporary reduction in the number of territories held by species such as dunnock, long-tailed tit and blackcap, however suitable habitat for these species will remain both on site and within the surrounding area.

No ground nesting bird species were recorded during the survey, therefore the development of the grassland areas is not considered likely to have an adverse impact on the favourable conservation status of ground nesting species.

During construction, it is anticipated that the site will be subject to extensive disturbance as a result of vegetation clearance and the movement of construction apparatus and contractors within the site. To avoid impacts on breeding birds, all vegetation removal should be timed to occur outside of the peak bird nesting season (avoiding the period 1st March to 31st August). Provided that this key window is avoided, disturbance impacts on nesting birds will be minimised. However, species which are more susceptible to human disturbance such as common whitethroat, nuthatch and great spotted woodpecker may be lost during the construction phase.

Operational Phase Impacts

It is understood that once the proposed construction activities are complete and the houses are inhabited, there is likely to be more disturbance to bird species, particularly from homeowners walking dogs and the likely ownership of cats. As a result of this, there is unlikely to be a significant change in the status of species which are more tolerant to people, such as blackbird, robin and tit species, potentially at the expense of more woodland and scrub specialist species, such as common whitethroat, nuthatch and great spotted woodpecker (as described above).

During the operational phase of the development, it is considered that appropriate habitat management will be important to ensure that habitats continue to be of the greatest possible value to breeding birds, with landscaping aiming to provide a range of habitats to appeal to a broad range of bird species. Of particular importance is the maintenance of a woodland/scrub/coarse grass ecotone, as many of the species recorded on site will utilize 'edge' habitats. The pond in the north of the site will also be retained and the creation of replacement ponds and associated aquatic habitats should be considered during the design of the final

landscape proposals. Post-development management of the retained and created habitats on site will ensure that habitats remain suitable for breeding birds in the long-term, as recommended in Chapter 6.

To enhance the site and to compensate for the loss of suitable breeding habitats within the site, bird boxes should be installed onto the new dwellings and retained trees within the site. The specification of bird boxes listed in Chapter 6 have been selected based on the species known to use the site, or likely use the site, for breeding.

6. RECOMMENDATIONS

All recommendations provided in this section are based on Middlemarch Environmental Ltd's current understanding of the site proposals (as shown on *Land off Hither Green Lane Redditch, Proposed Site Layout Rev Q*), correct at the time the report was compiled. Should the proposals alter, the conclusions and recommendations made in the report should be reviewed to ensure that they remain appropriate.

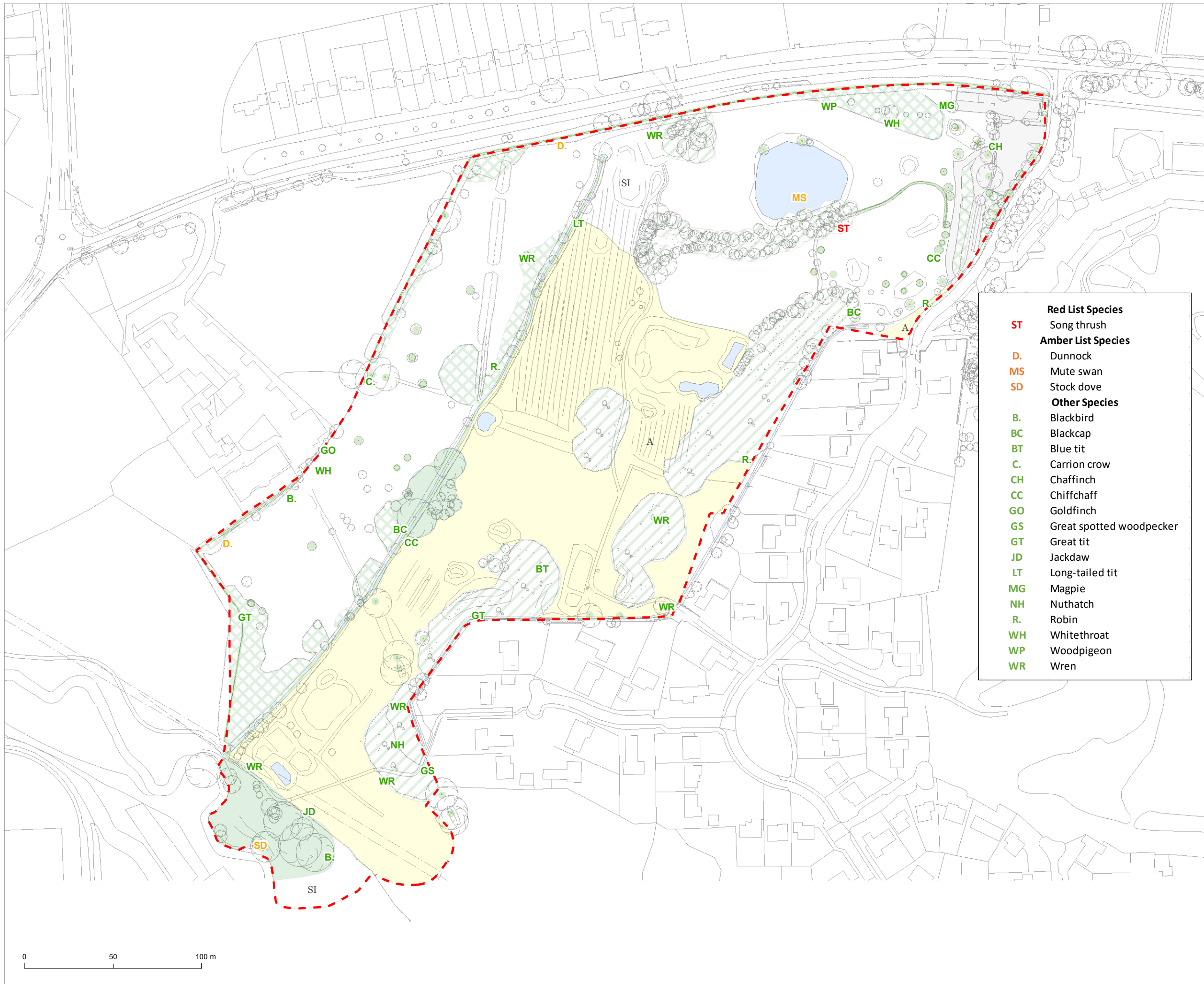
- R1** The boundary features on site should be retained and appropriately managed in order to ensure that the site continues to support a wide range of breeding bird species. The retained habitats should be protected and undisturbed during the construction phase.
- R2** The provision of nest boxes/features for a range of species is recommended for the site in order to maximise the sites value to as diverse a range of species as possible. It is recommended that nest boxes/features should include:
- 2 no. Schwegler No.5 Owl Boxes or similar, suitable for tawny owl, stock dove and jackdaw;
 - 5 no. Schwegler 3S Starling Boxes or similar, suitable for great spotted woodpecker and nuthatch to be installed onto retained trees;
 - 5 no. Woodstone Swift Nest box or similar, suitable for swift, to be installed under the eaves on the external walls of housing adjacent to areas of scrub or hedgerow for foraging.
 - 5 no. Schwegler 1SP Sparrow Terraces or similar, suitable for house sparrows, to be installed on the external walls of housing adjacent to areas of scrub or hedgerow for foraging.
 - 5 no. House Martin Nest Bowls either single or double entrance, suitable for house martin, to be installed under the eaves on the external walls of housing adjacent to areas of scrub or hedgerow for foraging.
 - 5 no, Schwegler 1B Nest Boxes with 32 mm Entrance Hole or similar, suitable for blue tit, coal tit, nuthatch and house sparrow to be installed onto retained trees; and
 - 5 no. Schwegler 2HW Nest Boxes or similar, suitable for pied wagtail, robin and wren to be installed on retained trees.
- R3** Biodiversity enhancement measures, including planting of native species and creation of new ponds, should be incorporated into landscaping proposals, as detailed in Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (RT-MME-152753-03-Rev A). Once the landscape proposals are finalised a Landscape and Environment Management Plan should be prepared detailing how the retained and created habitats will be managed in the long-term.
- R4** Any vegetation to be removed should be undertaken outside of the bird nesting season; this generally extends between March and September but is weather dependent. If this is not possible, the area concerned should be checked immediately prior to removal by a suitably experienced ecologist. Nesting and nest building birds are protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act WCA 1981 (as amended).

7. DRAWINGS

Drawing C153160-04-01 – Breeding Bird Survey Results

Legend

--- Application boundary



- Red List Species**
- ST** Song thrush
- Amber List Species**
- D.** Dunnock
 - MS** Mute swan
 - SD** Stock dove
- Other Species**
- B.** Blackbird
 - BC** Blackcap
 - BT** Blue tit
 - C.** Carrion crow
 - CH** Chaffinch
 - CC** Chiffchaff
 - GO** Goldfinch
 - GS** Great spotted woodpecker
 - GT** Great tit
 - JD** Jackdaw
 - LT** Long-tailed tit
 - MG** Magpie
 - NH** Nuthatch
 - R.** Robin
 - WH** Whitethroat
 - WP** Woodpigeon
 - WR** Wren

Project Hither Green Golf Course, Redditch, Worcestershire

Drawing Breeding Bird Map

Client Baratt David Wilson Homes Mercia

Drawing Number C153160-04-01 Revision 00

Scale @ A3 1:2,000 Date September 2021

Approved By GH Drawn By GT



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APPENDIX 1

LEGISLATION

The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010 (as amended) places a duty on public bodies to take measures to preserve, maintain and re-establish habitat for wild birds.

Nesting and nest building birds are protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act WCA 1981 (as amended).

Subject to the provisions of the act, if any person intentionally:

- kills, injures or takes any wild bird;
- takes, damages or destroys the nest of any wild bird while that nest is in use or being built; or
- takes or destroys an egg of any wild bird, he shall be guilty of an offence.

Some species (listed in Schedule 1 of the WCA) are protected by special penalties. Subject to the provisions of the act, if any person intentionally or recklessly:

- disturbs any wild bird included in Schedule 1 while it is building a nest or is in, on or near a nest containing eggs or young; or
- disturbs dependent young of such a bird, he shall be guilty of an offence.

Several bird species are Species of Principal Importance for Nature Conservation in England, making them capable of being material considerations in the planning process.