



Sandleford Park, Newbury

Appendix F16: Fungus Survey Report



Bloor Homes & The Sandleford Farm Partnership

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The Pavilion, 1st Floor, Botleigh Grange Office Campus, Hedge End, Southampton, Hampshire, SO30 2AF



Tel: 02382 022800

Email: ecology@wyg.com



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Prepared by:		Richard Penson Senior Ecologist
Checked & Verified By:		Tamsin Clark MCIEEM Associate Ecologist

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Executive Summary

Contents	Summary
Site Location	The site is located at Sandleford Park in Newbury, West Berkshire, centred on OS Grid Reference SU 46847 64550. The site comprises agricultural fields with areas of grassland and several copses of ancient woodland. A central valley runs from the north-western corner of the site towards the River Enbourne at the site's southern boundary.
Existing Site Information	WYG completed an initial ecological appraisal in 2008 with update surveys completed in 2011, 2013, 2015 and 2017. In addition a number of protected species surveys including fungus surveys have been completed at the site.
Scope of this Survey(s)	The fungus survey was completed in 2014.
Results	Records of two fungi were returned within the data search. Common and widespread fungi at national level were recorded during the 2014 walkover survey. Agricultural activity within fields on the site restricts fungi present to only common and widespread species. Woodland areas, especially Waterleaze Copse, and wet grassland in the centre of the site are likely to support notable species of fungi.
Recommendations	Cessation of agricultural activity as a result of the proposed development at Sandleford Park could have a beneficial effect on fungi.



Glossary

CEcol	Chartered Ecologist
CEnv	Chartered Environmentalist
CIEEM	Chartered Institute of Ecology & Environmental Management
Habitat Regulations	Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017
HAP	Habitat Action Plan
HBIC	Hampshire Biodiversity Information Centre
HPI	Habitat(s) of Principal Importance
LERC	Local Ecological Record Centre
LBAP	Local Biodiversity Action Plan
MCIEEM	Member of Chartered Institute of Ecology & Environmental Management
NBN Gateway	National Biodiversity Network Gateway
NE	Natural England
NERC Act	Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006
NPPF	Revised National Planning Policy Framework
SPI	Species of Principal Importance
TVERC	Thames Valley Environmental Records Centre
WHS	Wildlife Heritage Sites



1.0 Introduction

1.1 Background

WYG was commissioned by Bloor Homes and Sandleford Farm Partnership in December 2018 to review the findings of the 2014 Fungus Survey with reference to the current proposals for Sandleford Park, Newbury.

This update report has been prepared by Ben Cooke and Tamsin Clark MCIEEM.

1.2 Site Location

The site is located at Sandleford Park in Newbury, West Berkshire and is centred at Ordnance Survey National Grid Reference SU 46847 64550. The survey area, hereafter referred to as the 'site' comprises of agricultural fields with areas of grassland and several copses of ancient woodland dispersed throughout. A central valley runs from the north-western corner of the site towards the River Enborne at the site's southern boundary.

For details of the development description, please see the main ES chapter.

1.3 Purpose of the Report

The objectives of this assessment are to carry-out:

- Review the findings of the 2017 desk study and 2014 fungi survey, which involved a walkover of the site to record fungi species;
- An assessment of the potential ecological receptors present on site, any constraints they pose to the proposed development and any recommendations for any further surveys, avoidance, mitigation or enhancement measures that are needed (as appropriate).

Note that Latin names are provided at the first mention of each species and common names (where possible) are then used throughout the rest of the report for ease of reading.



2.0 Methodology

2.1 Desk Study

2.1.1 Previous Reports

An extended Phase 1 habitat survey was first completed by WYG at the site in 2008, this was updated periodically, with the most recent Ecological Appraisal update in December 2017 (Appendix F1). There have been no significant changes in the habitats on site during this time. WYG also completed fungus surveys in autumn 2014 (WYG, 2015). The findings of this survey are reassessed in the current report, with reference to the updated proposals for the site.

2.1.2 Local Ecological Records Centre

Up to date information was requested from Thames Valley Environmental Records Centre (TVERC) and Hampshire Biodiversity Information Centre (HBIC) in December 2017, regarding the presence of protected and notable species within 2km of the proposed development site, including fungi species.

2.1.3 Local Species Recorders

The Flora of Berkshire, published in 2005 (Crowley 2005) with online updates covering the period 2005 to 2014 (Crowley 2014), does not cover fungi so the assessment of County status relied on the data available through the National Biodiversity Network (NBN, assessed in 2014) Gateway and the Thames Valley Fungus Group (<http://www.tvfungusgroup.co.uk/>, viewed 2014). The scientific names of fungi were taken from the British Mycological Society website (<http://www.britmycolsoc.org.uk/>).

2.2 Field Surveys

The following methodologies have been used to identify the ecological receptors present on or near the site, which are relevant to the proposed development.

2.2.1 Habitats

The site is mainly in agricultural use and also contains several ancient woodland areas, which are dispersed throughout the site. These woodlands are locally designated, Wildlife Heritage Sites (WHS) and are located on the site and in the immediate surrounds and are designated due to the presence of ancient woodland indicator species. The site has a fairly complex topography, but generally slopes towards the River Enborne which runs along the southern boundary. It also contains a central valley which runs from the north-western corner of the site towards the river in the south. At the fringes of the site are large tracts of mainly flat/gently sloping land, particularly towards the northern and western boundaries. Immediately beyond the site boundary to the south and west is agricultural land and woodland.

A Habitat assessment was also carried out to ascertain which areas would be most likely to support a diverse fungus flora.

2.2.2 Survey Methodology

A fungi survey was conducted on the 3rd November 2014 within the site. As the development proposals conserve and protect the woodland areas, no significant impacts were predicted on fungi suitable habitats. Woodland areas were therefore not included in the fungi survey, which covered all



the remaining habitats within the site. Surveyed areas included woodland edges, grassland areas, including the strips surrounding the arable fields as well as the fields themselves.

2.3 Limitations

The optimal period to undertake a fungi survey is September to November inclusive. The survey was completed on the 3rd November 2014 which is towards the end of the optimal survey window. The survey was carried out before the first frost so the majority of the species present were still identifiable. As fungi can appear throughout the year and have fruiting seasons of variable length; there will always be some species which have rotted "deliquesced" to a stage beyond identification as happened at this site with a *Mycena* species. As such this is not considered to be a limitation to the accurate assessment of the habitats and the dominant species of the respective vegetation types were visible and identifiable.

Most fungi are only visible when they produce fruiting bodies and some species are very irregular in producing them; this survey can only be taken as a snapshot in time of what was visible at the time of the survey.

The details of this report are recommended to be reviewed in the event that the proposals change.

3.0 Baseline Conditions

3.1 Fungi Records

TVERC returned one record brown birch bolete (*Leccinum scabrum*) from Greenham Common recorded in 2014. HBIC return one record of fungus zoned tooth (*Hydnellum conrescens*) from Newtown Common recorded in 2010.

3.2 Survey Results

Fungi Species

All the fungi recorded were common and widespread at a national level according to the NBN Gateway data. Some species, including field mushroom and fleecy milkcap show an apparent restricted distribution in Berkshire although this is considered most likely to be due to under-recording as they closely resemble other equally common species and do not have exacting habitat requirements.

Table 1 below shows records of fungi species from the site (2014).

Table 1 Fungi Species Recorded at Sandleford Park

Common Name	Scientific Name	Location
Candle-snuff Fungus	<i>Xyloria hypoxylon</i>	Along green lane
Hairy Stereum	<i>Stereum hirsutum</i>	On fallen timber along wood edges throughout the site
Field Mushroom	<i>Agaricus campestris</i>	In remains of stubble and along field edges
Glistening Ink-cap	<i>Coprinellus micaceus</i>	Scattered through the site in grassland
Lawyer's-wig	<i>Coprinus comatus</i>	Scattered through the site in grassland
Horn-of-Plenty	<i>Craterellus cornucopioides</i>	Edge of Slockett's Copse
Birch Polypore	<i>Piptoporus betulinus</i>	On Silver Birch, wherever this occurs, wood edges throughout the site
Sulphur-tuft	<i>Hyphaloma fasciculare</i>	Common, along all wood edges
Bare-toothed Russula	<i>Russula vesca</i>	Associating with oak on west side of High Wood
Wood woolly-foot	<i>Gymnopus peronatus</i>	Along wood edges, throughout the site
Spindle Tough-shank	<i>Collybia fusipes</i>	Scattered throughout the site
Honey Fungus	<i>Armillaria mellea</i>	In small quantity throughout the site on wood edges
Shaggy parasol	<i>Chlorophyllum rhacodes</i>	Along green lane, 1 specimen



Common Name	Scientific Name	Location
Fleecy Milkcap	<i>Lactarius vellereus</i>	On North edge of Waterleaze Copse
Jelly-Ear	<i>Auricularia auricula-judea</i>	Abundant on elder bushes throughout the site
Common Earth-ball	<i>Scleroderma citrina</i>	Common along wood edges
Stump Puffball	<i>Lycoperdon pyriforme</i>	Common to Frequent along wood edges
Turkey-tail	<i>Coriolus versicolor</i>	Common to Abundant on dead wood along wood edges
Split-Gill	<i>Schizophyllum commune</i>	On two trees on the north edge of Waterleaze Copse
Weeping Widow	<i>Lacrymaria lacrymabunda</i>	Occasional to locally common in grassland throughout the site
Clouded Funnel-cap	<i>Clitocybe nebularis</i>	One clump on south edge of Barn Copse
Tar-spot Fungus	<i>Rhytosma acerinum</i>	Ubiquitous, growing on sycamore and field maple leaves; found wherever these trees occur.

No notable fungi species were recorded. Although this can be considered no more than a snapshot in time of what was visible on the day of the survey, a habitat assessment was also carried out to ascertain which areas would be most likely to support a diverse fungus flora.

Habitats Assessment

The arable (including currently non-cropped land) and grass strips are subject to at least periodic disturbance as a result of agricultural activities and it is considered probable that the grass strips surrounding the arable fields have also been subject to fertiliser and herbicide spray drift; all of these having an adverse impact on fungi, restricting which species would be likely to occur. Regular soil disturbance in particular prevents or inhibits the development of mycorrhizal associations which fungi develop with the roots of host plants as "there is not enough time between disturbance events for fungi to develop a mature mycelium (the equivalent of roots in vascular plants) before the next ploughing, such habitats will not repay much mycological survey effort" (Buczacki, Shields & Ovenden 2012). It is considered that only common and widespread, opportunistic fungi would occur in these habitats for this reason.

The woodland areas, with long-undisturbed soil profiles and important fungus host species of trees such as pedunculate oak (*Quercus robur*) and silver birch (*Betula pendula*) are considered most likely to support a diverse assemblage of fungus species. Waterleaze Copse in particular, with its wide diversity of tree and shrub species including both wet and dry woodland is considered likely to support notable species, including those having particular associations with alder (*Alnus glutinosa*).

The woodland areas will be retained within the proposed development and no indirect impacts affecting fungi are anticipated in these areas.



The wet grassland alongside the water course in the centre of the site is also considered to have potential to support notable fungi, even though none were found at the time of the survey. This area is considered unlikely to have been ploughed or directly impacted by agricultural activity and so there has been sufficient time for mycorrhizal associations to develop between fungi and host vascular plant root systems. The range of vascular plants present also indicates that this habitat has been relatively little affected by fertiliser spray drift although this is difficult to quantify. Again, this area will not be largely retained within the proposed development.



4.0 Relevant Legislation

Schedule 8 of the Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) lists the most threatened fungi (alongside plants, bryophytes and lichens) occurring in the UK. The Act makes it an offence to:

- Intentionally pick, uproot or destroy any fungi (alongside plants, bryophytes and lichens) listed in Schedule 8; and
- Sell offer or expose for sale, or possess for the purpose of trade, any live or dead wild plant included in Schedule 8, or any part of, or anything derived from such plant.



5.0 Summary

5.1 Fungi Records

No fungi species records were identified from the data search.

5.2 Fungi Species

Only common and widespread species were recorded during a walkover survey. Notable fungi are not considered to pose a constraint to the proposed development.

5.3 Habitats

Habitats on the site that will be affected by the development proposal are mainly agricultural fields that support common and widespread fungi species. It is considered that the cessation of agricultural activity at Sandleford Park could have a beneficial effect on fungi as the site will no longer be affected by pesticide and fertiliser sprays, and soil disturbance will be reduced to a much lower level than that experienced in the past.

Habitats that offer potential to support notable fungi species include woodland areas and wet grassland, which will be retained within the proposed development.



6.0 References

- Buczacki, S., Shields, C. & Ovenden D. (2012) *Collins Fungi Guide*. Collins, London.
- Communities and Local Government (2012) National Planning Policy Framework.
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