

Strategic Sites

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**Huddersfield Waterfront  
Quarter**

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Preliminary Ecological  
Appraisal

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Appraisal

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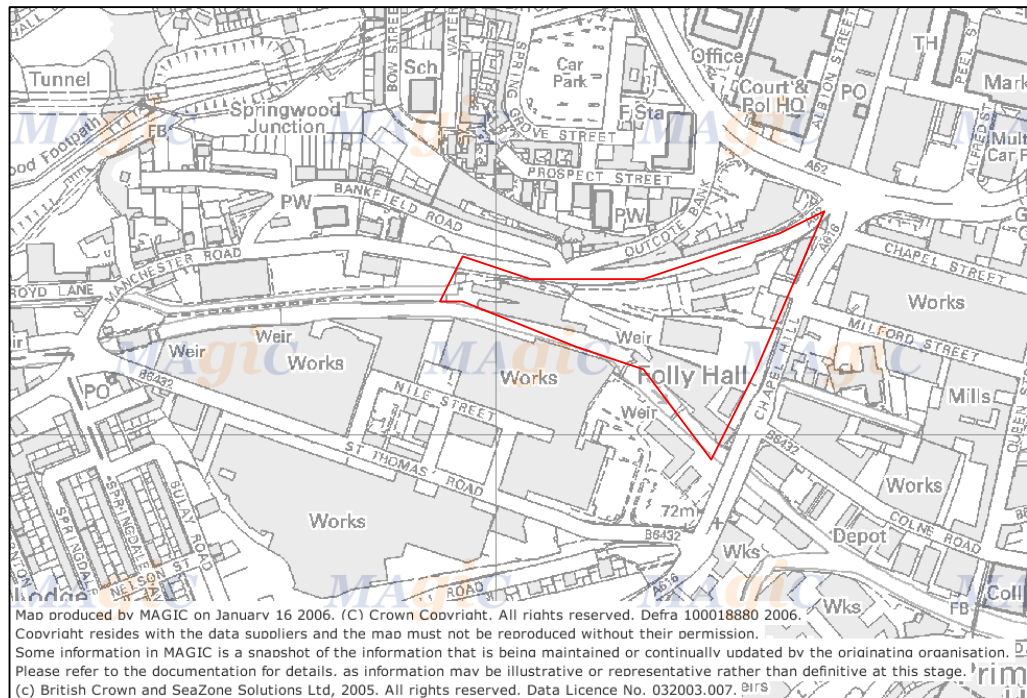
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# 1 Introduction

This report updates the original baseline walkover survey undertaken in 2006. Additional biological information and data obtained recently has been integrated into the report.

The Huddersfield Waterfront Quarter site is situated on land immediately north of the River Colne, near the town centre. The Huddersfield Narrow Canal is partly culverted under the site and is illustrated in Figure 1 below.

**Figure 1. Site over view.**



The aim of this report is to identify any features of nature conservation importance that could influence site re-development via desk study and field survey.

## 2 Methodology

The desk study involved obtaining data on designated nature conservation sites, protected and notable species from West Yorkshire Ecology records centre. The field survey involved recording details of habitats and species (including potential presence) at the site.

## 3 Results

### 3.1 Desk Study

There are no designated sites of nature conservation importance within the site boundary. The nearest designated site of nature conservation importance is the Huddersfield Narrow Canal; sections of which form part of an extensive Site of Ecological or Geological Importance (SEGI). The designated sections of Canal are located approximately 10m east and 70m west of the site.

The Huddersfield Narrow Canal SEGI is designated because it supports a diverse range of aquatic and wetland plants, that include regionally uncommon species such as rigid hornwort (*Ceratophyllum demersum*) and fringed water-lily (*Nymphoides peltata*), and the

nationally rare floating water-plantain (*Luronium natans*). The latter species is afforded special protection because it is listed on Schedule 8 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) and Schedule 4 of The Conservation (Natural Habitats &c.) Regulations 1994.

### 3.1.1 Data update 2008

Additional data obtained recently has identified records for white-clawed crayfish (*Austroptamobius pallipes*) and floating water plantain (*Luronium natans*), immediately up and down stream of the site.

## 3.2 Field Survey

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A survey of the site was conducted by an Arup ecologist on 21st December 2005.

### 3.2.1 Buildings and Hardstanding

The site mainly comprises large buildings (light engineering workshops, timber storage warehouses, offices and mixed residential/retail) and hardstanding (vehicle access roads and parking areas) and.

### 3.2.2 Stone Walls

Stone walls occur along the northern and southern site boundaries. The stone walls along the southern site boundary by the River Colne are colonised in places by plants such as great willowherb (*Epilobium hirsutum*), and common nettle (*Urtica dioica*).

### 3.2.3 Semi-improved Neutral Grassland

The south-facing slopes along the northern site boundary and the western part of the site support semi-improved neutral grassland. The following common grass species were recorded: crested dog's-tail (*Cynosurus cristatus*), red fescue (*Festuca rubra*), tufted hair-grass (*Deschampsia cespitosa*), cock's-foot (*Dactylis glomerata*), false oat-grass (*Arrhenatherum elatius*). The following common forbs were recorded: ribwort plantain (*Plantago lanceolata*), spear thistle (*Cirsium vulgare*), creeping buttercup (*Ranunculus repens*), dandelion (*Taraxacum officinale* agg.), white clover (*Trifolium* sp.), a vetch (*Vicia* sp.) and rosebay willowherb (*Chamerion angustifolium*). The moss (*Calliergon cuspidatum*) is widely distributed within the grassland ground layer.

### 3.2.4 Trees and Shrubs

Scattered trees and shrubs occur along the northern and southern site boundaries. Sycamore (*Acer pseudoplatanus*) is the dominant tree species, with occasional ash (*Fraxinus excelsior*) and elder (*Sambucus nigra*), hawthorn (*Corylus avellana*) and a willow (*Salix* sp.) are relatively rare. Where the tree canopy is more extensive along the northern site boundary, bramble (*Rubus fruticosus* agg.) is abundant and male fern (*Dryopteris filix-mas*) is occasional within the field layer. Buddleja (*Buddleja davidii*) is frequent and scattered across the western part of the site.

### 3.2.5 Hedgerows

A Leyland cypress (*Cupressocyparis leylandii*) hedge occurs along the eastern side of the site.

### 3.2.6 Japanese Knotweed

Japanese knotweed (*Fallopia japonica*) occurs at four locations along the southern site boundary and around the western most Environmental Services building.

Under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) it is an offence to cause the spread of Japanese knotweed plants.

### **3.2.7 Bats**

The majority of the buildings at the site are unsuitable for roosting bats because they are generally too light (because skylights are present) and have no attic voids. The Seller's building in the south-east corner of the site near the river bridge has potential to support roosting bats. In particular, there is a suitable gap in the soffit board on the north facing side of the building which may be used by roosting bats. The loose tiles and gaps in the brickwork of the shops along the eastern site boundary have potential to support roosting bats.

British bat species are afforded protection under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended), the Countryside and Rights of Way (CROW) Act 2000 and The Conservation (Natural Habitats &c.) Regulations 1994. This legislation makes it an offence to kill, injure, capture (handle) or disturb a bat, or damage, destroy or obstruct access to any place that a bat uses for shelter or protection (this is taken to mean all bat roosts whether bats are present or not).

### **3.2.8 Reptiles**

The south-facing banks and stone walls along the northern site boundary may have some potential to support reptiles, particularly common lizards. Common lizards are afforded legal protection from killing and injury under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended).

### **3.2.9 Breeding Birds**

The gaps in the brickwork of the shops along the eastern site boundary have potential to support nesting birds. The ivy covered boundary walls west of these shops also have potential to support nesting birds. The Leyland cypress hedge was found to be used by house sparrows and may be used by nesting birds.

The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) affords legal protection to wild birds at the nest. It is an offence to disturb a bird whilst on or building a nest, its eggs or dependent young.

## **3.3 Species Update 2008**

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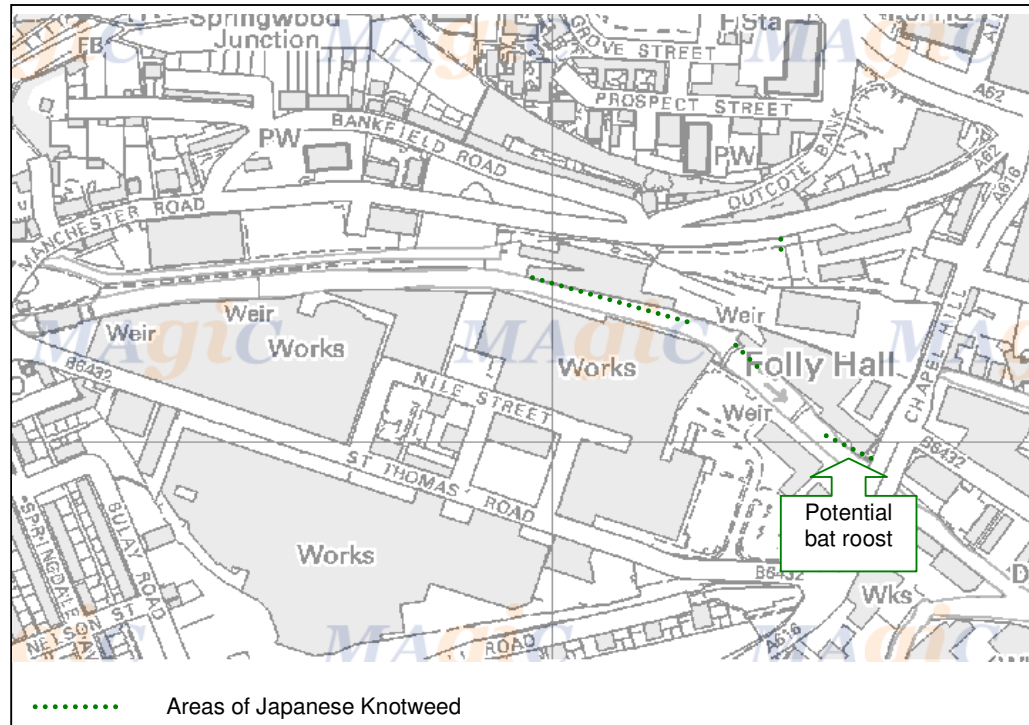
In light of the identification of recent records for white clawed crayfish and floating water plantain potentially within close proximity to the site; due consideration for these species will be required.

### **3.3.1 White-clawed crayfish**

White-clawed crayfish is listed in Appendix III of the Bern Convention and Annexes II and V of the EC Habitats Directive. It is also protected under Schedule 5 of the WCA in respect of taking from the wild and sale.

### **3.3.2 Floating water plantain**

Floating water plantain is listed on Annexes II and IV of the Habitats Directive and Appendix I of the Bern Convention. It is protected under Schedule 4 of the Conservation (Natural Habitats, etc.) Regulations 1994 and Schedule 8 of the WCA 1981.



## 4 Conclusions

Apart from one small section, most of the Huddersfield Narrow Canal is culverted under the site and is of limited ecological value. The site buildings and hardstanding are of limited ecological value. However, there is potential for a few buildings at the site to support roosting bats and nesting birds. The trees, shrubs and hedges have potential to provide nest sites for common bird species. The semi-improved neutral grassland is likely to support a range of common plant species of local ecological value, although there is potential for the south-facing slopes to support reptiles, potentially common lizard. Japanese knotweed is mainly found along the northern and southern site boundaries, respectively around the western most Environmental Services building and alongside the River Colne. The proximity and utilisation of the canal within the development, coupled with the potential presence of white-clawed crayfish and floating water plantain will require additional assessments to accurately define presence or likely absence.

## 5 Recommendations

Appropriate pollution and spillage control measures will be adopted to ensure that the ecological integrity and nature conservation status of the Huddersfield Narrow Canal is not compromised by the re-development. An opportunity exists to input to designs by creating and enhancing habitats at the site for wildlife. In particular, a wildlife corridor could be created along the alignment of the culverted Huddersfield Narrow Canal to link to existing semi-natural habitats on either side of the site.

Japanese knotweed plants should be accurately mapped and provision made for their treatment and/or removal prior to re-development.

A bat survey should be conducted to determine whether roosts occur in the Seller's building in the south-eastern corner of the site and within shops along Chapel Hill Road. If a bat roost is found to be present a licence application will need to be submitted to Defra with details of appropriate mitigation prior to re-development.



At this stage a formal reptile survey is deemed to be unnecessary, however an assessment of suitability is recommended to ascertain the ability of the site to support reptile species.

Additionally, surveys for both white-clawed crayfish and floating water plantain will be required as works are likely to directly affect the canal.

The surveys recommended above have been commissioned and a report of the findings will be presented to the planning authority prior to determination of the outline planning application.