

Ecology/Arboriculture Summary

11 January 2024

- Mr's Williams, Jacobs And Hooper intend to develop some land at the corner of Wallage Lane and Turners Hill Road for a residential unit.
- A Preliminary Ecological Assessment was conducted in April 2014. At the time, the central open area was a car park.
- It concluded there was potential for reptiles, dormice, badgers, nesting birds, bats and invertebrates in the woodlands immediately adjacent to the car park.
- In May 2019 Verdant Ecology visited the site and found the central open area (Area A) to have become a swathe of goat's-rue. The previously cleared NE part of the site (Area B) was immature willow trees in rhododendron with no ground flora. The previously cleared SW part of the site (Area C) was immature silver birch trees and rhododendron growing in remnants of heather. The rest/fringes of the ownership site was woodland, much of which had characteristics of ASNW.
- The whole ownership site, including the cleared areas, was originally designated as ASNW.
- An application to Natural England was made in 2019 to de-designate the previously-cleared areas. (*These areas were de-designated in September 2020.*)
- The plan is;
- Define the ASNW and other basic habitats. This has been done approximately (a combination of field visits, aerial images, OS maps) and is shown in Appendix 1.
- Use existing access. Upgrade using cellular mattress to protect tree roots.
- Service runs. Along access. In line with BS5837 and NJUGvol4.
- Define a CEZ (Construction Exclusion Zone) that retains and/or plants new so as to have a buffer of native trees at least 15m wide within the inside edge of the mature woodland.
- Confine development to areas A and B (minus the buffer planting for area D).
- Provide assurances on preventing indirect impacts (as a recommended minimum standard, compliance with Bat Conservation Trust and Institute for Lighting Engineers, 2018, Guidance Note 8 – Bats and Artificial Lighting in the UK, the COSHH Regulations and the Environment Agency's Pollution Prevention Guidelines series).
- This will mean buildings incorporating lots of glass may not be acceptable.
- Pollution (including light) control and a buffer around the ASNW means significant indirect impacts on any associated wildlife is unlikely, therefore no surveys of undeveloped areas are needed.
- This leaves likely significant direct impacts (harm to individuals or habitat loss) on protected species in the developed area.
- The table below lists these and provides information on their significance or explains their likely absence.

Appendices

Appendix 1. Site Plan

Appendix 2. Ecological Receptor and Relevance

(assumes indirect impacts on surroundings can and will be prevented)

	Suitable areas	Significant direct impact likely?	Survey needed?	Done?	Result	Sufficient for planning decision?	What next?
Invasive plants	All	y	y	y	Several invasive plants on site, including a Sch. 9-listed plant (Rhododendron) and a very pernicious weed (Goat's-rue).	y	Warn anyone attending the site to seek ecologist advice first so that they don't break the law unwittingly (by taking plant matter off site).

Trees	Access. Site edge	n	n	n	There are dozens of trees along the existing access that have roots that would be affected if it was resurfaced. However, access will be a cellular mattress and can thus be built without significant negative impacts on tree roots. Several trees along the access route may have to be pruned for access and H&S. None are significant. ASNW will need to be protected by at least 15m, individual retained trees in accordance with BS5837.	y	?
Reptiles	A + C + D	y	y	y	Assume absence.	y	Double check.
Dormice	B + C + D	y	y	y	Assume absence.	y	Double check.
Badgers	All	y	y	y	No evidence of badgers to date.	y	Update surveys occasionally.
Hedgehogs	All	y	n	n	Assume presence.	y	Clear site with ecologist guidance.
Toads	All	y	n	n	Found during reptile surveys.	y	Clear site with ecologist guidance.
Nesting birds	All	y	n	n/a	Site clearance during winter	y	Clear site with ecologist guidance.
BAP birds	All	y	n	n/a	Habitats lost relatively poor for wildlife and site can reasonably be expected to be enhanced.	y	Incorporate natural habitats in the design.
Bat foraging	All	y	y	y	All areas low.	y	Control (light) pollution. Incorporate a buffer of tree planting on the inside edge of the woodland.
Invertebrates	All	n	n	n	n/a	y	Incorporate a buffer of tree planting on the inside edge of the woodland.
Bat roosts	D	n	n	n	Design layout must only allow removal of immature trees. A buffer for mature trees will be necessary. Several trees along the access route may have to be pruned for access and H&S. Currently (summer 2019), this was not likely to affect significant bat roost potential.	y	Design layout to coincide with area A, B and C whilst incorporating at least a 15m buffer of tree planting on the inside edge of the woodland.
Barn Owl	None	n	n	n	Habitats considered unsuitable.	y	

GCNewts	All	n	n	n	Nearest pond 155m away and reported as fish pond. Next nearest pond 400m away and on maps as fish pond. No other ponds on OS maps within 500m.	y	
Other					If not listed here, habitat considered entirely unsuitable and/or beyond known species range e.g. water voles, otter or osprey.	y	