

Crossways House
The Square
Stow on the Wold
Gloucestershire
GL54 1AB

Tel: 01451 870767
Fax: 01451 870060
Email: info@ecologysolutions.co.uk
Web: www.ecologysolutions.co.uk



AYLESBURY ROAD, TRING

PRELIMINARY ECOLOGICAL CONSTRAINTS

This briefing note sets out preliminary ecological constraints identified following a walkover survey of the site in June 2012.

Habitats

The large majority of the site (~60-70%) represents arable land and is therefore is considered to be of limited ecological value. Arable field margins contained common species such as Poppy, Purple Toadflax, Scarlet Pimpernel, with some occasional occurrences of Field Scabious.

There is some grassland, some of which is intensively horse grazed, although this is quite improved in nature therefore offering little botanical interest. Herbaceous species were limited to species such as Clover, Dandelion, Creeping Buttercup, Yarrow, Daisy, Ribwort Plantain, Greater Plantain, Germander Speedwell and occasional Meadow Buttercup, with grass species comprising False Oat-grass, Cock's-foot and Meadow grasses.

Of the most value in the context of the site are the hedgerows, many of which are species-rich and some which could potential qualify as being ecologically important under the Hedgerow Regulations on account of their botanical diversity. Species present within the more species-rich hedgerows included (but were not present along all hedgerows) Hawthorn, Blackthorn, Wild Clematis, Dog-rose, Dogwood, Elder, Holly, Spindle, Sycamore, Wild Privet, Field Maple, Crab Apple, Wayfaring Tree, Ash, Cherry, Blackthorn, Bramble, Elm and Hazel, although Hawthorn, Blackthorn and occasionally Field Maple tended to be the dominant species. Ground flora was generally dominated by common ruderal species such as Common Nettle and Hogweed, although occasional White Campion and Red Campion were present along some hedgerows.

Further Survey Work

The hedgerows within the site are likely to offer foraging and potentially navigational opportunities for bats. As such, any planning application would need to be accompanied by a series of bat activity surveys in order to identify the level of any activity and any features within the site which are of importance to bats.

Two mature trees within the hedgerows were also identified as having some, albeit limited, potential to support roosting bats on account of the presence of woodpecker holes and/or peeling bark. If felling or other works would be proposed to these trees then further survey

work may be required (for example tree climbing or targeted emergence surveys undertaken as part of the activity surveys).

In addition, a small single storey building adjacent to the eastern boundary of the site does, superficially, offer suitable habitat for roosting bats. This building would be subject to an internal survey in order to identify any past/present usage by bats with any additional surveys undertaken if required.

The species-rich hedgerows may also offer suitable habitat for the Hazel Dormouse. The NBN Gateway database available online has shown that records for this species are known in the local area. As such, we would recommend that surveys for this European protected species are undertaken to identify whether they are present within the site.

Recommendations

It is recommended that forthcoming promotion of the site seeks to retain the species-rich hedgerows wherever possible and that these would form an integral part of the design of the scheme.

Results of the bat surveys would also need to inform the design where necessary.

Planning policy dictates that ecological enhancements are provided and we would recommend that new habitats are provided where possible, for example areas of open space could be overseeded with a wild flower seed mix and any drainage attenuation pond could also be designed to provide wetland habitats currently not present within the site.