

ECOLOGY SUMMARY – MILTON HILL, CLAPHAM

Wardell Armstrong was commissioned to undertake a range of ecological surveys to support the promotion of a new housing development within the Local Plan for a site at Milton Hill, Clapham. The surveys were all undertaken by qualified ecologists in accordance with best practice guidelines. This document provides a summary of the ecological works undertaken to date and an overview of the results and recommendations from the specialist surveys undertaken.

BATS

A range of surveys have been undertaken to assess the presence of bats within the Site.

A number of bat species were recorded in the 2018 and 2020 bat activity surveys undertaken. Bat species diversity on the site is considered to support at least 7 of the 17 British resident species, as outlined below:

- Common and Soprano Pipistrelle - As both species are common and widespread in the UK the common and soprano pipistrelles using the site are considered to be of Local value for nature conservation.
- Nathusius' pipistrelle - Due to the regular recording of this species at the site, albeit in low numbers, the Nathusius' pipistrelle using the site are considered to be of district value for nature conservation.
- Noctule - Due to noctule being a relatively common species, the noctule using the site are considered to be of local value for nature conservation.
- Western barbastelle – As Western barbastelles are considered to be a rare bat species, the barbastelle using the site are considered to be of district value.
- Brown long-eared, Myotis sp., and Serotine - A low number of calls from these species were recorded, but none of the results were indicative of an important commuting route being present within the site. Therefore, the low numbers of brown long-eared, Myotis sp. and serotine using the site are considered to be of local value.

Bat Roosts

The trees within the Site were assessed as having negligible bat roost potential.

A Preliminary Roost Assessment was undertaken on the buildings within the Site. Four were assessed as having negligible potential for roosting bats, and the remaining 11 were assessed as having low potential. Emergence/re-entry surveys were carried out of the buildings with low potential.

In 2018, bats were recorded emerging from two of the buildings. However, emergence/re-entry surveys were also undertaken in 2020 and no emergences were recorded.

No emergences or re-entries were recorded for the remaining buildings, although there was foraging and/or commuting activity recorded in the vicinity.

It is considered that the removal of these buildings will not have a significant impact upon individual opportunistic bats above the local scale. It is recommended that pre-demolition surveys are undertaken on the two buildings where bat emergences were recorded. These should be undertaken between May and August and if no evidence of roosts are discovered, demolition can be undertaken

under a Precautionary Working Method Statement. If evidence of bat occupation is found, a bat mitigation license will be needed from Natural England.

BREEDING BIRDS

Breeding bird surveys were undertaken at the Site in 2018 during the peak breeding season (between April and June), and were updated in 2020. Three visits were undertaken both in 2018 and in 2020.

The following species of conservation significance were recorded within the Site:

- Schedule 1 Species (Non-breeding)
 - 2 (2018) - Red Kite and Hobby
 - 1 (2020) – Red Kite
- Red Listed Birds of Conservation Concern
 - 7 (2018) - Skylark, song thrush, house sparrow, linnet, and yellowhammer (breeding) and mistle thrush and starling (non-breeding).
 - 6 (2020) – Skylark, song thrush, house sparrow, linnet, and yellowhammer (breeding) and starling (non-breeding).
- Amber Listed BoCC
 - 7 (2018) – Dunnock, Kestrel, Stock Dove, and Reed Bunting (Breeding) and lesser black-backed gull, swift and swallow (non-breeding).
 - 3 (2020) – Dunnock (breeding) and kestrel and swift (non-breeding).

Recommended mitigation measures for breeding birds include; creation of skylark plots on suitable off-site agricultural land; implementation of management on Public Open Space (POS) for skylark; hedgerow retention, management and creation; creation of diverse wildflower grassland and scrub and installation of nest boxes.

BARN OWL

Barn owl surveys were undertaken in 2018 and 2020 to assess the Site's potential to support barn owls.

No evidence for the presence of roosting or breeding barn owls was found on this Site.

Potential foraging habitat was identified on site, in the form of field margins of rough grassland around each of the agricultural fields. However, the interior of the fields comprised intensively managed wheat crops that are very low quality for foraging barn owl (due to the limited small mammal opportunities).

GREAT CRESTED NEWTS

Watercourses on and within 500m of the Site boundary were assessed, where access permitted, for their potential to provide suitable breeding habitat for great crested newt (GCN) (*Triturus cristatus*). This scoping exercise was undertaken on 10th April 2018 and updated on 15th April 2020

Two ponds and a network of ditches were identified within 500m of the Site. Six waterbodies were scoped as having potential to support GCN and subject to further surveys. The remainder were deemed unsuitable due to lack of water or fast flow of water.

Torchlight inspection, bottle trapping and egg searching were undertaken on the six waterbodies considered to have potential to support GCN the Site. No GCN were observed during any of the

presence/absence surveys undertaken in 2018 or 2020, therefore the development will not result in any significant effects on GCN.

No further mitigation is considered necessary.

BIODIVERSITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

A Biodiversity Impact Assessment has been undertaken, based upon the DEFRA metric for assessing the losses and potential gains in biodiversity. The results of this assessment show a 10.42% biodiversity net gain for habitat and a 10.1% net gain for hedgerows. The metric results demonstrate that the onsite habitat creation measures are adequate to mitigate the habitat losses within the planning application area.

CONCLUSION

A suite of ecological surveys were carried out on the Site at Milton Hill, Clapham, to assess the impact of the proposed development on the ecological receptors identified in relation to the Site. Where appropriate, mitigation and/or ecological enhancements have been recommended to ensure the development does not have a significant adverse impact.