Ducker Site

Ecology

Thomson Ecology have been commissioned to carry out a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal and this can be provided if requried.

The summary, main recommendations and conclusions are reproduced here.

Summary

Kenneth W Reed + Associates is involved in the potential redevelopment of Ducker site, a former Ducker Pond used as a swimming pool located in Brent, London. The pond was subsequently in-filled and a secondary woodland is now established on the area. The development proposals include vegetation clearance and a future development on the footprint of the Ducker Pond in-fill area. The areas outside of the Ducker Pond in-fill area will be retained.

Kenneth W Reed + Associates commissioned Thomson Ecology Ltd in April 2018 to carry out a Preliminary Ecological Assessment (PEA) of the site.

The main findings of the desk study were that the site is within a non-statutory designated site, Northwick Park and the Ducker Pool, Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINC). SINC sites are designated by local authorities and receive protection under local planning policy. SINCs also receive consideation through the London Plan (2016). No statutory designated sites or parcels of ancient woodland were recorded within 2km of the site. The desk study also identified 173 parcels listed as Habitats of Principal Importance (HPI) for nature conservation, or priority habitats, under Section 41 England) of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006 within 2km of the developoment in addition to semi-natural broadleafed woodland and standing water (a pond), which were recorded within the site. Records of protected fauna, including plants, birds and bats witin 1km of the site were returned during the desk study.

During the extended Phase 1 habitat survey, the site was found to support semi-natural broadleafed woodland, standing water (a pond), running water (stream), dense scrub and bare ground. Fly-tipped and discarded materials were also recorded in the eastern part of the site.

The site was found to have potential to support breeding birds, reptiles, stag beetle *(Lucamodae),* roosting bats, amphibians (common toad) *(Bufo bufo)* and great crested newt (Triturus cristatus)) and mammals (European hedeghog (Erinaceus europaeus) and badger *(Meles meles)*) Cherry laurel *(Prunus laurocerasus)* was found across the site during the extended Phase 1 habitat survey. Cherry laurel is a non-native invasive species and spread in the wild through seed dispersal.

The recommendations set out below should ensure that the development is compliant with the law and planning policy with respect to protected species which may be using the site as suitable habitat was recorded during the Phase 1 habitat survey.

Main Recommendations

The following measures are recommended for the development to comply with relevant bio-diversity legislation and policy:

- If full or partual retention of the semi-natural broadleafed woodland habitat within the Northwick Park and the Ducker Pool SINC designated site is not viable, then consultation with the local planning authority regarding compensation for loss of SINC habitat is recommended and at least like-for like habitat creation is likely to be required;

- At least one new wildlife pond should be created at a suitable location within the site to replace the loss of the existing pond;

- Temporary Heras fencing with dust sheeting and pollution control measures should be implemented to minimise any potential impacts to the adjancent semi-natural broadl woodland during the construction phase in line with the (now withdrawn) Pollution Prevention Guidelines (Environment Agency, 2012);

- Removal of any trees and/or dense scrub and logs onsite should be undertaken outside the breeding bird season i.e. site clearnace should be undertaken in the period September to February inclusive;

- In respect to reptiles, common toad and stag beetle, which may be present onsite, clearance of the site should be conducted under an ecological watching brief and following a mitigation method statement to minimise the risk of potential impacts to those species;

- In order to limit the potential light disturbance on bats, construction and operational lighting around the area to be cleared, should be carefully controlled to avoid potential spillge of artificial lighting onto the areas to be retained (BW1 and BW2 on Figure 2);

- To reduce the potential for Cherry laurel species to spread in surrounding habitats it is recommended that the plants are removed by excavating and/or burning prior to any works commencing;

- Security fencing and acoustic barriers should be designed in such a way as to allow movement of wildlife such as European hedgehog; and

- It is recommended that a pre-construction badger walkover survey is undertaken prior to the commencement of development activities on the site to ensure that to badgers have taken up residence on or near to the site.

Additional mitigation measures may be required following the results of the further surveys recommened below.

Further measures to enhance biodiversity are recommended to comply with national and local planning policy:

- An emphasis should be placed on the use of native trees and shrubs and of plants attractive to wildlife, where possible of local provenance, in the landscpae proposals;

- A green or brown roof could be included within the development proposals to benefit biodiveristy.

- Bird boxes and bat boxes could be installed on the buildings and suitable trees throughout areas of woodland within the site to provide additional nesting opportunities for bids and roosting opportunities for bats;

- A biodiversithy enhancement and management plan for the semi-natural broadleafed woodland areas which will be retained, should be produced, to provide further details on how habtitats of importance to biodiversity will be protected during development and how biodiversity will be enhanced post development.

Following best practice guidelines, further surveys for the following species/groups of species are recommended because suitable habitat was found during the survey within the area which will be affected by the works and they are legally protected or otherwise of conservation concern:

- Bats; and
- Great crested newt.

Further survey and/or mitigation measures may be required follwoign the results of the further surveys. Mitigation for great crested newt and bats requires licensing by Natural England.

Andrew Reed 16 April 2019