ecology
SERVICES UK LIMITED

Mr. M. Austin
The Poplars
Talbot Road
Glossop
SK13 7DP

2nd January 2013

Dear Mr. Austin,

RE: The Poplars, Talbot Road, Glossop SK13 7DP – planning number HPK/2012/0528

Thank you for your request for an ecological survey, assessment and advisory letter in relation to a proposed development at the above site.

I understand that the information is required as part of a planning application. This letter provides an overview of ecological issues relating to the site to help inform the decision-making process.

For clarification, I am a Chartered Environmentalist and a full member of the Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management, with a Bachelor of Science degree in Biology.

I have been working as an ecological consultant for over fifteen years, most recently as Director of Ecology Services UK Limited. This work includes provision of expert advice and guidance to Statutory Nature Conservation Organisations, National Park Authorities and Lancashire and Yorkshire Police Authorities, as well as the delivery of professional training courses.

Please note that the following information represents the professional opinion of an ecologist and does not constitute professional legal advice. You may wish to seek professional legal interpretation of the wildlife legislation cited.

Background information

I understand that the development comprises the construction of a building as show on attached drawing 2341-201 (dated August 2012). I am also in receipt of a drawing showing the predicted impact on trees and shrubs (drawing 2341-210, dated September 2012).

I am not aware of any previous ecology surveys of the proposed development site or the surrounding area.

www.ecologyservice.co.uk
Ecology Services UK Limited
19 Watling Street | Bury | Lancashire | BL8 2JD
T 0161 763 4699 E info@ecologyservice.co.uk
registered in england and wales no. 5329675

Methodology

I carried out a detailed daytime inspection of the area shown outlined in red on the attached drawing 2341-201 (dated August 2012).

The inspection took place on 31st December 2012.

In particular, the following techniques were employed:

- Information about statutorily designated sites was accessed from the Natural England website, in the form of site boundary vector data

- Information about locally designated sites (Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation) was accessed from the local plan

- The site and its immediate surroundings were assessed for their potential to support a range of protected species which might reasonably be expected to occur in this type of location in Glossop;

    - Badgers - the proposed development area was assessed for its potential to support badgers. The assessment was based on the availability of suitable features on site and in the immediate vicinity and the connectivity with suitable features in the surrounding landscape.

    - Bats – trees were searched for bat roosts and assessed for their potential to support bat roosts. The site was assessed for its potential to be used by commuting and foraging bats.

    - Amphibians - the proposed development area was assessed for its potential to support great crested newts. The assessment was based on the availability of suitable sheltering features on site and in the immediate vicinity, the connectivity with potential sheltering features in the surrounding landscape and on the availability of potential breeding ponds in the surrounding landscape.

    - Reptiles – the proposed development area was assessed for its potential to support reptiles. The assessment was based on the availability of suitable foraging, basking and egg laying features on site and in the immediate vicinity.

    - Nesting and other significant use by birds – the proposed development area was assessed for its potential to be used by nesting birds.

    - Presence of important habitats and other important species - the proposed development area was surveyed for habitats and species, and assessed for its potential to support a range of species.

    - Undesirable species - the proposed development area was surveyed for undesirable species (e.g. those listed on Schedule 9 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 as amended).

Site description

The area proposed for development supports the following habitats:

Scrub	Neutral grassland	Tall herb
Hedges	Garden pond	Fences
Wall	Trees	

The plot subject to survey can be conveniently split into north and south areas. The north area is dominated by semi-natural vegetation communities; these are bramble scrub, unmanaged and rank neutral grassland, along with scattered trees and shrubs (oak, sycamore, hawthorn, crab apple, holly and rhododendron) and ivy carpets. The boundaries of the north area are demarcated by fences and a garden hedgerow. The south area is managed as a garden and has beech and hawthorn hedgerows, mown grassland, cultivated areas (vegetable plots) and two formal water features; a series of artificial pools associated with a spring to the north and a formal garden pond to the south. Woody vegetation associated with the garden comprises cherry, beech, ash, hawthorn and larch. Garden plants also include montbretia. The boundaries of the south area are demarcated by a fence and garden hedgerows.

Rhododendron and montbretia are listed on Schedule 9 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act (1981 as amended).

Designated sites

There are no designated sites within 1 km of the proposed development site boundary.

Presence and likely presence of protected species

Badgers

No badgers or signs of badgers were found during the surveys. A number of site features had potential for use by badgers, although the likelihood of badgers occupying the site is regarded as low.

Bats

No bats or signs of bats were found during the surveys. No features were found with any potential for use by roosting bats.

All habitats on the site will support suitable food sources for bat foraging during the active season under suitable weather conditions. Artificial lighting is unlikely to present a constraint to bat activity on the site.

Overall, the site is regarded as having high potential for use by commuting and foraging bats during their active season (March/April to October).

Amphibians

No amphibian species were found during the surveys. The single garden pond to the south of the proposed development site has some potential for use by amphibian species during their active season; however the potential is regarded as low due to a number of factors including the position of the site, the management of the immediate surroundings and the frequent and significant fluctuation of water levels.

All of the habitats on the site have some potential to be used by amphibians for foraging and sheltering throughout much of the year.

Overall, there is a low risk of the site being used by great crested newts.

Reptiles

No reptile species were found during the surveys.

All of the habitats on the site have some potential to be used by reptile species for foraging and sheltering throughout their active season, although the potential, particularly for suitable undisturbed egg laying sites and basking areas, is regarded as very low.

Overall, there is a low risk of the site being used by reptiles.

Nesting and other significant use by birds

No signs of nesting birds were found during the surveys. Birds recorded were limited to long tailed tits and a blackbird.

The hedgerows, scrub, shrubs and trees all have potential for use by some nesting bird species.

Overall, the site is regarded as having high potential for use by small numbers of nesting birds.

Significant habitats and species

Biodiversity Broad Habitats were represented as follows:

- Neutral Grassland, Tall Herb, Broadleaved, Mixed and Yew Woodland (scrub and scattered trees), Standing Open Water and Canals and Built Up Areas and Gardens

- Boundary features (hedgerows, drystone wall and fences)

Habitats of Principal Importance (Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006) were represented as follows:

- Hedgerows

No Species of Principal Importance (Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006) were identified during the site investigation.

Conclusions

The presence of relatively undisturbed habitats has some value, including secondary value in their potential for use by some species.

Any works taking place on the site will need to take full account of the presence of hedgerows as a Habitat of Principal Importance (Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006).

Use by protected species is likely to be limited to foraging and commuting bats and small numbers of nesting birds. Any works taking place on the site will need to take full account of the potential presence of nesting birds.

Any works taking place on site will need to take full account of the presence of rhododendron.

Advice and recommendations

Habitats

As a matter of good practice, it is advised that the following measures are adopted and implemented:

- Working areas, including access points and trenching/other excavations, should be kept to a minimum to minimise habitat loss/disturbance. Ideally, storage of materials, plant and equipment should be on hard standing only.

- Storage of materials, equipment and plant should not take place under the 'dripzone' of trees (i.e. under their canopy) which are to be retained. Best practice should be followed (i.e. BS5837: 1991 Trees in Relation to Construction) to ensure that individual trees are not adversely affected.

Badgers

As a matter of good practice, it is advised that the following measures are adopted and implemented:

- All personnel involved in site works should be advised about badgers by an appropriate person, so that all works are undertaken with a clear understanding about legal aspects, precautions to be adopted and what to do if a badger or signs of badgers are found.

- If badgers or signs of badgers are found on site during the development, work must stop until advice has been sought from Natural England directly, or through an appropriately experienced Ecologist.

Bats

As a matter of good practice, it is advised that the following measures are adopted and implemented:

- Artificial lighting fixtures and artificial light spillage should be limited to areas associated with the proposed development only. Artificial light spillage should be avoided within semi-natural habitats where possible, particularly around hedgerows, trees, shrubs and scrub.

- Impacts on hedgerows, trees, shrubs and scrub should be kept to a minimum to limit habitat loss and disturbance.

Amphibians

As a matter of good practice, it is advised that the following measures are adopted and implemented:

- Impacts on all habitats should be kept to a minimum to minimise habitat loss and disturbance.

- It is advised that as a precaution, if removal or disturbance of potential sheltering features (walls and brash piles) is to take place, this should be done carefully by hand to avoid killing or injuring of animals.

- It is advised that as a precaution, all personnel involved in site works should be advised about amphibians by an appropriate person, so that all works are undertaken with a clear understanding about legal aspects, precautions to be adopted and what to do if any amphibians are found.

- It is advised that if amphibian species are found on site during the development, work must stop until advice has been sought from an appropriately experienced Ecologist.

Reptiles

As a matter of good practice, it is advised that the following measures are adopted and implemented:

- Impacts on all habitats should be kept to a minimum to minimise habitat loss and disturbance.

- It is advised that as a precaution, if removal or disturbance of walls is to take place, this should be done carefully by hand to avoid killing or injuring of animals.

- It is advised that as a precaution, all personnel involved in site works should be advised about reptiles by an appropriate person, so that all works are undertaken with a clear understanding about legal aspects, precautions to be adopted and what to do if a reptile is found.

- It is advised that if reptiles are found on site during the development, work must stop until advice has been sought from an appropriately experienced Ecologist.

Nesting birds

As a matter of good practice, it is advised that the following measures are adopted and implemented:

- Works affecting the survey area should ideally be avoided during the nesting season (February to September). It is advised that if work is to take place during the nesting season, the site should be checked for nesting birds immediately prior to disturbance and development by an appropriately experienced Ecologist.

- If birds are found to be nesting within the area subject to development, it will be necessary to seek advice as to whether or not the development can proceed lawfully at that time. Under these circumstances, work must stop until advice has been sought from an appropriately experienced Ecologist.

Undesirable plant species

It is advised that any disturbance or demolition will have to take full account of rhododendron and montbretia. This should include the development of a method statement and work procedures to avoid any further spread of these species or contamination of areas on adjacent land as a result of activities on the survey site.

Rationale

- For the site to be affected by the development, the surveys have provided no evidence of protected species presence. However, there is at least some potential for badgers, nesting birds, amphibians and reptiles to be found associated with a small number of features.

- The species listed above are protected under UK and (in the case of great crested newts) European legislation. Resting and sheltering places of great crested newts are protected even if the animals are not present at the time of survey.

- Viviparous lizard and grass snake are protected, under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended), against intentional killing or injury. In practice, this means that a developer would be expected to take all reasonable steps to prevent the killing or injury of reptiles that might result from development work or from any associated activities. This not only applies to sites where reptiles are already known to occur, but to any site where they might reasonably be expected to occur.

- It is generally an offence intentionally to kill, injure or take any wild bird or take, damage or destroy its nest whilst in use or being built or take or destroy its eggs.

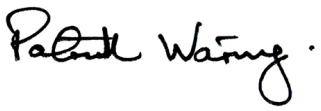
- If nesting birds are present, plans will need to show how offences will be avoided during the proposed development. Work will have to be programmed around the nesting season to minimise disturbance.

- The works to be carried out as part of the development are expected to involve an amount of disturbance around the site which could provide conditions for the spread of invasive species.

- Rhododendron and montbretia are included in Schedule 9 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended). Section 14(2) of the Wildlife and Countryside Act prohibits 'planting' or 'causing to grow' in the wild of any plant listed in Part 2 of Schedule 9

If you would like any further clarification of the points in this letter, or any further ecological advice in relation to the proposed works, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely



Patrick Waring MIEEM CEnv
Director - Ecology Services UK Ltd



North area with grassland and trees (lhs) and bramble scrub and hedgerow (rhs)



South area with vegetable plot with hedgerows (lhs) and garden water feature (rhs)



South area with mown grassland with planted trees (lhs) and small garden pond (rhs)