

71622 – HARDY'S GATE BRIDGE, DUMERS LANE, RADCLIFFE

Thank you for consulting GM Ecology Unit.

Summary

As for the previous application, 69802 There are no significant ecological issues associated with this development

Bats

No evidence of bats roosting in the bridge was found. Whilst the bat survey is becoming dated, the proposed works to the bridge are very unlikely to cause harm to bats, therefore I am satisfied that assessment is still valid. No further information or measures are required.

Otter

Otter are known to be present on this section of the River Irwell. Whilst no works are required within the river as a precaution, I recommend an informative along the following lines is applied to any permission.

Whilst there is only a very low risk of otter being present, the applicant is reminded that under the 2019 Regulation it is an offence to disturb, harm or kill otters. If an otter is found during the development all work should cease immediately, and a suitably licensed ecologist employed to assess how best to safeguard the otter(s).

Nesting Birds

Evidence of a bird nesting under the bridge was recorded. There is however no works proposed under the bridge. There is also a sand martin wall present, which whilst according to anecdotal records is not functioning as hoped provides potential bird nesting habitat. As previously I recommend a condition along the following lines is applied to any permission.

No works shall occur between the 1st March and 31st August unless a reasonable avoidance measures method statement for birds that nest in the arches be provided to and agreed in writing by the LPA

Proximity to the River Irwell

As previously, there are risks during construction of dust, pollutants and debris entering the watercourse and negatively impacting on the ecological potential of the river. Protection can be provided via condition.

Contributing to and Enhancing the Natural Environment & Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG)

Section 180 of the NPPF 2023 states that the planning policies and decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment. 10% BNG is mandatory under Schedule 7A of the Town & Country Planning Act 1990 (as inserted by schedule 14 of the Environment Act 2021).

The development is restricted to existing hardstanding. No vegetated habitat will be lost and there are no direct effects likely to wildlife. I accept that the development is exempt from biodiversity net gain under the de minimis rule.

With regards enhancements, I recommend improvements to the existing sand martin wall is carried out to improve the levels of usage. The details can be conditioned.

David Dutton

Ecologist