

Summary

There are no significant ecological issues associated with this development proposal.

Protected Species

It is very unlikely that any protected species will utilise this site, given the lack of habitat and proximity to large numbers of dogs and cats. No further information or measures are required.

Nesting Birds

There are no bird nesting opportunities on the site, with some low potential associated with the adjacent mature sycamore. I am satisfied that no further information or measures are required.

Invasive Species

I note that himalayan balsam was present just off-site along the road. (based on streetview) I therefore recommend an informative along the following lines is applied to any permission.

It is an offence under the Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981, as amended to introduce, plant or cause to grow wild any plant listed in Schedule 9 part 2 of the Act. Species such as Himalayan balsam are included within this schedule. If any such species will be disturbed as a result of this development a suitably experienced consultant should be employed to advise on how to avoid an offence.

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

Section 187 of the NPPF 2024 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 will result in the loss of low value habitats primarily amenity grassland to development, there are no wildlife issues that require mitigation.

The development is subject to 10% BNG. A metric has been provided that demonstrates that the planting of three native trees on-site is sufficient to achieve 10% net gain. I have no issues with the BNG assessment or metric.

As rural trees are regarded as significant by defra, a 30 year habitat management and monitoring plan (HMMP) for the rural trees will be required. Given this is for just three trees, only a simple management and monitoring plan would be required, with control via a standard condition.

The statutory biodiversity gain condition will also apply. To discharge they will need to submit:

- A biodiversity gain plan using the defra template,
- Final agreed version of the HMMP and
- Final agreed version of the metric

I recommend provision of one bird box as enhancement for wildlife on one of the retained sycamore trees along adjacent to the site. *The details can be provided via condition.*