

Planning application 69684 Land to rear of 31-45 Ajax Drive

Summary

The main ecological issue will be biodiversity mitigation and enhancement for loss of what was semi-natural habitat.

Ecological Survey Requirements & Contributing to and Enhancing the Natural Environment

The site has been cleared of trees and scrub within the last few years and is partly restrospective in terms of change of use to garden. The only likely issues now are invasive species such as himalayan balsam and japanese knotweed along with nesting birds within any areas of scrub that are still remaining. I am satisfied that these potential issues are very unlikely to prevent development and can be dealt with at reserved matters.

Section 174 of the NPPF 2021 states that the planning policies and decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment. The development will involve the loss of an area of scrub and ruderal habitats to garden, buildings and hardstanding and if the site prior to clearance was utilised as the baseline, woodland. Now Places for Everyone (PfE) has been through Inquiry, thematic policies in the plan can now be given 'great weight' in planning decisions. This includes the BNG Policy.

Given the size of the site any losses will be relatively small but should still be compensated. As part of any permission, I would recommend a condition along the following lines

As part of reserved matters a preliminary ecological appraisal and biodiversity net gain assessment of the site will be provided to and agreed in writing by the LPA