

INTERNAL MEMORANDUM

To: David Cross
From: Ecologist/Countryside Officer
Ask for: Matt Davies
Ext: 5278
Memo number: 1
Date: 27th January 2020

SUBJECT: P/20/0024 – LAND TO THE REAR OF MERTHYR TYDFIL LEISURE VILLAGE

The proposed development is the construction of a two-storey, monopitch office block and car parking sited mostly on an area of grassland.

Issues – the site is close to the Afon Taf SINC. There are records of protected species in the area (including, European otter, bats, birds, invertebrates, hedgehog).

Most of the area that would be impacted by the new building and car parking is regularly mown grassland bounded by pathways. On the eastern edge the development will encroach onto the edge of some habitat to the west of the Afon. This edge habitat (long grassland with a mown edge) is next to a relatively steep bank. It is likely that the building will mean disruption of the habitat on this bank (scrub). The edge habitat and the habitat on the bank is suitable for reptile species and for nesting birds.

Although there is some lighting associated with the adjacent car parking to the west of the proposed development site, the area of the site and along the habitat to the west of the Afon Taf is currently unlit.

The development is of sufficient distance from the Afon Taf SINC. There should be no impacts on either the SINC or the resident otter.

Requirements:

- A Landscape and Ecological Enhancement Plan (LEEMP) will be drawn up with input from a suitably qualified ecologist. The LEEMP must be agreed by the LA ecologist, and include, but not be limited to the following:
 - A Reptile Mitigation Strategy (involving habitat management to avoid injury and/or killing plus reinstatement of any disrupted habitat to the east of the development and the addition of an underground hibernaculum x1).
 - Consideration for nesting birds – removal of suitable bird nesting habitat outside of the bird-breeding season. Bird box added to the southern elevation of the building.
 - Preferably there will be no external lighting associated with the development. If onsite lighting is proposed it will conform to the following guidance and recommendations:
 - (2018) Guidance Note 08/18. Bats and artificial lighting in the UK: Bats and the Built Environment series. Bat Conservation Trust and Institute of Lighting Professionals:
<https://cdn.bats.org.uk/pdf/Resources/ilp-guidance-note-8-bats-and-artificial-lighting->

[compressed.pdf?mtime=20181113114229](#)

Important considerations can be seen on pages 18 and 19 under the heading 'Appropriate luminaire specifications'. Other measures to be considered include 'dimming and part-night lighting' and 'screening'.

- There will be no lighting of the habitat to the east of the site to maintain a dark corridor for nocturnal species.
- If lighting is proposed, a lighting plan will be produced to be approved by the Local Authority Ecologist. There will be an accompanying illuminance contour plan.
- Bat box added to the eastern elevation of the building, near the south eastern corner.
- Perennial wildflower areas (native species) to be included in the design for the benefit of pollinators to support The Action Plan for Pollinators in Wales, 2013 (<https://www.biodiversitywales.org.uk/Wales-Action-Plan-for-Pollinators>).
- Gaps (13cm x13cm) will be provided in the mesh fence to allow passage of hedgehogs across the site.

New requirements in light of the newly provided Landscape Plan (also to be included in the LEEMP)

- The pond will be designed with wildlife in mind. There will be a marsh area alongside for marginal planting. A specification, construction methodology and a planting scheme (native species) for the different pond zones will be provided (NB devil's bit scabious will be included within the marsh area).
- The hedge will not comprise laurel, but rather a mix of native species (e.g., hawthorn, blackthorn, holly, beech, hornbeam) with no one species making up more than 70% of the total. A planting plan will be provided.
- The other onsite planting (small trees and grassland) will also use native species and will include a wildflower area (as previously mentioned). Again, a planting plan (including grassland seed mixes) will be required.

The LEEMP will include establishment, maintenance, management and replacement details for the new ecological features.