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Cambridge Road Estate – Bird Survey Report

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1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 Greengage Environmental Ltd was commissioned to undertake a bird survey by Cambridge Road (RBK) LLP of the Cambridge Road Estate in the Royal Borough of Kingston upon Thames.
- 1.2 This document is a report of this survey and has been produced to support a hybrid Outline Planning Application for a mixed use development, including demolition of existing buildings and erection of up to 2,170 residential units (Use Class C3), 290sqm of flexible office floorspace (Use Class E), 1,395sqm of flexible retail/commercial floorspace (Use Class E/Sui Generis), 1,250sqm community floorspace (Use Class F2), new publicly accessible open space and associated access, servicing, landscaping and works.
- 1.3 Detailed permission is sought for access, layout, scale, appearance and landscaping of Phase 1 for erection of 452 residential units (Use Class C3), 1,250sqm community floorspace (Use Class F2), 290sqm of flexible office floorspace (Use Class E), 395sqm of flexible retail/commercial floorspace (Use Class E/Sui Generis), new publicly accessible open space and associated access, servicing, parking, landscaping works including tree removal, refuse/recycling and bicycle storage, energy centre and works (“the Proposed Development”).
- 1.4 This survey aimed to gather information on the species of bird that are present on or flying over the site, as well as to gather anecdotal evidence of bird behaviour on site e.g. nesting, foraging, territory building etc, in order to inform appropriate mitigation, compensation and enhancement actions in light of Proposed Development.
- 1.5 The survey identified 17 species of bird on the site, of which five are on the RSPB Birds of Conservation Concern lists as declining. Of particular note is the moderate sized colony of house sparrow (*Passer domesticus*) present on the site which appear to nest in common features of the built form across most building types present on the estate.
- 1.6 In order to ensure site preparation doesn't destroy active house sparrow nests, demolition of the buildings in possession of these potential nesting features should only be undertaken outside of the nesting season. Additionally, compensatory nesting opportunities should be installed in the immediate vicinity of these units prior to sparrow nest building. The new buildings proposed on site should also include integrated nest boxes.
- 1.7 The Proposed Development includes extensive areas of landscaping and public realm as well as the installation of multiple living roofs across the site. These interventions will not only adequately compensate for the loss of existing habitat but significantly increase the amount and quality of habitat for nesting and foraging birds across the site.

2.0 INTRODUCTION

- 2.1 Greengage was commissioned to undertake a bird survey by Cambridge Road (RBK) LLP of the Cambridge Road Estate in the Royal Borough of Kingston upon Thames.
- 2.2 This document is a report of this survey and has been produced to support a hybrid Outline Planning Application for a mixed use development, including demolition of existing buildings and erection of up to 2,170 residential units (Use Class C3), 290sqm of flexible office floorspace (Use Class E), 1,395sqm of flexible retail/commercial floorspace (Use Class E/Sui Generis), 1,250sqm community floorspace (Use Class F2), new publicly accessible open space and associated access, servicing, landscaping and works.
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- 2.4 This survey aimed to gather information on the species of bird that are present on or flying over the site, as well as to gather anecdotal evidence of bird behaviour on site e.g. nesting, foraging, territory building etc, in order to inform appropriate mitigation, compensation and enhancement actions in light of the Proposed Development.

SITE DESCRIPTION

- 2.5 The survey area extends to approximately 9 hectares and is centred on National Grid Reference TQ190690, OS Co-ordinates 519074, 169085.
- 2.6 The estate is located within the Norbiton Ward in the Royal Borough of Kingston upon Thames, approximately 850m east of Kingston town centre. The site is bound to the north by A2043 – Kingston Road and to the south by Kingston Cemetery and Crematorium. The estate currently contains 823 residential homes distributed across:
-)] Four 15-storey residential tower blocks;
 -)] Sixteen 5/4-storey terraced flats; and
 -)] Numerous areas of 2-storey terraced housing.
- 2.7 The estate and assessment boundary also include the Bull and Bush Hotel and Pub, Piper Community Hall and a convenience shop.
- 2.8 The site is situated in a residential area, sub-urban in character. Residential development dominates land use to the north, east and west of the site, including a newly constructed student accommodation adjacent the site to the north. South of the site is Kingston

Cemetery, beyond which lies the Hogsmill River (300m south). Southeast of the site features outdoor recreation areas. Green infrastructure provision in the area is formed by street trees, the cemetery, Hogsmill River, recreation grounds and residential gardens.

3.0 METHODOLOGY

- 3.1 The bird survey followed an adapted version of the Common Bird Census methodology developed by the British Trust for Ornithology (BTO)¹. The survey consisted of three survey visits undertaken through July to August 2020, with each visit undertaken two weeks apart. These visits commenced at, or within 30 minutes of dawn and lasted for a minimum of two hours.
- 3.2 A transect route was walked through the site, with the direction of the transect alternated for each visit. Any birds observed (either visually using binoculars or audibly) during the transect were recorded, with information relating to species, numbers, behaviour and location collected.
- 3.3 Data collected across the three survey visits was assessed to identify any spatial or temporal trends.

SURVEYORS

- 3.4 Daniel Perlaki, who undertook the surveys at site and prepared this report, has an undergraduate degree in Ecology (BSc Hons), a Master's degree in Conservation Science and Policy and is a Graduate member of CIEEM.
- 3.5 Mike Harris, who reviewed this report, has a Bachelor's degree in Environmental Biology (BSc Hons), a Natural England Great Crested Newt Licence (2015-17819-CLS-CLS) and Dormouse Licence (2016-21291-CLS-CLS), is a Chartered Environmentalist (CEnv) and is a Full member of CIEEM. Mike has over 17 years' experience in ecological surveying and has undertaken and managed numerous ecological surveys and assessments.
- 3.6 This report was written by Daniel Perlaki and reviewed and verified by Mike Harris who confirms in writing (see the QA sheet at the front of this report) that the report is in line with the following:

- J Represents sound industry practice;
- J Reports and recommends correctly, truthfully and objectively;
- J Is appropriate given the local site conditions and scope of works proposed; and
- J Avoids invalid, biased and exaggerated statements.

CONSTRAINTS

- 3.7 The bird survey visits were undertaken at a sub-optimal time of year. Typically, a breeding bird survey would be undertaken between March and July, with visits spaced four weeks apart. This has limited the ability for the survey to identify early nesting sites (unless second clutches were being reared) or territories. However, one of the key aims of the survey was to ascertain the presence of house sparrow and to what extent. As house sparrows are known to have multiple clutches in a year and given their presence

recorded in moderate numbers during the survey, the undertaking of the survey outside of the optimal season is not considered to have significantly impacted up on the conclusions made, in particular with regards to house sparrow.

4.0 RESULTS

4.1 The survey visits identified predominantly common urban/sub-urban species, the majority of which were passerines. A survey plan is included in Figure 1 which shows locations of species recorded. A full species list is shown in Table 4.1 below.

Table 4.1 Species list

| BTO Species Code | Common Name | Scientific Name | Comment |
|------------------|----------------------|-----------------------------------|--|
| RI | Ring-necked parakeet | <i>Psittacula krameri</i> | |
| GT | Great tit | <i>Parus major</i> | |
| JD | Jackdaw | <i>Corvus monedula</i> | |
| HS | House sparrow | <i>Passer domesticus</i> | RSPB Red List, London BAP, S41 Species |
| C. | Carrion crow | <i>Corvus corone</i> | |
| MG | Magpie | <i>Pica pica</i> | |
| R. | Robin | <i>Erithacus rubecula</i> | |
| BH | Black-headed gull | <i>Chroicocephalus ridibundus</i> | RSPB Amber List |
| FP | Feral pigeon | <i>Columba livia domesticus</i> | |
| GO | Goldfinch | <i>Carduelis carduelis</i> | |
| WP | Wood pigeon | <i>Columba palustris</i> | |
| SI | Swift | <i>Apus apus</i> | RSPB Amber List |
| J. | Jay | <i>Garrulus glandarius</i> | |
| CM | Common gull | <i>Larus canus</i> | RSPB Amber List |
| BT | Blue tit | <i>Cyanistes caeruleus</i> | |
| SG | Starling | <i>Sturnus vulgaris</i> | RSPB Red List, London BAP, S41 Species |
| WR | Wren | <i>Troglodytes troglodytes</i> | |

4.2 A total of 17 species were recorded, of which five appear on the RSPBs Birds of Conservation Concern list as declining (two red list and three amber list). Two of these five species, house sparrow and starling, are also London BAP species and S41 Species of Principal Importance. Four of these five species (black-headed gull, swift, common gull and starling) were observed flying over the site only.

4.3 House sparrows (*Passer domesticus*), a Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) priority species were recorded in moderate numbers. These were predominantly recorded in the

southern half of the site in areas of 2- and 3-storey terraced housing. The peak count recorded on any of the survey visits was 25 individuals foraging in one location.

- 4.4 Whilst no direct evidence of house sparrow breeding was recorded, they were observed entering gaps behind missing or slipped hanging clay tiles on the 2-storey terrace houses and behind gaps in the surface render panels of the terraced flat buildings. It is considered highly likely that these features provide nesting opportunities for house sparrows and other small passerines.

Figure 4.1 House sparrow nesting beneath hanging clay tiles



Figure 4.2 House sparrow nesting sites beneath surface cladding



- 4.5 No other species were confirmed as breeding.
- 4.6 All recordings of starling, jay, black-headed gull, swift and common gull were as individuals flying over the site only.
- 4.7 Starling, which are a S41 and UK BAP priority species were only recorded on one occasion on 31st July. Three individuals were recorded passing north over the open area of amenity grassland in the north of the site.
- 4.8 Every encounter with ring-necked parakeets, jackdaws, feral pigeons and carrion crows was not recorded as they were nearly ubiquitous across the site.
- 4.9 Jackdaws were recorded in large numbers and observations during bat re-entry surveys undertaken in summer 2019 indicate the likely presence of a jackdaw roost in Kingston Cemetery and Crematorium to the south of the site.

5.0 DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

- 5.1 To avoid potential impacts upon nesting birds (particularly house sparrows), demolition of building units with the nesting features pictured above should be undertaken outside of the nesting bird season (generally considered to be from March to August inclusive). Additionally, prior to demolition of these units, compensatory house sparrow nest boxes should be installed in the immediate vicinity of these units prior to demolition to ensure nesting opportunities are available in the spring.

Figure 5.1 Compensatory house sparrow nest box models



- 5.2 Additionally, the proposed buildings should feature integrated sparrow terraces within brick courses or set into cladding to provide permanent nesting opportunities. These should be located at a minimum of 10m height and on northern and eastern aspects to prevent risk of overheating. They should also be grouped together with entrance holes within 30-50cm of each other to reflect the social nature of house sparrows.

Figure 5.2 Sparrow terraces suitable to be integrated into built form



- 5.3 Site clearance will also result in the loss of foraging habitat, albeit habitat of poor quality. This will be fully mitigated for through provision of extensive landscaping associated with the proposed development. The proposed landscaping and habitat creation have been designed to increase the value of habitats across the site for nesting and foraging birds through inclusion of berry producing shrubs, scrub habitat and species-rich planting. A Biodiversity Impact Assessment (BIA) accompanying this document details the change

in ecological value of the site using the DEFRA Metric 2.0, in line with best practice guidance.

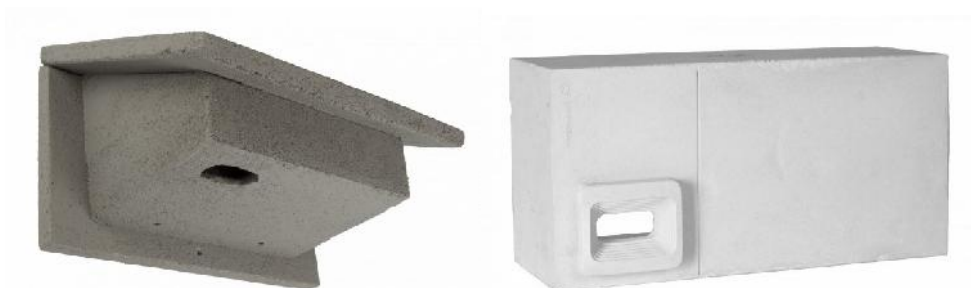
- 5.4 To further enhance the value of the site for nesting birds, additional bird nest boxes suitable for a range of species should be installed on site. Trees planted/retained of sufficient size to support hanging boxes should be fitted with the following:

Figure 5.3 CJ Wildlife Seville 32mm Woodstone Nest Box (left), CJ Wildlife Barcelone Woodstone Open Nest Box (middle) and 3S Schwegler Starling Nest Box (right)



- 5.5 Additionally, on any new building units of suitable height (above 2 storeys), swift nest boxes should be installed under eaves and/or integrated into the built form to provide nesting opportunities for swifts.

Figure 5.4 CJ Wildlife Swift box (left) and Green & Blue Swift Block (right)



- 5.6 Due to the phased nature of the proposed development, a comprehensive breeding bird survey should be undertaken for each specific phase prior to commencement. This should include early season visits to determine territories and nesting sites with more clarity than was achievable with this assessment.

6.0 SUMMARY & CONCLUSION

- 6.1 Greengage was commissioned by Cambridge Road (RBK) LLP to undertake a bird survey of the Cambridge Road Estate in Royal Borough of Kingston upon Thames in order to gather information on the species of bird that are present on or flying over the site, as well as to gather anecdotal evidence of bird behaviour on site e.g. nesting, foraging, territory building.
- 6.2 The survey identified a breeding population of house sparrows in addition to the presence of 16 other species. Five of these species are listed on the RSPB Birds of Conservation Concern list as declining. Four of these five species were only seen flying over the site.
- 6.3 Key mitigation, compensation and enhancement actions are described to ensure the proposed development results in no detrimental impacts to local bird populations.

FIGURE 1 BIRD SURVEY PLAN

APPENDIX 2 RELEVANT LEGISLATION AND POLICY

LEGISLATION

Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended)

The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) is the principal mechanism for the legislative protection of wildlife in Great Britain. This legislation is the means by which the Convention on the Conservation of European Wildlife and Natural Habitats (the 'Bern Convention') and the Birds Directive and EU Habitats Directive are implemented in Great Britain.

Legislation Relating to Nesting Birds

Nesting birds, with certain exceptions, are protected from intentional killing, destruction of nests and destruction/taking of eggs under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) and the CRoW Act. Any clearance of dense vegetation should therefore be undertaken outside of the nesting bird season, taken to run conservatively from March to August (inclusive), unless an ecologist confirms the absence of active nests prior to clearance.

PLANNING POLICY

National

National Planning Policy Framework

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 2019² sets out the Government's planning policies for England, including how plans and decisions are expected to apply a presumption in favour of sustainable development. Chapter 15 of the NPPF focuses on conservation and enhancement of the natural environment, stating plans should 'identify and pursue opportunities for securing measurable net gains for biodiversity'.

It goes on to state: 'if significant harm to biodiversity resulting from a development cannot be avoided (through locating on an alternative site with less harmful impacts), adequately mitigated, or, as a last resort, compensated for, then planning permission should be refused'. Alongside this, it acknowledges that planning should be refused where irreplaceable habitats such as ancient woodland are lost.

Regional

The London Plan: Spatial Development Strategy for Greater London³

The London Plan is comprised of separate chapters relating to a number of areas, including London's Places, People, Economy and Transport. The following policies have

been identified within the London Plan, which relate specifically to ecology and this development.

Policy 2.18 Green Infrastructure

Policy 2.18 aims to protect, promote, expand and manage the extent and quality of, and access to, London's network of open and green spaces.

Policy 5.10 Urban Greening

This policy encourages the 'greening of London's buildings and spaces and specifically those in central London by including a target for increasing the area of green space (including green roofs etc) within the Central Activities Zone'.

Policy 5.11 Green Roofs and Development Site Environs

Policy 5.11 specifically supports the inclusion of planting within developments and encourages boroughs to support the inclusion of green roofs.

Policy 5.13 Sustainable Drainage

Policy 5.13 promotes the inclusion of sustainable urban drainage systems in developments and sets out a drainage hierarchy that developers should follow when designing their schemes.

Policy 7.19 Biodiversity and Access to Nature

'The Mayor will work with all the relevant partners to ensure a proactive approach to the protection, enhancement, creation, promotion and management of biodiversity in support of the Mayors Biodiversity Strategy.'

The Draft New London Plan (emerging)

Policy G1 Green infrastructure

- A. London's network of green and open spaces, and green features in the built environment such as green roofs and street trees, should be protected, planned, designed and managed as integrated features of green infrastructure.
- B. Boroughs should prepare green infrastructure strategies that integrate objectives relating to open space provision, biodiversity conservation, flood management, health and wellbeing, sport and recreation.
- C. Development Plans and Opportunity Area Planning Frameworks should:
 1. identify key green infrastructure assets, their function and their potential function

2. identify opportunities for addressing environmental and social challenges through strategic green infrastructure interventions.

Policy G2 London's Green Belt

- A. The Green Belt should be protected from inappropriate development:
 1. development proposals that would harm the Green Belt should be refused
 2. the enhancement of the Green Belt to provide appropriate multi-functional uses for Londoners should be supported.

Policy G5 Urban greening

- A. Major development proposals should contribute to the greening of London by including urban greening as a fundamental element of site and building design, and by incorporating measures such as high-quality landscaping (including trees), green roofs, green walls and nature-based sustainable drainage.
- B. Boroughs should develop an Urban Greening Factor (UGF) to identify the appropriate amount of urban greening required in new developments. The UGF should be based on the factors set out in Table 8.2, but tailored to local circumstances. In the interim, the Mayor recommends a target score of 0.4 for developments that are predominately residential, and a target score of 0.3 for predominately commercial development.

Policy G6 Biodiversity and access to nature

- C. Where harm to a SINC (other than a European (International) designated site) is unavoidable, the following approach should be applied to minimise development impacts:
 1. avoid adverse impact to the special biodiversity interest of the site
 2. minimise the spatial impact and mitigate it by improving the quality or management of the rest of the site
 3. seek appropriate off-site compensation only in exceptional cases where the benefits of the development proposal clearly outweigh the biodiversity impacts.
- D. Biodiversity enhancement should be considered from the start of the development process.
- E. Proposals which create new or improved habitats that result in positive gains for biodiversity should be considered positively, as should measures to reduce deficiencies in access to wildlife sites.

Policy G7 Trees and woodlands

- C. Development proposals should ensure that, wherever possible, existing trees of quality are retained [Category A and B]. If it is imperative that trees have to be removed, there should be adequate replacement based on the existing value of the benefits of the trees removed, determined by, for example, i-tree or CAVAT. The planting of additional trees should generally be included in new developments – particularly large-canopied species which provide a wider range of benefits because of the larger surface area of their canopy.

Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG): Sustainable Design and Construction 2014

As part of the London Plan 2011 implementation framework, the SPG, relating to sustainable design and construction, was adopted in April 2014 and includes the following sections detailing Mayoral priorities in relation to biodiversity of relevance to The Site.

Nature conservation and biodiversity

The Mayor's priorities include ensuring 'developers make a contribution to biodiversity on their development Site'.

Overheating

Where priorities include the inclusions of 'measures, in the design of schemes, in line with the cooling hierarchy set out in London Plan policy 5.9 to prevent overheating over the scheme's lifetime'

Urban greening

A Priority is for developers to 'integrate green infrastructure into development schemes, including by creating links with wider green infrastructure network'.

Use less energy

'The design of developments should prioritise passive measures' which can include 'green roofs, green walls and other green infrastructure which can keep buildings warm or cool and improve biodiversity and contribute to sustainable urban drainage'.

London Environment Strategy 2018⁴

The Mayor's Environment Strategy was published in May 2018. This document sets out the strategic vision for the environment throughout London. Although not primarily a planning guidance document, it does set strategic objectives, policies and proposals that are of relevance to the delivery of new development in a planning context, including:

Objective 5.1 Make more than half of London green by 2050

Policy 5.1.1 Protect, enhance and increase green areas in the city, to provide green infrastructure services and benefits that London needs now.

This policy states:

“New development proposals should avoid reducing the overall amount of green cover and, where possible, seek to enhance the wider green infrastructure network to increase the benefits this provides. [...] New developments should aim to avoid fragmentation of existing green space, reduce storm water run-off rates by using sustainable drainage, and include new tree planting, wildlife-friendly landscaping, or features such as green roofs to mitigate any unavoidable loss”.

This supports the ‘environmental net gain’ approach promoted by government in the 25 Year Environment Plan.

Proposal 5.1.1.d The London Plan includes policies to green streets and buildings, including increasing the extent of green roofs, green walls and sustainable drainage.

Objective 5.2 conserving and enhancement wildlife and natural habitats

Policy 5.2.1 Protect a core network of nature conservation sites and ensure a net gain in biodiversity

This policy requires new development to include new wildlife habitat, nesting and roosting sites, and ecologically appropriate landscaping will provide more resources for wildlife and help to strengthen ecological corridors. It states:

“Opportunities should be sought to create or restore priority habitats (previously known as UK Biodiversity Action Plan habitats) that have been identified as conservation priorities in London [and] all land managers and landowners should take BAP priority species into account”.

Local

Kingston Core Strategy

Policy CS 3 - The Natural and Green Environment

The Council will protect and improve Kingston’s valued natural and green environment by:

- a. seeking to ensure that residents have access to an interconnected network of safe, well managed and maintained areas of open space through the implementation of routes in the ‘South West London Greenways Network Expansion - Feasibility Report’, Kingston’s Green Spaces Strategy, Park Management Plans and Annual Implementation Plans

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- b. protecting Kingston's open space network from inappropriate development through its open spaces designations; Green Belt, Metropolitan Open Land (MOL), Thames Policy Area, Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINCs), Local Nature Reserves, Local Open Space, School Open Spaces, Green Corridors, Green Chains and Allotments, as shown on the Proposals Map
 - c. facilitating regeneration, infrastructure upgrades and environmental improvement to the Hogsmill Environs
 - d. incorporating appropriate elements of public open space into new developments and/or making a financial contribution to improving existing open spaces, with additional facilities and better management to Green Flag standards
 - e. promoting the management of biodiversity in light of the threats arising from climate change and future development growth, by working in partnership with a range of organisations on projects to protect and enhance Kingston's Open Space Network. This will not only provide increased wildlife habitats, but will also link wider parts of Kingston, allowing easier movement and reducing isolation of habitats.

Policy DM 6 - Biodiversity

The Council will:

- a. ensure new developments protect and promote biodiversity as part of sustainable design, through the inclusion of sustainable drainage, tree planting, soft landscaping, habitat enhancement and/or improvement, green roofs and new or improved semi-natural habitats, where appropriate
- b. require an ecological assessment on major development proposals, or where a site contains or is next to significant areas of habitat or wildlife potential. This should be completed before design work or submission of the planning application.
- c. ensure that new development does not result in a net loss of biodiversity and, where appropriate, should include new or improved habitats and provision for natural and semi-natural public green space, as set out in the Planning Obligations SPD or Community Infrastructure Levy charge.

REFERENCES

- ¹ Gilbert, G., Gibbons, D. W. and Evans, J. (1998); Bird Monitoring Methods.
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- ⁴ Greater London Authority (2018). London Environment Strategy 2018. London: Greater London Authority.