

Denny Ecology

Ecological Consultants

Bird Hazard Management Plan

Site Address: 121 Cowley Road, Uxbridge, UB8 2AQ

Planning Application No: 7008/APP/2010/2758

Condition No: 27

17th May 2012

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1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Planning background

Planning consent was granted for the demolition of the existing buildings and construction of a food retail store with associated parking, access and landscaping at 121 Cowley Road, Uxbridge, Greater London, (OS grid ref. TQ 053 829). This consent is subject to a number of conditions including the preparation of a Bird Hazard Management Plan (BHMP) pursuant to Condition 27. In order to discharge this condition, Windrush Ecology has been commissioned by Lidl UK GmbH to prepare a BHMP. Denny Ecology had been contracted to prepare this plan on behalf of Windrush Ecology.

We have consulted with Simon Vince of Heathrow Airport Limited regarding the background to the condition request and the scope and content of this report. We have also consulted the detailed design of the development and building plans drawn up by Poole & Pattle chartered architects.

1.2 Report structure

This report is split into two sections. The first is a birdstrike risk assessment of species likely to occur on the site, including a review of existing occurrence records of these species in the area. The second is the management plan itself, which states the measures to be taken through the lifetime of the building, to reduce birdstrike risk to a minimum.

2 RISK ASSESSMENT

2.1 Proposed development

The new food retail development will be constructed on a site currently occupied by a car dealership. It will comprise a food retail outlet and an associated car park. The site is located approximately 6 km north of Heathrow Airport. Therefore development on the site must not encourage an increase in the population size of any bird species that may potentially cause a risk of birdstrike.

The food store will be approximately 8m high with two shallow pitched roofs (5 degrees). The larger roof will be north-facing and its apex will be raised above the smaller south-facing roof thus creating a partially sheltered south-facing area. Landscaping around the car park will comprise trees planted in tree gratings and ground cover plantings. A 5-6m strip of native shrubs will be planted along the approximately 55m long western edge of the site to create a thicket which will act to buffer the site from the adjacent wildlife site. The existing site includes tree canopy extending over the western and southern boundaries. This canopy will be removed and there will therefore be no net gain, and possibly a loss, of tree canopy on the site.

2.2 Potential risk species

In urban settings such as this the species of concern, pertaining to birdstrike risk, are gulls *Larus spp.*, corvids *Corvus spp.* (including jackdaws *Corvus monedula*), starlings *Sturnus vulgaris* and wood pigeons *Columba palumbus*. There will be no gain in the number of trees on the site, therefore the potential natural nesting habitat for wood pigeons and corvids will not significantly increase. Starlings prefer to nest in holes or cavities, at times using gaps to access under roof spaces. The proposed building design is unlikely to create new nesting areas for this species. Nesting jackdaws can use chimneys or similar structures on roofs, but as there are no such structures on the proposed roof, there is no potential for roof-nesting by this species.

The shallow-pitched roof design raises the potential for use by nesting or roosting gulls. This is considered to be a low potential due to several factors:

- The roof has a pitch of approximately 5 degrees which will not be as attractive to nesting gulls as a shallower-pitched or flat roof as the eggs are at more risk of rolling.
- The surrounding area contains many flat-roofed buildings which are not known to host populations of nesting gulls. It is therefore unlikely that an additional flat roof in the area would be any more encouraging to gulls than the existing ones.
- Existing data from the London Bird Report 2000 show a low population of gulls in the area. Nesting herring gulls *Larus argentatus* and lesser black-backed gulls *L. fuscus* were recorded at Staples Corner (>15km from the site) and at Billingsgate Dock (>30km from the site). Small numbers of roosting great black-backed gulls *L. marinus* were recorded in the winter at Staines Reservoir (>12km from the site) and Hampton Waterworks (>16km from the site). Although the London Bird Report is a compilation of reported observations rather than the findings of a comprehensive study of the area it is unlikely that a notable population would not be included in the report.
- All three species were recorded in or close to the tetrad (2km by 2km square) in which the site is located during winter surveys in 2007/08 and 2008/09. Herring and lesser black-backed gulls were also recorded during breeding season surveys in 2008 and 2009 (London Natural History Society). However there is no reason to suspect that they were present in particularly large concentrations.

Although the risk of gulls colonising the area is low at present, future colonisation must be considered. Herring gulls are presently a UK BAP species and red-listed in the Birds

of Conservation Concern (BoCC) listings (Eaton *et al.*, 2009) due to the decline nationally in both their breeding and non-breeding populations over the past 25 years. Over the same time period the wintering population of lesser black-backed gulls has rapidly increased (Robinson 2005). In general, since the middle of last century inland and urban gull colonisation has increased. However the area of London in question has thus far not been adopted by significant numbers of gulls and as it is not near the coast or wetlands it is not likely to be colonised by large numbers of gulls in the future.

2.3 Conclusion

The proposed site development will not significantly change the available habitat for species which present a risk of birdstrike. In particular, gulls are not likely to colonise the new building in the near future. Therefore the development poses a very low risk to birdstrike at Heathrow Airport and the surrounding area. However there is a small possibility that the roof will be used as a breeding site and/or loafing site for gulls if they become more common and widespread in the future and an appropriate management plan to reduce this risk has been prepared below.

3 MANAGEMENT PLAN

The conclusion of the risk assessment is that the proposed site development poses a very low risk to birdstrike. However the following actions will be taken to ensure that the risk remains low throughout the life of the building.

- In order to prevent a new feeding source for gulls, the consumption of food on the external premises will not be encouraged. Specifically, no picnic tables will be provided and an adequate number of litter bins will be supplied and maintained. In addition, the retailer's waste disposal area will be kept free from easily accessible food. Skips will be kept covered and will be emptied before they overflow, and spillages will be cleaned up promptly.
- The roof will be constructed so that its entirety is safely accessible at all times.
- Roof inspections will be made a minimum of two times during the gull nesting season to look for evidence of nesting: once in mid-April and a second in the beginning of June. Inspections will be carried out by an appointed (and appropriately trained) person(s).
- Outside the breeding season the appointed person(s) will maintain constant checks of the roof by eye from ground level.
- If nesting or roosting gulls are found at any time immediate action will be taken to disperse the birds using the appropriate measures.
- If dispersal of a large number of birds is required, and the wind is from any northerly direction, Heathrow Airside Operations will be contacted at 0208 7457373 before dispersal actions are taken.
- If nests or eggs are found immediate action will be taken to remove them from the area. This may require a licence and prior to removal advice must be sought by Defra (www.defra.gov.uk) or the appropriate licensing authority at the time.
- There will be full cooperation with Heathrow Airside Operations staff if dispersal action is requested on site at any time.
- Initial dispersal measures to be used will be to remove nests, eggs and/or chicks of nesting birds or chasing loafing birds from the roof. Should repeated nest removal or chasing not prevent recolonisation within a season, then other dispersal measures, such as broadcasting distress calls targeted at the species present and erecting bird spikes, will be agreed with Heathrow Airside Operations staff and implemented as soon as possible.
- Records will be kept of any birds detected and all dispersal actions taken and will include the following: date & time that the inspections take place; the name of the operative carrying out the inspections; the number and species of birds seen; a note of any dispersal action taken. These records will be made available to Heathrow Airport Ltd to inspect upon request.

Signature:

Date:

27-06-2012

4 REFERENCES

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