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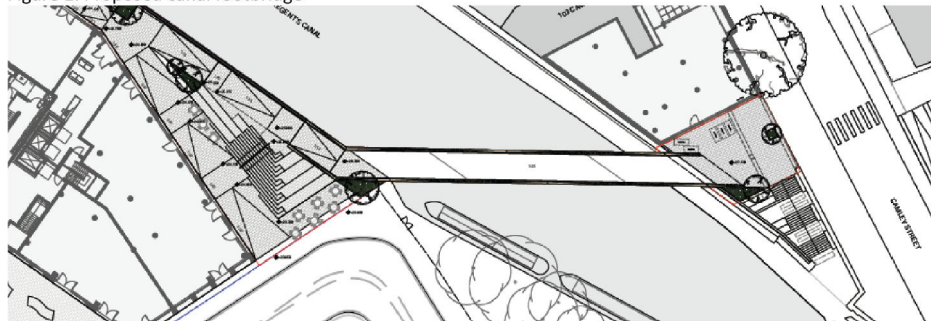
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Sent By E-Mail Only

Dear Jason,

Aspect Ecology has been advising Reef Estates with respect to the delivery of a new pedestrian footbridge known as 'Regents Canal Bridge (as depicted by the below technical drawing), hereafter referred to as 'the site'.

Figure 1: Proposed canal footbridge



Purpose of this letter

This letter is designed to provide a summary to Reef Estates of the current ecological status of the site, in order to fully inform the forthcoming planning submission. Where necessary, any recommendations that require consideration are set out to ensure full policy and legislative compliance.

Methodology

The site was subject to a survey in October 2021 in order to ascertain the general ecological value of the land contained within the boundaries of the site and to identify the main habitats and ecological features present. The site was surveyed based on standard Phase 1 Habitat Survey methodology¹, whereby the habitat types present are identified and mapped, together with an assessment of the species composition of each habitat. This technique provides an inventory of the basic habitat types present.

¹ Joint Nature Conservation Committee (2010, as amended) 'Handbook for Phase 1 habitat survey: A technique for environmental audit.'

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Results of survey work

Habitats

The proposed footbridge is to span Regent's Canal. The canal itself is a considerable watercourse corridor, with deep water with an apparent slow flow supporting submerged aquatic vegetation. The sides of the canal are formed by the vertical sheet piled embankment, which is topped with concrete and is therefore devoid of any emergent or bankside vegetation.

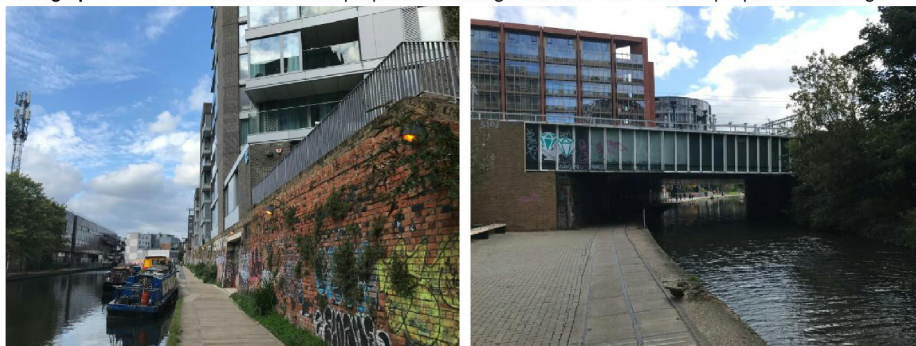
Stretching back from the top of the bank on both sides of the canal are areas of hardstanding, with the northern side of the canal formed by a pathway and access steps of concrete construction, with the proposed bridge connection to the south of the canal formed by an area of gravel. (At the time of survey, a group of semi-mature variegated Sycamore *Acer pseudoplatanus* were present in this location on the southern side of the canal, though under planning permission 2017/5497/P these are to be removed and as such do not form part of the baseline of this application). As such, the proposed bridge connections on both sides of the canal are of negligible ecological value, such that the land take required to construct the bridge is of negligible ecological significance.

As such, the canal provides a valuable habitat and potential corridor for aquatic fauna in particular (as recognised by its designation as part of the wider London's Canals SMINC designation), and as such provides some moderate to high ecological value at the local level, albeit the banks itself are devoid of vegetation and therefore unlikely to provide any particular ecological value in its own right. The proposed development of a footbridge will not directly impact the canal itself, though the creation of a bridge with lighting could have an indirect impacts on fauna utilising the canal, and this is considered in more detail below (under 'fauna').

Fauna

The portion of Regent's Canal that passes under the proposed bridge provides a potential corridor for use by commuting and foraging bats in connection with offsite areas, albeit the considerable levels of lighting and heavily developed urban setting (with extremely limited and isolated bankside vegetation present, see below representative photographs) are such that at best only limited use would be anticipated by bat species that are less sensitive to increased light levels such as Pipistrelles. Previous survey work undertaken by Aspect Ecology Ltd in relation to a nearby development site included bat foraging survey work of the canal corridor in September 2014, which identified only very limited use of the canal corridor by individual Common Pipistrelle bats, supporting this position.

Photograph 1 and 2: View west from the proposed footbridge and view east from the proposed footbridge



The Proposed Development will not directly affect the canal corridor itself. Nonetheless, the potential exists for any lighting proposals to impact on bat species foraging or commuting along the watercourse.

However, the immediate setting of the proposed bridge is situated directly next to Camley Street road crossing, and the considerable crossing from King's Cross St Pancreas station. As such, not only is this area of the canal not known for heightened bat activity, but this portion of the canal is already well bisected by a number of notable crossings, such that the addition of a further and more minor crossing is reasonably unlikely to have an adverse effect on foraging and commuting bats.

In addition, a number of footbridges are present in the local area which have been constructed in recent years, that span the canal and have clearly been approved as suitable by Camden Town Council. 'Somers Town bridge' is located approximately 250m southeast of the new proposed crossing, and was opened in 2017. In addition, 'Kings Cross Bridge 2', located approximately 450 south east of the new proposed crossing, and appears to have been opened in 2021. A key feature of both of these bridges is the inclusion of sensitive lighting, with Somers Town Bridge incorporating lighting under the handrail, and Kings Cross Bridge 2 placing lighting at the base of the handrail, which creates a safe level of lighting for pedestrians but does not create unnecessary glare or light spill across the canal.

Photograph 3 and 4: Lighting on Somers Town Bridge and on Kings Cross Bridge 2



It is therefore recommended that the lighting design for the proposed footbridge follows the example of Somers Town Bridge and Kings Cross Bridge 2, creating a low impact lighting design that directs low level lighting to the walkway over the bridge and avoiding light spill into the wider area. In addition, luminaires should lack UV elements and metal halide and fluorescent sources should be avoided in preference for LED luminaires. A warm white spectrum (ideally <2,700K) should be adopted to reduce the blue light component. Such a design will minimise any potential effect on nocturnal species, especially in a highly urban context where light-spill from residential accommodation immediately adjacent to the canal likely results in a much greater level of light spill than any that may be created by the proposed bridge crossing.

Evaluation

Overall, although Regent's Canal provides a valuable habitat and potential corridor for fauna, the proposed footbridge crossing will not directly affect any areas of ecological value, whilst if the lighting design for the bridge is undertaken sensitively, in line with the examples of Somers Town Bridge and Kings Cross Bridge 2, then the proposals are anticipated to have no adverse indirect impacts.



Additional recommendations

Along with the recommended sensitive scope of the lighting regime (as per the above), it is recommended that standard construction safeguards are employed to safeguard the canal corridor against the potential effects of construction. This should be detailed in full by way of a Construction Environmental Management Plan, and include precautions for ensuring that no pollutants, debris or construction materials enter the canal, and outline appropriate and effective remediation work to address any accidents that do occur.

Conclusion

In conclusion, it is considered that the proposals have sought to minimise impacts and subject to the implementation of appropriate avoidance, mitigation and compensation measures (set out within this letter), it is considered unlikely that the proposals will result in harm to biodiversity.

I trust that this is helpful and clear, but please do drop me a line with any further queries.

Yours sincerely



Andrew Holyoak
Principal Ecologist

