

Ecological Impact Assessment at Peterhouse Technology Park

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Background

To facilitate the growth of ARM Technologies, it was proposed to expand Peterhouse Technology Park in Cambridge to create 188,000 sq ft of office space and two decked car parks. The planning permission required the drafting of a Very Special Circumstances Case and Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) to justify the early release of the land from the Green Belt.

Solution

Commissioned by Bidwells, MKA Ecology produced the Ecological Impact Assessment (EclA) chapter of the EIA. An initial Phase 1 and Protected Species Scoping survey enabled us to make our assessment of habitats and their potential to support protected species. Habitats were largely typical of urban fringe with features of ecological value, such as semi-improved calcareous grassland field margins, scrub, scattered trees and hedgerows.

Enhanced habitats were recommended to include calcareous grassland meadows, replacement hedgerows, shrubs and brown roofs. These reflect the local landscape and deliver biodiversity gains. Bird and bat boxes were also recommended to compensate for the loss of habitat for breeding birds and provide enhanced roosting opportunities for bats.

A desk study gave details of historical protected species records and information about protected areas local to the site. Sites of nature conservation interest close to the Technology Park were designated primarily for botanical interest. It was therefore unlikely that disturbance, such as noise or light, from the proposed development would impact.

Outcome

Planning permission for the expansion of the Technology Park was granted with Secretary of State's approval. As part of the development team MKA Ecology's suitably qualified ecologists provided ecological input to maximise credits gained under the BREEAM scheme. During construction MKA Ecology's team undertook ecological clerk of works services, including nesting bird checks and supervising destructive searches.



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