Invasive Species Survey

Site: Edgar Wood Academy, Heywood Old Road, Middleton, OL10 2QL

Ref: 20799/E6

Client: Wates Construction

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INTRODUCTION

On land east of Old Heywood Road in Middleton, Rochdale, outline planning permission has been granted for the construction of Edgar Wood Academy.

One of the conditions of the consent (No. 16), is for a survey of invasive species, in particular Himalayan Balsam *Impatiens balsamifera.*

The condition states:

With the exception of the access stub-road hereby approved, no development (including site preparatory works) shall take place, until a survey for Himalayan Balsam and other invasive species, along with a scheme of works and timetable for the associated management / treatment of any invasive species identified, has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The agreed scheme of works and method statement shall be implemented in full throughout the course of the development.

This report details the results of the survey.

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SURVEY

On 10th March 2020, an ecologist from Wardell Armstrong undertook a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal of the land. This was undertaken to determine the presence of any important habitats or species which might be impacted on by the construction of the Academy.

The ecological data search confirmed there were no recent records of invasive non-native plant species, whilst the site walkover revealed no signs of invasive species within the curtilage of the application site.

On 20th December 2020 and 11th January 2021, the whole of the outline application site was re-surveyed by Indigo Surveys for invasive species. The survey was extended to the wider area by at least 100 m where access was possible.

Although outside the optimum period for phase 1 habitat surveys (considered to be April to September inclusive), invasive species such as Himalayan Balsam and Japanese Knotweed *Fallopia japonica* will still be evident, so the timing was not a constraint to the survey.

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RESULTS

No signs of any invasive species were found on the application site, or in the adjoining fields or woodland area to the east.

However, along Whittle Brook, which lies to the north of the Academy site, a small stand of Himalayan Balsam was found (Figs. 1 and 2).





Figs. 1 & 2 Small stand of Himalayan Balsam

This lies outside the application site boundary, and approximately 35 m upstream of the proposed surface water outfall for the development (Fig. 3). The stand is also growing on the opposite side of the brook in third party land.



Fig. 3 Location of Himalayan Balsam ★ and drainage route ▪▪▪▪

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The approximate position of the proposed drainage route and outfall for the development is shown below (Fig. 4).



Fig. 4 Route of drainage for development to Whittle Brook

The installation of the drainage will be the only impact in the corridor of the brook, and the outfall does not extend to the watercourse itself and instead will exit part of the way down the bank.

This will allow the water from the sports pitches to trickle down to the brook creating a wet flush which develop its own wetland floral community.

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CONCLUSIONS

In the UK, it is recommended that Himalayan Balsam is controlled or eradicated, and landowners have a duty of care to prevent its spread from their property. Furthermore, the plant must be handled and disposed of in accordance with strict guidelines and legislation.

Given the position of the Himalayan Balsam, and its location in relation to the Academy and drainage route, there will be no disturbance of the brook or the stand of balsam, and as such no mitigation measures or treatment are required.

As a precaution, the location of the Himalayan Balsam will be indicated to contractors working near the watercourse to ensure there is no disturbance of the stand.

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