

Our Ref: 22001861

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Dear Sir/Madam

Eiffage Kier Ferrovial BAM Joint Venture (EKFB) Oatleys Hall – Hedgerow Removal Notice

Dalcour Maclaren (DM) has been instructed by Eiffage Kier Ferrovial BAM Joint Venture (EKFB) to obtain Hedgerow Removal consent for the removal of a section of hedgerow located at Oatleys Hall, Turweston, Buckinghamshire, NN13 5JG (approximate Grid Reference: SP 60839 37498).

EKFB are proposing to undertake de-veg works required to form an opening in a section of hedgerow in order to install a single 4.5m wide vehicle access gate. An elevation plan indicating the design and measurements of this gate is submitted for reference as part of this application (Dwg ref. 1MC06-CEK-CV-DDE-C002-000126). The works are required as part of an Accommodation Works package to mitigate severance caused by permanent HS2 works which spans across land at Oatleys Hall. The location and extent of proposed hedgerow removal is shown within the drawings attached, referenced: 20230911_22001861_PLN_SI_8.1.pdf and 20230911_22001861_PLN_SI_7.1.pdf.

Background to the Hedgerow Removal Notice application

In order to inform the need for a Hedgerow Removal Notice (HRN), DM has undertaken a review of the hedgerow in question. As the hedgerow is more than 20 metres long and appears to be adjacent to land used for agricultural needs, it is considered that this meets the criteria for length and location as outlined by the Hedgerow Regulations, 1997.

Regarding the 'importance' of these hedgerows, historic satellite imagery, as available on Google Earth dating back to 2004 suggests that the hedgerow in question is at least 19 years old. Additionally, through a review of historic mapping (National Library of Scotland, accessed on 8th June 2023), it has been established that the road boundaries have existed since 1883 as shown on the six-inch OS Historical Map for that period. As such, it has been assumed that the boundaries and hedgerow have most likely been in place for a period longer than 30 years.

Furthermore, whilst it will not be possible to prove that the hedgerow is a component of a pre-1845 field system without visiting the record office; the boundary is well established on the 1st edition OS map and the arrangement of the fields, roads and settlement would indicate that the field system has pre-1845 origins.

A Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA) has been carried out by Dalcour Maclaren (October 2023) for the proposed works at Oatleys Hall, (ref. 20230926_EKFB_Oatleys Farm_PEA_001). The PEA encompasses the hedgerow to be removed (referred to as hedgerow (H2) within the attached PEA) for the purpose of

installing a gate for vehicle access. The PEA identified that the hedgerow is mainly comprised of hawthorn with some areas of white bryony. Two trees, an oak and an ash, were present within the hedgerow. This habitat could offer suitable linear commuting and foraging features for bats and, therefore, has the potential to support protected species listed under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981.

For these reasons, we would conclude that the hedgerow in question meets the criteria of length, location, and 'importance' to require a Hedgerow Removal Notice.

However, as part of this PEA, a check has been carried out for protected species and no harm is anticipated as a consequence of the hedgerow removal, provided that a precautionary method of working and the mitigation measures set out below are followed.

Mitigation and Compensation

It is anticipated that the proposed removal of the hedgerow will be undertaken outside of bird nesting season. This timing of hedgerow removal will mitigate impact on nesting bird species that are potentially present within and in proximity to the hedgerow. If it is necessary to undertake the works during nesting season, hedgerows will be checked for nesting birds by a Suitably Qualified Ecologist (SQE) prior to the works commencing in order to avoid disturbance. Further mitigation measures, as outlined within the PEA include using best practice working methods, undertaking all works during daylight hours and minimising vibration and noise impacts (ref. 20230926_EKFB_Oatleys Farm_PEA_001). Furthermore, if any protected species, including breeding birds, are encountered during the works, all work will stop immediately, and a SQE will be contacted for advice on how to proceed.

The proposed works are to result in a small permanent loss of hedgerow habitat. However, compensation measures have been outlined within the PEA, including allowing vegetation to re-establish where possible, facilitating enhancement of surrounding hedgerows and planting additional native species. Further enhancement may also be achieved through installation of bird and bat boxes to the surrounding mature trees.

It is therefore requested that the Local Planning Authority consent to the hedgerow removal at land off Oatleys Hall to enable EKFB to continue to provide infrastructure to mitigate land severance resulting from part of the wider HS2 scheme.

Yours sincerely,

Charlotte Hopkins (Dalcour Maclaren, on behalf of EKFB)