Brady Shipman Martin.

Built. Environment.

Project:	**Proposed Local Authority Own Housing Development at Mayeston, Poppintree, Dublin 11**
Client:	**Fingal County Council**
Subject:	**Invasive alien plant species survey report**
Date:	**17 November 2023**

1.0 Introduction and Background

Fingal County Council (FCC) proposes to develop new housing at Mayeston, Poppintree, Finglas, Dublin 11. It is proposed to carry out the Local Authority Own Housing Development pursuant to s.179A of the Planning and Development Act 2000, as amended ("the 2000 Act"), and, inter alia, Art.81A of the Planning and Development Regulations 2001, as amended by the Planning and Development (Section 179A) Regulations 2023 (SI No.101/2023) ("the 2001 Regulations") – the foregoing provides the statutory criteria and processes which apply to such housing developments.

This document comprises an invasive alien plant species survey report, based on the results of site visits undertaken by Matthew Hague, CEnv, MCIEEM, Associate and Senior Ecologist of Brady Shipman Martin, on 26 August 2022 and 22 June 2023. During the surveys all parts of the site were inspected and a detailed photographic record was made of the species noted.

2.0 Study site overview

The site contains no features of any ecological significance, and is of Local (Lower Value) importance as defined by the ecological resource valuations presented in the National Roads Authority/Transport Infrastructure Ireland *Guidelines for Assessment of Ecological Impacts of National Road Schemes* (NRA/TII, 2009 (Rev. 2)).

The north eastern part of the site comprises of an area of rank grassland, with encroaching scrub (mainly bramble (*Rubus fruticosus* agg.) and hedge bindweed (*Calystegia sepium*) now dominating much of the site area. Other scrub species include dogwood (*Cornus* sp.), Japanese rose (*Rosa rugosa*), blackthorn (*Prunus spinosa*) as well as willowherb (*Epilobium* spp.) and occasional privet (*Ligustrum vulgare*), buddleia (*Buddleja davidii*) and cherry (*Prunus* sp.).

The western part of the site (the section surrounded by a palisade fence) is mainly dominated by a mix of hard standing (concrete pads and an asphalt road) and spoil mounds and recolonising bare ground (gravel and soil). This area contains similar species to the north eastern side, however it is heavily dominated by buddleia. Occasional young birch (*Betula* sp.) saplings are also present. There are patches of winter heliotrope (*Petasites fragrans*)[1] present here.

No evidence of invasive alien plant species listed on the Third Schedule (Part 1: Plants) of the *European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations*, 2011, as amended, also known as the Habitats Regulations) was recorded on the site during previous surveys undertaken as part of the planning application.

[1] In addition to winter heliotrope, the native coltsfoot (*Tussilago farfara*) is also present on this site. Although similar the plants can be distinguished by their leaves (see Plate 6), and their flowers.

3.0 Methodology

A desk study was undertaken, during which the records held by the National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS), National Biodiversity Data Centre (NBDC) and Invasive Species Ireland were reviewed. Files relating to planning applications in the wider area of the site were also consulted. This included a review of the documentation prepared by the author as part of the original Part 8 application.

The surveys undertaken in August 2022 and June 2023 comprised walkover inspections of the entire site. Evidence of invasive species, including mature plants, seedlings and old growth was recorded. The surveys focussed on, but were not limited to, species listed on the Third Schedule (Part 1: Plants) of the *European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations*, 2011, as amended, also known as the Habitats Regulations[2]). Listed species include Himalayan balsam (*Impatiens glandulifera*), Japanese knotweed (*Reynoutria japonica*), giant hogweed (*Heracleum mantegazzianum*), three-cornered garlic (*Allium triquetrum*) and giant rhubarb (*Gunnera tinctoria*), among others.

4.0 Results

No records of any species listed on the Third Schedule of the Habitats Regulations were found in any of the databases covering the site, and only one, giant hogweed, is noted on the NDBC database as being present within 2km of the site (i.e. in Grid Square O14K). However, the databases are incomplete, and a lack of records is not any indicator of absence.

During the course of the June 2023 surveys three invasive plant species were recorded (winter heliotrope, buddleia and Japanese rose (*Rosa rugosa*)). As can be seen in the photographs (Plates 1-8) buddleia is abundant in the western section, winter heliotrope is primarily located in the south western corner along the boundary but with small pockets throughout the western section, for example on the western side of the earth mound in the centre of the site. The *Rosa rugosa* is restricted to the grassland in the north eastern sector.

No species listed on the Third Schedule of the Habitats Regulations were confirmed anywhere on the site during the site surveys. This reflects the findings of the original surveys.

5.0 Assessment and conclusions

None of the plant species recorded on the site during the June 2023 survey, including the buddleia, winter heliotrope and Japanese rose, are listed on the Third Schedule of the Habitats Regulations. There is therefore no legal obligation to deal with them in a formal manner under the regulations. The contractor will be required to prepare and implement a management plan and biosecurity plan to ensure that the buddleia, winter heliotrope and Japanese rose plants do not spread beyond the site boundary.

On any construction site there is a risk of transfer of invasive plant material during the construction phase that could potentially lead to these species becoming established in the area. Good site management is essential to prevent this, and the planting plans and landscaping proposals should ensure that no invasive species are introduced, either deliberately or inadvertently, to the site.

No further survey or assessment in relation to Third Schedule invasive plant species is required, although a watching brief must be maintained throughout the construction period to ensure that this remains the case, and a biosecurity plan/management plan will be required in order to prevent the spread of the non-Third Schedule invasive plants.

[2] https://www.irishstatutebook.ie/eli/2011/si/477/made/en/print

6.0 Key references

Booy, O., Wade, M. and Roy, H. (2015). *Field Guide to Invasive Plants & Animals in Britain* Bloomsbury.

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Invasive Species Ireland, 2019:

http://invasivespeciesireland.com/species-accounts/established/terrestrial/japanese-knotweed

National Roads Authority (2010). *Guidelines on Management of Noxious Weeds and Non-Native Plant Species on National Roads* (Rev 1)

PCA, 2018. *Code of Practice Management of Japanese Knotweed*. Property Care Association:

https://www.property-care.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/05/PCA-COP-Control-of-Knotweed-24pp_04.05.18-WEB.pdf

7.0 Photographs

Plate 1: Winter heliotrope in the south western corner

Plate 2: Winter heliotrope looking north along the western boundary

Plate 3: Winter heliotrope on ridge at northern edge of the site, looking east

Plate 4: Buddleia and other scrub in the centre of the western section, looking south

Plate 5: Buddleia plants – typical view

Plate 6: Coltsfoot (left) and winter heliotrope (right) - comparison

Plate 7: *Rosa rugosa* in the north eastern section of the site

Plate 8: *Rosa rugosa*