

6th December 2024

Our Ref: 10179.007

David Miller is dealing with this matter

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Cathy Holwill

RBC Ecology Consultations

Dear Cathy,



**THE
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WATERFRONT SQUARE, NORMAN PLACE, READING – WATERCOURSE ASSESSMENT

Thank you for your correspondence regarding the watercourse assessment for Waterfront Square, Norman Place (planning application ref: PL/24/0958). As stated previously, we still feel that the value of completing an assessment of the watercourse is limited, and that from an ecological perspective we feel that functionally the site is outside of the riparian zone. However, we acknowledge that the site is within 10m of the bank top of the Thames, and therefore understand your request for completing a watercourse assessment.

This is something we can do, however we wanted to confirm on survey timings. The RCA method states that the field survey should be undertaken in periods of low flow (i.e. in periods of low rainfall). In practice this is usually only the case consistently by late spring. The reasoning for the survey being recommended to be undertaken in periods of low flow is so the channel bed is visible. However, for large rivers (such as the Thames), the river channel is rarely/never visible due to its size, and as such the survey would be limited at any time of year. The RCA survey form actually acknowledges the limitation of surveying large rivers, see below:

If a river is >30m wide, it is usually too large for a full MoRPh survey. For large & navigable rivers and canals a reduced MoRPh survey is possible, focusing on the banktops and faces and those bed features that are visible.

Therefore, we feel it would represent no significantly greater constraint undertaking the survey over winter, rather than having to wait for a period of low flow. We would therefore propose undertaking the RCA early in the new year, if not possible to complete before, but we wanted to check this approach with yourselves. Please would you be able to confirm this survey approach would be acceptable?

We would be happy to discuss further should you require.

Yours sincerely,

David Miller
Senior Ecologist
TEP



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