

HERTFORDSHIRE ECOLOGY

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Ask for: Bernie Fleming
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Date: 22 December 2015

Dear June,

6/2015/1741/FULL

Demolition of existing single storey dwelling and replacement with single storey dwelling (with basement)

125 The Ridgeway, Northaw, Potters Bar EN6 4BG

Thank you for consulting Hertfordshire Ecology with your letter of 7 December 2015.

I am not aware of any ecological records specific to the proposed development site. However, it is situated in close proximity to the ancient hornbeam woodland of Northaw Great Wood SSSI and Local Nature Reserve. Although it is my opinion that the SSSI/LNR will not be adversely affected by the proposals the Council should consider consulting Natural England. Similarly, it lies in close proximity to two, known great crested newt (gcn) breeding ponds, one c300m to the south-east, and one, just 130m to the north-west, but beyond the main road. Again though, neither population nor pond is thought likely to be adversely affected because of the distances involved (gcns are rarely found over 250m from a breeding pond) and because of the physical barrier presented by the main road (respectively).

However, the proposed development site is situated within a typical rural landscape with semi-natural grassland, woodland and waterbodies nearby. Together, these habitats provide foraging and roosting opportunities for bats making it reasonable to conclude that they are active around the property and possibly roost within it; there are records of bat activity in the local area. All bats are protected under domestic and European law and in general terms, it is an offence to disturb or harm a bat, or damage or obstruct access to a roost.

Whilst the design and condition of the buildings suggest that the likelihood of a roost being present is slim (and there is, therefore, no need for a survey), demolition is proposed which means that if bats are present they could be affected. Consequently, to reduce the likelihood of harm arising and of an offence being committed, I advise that a precautionary approach is taken and recommend that the following **Informative** is added to any permission:

“Bats and their roosts are protected at all times under domestic and European law. Works should proceed with caution, and in the event of bats or evidence of them being found, work must stop immediately and advice taken on how to proceed lawfully from one of the following: Natural England: 0300 060 3900 , the UK Bat Conservation Trust Helpline: 0345 1300 228, the Herts & Middlesex Bat Group website: www.hmbg.org.uk or a bat consultant”

I hope these comments are helpful.

Best wishes,

Bernie Fleming

Ecology Advisor, Hertfordshire Ecology

Providing ecological advice to Hertfordshire's Local Authorities and communities