

# HERTFORDSHIRE ECOLOGY

Providing ecological advice to Hertfordshire's Local Authorities and communities

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Ask for: Neil Harvey  
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Date: 18/01/2018

Dear Mark

**Application Reference: 6/2017/2964/MAJ**

**Proposed development at: Blue Moon Paddock Woodfield Lane Brookmans Park AL9 6JJ**

**Proposal: Demolition of existing redundant structures and erection of single family dwelling dwelling house (within envelope of existing structures), together with associated tree planting scheme (part of Centenary Woods project sponsored by Woodland Trust); landscaping and car parking**

Thank you for consulting Hertfordshire Ecology on the above application. I note that comments were made on a similar, previous application on the site (6/2016/1677/MAJ, comments dated 12<sup>th</sup> October 2016). The application is accompanied by a September 2016 response to the ecological comments made by Hertfordshire Ecology at pre-application and by a reptile presence/absence survey report dated 2016. I also have access to a Phase 1 Habitat Survey from 2014 based on a survey visit carried out in October of that year and upon which comments in the September 2016 response were based. There is no new ecological information provided with the current application.

The substance of comments previously made by Hertfordshire Ecology, therefore, remains the same.

The application site is wholly within the Chestnut Farm Meadows Local Wildlife Site, designated for the presence of species-rich grassland, a fact which is not acknowledged within any of the reports. Although characterised as semi-improved within the Phase 1 report and subject to a lack of suitable management in recent

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years, there are insufficient data to support this conclusion, bearing in mind that the survey was carried out in October, not a suitable time for a grassland botanical survey. Given the Local Wildlife Site status of the site, full survey information would be expected, together with a consideration of the potential to restore this aspect of the site's ecology. Notwithstanding this conclusion, as has been stated in our previous comments, the likelihood is that the grassland habitat is of insufficient quality to still justify Local Wildlife Site status and so no objection is offered on this point. However, as environmental enhancement has been proposed as central to the application, it is appropriate to ensure that it is secured by means of an **appropriate condition**:

*A Biodiversity Management Plan (BMP) shall be submitted to, and be approved in writing by, the local planning authority prior to the commencement of the development. The content of the LEMP shall include the following.*

- a) Description and evaluation of features to be managed (informed by up-to-date and adequate survey data).*
- b) Ecological trends and constraints on site that might influence management.*
- c) Aims and objectives of management.*
- d) Appropriate management options for achieving aims and objectives.*
- e) Prescriptions for management actions.*
- f) Preparation of a work schedule (including an annual work plan capable of being rolled forward over a five-year period).*
- g) Details of the body or organization responsible for implementation of the plan.*
- h) Ongoing monitoring and remedial measures.*

*The BMP shall also include details of the legal and funding mechanism(s) by which the long-term implementation of the plan will be secured. The plan shall also set out how contingencies and/or remedial action will be identified, agreed and implemented so that the development still delivers the fully functioning biodiversity objectives of the originally approved scheme. The approved plan will be implemented in accordance with the approved details.*

The presence of reptiles on the site has been established and so mitigation measures will be needed in line with those provided within the reptile survey document. It is recommended that this mitigation is secured by means of a **pre-commencement condition**:

*No development shall take place (including any demolition, ground works, site clearance) until a method statement for reptile mitigation has been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The content of the method statement shall include the:*

- a) purpose and objectives for the proposed works;*
- b) detailed design(s) and/or working method(s) necessary to achieve stated objectives (including, where relevant, type and source of materials to be used);*
- c) extent and location of proposed works shown on appropriate scale maps and plans;*
- d) timetable for implementation, demonstrating that works are aligned with the proposed phasing of construction;*
- e) persons responsible for implementing the works;*

*The works shall be carried out strictly in accordance with the approved details prior to the commencement of construction works.*

I trust these comments are of assistance.

Yours Sincerely

Neil Harvey  
Ecology Advisor  
Hertfordshire Ecology