

HERTFORDSHIRE ECOLOGY

Providing ecological advice to Hertfordshire's Local Authorities and communities

Environmental Resource Planning
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Ask for: Simon Richards
Tel: 01992 588483
Date: 24/07/2020

Dear David Elmore

Application: Erection of detached dwelling and new vehicular access

Address: Land Adjacent to 48 The Ridgeway, Cuffley, Potters Bar, EN6 4BA

Reference 6/2020/1325/FULL

Thank you for consulting Hertfordshire Ecology on the above, for which I have the following comments:

The application site for a new dwelling is on part of "Home Wood (Cuffley)" Local Wildlife Site (LWS). The application is supported by a **Preliminary Ecological Appraisal** (PEA) by T4 Ecology (report date June 2020). This concludes that the application site is an area of amenity grassland and garden and of a different character to the rest of the Local Wildlife Site (LWS) and without its defining ecological features. The pond on site, which will be lost to the development, was assessed in conjunction with the surrounding terrestrial habitats for its suitability for great crested newts. This found the pond to provide a 'poor' level of potential habitat. These findings were supported by the results of a Habitat Suitability Index Assessment and the fact that Hertfordshire Environmental Records Centre (HERC) has no records for this species within the near vicinity. Overall I have no reason to question the conclusions of the report.

Development within, or negatively impacting, a LWS can be a reason to advise refusal, as there is a presumption in favour of avoiding impact to these non-statutory sites. However in this case, based on the results of the ecological survey, any aspects of the site that were consistent with it being included as part of the LWS have already been lost. Suitable mitigation in section 5.2s is recommended to overcome what constraints do exist. Based on this, **I do not object** to the development being within the LWS boundary and consider that there are not any existing ecological constraints to the proposal which would form the basis for refusal. Given the site's proximity to the woodland edge of the LWS, recommendations relating to bats and lighting should be secured by **Condition**. Please see section below.

The planning system should aim to deliver overall net gains for biodiversity where possible as laid out in the National Planning Policy Framework and other planning policy documents. Simple biodiversity enhancements have been suggested within the report. The recommendations for a wildflower meadow would be a useful addition but if not supported by the owner are unlikely to be sustained within a private garden setting. However, the planting of three trees (page 36 of the report) would

compensate for the lost pond, and with the suggested bat and bird boxes, allow the development to deliver a biodiversity net gain in line with the aims of the NPPF. I advise these measures are secured by **Condition:** see below:

Recommended Conditions:

“Any external lighting scheme should follow guidance from the Bat Conservation Trust and IPL 2018, and CIE 150:2017 and be designed to minimise light spill, in particular directing light away from the boundary vegetation to ensure dark corridors remain for use by wildlife as well as directing lighting away from potential roost / nesting sites.”

“All works (including vehicle movements, materials and waste), must be kept strictly within the curtilage of the proposed development site and under no circumstances should there be any detrimental physical impact to the adjacent woodland Local Wildlife Site.”

“The Recommendations enhancements on page 23 of the Preliminary Ecological Appraisal by T4 Ecology (report date June 2020) relating to bat and bird boxes and provisions for wildlife permeable boundaries should be enacted in full. In addition, at least 3 tree or shrub species of a type chosen from those listed on page 36 of the report should form part of the landscaping plan for the development. These measures should be carried out strictly in accordance with the approved details and all features shall be retained in that manner thereafter”

Recommended Informatives:

“Any vegetation clearance should be undertaken outside the nesting bird season (March to August inclusive) to protect breeding birds, their nests, eggs and young. If this is not practicable, a search of the area should be made no more than two days in advance of vegetation clearance by a competent Ecologist and if active nests are found, works should stop until the birds have left the nest.

“To protect any mammals commuting through or foraging within the site, any excavations left open overnight should be covered or have mammal ramps (reinforced plywood board >60cm wide set at an angle of no greater than 30 degrees to the base of the pit) to ensure that any animals that enter can safely escape. Any open pipework with an outside diameter of greater than 120mm must be covered at the end of each working day to prevent animals entering / becoming trapped.”

I trust these comments are of assistance,
Yours sincerely

Simon Richards
Ecology Advisor, Hertfordshire Ecology