

HERTFORDSHIRE ECOLOGY

Providing ecological advice to Hertfordshire's Local Planning Authorities

Hertfordshire LEADS, Sustainable Growth
Hertfordshire County Council, County Hall, Pegs Lane, Hertford, SG13 8DN
ecology@hertfordshire.gov.uk

David Elmore
Principal Major Development Officer
Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council

Ask for: Anita Parry
Tel: 01992 556149

Date: 08/08/2022

Dear David,

Application Reference: 6/2022/1355/MAJ

Proposed development at: Former Beales Hotel Comet Way Hatfield AL10 9NG

Proposal: Demolition of existing building and construction of 145 residential units (Use Class C3) with private and communal amenity space, landscaping, access, associated car and cycle parking, refuse and recycling storage and supporting infrastructure.

Thank you for consulting Hertfordshire Ecology on the above. I apologise for the delay with this reply. The site is located at the former Beales Hotel.

Summary of advice

- The recommendations in section 7 of the EIA ecology report are reasonable and should be followed.
- Biodiversity net gain can be achieved from the development.
- LEMP by condition.

Comments

An *Ecological Impact Assessment, May 2022*, prepared by Green Environmental Consultants has been submitted in support of this application. The site was visited on 12 January and comprises a two storey building, hardstanding car park, and occasional / boundary trees. The report provides an adequate assessment of the impact of the proposals and is based on appropriate survey methods and effort. The likelihood of an adverse ecological impact is negligible-low, but the report suggests reasonable precautionary measures to ensure that legally protected species (such as nesting birds) are not harmed. Several appropriate biodiversity enhancements have been made including appropriately located native-species and nectar rich planting, integrated bat and bird boxes (including for swifts) within the fabric of the new building, and invertebrate boxes.

The recommendations in section 7 of the ecology report are reasonable and should be followed.

Landscaping is proposed for the courtyards and pocket gardens on various floors and roof terraces. This will include native species, plants good for pollinators, and green roofs. Existing trees will be retained where possible, and replacement trees are proposed for trees being removed. 28 new trees will be planted in total including English oak, which is welcomed.

A Biodiversity Net Gain report, May 2022 (Green Environmental Consultants) and associated metric spreadsheet has also been submitted in support of this application. The proposed development will enhance the site for biodiversity and the submitted documents show a net gain of well over 10%. I have no reason to dispute this finding and, although not yet mandatory, these net gain measures are welcomed.

To bring all the biodiversity aspirations together, I advise a Landscape and Ecological Management Plan (LEMP) covering at least 5 years is produced. The LEMP should also show the location of bat, bird and invertebrate boxes/structures. The ecological enhancements should avoid potential conflict with any external lighting schemes (if relevant). The LEMP should be provided by condition to ensure biodiversity enhancements are secured in line with national and local policies.

I trust these comments are of assistance.

Yours sincerely,

Anita Parry
Ecology Advisor
Hertfordshire Ecology