

HERTFORDSHIRE ECOLOGY

Providing ecological advice to Hertfordshire's Local Authorities and communities

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Ask for: Simon Richards
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Date: 31/03/2020

Dear David

Application: Erection of dwelling

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

Reference: 6/2020/0576/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), which is described as very old scrub and plantation that has developed into semi-natural woodland. It has a diverse ground flora, woodland indicators and is shown on the old Bryant's map (1822). The proposal will result in the loss of this portion of LWS. In addition, the site contains a pond which will also be lost to the proposed development.

Local Wildlife Sites are an important ecological resource at the county level and should be protected if possible. There is a presumption in favour of avoiding development on LWS (within National Planning Policy Framework [NPPF] and within Local Plan policies) and we support this. Generally, any application that damages a LWS in a manner that permanently destroys the LWS quality habitat could be refused.

However, in this instance, much of the area proposed for the development is made up of an area used as tennis courts and is unlikely to have any significant botanical value. Given the potential negative impact of the proposal on a part of the LWS, I advise that the LPA should seek further information on this area in the form of an Ecological Appraisal. This should include a botanical survey of the site carried out at the optimum time of year of early (May) to enable the full botanical composition of the area affected to be reliably assessed. In addition, a survey of the onsite pond to assess its potential to support protected species, such as great crested newts should be undertaken.

The appraisal should detail the likely impacts of the proposal and suggest any appropriate mitigation, compensation or enhancements that might be required to satisfy the biodiversity obligations of planning, in line with the aims of the NPPF to achieve biodiversity net gain. This information should be provided prior to determination.

Consequently, I advise that there is presently insufficient information on ecology for the LPA to establish that the proposal will not have an unacceptable impact on the LWS and that the application should not be determined until this information has been provided to the satisfaction of the LPA.

I trust these comments are of assistance,
Yours sincerely

Simon Richards
Ecology Advisor, Hertfordshire Ecology

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