

# HERTFORDSHIRE ECOLOGY

Providing ecological advice to Hertfordshire's Local Authorities and communities

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Mr M Peacock  
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AL8 6AE

Ask for: Anita Parry  
Tel: 01992 556149  
Date: 03/05/2017

Dear Mr M Peacock.

**Application Reference: 6/2017/0550/MAJ**

**Proposed development at: Land adjacent to Porsche Garage Hatfield Avenue  
Hatfield AL10 9UA**

**Proposal: Erection of a 75 bed elderly care home development (C2) with 20 parking bays and associated landscaping.**

Thank you for consulting Hertfordshire Ecology on this application.

1. We do not have any biological (species or habitat) data for the application site, which from aerial photography appears to be predominantly a triangular hardstanding car park with grassland to the north-west and north-east and some bordering trees and shrubs. However, the site is described differently in the *Extended Phase 1 Habitat and Ecology Survey* report (by CGO Ecology, dated 17 October 2107) submitted with this application.

2. The site was visited on 6 September 2016 and is now mainly bare ground, with peripheral species-poor hedge and trees, some amenity grassland, and temporary cabins. The site is under construction with Heras fencing and heavy plant present; it is clearly of limited ecological interest (now). It was not regarded as being suitable to support protected species - except perhaps breeding birds in bordering trees and shrubs – and no further surveys were considered necessary.

3. Japanese knotweed was recorded on site. This plant is listed as an invasive species in Schedule 9 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981, and control measures should be put in place to prevent it spreading further. I advise a method statement is produced as a Condition of Approval:

- *Prior to commencement of construction of the site (including [further?] site clearance), a detailed method statement for removing Japanese knotweed from site shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The statement shall include measures to prevent spread during operations, and measures to ensure that any soils brought to the site are free from the seeds/root/stem of any invasive plant*

*listed under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 as amended. Development shall proceed in accordance with the approved details.*

4. As mitigation against the loss of semi-natural habitats on site, sown semi-natural grassland, native tree planting, and gappy hedgerow infilling is suggested. Bat and bird boxes, and invertebrate log piles and 'houses/hotel' are also suggested and I hope these will be included within the development scheme to increase biodiversity opportunities at the site. To ensure biodiversity objectives are realised, I advise that a 'Biodiversity and Habitat Management Plan' is produced and implemented as a **Condition of Approval**:

- *Prior to the commencement of development, a written Biodiversity and Habitat Management Plan should be prepared and submitted to the Local Planning Authority, detailing how it is planned to incorporate biodiversity as part of the development, details of introduced tree and grass seed species, how the habitats within the site will be managed to maintain long term biodiversity objectives, and who will have the management responsibilities.*

5. Consideration should also be given to the following, as **Informatives** with any *permission granted*, as appropriate:

- *The removal or severe pruning of trees & shrubs should be avoided during the bird breeding season (March to September inclusive). If this is not possible then a search of the area should be made by a suitably experienced Ecologist and if active nests are found, then clearance must be delayed until the last chick has fledged.*
- *Any external lighting scheme should 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.*

I trust these comments are of assistance.

Regards,

Anita Parry  
Ecology Advisor, Hertfordshire Ecology