

HERTFORDSHIRE ECOLOGY

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Mark Peacock
Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council
The Campus
Welwyn Garden City
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Ask for: Bernie Fleming
Tel: 01992 555220

Date: 13 January 2016

Dear Mark,

6/2015/2515/PN3

Prior approval for the erection of portal frame structure, roller shutters, personal doors, ventilation, cladding and tile type metal roof measuring 36.5m length, 12.5m breadth and 5.1m height Nyn Manor, Vineyards Road, Northaw, Potters Bar EN6 4PQ

Thank you for consulting Hertfordshire Ecology with your letter of 30 December 2015.

I am not aware of any ecological records specific to the proposed development site. However, it is situated in close proximity to the ancient hornbeam woodland of Northaw Great Wood SSSI and Local Nature Reserve. Although it is my opinion that the SSSI/LNR will not be adversely affected by the proposals the Council should consider consulting Natural England.

Similarly, it lies in close proximity to two, known great crested newt (gcn) breeding ponds, one c350m to the south-east, and one, just 145m to the north, but beyond the main road. Again though, neither population nor pond is thought likely to be adversely affected because of the distances involved (gcns are rarely found over 250m from a breeding pond) and because of the physical barrier presented by the main road (respectively).

However, gcn are a 'European Protected Species'. The animals, its eggs and their breeding sites and resting places are protected by European and domestic legislation. Although the risk is low, gcn can be harmed by construction activities when they may take refuge under building materials (when they are active on land, typically from March to April and from June to October). Consequently, to reduce the likelihood of harm arising and of an offence being committed, I recommend a precautionary approach and the addition of the following **Informative** to any consent:

- **The agricultural grassland on and around the proposed development site should be kept as short as possible up to, and including, the time when the building works take place, so that it is sub-optimal for great crested newts;**
- **Stored materials (that might act as temporary resting places) are raised off the ground, eg on pallets or batons, and any rubbish is cleared away promptly;**
- **Any trenches or excavations are backfilled before nightfall or a ramp left to provide escape;**
- **Ideally, the building work should be carried out between April and June, when great crested newts are typically in their breeding ponds and less likely to be found on site;**
- **Should great crested newts be found during construction, work must stop immediately and advice taken on how to proceed lawfully from an ecological consultant or Natural England (Tel: 0300 060 3900).**

I hope these comments are helpful.

Best wishes,

Bernie Fleming

Ecology Advisor, Hertfordshire Ecology

Providing ecological advice to Hertfordshire's Local Authorities and communities

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