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HERTFORDSHIRE BIOLOGICAL RECORDS CENTRE

Environment, County Hall, Hertford, Herts, SG13 8DN

PLANNING DEPARTMENT
- 3 JAN 2012
RECEIVED

Mrs S. Smith
 Planning Officer
 Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council
 The Campus Welwyn Garden City
 AL8 6AE

Pl. ask for :- Graham Goodall
 Our Ref :- EDS57/020
 Your Ref :- N6/2010/3120/DC3
 Telephone :- 01992 556155
 Date :- 03/01/2012

Dear Mrs Smith

Planning application: N6/2010/3120/DC3; Splashlands, Stanborough Road, WGC. Redevelopment of site to provide a wet play area, adventure play areas, an educational play area, high ropes attraction, changing huts, education room, café and toilet facilities. Alterations to Stanborough Road and car park on site.

Extended Phase 1 Habitat Survey Report. Middlemarch Environmental Ltd. October 2011.

Initial Badger Survey.

A survey was undertaken on 13th January 2011. No evidence of badgers was recorded. Recommendations:

- Excavations should not be left uncovered at night; pits and trenches should be fitted with suitable mammal ramps.
- The badger survey should be repeated if development does not start for 12 months; eg. January 2012.

Initial Bat Survey.

A survey was undertaken on 13th January 2011. The inspection of the one building (lido toilets-changing rooms) recorded no evidence of bats or a roost site. One tree (No: 330) to be felled was identified as having potential roost sites (cracks, fissures). Other trees with bat-potential will be retained.

Reptile Survey.

A reptile survey was conducted during April-May 2011. No reptiles were recorded, although habitat around the lido and along the river remain suitable.

Water Vole Survey.

A survey was conducted on 30th April 2011. No Water Voles or evidence of WV was found.

Biodiversity Enhancement Scheme. RT-MME-108604-11

This document proposes several objectives to benefit the site and local biodiversity in general.

1. To support a species assemblage of similar quality and character to that currently present.
2. Improved habitat quality; currently low.
3. Provide beneficial habitats for a range of species.
4. Provide specific features for individual/groups of species, as appropriate.
5. Provide continuity of habitats with adjacent features, for Green Infrastructure.
6. Ensure all important habitats are maintained in good condition.

7. Site management will retain, enhance and create habitats.

Other 'non-ecological' objectives include:

- A safe amenity environment.
- Opportunities for community involvement.
- Potential education resource.

A range of habitats will be created and enhancement in the form of:

- Short turf with flowers.
- Wildflower-rich swards.
- Ruderal vegetation.
- Native ("wildlife-friendly") trees and shrub planting.
- Dead-wood habitat.
- Pond.
- River Lea embankments.
- Native hedgerows.

Species lists are given for wildflowers, trees and shrubs, but **not** for aquatic native plants. Bird boxes are proposed, but design and type are not given. Limited (generic) site management options are listed.

HBRC COMMENTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS.

There are no European Protected Species present on the site. Therefore, the LPA do **not** have to consider the 3 tests, as set out in the Habitat Regulations 2010.

Green Infrastructure:

The proposals have the potential to benefit Green Infrastructure, particularly in maintaining and enhancing the 'green river corridor' between Welwyn Garden City and Hatfield, along the River Lea, where it is 'squeezed' between the A1 motorway and the urban edge of WGC. It forms a living landscape between the open, wooded landscape north of St Albans and the River Mimram valley into Hertford.

Wildflowers and grasses:

We agree with the chosen mixes and recommend that Emorsgate Wild Seeds Meadow Mixes are used that suit local soil conditions.

Trees and shrubs:

We agree with the chosen mixes.

Aquatic Plants; ponds and river margins:

The margins of the River Lea should be planted with a range of native aquatic plants. A species list has not been included; therefore, we recommend that species are native and ecologically acceptable.

Species	Emergent	Marginal wetland
Angelica (<i>Angelica sylestris</i>)		♣
Amphibious bistort (<i>Polygonum amphibium</i>)		♣
Arrowhead (<i>Sagittaria sagittifolia</i>)	♣	
Bog Bean (<i>Menyanthes trifoliata</i>)	♣	♣
Brooklime (<i>Veronica beccabunga</i>)		♣
Cuckoo flower (<i>Cardamine pratense</i>)	♣	♣
Flowering rush (<i>Butomus umbellatus</i>)	♣	
Gipsywort (<i>Lycopus europaeus</i>)		♣
Greater spearwort (<i>Ranunculus lingua</i>)	♣	♣

Hemp agrimony (<i>Eupatorium cannabinum</i>)		♣
Marsh marigold (<i>Caltha palustris</i>)		♣
Meadowsweet (<i>Filipendula ulmaria</i>)		♣
Purple loosestrife (<i>Lythrum salicaria</i>)		♣
Ragged robin (<i>Lychnis flos-cuculi</i>)		♣
Royal fern (<i>Osmunda regalis</i>)		♣
Water avens (<i>Geum rivale</i>)		♣
Water forget-me-not (<i>Myosotis scorpiodes</i>)		♣
Water mint (<i>Mentha aquatica</i>)		♣
Water plantain (<i>Alisma plantago-aquatic</i>)	♣	
Water violet (<i>Hottonia palustris</i>)	♣	
Yellow flag iris (<i>Iris pseudacorus</i>)	♣	♣
Yellow loosestrife (<i>Lysimachia vulgaris</i>)		♣

Planning issues.

Some works have the potential to disturb or harm species; therefore, we recommend that the following Conditions should be applied.

- Excavations will not be left uncovered at night; pits and all trenches will be fitted with suitable mammal ramps.
- The badger survey will be repeated if development does not start before January 2012.
- The existing building will be sealed to prevent colonisation by bats.
- All trees with potential bat features will be checked by an ecologist prior to felling.
- Twelve bat boxes (6 x 2F; 3 x 2F-DFP) will be erected on mature trees around the site.
- Various types of bird boxes should be located around the site;
 - Schwegler 2H; Wren-Robin. 3 off.
 - Schwegler 2SV; Starling (45mm entrance hole). 2 off.
 - Schwegler 1B Blue Tit (26mm entrance hole). 4 off.
 - Schwegler 1B Great Tit (28-32mm entrance hole). 4 off.
 - Cedar Plus House Sparrow boxes (Code 002113D). 2 off.

The bird boxes must be placed in appropriate locations:

- 2H, 3SV, 1B boxes in mature trees at a height of 3-5 metres, facing south-east.
- Boxes must be at least 5 metres apart to minimise competition.
- Lighting: proposed lighting of the site must not impact on potential bat flight-lines.
- Pre-development works; all vegetation will be cut to a height of 100mm above ground level.
- All trees and shrubs will be cut and removed by hand.
- Brash-piles will be created as reptile refugia.
- If reptiles are found, they will be translocated to an area of retained habitat in the south of the site.
- A series (3-5) of reptile hibernacula will be created on the site.

- Three reptile basking areas (5m²) will be created on the site.
- Wildflower swards will be created using Emorsgate Meadow Mixes to suit local soils.
- Created habitats will link with suitable reptile habitats off-site.
- Suitable habitats for Water Voles will be retained and enhanced along the River Lea. A 2-3 metre-wide strip (riparian buffer) will be specifically created and maintained along the margins of the River Lea.
- The River Lea riparian margin will be planting with appropriate aquatic, native plant species.

Yours sincerely,

Graham Goodall. CEnv. MIEEM.
Senior Ecologist

Sponsored by:
HERTFORDSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL, DACORUM BOROUGH COUNCIL, EAST HERTFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL,
HERTSMERE BOROUGH COUNCIL, CITY AND DISTRICT OF ST ALBANS, THREE RIVERS DISTRICT COUNCIL,
WELWYN HATFIELD COUNCIL, NATURAL ENGLAND and ENVIRONMENT AGENCY