

SS MS
RECEIVED
14 JAN 2012
✓

HERTFORDSHIRE BIOLOGICAL RECORDS CENTRE

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

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

Ask for: B. Tranter
Our Ref:
Your Ref: N6/2010/3120/DC3
Tel: 01992 556155
Date: 03/01/2012

Dear Mrs Smith,

Planning application: N6/2010/3120/DC3. Former Splashlands, Stanborough Road, WGC. Redevelopment of former Splashlands and surrounding area to include construction of a high ropes adventure course and supporting ticket kiosk and clearance of former lido area, redevelopment of former.

Thank you for consulting HBRC on the above application. HBRC has commented on previous proposals within Stanborough Park. The present application applies to a smaller area of the park than previously and we note that revised ecological surveys have been conducted to update the surveys originally undertaken. We have the following comments to make on the revised application:

1. HBRC database & ecological evaluation

The former Splashlands site is part of Stanborough Lakes Ecology Site in our database, reference number 57/020. The site is described as follows:

“Large lake with man-made islands surrounded by improved grassland. Damp patches and marginal vegetation add interest. Bats known to feed over the lake.”

Ecology Sites are non-statutory and may be of wildlife interest, at least at a local level; though they may be included in the database purely as some ecological information is held on them. Whilst these sites are often a valuable starting point in identifying the county's wildlife resource, they do not meet the rigorous and quantifiable assessment criteria needed to identify them as Local (County) Wildlife Sites.

2. Updated Walkover Survey report. WYG Planning & Environment. 14 December 2012.

Key points from the report:

- The survey methodology and habitat evaluation followed recognised guidelines.
- The habitats present were assessed as common and widespread.
- The habitats on the site were assessed as unlikely to support protected species such as otter, water vole, badger or amphibians.
- No reptiles were found but the old lido area was assessed as providing suitable reptile habitat.

- The impact of the proposed works on bats was considered to be negligible.
- Trees and shrubs were found to offer nesting potential for common bird species and possible roost sites for bats.
- No further protected species surveys were recommended.
- Recommendations to protect reptiles, bats, badgers and nesting birds during the works along with proposals to retain/enhance the biodiversity of the site were made.

3. HBRC comments

1. We take the view that an appropriate survey methodology, evaluation and analysis have been carried out by WYG Planning & Environment.
2. On the data submitted we agree with their assessment and with their recommendations given in Section 5.0 Ecological Impacts and Recommendations of the report.

4. HBRC recommendations

We take the view that the ecological report contains sufficient information for the LPA to make a fully informed decision and are happy with the ecological/landscape enhancements proposed.

We advise therefore, that the recommendations as detailed in Section 5 of the report are conditioned in total (ideally incorporated within a Landscape Management Plan).

We trust these comments are of assistance in determining this application and should you require any further information or advice, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Yours sincerely,

Barry Tranter PhD MIEEM
Senior Ecological Consultant for HBRC