

Edd Evans
Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council,
The Campus,
Welwyn Garden City,
Herts,
AL8 6AE

Hertfordshire LEADS

Hertfordshire County Council
Farnham House
Six Hills Way
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Contact: Chloe Weingarten
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Date: 06/11/2025

Dear Edd,

Application: Submission of details pursuant to condition number 13 (Landscape details), 14 (Landscape and Biodiversity Management Plan), 41 (Scaled Landscape Plan) and 42 (Landscape and Ecology) on planning permission 6/2019/2714/OUTLINE
Address: YMCA 90 Peartree Lane Welwyn Garden City AL7 3UL
Application No: [6/2025/2003/COND](#)

ECOLOGICAL IMPLICATIONS

Thank you for consulting this office on the above application.

Overall Recommendation:

- The planning officer should:
1. Request further information from the applicant and re-consult the Ecology Service (LEADS) when it is furnished

Summary of Advice:

- I advise that prior to the condition being discharged, the hedge planting plans should be amended to include native species planting.

Conditions:

Condition 14: *No development of the hostel other than its demolition shall commence until a Landscape and Biodiversity Management Plan is submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The Landscape and Biodiversity Management*

Plan must refer to the Ecological Report submitted as part of this application and must also include details identifying wildlife enhancements marked on a biodiversity plan, and details of measures to protect and enhance existing flora, fauna and habitats within the development site. These enhancements must mitigate the loss of biodiversity on the site and enhance the visual impact of the development hereby approved. The Landscape and Biodiversity Management Plan shall not be carried out other than in accordance with the approved details and retained thereafter.

REASON: To ensure the landscape, habitats and species are safeguarded and where appropriate enhanced in accordance with Policies D8, R11 and R28 of the Welwyn Hatfield District Plan; and the National Planning Policy Framework and the requirements of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010.

Condition 42: *No development of the hostel other than its demolition shall commence until a Landscape and Biodiversity Management Plan is submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The Landscape and Biodiversity Management Plan must refer to the Ecological Report submitted as part of this application and must also include details identifying wildlife enhancements marked on a biodiversity plan, and details of measures to protect and enhance existing flora, fauna and habitats within the development site. These enhancements must mitigate the loss of biodiversity on the site and enhance the visual impact of the development hereby approved. The Landscape and Biodiversity Management Plan shall not be carried out other than in accordance with the approved details and retained thereafter.*

REASON: To ensure the landscape, habitats and species are safeguarded and where appropriate enhanced in accordance with Policies D8, R11 and R28 of the Welwyn Hatfield District Plan; and the National Planning Policy Framework 2019 and the requirements of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010.

Documents:

- Ecological Assessment (BMD, September 2019)
- Landscape Ecological Management Plan (BMD, August 2025).
- Planting Schedule

Comments:

A Landscape Ecological Management Plan (LEMP) has been submitted.

This document refers to landscape features, habitat creation, species enhancements, and lighting measures. The document also includes information relating to ecological monitoring.

The WHBC tree officer has outlined that it would be more appropriate to plant mixed native species for the hedge (i.e. yew and holly), as opposed to Photinia Red Robin. I am in agreement with this, and a native hedge would generally be more beneficial to bat species given the native insects it will attract. As recommended by the tree officer, this section in the LEMP should be amended, and **I advise that a native hedge is planted in replacement of the Photinia Red Robin.**

Appendix E includes a Biodiversity Enhancement Plan which shows the location of proposed bat boxes, bird boxes, insect houses, hedgehog houses, and hedgehog highways. We note that the building has already been constructed, which means that the integrated features are unchangeable. We also note that the integrated swift features are on the first floor, and this is generally not appropriate for swifts given the height in which they tend to nest. However, the Condition wording nor ecology report does not specifically mention swifts, and since other species can still utilise these boxes, I do not consider it a reason to not discharge the condition, especially since the building has already been constructed. I consider the species habitat enhancements listed in the biodiversity enhancement plan section sufficient to meet the requirements set out in the decision notice, and to satisfy the recommendations made in the ecology report.

However, I advise that prior to the condition being discharged, the hedge planting plans should be amended to include native species planting.

I trust these comments are of assistance,

Regards,

Chloe Weingarten
Ecology Adviser, Hertfordshire LEADS

Hertfordshire LEADS provides Landscape, Ecology, Archaeology, Design and Sustainability support to planning departments in Hertfordshire.