

HERTFORDSHIRE ECOLOGY

Providing ecological advice to Hertfordshire's Local Authorities and communities

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Your Ref: 6/2018/0171/MAJ
Ask for: M J Hicks
Tel: 01992 556158
Date: 24/09/2018

Dear Chris / Gerry

Application: Creation of a mixed-use quarter... plus associated car parking, access, landscaping, public art and other supporting infrastructure.
Address: Former Shredded Wheat Factory Welwyn Garden City AL8 6UN
Application No: 6/2018/0171/MAJ

Thank you for forwarding the recent plan BMD.17.023.ECO.902 to Hertfordshire Ecology in respect of the above application, for which I have the following comments:

1. The site proposals will create numerous habitat areas within the development, which are likely to represent a gain in such features generally, although the associated rail habitat in the NW corner will be lost. The existing site has negligible ecological value, as confirmed in previous comments on this site. The new plan outlined the locations of hibernacula, stag beetle loggeries, bat boxes, hedgehog domes, bird boxes, invertebrate housing, sparrow terraces and swift boxes.
2. Whilst the landscape proposals do create numerous habitat patches, they are mostly small, relatively isolated or if larger, will essentially function as amenity spaces – which is understandable. Although this will limit their ecological potential, I acknowledge they seek to provide some additionality in the development and linking features through the middle of the site. The edge features will perhaps remain the most ‘natural’ or less disturbed areas. However the provision and availability of habitat resource itself is likely to be the most significant issue; it can always be managed or enhanced with various features to create different ecological effects to benefit biodiversity, but ultimately this will still depend upon the extent and quality of local habitat availability. For example, the former proposals for a mini-orchard would provide a range of ecosystem

services of value which provision of boxes, domes, housing and terraces alone cannot provide.

3. However, in this context, I acknowledge the plan BMD.17.023.ECO.902 highlights a wide range of ecological enhancement proposals associated with what open spaces and other features will exist and are suitable. These are scattered throughout the site but are particularly concentrated on the western edges where disturbance will be less. Whilst I am not convinced all will meet the target species aspirations (e.g. stag beetles which prefer large deadwood locations), these will still principally provide dwelling areas for wildlife within a wholly redeveloped site, and as such are to be supported.

4. As such, I can confirm this approach will represent a **beneficial contribution** to biodiversity within the Scheme as a whole.

I trust these comments are of assistance,

Regards,

Martin Hicks MCIEEM
Ecology Advisor, Hertfordshire Ecology