

HERTFORDSHIRE ECOLOGY

Providing ecological advice to Hertfordshire's Local Authorities and communities

Environmental Resource Planning
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Clare Howe
Planning Department,
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The Campus, Welwyn Garden City,
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Ask for: Simon Richards
Tel: 01992 588483
Date: 15/02/2021

Dear Clare

Application: Demolition of existing buildings and construction of 289 residential units (Use Class C3) and community hub (Use Class E/F.2), with public realm and open space, landscaping, access, associated car and cycle parking, refuse and recycling storage and supporting infrastructure.

Address: Biopark Broadwater Road Welwyn Garden City AL7 3AX

Reference 6/2020/3420/MAJ

Thank you for consulting Hertfordshire Ecology on the above, for which I have the following comments:

The application is supported by the following ecological reports by Green Environmental Consultants:

- An Ecological Impact Statement (August 2020) including a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal and Preliminary Roost Assessment.
- BWGC Metric Version 2, calculation.

The existing site has minimal green space and was assessed as having low ecological quality. The buildings were assessed as having negligible potential as bat roosts, and no further evidence of protected species was found except feral pigeon nests in the underground car park. I have no reason to dispute these results and agree that further surveys are not required. However, as evidence of nesting birds and further potential for such was found, I advise the following **Condition** to accompany any consent given:

“Any demolition or bird exclusion measure as well as any significant tree/shrub works or removal should be undertaken outside the nesting bird season (March to August inclusive) to protect breeding birds, their nests, eggs and young. If this is not practicable, a search of the area should be made no more than two days in advance of vegetation clearance by a competent Ecologist and if active nests are found, works should stop until the birds have left the nest.”

Precautionary measures relating to hedgehogs and mitigation relating to the new lighting are also suggested in the report and should be followed in full.

Enhancement and biodiversity net gain

The application also includes a completed biodiversity metric. Most of the planned post-development habitats are of low distinctiveness and form part of a typical urban landscaping scheme. However, I am glad to see the inclusion of some areas of meadow and native hedging, which I support. The scale of the resulting net gain is a consequence as much of the paucity of the existing habitats as to the richness of those being proposed, but I do not dispute that a net gain in excess of 10%, and in line with the aims of the NPPF and emerging legislation, has been achieved.

The ecology report lists a number of recommended enhancements which I would like to see included within the development plans. Consequently, I advise these are secured by **Condition** - worded as below or similar:

“All ecological mitigation and enhancement measures and/or works shall be carried out in accordance with the details contained in section 7.2 of the Ecological Impact Statement, (Green Environmental Consultants, August 2020) as already submitted with the planning application.”

I trust these comments are of assistance,
Yours sincerely

Simon Richards
Ecology Advisor, Hertfordshire Ecology