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By email only: Planning Department, planning@horsham.gov.uk

Our ref: 12793
Date: 21 January 2026

Thank you for requesting advice on this application from Place Services' ecological advice service. This service provides advice to planning officers to inform Horsham District Council planning decisions with regard to potential ecological impacts from development.

Application: DC/25/1146
Location: Leonardslee Gardens Brighton Road Lower Beeding West Sussex
Proposal: Extension to the visitor entrance building to house a new ticket sales area and café; Infilling roof to the former generator block courtyard, re-roofing of the Alpine House and internal/ external reconfigurations and link extension; Single storey winter garden conservatory to the Stable Block; Terrace extension to the east and internal/ external reconfigurations; Change of use from redundant staff offices and staff accommodation within the stable block to guest accommodation including extension to Honey Cottage; Change of use to the partial first floor of the Red House to staff accommodation; Small WC extension, reinstated chimney stack, and roof alterations to the Engine House; Lightweight wedding pavilion to the lawn, south of Leonardslee House; Landscaping changes including to the forecourt of Leonardslee House.

Thank you for re-consulting Place Services on the above application.

No ecological objection	<input type="checkbox"/>
No ecological objection subject to attached conditions	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Further information required/Temporary holding objection	<input type="checkbox"/>
Recommend Refusal	<input type="checkbox"/>

Subject to Natural England's formal comments on the conclusion of the LPA's Appropriate Assessment



Please refer to Horsham District Council's advice regarding Water Neutrality requirements following [Natural England's Withdrawal Statement](#) (31st October 2025).

Summary

We have reviewed the Agent email (21st October 2025) and Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (Garden Entrance, Honey Cottage, Clock Tower Café and Village Centre) Version 1.0 (Temple Group Ltd., April 2025) relating to the likely impacts of development on designated sites, protected and Priority species & habitats, and identification of appropriate mitigation measures. Please note that comments on Biodiversity Net Gain are provided by Horsham District Council in-house. Our previous comments are dated 16th October 2025. We are satisfied that there is sufficient ecological information available to support determination of this application.

We have now also reviewed the Precautionary Working Method Statement (Ramboll, December 2025).

We are now satisfied that there is sufficient ecological information available for determination of this application. Please note that we have no comments on Great Crested Newt as we have been instructed to leave comments on this European Protected Species to the [NatureSpace Partnership](#).

We previously stated regarding bats “we support the implementation of a non-licensed Precautionary Method Statement for bats as proposed in Section 5.5 of the Dusk Emergence Survey Report (Temple Group Ltd., September 2024). This is because the three dusk emergence surveys undertaken in May, June and July 2024 on the Clocktower Café and Honey Cottage confirmed the presence of a roost for Brown Long-eared bats (Dusk Emergence Survey Report (Temple Group Ltd., September 2024)). However, we understand from Section 4.10 of the Dusk Emergence Survey Report (Temple Group Ltd., September 2024) that the works to Honey Cottage and the Clocktower Café will not impact the roost.” We are now satisfied this has been sufficiently detailed within the Precautionary Working Method Statement (Ramboll, December 2025).

Regarding Hazel Dormice, we previously stated “we support the implementation of a non-licensed Precautionary Method Statement for Hazel Dormouse as indicated in the Preliminary Ecological Appraisal and Preliminary Roost Assessment (Stable Block) Version 1.0 (Temple Group Ltd., December 2023).” We are now satisfied this has been sufficiently detailed within the Precautionary Working Method Statement (Ramboll, December 2025).

This provides certainty for the LPA of the likely impacts on designated sites, protected and Priority species & habitats and, with appropriate mitigation measures secured, the development can be made acceptable.

The mitigation measures identified in the Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (Garden Entrance, Honey Cottage, Clock Tower Café and Village Centre) Version 1.0 (Temple Group Ltd., April 2025) and the Precautionary Working Method Statement (Ramboll, December 2025) should be secured by a condition of any consent and implemented in full. This is necessary to conserve and enhance protected and Priority species particularly those recorded in the locality.

We also support the proposed reasonable biodiversity enhancements for protected, Priority and threatened species, which have been recommended to secure net gains for biodiversity, as outlined under Paragraph 187d and 193d of the National Planning Policy Framework (December 2024). Reasonable biodiversity enhancement measures are a separate matter to mandatory biodiversity net gains and the finalised details should be outlined within a separate Biodiversity Enhancement Strategy to be secured as a condition of any consent.

This will enable LPA to demonstrate its compliance with its statutory duties including its biodiversity duty under s40 NERC Act 2006 (as amended).

Impacts will be minimised such that the proposal is acceptable, subject to the conditions below based on BS42020:2013. We recommend that submission for approval and implementation of the details below should be a condition of any planning consent.

Recommended conditions

1. ACTION REQUIRED IN ACCORDANCE WITH ECOLOGICAL APPRAISAL RECOMMENDATIONS

“All mitigation measures and/or works shall be carried out in accordance with the details contained in the Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (Garden Entrance, Honey Cottage, Clock Tower Café and Village Centre) Version 1.0 (Temple Group Ltd., April 2025) and the Precautionary Working Method Statement (Ramboll, December 2025) as already submitted with the planning application and agreed in principle with the local planning authority prior to determination.

This will include the appointment of an appropriately competent person e.g. an ecological clerk of works (ECoW) to provide on-site ecological expertise during construction. The appointed person shall undertake all activities, and works shall be carried out, in accordance with the approved details.”

Reason: To conserve protected and Priority species and allow the LPA to discharge its duties under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended), the Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) and s40 of the NERC Act 2006 (as amended).

2. PRIOR TO ANY WORKS ABOVE SLAB LEVEL: BIODIVERSITY ENHANCEMENT STRATEGY

“Prior to any works above slab level, a Biodiversity Enhancement Strategy for protected, Priority and threatened species, prepared by a suitably qualified ecologist, shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority.

The content of the Biodiversity Enhancement Strategy shall include the following:

- a) *Purpose and conservation objectives for the proposed enhancement measures;*
- b) *detailed designs or product descriptions to achieve stated objectives;*
- c) *locations of proposed enhancement measures by appropriate maps and plans (where relevant);*
- d) *persons responsible for implementing the enhancement measures; and*
- e) *details of initial aftercare and long-term maintenance (where relevant).*

The works shall be implemented in accordance with the approved details shall be retained in that manner thereafter.”

Reason: To enhance protected, Priority and threatened species and allow the LPA to discharge its duties under paragraph 187d of NPPF 2024 and s40 of the NERC Act 2006 (as amended).

CONDITION IF EXTERNAL ARTIFICIAL LIGHT IS PROPOSED:

3. PRIOR TO BENEFICIAL USE: WILDLIFE SENSITIVE LIGHTING DESIGN SCHEME

“Prior to beneficial use, a “lighting design strategy for biodiversity” in accordance with Guidance Note 08/23 (Institute of Lighting Professionals) shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The strategy shall:

- a) *identify those areas/features on site that are particularly sensitive for bats and that are likely to cause disturbance in or around their breeding sites and resting places or along important routes used to access key areas of their territory, for example, for foraging; and*
- b) *show how and where external lighting will be installed (through provision of appropriate lighting plans and technical specifications) so that it can be clearly*

demonstrated that areas to be lit will not disturb or prevent the above species using their territory or having access to their breeding sites and resting places. All external lighting shall be installed in accordance with the specifications and locations set out in the scheme and maintained thereafter in accordance with the scheme. Under no circumstances should any other external lighting be installed without prior consent from the local planning authority.”

Reason: To allow the LPA to discharge its duties under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended), the Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) and s40 of the NERC Act 2006 (as amended).

Please contact us if you have any queries in relation to this advice.

Hayley Dean MCIEEM MSc BSc (Hons)
Senior Ecological Consultant
 Place Services at Essex County Council



Place Services provide ecological advice on behalf of Horsham District Council.

Please note:

This letter is advisory and should only be considered as the opinion formed by specialist staff in relation to this particular matter.

We are unable to respond directly to applicants/agents or other interested parties. Any additional information, queries or comments on this advice that the applicant/agent or other interested parties may have, must be directed to the Planning Officer at the relevant LPA, who will seek further advice from us where appropriate.