22 February 2024

Kate Turner
Horsham District Council
Parkside,
Chart Way,
Horsham,
West Sussex
RH12 1RL

By email only

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. Any additional information, queries or comments on this advice that the applicant or other interested parties may have, must be directed to the Planning Officer who will seek further advice from us where appropriate and necessary.

Dear Kate

Application: **DC/23/1979**
Location: **Stables at Glebe Meadow Church Lane Ashurst Steyning West Sussex BN44 3AR**
Proposal: **Change of use of existing stable building into a holiday let, alongside building operations including the introduction of infill glazing and windows, together with the provision of parking and other associated works.**

Thank you for consulting Place Services on the above application.

a) No ecological harm/No objection	
b) Requires further information on European Protected Species (bats)	Yes
c) Recommend grant permission subject to conditions	
d) Recommend refusal	
e) Subject to Natural England's formal comments on the conclusion of the Water Neutrality Appropriate Assessment	Yes
f) Discharge of condition	

Please note that following receipt of Natural England's position statement on developments in the Sussex North Water Supply Zone, decisions on planning applications should await the completion of a Sussex North water neutrality strategy unless they can demonstrate water neutrality.

Summary
We have reviewed the Preliminary Roost Assessment and Barn Owl Scoping Survey Version 002 (aLyne Ecology, October 2023), supplied by the applicant, relating to the likely impacts of development on protected & Priority species and habitats, and identification of proportionate mitigation.

We note from Section 5.1.3 of the Preliminary Roost Assessment and Barn Owl Scoping Survey Version 002 (aLyne Ecology, October 2023) that the stables have low bat roost potential due to lifted tiles and potential internal roost features in the form of crevices in the timber framework. Section 7.1 states that the work can proceed under a non-licensed Precautionary Method Statement for bats 'providing the works do not involve any alterations to the roof structure or removal (temporary orpermanent) of roof tiles'. However, it is not clear if there will be works involving the roof (particularly as there are lifted tiles) and there could be bats within the timber framework of the building, as stated.

There are numerous records of bats close to the site: five records for Common Pipistrelle, Soprano Pipistrelle and Brown Long-eared bat within 20m to the south; one record for Common Pipistrelle 40m to the northeast and five records for Brown Long-eared bat and Common Pipistrelle within 1km to the south (Sussex Biodiversity Record Centre – accessed under licence). We therefore recommend that further assessment for bats should be undertaken in accordance with the 4th Ed. Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists Bat Conservation Trust (Collins ed., 2023).

The above information is required prior to determination because paragraph 99 of ODPM Circular 06/2005 highlights that: "*It is essential that the presence or otherwise of protected species, and the extent that they may be affected by the proposed development, is established before the planning permission is granted, otherwise all relevant material considerations may not have been addressed in making the decision.*"

This information is required to provide the LPA with certainty of impacts on legally protected species and be able to secure appropriate mitigation either by a mitigation licence from Natural England or a condition of any consent. This will enable the LPA to demonstrate compliance with its statutory duties, including its biodiversity duty under s40 NERC Act 2006 and prevent wildlife crime under s17 Crime and Disorder Act 1998.

We note that the stables have negligible potential to support Barn Owl (the Preliminary Roost Assessment and Barn Owl Scoping Survey Version 002 (aLyne Ecology, October 2023) and therefore agree that no further surveys are required for this species.

Please note that we no longer provide comments on Great Crested Newt as we have been been instructed to leave comments on this European Protected Species to the NatureSpace Partnership.

We look forward to working with the LPA and the applicant to receive the additional information required to overcome our holding objection.

Please contact us with any queries.

Yours sincerely

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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.