



26 May 2023

Stephen Astles
Horsham District Council
Parkside,
Chart Way,
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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 Stephen

Application: DC/23/0057

Location: Plot 1 Steel Framed Barn Oaklands Coltstaple Lane Horsham West Sussex RH13 9BB

Proposal: Demolition of 1no. agricultural building and the erection of 2no. dwellings with associated works.

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

Temporary Holding Objection	
No ecological objections	
Recommended Approval subject to attached conditions	Yes
Recommended Discharge of condition	
Subject to Natural England's formal comments on the conclusion of the Water Neutrality Appropriate Assessment	Yes

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. As this application does not yet demonstrate water neutrality, we are required to apply a holding objection.

Summary

We have reviewed the Great Crested Newt Method Statement (AEWC Ltd., May 2023), Protected Species Walkover and Bat and Barn Owl Assessment (AEWC Ltd., November 2022), Tree Survey



& Arboricultural Impact Assessment V2 (Hellis Solutions Limited, November 2022) and Site Location Plan Drawing Number 90_100 (Simon Harvey Designs Ltd., October 2022), supplied by the applicant, relating to the likely impacts of development on protected & Priority species and habitats, and identification of proportionate mitigation.

We note that the farm building has negligible potential for roosting bats (Protected Species Walkover, Bat and Barn Owl Assessment (AEWC Ltd., November 2022)) and that no trees are due to be removed during the development (Tree Survey & Arboricultural Impact Assessment V2 (Hellis Solutions Limited, November 2022)). Therefore, we agree that no further surveys are required for bats.

We also note that there is suitable habitat for Great Crested Newt (GCN) on site and there are three ponds within 500m of the site (Great Crested Newt Method Statement (AEWC Ltd., May 2023)). However, the Natural England rapid risk assessment indicates that an offence is highly unlikely and we therefore support the implementation of a non-licensed GCN Precautionary Method Statement (Great Crested Newt Method Statement (AEWC Ltd., May 2023)). This should be secured by a condition of any consent and implemented in full.

The adjacent woodland to the south (Upper Blunt's Copse) is classified as Ancient Woodland (MAGIC maps <https://magic.defra.gov.uk/MagicMap.aspx>). Ancient Woodland is irreplaceable habitat and so, although none of the Ancient Woodland will be lost to development (Protected Species Walkover, Bat and Barn Owl Assessment (AEWC Ltd., November 2022), Tree Survey & Arboricultural Impact Assessment V2 (Hellis Solutions Limited, November 2022)), a 15m buffer will be required between any works and the woodland in line with [Government Standing Advice](#).

We are now satisfied that there is sufficient ecological information available for determination.

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

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

The mitigation measures identified in the Great Crested Newt Method Statement (AEWC Ltd., May 2023) and Protected Species Walkover and Bat and Barn Owl Assessment (AEWC Ltd., November 2022) should be secured by a condition of any consent and implemented in full. This is necessary to conserve and enhance protected and Priority species.

We also support the recommendation that a Wildlife Friendly Lighting Strategy is implemented for this application (Protected Species Walkover and Bat and Barn Owl Assessment (AEWC Ltd., November 2022)). Therefore, technical specification should be submitted prior to occupation, which demonstrates measures to avoid lighting impacts to foraging / commuting bats, which are likely to be present within the local area. This should summarise the following measures will be implemented:

- Light levels should be as low as possible as required to fulfil the lighting need.
- Warm White lights should be used at <2700k. This is necessary as lighting which emits an ultraviolet component or that has a blue spectral content has a high attraction effect on insects. This may lead in a reduction in prey availability for some light sensitive bat species.



- The provision of motion sensors or timers to avoid the amount of 'lit-time' of the proposed lighting.
- Lights should be designed to prevent horizontal spill e.g. cowls, hoods, reflector skirts or shields.

We also support the proposed reasonable biodiversity enhancements, which have been recommended to secure net gains for biodiversity, as outlined under Paragraph 174[d] of the National Planning Policy Framework 2021. The reasonable biodiversity enhancement measures should be outlined within a Biodiversity Enhancement Layout and should be secured by a condition of any consent for discharge prior to slab level.

Impacts will be minimised such that the proposal is acceptable subject to the conditions below based on BS42020:2013. In terms of biodiversity net gain, the enhancements proposed will contribute to this aim.

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 and enhancement measures and/or works shall be carried out in accordance with the details contained in the Great Crested Newt Method Statement (AEWC Ltd., May 2023) and Protected Species Walkover and Bat and Barn Owl Assessment (AEWC Ltd., November 2022), 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 and enhance 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 (Priority habitats & species) and Policy 31 of the Horsham Development Framework.

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

"A Biodiversity Enhancement Layout, providing the finalised details and locations of the enhancement measures contained within the Great Crested Newt Method Statement (AEWC Ltd., May 2023) and Protected Species Walkover and Bat and Barn Owl Assessment (AEWC Ltd., November 2022) shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority.

The enhancement measures shall be implemented in accordance with the approved details prior to occupation and all features shall be retained in that manner thereafter."



Reason: To enhance Protected and Priority Species and allow the LPA to discharge its duties under the s40 of the NERC Act 2006 (Priority habitats & species).

3. PRIOR TO OCCUPATION: WILDLIFE SENSITIVE LIGHTING DESIGN SCHEME

“A lighting design scheme for biodiversity shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The scheme shall identify those features on site that are particularly sensitive for bats and that are likely to cause disturbance along important routes used for foraging; and show how and where external lighting will be installed (through the provision of appropriate lighting contour plans, Isolux drawings and technical specifications) so that it can be clearly demonstrated that areas to be lit will not disturb or prevent bats using their territory.

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 (Priority habitats & species) and Policy 31 of the Horsham Development Framework.

Please contact us with any queries.

Yours sincerely

Genevieve Broad MCIEEM MSc BSc (Hons)

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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.