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9673: LAND SOUTH OF THE FORTY AND NORTH OF
CHELWORTH ROAD, CRICKLADE

TECHNICAL NOTE: ECOLOGY RESPONSE

OCTOBER 2024

Introduction

1. Ecology Solutions were instructed by Hannick Homes & Developments Ltd to undertake ecological assessment work to inform development proposals for Land South of The Forty and North of Chelworth Road, Cricklade (hereafter referred to as the application site).
2. A suite of ecological survey and assessment work was undertaken in order to inform development proposals, as outlined in the Ecological Assessment report (Ecology Solutions, November 2023) submitted as part of the outline planning application (reference PL/2023/10331).
3. Subsequently, consultation comments were received from Wiltshire Council's (WC) Biodiversity Team on 5 June 2024.
4. This Technical Note serves to provide further clarification and information to address the matters raised in the Biodiversity Team's consultation response in order to assist with the determination of the planning application.
5. It should be noted that further discussions are currently underway with Natural England to address the final remaining matter (in relation to North Meadow and Clattinger Farm SAC).

Response to WDC Biodiversity Team Consultation Comments

Ecological Parameters Plan

6. The WC Biodiversity Team outlined within their response that an Ecological Parameters Plan (EPP) would be required, stating:

"The EPP must:

- *Specify the minimum distance from the edge of boundary habitat features to the footprint of the built development areas including private residential curtilage.*
 - *Detail that any retained or newly planted trees/hedgerows are not within or form the border to private dwellings. The perimeter for private land should be a suitable distance away to ensure the habitat remains functional for biodiversity. The size of this buffer depends on the ecological sensitivity of the habitat and its importance as part of the biodiversity strategy. A buffer of at least 3m is required from the edge of the vegetation for safe access for maintenance.*
 - *Demonstrate that the existing boundary vegetation are suitably retained and the proposed tree planting are appropriately spaced to account for future root and canopy growth.*
 - *Identify where new habitats will be lost, retained, created and enhanced on site, include minimum area in hectares or length in metres and habitat type.*
 - *The areas of private residential curtilage and the areas within communal ownership along with the proposed physical barrier specification between these areas where appropriate.*
 - *The “dark corridor” for sensitive ecological features where the increase in lux levels from artificial light will be zero or, if lux contours have been modelled, show contour lines for 1, 0.5 or 0.1 lux depending on the sensitivity of ecological features.*
 - *Provide cross-sectional drawing to show profile of SuDs, ponds or wetland features to demonstrate there is adequate room for these features to have gently profiled sides and thereby maximise their biodiversity potential.*
 - *Detail the trees with bat roost features.*
 - *Detail the location of the reptile and amphibian translocation receptor site.*
 - *Include the specification and location of the biodiversity mitigation/enhancement measures such as but not limited to log piles, bee bricks, bat boxes and bird boxes to be installed. Integrated features on new residential developments should be created at the ratio of 1:1 feature to building in accordance with best practice guidelines.*
7. Following WC's request for an EPP, Ecology Solutions have subsequently produced a plan with requested information, providing clarification with regard to measurements/parameters in addition to the other points raised by the WC Biodiversity Team. A copy of the EPP is attached to this Technical Note.
 8. As illustrated on the EPP (and in accordance with the Ecological Assessment), the vast majority of existing hedgerows along the southwest and southeast boundaries of the application site will be fully retained. Hedgerows to the north of the site will also be retained, with some localised losses to facilitate site access and roads. Retained features will be protected throughout the construction phase

through the use of temporary protective fencing, details of which can be secured via condition.

9. The indicative layout, as illustrated on the EPP, shows that a 3m buffer can be maintained between the retained vegetation and plot boundaries within the site, to ensure the hedgerows are protected and maintained.
10. Private gardens will be physically separated from retained habitats and buffer zones by suitable fencing, such that there is clear separation between the private curtilage of new residents and the retained habitats beyond. It is envisaged that features such as Hedgehog Highways will be provided to ensure a degree of connectivity between rear gardens and retained habitats, whilst ensuring that there is physical separation between the private and public parts of the new development. This will serve to protect retained vegetation (and buffer zones) and minimise the potential for damage arising due to inappropriate management.
11. The mitigation measures proposed for the site will maintain the existing boundary hedgerows to the southeast and southwest of the site, effectively providing a dark zone for bats. It is anticipated that a Lighting Design Strategy would be secured via a suitably worded planning condition. This is also proposed for the northern boundary, where there are a limited number of trees with low bat potential (locations as marked on the EPP).
12. It is intended, as far as is reasonably practicable, to keep these boundaries of the site as dark as possible. A sensitive lighting scheme will be secured for the site to avoid post-development nocturnal lighting which might adversely impact foraging or commuting bats.
13. In addition, areas of scrub and grassland will be retained and enhanced, and the provision of meadow grassland and SuDS feature to the south will provide further opportunities for foraging bats.
14. No reptiles or amphibians were recorded within the application site during the survey work undertaken in September and October 2023. As such, it is considered highly unlikely that common reptiles and amphibians are present within the site.
15. Therefore, a reptile/amphibian receptor site on site is not required as no translocation work is being conducted. Due to minor losses to superficially suitable habitat a non-licensed avoidance methodology will nonetheless be adopted for site clearance works at this site, as outlined in the Ecological Assessment report.
16. Indicative locations and number (with a ratio of 1:1 feature to buildings in line with the consultation response) of bat boxes / bricks, bird bricks, log piles and bug hotels have been marked on EPP. Mindful of the outline nature of the planning application, it is considered that the final detail with regard to the provision of these features will be secured via a suitably worded condition attached to the planning consent.

Reptile Survey Clarifications

17. The WC Biodiversity Team also outlined within their response that evidence to support the reptile survey effort would be required, stating:

“The timings of the reptile survey visits and the location of the artificial refugia or “tins” must be included in the ecology report”.

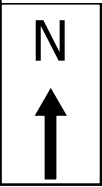
18. As stated in the Ecological Assessment (November 2023), reptile surveys were conducted to identify the presence or absence of common reptiles within the application site.
19. Plan ECO5 (attached to this Technical Note) provides clarification with regard to the location of artificial refugia deployed as part of the survey work. As illustrated on the plan, survey work included all fields within the application site boundary, in addition to adjoining land to the west.
20. Table 1 below provides a summary of the survey results, including timing with regard to the dates and times of survey visits completed in September and October 2023.

Date & Time	Survey Number	Weather Conditions	Reptiles Recorded
18/09/23 13:00	1	100% cloud cover, 17°C	No Reptiles Recorded
22/09/23 10:30	2	15% cloud cover, 12°C	No Reptiles Recorded
26/09/23 17:30	3	30% cloud cover, 17°C	No Reptiles Recorded
03/10/23 12:30	4	15% cloud cover, 16°C	No Reptiles Recorded
06/10/23 10:30	5	30% cloud cover, 16°C	No Reptiles Recorded
09/10/23 09:30	6	100% cloud cover, 18°C	No Reptiles Recorded.
11/10/23 10:15	7	100% cloud cover, 18°C	No Reptiles Recorded.

Table 1: Reptile Survey Results

North Meadow & Clattinger Farm Special Area of Conservation

21. As outlined above, separate discussions are underway with Natural England in relation to measures to avoid potential effects to North Meadow & Clattinger Farm SAC via recreational pressure.



- Key:
- Application Site Boundary
 - Developed Land; Sealed Surface
 - Residential
 - Created Modified Grassland 0.09ha
 - Attenuation Feature (SuDS) 0.17ha
 - Enhanced Modified Grassland 0.33ha
 - Retained Scrub 0.04ha
 - Created Other Neutral Grassland 0.99ha
 - Retained Tree with Low Bat Roosting Potential
 - Proposed Urban Trees (Indicative)
 - Buffer of 3m Distance from Retained Features and Development
 - Lost Hedgerow 0.05km
 - Retained Hedgerow 0.52km
 - Potential Dark Corridors
 - Wildlife Corridors
 - Bat Bricks/Boxes (Indicative)
 - Bird Bricks/Boxes (Indicative)
 - Bee Hotel (Indicative)
 - Log Pile (Indicative)



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INDICATIVE ECOLOGICAL PARAMETERS PLAN	Rev: A OCT 2024
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