

From: [Johnston, Christopher](#)
To: [Planning Comments \(SMDC\)](#)
Subject: FW: SMD/2021/0291 Willowshaw Farm- Change of use of redundant barn
Date: 08 June 2021 12:14:10

From: Kate Dewey <k.dewey@staffs-wildlife.org.uk>
Sent: 04 June 2021 09:22
To: Johnston, Christopher <Christopher.Johnston@StaffsMoorlands.gov.uk>
Cc: Alex Fitzroy <a.fitzroy@staffs-wildlife.org.uk>; AbsoluteEcology@hotmail.co.uk
Subject: SMD/2021/0291 Willowshaw Farm- Change of use of redundant barn

SMD/2021/0291

Willowshaw Farm, Cloudside, Congleton, CW12 3QQ

Change of use of redundant barn to form single dwelling with associated parking and amenity space

Site size 0.06 hectares

Staffordshire Wildlife Trust has been asked to review the above application as part of a service level agreement with Staffordshire Moorlands District Council to provide ecology advice regarding planning and development management functions.

SUMMARY – Holding objection -further information or amendments required. Due to impacts on common pipistrelle and brown long-eared bat roosts within the barn and potential impacts from proposed new drainage to a LWS and priority habitats.

Requirements:

1. An ecological data search as part of the ecology report.
2. Further information required on the bat survey results to clarify number of bat roosts present. Review of bat roost impacts and mitigation proposals to retain roosts in situ where possible and incorporate bat lofts where space allows.
3. A detailed bat method statement including reasonable avoidance measures for the works to be secured via condition.
4. Amendments to drainage plans to include creation of a wetland/ reedbed to be secured via condition.
5. Detailed landscaping to include additional planting to be secured via condition.
6. A method statement detailing reasonable avoidance measures for great crested newts to be secured via condition (groundworks and dry-stone wall).
7. Condition regarding protection of nesting birds and provision of replacement swallow nesting features

Documents reviewed:

- Bat Activity Survey
- 2020-2545-02 EXISTING CONDITIONS - FARMHOUSE AND ATTACHED BARN FLOOR PLANS
- 2020-2545-03 EXISTING CONDITIONS - FARMHOUSE AND ATTACHED BARN ELEVATIONS
- 2020-2545-05 EXISTING CONDITIONS - SITE PLAN
- 2020-2545-10A PLANNING PROPOSAL - BARN CONVERSION FLOOR PLANS
- 2020-2545-11A PLANNING PROPOSAL - BARN CONVERSION ELEVATIONS
- 2020-2545-15 PLANNING PROPOSAL - BARN CONVERSION SITE PLAN
- Application Form

DESIGNATED WILDLIFE SITES

Local Wildlife Sites

Cloud Side BAS lies to the west on the opposite side of the lane from the site. The site notes state that increased biodiversity is found within the outer regions of the woodland. This, in combination with foraging and commuting bats (see below), means that a sensitive lighting scheme will be required to avoid unnecessary light spill onto the woodland edge.

Wren Clough SBI is present approximately 230 m to the south-east, downstream of the site. It contains Ancient Semi-Natural Woodland, a pond, a stream which is a potential receptor of drainage from the fields between the site and the development, and unimproved grassland. These are priority habitats. Further information and amendments to drainage plans will be required to ensure this site is not impacted (see drainage comments below).

HABITATS

Surface/Waste drainage

It is not clear from the plans whether the barns will drain into new drainage infrastructure proposed for the wider development including the agricultural buildings to the north. To ensure pollutants do not impact on the LWS and priority habitats, a wetland/ reedbed swale would ideally be included within the drainage design to further filter pollutants prior to leaving the site and entering the watercourses to the east.

Biodiversity Net Gain

The current plans will not meet biodiversity net gain targets. The wetland feature would create additional habitat on site for a range of species. In addition to this, the bat compensation and enhancements below will ensure no losses.

The Bat Activity Report suggests enhancements in the form native tree and shrub planting. This is welcomed, and we suggest planting of a native hedgerow around the eastern boundary to link up with existing trees at the northern end of the site. Further planting within the garden areas including climbers on walls would further green the area and benefit birds and bats. A detailed soft landscaping plan should be secured via condition.

SPECIES

Bats

Survey methods-

No ecological data search for bats has been included within the report. This is required to give the survey results context within the wider landscape and to check for potential off-site impacts, such as impacts to local bat populations.

Surveys were late in the season and not all were 14 days apart, surveyors do not appear to have covered B4-6 well.

Results-

B2 and B3- roof voids are connected, scattered bat droppings throughout. No evidence in other buildings B4, B5, B6.

B2 has one Common Pipistrelle and one Brown long-eared bat roosting in ridge tiles, and one Common Pipistrelle roosting in the second vent from the left on the north west elevation.

Another Brown long-eared bat was seen flying inside B2 and B3.

Impacts and Mitigation-

Outbuilding and garage B5 B6 would be unaffected. B2 and B3 to be developed up into the rafters with rooflights, B4 proposed roof void open over lounge with rooflights. Appears from structural survey that re-roofing, replacement of first floor structure, and replacement timber lintels are recommended. It is not clear whether any repointing will occur.

It is clear that a bat licence will be required as there will be works affecting the roofs of B2 and B3. However, the Pipistrelle roost on the NW elevation could potentially be retained in situ.

The report assesses that all roosts will be lost and proposes a range of mitigation; however, the plans were not known at the time of the bat assessment, and so a review of impacts is required. There appear to be opportunities to retain some loft spaces within the new development, along the apex of B2, B3 and a larger space in B4. These integrated options should be considered as this could retain some roosts in situ and provide better compensation than bat boxes.

The recommendations for mitigation and compensation within the Bat Activity Report should also be included in addition to the above, which includes:

- An EPS licence from Natural England will be required to legally undertake the works due to the loss of bat roosts.
- A mitigation strategy for bats will be required including method statement with reasonable avoidance measures.

- Suitable timing of works to avoid bat disturbance or injury (October – March).
- Supervision of re-roofing, soft demolition, and first floor internal works by a bat licensed ecologist.
- A bat receptor site is to be installed prior to any works commencing.

A detailed lighting scheme must be included within updated plans. This should avoid light spill onto the lane and woodland edge, and avoid lighting of roost entrances at any retained roosts or newly installed compensation or enhancement. Further details within the Bat Activity Report regarding lighting must be followed.

Great Crested Newts, Amphibians

There are ponds and ditches within 250 m of the development site. Although the presence of newts is unlikely, works to stone walls and footings could impact amphibians if present. A great crested newt method statement including reasonable avoidance measures should be secured via condition. This involves good housekeeping practice during the development by ensuring materials are stored on pallets and keeping the site tidy by clearing debris and any rubble on the same day, this is to avoid creating potential refuge habitat. This also includes any works to the dry-stone walls.

Birds

Swallow nests were present within B2. Work must avoid impacting nesting birds and replacement nest features should be provided in the retained outbuilding and garage with access points provided. This could be secured via condition.

Regards,

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