
From:
Sent: 11 February 2022 16:44
To:
Subject: FW: SMD/2021/0190 Gravel Bank Farm

From:
Sent: 09 February 2022 17:02
To:
Cc:
Subject: SMD/2021/0190 Gravel Bank Farm

Ref number SMD/2021/0190

Application Location Gravel Bank Farm, Caverswall Common Lane, Caverswall, Staffordshire, ST11 9EU

Application description Redevelopment of previously developed site for erection of up to 6no. bungalows (outline with all matters reserved)

Site size hectares 0.45

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 – No objection subject to conditions.

Secure via condition should approval be granted:

1. Full drainage plan that follows SuDS principles.
2. Landscaping plan to secure a net gain, showing habitat enhancements and planting lists.
3. Sensitive lighting scheme to protect bat foraging and commuting habitat.
4. Timing of vegetation clearance to avoid the bird nesting season (March to August, inclusive) or have an ecologist present to supervise.
5. Root protection plan.
6. Precautionary method of working for mammals.
7. Precautionary method of working for amphibians (including great crested newts).

Documents reviewed:

- Application Form
- Indicative Site Plan (Aug 17)
- PEA (Feb 21)
- 0099-PL-2A - Site Sections
- 0099-PL-10 – Existing Buildings
- 0099-PL-11 – Existing Buildings
- Planning Statement (Mar 21)

DESIGNATED WILDLIFE SITES & WIDER ECOLOGICAL NETWORK

No direct impacts to important sites are anticipated by the works due to their limited scale. There appears to be semi-natural habitat linked to the site, meaning it sits within the wider ecological network. Negative impacts can be avoided with suitable drainage and lighting plans in place. The development could enhance the network via the proposed woodland planting and further site enhancements.

HABITATS

Habitat Survey

The site was adequately surveyed. The PEA found that most of the current habitats on site have limited value and botanical interest in their current form, with the exception of the western hedgerow which scored as a priority habitat.

Western Boundary Hedgerow (H1)

As per the PEA, this hedgerow scored as a priority habitat due to its species composition and is of Principal Importance under the NERC Act, 2006. To avoid damage to this habitat Root Protection Areas (RPAs) must be in place for this feature, following guidance set out in 'BS 5837:2012 - Trees in Relation to Design, Demolition and Construction'. ***Root protection plan to be secured via condition.***

Biodiversity Net Gain

Policy NE1 in the Staffordshire Moorlands Local Plan Adopted September 2020, expects that 'all development where possible seeks to deliver a net gain in biodiversity proportionate to the size and scale of the development. In circumstances where adverse impacts are demonstrated to be unavoidable, developers will be required to ensure that impacts are appropriately mitigated, with suitable compensation measures towards loss of habitat used only as a last resort where there is no alternative'

The mown amenity grassland and introduced shrubs are of low value and are likely to be replicated in new garden areas in any case. The proposed woodland planting within the landholding and hedgerow planting will ensure a net gain is achieved. Furthermore, the important hedgerow along the western boundary is to be retained. Due to this no Biodiversity Impact Assessment is needed in this case.

Further enhancements within the red line boundary should be considered. This can include using a short flowery lawn mix, climbers, fruit trees, new native hedges on new boundaries, enhance existing hedges with trees/ additional species, re-seed any disturbed areas with a wildflower meadow mix, creation of a pond and wetland for surface and treated water discharges. It appears from the plans that additional planting is already proposed which is welcomed. A full planting list should be included. Hedgerow planting and enhancement should consist of native species and aim to match the species composition of the western hedgerow.

A soft landscaping plan should be secured via condition.

Drainage

The plans are not clear regarding proposed foul drainage.

A soakaway is proposed for surface water discharge. We encourage the use of SuDS principles where possible. Including source control, permeable surfaces for parking areas such as reinforced grass, the use of landscaping such as wetland creation for infiltration, use of any existing ditches along hedges, and avoiding pipes in favour of open features where possible to mimic natural processes and to create additional habitat.

No plans have been submitted at present, however, there appears to be enough room within the red line boundary or within the landholding away from significant habitats that this can be left for reserved matters.

Any drainage plans must avoid impacting on valuable habitats, particularly the western hedgerow and adjacent habitats.

A full drainage plan should be secured via condition.

SPECIES

Badgers (and other mammals)

As per section 4.3 of the PEA report, the following mammal precautions should be followed: *“During the course of any works that may be undertaken, should any open trenches and deep excavations be made then these should be either filled in or covered every night (or provided with escape ramps) to prevent harm and enable any trapped badgers to escape.”* ***To be secured via condition.***

Bats

There are no concerns regarding roosting bats.

A sensitive lighting scheme should be implemented to protect foraging and commuting habitat, particularly along the boundary hedgerows and habitats adjacent to the site. Exterior lighting should be aimed towards the ground and hooded to reduce light spill onto surrounding areas. Security lighting should be on a short timer and triggered by large bodies only. Further guidance can be found within ‘Guidance Note 08/18: Bats and artificial lighting in the UK’ by the Bat Conservation Trust. This will also protect other groups such as invertebrates. ***Sensitive lighting plan to be secured via condition.***

Birds

Any vegetation clearance must take place outside of the bird nesting season (March to August, inclusive), if any clearance is to take place during this time an ecologist will need to be present as part of a watching brief. ***To be secured via condition.***

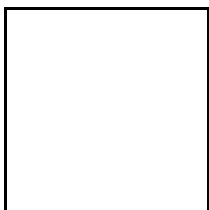
Great Crested Newts (GCN), Amphibians

According to MAGIC maps there is a pond within 100 m west of the southern site boundary. However, this area appears to be very overgrown and there appears to be a lack of other ponds nearby. Therefore, it is unlikely to be used by GCN for breeding. However, amphibians may still use the area and therefore we recommend a precautionary working approach is followed when removing any potential hibernacula on site in case any amphibians are present. This includes the stone walls, greenhouse bases, debris/old materials/pots/tanks, and vegetation clearance. If any GCN are uncovered works should cease and the advice of an ecologist sought. ***Precautionary working method to be secured via condition.***

Regards,

Alex Fitzroy BSc (Hons), AMRSB

Planning for Nature Officer



The Wolseley Centre grounds are open daily- if you are planning to visit please read about the centre changes [here](#).

Planning consultations- please send to

P.S. Our planning work is funded mostly by our members - If you'd like to keep me doing what I do, and help us do more, [Please join today](#) or make a donation at <http://www.staffs-wildlife.org.uk/donate>



Are you a member of the Wildlife Trust? Less than 10p per day will help us protect and enhance the wildlife and wild places of Staffordshire. [Please join today!](#)

Staffordshire Wildlife Trust Registered Office: The Wolseley Centre, Wolseley Bridge, Stafford, ST17 0WT. Registered as a company in England & Wales number 959609. This email and any attachments are confidential, copyright Staffordshire Wildlife Trust (SWT), and intended for the recipient only. SWT accepts no responsibility for information unrelated to its business.

Think before you print! Do you really need a paper copy of this email?

Do you really need to print out this Email? Be green - keep it on the screen.

This email is intended for the addressee(s) only and may contain sensitive, privileged or confidential information that could be protectively marked. If you are not the addressee please do not use the information in any way. If you have received this email in error please notify the sender immediately and delete it from your system. Thank you.

The Council may be required to disclose this email or any responses to it under the Freedom of Information Act 2000. The way in which we handle personal information is set out in our privacy notice and is available at <https://www.staffsmoorlands.gov.uk/YourData>
