

Dear Rebecca Bowers,

SMD/2024/0277

Erection of a new dwelling

Mill Farm Gratton Lane, Endon near Gratton ST9 9AG

0.0913 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.

The application is a Full application for the erection of a new dwelling. The new dwelling will be a 3 bedroomed dwellinghouse, comprising of an open plan kitchen/living/dining area, 2 bathrooms, and storage space. In February, 2024 prior approval was granted for the conversion of the existing building on site to residential use (DET/2023/0045).

We have viewed the following documents:

- 001 Site Location Plan
- 002 Site Plan as Existing
- 003 Site Plan as Proposed
- 005 Plans as Approved
- 006 Plans as Proposed
- 4245_FB_PDAS_02 Planning Statement (dated June 2024)
- Mill Farm - Endon - PEA Report (Elite Ecology June 2024)

SUMMARY – should the Local Planning Authority be minded to approve the planning application we would recommend a number of pre-commencement conditions are attached, as detailed below.

1. All recommendations within the Mill Farm - Endon - PEA Report (Elite Ecology June 2024) to be included within a Precautionary Working Method Statement (PWMS) document to be conditioned as part of the consent, including plans and supporting information as needed.
2. A planning condition is included to ensure any surface water seepage to ground and/or discharge to the nearby watercourse (brook) complies with IRZ¹ requirement for no more than 5m³ / day.
3. A planning condition is included to provide details of measures to protect the nearby watercourse (brook) from potential run-off / silt ingress and other potential pollution.
4. Bird nest boxes are included in the scheme.

DESIGNATED WILDLIFE SITES

No designated wildlife sites are present within the site or within 1km of the site boundary. Holly Wood nature conservation site, which includes Priority Deciduous Woodland habitat, is located some 750m to the west and connected to the site via the watercourse (brook). The site is within an IRZ which includes reference to the need to limit surface water seepage to ground and discharge to watercourses to no more than 5m³ / day. If such discharge is likely to exceed this volume, Natural England may need to be consulted on this matter.

¹ <https://magic.defra.gov.uk/MagicMap.aspx> IRZ = Impact Risk Zone (last accessed 26/07/2024)

To protect the watercourse and the off-site woodland area, and account for the site's location within an IRZ, measure to protect the watercourse from excessive surface run-off, siltation and other pollution should be included both during construction and operational phases. This can be secured by a suitably worded pre-commencement condition.

HABITATS

We note that while small areas of terrestrial habitat are lost under the proposed scheme, the woodland/trees are to be retained, the watercourse will not be directly impacted, and overall habitat impacts are assessed as low. In addition, no priority habitats (as mapped on MAGIC) are directly impacted.

The recommendations for a tree protection plan for the retained ash tree T1 (which also has bat roost potential) and a Himalayan balsam removal/control plan is welcomed and necessary and both can be secured by condition.

Avoidance of indirect impacts on the watercourse (as noted above and including the Dust Management Plan as recommended in the PEA report) can also be secured by condition.

The PEA report also recommends the inclusion of suitable wildlife corridors and 'bat friendly' planting. Both recommendations are welcome and can be secured by condition.

BIODIVERSITY NET GAIN

Assuming the application is appropriately classed as a self-build dwelling, we agree that the application is exempt from Statutory Biodiversity Net Gain under the 'self build and custom build development' criteria.

SPECIES

The retention and protection of tree T1 (a mature ash), which is classed as holding Moderate potential for roosting bats, is welcomed, as is the provision of an ecologically sensitive lighting plan for the proposed scheme. The provision of an ecologically sensitive lighting plan should be secured by consent.

Should the tree be at risk of impacts (pruning, lopping, root damage, etc) then the need for further bat surveys should be reviewed.

The building was assessed as being of Negligible potential for roosting bats along with Low potential to support nesting birds. Other habitats on site had potential to support small numbers of protected/notable species in terms of provision of forage, shelter, breeding or commuting resources.

Suitable precautionary working methods should be employed for the following species, as identified in the PEA report:

- Bats
- Hedgehog
- Reptiles (commoner species only)
- Amphibians (commoner species only)
- Crustaceans and fish

Nesting birds may be present on site in suitable vegetation and within building B1. The report recommends precautionary measures to deal with this matter, including avoidance of potential impacts by seasonal constraints, and this is appropriate.

Therefore, it is recommended that the above are included within a suitable Precautionary Working Methods Statement (PWMS) and that the PWMS document be secured by consent.

The PEA report includes the provision of suitable bat boxes on the new dwellinghouse. This is welcomed.

It is recommended that at least one bird nest box is included in the ecological enhancement plan, to support one or more of the following species – house sparrow, starling, swift, house martin, or swallow. This will be in line with the Staffordshire Moorlands District Plan for Nature (September 2023²).

A plan showing the locations and types of bat and bird nest box(es) can be secured by planning condition.

Regards,

Dated 19th July 2024

² [https://www.staffs Moorlands.gov.uk/media/9299/Staffordshire-Moorlands-Plan-for-Nature-Sept-2023/pdf/Staffordshire Moorlands Plan for Nature Sept 2023.pdf?m=1718117668490](https://www.staffs Moorlands.gov.uk/media/9299/Staffordshire-Moorlands-Plan-for-Nature-Sept-2023/pdf/Staffordshire_Moorlands_Plan_for_Nature_Sept_2023.pdf?m=1718117668490)