

Woodhead Hall Cherry Lane Cheadle 3 Storey Apartment Block SWT Comments

Date: 28.11.2025

Application Reference: SMD/2022/0612

Location: Woodhead Hall, Cherry Lane, Cheadle

Proposed Development: Erection of three storey apartment block containing 21 one-bedroom apartments (Class C2 retirement living apartments be marketed for over 55's) and a single storey building accommodating staff facilities, and 3 one-bedroom apartments. Widening and resurfacing of access and track from Lockwood Road

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.

[Updated comments are found in blue.](#)

Documents Viewed:

- Application form
- Bird and Bat Activity Survey Report- Charnia Ecology, October 2022
- Biodiversity Net Gain Report- Elite Ecology, January 2025
- Woodhead Hall, Cheadle (Retirement Village) - Elite Ecology Recommended Statutory Metric, January 2025
- New Habitat Map- Elite Ecology, January 2025
- Arboricultural Report- Old Oak Tree Care, October 2024.
- Landscape Plan- Mode Architects & Development, October 2022.
- Lighting Plan- Mode Architects & Development, October 2022.
- Biodiversity Net Gain Statement- UES, July 2025.
- 20250722 BNG metric - Woodhead Hall Retirement Village- UES, July 2025.
- Bat Presence/ Activity Report- UES, July 2025.
- Biodiversity Net Gain Statement- UES, November 2025
- Biodiversity Net Gain Statement- UES, November 2025
- BNG metric - Woodhead Hall Retirement Village- UES, November 2025.

Summary: We recommend **no objection**.

Further detail

A PEA or full consideration of protected species for the development should be provided. There is woodland and scrub on and adjacent to the site which has the potential to support a number of protected species that may be impacted by the development and construction phase and may require RAMs. [A joint PEA survey was provided with application SMD/2022/0610.](#)

The lighting plan provided shows wall lights that have light uplift, there should only be downward facing lights. The plan does not show the whole of the redline boundary. [This can be secured as a pre-commencement condition.](#)

The landscape plan is limited and doesn't show the whole redline boundary. It also shows a gravel path running through the woodland. As there is no proposed habitat map it is not clear if this had been included in the BNG, additionally will this path be lit? It should be included in the lighting plan. [A proposed plan has been provided in the updated BNG statement.](#)

BNG

- Site walkover was done on 3rd December. This is not an appropriate time of year to carry out a survey, particularly as there is grassland on the site, and December is out of the growing season. The new survey was carried out on 9th February, this is also considered an inappropriate time of year to carry out a grassland survey.
- The majority of the site is strategic and semi-strategic for woodland, in the report the whole site has been classified as non-strategic. [The woodland strategic significance has been fixed in the metric.](#)
- MAGIC maps suggest the grassland is acid/calcareous/ neutral grassland, not modified grassland. As no species lists have been given and the survey was done at an inappropriate time of year, we cannot be confident that the grassland isn't of a higher quality. We have still not been given a species list for the site and the updated BNG report gives no details of the habitats present on the site.
- A complete, new habitat map which contains details of which habitats will be present should be provided, this needs to be resolved in order to determine if the net gain figure is accurate. [A basic proposed habitats map is included in the appendix of the new BNG statement.](#)
- Although this application pre-dates the 10% statutory BNG currently required, as per the NPPF, it still needs to demonstrate a net gain, this has been demonstrated in the metric for the habitats on site. [A HMMP should be provided at the gain plan stage.](#)

Habitat Creation and Management

[In the new BNG statement there is no Habitat Creation or Management guidance, as the post development of the site is not clear. The following recommendations are from the previous BNG report, and we have comments regarding these that will need to be addressed when a HMMP is written.](#)

[The woodland may require a woodland management plan which should be written to England Forest Standard. This can be incorporated into the HMMP.](#)

Management recommendations should be detailed so that the person creating or managing the habitat can follow them. Ensure any description of habitat works in accordance with British Standards that are not freely available are fully explained so that people without access to the British Standards can follow them.

1. Soil preparation. Wildflower areas – suggest low nutrient soil or subsoil rather than topsoil to keep the soil as nutrient poor as possible. No compost should be added to wildflower areas.

2. Scattered Trees. Ensure that *“These trees are to be planted accordance with BS 3936, BS8545 and The National Plant Specification – ‘Rootballed Trees’.”* is expanded upon so that people without access to the British Standards understand what is required.

3. Wildflower meadow. All seeds should be native and preferably of local provenance. This could be purchased seed mixes or collection / green hay from a suitable local donor site. The cut should be between mid-July and September should replicate a traditional hay cut, therefore all cuttings should remain on site for a few days to allow any seeds to drop out back into the grassland and then removed off-site or placed in a designated area. If areas are left long, they should be cut on at least a three-year rotation to avoid succession, coarse grasses, plants such as dock and nettle that thrive in more nutrient enriched areas and scrub appearing.

4. Woodland Enhancement. All trees should be native and preferably of local provenance. Species such as Box, Buckthorn and Alder Buckthorn may be inappropriate for the locality, alternative species to use could include Pedunculate Oak, Rowan, Hawthorn, Field Rose and Elder.

5. Control of aggressive weeds – the management should include removal of aggressive weeds as well as plant ID survey. Perhaps worded ‘any aggressive or invasive weeds will be identified and removed by hand’. It is unclear why March is one of the times suggested to do carry out an ID survey for aggressive weeds – further clarification required. We would recommend identifying and removing aggressive weeds just once a year in May.

Timing phasing and Duration of Conservation Measures

Planting of wildflower seeds is usually done in Autumn or Spring following appropriate ground preparation. Timing should be as per seed company instructions.

Planting of trees / scrub / hedgerows to be ideally between the end of November and end of March, avoiding hard frosts, droughts or particularly cold, windy periods.

Wildflowers – sow Autumn or Spring. Cut between mid-July and end of September.

Controlling aggressive weeds - the management should include removal of aggressive weeds as well as plant ID survey. Perhaps worded ‘any aggressive or invasive weeds will be identified and removed by hand’. We would recommend just once a year in May.

The monitoring schedule should be as agreed in the S106, planning condition or conservation covenant.

Bird and Bat Report

- Survey was carried out in 2022- as the surveys are over two years old, they are considered not valid. The site is known to contain a bat roost; therefore, the surveys should be repeated, and the works should take place under mitigation with a NE license and method statement.
- Wood pigeon are amber listed birds
- An updated bat and bird report has been received. The report states that there are 9 bat roosts on the site. Therefore, a European Protected Species Licence will be required.
- The updated report also demonstrates the presence of nesting House Martins and Barn Swallows.
- No darkest point photos were included in the bat report, as described in the Bat Conservation Trust Good Practice Guidelines 4th edition.
- A data search was not carried out as part of the survey- however, a data search is included in the joint PEA report.

Conditions

Pre-commencement Conditions

No development shall take place until a [Habitat Management and Monitoring Plan (the HMMP)], prepared in accordance with the approved Biodiversity Gain Plan using the Natural England template and including:

- a non-technical summary;
- the roles and responsibilities of the people or organisation(s) delivering the [HMMP];
- the planned habitat creation and enhancement works to create or improve habitat to achieve the biodiversity net gain in accordance with the approved Biodiversity Gain Plan;
- the management measures to maintain habitat in accordance with the approved Biodiversity Gain Plan for a period of 30 years from the completion of development; and the monitoring methodology and frequency in respect of the created or enhanced habitat to be submitted to the local planning authority, has been submitted to, and approved in writing by, the local planning authority.

- the HMMP should also include a woodland management plan based on the English Forest Standard.

No development shall take place until a Construction Environmental Management plan (CEMP) has been submitted to the local planning authority (LPA) this must include:

- Risk assessments of potentially damaging construction activities.
- Identification of biodiversity protection zones.
- Practical measures during construction to avoid or reduce impacts during construction (may be provided by method statements). This should include RAMs for birds, [REDACTED] hedgehogs, and bats. These should include a sensitive nocturnal lighting strategy for bats and other nocturnal wildlife during and post construction.
- The location and timing of sensitive works to avoid harm to biodiversity.
- The times during construction works when specialist ecologists need to be present on site to oversee works.
- Responsible persons and lines of communication
- The role and responsibilities of an ecological clerk of works or similar competent person.
- Use of protective fences, exclusion barriers and warning signs.

The CEMP shall be adhered to and implemented throughout the construction period strictly in accordance with approved details, unless otherwise agreed in writing with the LPA. There should be a sign off system showing that all construction personnel have read, understood and will comply with the CEMP.

A landscape and ecological management plan (LEMP) shall be submitted to, and be approved in writing by, the Local Planning Authority prior to the commencement of the development. This should cover aspects not included in the HMMP and ground preparation in advance of the HMMP being followed as well as:

- Description of creating appropriate ground conditions for the planned habitats
- Description and evaluation of features to be managed.
- Ecological trends and constraints on site that might influence management.
- Aims and objectives of management.

- Appropriate management options for achieving aims and objectives.
- Prescriptions for management actions.
- Preparation of a work schedule (including an annual work plan capable of being rolled forward over a five-year period).
- Details of the body or organization responsible for implementation of the plan.
- Ongoing monitoring and remedial measures.

The LEMP shall also include details of the legal and funding mechanism(s) by which the long-term implementation of the plan will be secured by the developer with the management body(ies) responsible for its delivery. The plan shall also set out (where the results from monitoring show that conservation aims and objectives of the LEMP are not being met) how contingencies and/or remedial action will be identified, agreed and implemented so that the development still delivers the fully functioning biodiversity objectives of the originally approved scheme. The approved plan will be implemented in accordance with the approved details.

A European Protected Species Licence must be applied for and granted before any works may proceed that will impact bats and their roosts. Evidence that the licence has been granted should be supplied including the method statement prior to the commencement of works. Timing constraints according to the licence should be adhered to.

Pre-commencement condition to approve a sensitive nocturnal lighting scheme for during and post conservation works. This should be in line with the bat licence requirements. We would recommend utilising [Bat Conservation Trust's Guidance on Bats and Artificial Lighting at Night](#). The lighting scheme should be submitted to and approved in writing by the LPA prior to the works starting.

General good practice regarding use of nocturnal lighting is as follows:

- if external artificial lighting is required during or after the construction phase, a low-level/low lux lighting scheme should be implemented to avoid indirect disturbance to nocturnal animals that may utilise local habitats.
- during the construction phase, works will ideally not be carried out after dusk and should not commence until after dawn (it is also recommended that generators and machinery that emit significant noise levels are not left to run through the night).
- light spill should be controlled and if lighting is required at night, hooded shields should be fitted to prevent inappropriate light spill.
- Prior to the commencement of the works and once the licence has been granted, the named ecologist or accredited agent must carry out a final inspection to check

for the presence of bats. If any are found, they will be carefully removed and placed in the bat boxes which will serve as a receptor site. Please note, this is included as a pre-commencement condition but should be done as close to the work starting as possible; therefore it should be clear that planning checks should not cause a delay between the checks and commencement of works.

The initial site clearance (including vegetation) and demolition works take place outside of the breeding bird season and should not be undertaken from March to August inclusive. If this is not possible, a breeding bird nest survey should be undertaken prior to the commencement of works by a suitably experienced ecologist, and an ecological clerk of works appointed if considered necessary.

Ahead of works commencing, at least four receptor bat boxes will be fitted onsite to one or more trees or the side of a building, ideally 4-5m above ground level. Importantly, bat boxes must be sited away from artificial nocturnal light spill and they must not be sited above windows or other building aspects that may lead to bats being disturbed. Schwegler 1FF bat boxes are recommended because they are known to be used by a number of species and roost types including maternity roosts, largely because they retain ideal thermal properties because they are built using a mix of wood and concrete (Woodcrete).

A pre-commencement condition detailing the number, type and citing of House Martin and Swallow bird boxes, and bat boxes along with installation instructions to be submitted to and agreed by the LPA ecologist.

Conditions

Condition of sign off that the sensitive lighting scheme for the operational stage has been delivered as per the scheme detailed in the pre-commencement condition.

Condition to sign off the delivery of bat and bird boxes.

If the proposals change and the woodland is to be removed, it should be replaced two-fold in terms of area in an appropriate location. A detailed woodland management plan should be prepared for the newly created woodland and agreed with the local planning authority.

[REDACTED]