

Mount Pleasant , Mount Road , Leek , Staffordshire , ST13 6NQ SWT Comments

Date: 18th December 2025

Application Reference: SMD/2024/0560

Location: Mount Pleasant , Mount Road , Leek , Staffordshire , ST13 6NQ

Proposed Development: Proposed new four bedroom house within the site boundry

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. [New comments are in blue text.](#)

Documents Viewed:

- Application form
- Nocturnal Bat Survey Report, Collington Winter July 2025
- Location Plan, Figure no. 4801.001, dated 01/12/24
- 20-2717 Mount Pleasant PEA DRAFT
- 4801 - 002 - BLOCK PLAN REV B
- Proposed Plan- Vista Consulting
- Bird and Bat Box Location Plans- Vista Consulting

Summary: We recommend **a holding objection** until the following information is supplied and our comments are resolved:

- We note the Application Form states this is a self-build and custom build development and therefore exempt from the requirement for Statutory BNG but the applicant must still demonstrate how the development will provide a net gain in accordance with NPPF and local plan policy. Please provide evidence of a net gain in biodiversity that is additional to protected species measures. [This has been provided in the form of proposed maps which show the planting of a new tree and hedge.](#)
- Proof that Natural England have been consulted as recommended in the PEA. [This has not been provided.](#)

Further detail

Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA) Report

Designated Sites

The site is located within the impact risk zone of the South Pennine Moors, (SPA), (SAC) and The Leek Moors Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI). The sites are located approximately

4.2 km northeast of the site. The Impact Risk Zones for Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI IRZs) indicate that at the location selected, there is potential for all proposed developments to have a harmful effect on terrestrial Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs) and those Special Areas of Conservation (SACs), Special Protection Areas (SPAs) or Ramsar sites that they underpin. The PEA recommends that Natural England should be consulted with for advice on the nature of the potential impacts and how these might be avoided or mitigated. There should be evidence that this has been done. [This has not been received.](#)

Please note there is no legend on the key for vegetated garden.

The ecologists' recommendations should be followed; these will be detailed in the conditions.

NPPF and Local Plan

Although the development is exempt from the net gain condition, it still needs to provide a net gain in biodiversity as per the NPPF and local plan policy. Proposed mitigation has been recommended for protected species but biodiversity net gain should be additional to this. Evidence has not been presented to show that there will be an uplift in biodiversity as a result of this development. This may be through a completed biodiversity metric or habitat map evidencing the uplift or through further recommendations from an Ecologist – in addition to those required for protected species – showing that there will be an uplift in biodiversity. [This has been demonstrated on the proposed map through the addition of a new tree and new hedge. The new hedge should consist of native species of local provenance.](#)

Conditions

Pre-Commencement Conditions

- A pre-commencement condition for a plan to show the number, locations of bird and bat boxes (for crevice dwelling species) and the specifications should be produced by a suitably qualified ecologist once the layout is finalised. This is to be approved by the LPA Ecologist.
- As per the PEA, a pre-commencement condition for sensitive lighting scheme during and post construction. As per the PEA, any proposed lighting/existing lighting should follow the guidance outlined in the Institute for Lighting Engineers document "Guidance for the Reduction of Obtrusive Lighting" (2005) and BCT's "Bats and Artificial Lighting at Night" (2023). An External Lighting Scheme had not been produced on the writing of this report. As such, the following recommendations are to be considered within the scheme during its condition, to minimise impacts of lighting. The recommendations are as follows:
 - Keep site lighting to minimum levels.

- Luminaries should lack UV elements and preferably LED lighting with a warm white light should be used over cool white light (ideally <2700Kelvin).
- Lighting should feature peak wavelengths greater than 550nm.
- Light placement should be downward facing to prevent excess horizontal or vertical light spill.
- The use of integrated fittings such as cowls, shields, louvres and hoods, that effectively contain light spill from unintended areas.
- The use of hard landscaping features to block light and create dark corridors.
- Avoid illuminating habitats of value.
- Use of timed security lights should be set on motion-sensors and using short, 1-minute timers, to minimise light use.
- Column heights of lighting can be considered to minimise light spill.

This should be approved by the LPA Ecologist.

- A pre-commencement of work badger survey should be conducted by a suitably qualified ecologist to ensure the current badger situation is known and that the recommendations are correct – if recommendations change, the RAM should be updated.

Conditions

Habitats

- A condition securing protection measures for trees during construction as detailed in the PEA. Generally, the protection measures of retained trees will be through use of temporary protective demarcation fencing to protect the trees and shrubs. The fencing must extend outside the canopy of the retained trees and must remain in position until all plots have been developed to ensure protection is provided throughout the construction phase. The fencing will be in accordance with BS 5837:2012 Trees in Relation to Design, Demolition and Construction: Recommendations.
- A condition that replacement tree planting at a 1:3 ratio is required to compensate for loss of any trees. These should comprise native species and species known to be of value for the attraction of wildlife. This will include fruiting and flowering species.
- The new hedge to be planted needs to be made up of native species of local provenance.

Amphibians

- A condition as per the PEA for consideration of amphibian presence during habitat management is. Any debris is to be cleared by hand, and any common amphibians located moved carefully, by hand, to outside of the impacted area. If a great crested newt is discovered, a licenced Ecologist should be contacted and provide advice for appropriate action.

Reptiles

- As per the PEA, Reasonable Avoidance Measures (RAMs) should be followed to minimise the likelihood of killing, injuring or disturbing any reptiles present on the site during the construction phase these are:
 - An experienced Ecological Clerk of Works (ECoW) shall be appointed to ensure RAM's are enforced.
 - A walkover of the area should be undertaken by the ECoW to determine any change in status of the habitats/structures on site prior to the initiation of any works.
 - A toolbox talk by the appointed ECoW will be given to the site manager and all contractors working on site with respect to the surrounding habitats and potential for protected/notable species. A copy of species factsheets relating to reptiles and breeding birds will be provided for display within the site office.
 - Suitable vegetation is to be trimmed under ECoW to approximately 15cm in a northern to southern direction. It is to be checked by the ECoW following trimming to identify individuals. If discovered, they will be removed from the working area and covered. Once the areas are deemed reptile free, they are to be trimmed to ground level and maintained at this length for the remaining works.
 - Any excavations will be backfilled on the same day as excavation or checked by the ECoW immediately prior to backfilling. If not possible, a ramp, will be provided in all excavations that cannot be backfilled on the same day or alternatively, all excavations should be well-covered with plywood.
 - No piles of loose construction materials are to be created during works – all material will be kept on hardstanding, stored on pallets, removed immediately from the site, or checked by an ECoW prior to being removed.
 - In the event reptiles are discovered, works will halt immediately and the ECoW will be contacted for advice. Contractors are not to handle reptiles unless informed to do so by the ECoW.

The precautionary destructive search work will be undertaken during the summer at a time of year when reptiles are active. The ecologist will be present during the strimming works. Any reptiles found during the destructive search will be relocated to adjacent suitable sites.

Birds

- As per the PEA, a condition securing protection for nesting birds should be in place. Any vegetation management or work to the above buildings, should be undertaken outside of the breeding bird season (March to September, inclusive). If this is not possible, a suitably qualified ecologist should undertake a nesting bird check no more than 48 hours prior to removal. If nesting activity is observed, the nest(s) should be left in situ until the young have fledged. A suitable buffer will be maintained and determined by the ecologist.

Bats

- A condition securing the following Precautionary Working Methods for works on building B2 throughout the entire construction phase of the development.
 - All contractors working on the site will be briefed with a Toolbox Talk by the licenced ecologist, on the legal protection afforded to bats and their roosts, and on how to proceed if a bat is discovered during the work.
 - The licenced ecologist will undertake a daylight inspection to assess the status of the site for bats prior to works commencing on site. This will be conducted using an elevated platform, scaffolding, or ladders where necessary to inspect the structure for field signs of bats.
 - The licenced ecologist will re-assess the potential impacts and proposed working methods will be altered, if required to minimise risk of disturbing roosting bats.
 - If any bats are located during the proposed works, all works will cease, and Natural England is to be contacted immediately and a licence to be obtained.
 - Construction noise should be kept to a minimum, where feasible to minimise risk of noise disturbance.

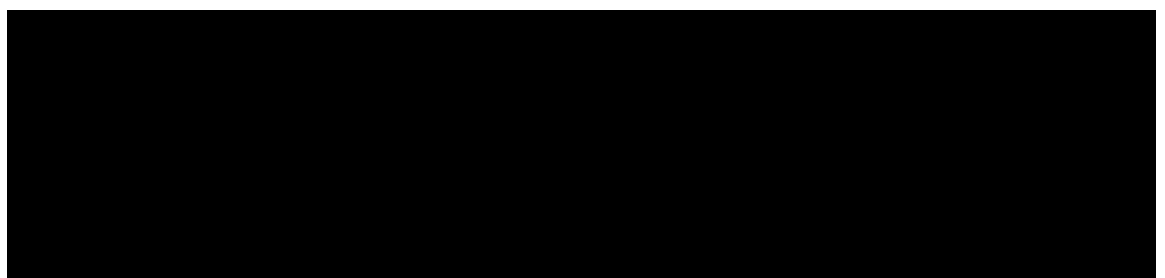
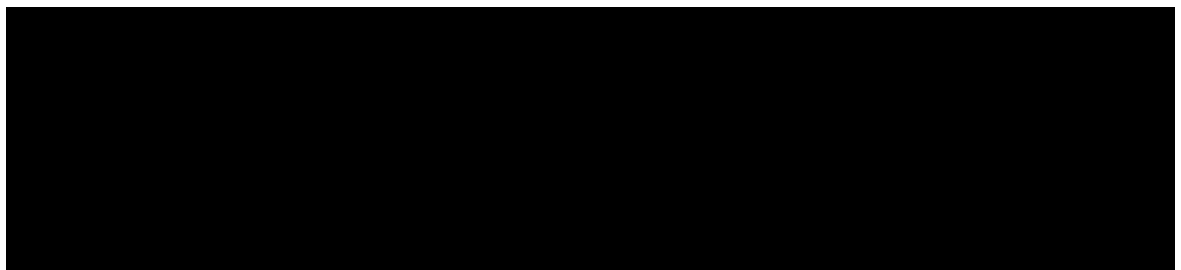
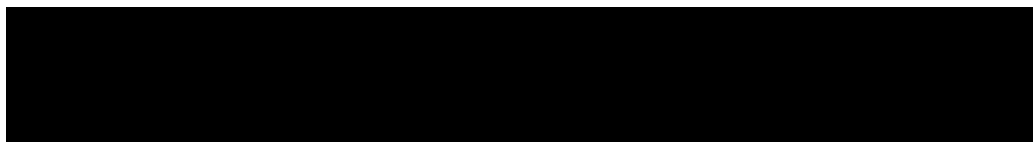
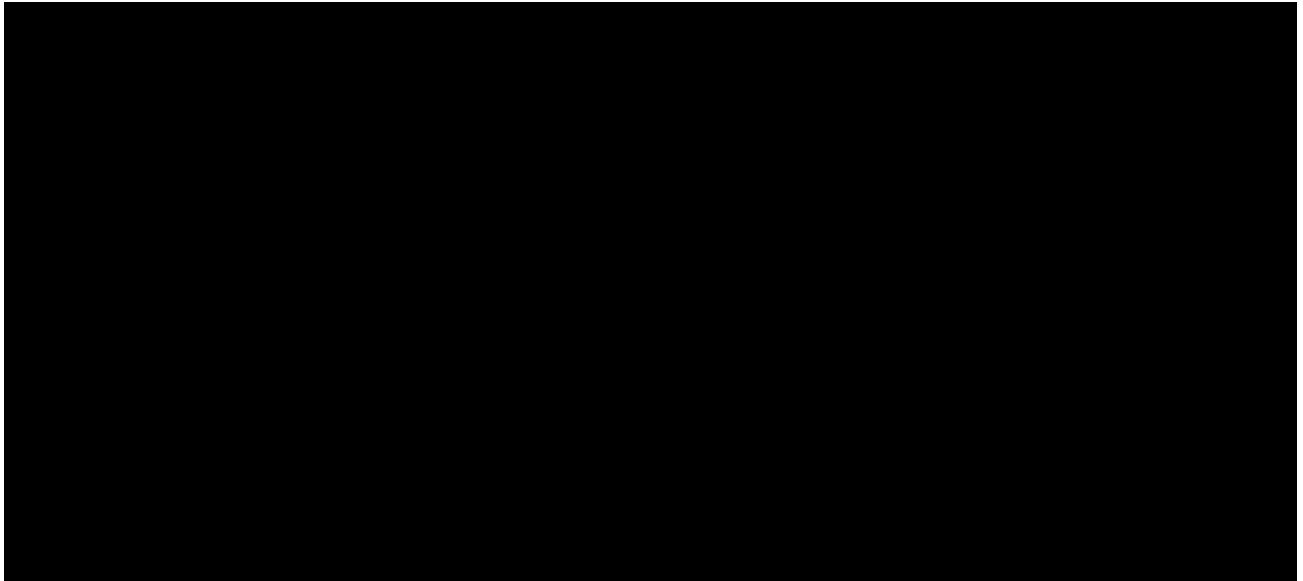
If a bat is discovered at any unsupervised time, work must cease immediately, and a licenced bat handler must be called for advice. This advice will include leaving the bat to disperse of its own accord or wait for the licenced ecologist to move the bat. Builders and contractors are explicitly forbidden from handling bats except in the case of finding a trapped or injured bat. In which case the bat may be moved into a safe and secure place (e.g., a box) and the registered ecologist must be contacted immediately. The habitats of highest potential value for commuting and foraging bats include the unmanaged hedgerow habitats which are anticipated to attract invertebrate prey and act as valuable commuting corridors. The habitat

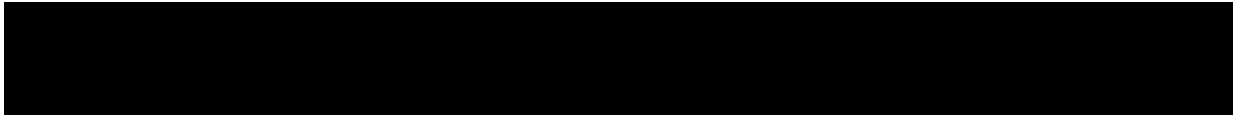
management should aim to minimise use of insecticides and increase the invertebrate population which in turn will benefit bats. The proposed development should also look to retain these linear features where possible.

- A condition to show that the agreed sensitive lighting scheme has been installed and adhered to.

Bats and Birds

- A condition for evidence that the agreed bat and bird boxes have been installed.





Terrestrial Mammals

- The following measures should be secured regarding hedgehogs and injured mammals. During habitat management, any areas of dense vegetation should first be carefully hand searched to check for the species. If identified during management, any hedgehogs should be relocated carefully by hand to a location away from the working area. If any injured mammal species are located, they should be taken to a local vet.
- The inclusion of 'hedgehog highways' to facilitate movement across the site. This includes holes of 13 x 13cm at the bases of fence panels, leaving a sufficient gap beneath gates and/or leaving brick spaces at the bases of brick walls.