

Hillcrest SWT Comments

Date: 23/12/2025

Application Reference: SMD/2025/0419

Location: Hillcrest , Black Lane , Winnothdale , Staffordshire , ST10 4HB

Proposed Development: Change of use of 1 steel framed agricultural barn to 1x C3 dwelling

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.

Documents Viewed:

- Application form
- Biodiversity Report- AP Planning and Design
- Existing Plan
- Lighting and Parking Plan
- Location Plan
- Proposed Plans
- Site Plan

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

- The redline boundary should be consistent across all plans
- NPPF uplift should be demonstrated
- Photographic evidence of the current building to be provided.
- Is there to be a garden associated with the house?
- Has a data search been carried out?

Further detail

The redline boundaries on the location plan and site plans are different. These should be the same. Additionally, both red-line boundaries are bigger than the footprint of the building and appear to contain grassland. Is there going to be a garden associated with the house?

The smaller redline boundary on the site plan measures at around 2500m², therefore the site may be subject to 10% BNG and a habitat assessment if the land is to be impacted. If the surrounding land is not going to be impacted, then de-minimis still applies.

A desk study including a data search has not been carried out. This is standard procedure for Preliminary Ecological Appraisals (PEAs) as per CIEEM's Guidelines for Preliminary Ecological Appraisals, 2017. If the Ecologist feels that this is not needed, justification will need to be provided.

When looking at satellite images and MAGIC maps there is a large oak tree on the site and a block of woodland near the site. These habitats have the potential to support bats, therefore an external sensitive nocturnal lighting plan should be provided. This should be a pre-commencement condition.

If the site is not subject to BNG, it must still provide an uplift as per the NPPF. More detail on the native species planting and bat and bird boxes to be installed should be provided and then secured via a condition.

There are no photos in the biodiversity report to support the conclusion that the building is not capable of supporting any protected species.

Conditions

Pre-commencement

An external sensitive nocturnal lighting strategy should be secured through a pre-commencement planning condition. The external nocturnal lighting strategy for both during and after construction should be designed in line with guidance from the [BCT on Bats and Artificial Lighting at Night](#). Lighting should include cowls / hoods or shields, operational timers and use a lighting spectrum ideally below 2700K. The strategy will identify features on site that are particularly sensitive for bats and that are likely to cause disturbance to their resting places, breeding sites and key areas for foraging and commuting and show how and where external lighting will be installed (through the provision of appropriate lighting contour plans and technical specifications) so that it can be clearly demonstrated that area to be lit will not disturb or prevent bats using their territory or having access to their breeding sites and resting places. All external lighting will be installed in accordance with the strategy and shall be maintained thereafter in accordance with the strategy. Under no circumstances should any other external lighting be installed without prior consent from the local planning authority.

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

Conditions

Demonstration that the sensitive lighting strategy has been adhered to.

Demonstration that bird and bat boxes have been put in place.