

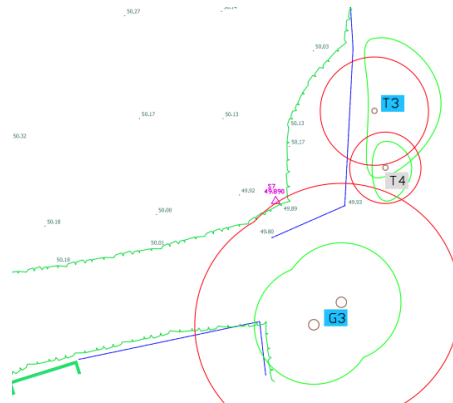
Officer Liz Anderson – Ecologist
Date 07/08/25

Ref: 25/01094/FP
Att: Thomas Howe

Land To The Rear 34, Arlesey Road, Ickleford, Hitchin, Hertfordshire, SG5 3UU
Erection of nine dwellings including access, parking and landscaping.

Updated consultee comments;

Thank you for sending the additional, updated information across, having looked at the documents I'm pleased to see the habitat map has been updated to include land within the correct red line boundary.



Regarding the poplar tree (T3), I accept that its stem was outside of the application site but the roots would have been within the red line as shown by the tree survey. Therefore my earlier comments in relation to the need to adequately account for its loss remain as follows; *the habitat baseline has not sufficiently accounted for the removal of a veteran poplar with a basal diameter of $\approx 1.5m$ which would equate to a rough DBH of at least 1m (see images at the end of response). The Biodiversity Metric tree helper would determine this to be a very large tree and give it an area value of 764sqm. A veteran tree would be classed as irreplaceable habitat and, as such, a bespoke approach would be required to mitigate for its loss.*

It is noted that the application states the veteran tree is outside of the application area but even if the main stem is just outside the red line the tree roots would be well into the development site. Any development within the RPA of the tree would likely cause it damage, let alone felling it. Were the tree to have remained, if it was not being effectively protected (i.e. RPA remaining development free) as part of the development then it should count this as an impact i.e. a reduction in condition.

I also advised that no on-site hedge baseline is recorded in the metric and this appears to still be missing. Site photos show boundary vegetation and yet none has been included.

All other previous comments also remain unchanged. I accept that this is an allocated site and that the applicant has attempted to mitigate some of the ecological losses but the site still fails to deliver the mandatory 10% BNG which will need to be sourced off-site and the amount of units required should

fully reflect those lost as a result of this proposal so I would request an updated Metric baseline is provided taking account of the poplar tree and hedgerow as existing on site. Where losses have occurred prior to a planning application the ecological baseline can be taken back to 2020 at which point the tree and hedgerows are clearly visible. See screenshot of aerial image taken 2021/3





Image showing size of veteran tree stump over 1.5m in diameter. Yellow circle indicates location of tree stump and yellow arrow shows location of T3.