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Contact: Bernie Fleming
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Date: 24 March 2025

Dear Henry,

25/00200/DOC

**Details reserved by Condition 8 (Swift and bat boxes) of planning permission
23/01885/FP granted on 13.12.2024**

**Land at Police Row Between The Grange and 1 The Grange, Police Row, Therfield,
Hertfordshire**

ECOLOGICAL IMPLICATIONS

Overall Recommendation

- ☒ Further information is required before Condition 8 can be discharged

Summary of Advice

- Although the type and number of bird boxes is satisfactory the location of several is flawed
- Accordingly, Condition 8 cannot be discharged until these matters are resolved
- Recommendations are made on how this can best be resolved

Supporting documents

I have made particular, if not exclusive use of the following documents in providing this advice:

- Proposed Site Detail Plan, Rev. T1, Sidey Design, November 2024

Comments

Thank you for your letter of 24 February 2025 which refers, and for consulting Herts LEADS (Ecology); I apologise for the delay with this reply.

Condition 8 states:

The development shall incorporate 10 integrated swift boxes and 10 integrated bat boxes which shall be retained in perpetuity.

Reason: To enhance biodiversity in accordance with the NPPF and the North Hertfordshire Local Plan Policy NE4

The wording could be interpreted to allow the applicant to simply install the required number of boxes, of any type, to any elevation to allow it to be discharged.

I would have preferred more prescriptive wording that set out the type, location and orientation of each but have assumed this is hidden in the *spirit* of the condition and have made my comments accordingly. This is because to give the boxes the greatest chance of success the type, elevation/orientation and relationship to external doors, windows and lights is of great importance.

Perhaps the applicant was of a similar mind and has submitted a Site Detail Plan showing the type and location of the bird and bat boxes required and I acknowledge the efforts taken (though I could only count nine of each).

The types of boxes are fine but the orientation of some leaves something to be desired and the absence of any elevations is unhelpful. Taking my interpretation of the wording into account, these shortcomings mean **I cannot recommend that Condition 8 is discharged.**

Another reason for this is that the most recent edition of the NPPF (Dec 2024) now specifically refers to the provision of features for priority or threatened species. I therefore consider it necessary for the discharge of this condition to be provided with sufficient details to demonstrate a reasonable likelihood of success.

Generally speaking, bat boxes should be installed on south-facing (ie south-west to south-east) walls high up towards or just underneath the eaves. In contrast, bird boxes should be installed on north-facing (ie north to north-east) elevations though again these should be installed high up, above 3 or 4m and/or towards the eaves.

In both cases, locations should avoid proximity to first floor windows and external lights to reduce disturbance during the breeding season, and ground floor doors. Further, neither bat nor bird boxes should be directly illuminated by lights from adjacent buildings.

At present the Site Detail Plan shows five bat boxes on (more or less) north-facing walls and three bird boxes on south-facing walls and further, there is neither any indication of what height they would be nor how they would relate to windows and doors.

Accordingly, **I recommend the Site Detail Plan is amended to ensure all ten of both bat and bird boxes are orientated appropriately and that elevations drawings of the proposed dwellings should be amended to show the relationship with external doors, windows and lights.** If this would affect already consented designs then an indicative drawing showing the same would be acceptable.

On the other hand, the Council may consider that the terms of the application have been met allowing it to discharge this condition. Though I would urge it not to, in that case, the further information suggested would not be necessary.

Yours sincerely,

Bernie Fleming

Ecology Advisor, Hertfordshire LEADS

Hertfordshire LEADS provides Landscape, Ecology, Archaeology, Design and Sustainability support to planning departments in Hertfordshire.