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Application

26/00219/FP

Erection of two storey church following
demolition of existing single storey church
and creation of pedestrian access.

Evangelistic Church York Way Royston
Hertfordshire SG8 5HJ

Documents:

Preliminary Ecological Appraisal –
Croft Ecology, 20/01/2026

Summary of Advice:

Application can be determined

Pre-determination

- Protected species – No further
surveys required
- BNG – Sufficient minimum
information

Determination

- BNG – Insignificant onsite
enhancement

Post- Determination

- BNG – BGP needed

Comments and recommended Conditions and Informatives:

Protected species

Bats: The Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA) that has been submitted with this proposal indicates that neither the building on site nor the trees on site contain potential roost features. As such, no further surveys are required. However, the site may support communities of foraging or commuting bats. The likelihood of an adverse impact is low as bats are not directly affected, but the report suggests that a sensitive lighting scheme should be followed. I support this recommendation.

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

Birds: The trees and areas of scrub on site could provide suitable habitat for nesting birds. One of these trees is scheduled to be felled. All wild birds, their nests, eggs and young are afforded protection and in general terms it would be an offence to kill, injure or displace breeding birds and their young. To reduce the risk of an offence being committed a precautionary approach is required and, consequently, I recommend the following Informative is added to any consent:

“In order to protect breeding birds, their nests, eggs and young, development should only be carried out during the period October to February inclusive. If this is not possible then a pre-development (i.e. no greater than 48 hours before clearance begins) search of the area should be made by a suitably experienced ecologist. If active nests are found, then works must be delayed until the birds have left the nest or professional ecological advice taken on how best to proceed”.

Species enhancements: Section 4.5 of the PEA outlines measures that could be adopted to enhance the site’s suitability for groups of species such as bats and birds. I support these measures and recommend that the developer includes these on the new building.

BNG - Pre Determination

Habitat Assessment: Sufficient information has been provided to allow the LPA to consider the UK habitat and habitat condition assessments provided. Based on this information I advise that the LPA can be confident that the habitat assessment is sufficient to populate the biodiversity metric.

BNG: A baseline map has been provided which is consistent with the habitat assessment. The submitted metric containing the metric start page includes the completion date and the name of the person completing the metric.

The metric calculation tool (Statutory metric, 04/02/2026) shows base line values of 0.29 Habitat Units and 0.03 Hedgerow units. The baseline habitats are consistent with the baseline habitat map and outcomes of the botanical surveys submitted. As a result, I have no reason to doubt these values.

Strategic Significance: The values for the baseline habitats have been set as low in line with government LNRS guidance.

Consequently, I advise that the minimum information requirements for BNG predetermination have been met and the application can be determined accordingly.

BNG – Determination

On site BNG is not significant: The proposed BNG On-Site enhancements are made up of habitats that cannot be secured by the planning process and as a result I advise that they should be considered non-significant.

BNG netgain predetermination: An overall net gain greater than 10% that meets the trading rules has been shown to be possible. This proposes to be achieved by delivering an onsite net gain of +0.03 habitat units and 0.01 hedgerow units resulting in a **10.53 and, 33.05% increase accordingly.**

Whilst the biodiversity gain condition is a post determination matter, the present information allows the LPA reasonable confidence that the general Biodiversity Condition will be discharged.

BNG - Post Determination

Biodiversity Gain Plan: I advise this is completed using the government template.

In order for the Biodiversity Gain Plan to be discharged it should be submitted with the following minimum information either within the body of the plan or as supporting information.

- Completed metric tool calculation that demonstrates
 - a minimum 10% net gain achieved within the trading rules and consistent with the figures quoted within the Biodiversity Gain Plan.
 - A fully completed start page including project details and the date the final version of the metric was completed.
- pre-development and post-development plans showing the location of on-site habitat, the direction of north and drawn to an identified scale, Post Development Plans should be sufficient to record the location of the post determination habitats within the final metric submitted to discharge the BGP.

I trust these comments are of assistance and kind regards.

Cameron Appleyard

Assistant Ecology Advisor, Hertfordshire LEADS