

Officer Liz Anderson – Ecologist

Date 01/10/2026

Ref: 26/01887/FP

Att: Will Thompson

Pirton Hall, Shillington Road, Pirton, Hitchin, Hertfordshire, SG5 3HB

Erection of two detached dwellings with detached double garages following demolition of existing detached garage. Single storey side extension, front infill extension, first floor rear balcony and alterations to fenestration to existing coach house to provide one 3-bed dwelling and erection of detached double garage to serve the coach house. Erection of attached garage to serve Pirton Hall following part demolition of Pirton Hall. Installation of soft and hard landscaping works.

Consultee comments;

Thank you for consulting me, having looked at the submitted documents I would have no ecological objection to the proposal.

The Statutory Metric provided identifies the site baseline as 4.71 habitat units with the post development value being 4.77 units, as such the proposal is unable to demonstrate the mandatory 10% BNG on site and offsite units will be required.

In addition to mandatory BNG the North Herts Local Plan also advises development should consider additional ecological enhancements, some of which are noted in the July 2026 Ecological Appraisal (EA). Taking this into account the following condition is advised;

No development shall take place until an Ecological Enhancement Plan (EEP) for the creation of new wildlife features such as the inclusion of integrated bird/bat and bee bricks in buildings/structures (swift bricks should be used where building heights allow) and hedgehog holes in fences

Reason: To ensure development is ecologically sensitive and secures biodiversity enhancements in accordance with the North Herts Local Plan policy NE4.

The July 2026 Emergence and Activity Bat Survey confirms bats are roosting in Building 1; Pirton hall. As such a bat mitigation class licence will be required and the following condition is advised;

No works are in any circumstances to commence unless the local planning authority has been provided with either:

- 1. a licence issued by Natural England authorizing the specified activity/development to go ahead; or*
- 2. a statement in writing from a suitably qualified ecologist to the effect that they do not consider that the specified activity/development will require a licence.*

Reason: To ensure that works do not result in adverse impacts to protected species.

Further, the EA confirmed breeding bird and badger presence on site and also recommended an unlicensed method statement as a precaution to avoid harm to Great Crested Newts. As such I recommend a Biodiversity Method Statement be conditioned, suggested wording follows;

No development shall take place (including any demolition, ground works, site clearance) until a method statement for the demolition of the main house and site clearance has been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The content of the method statement shall include the:

- a) purpose and objectives for the proposed works;*
- b) detailed working method(s) necessary to achieve stated objectives*
- c) extent and location of proposed works shown on appropriate scale maps and plans;*
- d) timetable for implementation, demonstrating that works will avoid ecological sensitive times;*
- e) persons responsible for implementing the works;*
- f) disposal of any wastes arising from works.*

The works shall be carried out strictly in accordance with the approved details

The case officer should note Biodiversity Gain condition wording should be added to the decision notice, the biodiversity gain condition is a pre-commencement condition having its own separate statutory basis and is deemed to apply to every planning permission granted for the development of land in England. To ensure the applicant is clear about this distinction the biodiversity gain condition should not be included in the list of conditions imposed in the written notice when granting planning permission but should remain separate.

Biodiversity Net Gain

*The effect of paragraph 13 of Schedule 7A to the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 is that planning permission granted for the development of land in England is deemed to have been granted subject to the condition “(the biodiversity gain condition)” that **development may not begin** unless:*

(a) a Biodiversity Gain Plan has been submitted to the planning authority, and

(b) the planning authority has approved the plan.

The planning authority, for the purposes of determining whether to approve a Biodiversity Gain Plan if one is required in respect of this permission would be North Herts Council.

There are statutory exemptions and transitional arrangements which mean that the biodiversity gain condition does not always apply.

Based on the information available this permission is considered to be one which will require the approval of a biodiversity gain plan before development is begun because none of the statutory exemptions or transitional arrangements are considered to apply.