

Hertfordshire LEADS (Ecology)
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01/04/2026

Application

[26/00104/FP](#)

Lagonda Stud, Pottersheath Road, Pottersheath, Hertfordshire, AL6 9SU

Erection of one detached dwelling with detached double garage and air source heat pump following demolition of existing stables and outbuildings including landscaping, amenity space, layout of access and parking.
Erection of detached double garage to serve existing dwelling

Documents

Ecological impact assessment – 08/10/2025 – MS Ecology

BNG assessment – 22/12/2025 – MS Ecology

Emerging bat survey report – 26/08/2025 – MS Ecology

Arboricultural survey, impact assessment, method statement and protection plan – 30/07/2025 – Andrew Cunningham Arboricultural Consultant LTD

Summary of Advice:

Application can be determined with Conditions and Informatives listed

Comments and recommended Conditions and Informatives:

The proposals outline the project as a demolition and redevelopment of an existing stable block and its associated buildings (7 in total) into a detached two storey dwelling with garage, parking and infrastructure. The site is situated in a rural location on land used as pasture and within close proximity of ancient woodland. An ecological impact assessment was carried out which included a field visit on 11/07/2025 to look

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for the presence/absence of protected species and to assess the quality of habitats present. No evidence of protected species or habitats of importance were reported.

A PRA was carried out 15/04/2025 which included an internal and external inspection of the buildings. The buildings were deemed to have negligible potential to support bats and building “B” was graded as having low potential, and following the BCT best practice guidance, one bat emergence survey was carried out on 08/07/2025; which observed foraging/commuting common and soprano pipistrelles. No bats were witnessed entering or exiting the buildings.

Protected species

Reptiles/amphibians

Reptiles are not known to be on site; however, as there are records for reptiles and amphibians in the nearby area which could be put at risk of harm or killing during destructive works (including vegetation and building clearance), to avoid committing an offence, I advise a precautionary approach **informative** using **Reasonable Avoidance Measures (RAM)** is added to any permission granted:

Keep any areas of grass as short as possible up to, and including, the time when the works take place so that it remains / becomes unsuitable for reptiles to cross. Clearance of existing vegetation should be undertaken progressively using hand-held tools, where appropriate, towards boundaries to allow any animals present to escape to contiguous areas of habitat. Where any hedgerows, long grass or scrub are to be cleared, this work should be carried out in two phases. The first cut should be to >15cm to decrease the suitability of the vegetation for reptiles and encourage any reptiles present to move to retained areas of habitat. Where potential for reptiles to be present remains, following a minimum period of seven days, a second cut to ground level should be carried out in order to render the habitat unsuitable. Caution should be taken when moving debris piles or building materials as any sheltering animals could be impacted on. If a reptile is found, then it should be allowed to move safely out of the way on its own accord to contiguous habitat remaining on, or adjacent to, site. Any trenches on site should be covered at night or have ramps to ensure that any animals that enter can safely escape - this is particularly important if holes fill with water.

Bats

Given the location and nature of the site, lack of apparent characteristics of the building and lack of associated records, on this occasion I do not consider there is sufficient likelihood of bats being present and affected for the LPA to require a formal survey prior to determination. However, in the unlikely event that bats are found, given the proposal will involve demolition, I advise a precautionary approach to the works is taken and recommend the following **Informative** is added to any permission granted.

“If bats, or evidence of them, are discovered during the course of works, work must stop immediately, and advice sought on how to proceed lawfully from an

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appropriately qualified and experienced Ecologist or Natural England to avoid an offence being committed.”

Wild birds

The only birds noted during the visit were doves and pigeons, however as wild birds are known to utilise open buildings for nesting; I advise a precautionary approach to the works is taken and recommend the following **Informative** is added to any permission granted.

“Any significant tree/shrub works or removal should be undertaken outside the nesting bird season (March to August inclusive) to protect breeding birds, their nests, eggs and young. If this is not practicable, a search of the area should be made no more than two days in advance of vegetation clearance by a competent Ecologist and if active nests are found, works should stop until the birds have left the nest.”

Other protected species

Historical records indicate that the wider area is used by badgers and although not witnessed on site the potential for badger and hedgehogs cannot be ruled out due to the rural semi-natural environment the development is situated in. Hedgehogs are protected under Schedule 6 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981, which prohibits killing and trapping by certain methods. They are also a UK Priority species under the NERC Act (SEC.41) 2006. The species is therefore considered one of the UK's target species to avoid further population decline. Additionally, badgers are protected under the Protection of Badgers Act 1992, whereby both badgers and their setts are protected. I advise a precautionary approach to the works is taken and recommend the following Informative is added to any permission granted.

“Any excavations left open overnight should be covered or have mammal ramps (reinforced plywood board >60cm wide set at an angle of no greater than 30 degrees to the base of the pit) to ensure that any animals that enter can safely escape. Any open pipework with an outside diameter of greater than 120mm must be covered at the end of each working day to prevent animals entering / becoming trapped”.

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.

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Minimum BNG information pre- determination

A baseline map has been provided which is consistent with the habitat assessment.

The submitted metric has been supplied. The metric start page includes the completion date and the name of the person completing the metric.

The metric calculation tool (Mandatory Metric) completed 01/09/2025 shows base line values of 0.45 Habitat Units and 0 Hedgerow units. The baseline habitats are consistent with the base line habitat map and outcomes of the PEA and BNG report 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 have been met and the application can be determined accordingly.

BNG- Determination

Significant Onsite Enhancement

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 +0.05 habitat units resulting in a 10.38% increase.

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

At the biodiversity gain plan stage an updated metric will need to be submitted showing how a net gain can be delivered. This could be either by the provision of further onsite non-significant enhancements, onsite enhancements that can be secured at the post determination stage, or by the use of an off-site location. As a last resort if an off-site location cannot be found Biodiversity Credits would need to be purchased. In this latter case the applicant must demonstrate to the satisfaction of the LPA that all other options have been fully explored and that the BNG hierarchy has been followed.

LNRS & Post Determination Strategic significance

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Areas of the application site are covered by mapped measures within the strategy. However it is noted in the application that this land is to be retained as a paddock and will not be enhanced.

Biodiversity Gain Plan

I advise this is completed using the government template.

In order 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.
 - where off site units are being used these should be shown in the appropriate tab of the metric and the offsite gain site summary should be completed.
 - Where relevant a fully completed irreplaceable habitats tab
- 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.
- a compensation plan if the development affects irreplaceable habitats
- if off-site units are being used, the biodiversity net gain register reference number will be required for a completed BGP,
- proof of purchase if they're buying statutory biodiversity credits
- a description of how they will manage and monitor significant on-site gains (for example, With a habitat management and monitoring plan)

I trust these comments are of assistance and kind regards.

Lea Grayston-Smith

Assistant Ecology Adviser, Hertfordshire LEADS

Simon Richards

Senior Ecologists, Hertfordshire LEADS