

Date: 10 December 2024
Our ref: 496151
Your ref: 24/02673/FP & 24/02674/LBC



North Hertfordshire Council
planning.control@north-herts.gov.uk

Hornbeam House
Crewe Business Park
Electra Way
Crewe
Cheshire
CW1 6GJ

T 0300 060 3900

BY EMAIL ONLY

Dear Sir or Madam,

Planning consultation: Change of use and conversion of existing outbuilding to one self-contained 1-bed dwelling to include alterations to fenestration; external rendering and parking and landscaping following demolition of existing extensions
Location: Hexton Manor Hexton Hitchin Hertfordshire SG5 3JH

Thank you for your consultation on the above dated 03 December 2024 which was received by Natural England on 03 December 2024

Natural England is a non-departmental public body. Our statutory purpose is to ensure that the natural environment is conserved, enhanced, and managed for the benefit of present and future generations, thereby contributing to sustainable development.

SUMMARY OF NATURAL ENGLAND'S ADVICE

NO OBJECTION

Based on the plans submitted, Natural England considers that the proposed development will not have significant adverse impacts on statutorily protected nature conservation sites.

Natural England's generic advice on other natural environment issues is set out at Annex A.

Landscape Advice

The proposed development is for a site within or close to a nationally designated landscape namely Chilterns National Landscape (defined in legislation as an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty).

Natural England has concluded that impacts on the nationally designated landscape and the delivery of its statutory purpose to conserve and enhance the area's natural beauty can be determined locally by the local planning authority, with advice from its landscape or planning officers, and from the relevant National Landscape Partnership or Conservation Board.

Natural England is not confirming that there would not be a significant adverse effect on landscape or visual resources or on the statutory purpose of the area, only that there are no landscape issues which, based on the information received, necessitate Natural England's

involvement.

We advise that the planning authority uses national and local policies, together with local landscape expertise and information to determine the proposal. The policy and statutory framework to guide your decision and the role of local advice are explained below. Your decision should be guided by paragraph 182 and 183 of the National Planning Policy Framework, which requires great weight to be given to conserving and enhancing landscape and scenic beauty within National Landscapes, National Parks, and the Broads and states that the scale and extent of development within all these areas should be limited. Paragraph 183 requires exceptional circumstances to be demonstrated to justify major development within a designated landscape and sets out criteria which should be applied in considering this proposal.

Alongside national policy you should also apply landscape policies set out in your development plan, or appropriate saved policies.

We also advise that you consult the relevant National Landscape Partnership or Conservation Board. Their knowledge of the site and its wider landscape setting, together with the aims and objectives of the area's statutory management plan, will be a valuable contribution to the planning decision. Where available, a local Landscape Character Assessment can also be a helpful guide to the landscape's sensitivity to this type of development and its capacity to accommodate the proposed development.

The statutory purpose of the National Landscape is to conserve and enhance the area's natural beauty. You should assess the application carefully as to whether the proposed development would have a significant impact on or harm that statutory purpose.

Furthermore, [Section 245](#) (Protected Landscapes) of the Levelling Up and Regeneration Act 2023 places a duty on relevant authorities (which includes local authorities) in exercising or performing any functions in relation to, or so as to affect, land in a National Park, the Broads or an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty in England, to seek to further the statutory purposes of the area. This duty also applies to proposals outside the designated area but impacting on its natural beauty.

The relevant National Landscape body (Conservation Board or Partnership) may be able to offer advice in relation to the duty, including on how the proposed development aligns with and contributes to delivering the aims and objectives of the area's statutory management plan.

Other advice

Priority habitats and Species

Priority habitats and Species are of particular importance for nature conservation and are included in the England Biodiversity List published under section 41 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006. Most priority habitats will be mapped either as Sites of Special Scientific Interest, on the Magic website or as Local Wildlife Sites. A list of priority habitats and species can be found on [Gov.uk](#).

Natural England does not routinely hold species data, such data should be collected when impacts on priority habitats or species are considered likely. Consideration should also be given to the potential environmental value of brownfield sites, often found in urban areas and former industrial land, further information including links to the open mosaic habitats inventory can be found [here](#).

Sites of Special Scientific Interest Impact Risk Zones

The Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015 requires local planning authorities to consult Natural England on "Development in or likely to affect a Site of Special Scientific Interest" (Schedule 4, w). Our SSSI Impact Risk Zones are a GIS dataset designed to be used during the planning application validation process to help local planning authorities decide when to consult Natural England on developments likely to affect a SSSI. The dataset and user guidance can be accessed from the [data.gov.uk](#) website

Further general advice on the consideration of protected species and other natural environment issues is provided at Annex A.

We would be happy to comment further should the need arise but if in the meantime you have any queries please do not hesitate to contact us.

For any queries regarding this letter, for new consultations, or to provide further information on this consultation please send your correspondences to consultations@naturalengland.org.uk.

Yours faithfully

Julian Clarke
Consultations Team