

Officer Liz Anderson – Ecologist
Date 17/2/25

Ref: 24/02936/FP
Att: Tom Rea

The White House , Valley Rise, Royston, Hertfordshire, SG8 9GH

Erection of two 5- bed detached dwellings with garages and ancillary works following demolition of existing veterinary centre. Erection of detached single garage to serve existing dwelling

Consultee comments;

Having read the submitted documents there would be no ecological objection to the proposal. The amended layout allows for more space around existing trees. Whilst the scheme cannot deliver BNG on site this is accepted in the December 2024 Biological Impact Assessment which identifies opportunities to maximise ecological benefit on site which also acknowledging that off-site compensation will be required.

The August 2024 Emergence and Activity Bat Survey did not find evidence of bats using the buildings to be removed but makes recommendation for appropriate protection measures/ supervised roof stripping and precautionary mitigation measures to avoid adverse effects on bats.

In addition to mandatory BNG the North Herts Local Plan also advises development should consider the inclusion of integrated features in the built fabric of dwellings such as bat, bird and bee bricks. These are also recommended in part 4 of the January 2024 Ecological Appraisal together with hedgehog holes in fences to maintain permeability throughout the site for wildlife.

Taking the above points into account the following conditions are advised;

Biodiversity Method Statement

No development shall take place (including any ground works, site clearance) until a Biodiversity Method Statement has been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The Statement shall be informed by August 2024 Emergence and Activity Bat Survey and include the following:

- a) Review of site /time constraints.*
- b) Details of any necessary working methods to prevent harm to bats.*
- c) Type and source of materials to be used where appropriate.*
- d) Persons responsible for implementing the works.*

Ecological Enhancements

No development shall take place until an Ecological Enhancement Plan (EEP) for the creation of new wildlife features such as hibernacula, the inclusion of integrated bird/bat and bee boxes in buildings/structures and hedgehog holes in fences, as informed by the January 2024 Ecological Appraisal, has been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority.

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.