



16th January 2024

Katherine Williams
Mid Sussex District Council
Oaklands Road
Haywards Heath
RH16 1SS

By email only

Thank you for requesting advice on this application from Place Services' ecological advice service. This service provides advice to planning officers to inform Mid Sussex District Council planning decisions with regard to potential ecological impacts from development. Any additional information, queries or comments on this advice that the applicant or other interested parties may have, must be directed to the Planning Officer who will seek further advice from us where appropriate and necessary.

Application: DM/24/2409
Location: Slaugham Garden Nursery Staplefield Road Slaugham Haywards Heath West Sussex RH17 6AG
Proposal: Proposed conversion of barn to residential use to create 1 2-bedroom dwelling. Removal of existing hardstanding and landscaping.

Dear Katherine

Thank you for consulting Place Services on the above application.

Temporary Holding Objection	
No ecological objections	
Recommended Approval subject to attached conditions	Yes
Recommended Discharge of condition	

Summary

We have reviewed the Ecological Impact Assessment (ACD Environmental, August 2023), relating to the likely impacts of development on designated sites, protected and Priority species & habitats, identification of appropriate mitigation measures and mandatory Biodiversity Net Gain. We note that the current application relates only to the conversion of the nursery workshop store to a dwelling.

In addition, we have reviewed the documents submitted in relation to biodiversity net gains, including the application form.

We note from the Ecological Impact Assessment (ACD Environmental, August 2023) that the building and the trees onsite have negligible bat roost potential. Therefore we agree that no further surveys for bats are required.



We also note that there is a low population of Grass Snake onsite and therefore support the Precautionary Method Statement for mobile protected species, including reptiles and Hedgehog, in Sections 6.10, 6.15 and 6.30 of the Ecological Impact Assessment (ACD Environmental, August 2023). This should be secured by a condition of any consent.

We are satisfied that there is sufficient ecological information available to support determination of this application. However, please note we have no comments on Great Crested Newt as we have been instructed to leave comments on this European Protected Species to the [NatureSpace Partnership](#).

This provides certainty for the LPA of the likely impacts on designated sites, protected and Priority species & habitats and, with appropriate mitigation measures secured, the development can be made acceptable.

The mitigation measures in the Ecological Impact Assessment (ACD Environmental, August 2023) should be secured by a condition of any consent and implemented in full. This is necessary to conserve and enhance protected and Priority species particularly those recorded in the locality.

Biodiversity net gains is a statutory requirement set out under [Schedule 7A \(Biodiversity Gain in England\) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990](#). The de-minimis exemption, as set out under the [Biodiversity Gain Requirements \(Exemptions\) Regulations 2024](#), applies to development that does not impact a Priority habitat and impacts less than:

- 25 square metres (5m by 5m) of on-site habitat
- 5 metres of on-site linear habitats (e.g. hedgerows or watercourse)

The de-minimis threshold refers to impact and not size of the red-line boundary. A development 'impacts' a habitat if it [decreases the biodiversity value](#).

Providing that the development does not affect any more than 25m², we are satisfied that the development is exempt from the statutory requirement of mandatory biodiversity net gains.

We also support the proposed reasonable biodiversity enhancements for protected, Priority and threatened species, which have been recommended to secure net gains for biodiversity, as outlined under Paragraph 187d and 193d of the National Planning Policy Framework (December 2024). The reasonable biodiversity enhancement measures should be outlined within a separate Biodiversity Enhancement Layout and secured by a condition of any consent.

This will enable LPA to demonstrate its compliance with its statutory duties including its biodiversity duty under s40 NERC Act 2006 (as amended) and delivery of mandatory Biodiversity Net Gain.

Impacts will be minimised such that the proposal is acceptable, subject to the conditions below based on BS42020:2013. We recommend that submission for approval and implementation of the details below should be a condition of any planning consent.



Recommended conditions

1. ACTION REQUIRED IN ACCORDANCE WITH ECOLOGICAL APPRAISAL RECOMMENDATIONS

"All mitigation and enhancement measures and/or works shall be carried out in accordance with the details contained in the Ecological Impact Assessment (ACD Environmental, August 2023), as already submitted with the planning application and agreed in principle with the local planning authority prior to determination. This includes the Precautionary Method Statement for mobile protected species in Sections 6.10, 6.15 and 6.30 of the Ecological Impact Assessment (ACD Environmental, August 2023), which avoids impacts on protected species.

This may include the appointment of an appropriately competent person e.g. an ecological clerk of works (ECoW) to provide on-site ecological expertise during construction. The appointed person shall undertake all activities, and works shall be carried out, in accordance with the approved details."

Reason: To conserve and enhance protected and Priority species and allow the LPA to discharge its duties under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended), the Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981 as amended and s40 of the NERC Act 2006 (as amended).

2. PRIOR TO ANY WORKS ABOVE SLAB LEVEL: BIODIVERSITY ENHANCEMENT LAYOUT

"A Biodiversity Enhancement Layout for biodiversity enhancements listed in the Ecological Impact Assessment (ACD Environmental, August 2023), shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority.

The content of the Biodiversity Enhancement Layout shall include the following:

- a) detailed designs or product descriptions for biodiversity enhancements; and*
- b) locations, orientations and heights for biodiversity enhancements on appropriate drawings.*

The enhancement measures shall be implemented in accordance with the approved details prior to occupation and all features shall be retained in that manner thereafter."

Reason: To enhance protected and Priority species & habitats and allow the LPA to discharge its duties under paragraph 187d of the NPPF 2024 and s40 of the NERC Act 2006 (as amended).

Please contact us with any queries.

Yours sincerely,

Genevieve Broad MCIEEM MSc BSc (Hons)

Ecological Consultant

Place Services at Essex County Council

placeservicesecology@essex.gov.uk

Place Services provide ecological advice on behalf of Mid Sussex District Council

Please note: This letter is advisory and should only be considered as the opinion formed by specialist staff in relation to this particular matter.