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Mid Sussex District Council
Oaklands Road
Haywards Heath
West Sussex
RH16 1SS

Our ref: 15975
Date: 21 April 2026

By email only: Planning Department, planninginfo@midsussex.gov.uk

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.

Application: DM/26/0673
Location: Spicers Farm Rowhill Lane Balcombe Haywards Heath
Proposal: Proposed single storey rear extension and minor internal configurations to main house and barn conversion to ancillary accommodation.

Thank you for consulting Place Services on the above householder application.

No ecological objection	☐
No ecological objection subject to attached conditions	☒
Further information required/Temporary holding objection	☐
Recommend Refusal	☐
Subject to Natural England's formal comments on the conclusion of the LPA's Appropriate Assessment	☐

Summary

We have reviewed the Bat Emergence Survey Report (Tom Halley Ecology, July 2025) and Preliminary Ecological Appraisal Report (Tom Halley Ecology, July 2025) relating to the likely impacts of development on designated sites, protected and Priority species & habitats and identification of appropriate mitigation measures and mandatory Biodiversity Net Gain.

We have also reviewed the information submitted relating to mandatory biodiversity net gains, including the Application Form.

We note from the Bat Emergence Survey Report (Tom Halley Ecology, July 2025) that a licence for roosting bats will be required before commencement of any works and recommend that a copy of this is secured by a condition of any consent. This is because the three dusk emergence surveys in May, June and July 2025 on Building B1 (main house) and Building B2 (barn) identified the following bat roosts:

Building B1 (main house):

- Common pipistrelle maternity roost – hanging tiles
- Brown long-eared bat day roost – loft void
- Daubenton's bat day roost – eaves and hanging tiles

Building B2 (barn):

- Common pipistrelle day roost – internal crevices along ridge
- Brown long-eared bat day roost and potential feeding roost – internal space

We support the outline mitigation measures to support the application for a Natural England Mitigation Licence in the Mitigation and Licensing Requirements section of the Bat Emergence Survey Report (Tom Halley Ecology, July 2025).

We also support the Precautionary Method Statement for mobile protected and Priority species (including Hedgehog, which is a protected and threatened species) in the Other Mammals section of the Preliminary Ecological Appraisal Report (Tom Halley Ecology, July 2025). This should be secured by a condition of any consent and implemented in full.

We note from the Preliminary Ecological Appraisal Report (Tom Halley Ecology, July 2025) that there is evidence of Barn Owl presence in Building B2 (barn) and therefore this species will be affected by the development, although we understand there is no evidence of nesting. Barn Owl is protected as all times under Schedule 1 of the Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981 (as amended). Therefore, we support the recommendation for the installation of an additional Barn Owl box on a mature tree south-west of the main house. This should be secured by a condition of any consent and implemented in full.

We are satisfied that there is sufficient ecological information available to support determination of this application. However, please note that 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 identified in the Bat Emergence Survey Report (Tom Halley Ecology, July 2025) and Preliminary Ecological Appraisal Report (Tom Halley Ecology, July 2025) 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, including bats and Barn Owl.

We also support the recommendation that a Wildlife Friendly Lighting Strategy is implemented for this application (Bat Emergence Survey Report (Tom Halley Ecology, July 2025) and Preliminary Ecological Appraisal Report (Tom Halley Ecology, July 2025)) to avoid impacts from light disturbance. This should be secured by a condition of any consent and implemented in full. Therefore, technical specification should be submitted prior to occupation, which demonstrates measures to avoid lighting impacts to foraging / commuting bats, which are likely to be present within the local area. This should summarise the following measures recommended by [Guidance Note:08/23 \(Institute of Lighting Professionals\)](#) will be implemented:

- Do not provide excessive lighting. Light levels should be as low as possible as required to fulfil the lighting need.
- All luminaires should lack UV elements when manufactured. Metal halide, compact fluorescent sources should not be used.
- Warm White lights should be used at <2700k. This is necessary as lighting which emits an ultraviolet component or that has a blue spectral content has a high attraction effect on insects. This may lead in a reduction in prey availability for some light sensitive bat species.
- Where appropriate, external security lighting should be set on motion-sensors and set to as short a possible a timer as the risk assessment will allow.
- Luminaires should always be mounted horizontally, with no light output above 90° and/or no upward tilt.
- Only if all other options have been explored, accessories such as baffles, hoods or louvres can be used to reduce light spill and direct it only to where it is needed. However, due to the lensing and fine cut-off control of the beam inherent in modern LED luminaires, the effect of cowls and baffles is often far less than anticipated and so should not be relied upon solely.

With regard to mandatory biodiversity net gains, it is highlighted that applications are required to deliver a mandatory 10% measurable biodiversity net gain, unless exempt under [paragraph 17 of Schedule 7A of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990](#) and the [Biodiversity Gain Requirements \(Exemptions\) Regulations 2024](#). As a result, we are satisfied that this application is exempt from mandatory biodiversity net gains, as the development meets the householder exemption.

We also support the proposed reasonable biodiversity enhancements for protected, Priority and threatened species, which have been recommended in the Preliminary Ecological Appraisal Report (Tom Halley Ecology, July 2025) 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 measures and/or works shall be carried out in accordance with the details contained in the Bat Emergence Survey Report (Tom Halley Ecology, July 2025) and Preliminary Ecological Appraisal Report (Tom Halley Ecology, July 2025) 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 and Priority species in the Other Mammals section of the Preliminary Ecological Appraisal Report (Tom Halley Ecology, July 2025), which avoids impacts on protected species.

This will 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 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 COMMENCEMENT OF ANY WORKS WHICH WILL IMPACT THE BREEDING / RESTING PLACE OF BATS: SUBMISSION OF A COPY OF EPS

MITIGATION LICENCE OR EVIDENCE OF SITE REGISTRATION UNDER A BAT MITIGATION CLASS LICENCE FOR BATS

“Any works which will impact the breeding / resting place of bats, shall not in in any circumstances commence unless the local planning authority has been provided with either:

- a) a licence issued by Natural England pursuant to Regulation 55 of The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended) authorizing the specified activity/development to go ahead; or*
- b) evidence of site registration supplied by an individual registered to use a Bat Mitigation Class Licence; or*
- c) a statement in writing from the Natural England to the effect that it does not consider that the specified activity/development will require a licence.”*

Reason: To conserve protected 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 s17 Crime & Disorder Act 1998.

3. WITHIN THREE MONTHS OF CONSENT: BIODIVERSITY ENHANCEMENT LAYOUT

“Within three months of consent, a Biodiversity Enhancement Layout for biodiversity enhancements listed in the Preliminary Ecological Appraisal Report (Tom Halley Ecology, July 2025) shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority.

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

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

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

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

4. WITHIN THREE MONTHS OF CONSENT: WILDLIFE SENSITIVE LIGHTING DESIGN SCHEME

“Within three months of consent, a “lighting design strategy for biodiversity in accordance with Guidance Note 08/23 (Institute of Lighting Professionals) shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The strategy shall:

- a) *identify those areas/features on site that are particularly sensitive for bats and that are likely to cause disturbance in or around their breeding sites and resting places or along important routes used to access key areas of their territory, for example, for foraging; and*
- b) *show how and where external lighting will be installed) so that it can be clearly demonstrated that areas to be lit will not disturb or prevent the above species using their territory or having access to their breeding sites and resting places.*

All external lighting shall be installed in accordance with the specifications and locations set out in the scheme and maintained thereafter in accordance with the scheme. Under no circumstances should any other external lighting be installed without prior consent from the local planning authority."

Reason: To 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).

Please contact us if you have any queries in relation to this advice.

Yours sincerely,

Hamish Jackson ACIEEM BSc (Hons)
Senior Ecological Consultant
 Place Services at Essex County Council



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.

We are unable to respond directly to applicants/agents or other interested parties. Any additional information, queries or comments on this advice that the applicant/agent or other interested parties may have, must be directed to the Planning Officer at the relevant LPA, who will seek further advice from us where appropriate.