



Date: 29 September 2025

Our ref: 08942

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

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. 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/25/2223
Location: Juhring And Hobbs Field At Saint Hill Manor Saint Hill Road East Grinstead
Proposal: Hard paved car park with 121 spaces and toilet facilities adjacent to Saint Hill Road. Hard paved access road servicing both Juhring and Hobbs fields. Engineered grass surfaced provision of 619 spaces for temporary parking for specific events in Juhring field. Re-contouring of Hobbs field with grassed surface and provision of permanent pads for a marquee together with washroom facilities and substation with backup generator.

Thank you for consulting Place Services on the above 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 Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PJC, September 2024) 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 this includes the Biodiversity Net Gain Feasibility Assessment (PJC, April 2025) and the Statutory Biodiversity Metric (Completed by Naomi Cornwell BSc(Hons) MSc, November 2024).

We are satisfied that there is sufficient ecological information available to support determination of this application.

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. Please note that we have been instructed to leave matters relating to Great crested newt to NatureSpace.

The mitigation measures identified in the Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PJC, September 2024) 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. With regard to reptiles the Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PJC, September 2024) recommends a reptile method statement should be provided. This should be secured as a condition of any consent.

Furthermore the Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PJC, September 2024) advises 'The Site was identified as being within the Impact Risk Zone for Weir Wood Reservoir SSSI, located approximately 1.35km south of the Site. Therefore it was recommended Natural England must be consulted.

The Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PJC, September 2024) advises 'A parcel of ancient woodland, North Wood, was recorded immediately adjacent to the Site boundary, south-of Juhring field and north of Hobbs Field.' Therefore it was recommended that a strict minimum 15m no construction buffer zone must be implemented between the ancient woodland (irreplaceable habitat) and the development footprint. This should be secured by condition of any consent.

With regard to mandatory biodiversity net gains, it is highlighted that we support the submitted Biodiversity Net Gain Feasibility Assessment (PJC, April 2025) and the Statutory Biodiversity Metric (Completed by Naomi Cornwell BSc(Hons) MSc, November 2024). Biodiversity net gains is a statutory requirement set out under [Schedule 7A \(Biodiversity Gain in England\) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990](#) and we are satisfied that submitted information provides sufficient information at application stage. As a result, a Biodiversity Gain Plan should be submitted prior to commencement, which also includes the following:

- a) The completed metric calculation tool showing the calculations of the pre-development and post-intervention biodiversity values.
- b) Pre and post development habitat plans.
- c) Legal agreement(s)

- d) Biodiversity Gain Site Register reference numbers (if using off-site units).
- e) Proof of purchase (if buying statutory biodiversity credits at a last resort).

We are generally satisfied that the post-intervention values are realistic and deliverable.

In addition, a [Habitat Management and Monitoring Plan](#) (HMMP) should be secured for all [significant on-site enhancements](#). However, it is indicated that Mid Sussex do not classify minor development as significant on-site enhancements. As a result, we are satisfied that HMMP is not likely to be required.

We note that the proposals include off-site enhancements within the blue line boundary. This will need to be registered with the biodiversity gain site register and will require a Habitat Management and Monitoring Plan (HMMP) and legal agreement with the Council or a responsible body as part of the registration to secure the enhancements for the 30-year period. As a result, the applicant is advised that it may be preferable to approach an off-site provider to meet the 10% biodiversity net gain requirement. This matter will need to be addressed as part of the biodiversity gain condition.

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 Strategy and should be secured by a condition of any consent.

If any external lighting is to be proposed, it is advised that a sensitive lighting scheme is developed to minimise any impacts. This must follow the Guidance Note 8/23 Bats and artificial lighting (The Institute of Lighting Professionals & Bat Conservation Trust). In summary, it is highlighted that the following measures should be implemented for the lighting design, which could be informed by a professional ecologist:

- Light levels should be as low as possible as required to fulfil the lighting need.
- Warm-White lights should be used preferably at 2700k. This is necessary as lighting which emit an ultraviolet component or that have a blue spectral content have a high attraction effect on insects. This may lead in a reduction in prey availability for some light sensitive bat species.
- If light columns are required, they should be as short as possible as light at a low level reduces the likelihood of any ecological impact. However, the use of cowls, hoods, reflector skirts or shields could also be used to prevent horizontal spill.
- Movement sensors and timers could be used to minimise the 'lit time'.

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 Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PJC, September 2024) as already submitted with the planning application and agreed in principle with the local planning authority prior to determination.

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 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: REPTILE METHOD STATEMENT

“A Reptile Method Statement shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. This will contain precautionary mitigation measures and/or works to reduce potential impacts to reptiles during the construction phase.

The measures and/works shall be carried out strictly in accordance with the approved details and shall be retained in that manner thereafter.”

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).

3. PRIOR TO ANY WORKS ABOVE SLAB LEVEL: BIODIVERSITY ENHANCEMENT STRATEGY

“Prior to any works above slab level, a Biodiversity Enhancement Strategy for protected, Priority and threatened species, prepared by a suitably qualified ecologist in line with the recommendations of the Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PJC, September 2024), 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) Purpose and conservation objectives for the proposed enhancement measures;*
- b) detailed designs or product descriptions to achieve stated objectives;*
- c) locations of proposed enhancement measures by appropriate maps and plans (where relevant);*
- d) persons responsible for implementing the enhancement measures; and*
- e) details of initial aftercare and long-term maintenance (where relevant).*

The works shall be implemented in accordance with the approved details 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. **PRIOR TO OCCUPATION: WILDLIFE SENSITIVE LIGHTING DESIGN SCHEME**

“Prior to occupation, 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 (through provision of appropriate lighting contour plans and technical specifications) 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).

Biodiversity Gain condition

Natural England advises that the biodiversity gain condition has its own separate statutory basis, as a planning condition under [paragraph 13 of Schedule 7A of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990](#). The condition is deemed to apply to every planning permission granted for the development of land in England (unless exemptions or transitional provisions apply), and there are separate provisions governing the Biodiversity Gain Plan.

The local planning authority is strongly encouraged to not include the biodiversity gain condition, or the reasons for applying this, in the list of conditions imposed in the written notice when granting planning permission. However, it is highlighted that biodiversity gain condition could be added as an informative, using [draft text](#) provided by the Secretary of State:

“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 Mid Sussex council.

There are statutory exemptions and transitional arrangements which mean that the biodiversity gain condition does not always apply. These are listed in paragraph 17 of Schedule 7A of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 and the Biodiversity Gain Requirements (Exemptions) Regulations 2024.

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."

Please do not hesitate to contact us if you have any queries in relation to this advice.

Yours sincerely

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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.