



Date: 16 December 2025

Our ref: 11666

Andy 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/25/2716
Location: Wickenden Manor Chilling Street Sharpthorne East Grinstead
Proposal: Proposed three storey extension to provide further accommodation, meeting rooms and kitchen. Extension and change of use of stables to create further accommodation. Erection of conservatory to Lodge. New hard surface basketball and tennis court. Installation of solar panel arrays within the walled garden.

Thank you for consulting Place Services on the above full 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 and Re-Entry Surveys (Arbtech Consulting Ltd., August 2025) and Preliminary Ecological Appraisal and Roost Assessment (Arbtech Consulting Ltd., June 2025), relating to the likely impacts of development on designated sites, protected & Priority species and habitats, and identification of appropriate mitigation measures.

We have also reviewed the information submitted to meet the requirements of mandatory biodiversity net gains, which includes the Statutory Biodiversity Metric (June 2025) and Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment Issue 3 (Arbtech Consulting Ltd., October 2025). We highlight that the baseline habitats are shown in Appendix 3, the proposed habitats are shown in Appendix 4 and the habitat condition assessments are shown in Table 1 of the Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment Issue 3 (Arbtech Consulting Ltd., October 2025).

We note from the Bat Emergence and Re-Entry Surveys (Arbtech Consulting Ltd., August 2025) that a licence for 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 bat emergence surveys in July and August 2025 confirmed the following roosts:

Building 1 (the Manor House):

- 1 x Common Pipistrelle and Soprano Pipistrelle maternity roost (47 individuals) entire roof
- 1 x Brown Long-eared bat day roost (one individual) north elevation
- 1 x Serotine day roost (two individuals) southwest elevation

Building 2 (two storey brick-built building):

- 1 x Common Pipistrelle day roost (one individual) southwest corner
- 1 x Common Pipistrelle day roost (one individual) northeast elevation
- 1 x Common Pipistrelle day roost (one individual) south elevation

We support the outline mitigation measures in the Bat Emergence and Re-Entry Surveys (Arbtech Consulting Ltd., August 2025). We understand from the submitted documents that all of the trees onsite will be retained under the current plans. We highlight that, if the plans change to include the felling of any trees, a Ground Level Tree Assessment for bats will be required prior to determination to ensure that roosting bats are not impacted.

We also note from the Preliminary Ecological Appraisal and Roost Assessment (Arbtech Consulting Ltd., June 2025) that Building B3 (derelict stable blocks) has negligible bat roost potential.

We support the non-licensed Precautionary Method Statement for Hazel Dormouse in the Preliminary Ecological Appraisal and Roost Assessment (Arbtech Consulting Ltd., June 2025) which should be secured by a condition of any consent and implemented in full.

As suitable habitat for reptiles and mobile protected and Priority species will be removed during construction, we also support the Precautionary Method Statement for reptiles and mobile protected and Priority species (including Hedgehog, which is a Priority and threatened species) in the Preliminary Ecological Appraisal and Roost Assessment (Arbtech Consulting

Ltd., June 2025). 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 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 and Re-Entry Surveys (Arbtech Consulting Ltd., August 2025) and Preliminary Ecological Appraisal and Roost Assessment (Arbtech Consulting Ltd., June 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, which includes bats, Hazel Dormouse, reptiles and mobile protected and Priority species.

We support the recommendation that a Wildlife Friendly Lighting Strategy is implemented for this application (Bat Emergence and Re-Entry Surveys (Arbtech Consulting Ltd., August 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 we support the submitted Statutory Biodiversity Metric (June 2025) and Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment Issue 3 (Arbtech Consulting Ltd., October 2025). 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) A Biodiversity Gain Plan form (Ideally using the Government's template: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/biodiversity-gain-plan>)
- b) The completed metric calculation tool showing the calculations of the pre-development and post-intervention biodiversity values.
- c) Pre and post development habitat plans.
- d) Legal agreement(s)
- e) Biodiversity Gain Site Register reference numbers (if using off-site units).
- f) Proof of purchase (if buying statutory biodiversity credits at a last resort).

In addition, a [Habitat Management and Monitoring Plan](#) (HMMP) should be secured for all [significant on-site enhancements](#). Based on the submitted post-intervention values as they are currently submitted and Government Guidance on what constitutes a significant on-site enhancement, it is suggested that this includes the following habitats:

- Mixed scrub (creation) Good condition
- Rural tree (creation) Moderate condition
- Other woodland; broadleaved (enhancement) Poor – Good condition
- Other lowland acid grassland (enhancement) Moderate – Good condition
- Lowland meadows (enhancement) Lower Distinctiveness Habitat – Good condition
- Modified grassland(enhancement) Moderate – Good condition
- Ponds (non-priority habitat) (enhancement) Moderate – Good condition
- Ponds (non-priority habitat) (enhancement) Poor – Good condition

The decision on whether significant on-site enhancements are present is ultimately up to the Council. Therefore, it is acknowledged that the Council typically does not consider significant on-site enhancements are present for minor development. However, in this instance, the proposal contains creation and enhancement of a number of medium – very high distinctiveness habitats to achieve a measurable biodiversity net gain.

Where present, the maintenance and monitoring of significant on-site enhancements should be secured via planning obligation for a period of up to 30 years from the completion of development. This will be required to be submitted concurrent with the discharge of the biodiversity gain condition. Therefore, the LPA is encouraged to secure draft heads of terms for this planning obligation at application stage, to be finalised as part of the biodiversity gain condition. Alternatively, the management and monitoring of significant on-site enhancements could be secured as a condition of any consent. The monitoring of the post-development habitat creation / enhancement will need be provided to the LPA at years 1, 3, 5, 10, 15, 20, 25, 30, unless otherwise specified by the LPA. Any remedial action or adaptive management will then be agreed with the LPA during the monitoring period to ensure the aims and objectives of the Biodiversity Gain Plan are achieved.

We are generally satisfied that the post-intervention values are realistic and deliverable. However, it is recommended that the following matters will need to be considered by the applicant as part of the biodiversity gain condition:

- We query the use of 'Lowland meadow' for the post-intervention values. This is because this habitat contains a very high distinctiveness is an extremely difficult habitat to create. The habitat requires 16 species per m2 with species that reflect specific grassland communities (e.g. NVC MG5), with at least four positive indicators for lowland meadows present within the sward. Therefore, further clarification should be provided to justify whether this habitat is realistic and achievable.
- Further justification will be required for the use of medium strategic significance criteria, for both the pre-development baseline and post-intervention values.

We also support the proposed reasonable biodiversity enhancements for protected, Priority and threatened species, which have been recommended in the Preliminary Ecological Appraisal and Roost Assessment (Arbtech Consulting Ltd., June 2025) to secure net gains for biodiversity, as outlined under Paragraph 187d and 193d of the National Planning Policy Framework (December 2024). Reasonable biodiversity enhancement measures are a separate matter to mandatory biodiversity net gains and the finalised details should be outlined within a separate Biodiversity Enhancement Strategy to be secured as 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 and Re-Entry Surveys (Arbtech Consulting Ltd., August 2025) and Preliminary Ecological Appraisal and Roost Assessment (Arbtech Consulting Ltd., June 2025) as already submitted with the planning application and agreed in principle with the local planning authority prior to determination. This includes the non-licensed Precautionary Method Statement for Hazel Dormouse and the Precautionary Method Statement for reptiles and mobile protected and Priority species in the Preliminary Ecological Appraisal and Roost Assessment (Arbtech Consulting Ltd., June 2025). This avoids impacts on European Protected Species and 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. 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 and Roost Assessment (Arbtech Consulting Ltd., June 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) 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 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).

Optional condition:

Management and monitoring for significant on-site enhancements should be secured by planning obligation (either at application stage or the Biodiversity Gain Condition), to allow aftercare and monitoring to be secured for the 30-year period and the LPA to cover its monitoring costs. However, if the LPA would prefer that this is secured via a separate condition, the following pre-commencement condition could be used:

5. **PRIOR TO COMMENCEMENT: HABITAT MANAGEMENT AND MONITORING PLAN (HMMP)**

A Habitat Management and Monitoring Plan (HMMP) for significant on-site enhancements, prepared in accordance with the approved Biodiversity Gain Plan, shall be submitted to, and approved in writing by the local authority, prior to commencement of development, including:

- a) a non-technical summary;*
- b) the roles and responsibilities of the people or organisation(s) delivering the HMMP;*
- c) the planned habitat creation and enhancement works to create or improve habitat to achieve the on-site significant enhancements in accordance with the approved Biodiversity Gain Plan;*
- d) the management measures to maintain habitat in accordance with the approved Biodiversity Gain Plan for a period of 30 years from the completion of development;*
- e) the monitoring methodology in respect of the created or enhanced habitat to be submitted to the local planning authority; and*

- f) *details of the content of monitoring reports to be submitted to the LPA including details of adaptive management which will be undertaken to ensure the aims and objectives of the Biodiversity Gain Plan are achieved.*

Notice in writing shall be given to the Council when the:

- *initial enhancements, as set in the HMMP, have been implemented; and*
- *habitat creation and enhancement works, as set out in the HMMP, have been completed after 30 years.*

The created and/or enhanced habitat specified in the approved HMMP shall be managed and maintained in accordance with the approved HMMP.

Unless otherwise agreed in writing, monitoring reports shall be submitted in years 1, 3, 5, 10, 15, 20, 25, and 30 to the Council, in accordance with the methodology specified in the approved HMMP.

The Council shall only issue approval of the habitat creation and enhancement works until:

- *the habitat creation and enhancement works set out in the approved HMMP have been completed; and*
- *a completion report, evidencing the completed habitat enhancements, has been submitted to, and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.*

Reason: To satisfy the requirement of Schedule 7A, Part 1, section 9(3) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 that significant on-site habitat is delivered, managed, and monitored for a period of at least 30 years from completion of development.

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) *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,

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.