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Oaklands Road
Haywards Heath
West Sussex
RH16 1SS

Our ref: 08186
Date: 21 January 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/25/1708
Location: Sunte House Birchen Lane Haywards Heath West Sussex RH16 1RZ
Proposal: Alterations and extension to residential outbuilding associated with Sunte House (Barn); external and internal alterations to remaining outbuildings (Stables, Cowshed, Byre); external and internal alterations to separate dwellinghouse (The Cottage)

Thank you for re-consulting Place Services on the above full planning 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 Report (Urban Edge Environmental Consulting, May 2024) and the Great Crested Newt eDNA Survey & Bat Survey for Building Group 2 (Urban Edge Environmental Consulting, November 2024) supplied by the applicant, relating to the likely impacts of development on designated sites, protected & Priority species and habitats and identification of proportionate mitigation.

We have also reviewed the Technical Note - Response to Ecology Consultee comments regarding BNG (Urban Edge Environmental Consulting, October 2025) and the updated Arboricultural Impact Assessment (Urban Edge Environmental Consulting, September 2025).

The Arboricultural Impact Assessment (Urban Edge Environmental Consulting, September 2025) confirms that only Tree T23 (Portugal Laurel) of a dbh of 190mm will be removed as part of the application. This was classified as 'introduced shrub' within the ecological assessment and will support the applicant's justification that this plant falls under this habitat criteria. As a result, we agree that the impacts of the proposed extension will only impact of 12m² of vegetated habitat, we agree that the application meets the de-minimis exemption under the Biodiversity Gain Requirements (Exemptions) Regulations 2024. Therefore, requirements for mandatory biodiversity net gains does not apply for this application.

In addition, we agree that the removal of a Portugal Laurel is unlikely to have any impacts upon roosting bats. Therefore, a ground-level tree assessment is not required for this application.

As a result, we are now 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.

The mitigation measures identified in the Preliminary Ecological Appraisal Report (Urban Edge Environmental Consulting, May 2024) and the Great Crested Newt eDNA Survey & Bat Survey for Building Group 2 (Urban Edge Environmental Consulting, November 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.

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). 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 Preliminary Ecological Appraisal Report (Urban Edge Environmental Consulting, May 2024) and the Great Crested Newt eDNA Survey & Bat Survey for Building Group 2 (Urban Edge Environmental Consulting, November 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. WITHIN THREE MONTHS OF CONSENT: BIODIVERSITY ENHANCEMENT STRATEGY

“Within three months of consent, 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 Report (Urban Edge Environmental Consulting, May 2024) and the Great Crested Newt eDNA Survey & Bat Survey for Building Group 2 (Urban Edge Environmental Consulting, November 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).

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.