

05th April 2019

Michael Bish, ADM Architects
Trinity
Goodwood
Chichester
West Sussex
PO18 0LA

Dear Michael

RE: Resurvey of Wings Nursery, Woodgate, West Sussex, PO20 3SU, April 2019 (our ref 8296)

Introduction

The Ecology Consultancy were commissioned by Michael Bish of ADM Architects to carry out a site walkover of Wings Nursery, Woodgate, West Sussex, PO20 3SU to help inform the development proposal of 50 new residential properties on site with associated recreational and hardstanding areas.

Arbeco Ltd (now a sister company of The Ecology Consultancy) undertook an ecological assessment of bat species (Arbeco Ltd, 2017a), a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (Arbeco Ltd, 2017b), and reptile presence / suspected absence surveys in September 2017 (Arbeco Ltd, 2017c). Due to the time elapsed since these surveys were undertaken it was necessary to conduct a repeat site walkover in order to evaluate any changes that may have taken place, and inform any modifications to the compensatory measures/mitigation plans previously outlined.

This report should be read in conjunction with the 2017 Arbeco Ltd reports.

Development Proposals

The outline development proposals for Wings Nursery comprise the construction of 50 new residential properties with associated recreational areas and hardstanding. The proposals will result in the loss of approximately 1.6ha of poor semi-improved grassland, 0.3ha good semi-improved grassland, 0.2ha tall ruderal vegetation and 0.1ha of scrub habitat to facilitate the proposed development.

Previous Surveys

London:
Tempus Wharf
33a Bermondsey Wall West
London
SE16 4T

Sussex:
3 Upper Stalls
Iford
Lewes
East Sussex
BN7 3EU

Norfolk:
60 Thorpe Road
Norwich
Norfolk
NR1 1RY

Midlands:
1-2 Trenil Park
Eastern Avenue
Lichfield
WS13 6RN

North:
Trinity Walk
Unit 37b, Market Walk
Wakefield
West Yorkshire
WF1 1LT

Scotland:
Suite 10
3 Coates Place
Edinburgh
EH3 7AA

Arbeco Ltd undertook an ecological assessment of bat species (Arbeco Ltd, 2017a), a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (Arbeco Ltd, 2017b), and reptile presence / suspected absence surveys in September 2017 (Arbeco Ltd, 2017c) on the site at Wings Nursery, Woodgate, West Sussex, PO20 3SU to help inform the planning proposals.

The habitats present on site include poor semi-improved grassland, good semi-improved grassland, tall ruderal, bare ground, dense scrub, buildings, ditches, species poor intact hedgerow, and scattered trees and were considered suitable for badgers, bats, breeding birds, dormice *Muscardinus avellaneus*, great crested newts *Triturus cristatus*, reptiles and invertebrates (Arbeco Ltd, 2017b).

Reptile presence / likely absence surveys were undertaken in Autumn 2017 which recorded a peak count of seven adult slow worms *Anguis fragilis* and five common lizards *Zootoca vivipara* on site (Arbeco Ltd, 2017c)

Walked activity transects and automated static detector surveys for bats were conducted in September and October 2017. Moderate levels of foraging and commuting were recorded across the vegetated areas of the site, with the majority of foraging and commuting activity recorded over the semi-improved grassland and hedgerows in the south west corner of the site (Arbeco Ltd, 2017c).

The site was also considered suitable to support nesting birds.

Methodology

A site walkover was undertaken by Georgina Baulcomb BSc (Hons) MSc GCIEEM on 3rd April 2019. The walkover followed the same methodology outlined in the Arbeco report (2017b) and comprised a site walkover to assess any changes in ecological makeup of the site. Consideration was also given to the habitats outside the site boundary to evaluate the ecological context of the site within the wider landscape, and their potential to enhance the ecological value of the site.

Results

The site has not significantly changed since the previous reports were issued. The habitats remained the same and with no new protected species constraints discovered.

Conclusion and Recommendations

The conclusions and recommendations detailed fully in the ecological assessment of bat species report (Arbeco Ltd, 2017a) and the reptile survey report (Arbeco Ltd, 2017c) are considered to still be relevant and are summarised below.

Bats

A designated wildlife area has been incorporated into the designs. This area will include a pond, reptile hibernacula, log piles and specific planting to enhance the site for wildlife. A detailed mitigation strategy is outlined in the reptile survey report (Arbeco Ltd, 2017c).

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The loss of the semi-improved grassland, tall ruderal vegetation and scrub from the site will result in reduced quantities of invertebrates using the site which will reduce the local bats' food source. This will be mitigated for with the inclusion of the wildlife area which will incorporate riparian habitat to enhance the site for invertebrates and thus enhance the site for foraging bats.

During the construction phase of the development, works should be kept to daylight hours and any security lights installed should be positioned facing away from the hedgerow boundaries and wildlife area. This will reduce disturbance to local bat populations.

The lighting scheme for the residential area should include low-level lighting with stepped baffle trims to minimise disturbance to bats. Lights should be faced away from the hedgerows on the west and south boundary and away from the wildlife area in the centre of site.

To further enhance the site for bats, bat boxes such as a Schwegler 1FF could be installed on houses built along the west boundary hedge or a Schwegler 2F on any suitable retained trees.

Birds

Any clearance of tall ruderal vegetation, scrub and buildings should be undertaken during the period October to February (inclusive) to avoid the nesting bird season. If this is not possible then a nesting bird check should be undertaken within 24 hours of work commencing with any nests identified left *in situ* until the chicks have fledged.

Reptiles

As detailed above, an area will be set aside as a designated wildlife site. This area will be connected to retained habitats on the western boundary via a habitat corridor consisting of native species planting. This, in turn, will be connected to the wider landscape along the western and southern boundaries by the retention of a 3m strip that includes hedgerow and scrub habitat. Further details are provided in the reptile survey report (Arbeco Ltd, 2017c).

A full mitigation strategy is detailed in the reptile survey report. This includes a precautionary approach to site clearance in relation to reptiles. The wildlife zone should be created ahead of works commencing and should be fenced off using reptile fencing prior to any clearance works. Site clearance should be undertaken in the reptile active season (March to October) and should be carried out under the supervision of an experienced ecologist.

Immediately prior to the debris and vegetation clearance the onsite ecologist should walk the area to be cleared to check for reptiles and dismantle by hand any features that could be used as refuges. Any reptiles found should be recovered by the onsite ecologist and moved to the receptor area.

Vegetation clearance should be undertaken in a phased way to allow reptiles to move out of the area to be cleared:

- The vegetation should be cut directionally, starting on the north-eastern end of the site and moving north-west to encourage reptiles to move away from the development footprint to suitable retained habitat in the north-eastern part of the site as shown in Figure 6.1.

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- The vegetation should be first cut to a height of approximately 15-20 cm.
- After a period of at least 24 hours from the first cut, the vegetation should be cut to ground level.

Vegetation clearance works should be supervised by an ecologist and undertaken using hand tools only, including brush cutters and strimmers, and piles of cleared vegetation should be removed from the work area and disposed of off-site or in the retained habitat in the north-western part of the site.

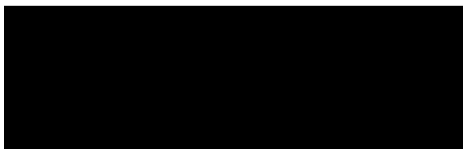
The retained habitat should be maintained post-development and appropriately marked immediately after the removal of temporary fencing to prevent access and incidental damage.

Biodiversity Enhancements

Under the National Planning Policy Guidance document, it is a requirement for the planning system to minimise impacts on and provide net gains in biodiversity where possible, contributing to the Government's commitment to halt the overall decline in biodiversity. In order to conserve and enhance the natural environment the following provision could be included:

- Bird and bat boxes should be installed on proposed buildings and / or mature native trees on site.
- The development proposals include incorporating a pond into the design. This should have a variety of depths to support different animal assemblages and be planted using native aquatic species such as water mint *Mentha citrate*, marsh marigold *Caltha palustris*, and greater spearwort *Ranunculus lingua*, which are all considered good receptor species for great crested newt egg laying.
- The boundaries on the site could be improved through the planting of locally sourced, native berry bearing species including hawthorn, blackthorn *Prunus spinosa* and rowan *Sorbus aucuparia*. These will provide additional foraging and nesting opportunities for breeding birds as well as potentially support dormice and invertebrate populations.
- Should any fencing be installed on site it is recommended that gaps are incorporated in any boundary fencing to allow for the dispersal species of principal importance including the European hedgehog *Erinaceus europaeus*, reptiles and amphibians into the wider landscape.
- Any new external lighting on site should be kept to a reasonable minimum and should include downward facing lights so as not to disrupt foraging and commuting bats (Arbeco Ltd, 2017b).

Yours sincerely,



Perry Hockin BSc (Hons) FdSc
Assistant Ecologist

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References

Arbeco Ltd (2017a) *Wings Nursery Bat Activity Survey Report*. Unpublished survey report.

Arbeco Ltd (2017b) *Wings Nursery Preliminary Ecological Appraisal*. Unpublished survey report.

Arbeco Ltd (2017c) *Wings Nursery Reptile Survey Report*. Unpublished survey report.