

Application No: F/7/21/PL

Site Address: Wicks Farm Ford Lane Ford BN18 0DF

Description of Works: Building a new 1.28 Ha high-tech glasshouse, reservoir and parking area adjacent to the existing 6 Ha glasshouse, reservoir and nursery area. This site is in CIL Zone 3 (Zero Rated) as other development.

Ecology:

The site lies within the SSSI Impact Risk Zone of Arundel Park SSSI and is 1.3km south of South Downs National Park.

The hedgerows along the west and north boundaries are fragmented but are used by wildlife as commuting corridors. Therefore, the boundary treelines and hedgerows should be retained and enhanced to improve existing green links with the wider landscapes and increase connectivity. This will include having a buffer strip around the hedgerows (5m) and during construction fencing should be used to ensure this area is undisturbed. Any gaps should also be filled in using native hedge species to improve connectivity. Conditions should be used to ensure this.

If any of the boundary line must be removed (for access) then 'hop over' points must be provided to reduce the gap created in the boundary line so bats and birds can still cross. Any gaps should also be filled in using native hedge species to improve connectivity. Conditions should be used to ensure this.

Bats:

The trees on site were surveyed and most have negligible potential for roosting bats, however, several trees along western boundary were considered to have low potential for roosting bats due to dense ivy cover. Therefore, as detailed within the Preliminary ecological assessment (January 2021) a precautionary approach should be undertaken and following an inspection by an ecologist prior to works commencing. The trees should be felled sensitively using soft felling techniques. If a bat is found all works must stop and Natural England consulted.

The lighting scheme for the site will need to take into consideration the presence of bats in the local area and the scheme should minimise potential impacts to any bats using the trees, hedgerows and buildings by avoiding unnecessary artificial light spill through the use of directional light sources and shielding. If artificial light is to be used to grow plants in the glasshouse during the night, a significant amount of light will spill onto adjacent habitats which are used by bats for foraging and commuting, and then further activity surveys will be required.

We require that a bat box is installed on the trees onsite facing south/south westerly positioned 3-5m above ground.

Breeding Birds:

Any works to the trees or vegetation clearance on the site should only be undertaken outside of the bird breeding season which takes place between 1st March – 1st October. If works are required

within this time an ecologist will need to check the site before any works take place (within 24 hours of any work). We would like a bird box to be installed on the trees on site.

Reptiles:

Most of the suitable habitat for reptiles is being retained as part of the proposals including the unmanaged field margins. However, a small amount of hedgerow is to be removed for access. Therefore, a precautionary approach should be undertaken on the site for reptiles. This involves any removal of scrub, grassland or ruderal vegetation to be done sensitively and done with a two phased cut. The removal of the rubble pile must be undertaken with an ecologist present and by hand where possible, outside of the reptile hibernation period. Ecological enhancements including the creation of log piles and banks around the reservoir for basking should be incorporated into the design of the new site.

Water Voles:

As detailed within the Preliminary ecological assessment (January 2021), there is a ditch located to the west of the site which has the potential to support water voles. If that ditch is used for a drainage or abstraction scheme, then a water vole survey is required and submitted for our approval with the planning application. If water voles or field signs of water vole are found, mitigation will be required and a mitigation strategy should be produced and also submitted with the planning application prior to determination.

Great Crested Newts:

A precautionary approach should be taken with regards to Great Crested Newts, with all vegetation clearance being undertaken whilst supervised by a suitably licensed ecologist. If Great Crested Newts are found during the process all works must stop and Natural England contacted.