

Application No: WA/32/21/PL

Site Address: Land at West Walberton Lane Walberton BN18 0QF

Description of Works: Construction of 30 No. dwellings together with associated access, parking, public open space & landscaping. This site may affect the setting of listed buildings, affects the character & appearance of the Walberton Green Conservation Area, is a Departure from the Development Plan & is in CIL Zone 3 & is CIL Liable as new dwellings.

Bats:

The site is classified as having high quality habitat to support commuting and foraging bats and has a regional value for both commuting and foraging bats. 19 trees along southern boundary are to be removed as part of the proposed development. 10 of these trees (Trees: 2, 3, 8, 10, 11, 13, 14, 15, 17, and 18) were assessed as having low suitability for roosting bats. Therefore, as detailed within the Phase 2 results and mitigation strategy (March 2021) there is potential for bats to be roosting within the trees on site. Due to this and as recommended within the survey further surveys are required (the trees must be inspected for potential roosting features and a search for evidence of bats (e.g. droppings) must be undertaken).

The site is used by commuting and foraging bats and therefore, the hedgerows and boundary treeline will need to be retained and enhanced for bats. This will include having a buffer strip around the hedgerows (5m) and during construction fencing should be used to ensure this area is undisturbed. 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.

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.

We require that bat bricks are integrated into the buildings and bat boxes are placed on mature trees onsite facing south/south westerly positioned 3-5m above ground.

Dormice:

There is a well-established population of dormice in local area that are using the site and therefore, the site is considered to be of county value for this species. Following submission of Phase 2 results and mitigation strategy (March 2021), we are happy that the mitigation proposed in section 10 would be suitable. A condition should be used to ensure this takes place.

However, the permanent loss of 374.52m² of hedgerow along the eastern and southern boundaries is concerning as it is the removal of vital habitat for dormice and other wildlife as well as commuting corridors for bats. Additionally, there is good habitat connectivity to this site for dormice as during

the survey evidence of both adult and juvenile dormice was found and breeding dormice are found within 2km of this site.

Reptiles:

There is a low population of slow worms on site, so the site is considered to be of local value for reptiles. Therefore, following submission of Phase 2 results and mitigation strategy (March 2021), we are happy that the mitigation proposed in section 9 would be suitable. A condition should be used to ensure this takes place. The enhancements for the site, including two artificial hibernacula are to be constructed around the boundary

Nesting 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 bird boxes to be installed on the new buildings and/ or on trees within the garden of the properties.

Great crested newts:

Pond 2 has average suitability to support GCN, however an eDNA test concluded a like absence of GCN within the pond. Therefore, 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.

Hedgehogs:

As detailed within the Phase 2 results and mitigation strategy (March 2021) precautions should be put in place for hedgehogs and the site will need to be searched carefully before works begin. If any small mammals including hedgehogs are found they should be relocated away from the construction area into surrounding suitable habitats.

Any brush piles, compost and debris piles on site could provide shelter areas and hibernation potential for hedgehogs. These piles must be removed outside of the hibernation period mid-October to mid-March inclusive. The piles must undergo soft demolition. A hedgehog nesting box should be installed within the site to provide future nesting areas for hedgehogs and we require that gaps are included at the bottom of the fences to allow movement of small mammals across the site.

As a precaution any trenches should be covered overnight, or a means of escape made available and any hazardous chemicals need to be suitably stored away so animals cannot access them.

CEMP:

Full details on how the habitats and enhancements onsite will be managed during the construction phase and post construction will need to be included within the Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) and Landscape and Management Plan (LEMP).

Hedgerows:

Along the northeast, west and south boundaries consist of UK native species and so qualify as NERC Priority Habitat. Northern and western hedgerows on site are classified as important hedgerows and are considered to be of local value. Therefore, the hedgerows and boundary treeline will need to be retained and enhanced for wildlife. This will include having a buffer strip around the hedgerows (5m) and during construction fencing should be used to ensure this area is undisturbed. 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.

Additionally, we are pleased to see the 5m buffer will be incorporated into the design of the new site with the separation of these boundary hedgerows from the garden areas to prevent the cutting down of the hedge.

Tree protective fencing must be in place prior to any construction machinery arriving on site, before any works on site get underway and must remain in place until all works are completed. Conditions should be used to ensure this.

Enhancements:

The creation of a wildlife pond benefits the environment and local aquatic species and the proposed features of this pond, found in section 12.4 (Enhancements) will need to be adhered to. The location and design will need to be shown within the landscape strategy.

Additionally, other enhancements to be incorporated within the scheme will need to be included in the landscaping strategy. These include:

- Any trees removed should be replaced at a ratio of 2:1
- Wildflower meadow planting used
- Filling any gaps in tree lines or hedgerows with native species
- Bat and bird boxes installed on the site
- Grassland areas managed to benefit reptiles.
- Log piles onsite
- We require that gaps are included at the bottom of the fences to allow movement of small mammals across the site
- two hedgehog nesting boxes included on the site

Chalk stream:

The chalk stream onsite is designated as a NERC priority habitat. Therefore, the chalk stream will need to be retained and enhanced for wildlife. This will include having a buffer strip around the chalk stream (5m) and during construction fencing should be used to ensure this area is undisturbed. Additionally, the stream must not be incorporated into any gardens and must have at least a 5m buffer between itself and any gardens, roads etc. built on site.

Biodiversity net gain:

The anticipated BNG as a result of the proposed development, assuming habitats are retained, enhanced or created as per the current project plan has been calculated as an overall net increase of

9.13% for the site. In line with Policy ENV DM5 of the Arun District Local Plan information on Biodiversity Net Gain needs to be provided as part of the planning application prior to determination. We are satisfied that the biodiversity enhancements recommended within the Phase 2 results and mitigation strategy (March 2021) are suitable and should be incorporated into the landscaping scheme. A condition should be used to ensure this takes place.