

[REDACTED]

From: Susan Leeson [REDACTED]
Sent: 12 December 2017 08:22
To: Ross Leal
Subject: Sunny Corner

Good Morning Ross

Following our recent conversation concerning the ancient woodland, please find attached a letter from the ecologist.

Best regards
Susan

SUSAN LEESON BSc, M.Phil
ASSOCIATE

[REDACTED]

www.neamesuifon.co.uk

Please note my working days are Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday



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8th December 2017

R.e. Ancient Woodland Designation

Dear Sir/Madam,

Further to your recent correspondence with Susan Leeson, I can confirm that Potwell Copse, adjacent to the proposed development site on Land at Sunny Corner is designated Ancient Woodland as outlined in the Phase 1 Habitat report. The proposed layout plan for Land at Sunny Corner shows House number 2 is 14.6m from the northern boundary, House number 3 is 9.4m for the northern boundary and House number 6 is 12.7m away from the northern boundary. "Development must be kept as far as possible from ancient woodland, with a buffer area maintained between the ancient woodland and any development boundary. An appropriate buffer area will depend on the local circumstances and the type of development. In a planning case in West Sussex the Secretary of State support the arguments for a 15m buffer around the affected ancient woodland, but larger buffers may be required".¹ The reasoning for the 15m buffer is due to the risk of reduction in semi-natural habitats in close-proximity to Ancient Woodland, change to light pollution, garden encroachment, increased predation from cats, and fragmentation and loss of connectivity to the wider landscape.

Below we have outlined reasons why we feel development slightly inside this buffer is acceptable and outline mitigation measures to offset this impact.

The location of Houses 2,3 and 6 are outside of the Root Protection Area (RPA) along the northern boundary of the site. Heras Fencing will be placed along the entire northern boundary to protect the woodland edge during the construction phases. Enhancement of hedgerows and creation of new hedgerows has been outlined in the Mitigation Statement for Land at Sunny Corner. However, further buffer planting will be implemented along the northern boundary to include native trees and shrubs and these have been listed within the Mitigation Statement for this site. Specific mitigation has been outlined for dormice within the Mitigation Statement report which will overlap with the protection measures outlined with regards to Ancient Woodland. This mitigation is designed to discourage encroachment of residential gardens in to the woodland edge boundary. Further recommendations include placing a covenant on the buffer area so this habitat can be managed but not cleared or removed.

Ancient woodland habitat mapping provided on Magic is created by looking at historic maps, the name of woodland, aerial photography, ground survey and the shape of the woodland. Therefore, it is important to assess the features of the woodland on the ground rather than relying on the designation it has been given. Having walked through Potwell Copse it has Ancient Woodland indicator species including bluebells with hazel being the dominant tree species. The woodland is wet underfoot and there are patches of the non-native *Rhododendron ponticum* spread throughout the woodland.

¹ [https://www.forestry.gov.uk/pdf/AncientWoodsSA_v7FINALPUBLISHED14Apr3.pdf/\\$file/AncientWoodsSA_v7FINALPUBLISHED14Apr3.pdf](https://www.forestry.gov.uk/pdf/AncientWoodsSA_v7FINALPUBLISHED14Apr3.pdf/$file/AncientWoodsSA_v7FINALPUBLISHED14Apr3.pdf)

Whilst Potwell Copse has been designated as Ancient Woodland, the characteristics of the woodland edge bordering the site is not consistent with Ancient Woodland habitat. There are conifers, cherry laurel (*Prunus laurocerasus*) and Cedar of Lebanon (*Cedrus libani*) that have been planted or naturally escaped along the woodland edge. This indicates that there has been some non-native planting within this area which reduces the value of the habitat and would indicate that this woodland edge is a Plantation upon an Ancient Woodland Site (PAWS) and we do not feel that there are Ancient Woodland Characteristics within 15m of the development.

I hope that the above information satisfies your concerns with respect to the woodland adjacent to the Land at Sunny Corner. However, please do not hesitate to contact me with any questions or queries.

Kindest regards,



Jess Burkitt
BSc, GradCIEEM



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