

Ecology response 31 3 25 for F/25/98967 STROUDWOOD NURSERY, STROUDWOOD LANE, LOWER UPHAM

Erection of 1no. industrial storage building and associated yard (Use Class B8), following demolition of existing barn.

Clare Martin

31/3/25

I have reviewed the Ecology comments, the updated Statutory Biodiversity Metric and the updated HMMP by Ecosupport (March 2025). This has answered my previous questions and I have no further concerns.

Lisa Malter

Ecologist

10/3/25

Ecology

This site is in a green impact risk zone for great crested newts. There are records of bats and badgers nearby.

I have reviewed the Preliminary Ecological Appraisal by Ecosupport (February 2025). The report states that there is low potential for foraging and commuting badgers, low potential for reptiles in the tall ruderal and bramble habitats, potential for dormice in the retained habitats and low potential for nesting birds.

Section 5.6 of the Planning Design and Access Statement by Nova Planning (February 2025) states: *The existing vegetation on the southern boundary, comprising a hedgerow and mature trees, will be retained and protected as part of the proposed development. The roadside hedge along the western boundary will also be preserved and enhanced with additional native planting. Further native planting will be introduced around the site perimeter to better integrate the development into the landscape, provide visual containment, and achieve measurable net gains in biodiversity.*

Precautionary working methods for protected species have been included in section 6.0 of the PEA report. These are appropriate and must be adhered to during construction. This includes directional strimming and passive dispersal during the active reptile period (April through September), an updated walkover for nesting birds, a pre-works check for nesting birds by a suitably qualified ecologist if work cannot avoid the bird nesting season March-August). As the active reptile period overlaps with most of the bird nesting season, it is highly likely that the pre-works check will be required, so this must be conditioned.

Recommended condition: Immediately before the start of any vegetation clearance works, a pre-works check for nesting birds is required. This must be done by a suitably qualified ecologist. If any active nests are found, work must stop, and a 5 m buffer must be erected

around the nest to protect it from disturbance until after the birds have fledged and left the nest.

Reason: To protect nesting birds and their young.

The location of the recommended bat and bird nest boxes must be shown on a plan. The plan will include the specifications of the boxes, the specifications of any exterior lighting and the directional aspect of the proposed elevations to ensure that these enhancements are in appropriate locations.

Given the rural nature of this site, a biodiverse green roof would be an additional enhancement, help the building to blend in with its surroundings and make a very positive contribution to the area.

Biodiversity Net Gain

I have reviewed the Statutory BNG metric (Dec 2024) and the BNG Habitat Management and Monitoring Plan (February 2025) by Ecosupport.

The statutory BNG metric shows that at least 10% biodiversity net gain can be achieved on site with a post development increase in area habitats of 11.48% and an increase in hedgerow (linear) habitats of 38.34 %, however I am not sure this is correct.

All of the bramble scrub along the northern boundary is proposed to be retained, however this does not match the proposed site plan which shows 'shrubbery' cut back along the western and northern boundaries.

A line of trees is proposed to be planted along the eastern boundary. This has been entered as 0.045 ha area habitat, but this appears to be a linear feature within modified grassland which is an area habitat. In the baseline the existing line of trees is listed as linear habitat (0.036 km) so why would a new line of trees qualify as additional area habitat? Linear habitat and area habitat must be accounted for separately in the metric.

In the BNG Habitat Management and Monitoring Plan Table 3 on p 18 states that 11 No. urban trees of moderate condition will be created along the eastern boundary of the site. This is shown on the BNG post development Layout plan (18/12/24) but not listed in the BNG metric.

The Proposed Site plan (Rev C4, dated November 2024, but submitted with the application in February 2025) shows only 5 trees on the eastern boundary but not extending past the building. If 11 trees are proposed, they must be shown on the site plan. The planting specifications of the trees, grassland and hedgerow must be provided.

The hedgerows will be managed for the benefit of wildlife which includes trimming on a 3-year rotation, with each side and the top trimmed in successive years. Alternatively, 1/3 of the hedgerow can be trimmed each year. This will ensure that a constant supply of flowers, fruits and seeds would be available for wildlife.

The flowering grassland seed mixture must be a shade-tolerant mix, suitable for the soil type and for growing under trees, next to a hedge and between a building and a hedge. Emorsgate EL1 has been recommended, however EH1 may be more suitable in this area.

Before determination the proposed Site plan, the BNG post development Layout plan and the Statutory Metric must all include the same information. An S 106 agreement and a monitoring fee must secure biodiversity net gain on site for 30 years.

Surface Water Drainage

The Drainage Strategy by Aqua Callidus Consulting (March 2025) contains permeability test results which show that infiltration is not possible on this site.

The proposal is to have porous gravel pavement for the storage yard with a coarse graded aggregate (CGA) foundation. The Drainage plan also shows a system of ACO channels draining the parking area, and notes that include *catch pit with Smart sponge to outfall*, two diffusers, exfiltration, a Controlflow 300 chamber and a GRC (Glass Reinforced Cement?) outfall. These have not been explained sufficiently in the Drainage Strategy but it looks as if all of the surface water drainage is filtered by the aggregate under the porous gravel pavement and discharged into a ditch to the west of the site at a rate of 2l/s which is acceptable. The simple index approach has been used to demonstrate that potential pollutants from the roof and the car park have been mitigated.

The report includes a standard SuDS maintenance table and diagrams of most of the proposed features, however there is no information about the Smart Sponge or its maintenance requirements.

Lisa Malter

Ecologist