

Additional Ecology response 19 6 25 for F/25/99256 ASHBOURNE STABLES, MORTIMERS LANE, LOWER UPHAM, SOUTHAMPTON, SO32 1HF

Construction of new vehicular access

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19/6/25

We suspect that the watercourse along Mortimer's Road is a modified stream rather than a ditch. If it is a modified stream, it must be correctly classified and a condition assessment of the stream by an accredited person will be required along with the BNG metric. Looking at the topography and the wider view of the surface water drainage map layers, this is likely to be the headwaters of a stream which goes under the Mortimer's Lane, into the pond at Pond Farm and then onto the golf course. The photos of the area on Google maps also show that the invasive plant Himalayan balsam may be present.

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Ecologist

16/6/25

I object to this proposal on the basis of hedgerow removal, net loss of biodiversity and culverting the ditch. This is contrary to DM 11, the NPPF and the Environment Act (2021).

An ecological impact assessment (EclA) is required, and additional further surveys may be needed before determination. The effects of this proposal on the hedgerow and the area around the hedgerow must be quantified. The presence, potential presence or absence of protected species must be established before determination.

Ecology

The hedgerow along Mortimer's Lane may qualify as an important hedgerow under the Hedgerows Regulations and may provide habitat for dormice, great crested newts in their terrestrial phase, nesting birds and hedgehogs. There are records of badgers in the wider area. Any water in the ditch which would be affected would flow into the stream to the south of the site which feeds into a tributary of the River Hamble.

The site is in a red impact risk zone for great crested newts. There are at least 4 ponds within 400 m of the site.

- **Red** (highly suitable habitat) or **Amber** (suitable habitat, likely to be present) – *When development falls into the red or amber zones on the impact risk map, developers MUST prove to their local planning authorities that their development plans pose 'no risk' to great crested newts, this can be done in one of three ways:*

1. Demonstrate that newts don't occur on your site (usually by commissioning an ecological consultant to carry out a site assessment).

2. Apply to Natural England for a Standard Licence – this can only be done after planning permission. You will need to commission an ecologist to carry out a survey and design a great crested newt mitigation scheme.
3. Join the NatureSpace District Licence Scheme, which usually provides the quickest, most certain and least risky option where a licence is required.

If this application is permitted a CEMP will be required and must contain precautionary working methods to protect wildlife and nearby watercourses from pollution during construction.

Biodiversity Net Gain

The application form lists the site area as 634 square metres.

The consultation response from Highways (11 June 2025) states that for a 60mph road with a 5% or more flow of vehicles made up of bus / HGV type vehicles, a minimum visibility splay requirement would be 2.4 x 154 metres. Any vertical obstruction above 1.0 metres in height that is found to be within the visibility splay will need to be removed / cut back accordingly, and a condition would be requested to ensure this is maintained in future years.

In addition, Highways mention that culverting a ditch would be required. This would affect any habitat in the ditch and the areas around it.

The covering letter from the planning agent (27 May 2025) states that *no trees would be affected by the development proposal and the area of hard surfacing would be under 25 square metres. The visibility splay across the highway verge will remain unchanged and accordingly we do not believe a BNG assessment is required.* The application proposes a visibility splay of 75 m.

This contradicts the information in the Highways consultation response and does not take into account the hedgerow linear habitat which would need to be removed and lowered to a height of 1 metre to accommodate the proposal.

The site photos show that hedgerow is continuous along Mortimer's lane other than the current entrance to the farm. The red line boundary for the site must include the visibility splay. Ten percent biodiversity net gain is applied to linear features separately from area features, and the proposed entrance plus the visibility splay (either the 75 m proposed or the highway requirement of 2.4 x 154 m) is longer than the linear habitat of 5 m exempt from the requirement to provide 10% BNG. The ditch will also need to be entered into the biodiversity metric and 10% net gain will apply.

Surface water drainage

DM6 states:

3. Where a watercourse is present on a development site, it should be retained or restored into a natural state and enhanced where possible. The culverting of any watercourse will not generally be permitted, and development should wherever possible remove any existing

culverts and increase on-site flood storage. Development should be laid out to enable maintenance of the watercourse.

Further information is required on the ditch, and whether it is a watercourse or a highways ditch. A short stretch of culvert for access purposes only is probably acceptable. An oversized culvert will maintain more of a wildlife corridor than a small one. It needs to be entered into the biodiversity metric and a 10% net gain will apply to this area as well.

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