

APP/20/00761 | Erection of a 64 bed older persons care home (Use Class C2) together with construction of new access road, car/cycle parking, drainage works, hard/soft landscaping and other associated infrastructure. | Land on the east side of Helmsley House, Bartons Road, and west of Normandy Road, Havant. 20.1118

Thank you for consulting me on this application. Thank you for your patience.

The application is accompanied by an Ecological Appraisal (FPCR, August 2020). The site comprises primarily agriculturally derived species-poor grassland with boundary hedging and areas of woodland with a high proportion of planted and self-sown non-native species. I am content that the site is of limited ecological value overall.

Surveys are ongoing and the comments below should be seen as interim until such time as a finalised ecological appraisal is submitted.

The key potential constraint within this area is bats, and especially the rare Bechstein's bat which is known to occur locally. Recent surveys in the immediate landscape have also revealed the presence of the rarely recorded Alcaethoe's bat. Bat surveys are still ongoing (or were at the time of this report in August 2020). No details of bat activity or tree surveys are contained within the report and therefore I cannot comment on bats further at this time.

Overall, the site is relatively unconstrained and therefore opportunities exist for meaningful ecological enhancement. Key recommendations within the ecology report are acceptable, such as the active management of retained woodland areas to increase biodiversity by removing high-density non-native tree and shrub species and increasing ground flora. The inclusion of native-led planting schemes (such as dedicated wildflower grassland areas but also more generally throughout the public realm) should be a key objective, and the use of e.g. green walls and green roofs should be considered seriously. The inclusion of integral and tree-mounted bat and bird boxes are simple and inexpensive options for enhancing biodiversity. A sensitive lighting scheme, taking full account of the local bat population, must be provided.

Once finalised details of the ecological assessment have been submitted, and ecological mitigation and enhancement measures are reflected in relevant documents, I will be happy to provide updated comments.

If you have any queries please don't hesitate to contact me.

Kind regards,

Tristan

Tristan Norton

**Senior Ecologist
Ecology Team**

Specialist Environment Services

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Coronavirus (Covid-19)

Hampshire County Council's response to the Covid-19 is available here (<https://www.hants.gov.uk/socialcareandhealth/coronavirus>).

In line with Government advice to reduce non-essential travel and work from home where possible, Ecology officers are now working remotely. Whilst we will endeavour to conduct our services in a timely manner and to meet statutory timescales where we can, there may be some impact to the services we deliver. We will ensure that we keep all applicants / interested parties informed of any further impacts to our services should they arise. The Council's response also means that no non-essential site visits or face to face meetings will be undertaken until further notice. Essential and contractual surveys may continue take place where there is no risk to the surveyor or the public, and in line with Government advice. This will be reviewed on an on-going basis.



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