

APP/15/01235 | Outline application for residential development for 43 residential dwellings with access off Woodcroft Lane and emergency access off Eagle Avenue with all other matters reserved. | Land adjacent Woodcroft Primary school, Woodcroft Lane, Waterloo, PO8 9QD 16.0125

Thank you for consulting me on this outline application. In summary, I consider that there are several issues that require clarification.

The application is accompanied by an Ecological Appraisal (HCC, October 2015) which provides an assessment of the potential ecological impacts of this proposal. The application site comprises an area of mostly poor semi-improved/improved amenity sward which has been left unmanaged for some time, alongside associated boundary vegetation such as hedgerows and trees. Overall, the site is considered to be of limited ecological value. The application must be viewed in conjunction with the approved Woodcroft Farm development to the north and west (APP/13/00804) as it impacts the same habitat. The western boundary of the current application site will abut the proposed new access road for the Woodcroft Farm site, which will itself require the removal of a number of trees, some of which offer bat roosting potential. There have not, as far as I am aware, been any detailed bat surveys of the proposed Woodcroft Farm road so it is not known at present whether bat roosts occur. If trees immediately west of this application site do support bats then there may be need to amend the assessment to take account of potential impacts.

In terms of impacts, the proposals will result in the severance of boundary habitat to the east (main access off Woodcroft Lane) and the south (emergency access onto Eagle Avenue) as well as the loss of the majority of grassland habitat. Indirect impacts may occur to boundary habitats during construction and through the use of excessive lighting post-construction. It is stated that all trees to be removed offer negligible potential for supporting roosting bats, although it is not immediately clear whether the route of the proposed emergency access has been assessed: the text suggests not.

I would also note that there may be impacts to biodiversity associated with boundary vegetation e.g. from the proximity of rear gardens (waste dumping, pruning etc.) and from lighting (will the new emergency route require lighting? What impact might lighting have on bat species?). These potential issues are not discussed within the ecology report but must be included within an outline application if potential impacts are to be understood at the point of determination.

In terms of protected and notable species, the site has been shown to support a small number of slow-worms and it is likely that the species breeds on site in low numbers.

In summary, I consider that there are several issues that require clarification.

I trust the above is suitable - if you have any queries please don't hesitate to contact me.

Kind regards,
Tristan
Tristan Norton

**Senior Ecologist
Ecology Team**