

Date: 20 December 2024
Our ref: 495871
Your ref: 242252



Wokingham Borough Council

BY EMAIL ONLY

development.control@wokingham.gov.uk

Hornbeam House
Crewe Business Park
Electra Way
Crewe
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CW1 6GJ

T 0300 060 3900

Dear Sir/Madam

Planning consultation: Full Planning Permission for the change of use of the Moat House building from office (Use Class E) to residential (Use Class C3) to provide 4no. residential dwellings and associated internal roads, parking, landscaping, drainage, plant, bin, and cycle storage.

Location: Moat House Biggs Lane Arborfield Wokingham RG2 9LN

Thank you for your consultation on the above dated and received by Natural England on 02 December 2024.

Natural England is a non-departmental public body. Our statutory purpose is to ensure that the natural environment is conserved, enhanced, and managed for the benefit of present and future generations, thereby contributing to sustainable development.

SUMMARY OF NATURAL ENGLAND'S ADVICE

FURTHER INFORMATION REQUIRED TO DETERMINE IMPACTS ON DESIGNATED SITES

The proposed development has the potential to have a harmful effect on terrestrial Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs) and those Special Areas of Conservation (SACs), Special Protection Areas (SPAs) or Ramsar sites that they underpin.

Natural England's statutory advice on these potential impacts is set out below.

Further information required

Recreational pressure impacts to European Sites (habitat sites)

This development site is within the zone of influence (Zol) for recreational pressure impacts to one or more European Sites (habitats sites).

Within this Zol, proposals for residential developments of 50 or more units will have a likely significant effect on the qualifying features of the European Site(s) (habitats site(s)) through increased recreational pressure when considered either alone or in combination with other plans and projects.

Your authority has measures in place to manage these potential impacts through a strategic solution which Natural England considers will be effective in preventing adverse impacts on the integrity of the site(s).

Notwithstanding this, Natural England advises that these measures should be formally checked and confirmed by your authority, as the competent authority, via an appropriate assessment in view of

the Natural England Access to Evidence - Conservation Objectives for European Sites and in accordance with the Conservation of Habitats & Species Regulations 2017 (as amended).

Providing the appropriate assessment concludes that the measures can be secured, it is likely that Natural England will be satisfied that there will be no adverse effect on the integrity of the European Site(s) (habitats site(s)) in relation to recreational disturbance.

Where the proposal includes bespoke mitigation that falls outside of the strategic solution, Natural England should be consulted.

Reserved Matters applications, and in some cases the discharge/removal/variation of conditions, where the permission was granted prior to the introduction of the strategic approach, should also be subject to the requirements of the Habitats Regulations and our advice above applies.

Discretionary Advice

Natural England may provide further advice to the applicant through the discretionary advice service (DAS). Refer to [Developers: get environmental advice on your planning proposals - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#) for more information.

Impact Risk Zones for Sites of Special Scientific Interest

We strongly recommend that local planning authorities (LPAs) use Natural England's Impact Risk Zones for Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI IRZs) (available from the [Natural England Open Data Geoportal \(arcgis.com\)](#) and to use on [MAGIC \(defra.gov.uk\)](#) along with guidance) to decide when to consult Natural England on development proposals that might affect a SSSI.

The SSSI IRZs tool is quick and simple to use and gives instant planning advice as a formal consultation response in certain circumstances. Use of the SSSI IRZs avoids the need for a formal email consultation on some development proposals, reducing unnecessary delays in the planning process. In turn this allows Natural England to concentrate resources on development proposals with the highest risks and opportunities for nature recovery.

[Planning and transport authorities: get environmental advice on planning - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#) provides further guidance on when LPAs must consult Natural England on development proposals.

Further general advice on the consideration of protected species and other natural environment issues is provided at Annex A.

We would be happy to comment further should the need arise but if in the meantime you have any queries, please do not hesitate to contact us.

For any queries regarding this letter, for new consultations, or to provide further information on this consultation please send your correspondences to consultations@naturalengland.org.uk.

Yours sincerely

Sally Wintle
Consultations Team