

From:



Subject:

RE: Planning Application Consultation 19NP0113 Field House, Stannersburn, Hexham, Northumberland, NE48 1DD

Date:

18 February 2020 12:12:17

Dear Jay,

I have looked at the documents relating to this application and have the following comments:

The bat report accompanying this application states that the survey was carried out after the main maternity period, but the report identifies that there is restricted potential for a maternity roost in the buildings. A small roost (1-3 bats) of pipistrelle 45kHz was identified and will be destroyed through the proposed work. It is proposed to register the site under a Low Impact Class licence.

When a planning application is likely to have implications for European protected species, explicit consideration must be given to the three tests enshrined in Regulation 53 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017, either in the Committee Report or, in the case of delegated decisions, in the Planning Officer's own notes. It is proposed that the work will be covered under a Bat Class Licence (low impact). Even though Natural England oversee these class licences, as the competent Authority the National Park Authority must evaluate the three tests to determine if such a licence is likely to be suitable before granting planning permission.

The 3 tests are:

- The proposal must be required for imperative reasons of overriding public interest or for public health and safety
- There must be no satisfactory alternative to the proposal
- The proposal will not be detrimental to the maintenance of the favourable conservation status of the species in its natural range.

The first two tests are planning related and if the proposals are in line with the local plan they are usually seen to be met. The third of these tests is examined in terms of the mitigation proposals submitted by the applicant. After looking at the documents provided my advice for this application is as follows:

The mitigation and compensation listed in the report includes erection of a bat box prior to work commencing, incorporation of a bat crevice in the renovated building, timing restrictions avoiding the hibernation period and cold weather for removal of the roof, plus working methodologies. Natural England standing advice states that the type and function of replacement roosts should perform the same function as those which they replace. In this instance, I think that the bat box suggested should be sufficient. The species recorded will use bat boxes, and these are suitable for smaller roosts. The provision of a crevice in the converted building will also provide replacement roosting habitat. The methodology and timing suggested for the works seems acceptable to prevent physical harm, including avoidance of the hibernation period and cold weather as bats could be torpid. The location of the bat crevice in the proposed converted building is shown on the drawing no. 4615-3-2.

In Northumberland low impact class licences can be used for up to three roosts for common pipistrelle, soprano pipistrelle and brown long-eared bats. These proposals will affect one roost of common pipistrelle, therefore it would seem the class licence is appropriate.

In summary, it is my opinion that the current mitigation suggested is sufficient. The numbers of bats likely to be impacted on are low, important only at the local level. If the mitigation is put in place and work carried out in line with the bat report it is likely to be successful given the other details provided. The third test will be met as the proposals are unlikely to detrimentally affect the conservation status of the bat species present on site.

In addition a barn owl was noted as nesting the buildings in a box. There is potential for this Schedule 1 (WCA) species to be disturbed when nesting so there should be checks in the spring and there should be no work taking place in the nesting period if they are present. This is noted in the mitigation section of the report and should also be made a condition together with moving and erecting the nest box before work and breeding commences. I note the location of an owl access point and loft to be provided in the converted building (shown on drawing no. 4615-3-2) which should also be made a condition. I do note that there is an overhead cable shown on the plans and the new access should not be located in a position where to owls could potentially fly into this when gaining access to the loft. Any new cables should not attach to the building close to the access

I therefore have no objections if the above conditions are made.

Yours sincerely,
Gill Thompson

-----Original Message-----

From: DC Consultation

Sent: 04 February 2020 08:50

To: Gill Thompson

Subject: Planning Application Consultation 19NP0113 Field House, Stannersburn, Hexham, Northumberland, NE48 1DD

Please see the attached consultation regarding a planning application which has been received by Northumberland National Park Authority. Full details can be viewed at <http://nnpa.planning-register.co.uk/plaPlanningAppDisplay.aspx?AppNo=19NP0113>

DC Consultation, Development Control Consultation

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Gill Thompson, Ecologist

Tel: [REDACTED]

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