

Officer Liz Anderson – Ecologist
Date 19/01/2026

Ref: 25/02115/FP
Att: Henry Thomas

Kirby Manor Farm, Northfield Road, Ashwell, Baldock, Hertfordshire, SG7 5JQ

Conversion of 3 existing agricultural buildings to provide 8 residential units, including gardens and formation of vehicular access

Consultee comments:

Thank you for consulting me, having looked at the submitted documents I would have no ecological objection to the proposal.

The submitted Statutory Metric identifies the site biodiversity baseline as .37 Habitat Units and 0.01 Hedgerow Units with the post-development habitats of the site valued at 1.34 Habitat Units and 1.11 Hedgerow Units which means that the development is easily able to meet the mandatory requirement for 10% BNG on site.

The ecological appraisal and subsequent bat emergence survey report identifies the presence of a protected species within the barns with a confirmed bat roost in Building 3 and a barn owl nesting in Building 1. As a result any works likely to impact these species will need to be licenced. Additionally a badger sett has been located within 50m of the site boundary. A CEMP (biodiversity) condition is noted in the Committee Report and this will ensure works proceed in accordance with any licencing requirements.

The NPPF calls for development to deliver a net gain for biodiversity in addition to a new requirement to incorporate ecological features which support priority or threatened species such as swifts and bats. Opportunities for enhancement, for example the inclusion of integrated bat and bird bricks, are suggested.

The case officer should note Biodiversity Gain condition wording should be added to the decision notice, the biodiversity gain condition is a pre-commencement condition having its own separate statutory basis and is deemed to apply to every planning permission granted for the development of land in England. To ensure the applicant is clear about this distinction the biodiversity gain condition should not be included in the list of conditions imposed in the written notice when granting planning permission but should remain separate.

Biodiversity Net Gain

The effect of paragraph 13 of Schedule 7A to the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 is that planning permission granted for the development of land in England is deemed to have been granted subject to the condition “(the biodiversity gain condition”) that development may not begin unless:

(a) a Biodiversity Gain Plan has been submitted to the planning authority, and

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(b) the planning authority has approved the plan.

The planning authority, for the purposes of determining whether to approve a Biodiversity Gain Plan if one is required in respect of this permission would be North Herts Council.

There are statutory exemptions and transitional arrangements which mean that the biodiversity gain condition does not always apply.

Based on the information available this permission is considered to be one which will require the approval of a biodiversity gain plan before development is begun because none of the statutory exemptions or transitional arrangements are considered to apply.