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BY EMAIL

Ms Hannah Guy
Planning Case Officer
Development Services
Huntingdonshire District Council
Pathfinder House
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14 March 2025

Dear Ms Guy

24/02258/FUL - DEMOLITION OF TWO OUTBUILDINGS AND ERECTION OF TWO SELF-BUILD DWELLINGS ON LAND AT 64A BOTTELS ROAD, WARBOYS

We have reviewed the 32 page officer report due to be considered by the Development Management Committee on 17 March and must draw attention to several errors and unsubstantiated statements.

1. At paragraphs 1.2 and 7.25 the officer report states the site is located **adjacent** to the Warboys Conservation Area and at paragraph 7.26 the report dismisses comments that the site is within the conservation area stating *'The Parish Council for Warboys and local residents have objected to this development on the basis that it is located within the Conservation Area – this is not the case, the Conservation Area lies beyond its western boundary and* ***no part of the application site's red line is within the Conservation Area****'.*

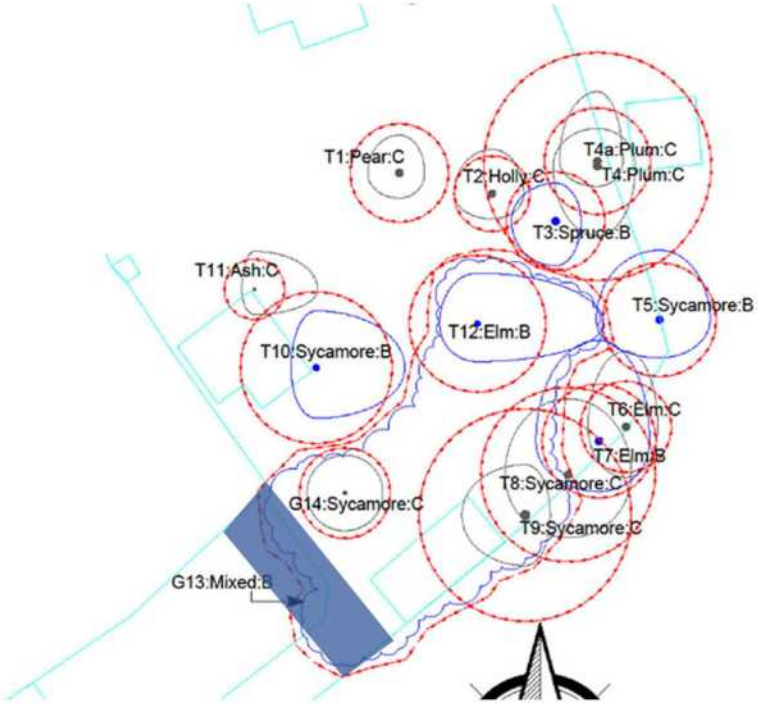
   However, comparing the application site Location Plan with the Council's Conservation Area Character Statement plan below, it is evident that part of the site (as shaded blue) is as a matter of fact within the conservation area. **This calls into question the assessment of the conservation area impact and the weight this is given in the officer report.**





2. At paragraph 7.26 the officer report states *'The trees are not protected by a TPO nor are the trees within the Conservation Area. The applicant therefore could remove these trees and shrubs at any given time, without penalty'.*

   However, reviewing the submitted Arboricultural Survey it is evident that Group 13 encroaches within the conservation area (shaded blue below) and there may be trees that are within the conservation area, and are given conservation are protection. **This calls into question the assessment of the conservation area and tree impact within the officer report.**



3. The advice from the Council's Landscape and Biodiversity Officer (attached) explains:

   'The proposal does not demonstrate that all potential adverse impacts on biodiversity and geodiversity have been full investigated, *nor does it demonstrate how adverse impacts will be avoided as far as possible, or if unavoidable how they will be minimised as far as possible.*

   This is further substantiated by ***the absence of a*** *desk study: Identification of any designated nature conservation sites within the zone(s) of influence; species records within the zone(s) of influence; Contextual information about the protected or priority habitats or species which are present. On this matter, Ecology colleagues are deferred to in the first instance.*

   The mitigation hierarchy has not been followed *to demonstrate avoidance nor adequate mitigation proposed for the loss of habitat.*

   Should the Planning Officer be minded approving this application, ***it is strongly recommended that a Statutory Biodiversity Metric is used to measure the baseline habitat value of the site. This is to ensure mitigation measures are proportional to the proposed loss, and to ensure compliance to LP30 and LP31,*** *as discussed above. It is highly likely that the necessary mitigation measures cannot be fully addressed on site, and that offsite contribution is required to ensure no net loss in biodiversity'.*

It is evident the additional assessment requested by the Council's Landscape and Biodiversity Officer has not been undertaken and the Council does not therefore have sufficient information to reach an informed assessment or opinion on the biodiversity impact of the proposed development, and whether this accords with Policy LP30 of the Local Plan and Section 15 of the National Planning Policy Framework (2024), as considered in paragraph 7.56 of the officer report.

The above identify fundamental matters in the officer assessment of the application that need to be reviewed.

Yours sincerely.

James & Megan Page

CC all members of the Development Management Committee.

Landscape Consultation

Proposal: Demolition of two outbuildings and erection of two self-build dwellings	**Location:** Land At 64A Bottels Road Warboys
Case Officer: HG **Landscape Officer:** PBAI	**Application No:** 24/02258/FUL

Comments:

There appears to a be a significant loss of trees and associated wildlife habitat and amenity value; all but one sycamore to be removed.

The proposal is exempt from Biodiversity Net Gain, due to the proposal being a self-build. The site is less than 5,000m^2 and there are no more than 9 dwellings.

We do not support this application in its current form. It is considered that the proposed loss of trees on site cannot be reasonably mitigated for, as proposed.

With reference to the Huntingdonshire Local Plan to 2038: LP 30 Biodiversity and Geodiversity, and LP 31 Trees, Woodland and Hedgerows:

> LP 30: *'A proposal will be required to demonstrate that all potential adverse impacts on biodiversity and geodiversity have been investigated.'*
>
> LP 31: *'b. sets out how the details of the proposal have been decided upon in terms of their impact on the value of trees, woodland, hedges and hedgerows and how adverse impacts will be avoided as far as possible, or if unavoidable how they will be minimised as far as possible.'*

The proposal does not demonstrate that all potential adverse impacts on biodiversity and geodiversity have been fully investigated, nor does it demonstrate how adverse impacts will be avoided as far as possible, or if unavoidable how they will be minimised as far as possible.

This is further substantiated by the absence of a desk study; Identification of any designated nature conservation sites within the zone(s) of influence; Species records within the zone(s) of influence; Contextual information about the protected or priority habitats or species which are present. On this matter, Ecology colleagues are deferred to in the first instance.

> LP30: *'All possible efforts must be taken to avoid adverse impacts. If it is demonstrated that adverse impacts are unavoidable they must be minimised as far as possible and then mitigated. Only where this process of avoidance, minimisation and then mitigation is insufficient to fully address adverse impacts will consideration be given to compensation measures. Following this process a proposal will only be supported subject to a hierarchy where:*
>
> *c. a protected species, a priority habitat or species, a site of local or regional importance, the achievement of water body good ecological potential, or the biodiversity value of the proposed development site as part of the wider network would be affected, the need for and the benefits of the proposal must clearly outweigh the assessed impacts.'*
>
> LP31: *'Loss, threat or damage to any tree, woodland, hedge or hedgerow of visual, heritage or nature conservation value will only be acceptable where:*
>
> *c. it is addressed firstly by seeking to avoid the impact, then to minimise the impact and finally where appropriate to include mitigation measures; or*

d. there are sound arboricultural reasons to support the proposal.'

The mitigation hierarchy has not been followed to demonstrate avoidance nor adequate mitigation proposed for the loss of habitat.

> LP30: 'c *[…] the need for and the benefits of the proposal must clearly outweigh the assessed impacts.'*
>
> LP31: *'Where impacts remain the need for, and benefits of, the development in that location must clearly outweigh the loss, threat or damage.'*

The Planning Officer is deferred to in the first instance regarding the planning balance.

> LP30: '*A proposal will ensure no net loss in biodiversity and provide a net gain where possible, through the planned retention, enhancement and creation of habitats and wildlife features, appropriate to the scale, type and location of development.'*
>
> LP31: '*Where loss, threat or damage cannot be fully addressed through minimisation and/ or mitigation measures the proposal may be supported if alternative measures such as reinstatement of features, additional landscaping, habitat creation or tree planting will compensate for the harm and can be implemented and established before development starts.'*

Should the Planning Officer be minded approving this application, it is strongly recommended that a Statutory Biodiversity Metric is used to measure the baseline habitat value of the site. This is to ensure mitigation measures are proportional to the proposed loss, and to ensure compliance to LP30 and LP31, as discussed above. It is highly likely that the necessary mitigation measures cannot be fully addressed on site, and that offsite contribution is required to ensure no net loss in biodiversity.

Signed: [redacted]

Dated: 04/02/2025