

Wiltshire Council Planning Consultation Response

ECOLOGY

Officer name: Emma Fisher

Date: 17/01/2018

Application No: 17/08735/FUL

Proposal: Provision of new public open space, footpath, play area, nine homes and associated infrastructure.

Site Address: Land at Church Place, Lydiard Millicent, Swindon, Wiltshire, SN5 3LR

Case Officer: Richard Sewell

Recommendations:

<input type="checkbox"/>	No Comment
<input type="checkbox"/>	Support
<input type="checkbox"/>	Support subject to conditions (please set out below)
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Holding objection (for reasons set out below)
<input type="checkbox"/>	No objections

Matters Considered

I have reviewed the details of the application and the accompanying ecological information and at present I cannot support this application for the reasons detailed below.

The *Preliminary Ecological Appraisal* (Smart Ecology Ltd, 13/07/2017) is in itself a robust document and I am satisfied with the approach to survey and assessments presented within the appraisal. However, I would highlight that the appraisal does not seem to be based on the design proposals that have been submitted to the Council for consideration as it is apparent that the appraisal was written on the premise that the trees along the northern and eastern boundaries of the site will be retained and not directly affected by the proposals and section 6.2.2 states: *'It is understood that the one hawthorn tree on site will be removed.'* In contrast, the submitted masterplan and Planning Statement clearly set out that the proposal entails the removal of trees to facilitate provision of a new access to a site, as section 2.5 of the Planning Statement stipulates: *'Section 2.5 of the Planning Statement stipulates: 'A few (approx three) mature trees will need to be removed to provide the new access from the current roundabout, creating a four-spur roundabout with pedestrian access.'*

Furthermore, Wiltshire Council's tree officer objected to the removal of trees afforded protection by a Tree Preservation Order (TPO) along the site boundary within their first consultee response and continued to express concern regarding the proposed new access road and the potential for negative impacts on the trees within their second consultee response. I concur with those comments and share those concerns.

Not only is the appraisal based on the understanding that none of the trees along the boundaries of the site will be removed, it also proposes avoidance and mitigation measures that would ensure the treeline and its value for protected species is protected. Section 6.2.6 of the appraisal states: *'It is recommended that an undisturbed wildlife buffer 10 m wide is created adjacent to the tree line, see Figure 2, Section 9. This will ensure that the tree line retains its value for foraging and commuting bats.'* I support this recommendation; however, the advice of the commissioned ecological consultant does not appear to

have been incorporated within the proposals and is not evident on the masterplan. In addition to the removal of trees from the boundary, the masterplan illustrates the creation of a new pathway and a playground directly adjacent to the northern treebelt. I would welcome a review of this masterplan by the applicant to ensure that an appropriate buffer is provided between any new design elements and the treebelt.

The appraisal also proposes ecological enhancements in section 5.2 which include the provision of a wildlife pond and planting of a 10m wide wildlife buffer adjacent to the northern treeline. I would like to see these recommendations incorporated within the design layout, and at present the Council does not appear to have been provided with plans illustrating that a 10m wide wildlife buffer will be retained and enhanced with planting. In addition, although the masterplan shows the inclusion of a SUDS pond within the northeast of the site, the application does not appear to have been accompanied with any details specifying how this pond will be enhanced to increase its value for wildlife.

I would encourage the applicant to review the recommendations in respect of ecological mitigation and enhancement set out within the appraisal as I would like to see these measures suitably incorporated within the design proposal/layout/masterplan.