

Hi Nick,

Thank you for sending this through.

Given that the pond is non-existent and from the photos that you've provided of the site, I am ok to accept that a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA) isn't crucial for this application.

Thank you for confirming the size of the site too – I would agree that it would be exempt from BNG under the new rules (site less than 0.2ha in size).

Despite being exempt from BNG, the requirements of the NPPF would still apply (Policy N1) where '*Development plans should safeguard and enhance the natural environment*'. I understand that bat and bird boxes wouldn't work well here due to the nature of the site, although a box or two could be placed on mature trees in the wider landownership, if applicable. Otherwise, I'd suggest something like a couple of raised planters with nectar-rich wildflowers to provide a resource for invertebrates.

I also have the following standard recommendations:

- Protected species can turn up in unexpected places and the granting of planning permission does not negate the need to abide by the laws which are in place to safeguard biodiversity. An informative should be used so that the applicant is aware that they must seek ecological advice should they find or suspect that the proposals will impact on protected species.
- Work that will impact on habitats where nesting birds may be present (for example vegetation clearance), should not be undertaken in the main bird nesting season (March – August) unless suitable checks for active bird nests have been undertaken. We would suggest that a condition to this effect be placed on any permission.

In summary, the application can be forwarded to determination and any permission if granted should be supported by the conditions recommended above.

Kind regards,

Melissa Sullivan
Ecologist

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