

FW: N/13/01615/REM - Ridgeway Farm, Common Platt, Lydiard Millicent, Purton - ecologist comments on revised plans

10 October 2013
12:59

Subject	FW: N/13/01615/REM - Ridgeway Farm, Common Platt, Lydiard Millicent, Purton - ecologist comments on revised plans
From	Burman, Lee
To	DevelopmentmanagementNorth
Sent	10 October 2013 08:14
Attachments	 N1301615...

Please load to the system . Many thanks, Lee.

From: Taylor, Jon
Sent: 25 September 2013 10:52
To: Burman, Lee
Subject: N/13/01615/REM - Ridgeway Farm, Common Platt, Lydiard Millicent, Purton - ecologist comments on revised plans

Lee,

As you're aware, I provided detailed comments on this REM application last month (attached), with the overall recommendation that prior to determination of the application (dated 02/08/13):

- *Update survey of calcareous grassland / mycological interest*
- *Review of development layout in eastern corner of the scheme to incorporate grassland / mycological interest and min 10m buffer from development*
- *Review of boundary treatments along hedgerows in light of the agreed 5m buffer, particularly where there are potential management issues (adoptions may wish to provide detail here)*
- *Submit landscaping details for creation / management of ponds, swales, grassland, trees / scrub*
- *Submit details for provision of bat / bird boxes, hibernacula and interpretation boards*

The applicant has subsequently submitted updated plans to address concerns raised by the council during the initial consultation. Taking each of these point in turn:

Update survey of calcareous grassland / mycological interest

The [ecology statement](#) has been updated with the results of a botanical survey carried out in August 2013 to re-examine the extent of calcareous grassland interest, the result of which confirm that two areas of calcareous grassland remain, one of which is within the Phase 1 area (in the south eastern corner of the site).

No mycological survey has been carried out to confirm the extent of the mycological interest at the site, as previously requested.

Review of development layout in eastern corner of the scheme to incorporate grassland / mycological interest and min 10m buffer from development

No changes to the development layout have been made to incorporate the agreed ecological mitigation. The [Phase 1 plans](#) indicate that the area of calcareous grassland in the current application occurs in the proposed location of Plots 152 / 153 and the swale which runs adjacent to these plots; this area of calcareous grassland would therefore be lost if the current layout is implemented, contrary to the approved EMP and Condition 13 (see previous comments dated 02/08/13). No updated mycological survey has been submitted, therefore it is assumed that this extent is still as shown in the plans submitted with the [ES](#) (Figure 5), indicating that most of the area of mycological interest within Phase 1

would also be lost to housing, SUDS and access, contrary to the approved EMP.

Review of boundary treatments along hedgerows in light of the agreed 5m buffer, particularly where there are potential management issues (adoptions may wish to provide detail here)

I note from the recently submitted Phase 2 plans that it will be possible to maintain a 5m buffer and allow for management along the western side of the hedgerow which forms the boundary between the two phases; I am therefore less concerned about the proximity of development on the eastern Phase 1 side of this hedge. No changes to the development layout have been made to incorporate the agreed 5m buffer adjacent to the southern hedgerow, however development within the 5m zone would be more limited adjacent to this boundary (mainly residential gardens) and at least it would be entirely accessible for maintenance from the old Purton Road. Creation of the cycle path along old Purton Road may also provide opportunities to introduce soft landscaping along the southern side of this hedgerow. Therefore although the boundary treatment is disappointing and not as agreed, the ecological impacts of the detailed design would be limited and I would not wish to maintain an objection to this aspect of the design.

Submit landscaping details for creation / management of ponds, swales, grassland, trees / scrub

Planting schedules include some rather unusual species compositions, however while they are not what I might have expected to see at least they are now implementable and enforceable, and comprise predominately native on the southern and eastern boundaries; therefore I would not wish to maintain an objection on such minor points.

Submit details for provision of bat / bird boxes, hibernacula and interpretation boards

The ecology statement states that 14 bat and bird boxes will be installed in buildings, however the location and type of box is not specified and I do not consider that this is sufficient detail to be implementable or enforceable. No details about the location of hibernacula are provided. The applicant has indicated that the location of interpretation boards has been specified in the agreed Open Space and Facilities Framework Plans; I haven't seen these plans, but if they do specify the location of interpretation boards and have been secured through legal agreement then I am satisfied that the REM application does not need to specify these details.

Conclusion

- The main issue is that the Phase 1 layout plans will result in the loss of calcareous grassland and mycological interest at the site and should be amended to remove residential plots, SUDS, paths, and landscaping from these areas, which should be maintained and managed for their ecological interest, as agreed through the EMP and conditions attached to the OUT permission
- Although disappointing, I am willing to concede on minor points relating to planting and hedgerow buffers
- Plans for bat / bird box and hibernacula provision should be submitted in sufficient detail as to be implementable and enforceable
- I would like to see the agreed Open Space and Facilities Framework Plans confirming the provision of interpretation boards

Kind regards

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