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18th July 2019

Dear Ms O'Brien

Planning Application Darton Park – Ecology Walkover Survey

An ecology walkover survey of an area of land proposed for a car park at Darton Park, was commissioned by Fiona O'Brien of Barnsley Metropolitan Borough Council (BMBC) on 16th July 2019. This survey was requested by the BMBC Biodiversity Officer Trevor Mayne. It was stated that a 'short and simple report from a professional ecologist will suffice in this case' and 'should detail the biodiversity mitigation measures and offer simple enhancements'. This letter report is considered to comprise a document sufficient to meet both requirements.

A walkover survey of the site was undertaken by Peter Middleton MCIEEM on the 18th July 2019.

Site Description (habitats)

The redline boundary of the site encompasses an area of amenity grass and the access road, which runs south from Church Street in Darton (Grid Ref SE 31217 09956) (see Figure 1). The entrance to the proposed carpark from the access road will impact a small area of species poor outgrown semi-improved neutral grassland (boundary of the amenity grass) and scrub, however, no trees will be removed. The access road is largely tarmacked with uncut grass at the sides. The amenity grassland is species poor, regularly mown and shows signs of previous nutrient enrichment, as docks *Rumex* species are frequent in the sward. Grasses present include abundant creeping bent *Agrostis stolonifera* and frequent Yorkshire fog *Holcus lanatus* and cock'sfoot *Dactylis glomerata* together with occasional meadow-grasses *Poa* spp. Perennial ryegrass *Lolium perenne*

was not identified but is probably present, whilst herbs are restricted to frequent white clover *Trifolium repens*, dandelion *Tarraxicum officinale* agg. and creeping buttercup *Ranunculus repens* (see Plate 1 & 2). A similar assemblage of species is present along the field boundary and the access road together with cleavers *Gallium aperine* and a little elder *Sambucus nigra* scrub.

At the periphery of the amenity grass but not within the redline boundary are five immature broad-leaved trees. Tree species include four Swedish whitebeam *Sorbus intermedia* and one common lime *Tilia x europaea*. Site habitats are considered to be of no more than site level importance to nature conservation.

Figure 1 Red line boundary

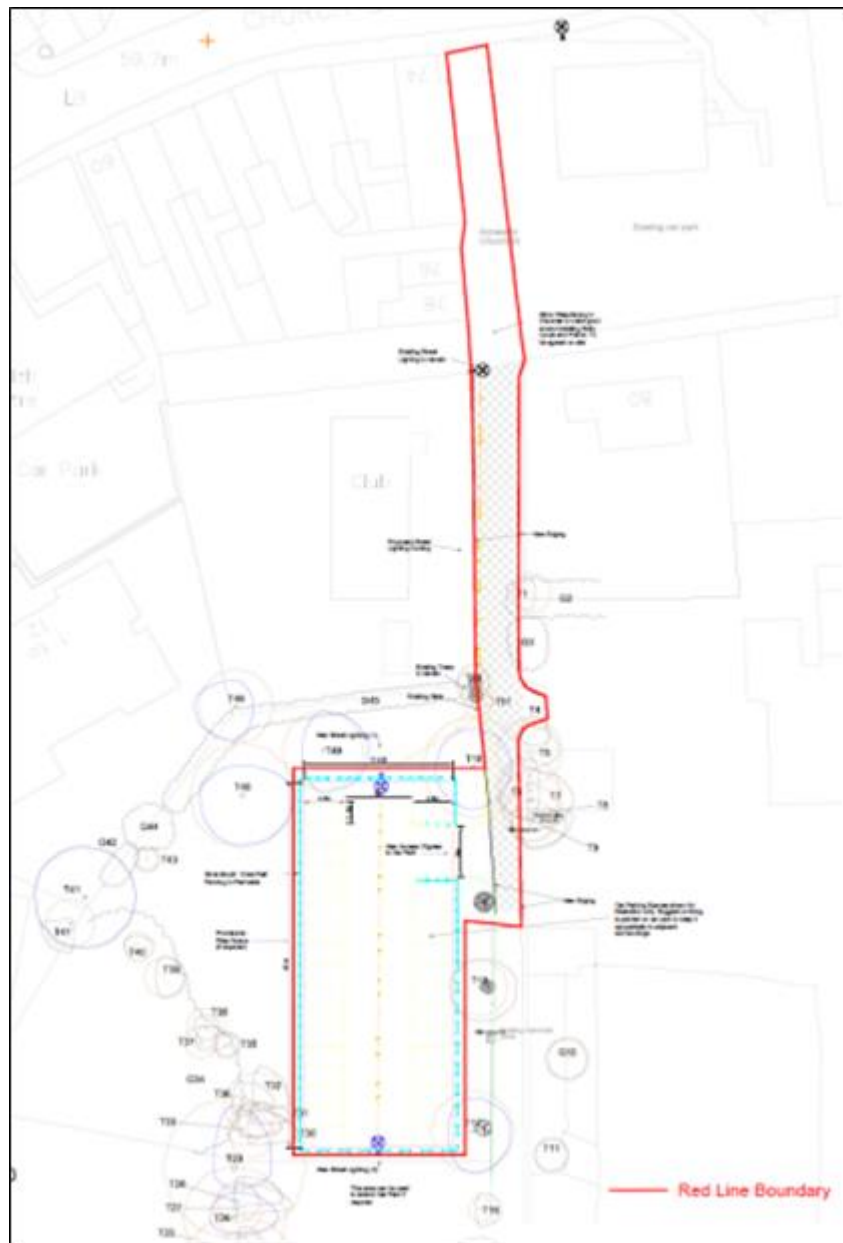


Plate 1. View south from north boundary



Plate 2. View north from southern boundary of proposed car park



Protected species

Considering the habitats to be lost as a result of the proposed scheme and the nature of the development, potential impacts to protected species are limited to bats.

GCN – There are no ponds within 500m of the site and there have been no EPS mitigation licences issued for locations within 1km of the site. The site provides very limited potential to support resting or hibernating Great Crested Newt (GCN) *Triturus cristatus* as habitats are largely restricted to amenity grass. GCN are therefore considered unlikely to be a receptor to the proposed scheme.

Bats – No trees adjacent to the redline boundary display features with potential to accommodate roosting bats. However, there is a copse near the western boundary that is expected to provide good foraging habitat for bats. It is however noted that the copse lacks connectivity to other high-quality foraging habitats.

Consequently, site habitats and adjacent offsite habitats are unlikely to be of greater than site level importance to foraging bats.

Plate 3. Proposed car park entrance, as indicated by red arrow



Assessment of impacts

The site is not considered to be of more than site level importance to any habitat or species group. Potential impacts of the development are considered to comprise:

- Damage to the root systems or stems of existing trees out-with the redline boundary.
- Temporary increase in vehicle movements during the period of construction into and out of the site.
- Temporary increase in noise, dust and vibration caused by construction work.
- Long-term increase in vehicle movements and resulting noise as a result of future use as a car park.
- Long term increase in human presence on site following the construction of the new car park.
- Increase in nighttime lighting that has the potential to negatively affect foraging bats.

Mitigation

Adjacent trees should remain intact. Taking a best practice approach to nature conservation issues, where boundary trees are to be retained, British Standard 5837 (2012): Trees in relation to design, demolition and construction, should be

followed. Root Protection Zones (RPZ's) should be calculated and implemented to prevent harm to trees. This should also apply to any trees up to 5 m from the boundary.

Consideration should be given to limit the impacts of new street and car park lighting on foraging bats. New lighting should be designed to reduce light spill across retained vegetation beyond the boundary of new hardstanding. Specifically, consideration could be given to the use of timers to reduce the time of lighting operation, with placement of directional luminaires around the car park boundary shining into the centre of the site.

Enhancements

In accordance with the aims of planning policy NPPF: 15, it is suggested that the developer follows the recommendations detailed below.

- New tree and shrub plantings should be an integral component of the soft landscaping proposals for the site. Plantings should include locally native species of trees and shrubs to be planted along the east and west boundaries of the car park. Additionally, a species rich hedgerow could be planted along the southern boundary of the hardstanding.
- Two Schwegler woodcrete 2F (with double front panel) bat boxes to be erected on the largest of the adjacent trees at least 4m from the ground.

If you have any queries or comments in relation to this report, please do not hesitate to get in contact.

Yours Sincerely



Peter Middleton MCIEEM