

Brittany Fearfield
North Kesteven District Council
Planning Department
District Council Offices
Kesteven Street
Sleaford
Lincs
NG34 7EF

13th November 2023

Our Reference 60468641 23/1324/FUL Stone Barn

Dear Brittany

23/1324/FUL & 23/1325/LBC: Stone Barn, Dovecote Rise, South Rauceby

Decision Checklist:	
Has an ecology report been submitted?	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
Is the proposal within or close to any designations?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Request Clarification <input type="checkbox"/>
Is there potential for protected or notable habitats & species?	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Uncertain <input type="checkbox"/>
All relevant surveys completed using appropriate methods?	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Request Clarification <input type="checkbox"/>
Evidence of protected or notable habitats & species found?	Habitats <input type="checkbox"/> Species <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Uncertain/No <input type="checkbox"/>
Will relevant habitats and/or species be impacted?	Habitats <input type="checkbox"/> Species <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> EPS <input type="checkbox"/> Uncertain/No <input type="checkbox"/>
Are mitigation measures adequate to avoid offences?	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Uncertain <input type="checkbox"/>
Is development consistent with objectives for No Net Loss?	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Uncertain <input type="checkbox"/>
Have proposals for ecological enhancement been made?	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) assessment provided?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Can planning permission be granted subject to appropriate conditions and obligations?	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Holding Objection <input type="checkbox"/>

I am satisfied with the information provided within the Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA) report and agree that the proposed development is not likely to adversely affect protected species.

The building has been assessed as having low suitability for roosting bats and usually this would necessitate further survey effort. However, a clear explanation has been provided for why this additional survey is not required, and I am satisfied with the reasons given. The features with suitability for bat roosting were all accessible and could be adequately inspected. No evidence of roosting bats was found.

The site is located within a strategic green corridor, but I do not believe that the proposed development conflicts with the relevant planning policy. The barn itself is not green infrastructure, and the proposed development will not substantively alter the existing habitat setting and context.

Proposals for ecological enhancement have been made in the form of one bat and two swift boxes and these are shown on the proposed layout plan. I welcome these proposals and these can be conditioned. However, I wish to give the following advice in relation to the proposals:

- I am not clear if the proposed boxes will be integral to the structure of the dwelling. The planning condition should secure integral provision.
- The proposed bat box is located on the north facing aspect. I think that the south facing aspect would be better (given it would be a warmer location) for a bat box, and this has relevance to the swift provision (see below).

- The swift boxes are proposed for the east facing aspect, but the positions are likely to be at a relatively low height and therefore sub-optimal for this species. I therefore recommend that these be relocated to the north facing aspect so that they can be positioned at above 5m height.

I am not clear if this development is of a type that is excluded from the local plan requirement for Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG). If the relevant planning policy applies then the BNG assessment will need to be provided before the application is determined, and the assessment should be prepared in accordance with the relevant guidance and good practice requirements¹².

Yours sincerely

David Broughton BSc MSc MPhil CEnv MCIEEM
Associate Ecologist
AECOM Limited

¹ <https://www.n-kesteven.gov.uk/sites/default/files/2023-05/Biodiversity%20Net%20Gain%20Guidance%20Note.pdf>

² <https://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/6049804846366720>