**From:** Charlotte Watkins
**Sent:** 19 November 2015 09:58
**To:** Nathanael Stock
**Subject:** 15/01693/F Muddle Barn Farm, Colony Road, Sibford Gower

**15/01693/F  Muddle Barn Farm, Colony Road, Sibford Gower**

Nathanael

Sorry for the delay in getting back to you on this application. I carried out a site visit last week to the area proposed for development (red line) and up to 100m from it (where accessible) principally to check the accuracy of the submitted badger information. Whilst it is a sub-optimal time of year to assess most other aspects, badgers are active in winter and ground vegetation is low allowing activity to be spotted more easily. I therefore have the following comments:

I found the information within the ecological report submitted with the application to be accurate. I did not look at all the land within the applicants ownership due to time constraints but confined it to the areas in which should a sett be present it could possibly be affected by development such that protective fencing or a licence would be required. This is the aspect relevant as a material consideration for the LPA.

The large badger sized hole to the West of the ménage noted in the report is still present but there were no signs of recent badger activity. I did not find any evidence of specific badger activity along the closest hedgerow to the proposed development (to the North), which would be of most concern, although there were a number of places where mammals (potentially badgers) have accessed through the hedge line further to the West of the development site. I did not note any setts or latrines in this hedgerow. In general the development site itself consists largely of buildings, hard standing and short turf and setts would be obvious here.

The claims that there are badger setts in the vicinity of the applicants land and adjacent plots may well be accurate and it is quite likely particularly along the boundary hedgerow of the owners land to the South as there is plentiful suitable foraging habitat for badgers here. We also know there are many records of badgers from the public around the Haynes Barn area  to the North (these reports are not on TVERC datasets and therefore would not have shown up in the Ecological Consultant’s desktop study). However setts in these areas would not be directly affected by development of the barns (there may be some impact on their routes for foraging but this is not protected by law). Setts within 30m of works are of concern or proven commuting routes but this is not the case here. The vast majority if not all of the current foraging grounds for badgers would remain intact.

In short I think it is unlikely that badgers will be significantly affected by the proposals as long as the precautions suggested within the ecological report are adhered to in order to protect foraging badgers which are undoubtedly in the area. There is no evidence to suggest a sett would experience illegal disturbance and a licence would not be necessary at this point.  However badgers are a highly mobile species and should site clearance works not commence by July 2016 a brief update check for badgers on site would be advisable.

Standard tree protection measures for retained hedgerow at Northern boundary and retained trees should be included in any landscape conditions.

I would suggest the following conditions to any permission:

**K23 Use of Native Species**

All species used in the planting proposals associated with the development shall be native species of UK provenance.

Reason KR3

**K12 Nesting Birds: No Works Between March and August Unless Agreed**

No removal of hedgerows, trees or shrubs nor works to, or demolition of buildings or structures that may be used by breeding birds, shall take place between the 1st March and 31st August inclusive, unless the Local Planning Authority has confirmed in writing that such works can proceed, based on health and safety reasons in the case of a dangerous tree, or the submission of a recent survey (no older than one month) that has been undertaken by a competent ecologist to assess the nesting bird activity on site, together with details of measures to protect the nesting bird interest on the site.

Reason KR1

**K16 Out of Date Survey**

If the site clearance and demolition of the current dwelling hereby approved does not commence by July 2016  a revised walk over badger check of the site shall be undertaken prior to the commencement of the development to establish changes in the presence, abundance and impact on badgers. The survey results, together with any necessary changes to the mitigation plans or working methods shall be submitted to and approved in writing the Local Planning Authority. Thereafter, the development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details.

Reason KR1

**K15 Carry Out in Accordance with Survey**

The development hereby approved shall be carried out in accordance with the recommendations and working practices set out in sections 4.4 and 4.5 of the ‘Extended Phase 1 Survey assessment and Bat Survey’ carried out by Wild Service Ecological Consultancy on July 2014.

Reason  KR1

\**It should be noted this includes restrictions on the demolition process and an update bat survey if certain conditions are not met.*

**K17 Biodiversity Enhancement**

Prior to the commencement of the development hereby approved, including any demolition, and any works of site clearance, a method statement for enhancing biodiversity on site with particular reference to nesting/roosting provision for swallows and bats shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Thereafter, the biodiversity enhancement measures shall be carried out and retained in accordance with the approved details.

Reason KR2

Regards

Charlotte

Dr Charlotte Watkins

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