
143085/FO/2025 - Planning Permission Objection

From [REDACTED]

Date Tue 01/07/2025 21:05

To Sue Wills [REDACTED]

Cc Planning [REDACTED]

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Hi Sue,

I would like to submit my objection to the proposal for new homes at Hinchley Road by Miller Homes (reference 143085/FO/2025).

I have included [REDACTED] to a PDF with my reasons as well as some supporting media with images showing the habitat which will be destroyed by the development and a short video with evidence of bats foraging in the proposed development area.

I hope I have not submitted this too late - I have been out of the country, I'm hoping the Consultation Expiry Date is inclusive!

My details:

[REDACTED]
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Introduction

Miller Homes have submitted a comprehensive plan for the creation of 106 new homes. While the demand for new homes in Manchester is understandable, I believe the current proposal would be a detriment to existing residents and wildlife in the area if implemented.

The submitted proposal includes removing groups of large trees and vegetation which currently provide a rich habitat for local wildlife and afford a large degree of privacy to existing residents.

In the following sections I provide reasons as to why the development should not go ahead as is. At a minimum a revised proposal needs to be submitted which does more to address the ecological concerns and privacy concerns of existing residents.

Privacy

Rear Bordering Houses

The proposed development plan shows several of the newly proposed houses (notably plots 45-50 and 71-76) will be built with the rear of the houses bordering the rear of existing houses on Northwold Drive and Caspian Road. The existing homes here are currently afforded a large degree of privacy due to the dense vegetation and large trees which currently exist on this part of the land (notably trees marked T5-T8 as well as G3 and G4 on the [Arboricultural Impact Assessment](#)). If the plan to remove these trees and build over them is completed, the existing houses will now be directly overlooked and have opposite properties with a direct eye line into many of the rooms in the rear of the home.

The boundary treatments plan shows the intent is to build 1.8m high fencing on this boundary between new and existing housing, which will provide next to no eye line obstruction and offer no privacy for residents of both existing and new housing.

Using my own property as an example, none of the rooms on the rear of the house are currently overlooked and due to the layout of the garden and existing housing, much of the garden is private. If the plan goes ahead, it is likely that the house on plots 46 (a 2.5 storey house) will now completely overlook the garden, while 45 and 47 will also overlook to a degree. The upstairs windows of the new house on plot 46 will have a direct eye line into our living room, conservatory, and two upstairs bedrooms. From the plan I suspect most of the aforementioned properties on Northwold Drive and Caspian Road will have a similar reduction of privacy.

I do not believe Miller Homes have taken this into consideration as the proposed 1.8m high fence will not mitigate this loss of privacy, and the plan submitted does not show any indication of planting any vegetation on these boundaries to reduce this loss of privacy.

Front Facing Houses

Many of the homes on Hinchley Road and some on Caspian Road will now have front-facing houses directly opposite them. While of a lesser impact, all of these homes will suffer a degree of privacy loss as they will now have a direct eye line into the front windows of the proposed houses.

Ecology

Bats

All bat species are European protected species (EPS) protected under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017. It is an offence to: deliberately kill, injure, disturb or capture them, damage or destroy their breeding sites and resting places (including when bats are not present).

Bats can be observed flying amongst the trees which are planned to be removed at dusk within the proposed site area, specifically in the group of trees denoted as **G3** in the provided [Arboricultural Impact Assessment](#). Bats are using these trees to forage and commute at a minimum, and may potentially be roosting within these trees. I have provided a short video along with this document.

A preliminary ground level inspection for bat PRFs was carried out on a single day (March 4th, 2025) as part of Ascerta's ecological assessment and found no evidence of PRFs, however, the 2023 bat survey guidelines followed by Ascerta note the difficulties of assessing bat PRFs from the ground:

- *"some tree features cannot be seen from the ground – in a study of tree roosts known to be occupied by radio-tagged bats by Davidson-Watts (pers. comm., 2021), in 26% of cases the features could not be identified from ground level;"*

They also note the difficulty of establishing the absence of bats and that in most cases, repeat visits are required to detect bats:

- *"Because tree-roosting bats move around and surveys are constrained, it is very difficult to establish absence."*
- *"Andrews and Gardener (2015) presented a summary of evidence and an encounter probability model for PRF inspections for tree-roosting bats (based on the known roost-switching behaviour of Bechstein's bat) showing that a high number of repeat visits is required to detect bats."*

Given the confirmed sightings of bats within the project area I believe further assessment has to be done to confirm that there are no bats roosting within the trees in and around G3, and that bats will not be negatively impacted by removal of habitat used for foraging and commuting.

Non-Protected Species

In addition to bats, the trees and vegetation proposed for removal are utilised by a number of other non-protected species. Many different species of bird can be heard and many nests are visible from ground-level. Blackbirds, wrens, jackdaws, song thrushes, blue tits,

sparrows, pigeons and magpies are some of the species commonly seen within the proposed development area and surrounding gardens. Squirrels are commonly seen using the area as a through-fare and foxes can be heard at night.

Removal of the trees and vegetation in the development area as proposed would be a clear detriment to the species listed above and potentially others.

Arboricultural Impact

The Arboricultural Impact Assessment provided by Ascerta shows the intent to remove 20+ existing trees in the development area, many of these are over 20 years old and some are in the mature age class. For the trees which are to be removed, Appendix 1 of the provided assessment recommends the following:

- *"Remove group to accommodate the development proposals. Replace with suitable specimen at the landscaping stage of the project".*

However, it is clear from the provided plans no suitable space will be available to grow any trees of significant size. The plan in the [Biodiversity Impact Assessment](#) shows plans to grow trees up to heights of 5.5m, however these will be significantly smaller and less mature than the existing trees, which are a range of sizes up to the largest at 24m tall. Images of the existing trees marked for removal will be provided.

Mature large trees provide better habitats for a wider variety of species compared to smaller, younger trees. They offer more resources and can support more complex ecosystems. It is clear these habitats will be lost in the case of the 20+ trees marked for removal. Additionally, as most of the newly proposed trees on the plan exist within plot boundaries, they may ultimately be removed by the homebuyers.

Biodiversity Net Gain

The BNG calculation provided with the application shows a net loss of 11.11 habitat units (93.91%) if the development goes ahead. Miller Homes plan on achieving the majority of their BNG obligations off-site as explained in the [Biodiversity Impact Assessment](#):

- *"The 10% biodiversity net gain for the site will be secured via a legal agreement within an offsetting land parcel."*

Although legally acceptable, this results in a large loss of biodiversity for the local area and would be a negative result for local wildlife and residents overall.

Summary

As-is the proposed development would result in a significant negative impact for local biodiversity with removal of habitats, foraging areas and through-fare for a number of non-protected species. The ecological surveys provided have also not conclusively confirmed that the proposed development will not result in disruption and loss of habitat to bats.

Furthermore, the development will also result in a large reduction of privacy for existing residents if it goes ahead.

A revised plan utilising some of the existing trees and vegetation could mitigate both the ecological concerns and privacy concerns for existing residents. Until revisions are made the proposed planning application should not go ahead.