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## Planning application 142464/FO/2025 Former Riverpark

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From [REDACTED]  
Date Wed 21/05/2025 15:53  
To Jennifer Atkinson [REDACTED]

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Hi Jen

Thank you for consulting the GMEU

### Summary

Potential ecological issues include badger, nesting birds, hedgehog, Japanese knotweed and biodiversity net gain.

### Bats

The risks to bat roosts were dealt with previously as part of the prior approval application for clearance of the site 141383/DEM/24. No evidence of bats was found with all buildings and trees assessed as having negligible potential. No further information is required with demolition already underway.

I also agree with the consultant that the site is not of significant importance for foraging bats, with local value located along the northern boundary with the railway. Sensitive lighting should be utilised along this boundary. However, as the layout indicates that this boundary will be faced primarily with back gardens, I am satisfied that it is very unlikely there will be any significant effects on foraging bats from lighting. No further information or measures are required.

### Badger& Other Mammals

No evidence of badger was recorded on the site, which has now been cleared. They are however present in the wider locality, there is therefore a low risk of harm during construction to badger and other mammals such as the priority species hedgehog. Precautionary working measures should be employed during construction. I therefore recommend a condition along the following lines is applied to any permission.

*Prior to construction a precautionary working measures method statement for mammals, including badger and hedgehog will be provided to and agreed in writing by the LPA*

### Nesting Birds

The latest google earth imagery indicated that site clearance was almost complete, with nesting birds protected as part of the prior approval notice. I am satisfied that the risks are now low enough to covered by an informative along the following lines.

*The applicant is reminded that, under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 as amended it is an offence to remove, damage, or destroy the nest of a wild bird, while the nest is in use or being built. Planning consent does not provide a defence against prosecution under this act. If a birds nest is suspected work should cease immediately and a suitably experienced ecologist employed to assess how best to safeguard the nest(s).*

### Invasive Species

Japanese knotweed is present along part of the northern boundary. This species is listed under schedule 9 part 2 of the Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981 (as amended). It is an offence to cause this species to grow in the wild. The roots are likely to extend under the site, the plant capable of regrowing from root fragments. I therefore recommend a working method statement to prevent disturbance and spread of this species during construction. I recommend a condition along the following lines.

*Prior to development a method statement to prevent the spread of Japanese knotweed will be provided to and agreed in writing by the LPA.*

Contributing to and Enhancing the Natural Environment & Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG)

Section 187 of the NPPF 2024 states that the planning policies and decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment. 10% BNG is mandatory under Schedule 7A of the Town & Country Planning Act 1990 (as inserted by schedule 14 of the Environment Act 2021). The site was primarily buildings and hardstanding with just small areas of amenity planting. This is to be replaced with residential development, gardens, small areas of amenity space and tree planting. The only wildlife mitigation that appears to be required is for loss of bird nesting opportunities.

The development is subject to mandatory 10% BNG as more than 25sqm of vegetated habitat will be lost. A metric has been provided that demonstrates that 10% net gain is easily exceeded. There were no hedge or river units present in the baseline.

Given the vegetated gardens alone would enable 10% net gain to be achieved, there is no reason to take this issue further at this stage. The proposed landscaping, which includes amenity grassland, tree planting, woodland planting and shrub planting however are all reasonable and achievable.

Some of the habitat measures proposed on site post development are significant as defined by defra, (mixed scrub, other neutral grassland, woodland and urban trees), as already noted however the major part of the units generated are through the creation of gardens a habitat that is not significant. They will require control via a Habitat Management & Monitoring Plan for 30 years via condition or legal agreement. I would argue given they are not needed to achieve the 10% net gain that a condition is more reasonable. Note the significant habitats are still required in order to meet trading rules as trees, woodland and scrub have been lost.

With regards wildlife I recommend inclusion of integrated bird and bat boxes on the new dwellings.  
*The details can be provided via condition.*

[Redacted]

Ecologist

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