Derbyshire Wildlife Trust

Sarah Brooks
Head of Planning
Amber Valley Borough Council
PO Box 18
Town Hall
Ripley, Derbyshire
DE5 3SZ

For the attention of Laura Anthony

Your Ref: AVA/2026/0548
Our ref: DWTAVA2425

21st October 2026

Dear Laura,

Proposal: Outline application for proposed two detached bungalows with detached garages

Location: Swiss Chalet Cromford Road Crich Matlock Derbyshire DE4 5DJ

Application Ref No.: AVA/2026/0548

With reference to the above application, I am responding as the Biodiversity Planning Officer responsible for work relating to the Service Level Agreement, which the Amber Valley Borough Council and the Trust have signed. The following comments are aimed at providing accurate and up to date information on the nature conservation issues associated with the proposed development.

Response

We have reviewed the submitted information inclusive of the Preliminary Ecological Appraisal prepared by Arbtech (July 2026).

It is understood that the application pertains to the development of two detached bungalows with garages.

Sandy Hill, Main Street, Middleton, Matlock, DE4 4LR
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The PEA presents the results of an extended UK Habitat Classification survey carried out on 28th July 2026. The site comprises 'built up areas and gardens' and scattered trees considered to be of minimal ecological importance. The site provides opportunities for common garden bird species, herptiles and hedgehogs. We are unable to comment on the extent of impacts on badger due to the redacted nature of the report.

It is noted that stands of Virginia creeper were recorded within the site. Virgina creeper is listed in Schedule 9 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 and therefore should appropriately be contained and removed to prevent the introduction or spread in the wild.

Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG)

The site is less than 0.2 ha in size and does not support priority habitats. As such, it is exempt from mandatory 10% biodiversity gains, in line with the changes to BNG requirements that took effect on the 6th of August 2026.

We would encourage the retention of trees where possible. If tree removal is required, replacement planting should be incorporated within proposals. A Landscape Plan should be secured to include native species and other species with proven benefits for wildlife.

Conditions

Restrictions on Operations

Prior to the commencement of development, an invasive non-native species protocol shall be submitted to and approved by the local planning authority, detailing the containment, control and removal of Virginia creeper on site. The measures shall be carried out strictly in accordance with the approved scheme.

Comments: It is an offence under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981, as amended, to introduce, plant or cause to grow wild any plant listed in Schedule 9, Part 2 of the Act. Virginia creeper is included within this schedule.

The submission of a method statement, to be agreed in writing with the local planning authority by condition, is to ensure that an adequate means of eradicating or containing the spread of the plant is considered and thereafter implemented to prevent further spread of the plant which would have a negative impact on biodiversity and existing or proposed landscape features.

Best practice measures

All works should be undertaken in a manner by which to safeguard common reptiles, amphibians, hedgehogs, badgers and nesting birds. Immediately prior to commencement, the footprint of works should be checked for any wildlife. If any active bird nest is discovered, works must be delayed until chicks have fledged. Active nests are protected by law.

Any scrub or shrubs requiring removal should be cut by hand to ground level and removed from the footprint of works so as not to create habitat piles. If common amphibians or reptiles are discovered, they should be allowed to move away freely or can be carefully collected with gloved hand and clean container and moved to an area of safety.

All excavations shall be covered overnight or else have an escape ramp installed to prevent entrapment of badgers, hedgehogs and other wildlife. All pipework greater than 150 mm shall be blanked off at the end of the day and chemicals shall be stored securely. Topsoil mounds shall be checked for badger activity prior to removal or re-use. An ecologist shall be contacted if any evidence of badger activity is found within the application area during development.

Lighting

Prior to the installation of lighting fixtures, a detailed lighting strategy shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the LPA to safeguard bats and other nocturnal wildlife. This should provide details of the chosen luminaires, their locations and any mitigating features such as dimmers, PIR sensors and timers. The Strategy should refer to Guidance Note 08/23 - Bats and Artificial Lighting at Night (BCT and ILP, 2023) and explain how proposals have been designed in compliance with this document. Such approved measures will be implemented in full.

Biodiversity Enhancement Plan

Prior to building works commencing above foundation level, a Biodiversity Enhancement Plan shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Approved measures shall be implemented in full and maintained thereafter. The Plan shall clearly show positions, specifications and numbers of features, which will include (but are not limited to) the following:

- universal integrated nest bricks / swift bricks at a ratio of 1:1, in line with British Standard 42021:2022.
- 2 x integral bat boxes.
- 2 x insect bricks.
- fencing gaps 130 mm x 130 mm to maintain connectivity for hedgehogs in all gardens.
- summary of ecologically beneficial landscaping (full details to be provided in Landscape Plans).

A statement of good practice including photographs shall be submitted to the local planning authority to fully discharge this condition, demonstrating that the enhancements have been selected and installed in accordance with the approved Plan.

It is hoped that the information provided is helpful to the Council. If you require any further information or wish to discuss any of the comments made, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely,

Holly Fowler

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