Technical Note 01

Project: Land East of Cauldham Lane, Capel-le-Ferne

Planning Ref: 24/00257

Date: June 2024

Consideration of Ecology Consultation Response

1 Introduction

1.1.1 Aspect Ecology is acting on behalf of Quinn Estates Ltd in respect of ecological matters for proposed development at land east of Cauldham Lane, Capel-le-Ferne. A planning application has been submitted at the site (application ref: 24/00257) for demolition of a single dwelling and erection of up to 90 dwellings with associated landscaping, parking and infrastructure.

1.1.2 In response to the planning application, a planning consultation response has been received from the Senior Natural Environment Officer (SNEO) at Dover District Council (DDC) dated 8th May 2024, raising a number of comments in relation to ecology. This note provides consideration of the matters raised, together with a review of the updated proposed site layout.

2 Western Access

2.1.1 The SNEO comments query whether the proposed location and route of the western access has been informed with consideration to avoiding and minimising ecological impacts, for example by selecting parts of the hedgerows with gaps/reduced density.

2.1.2 The point of access onto Cauldham Lane is largely dictated by visibility requirements. Nonetheless, the affected hedgerows are of a consistent depth and quality along the boundaries of the field, such that amending the access location would not result in any differing ecological impact.

[redacted]

4 Proposed Layout

4.1.1 The SNEO comments raise a query regarding the 5m vegetated buffer indicated along the southern and eastern boundaries in terms of what this will comprise and how it will be managed. A query is also raised regarding connectivity and that the main open space area is encircled by roads.

4.1.2 Further details of the boundary landscaping would be provided at the detailed stage, although it is anticipated that this would comprise a c. 2.5m wide hedgerow with hedgerow trees (located outside of the property boundaries) together with a management corridor allowing for access. The buffer would be separately fenced from the new and existing residential properties and would be maintained by a management company (as for the other areas of open space within the development).

4.1.3 A revised layout has been produced (see attached landscape strategy plan) which reorientates some of the properties and introduces some minor amendments to the road layout. As a result, the open space area in the east forms a continuous block, albeit it is still separated from land to the north by an access road. The continuous road loop is desirable for movement of cars, although a number of measures could be introduced under the detailed design to improve wildlife connectivity at this crossing point, to include use of dropped kerbs, narrowing of the road and installation of a wildlife culvert beneath the road (such as the ACO Climate Tunnel https://www.aco.co.uk/products/climate-tunnel or similar).

4.1.4 Otherwise the revised layout is not considered to result in any material changes for ecology, whilst it is illustrative in any case.

5 Biodiversity Net Gain

5.1.1 The SNEO comments raise a number of points in relation to the biodiversity net gain assessment, including a lack of habitat reference numbers on plans, whether target conditions are achievable for all habitats, use of 'other neutral grassland' instead of the 'sustainable urban drainage' habitat type, and loss of hedgerows H4 and H5 under the metric. Consideration of these matters is set out below, albeit these would be addressed as part of a formal Biodiversity Gain Plan at the post-consent stage in any case, as required under the new statutory framework.

5.1.2 In regard to habitat reference numbers on plans, these are provided for the pre-development (baseline) habitats, or habitat areas are readily identifiable. Comments are noted regarding the post-development plan, albeit individual habitat types are clearly identified within the key and are largely grouped across the site in any case.

5.1.3 The habitat creation tab assumes a moderate condition for a number of habitat types including other neutral grassland, modified grassland, mixed scrub and urban/rural trees. A summary of how proposed habitats could readily meet the required habitat condition assessment criteria to achieve this condition is set out in the table below.

Other neutral grassland (minimum 3 criteria)	Modified grassland (minimum 4 criteria)	Mixed scrub (minimum 3 criteria)	Urban/rural trees (minimum 3 criteria)
A) Good example of its habitat type Use of an appropriate seed mix would ensure a good mix of grassland species including characteristic indicator species	A) 6-8 species per m2 present Use of an appropriate flowering lawn seed mix would ensure sufficient species diversity	A) Good example of its habitat type An appropriate planting mix would ensure a good diversity of native species	A) Native species This can be specified under planting plans
D) Bracken/scrub cover Ongoing management would prevent Bracken/scrub encroachment	C) Scrub cover Ongoing management would prevent scrub encroachment	C) Species indicative of suboptimal condition/invasive species These elements would be limited by appropriate management	B) Continuous canopy This can be specified under planting plans/automatically passed for individual trees
E) Species indicative of suboptimal condition/physical damage/invasive species These elements would be limited by appropriate management	D) Physical damage This would be limited by appropriate management	D) Well-developed edge Mixed scrub largely located in wildflower grassland or flowering lawn areas, such that appropriate edge habitat can be provided through management	D) Tree health/damage This can be limited by appropriate management
	F) Bracken cover Ongoing management would prevent Bracken encroachment		F) More than 20% tree canopy oversailing vegetation This can be specified under planting plans
	G) Invasive species This would be avoided by appropriate management		

5.1.4 No definition of a 'sustainable drainage system' is given under the BNG Metric guidance, whilst under the UK Habitats Classification, this habitat is a secondary habitat code, which can include grassland, wetland and sparsely vegetated primary habitats. Under this proposal, the SuDS basin would likely be maintained as a largely dry basin and can be seeded with a wildflower grass mix. Therefore, the classification of the SuDS as 'other neutral grassland' is considered to be more appropriate given its proposed broad habitat and anticipated management regime.

5.1.5 Loss of hedgerows H4 and H5 have been assumed on a precautionary basis under the biodiversity net gain assessment as the exact prescriptions for these boundaries would be set out at the detailed design stage. Accordingly, new hedgerow planting is proposed to compensate for these losses and provide an overall gain in excess of 10%. Nonetheless, the retention of these hedgerows would be sought at the detailed design stage such that the anticipated biodiversity net gain for hedgerows could likely be increased.

5.1.6 In terms of the updated proposed site layout, this does not result in any significant changes to the extent of semi-natural habitats, such that the overall level of biodiversity net gain would be similar. The layout is illustrative in any event, with the new statutory framework requiring a formal Biodiversity Gain Plan to be submitted at the post-consent stage based on the detailed layout and landscaping proposals. Accordingly, it is not necessary to revise the Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment report at this stage to inform the planning application.

Internal Ornamental & Street Trees

Acer campestre 'Streetwise'
Amelanchier arborea 'Robin Hill'
Betula pendula
Carpinus betulus 'Lucas'
Corylus colurna
Malus trilobata
Prunus avium 'Plena'
Pyrus calleryana 'Chanticleer'
Sorbus aucuparia 'Sheerwater Seedling'
Tillia cordata 'Rancho'
Tillia tomentosa 'Brabant'
Ulmus 'New Horizon'

Ornamental Hedge Planting

Carpinus betulus (Hornbeam)
Ligustrum ovalifolium (Privet)
Osmanthus x burkwoodii
Skimmia spp
Prunus spp
Escallonia spp
Mixed native species hedges to site boundaries

Ornamental Shrubs

Cistus corbariensis, Cornus sanguinea, Euonymus fortunei 'Silver Queen', Fatsia japonica, Hebe 'Nicola's Blush', Hebe rakaiensis, Viburnum davidii

1. A minimum 5m vegetative buffer has been proposed along the southern and eastern boundaries, which will enhance the existing boundaries offering biodiversity benefits while also protesting residential amenity.

2. A variety of shrub, hedgerow and tree planting has been proposed across the development, which will further break up the built form and provide high quality environment.

3. A mixed-species native hedgerow and woodland belt proposed to the north of the site to contain the site from sensitive AONB views. Allowing time to mature, the tree belt will appear an extension of existing woodland to N.W.

4. SUDS/Swale close to northern boundaries utilises existing landfall and provide best opportunity to retain water on site, while also creating habitat opportunities.

5. Existing vegetation to the west to be retained and enhanced to limit visual impact of development or neighbouring properties.

0m 10m 20m 50m

Key:

- Site Boundary
- Existing/Retained Vegetation
- Proposed Feature Tree Planting
- Proposed Garden Tree Planting
- Proposed Open Space Tree Planting
- Proposed Street Tree Planting
- Proposed Native Shrub Planting
- Proposed Ornamental Shrub Planting
- Proposed Native Hedgerow Planting
- Proposed Ornamental Hedgerow Planting
- Proposed Species Rich Wildflower Mix
- Proposed Attenuation Basin
- Proposed Marginal Planting
- Proposed Swale
- Proposed Indicative Natural Play Area

Species Rich Wildflower Grass

Emorsgate EM2 General Purpose Meadow Mix, EH1 Hedgerow Mix & EM10 Tussock Mix

Open Space & Native Boundary Trees

Acer campestre	Malus sylvestris
Alnus glutinosa	Prunus avium
Betula pendula	Quercus robur
Carpinus betulus	Salix alba
Corylus avellana	Sorbus aria
Crateagus monogyna	Sorbus aucuparia
Fagus sylvatica	Tillia cordata

REV	DATE	NOTE	DRAWN	CHK'D
G	11.06.24	Updated to latest layout	BS	AJ
F	23.02.24	Updated to redline boundary	EL	AJ
E	21.02.24	Updated to access road update	EL	AJ
D	16.02.24	Updated to updated layout	EL	AJ
C	14.02.24	Updated to updated layout	EL	AJ
B	23.01.24	Updated to comments	EL	AJ
A	17.01.24	Updated layout	EL	AJ

REVISIONS

aspect landscape planning

TITLE
Great Cauldham Farm,
Capel Le Ferne, Kent

Landscape Strategy Plan

CLIENT
Quinn Estates

SCALE	DATE	DRAWN	CHK'D
1:1250 @ A3	NOV 2023	EL	AJ

DRAWING NUMBER	REVISION
7876 / ASP5 / LSP	G