

Dear Members

**Special Planning Committee (Large Scale Major Application)**

A special meeting of the Planning Committee will be held in the **Craddock Room, Civic Suite, Civic Centre, Riverside, Stafford** on **Wednesday 13 August 2025** to deal with the business as set out on the agenda.

Please note that this meeting will be recorded.

The Committee will meet at the rear of the Civic Centre and depart at **9.30am** to visit the site(s) as set out in the agenda and re-convene at the Civic Centre at approximately **11.30am** to determine the application(s).

Members are reminded that contact officers are shown in each report and members are welcome to raise questions etc in advance of the meeting with the appropriate officer.



Head of Law and Governance

**SPECIAL PLANNING COMMITTEE  
(LARGE SCALE MAJOR APPLICATION)  
13 AUGUST 2025**

**Chairman - Councillor A Nixon  
Vice-Chairman - Councillor S N Spencer**

**AGENDA**

<b>1</b>	<b>Apologies</b>	
<b>2</b>	<b>Declaration of Member's Interests/Lobbying</b>	
		<b>Page Nos</b>
<b>3</b>	<b>Planning Applications</b>	<b>3 - 23</b>

**MEMBERSHIP**

**Chairman - Councillor A Nixon**

B M Cross	A R McNaughton
P C Edgeller	A Nixon
A D Hobbs	M Phillips
J Hood	A J Sandiford
R A James	S N Spencer
R Kenney	

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SPECIAL PLANNING COMMITTEE - 13 AUGUST 2025

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**Ward Interest - Nil**

**Planning Applications**

*Report of Head of Economic Development and Planning*

**Purpose of Report**

To consider the following planning applications, the reports for which are set out in the attached **APPENDIX**:-

		Page Nos
<b>24/39885/FUL</b>	<b>Shugborough Hall, Lichfield Road, Shugborough</b>	4 - 23
This application has been referred to the Planning Committee because the development is a large scale major application		
<b>Officer Contact</b> - Richard Wood, Development Lead Telephone 01785 619324		

**Previous Consideration**

Nil

**Background Papers**

Planning application files are available for Members to inspect, by prior arrangement, in the Development Management Section. The applications including the background papers, information and correspondence received during the consideration of the application, consultation replies, neighbour representations are scanned and are available to view on the Council website.

<b>Application:</b>	24/39885/FUL
<b>Case Officer:</b>	Ed Handley
<b>Date Registered:</b>	5 March 2025
<b>Target Decision Date:</b>	4 June 2025
<b>Extended To:</b>	-
<b>Address:</b>	Shugborough Hall, Lichfield Road, Shugborough, Stafford
<b>Ward:</b>	Haywood and Hixon
<b>Parish:</b>	Colwich
<b>Proposal:</b>	Wetland restoration project comprising re-engineering of riverbank and earthworks to create and improve natural habitats
<b>Applicant:</b>	Staffordshire Wildlife Trust
<b>Recommendation:</b>	Approve, subject to conditions

### **Reason for referral to committee**

This application has been referred to the Planning Committee because the development is a large scale major application which the Council's Constitution specifies is determined by the Planning Committee.

### **Context**

#### **1.0 Site and surroundings**

- 1.1 The application site comprises a parcel of land covering approximately 12.5 ha on the eastern part of the Shugborough Estate; it is bound by the River Trent to the north, east, and south, and parkland associated with Shugborough Hall to the west.
- 1.2 The site forms part of the Grade I registered park and garden of the Shugborough Estate; within the Estate are Grade I, II\* and II listed buildings including Shugborough Hall and its associated landscaped parkland and facilities, the walled garden, and the Lichfield Drive Railway Bridge. The site also lies within the Shugborough and Great Haywood Conservation Area and is recorded in the Staffordshire Historic Environment Record.
- 1.3 The site is within Flood Zone 3 and is in an area classified as being at low risk by the Coal Authority. The site is within the Cannock Chase National Landscape (formerly Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty), within 15km of the Cannock Chase Special Area of Conservation (SAC), and within 5km of the Pasturefields Salt Marsh SAC. The site is within the Shugborough Hall SBI (site of biological

importance) and a green risk zone for great crested newts. The area is not currently accessible to visiting members of the public.

## **2.0 The proposal**

- 2.1 This application is for engineering works associated with a wetland restoration project at Shugborough Hall, involving river and flood plain restoration to a section of the River Trent. The works include wetland creation, flood plain reconnection, and habitat creation. Channel widening is proposed to create flow diversity in the river and encourage depositions within the main river channel which would, over time, facilitate the recreation of gravel features within the river. Grounds levels across the site would be amended to create wetland areas.
- 2.2 In localised areas across the site, wetland areas would be created; ground would be scraped; riffles, and low terraces would be created; the riverbed would be widened; and the embankment would be removed. Across the site there would be areas excavated to local riverbed level, local flood plain level, 0.4m-0.6m below flood plain level, and local ditch bed level. An area to the west of the site would be infilled to 72.50m AOD.
- 2.3 The applicant advises that the proposed project would be delivered as part of the Trent-Sow Parkland Groups and Environmental Enhancement Programme, funded by HS2, to deliver landscape and environmental benefits to the Trent-Sow area as part of the HS2 green corridor programme.

## **3.0 Legislative framework**

- 3.1 Section 38(6) of the 2004 Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act and section 70 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990, as amended, require decisions to be made in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.
- 3.2 The development plan for the purposes of this application comprises The Plan for Stafford Borough (TPSB) 2011-2031 Parts 1 and 2 and the Colwich Neighbourhood Plan.

## **Officer Assessment - Key Considerations**

### **4.0 Principle of development**

- 4.1 Whilst the proposed development is in an area of the estate which is not publicly accessible it does form part of a managed historic estate.
- 4.2 Spatial Principle (SP) 6 seeks to achieve rural sustainability by protecting and enhancing its environmental assets and character whilst sustaining the social and economic fabric of its communities by promoting, amongst other things, a sustainable rural economy, and the conservation or improvement of the rural environment.
- 4.3 SP7 provides for development in the open countryside which is consistent with SP6 and policy E2; where it does not conflict with the environmental protection and nature conservation policies of the plan; and where provision is made for any

necessary mitigating or compensatory measures to address any harmful implications.

- 4.4 Policy E1 seeks to sustain the local economy by supporting the location, diversity, and intensity of new economic development through measures including supporting the rural economy in accordance with SP6 and encouraging development consistent with SP7.
- 4.5 Policy E2 supports rural sustainability by encouraging development including proposals which help to conserve or improve the rural environment, and recreation uses appropriate to a rural location. Development should, where appropriate and feasible, respect and protect the natural landscape and built vernacular character of the area and any designated heritage asset; be of a high quality of design; be appropriately designed for its purposes; and incorporate necessary mitigating or compensatory measures to address any harmful implications.
- 4.6 Policy CLE6 of the Colwich Neighbourhood Plan (CNP) seeks to support the development of tourist and visitor facilities, including those associated with Shugborough; it is acknowledged that the proposed development relates to the management of the river and habitats within a part of the site which is not publicly accessible, however any unjustified harm to the significance of the Shugborough Estate should be seen as a failure to develop (or support the development of) this tourist attraction.
- 4.7 Subject to the consideration of impacts relating to heritage conservation, flood risk, and ecology it is considered that the principle of development is acceptable.

Policies and Guidance:-

National Planning Policy Framework

Paragraphs: 7, 8, 10, 11

The Plan for Stafford Borough

Policies: SP1 Presumption in favour of sustainable development; SP6 Achieving rural sustainability; SP7 Supporting the location of new development; E1 Local economy; E2 sustainable rural development

Colwich Neighbourhood Plan

Policies: CLE6 Tourism

## **5.0 Heritage conservation, character and appearance**

- 5.1 Paragraph 202 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) states that heritage assets are an irreplaceable resource which should be conserved in a manner appropriate to their significance so that they can be enjoyed for their contribution to the quality of life of existing and future generations.
- 5.2 Paragraph 210 also requires local planning authorities to take account of the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets, the

positive contribution that conservation of heritage assets can make to sustainable communities (including their economic vitality), and the desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness.

- 5.3 Paragraph 212 further states that great weight be given to the conservation of a heritage asset, irrespective of whether any potential harm amounts to substantial harm, total loss, or less than substantial harm to its significance. Paragraph 213 also requires that any such harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset to require clear and convincing justification, and at paragraph 215 where development will lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset this harm must be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal.
- 5.4 Policy N9 of The Plan for Stafford Borough seeks to sustain and enhance the significance of heritage assets and their setting and, in line with the NPPF, requires clear justification for any potential harm to the significance of a heritage asset.
- 5.5 In providing a detailed representation Historic England initially raised concern, advising that the proposed development would result in less-than-substantial harm with regard to elements including the low terrace and how the scheme would address the character of the park and associated historic remains. It was noted that there could be a number of heritage benefits, however results from further understanding of the archaeological character of the site and the relationship of the meadows to the park should be available to inform the detailing of the scheme. Specifically, concern was raised that the excavation works would have the potential to have both visual and archaeological impacts and that there is potential for pre-historic features which are not recognised on LiDAR. It was advised that a geophysical survey be considered. Further to this, whilst the meadow is liable to regular flooding and management as wetland may not represent a major visual change for much of the year, the creation of changes with an artificial appearance could impact the historic character of the meadow. Further clarification was sought with regard to these matters.
- 5.6 The applicant has since removed the cut channel from the scheme and provided a position statement to clarify the concerns raised. This statement confirms that:
  - The floodplain cut channel is removed from the scheme.
  - The low, steep sided terrace would be managed to a height varying between 0.3m and 0.5m with edges graded at a shallow angle to produce a more natural appearance. Additional overburden would be spread thinly in the neighbouring field or used within the walled garden area of the estate.
  - There are no plans to change or interfere with the duck decoy covert or artificial ditches which are part of that historic feature.
  - The proposal is in accordance with the Shugborough Parkland Management Plan where it relates to this part of the estate.

- A magnetometry survey would not provide further information beyond the LiDAR however, if required, a further localised LiDAR survey and magnetometry survey could be conducted. Magnetometry could give a false confidence that no archaeological features are present when the opposite is the case.
- By following the archaeological design plan and having an archaeologist present on site during key points of intervention work, there is confidence that any archaeology will remain secure.

- 5.7 In response, Historic England have removed their concerns and recommend consultation with local conservation and archaeological specialists.
- 5.8 The County Archaeologist has highlighted that there is potential for groundworks in the area to impact on archaeological features relating to probably historic field systems and associated trackway, as well as a palaeochannel of the River Trent. It is agreed that an archaeological watching brief during groundworks would be appropriate. Furthermore, given the potential for works to expose deposits of a palaeo-environmental nature, it was considered that an archaeological project design should be produced in consultation with an experienced geoarchaeologist and that they should be on call during the archaeological watching brief to advise further on recording and sample retrieval should this be necessary. No objection is raised, and a condition was initially recommended to secure an archaeological project design and subsequent assessment. During the course of consideration of this application, the applicant has submitted a written scheme of investigation (WSI) which the County Archaeologist advises is acceptable. A condition is therefore recommended to ensure that the archaeological site work is carried out in accordance with the WSI and that assessment and any analysis, publication, dissemination and archive deposition is secured.
- 5.9 The Council's Conservation Officer raises no objection to the proposed development, advising that a significant portion of the Trent floodplain was used as pasture before being improved to create a seasonally wet meadow pasture. In Duck Covert, remnants of a 19<sup>th</sup> Century ditch system, designed for managing water levels for duck shooting are visible. The site has historically been wetland and so the proposed restoration is considered to be a positive enhancement from a heritage conservation perspective. The Conservation Officer endorses the recommendation of the County Archaeologist.
- 5.10 The Gardens Trust advise that they do not wish to comment on this proposal.
- 5.11 The Canal and River Trust are supportive of the proposed development, highlighting the positive benefits from the improvement of habitats.
- 5.12 The meadow is liable to regular flooding but subject to vegetation growth management as wetland is not likely to result in any significant visual impacts except in views from the immediate surrounding area which is not (at this time) publicly accessible. On this basis, it is considered that the proposed development would not result in any undue harm to the Cannock Chase National Landscape.

- 5.13 It is considered that the proposed development accords with policy CE1 of the Colwich Neighbourhood Plan which encourages high standards of design which respect local character.

Policies and Guidance:-

National Planning Policy Framework

Paragraphs: 131, 135, 137, 139, 189, 190, 202, 205, 207, 208, 210, 212, 213, 215, 218

The Plan for Stafford Borough

Policies: N1 Design; N8 Landscape character; N9 Historic environment

Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) – Design

Colwich Neighbourhood Plan

Policies: CE1 Design

## **6.0 Amenity**

- 6.1 The proposed development does not raise any implications with regard to amenity. No part of the application site is publicly accessible and it lies a significant distance from any dwellinghouse.

Policies and Guidance:-

National Planning Policy Framework

Paragraphs: 135

The Plan for Stafford Borough

Policies: N1 Design

Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) – Design

## **7.0 Access and parking**

- 7.1 The proposed works would require vehicles accessing the site and therefore the application is supported by a Construction Transport Management Plan (CTMP). The CTMP states that site access would be in accordance with existing delivery procedures utilising the A513 access and advises that only equipment (no materials deliveries) would be brought onto site. A compound would be created outside of the flood plain comprising welfare unit; mobile fuel bowser; space for excavators and dumpers; and security units. Contractors would park within the compound or within existing car parks.

- 7.2 The local highway authority raise no objection to the proposal stating that it would not result in a level of vehicular movement which would cause concern and recommend that any approval is subject to a condition to ensure the development is carried out in accordance with the CTMP.

Policies and Guidance:-

National Planning Policy Framework

Paragraphs: 111 and 112

The Plan for Stafford Borough

Policies: T1 Transport; T2 Parking and manoeuvring facilities; Appendix B – Car parking standards

## **8.0 Flood risk and drainage**

- 8.1 Paragraph 181 of the NPPF requires that development should not result in increased flood risk elsewhere and that development should only be allowed in areas at risk of flooding where, in the light of a flood risk assessment it is demonstrated that, amongst other things, any residual risk can be safely managed, and safe access and escape routes are included where appropriate.
- 8.2 It is accepted that the proposal seeks to reinstate wetland on an area of the estate which is not publicly accessible. Consequently, it is considered that this is clearly development which is directly associated with the adjacent river and not in an area where access/escape routes are required.
- 8.3 The Lead Local Flood Authority (LLFA) raise no objection to the proposal on the basis that no new impermeable area would be introduced and flood risk would not be impacted negatively. Conditions were therefore recommended to secure the following:
- A detailed design of the proposed amendments to the ordinary watercourse and associated wetland area;
  - A construction surface water management plan to ensure surface water runoff and contaminants are intercepted, treated, stored and appropriately discharged as part of any temporary works associated with the permanent development to ensure that flood risk is not increased,
  - Water quality is not compromised prior to the completion of the scheme.

Furthermore, another condition is recommended to secure the provision of a finalised management and maintenance plan to ensure continued performance of the system.

- 8.4 The LLFA also advised that land drainage consent would be required for any structures proposed within the watercourse or any work within the watercourse be obtained via Staffordshire County Council. An informative should bring this to the attention of the applicant.

- 8.5 The applicant initially submitted further information in support of the application in relation to:
- Construction surface water drainage system design;
  - Construction management maintenance and remediation schedules;
  - Flood risk controls;
  - Water quality pollution control measures;
  - A construction surface water management plan.
- 8.6 Following further representation from the LLFA, the applicant contended that the requirements of the LLFA were likely to result in overly engineered construction which would be inappropriate for the objectives of the scheme. Consequently, the LLFA advise that there is no objection to the proposed development and recommend a condition to secure drawings of the final amendments to the ordinary watercourse and associated wetland for verification purposes. Furthermore, a finalised management and maintenance plan to ensure continued performance of the system (ordinary watercourse and associated wetland) is requested via condition; it is considered that this should be secured within six months of commencement.
- 8.7 The Environment Agency (EA) are supportive of the proposed development and raise no objection. The EA advise that the submission demonstrates that there would be minor changes in flood extent as a result of the proposed restoration scheme, resulting in a slight increase in flooding to an area within the ownership of the landowner, as is the objective of the scheme, and that minor flood extent reductions locally on the other side of the river are welcomed. Whilst two opportunities to deliver greater environmental gain are recommended, their absence does not render the proposal unacceptable. Further to this, the EA advise that flood risk activity permits may be required for works:
- On or within 8m of the top of bank of any river (16m if tidal)
  - Involving quarrying or excavation within 16m of any main river, flood defence (including a remote defence), or culvert
  - In the floodplain of a main river if the activity could affect flood flow or storage and potential impacts are not controlled by a planning permission.
- This requirement should be brought to the attention of the applicant via informative on any approval.
- 8.8 Severn Trent Water have been consulted but have not provided any representation.
- 8.9 Policy CI1 of the Colwich Neighbourhood Plan requires that sustainable urban drainage is incorporated into development where possible and that the enhancement of wildlife and biodiversity as part of the development of such systems will be supported.

- 8.10 Whilst the proposed development does not necessitate the use of such a system it is acknowledged that the proposal, by its very nature, would result in deliberate local increases and reductions in flood extent as the flood plain is altered and consequently naturalises over time. It is noted that there would be no significant modelled increase in downstream flood risk as a result of the proposed development. On this basis it is not considered that SuDS are appropriate with regard to this scheme.

Policies and Guidance:-

National Planning Policy Framework

Paragraphs: 161, 173, 174, 175, 176, 177, 178, 179, 181, 182

The Plan for Stafford Borough

Policies: N2 Climate change; N4 The natural environment and green infrastructure

Colwich Neighbourhood Plan

Policies: CI1 Flooding

## **9.0 Ecology and biodiversity**

- 9.1 Paragraph 182 of the NPPF seeks to ensure that development which could affect drainage on or around the site provide multifunctional benefits where possible, including improvements in water quality and biodiversity.
- 9.2 Policy CE3 of the CNP supports proposals which conserve or enhance biodiversity.
- 9.3 Natural England's online SSSI impact risk zones advice directs the Council to consider the proposal with regard to the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended).
- 9.4 The site is within 15km of the Cannock Chase Special Area of Conservation, however, due to the nature of the proposal and its location in relation to the Cannock Chase SAC it is not considered that the development would result in any impact on the reasons for the designation of the SAC. The Council is therefore not required to carry out an Appropriate Assessment.
- 9.5 Similarly, the development is screened out with regard to Pasturefields Salt Marsh SAC.
- 9.6 The supporting ecological assessment concludes that whilst the presence of amphibians cannot be ruled out there is no suitable breeding habitat for great crested newts within the site. The report advises good practice measures and additional mitigation measures to protect all reptiles and amphibians during works. The Newt Officer raises no objection to the proposed development, advising that the works are unlikely to cause an impact on great crested newts and/or their habitats. An informative on any approval is recommended, to bring the protected status of great crested newts to the attention of the applicant.

- 9.7 The Council's Biodiversity Officer raises no objection to the proposal, noting that no significant ecological constraints were found by the ecological impact assessment. It is noted that the agricultural improvement of the land has resulted in the site no longer providing the wetland habitat which must have once been present. Conditions are recommended to ensure that works are carried out in conjunction with reasonable avoidance measures relating to reptiles and amphibians, and to ensure that a search for, and removal of, individual white-clawed crayfish is carried out prior to the commencement of development.
- 9.8 Any approval would be subject to the mandatory biodiversity net gain condition. The Council's Biodiversity Officer acknowledges that the proposed development seeks to enhance the biodiversity value of the site and by its nature would provide a net gain. The supporting report indicates a 63.6% uplift in habitat units and a 31% uplift in watercourse units. No objection is raised on this basis and it is considered that a habitat management and monitoring plan would be required at the biodiversity gain plan stage.

Policies and Guidance:-

National Planning Policy Framework

Paragraphs: 187, 193, 194, 195,

The Plan for Stafford Borough

Policies: N4 The natural environment and green infrastructure; N5 Sites of European, national and local nature conservation importance, N6 Cannock Chase special area of conservation (SAC); N7 Cannock Chase AONB

Colwich Neighbourhood Plan

Policies: CE3 Biodiversity

## **10.0 Other matters**

- 10.1 The application site is within an area classed as being at low-risk by the Coal Authority; this area may contain unrecorded coal mining features and an informative should be attached to any approve to ensure that the applicant is aware of the standing advice provided by the Coal Authority.

Policies and Guidance:-

National Planning Policy Framework

Paragraphs: 8, 124, 125, 158, 159, 180, 187, 189

The Plan for Stafford Borough

Policies: N2 Climate change; N4 The natural environment and green infrastructure; N5 Sites of European, national and local nature conservation importance; N6 Cannock Chase special area of conservation; N7 Cannock Chase AONB; I1 Infrastructure delivery policy

## 11.0 Conclusion and planning balance

- 11.1 Following amendments to the scheme, it is not considered that the proposed development would result in undue harm to the significance of designated heritage assets. However, given the potential to expose features of archaeological interest it is considered that development should be carried out in accordance with an archaeological project design to be secured by condition.
- 11.2 The proposal would not result in any increase in impermeable area and flood risk would not be impacted negatively; there would be minor changes in flood extent resulting in a slight increase in flooding to an area in the landowner's control as is the objective of the scheme, together with minor flood extent reductions locally on the other side of the river. Subject to conditions to secure verification drawings of the amendments to the ordinary watercourse and associated wetland area, and to secure a management and maintenance plan to ensure continued performance, it is considered that the proposed development is acceptable with regard to flood risk.
- 11.3 It is recognised that the proposed development would result in significant ecological gains within the site. In this regard, any approval would be subject to the BNG condition and conditions relating to the protection of great crested newts and white-clawed crayfish are recommended.
- 11.4 Given the context of the site and the nature of the proposed works it is not considered that the proposal would result in any undue harm to the Cannock Chase National Landscape and, subject to conditions, there would be no undue harm to the local highway network.

## Consultations

### Historic England:

(Comments dated 13 June 2025):

No objection.

- In view of the removal of the cut channel we are no longer concerned for additional geophysical surveying. The views of your specialist conservation and archaeological advisors should be sought.

(Comments dated 9 April 2025):

Objection.

- A large part of the Trent floodplain was once used as pasture and later improved to create a seasonally wet meadow pasture. In Duck Covert the remains of a ditch system designed for managing water levels for duck shoot in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century are still visible. Additionally, some paleochannels have been preserved in the landscape, appearing as depressions or recognisable features in LiDAR images.
- The proposed development has the potential to have both visual and archaeological impacts. There is potential for pre-historic features which may not be recognised on

the LiDAR and a geophysical survey is recommended, to further understand the archaeological character of the site.

- The meadow to the west of the river floods regularly so management as wetland may not represent a major visual change for much of the year, depending on how vegetation is managed. However, the creation of a low steep-sided terrace would introduce a change in the historic character of the meadow, potentially as an artificial appearance. It is not clear how high above the existing surface level the low terrace would be.
- The resultant harm to heritage significance would be less-than-substantial, arising from some elements of the proposal such as the low terrace and how the scheme would address the character of the park and associated historic remains.
- There would be a number of heritage benefits provided by the proposal, including opportunities for restoration of wet meadow and removal of suspected 20<sup>th</sup> Century river flood management embankments. However, results from further investigation could inform the detailing of the scheme. Detailed clarification on how the proposal aligns with the existing parkland management plan would ideally be presented within a supported report.
- Historic England has concerns regarding the application on heritage grounds. The issues and safeguards outlined should be addressed in order for the application to comply with the NPPF.

#### **Conservation Officer:**

(Comments dated 25 June 2025):

No objection.

- The landscaped park is a grade I registered park and garden and within the Great Haywood and Shugborough Conservation Area.
- The site has historically been wetland and so the restoration is a positive enhancement from a conservation perspective.
- As the concerns raised by Historic England have been resolved, and no objections raised by the County Archaeologist or Historic England's Landscape Architect, the proposed works are considered to be an enhancement from a conservation perspective and also have the added benefit of improving the natural wetland habitat in this part of the estate.
- There is no conservation objection and no request for any conditions other than those requested by the County Archaeologist.

#### **County Archaeologist:**

(Comments dated 3 July 2025):

No objection.

- The WSI is acceptable, a condition is recommended to ensure that archaeological site work is carried out in accordance with the WSI, that assessment is completed, and that provision is made for analysis, publication, dissemination, and archive deposition.

(Comments dated 16 June 2025):

No further comment.

(Comments dated 7 April 2025):

No objection.

- The Staffordshire Historic Environment Record and Heritage Statement highlight that there is potential for groundworks in this area to impact on archaeological features relating to a probable historic field system and associated trackway and a paleochannel of the River Trent.
- An archaeological watching brief during groundworks would be appropriate. Furthermore, given the potential for the works to expose deposits of a paleo-environmental nature, an archaeological project design should be produced in consultation with an experienced geoarchaeologist and that an experienced geoarchaeologist is on call during the archaeological watching brief to advise further on recording and sample retrieval should the results merit.

**The Gardens Trust:**

(Comments dated 9 April 2025):

Do not wish to comment.

**Canal and River Trust:**

(Comments dated 1 April 2025):

No objection.

- The location and character of the proposal means there would be no impact on our infrastructure or associated assets, except for the positive benefits from the improvement of habitats in proximity to the green-blue infrastructure of the canal.

**Highway Authority:**

(Surgery 2 April 2025 and clarification comments dated 3 April 2025):

No objection.

- There would not be a lot of traffic movement, especially HGVs, to be concerned about.
- A condition is recommended to ensure that development is carried out in accordance with the construction transport management plan.

**Lead Local Flood Authority:**

(Comments dated 22 July 2025):

No objection.

- Conditions are recommended to secure the following:
  - o Submission of a final management and maintenance plan within 6 or 12 months of the commencement of development and for the development to be managed in accordance with the approved plan.
  - o Following completion of the development, as built plans of the amendments undertaken to the ordinary watercourse and associated wetland to be submitted for verification.

(Comments dated 8 July 2025):

No objection.

- The objectives of the applicant are understood. The submission of the information which the applicant advises is available would be sufficient:
  - o Generic section/long section for each feature.
  - o Detailed information about constructability in accompanying tables.
  - o Short note to explain the construction approach to maintain the natural features.
- A post-completion condition to verify as-built features is recommended.

(Comments dated 9 June 2025):

No objection, subject to conditions to secure the following:

- Submission of detailed design of the proposed amendments to the ordinary watercourse and associated wetland area prior to commencement.
- Provision of a detailed management and maintenance plan to ensure continued performance of the system (ordinary watercourse and associated wetland). Details of maintenance arrangements to include a schedule of activities with frequencies, together with the name and contact details of the party or parties responsible for ongoing maintenance.

(Comments dated 2 April 2025):

No objection.

- No new impermeable area would be introduced, and flood risk would not be negatively impacted.
- Conditions are recommended to secure the following:

- Detailed design of the proposed amendments to the ordinary watercourse and associated wetland area.
- Construction surface water management plan to ensure that surface water runoff and contaminants are intercepted, treated, stored, and appropriately discharged.
- Final management and maintenance plan to ensure continued performance of the system.

### **Environment Agency:**

(Comments dated 10 April 2025):

No objection.

- The submission includes analysis to determine the impact of the proposed scheme and whether the proposal would increase flood risk elsewhere. There are minor changes in flood extent as a result of the proposed restoration scheme which would result in a slight increase in flooding to the area within the ownership of the landowner as this is the objective of the scheme. However, the report also demonstrates that there are some minor flood extent reductions locally on the other side of the river which are welcomed.
- In addition to planning permission, some activities may require a flood risk activity permit from the Environment Agency.
- There are two opportunities which could be incorporated into the proposal to deliver greater environmental gain:
  - Introduction of large woody debris to improve in-channel flow variability and habitats.
  - Clear the entrance to the ditch in the south of the site during wetland creation to enable the use of the ditch by fish as a backwater.

### **Natural England:**

(Web-based comments 19 March 2025):

The development is within the zone of influence for recreational pressure impacts to one or more European Sites (habitats sites). Mitigation measures should be checked and confirmed via an appropriate assessment in accordance with the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended).

### **Biodiversity Officer:**

(Comments dated 31 March 2025):

No objection.

- Harris Lamb undertook an ecological impact assessment during 2024 which found no significant ecological constraints. Reasonable avoidance measures are recommended during the works phase.
- Historically the duck covert was used to hunt waterfowl. At present, the land has been agriculturally improved and no longer provides the wetland habitat which must have been present to provide the conditions for shooting. Therefore, the proposal would not only increase biodiversity but also restore a heritage landscape.
- The purpose of the application is to enhance the biodiversity value of the site and would, by its very nature, result in a net gain. The BNG report indicates a 63.6% uplift in habitat units and 31.3% uplift in watercourse units; the trading rules are met. A habitat management and monitoring plan would be required at the biodiversity gain plan stage.
- Conditions are recommended to ensure that reasonable avoidance measures are implemented during development; and that a search for (and removal of) individual White-clawed crayfish be carried out prior to the commencement of work on or near to the river.

**Newt Officer:**

(Comments dated 25 March 2025):

No objection.

- The development falls within the amber impact risk zone for great crested newts where there is suitable habitat and a high likelihood of newt presence.
- There are 4 ponds within 500m of the application site; 2 to the south and east are separated by the river, the remaining 2 are within the Shugborough Estate.
- There is little connectivity between the development site and surrounding features in the landscape. The floodplain zone is generally very unlikely to be suitable for great crested newts and the two ponds on the estate of over 300m from the proposed development.
- The supporting ecological report states that there is no suitable breeding habitat on-site; no suitable woodland habitat on site for the terrestrial phase; and not likely to be any impact on great crested newts.
- The proposed development is not likely to cause an impact on great crested newts and/or their habitats.
- It would be unreasonable to require further surveys as this could be considered disproportionate to the likely impacts of the development.
- An informative should be attached to any approval to bring to the attention of the applicant the requirements of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations.

**Coal Authority:**

Standing Advice: The development is within a coal mining area which may contain unrecorded coal mining related hazards. If any coal mining feature is encountered during development, this should be reported immediately.

**Colwich Parish Council:**

No objection.

**Neighbours:**

No representations received.

**Publicity**

Site notice expiry date: 17 April 2025

Newsletter advert expiry date: 23 April 2025

**Relevant planning history**

None

**Recommendation**

Approve subject to the following conditions:

1. The development to which this permission relates must be begun not later than the expiration of three years beginning with the date on which this permission is granted.
2. This permission relates to the following drawings, except where indicated otherwise by a condition attached to this consent, in which case the condition shall take precedence:-

1:10000 Location plan

DR-2022-0137 Shugborough restoration design drawings:

Sheet 1 - revision 1 (Overview map)

Sheet 2 - revision 1 (Overview map: utilities)

Sheet 3 - revision 1 (Overview map: levels

Sheet 4 - revision 1 (Wetland|)

Sheet 5 - revision 1 (Scrape)

Sheet 6 - revision 1 (Riffle/rapid)

Sheet 7 - revision 1 (Low terrace)

Sheet 8 - revision 1 (Widen)

Sheet 9 - revision 1 (Embankment removal)

3. A) The archaeological site work shall be carried out in accordance with the Written Scheme of Investigation (YA/2025/121 (22 May 2025) 10342\_Shugborough\_GA\_WSI)  
  
B) Provision shall thereafter be made for analysis, publication and dissemination of the results, and archive deposition in accordance with the Written Scheme of Investigation within 24 months of the commencement of development.
4. The development shall be carried out in accordance with the Construction Management Plan by Staffordshire Wildlife Trust.
5. Within six months of the commencement of any works to the ordinary watercourse and associated wetland, detailed as-built designs of the amendments to the ordinary watercourse and associated wetland area shall be submitted to the local planning authority for verification purposes.
6. Within six months of the commencement of development a detailed management and maintenance plan, to ensure the continued performance of the system (ordinary watercourse and associated wetland) for the life of the development, shall be submitted to, and approved in writing by, the local planning authority. The plan shall include a schedule of activities and their frequency, together with details of the parties responsible for ongoing maintenance. The development shall thereafter be managed in accordance with the approved plan.
7. The development shall be carried out in accordance with the mitigation measures set out in table 7.1 of the Ecological Impact Assessment (PE0461, 21 October 2024).

The reasons for the Council's decision to approve the development subject to the above conditions are:

1. To comply with the requirements of Section 51 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.
2. To define the permission.
3. In order to ensure that an appropriate record is kept of a heritage asset in accordance with paragraph 218 of the National Planning Policy Framework.
4. In the interests of the safety and convenience of users of the highway. (Policy T1c of The Plan for Stafford Borough).
5. To ensure the satisfactory storage, and disposal from the site, of water in order to reduce the risk of flooding. (Paragraph 170 of the National Planning Policy Framework).
6. To ensure that flood risk, on the site or elsewhere, is not increased for the lifetime of the development. (Paragraph 170 of the National Planning Policy Framework).

7. In order to ensure that the development does not result in damage or harm to legally protected species or their habitat/roost. (Paragraph 187 of the National Planning Policy Framework).

#### Informatives

- 1 In accordance with the requirements of Article 35 of the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) (Order) 2015, as amended, and the National Planning Policy Framework 2024, the Council has worked in a positive and proactive way in determining the application and has granted planning permission.
- 2 The applicant's attention is drawn to the requirement for land drainage consent, which would be required for any structures proposed within the watercourse or any work within the watercourse, and which must be obtained via Staffordshire County Council. The comments of Staffordshire County Council as the lead local flood authority can be viewed online through the planning public access pages of the Council's website ([www.staffordbc.gov.uk](http://www.staffordbc.gov.uk)).
- 3 The applicant is reminded that, under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended) and the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended), it is an offence to (amongst other things): deliberately capture, disturb, injure, or kill great crested newts; damage or destroy a breeding or resting place; intentionally or recklessly obstruct access to a resting or sheltering place. Planning permission for a development does not provide a defense against prosecution under this legislation. Should great crested newts be found at any stage of the development works, then all works should cease, and a professional and/or suitably qualified and experienced ecologist (or Natural England) should be contacted for advice on any special precautions before continuing, including the need for a license.
- 4 The proposed development lies within a coal mining area which may contain unrecorded coal mining related hazards. If any coal mining feature is encountered during development, this should be reported immediately to the Mining Remediation Authority on 0345 762 6846 or if a hazard is encountered on site call the emergency line 0800 288 4242. Further information is also available on the Mining Remediation Authority website at: [www.gov.uk/government/organisations/mining-remediation-authority](http://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/mining-remediation-authority)
- 5 The applicant's attention is drawn to the requirement for flood risk activity permits under the Environmental Permitting (England and Wales) Regulations 2016, which must be obtained via the Environment Agency. The comments of the Environment Agency can be viewed online through the planning public access pages of the Council's website ([www.staffordbc.gov.uk](http://www.staffordbc.gov.uk)).

**24/39885/FUL**

**Shugborough Hall**

**Lichfield Road**

**Shugborough**

