



ECOLOGICAL ADVICE SERVICE

TO: Kelly Joyce
FROM: Clair Thackray
DATE: 11 April 2023
SUBJECT: 20221362 The White House, Meopham

The following is provided by Kent County Council's Ecological Advice Service (EAS) for Local Planning Authorities. It is independent, professional advice and is not a comment/position on the application from the County Council. It is intended to advise the relevant planning officer(s) on the potential ecological impacts of the planning application; and whether sufficient and appropriate ecological information has been provided to assist in its determination. Any additional information, queries or comments on this advice that the applicant or other interested parties may have must be directed in every instance to the Planning Officer, who will seek input from the EAS where appropriate and necessary.

SUMMARY – SUFFICIENT INFORMATION PROVIDED

We have reviewed the ecological information submitted by the applicant and advise that sufficient information has been provided. We have taken this view due to our understanding from the Ecological Impact Assessment (Kent Botany, March 2023) that:

“the house was assessed as having negligible potential to support bat roosts and therefore it has not been necessary to recommend further survey work....there will be very little impact to the existing pitched roof over the main dwelling...

...The garden consisted of a mown lawn with shrub borders. There are no ponds present and no other habitats which may be used by protected species. No signs of badger setts or features which might be used by reptiles.”

We agree that no further surveys are necessary. If planning permission is granted, we advise that the following informative and conditions are attached.

Breeding birds

There is limited potential for the existing extension and roof sections to support nesting birds. All breeding birds and their young are protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) and therefore we advise that the following informative is included with any planning permission:

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 any wild bird while that nest is in use or being built. Planning consent for a development does not provide a defence against prosecution under this Act. Habitats are present on and around the site that provide opportunities for breeding birds. Any work to structures that may provide suitable nesting habitats should be carried out outside of the bird breeding season (1st March to 31st August inclusive) to avoid destroying or damaging bird nests in use or being built. Where structures need to be removed during the breeding season, mitigation measures need to be implemented. This includes examination by a suitably qualified and experienced ecologist immediately prior to starting work. If any nesting birds are found, works must cease until after the birds have finished nesting.

Roosting Bats

The Ecological Impact Assessment (EclA) concludes that there is negligible potential for roosting bats but has recommended a precautionary approach to the timing of works. We advise that this is secured as a condition to any planning permission approved and suggest the following wording:

The applicant is reminded that Bats and their roosts are protected at all times by the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 and the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended). Planning permission for development does not provide a defence against prosecution under this legislation or substitute for the need to obtain a bat licence if an offence is likely. In accordance with paragraph 5.6 of the Ecological Impact Assessment (Kent Botany, March 2023), removal of the pitched roof should be undertaken outside of the maternity and hibernation periods, restricting these works to April and September/October. The removal of tiles and roof-lining should be undertaken by hand (soft-stripping). If bats or evidence of bats is found during the works, the applicant is advised to stop work and follow advice from the site ecologist.

Biodiversity Enhancement Plan

Under section 40 of the NERC Act (2006) and paragraph 174 of the NPPF (2021), biodiversity must be maintained and enhanced through the planning system. Additionally, in alignment with paragraph 180 of the NPPF 2021, the implementation of enhancements and net gains for biodiversity (integrated as part of design) should be encouraged.

Enhancement measures including integral features for bats and breeding birds have been proposed within Section 6 of the EclA report. We advise that if planning permission is granted, a condition for a Biodiversity Enhancement Plan is attached to secure the implementation of the proposed measures. In addition, we advise that the following are considered for inclusion within the plan:

- Native-species landscaping
- A wildlife pond
- Habitat for hedgehog
- Log and compost piles.

Suggested condition wording:

Prior to completion, details of how the development will provide enhancement for biodiversity will be submitted to, and approved in writing by, the local planning authority. This will include a native species landscaping scheme and habitat boxes for bats, breeding

birds including S41 priority species, and hedgehog. Any boxes included for wildlife should be building integrated and/or made of Woodstone/Woodcrete to ensure durability. The approved measures will be implemented and retained thereafter.

If you have any queries regarding our comments, please do not hesitate to get in touch.

Clair Thackray
Biodiversity Officer

This response was submitted following consideration of the following documents:
Ecological Impact Assessment. Kent Botany. March 2023