



ECOLOGICAL ADVICE SERVICE

TO: Kelly Joyce
FROM: Elizabeth Fagg
DATE: 05 August 2026
SUBJECT: 20260337 Hard Times, Meopham

The following is provided by Kent County Council's Ecological Advice Service (KCC 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 if sufficient/appropriate ecological information has been provided.

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

We have reviewed the information submitted by the applicant and advise that sufficient **ecological and biodiversity net gain** information has been provided for determination. Recommended **condition/informative** wording is provided below.

This is a householder application and therefore comes under a BNG exemption.

PROTECTED SPECIES AND HABITATS

We have reviewed the householder application and the proposed two storey extension is on existing hardstanding, adjoining the existing garage and main building. Aerial imagery shows the building and garage roof appear relatively new, in good condition and well sealed. We consider that no protected species surveys are required.

The site has ancient woodland to the western boundaries and priority deciduous woodland to mainly the north and southern boundary, as shown by green shading in the excerpt from MAGIC below.



The information is provided regarding changes to windows and proposed dormers. We highlight that due to the woodland surrounding the plot consideration is required to lighting from external fittings and from any rooflights/dormers.

Lighting in the vicinity of a bat roost or along commuting/foraging routes could result in disturbance resulting in roost abandonment, which is an offence under Regulation 43 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended). Artificial lighting has been shown to be particularly harmful to bats along river corridors, near woodland edges and near hedgerows. Local authorities have a duty to ensure impacts upon legally protected species are avoided and impacts upon bats are a material consideration in any planning permission under the Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006 and through the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 2024.

Therefore, to mitigate against potential adverse effects on biodiversity, the Bat Conservation Trust/Institute of Lighting Professionals 'Guidance Note 08/23 Bats and Artificial Lighting at Night' should be consulted in the lighting design of the development.

We advise that the incorporation of sensitive lighting design for biodiversity is submitted to the local planning authority and secured via an attached condition with any planning permission.

Suggested Condition Wording:

Prior to occupation, a lighting design plan for biodiversity shall be submitted to, and approved in writing by, the local planning authority. The plan shall show the type and locations of lighting, as well as the expected light spill in lux levels, to demonstrate that areas to be lit shall not adversely impact biodiversity or the adjacent woodland. All lighting shall be installed in accordance with the specifications and locations set out in the approved plan and shall be maintained thereafter.

Reason: To limit the impact of light pollution from artificial light in accordance with the NPPF 2024, paragraph 198(c). With consideration for bats and other nocturnal wildlife in accordance with the NPPF 2024, paragraph 187(d).

The woodland is outside the site boundary but impacts to root protection areas need to be considered as well as impacts from dust, noise and light during construction. A construction and ecological management plan needs to be in place to ensure suitable mitigation measures are in place. This will require consideration of the arboricultural impacts.

CONSTRUCTION ECOLOGICAL MANAGEMENT PLAN (CEMP)

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 2024, paragraph 187, indicates that “*planning policies and decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by: ... d) minimising impacts on and providing net gains for biodiversity...*”

We suggest that the below wording is included as a condition for a Construction Ecological Management Plan (CEMP – biodiversity) if planning permission is granted. This shall mitigate for impacts to biodiversity and help ensure compliance with relevant legislation

Suggested Condition Wording:

No development shall be undertaken (including any ground works, site and/or vegetation clearance) until a construction ecological management plan (CEMP) has been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The CEMP shall be based on up-to-date ecological survey information, as advised by a suitably qualified ecologist and include the following:

- *Retained tree and hedgerow protection measures in accordance with BS 5837:2012;*
- *Identification of ‘biodiversity protection zones to avoid impacts to the ancient and priority deciduous woodlands’;*
- *Practical measures (both physical measures and sensitive working practises) to avoid or reduce impacts during construction (may be provided as a set of species or habitat-specific method statements);*
- *The location of materials/equipment storage areas and timing of sensitive works to avoid harm to biodiversity features;*
- *Responsible persons and lines of communication;*
- *The role and responsibilities on site of an ecological clerk of works (ECoW) or similarly competent person, and;*
- *Contingency plans should a protected species be encountered;*

The approved CEMP shall be adhered to and implemented throughout the construction period in accordance with the approved details.

Reason: To protect biodiversity in accordance with the NPPF paragraph 193 and Local Policy CS12, to avoid an offence under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) and with consideration for Species of Principal Importance under the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006.

BIODIVERSITY ENHANCEMENT PLAN (BEP)

No biodiversity enhancements are currently proposed. Paragraph 187(d) of the NPPF 2024 states: “*Planning policies and decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by ... minimising impacts on and providing net gains for biodiversity, including by establishing coherent ecological networks that are more resilient to current and future pressures and incorporating features which support priority or threatened species such as swifts, bats and hedgehogs.*” This is notwithstanding any exemption from statutory BNG.

Suggested biodiversity enhancements include the provision of durable bird/bat boxes (for house sparrows, starlings, swifts or as appropriate to the development and preferably integrated into new structures), native tree/shrub planting, sowing of an appropriate wildflower mix, the creation of artificial refugia for reptiles/amphibians, the creation of ‘hedgehog highways’ (13×13cm gaps in closed board fencing) and/or creation of bug hotels/bee bricks for invertebrates. Integrated features (e.g. swift bricks or bat tubes) should be clearly visible on elevations plans.

We consider features such as integrated bird or bat boxes, native species planting and insect homes and log piles could be implemented in this site.

Suggested condition wording

Within 3 months of works commencing, an ecological enhancement plan shall be submitted to, and approved in writing by, the Local Planning Authority. The plan detailing how the development will enhance biodiversity will be submitted to, and approved in writing by, the local planning authority. The approved measures will be implemented and retained thereafter.

Elizabeth Fagg
Biodiversity Officer

This response was submitted following consideration of the following documents:

- Cover letter
- Existing site/block plan, Streetwise
- Proposed block site/plan, Streetwise
- Planning statement