



ECOLOGICAL ADVICE SERVICE

TO: Lisa Williams
FROM: Helen Forster
DATE: 18 December 2023
SUBJECT: 20231013 Alston, 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.

We are satisfied that sufficient information has been provided to determine the planning application.

We have reviewed the submitted ecological information and we are satisfied with the conclusions that the building has limited potential to support roosting bats but suitable features are present to support nesting birds.

Breeding Birds

Due to suitable habitat being present to support breeding birds we recommend the following information is included if planning permission is granted:

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 vegetation/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. If vegetation/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.

Bats

It has been assessed that the building has negligible potential to be used by roosting bats but it is likely that bats are foraging /commuting within the site. Lighting can have a negative impact on bats (and other nocturnal species) and therefore any lighting must be designed to minimise light spill.

We recommend that if planning permission is granted the **lighting condition** has the following requirements:

- Be designed following best practice guidance within Bat Conservation Trust/Institute of Lighting Professional's 'Guidance Note 08/23 Bats and Artificial Lighting at Night'¹
- Downward facing and on motion sensors

Ecological Enhancements

Under section 40 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006 and paragraphs 174 and 180 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 2023, biodiversity should be maintained and enhanced through the planning system.

If planning permission is granted we recommend the following condition is included:

Prior to completion, details of how the development will enhance biodiversity will be submitted to, and approved in writing by, the local planning authority. This will include integrated and/or wall-mounted bird and/or bat boxes. Wall-mounted boxes will be made of woodcrete to secure a suitably long-term and low maintenance biodiversity enhancement for the site. Any boxes for birds will be targeted at red or amber listed species (as per the latest British Trust for Ornithology Birds of Conservation Concern list). The approved measures will be implemented and retained thereafter.

Appendix 1 provides some generic (non-exhaustive) information regarding the most common enhancements we see proposed. Suitable detail may include the provision of information such as:

- The proposed target species;
- Make and model of any boxes;
- Location information such as height, aspect, surrounding habitat;
- Detailed planting schedules; and
- Relevant (basic) management necessary to ensure the habitat is suitable for the target species.

¹ ['Bats and Artificial Lighting at Night' ILP Guidance Note update released - News - Bat Conservation Trust](#)

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

Helen Forster MCIEEM
Biodiversity Officer

This response was submitted following consideration of the following documents:
Preliminary Roost Assessment; Arbtech; Oct 2023