



ECOLOGICAL ADVICE SERVICE

TO: Alison Webster

FROM: Emma England

DATE: 11 August 2022

SUBJECT: 20220681 – Jackson Family Holdings Ltd, Northfleet

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

No ecological information has been submitted with this application. As a result of reviewing the data we have available to us (including aerial photos and biological records) and the information submitted with the planning application, we advise that further information is sought with regards to the potential for ecological impacts to arise as a result of the proposed development.

It is recommended that an ecologist produce a simple ecological impact assessment (EcIA) report for the site that includes the following information:

- Results of an inspection of the trees on-site by a suitably qualified and competent CIEEM ecologist for bat roosting suitability (where they are to be removed or experience an increase in lighting);
- Results of any further surveys and mitigations (if required) following the ecologist's tree inspection;
- Details of any other mitigations required for protected habitats or species (e.g., Swanscombe Peninsula SSSI/ nesting birds/ bat sensitive lighting);
- Details of mitigation for the loss of the trees on-site if they cannot be retained; and
- Details of ecological enhancements proposed on-site.

General Biodiversity Interest on-Site

The site appears to offer limited biodiversity interest, although, two trees appear present on site, a 3m high elder, and 12m high oak. Mature and semi-mature trees have intrinsic biodiversity interest and should be retained as far as possible. Nevertheless, current designs indicate that it is likely that these trees will need to be removed. The loss of these trees should be mitigated for within designs in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) which states that planning policies and decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by: '*Minimising impacts on and providing net gains for biodiversity...*'. Plans should be provided to demonstrate adequate mitigation for the loss of these trees where necessary. It may be possible to provide some mitigation on the roof terrace, as suggested by the view of the proposed rear south west elevation within Ward and Associates drawing 2521.WD.08B.

Bats

Although the trees are sited within an existing industrial area, likely to be lit at night, this alone cannot rule out the possibility of roosting bats. There is woodland approximately 225m south of the site, with parts of the Swanscombe Peninsula Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) within 175m to the north and 480m to the south-west of the site. Surveys carried out in the SSSI have recorded bats. The River Thames is located approximately 330m to the north-east of the site. There are a number of recent records of bats, including roosting bats within 900m of the site.

As such, the trees on-site will need to be inspected by a suitably qualified ecologist to assess their potential to support roosting bats, where they are to be removed or impacted by an increase in lighting.

In addition to considering roosting bats, any external lighting (where required) should be sensitively designed to ensure there is no increase in light spill that could have an impact upon commuting and foraging bats in the local area. As lighting can be detrimental to roosting, foraging and commuting bats, the recommendations from the Bat Conservation Trust and the Institution of Lighting Professionals, titled 'Guidance Note 08/18 Bats and Artificial Lighting in the UK', should be considered where relevant.

Supplying sufficient information with regards to protected species, in advance of determination, is in accordance with paragraph 99 of ODPM 06/2005 which states: "*it is essential that the presence or otherwise of protected species and the extent that they may be affected by the proposed development, is established before the planning permission is granted, otherwise all relevant material considerations may not have been addressed in making the decision*".

Birds

The removal of bushes and trees during the main nesting season (March-August inclusive) risks breaches of nesting bird legislation. Under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981, as amended (section 1), it is an offence to remove, damage or destroy the nest of any wild bird while that nest is in use or being built. Therefore, the clearance of suitable nesting habitat should take place outside the main nesting bird season, or only be carried out following a nesting bird check by a suitably qualified and competent ecologist within 48 hours of the clearance, that shows that the nesting habitats are not in active use by nesting birds.

Designated Sites

The site is approximately 175m south-east and 480m north-east of parts of the Swanscombe Peninsula Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI). There are no international statutory designated sites for their nature conservation value within 6km of the site.

The SSSI Impact Risk Zone for the site suggests that any development that could cause air pollution or dust, either during its construction or operation requires the local planning authority to consult Natural England on likely risks to statutory designated sites. An ecologist should review the potential impacts of the proposal on nearby statutory designated sites and advise on any mitigations that could be required during construction or operation to mitigate for effects on nearby designated sites.

Ecological Enhancements

One of the principles of the National Planning Policy Framework is that “opportunities to improve biodiversity in and around developments should be integrated as part of their design, especially where this can secure measurable net gains for biodiversity...” We advise that details of how the site will enhance biodiversity should be provided with input from an ecologist.

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

Emma England

Biodiversity Officer

This response was submitted following consideration of the following documents:

Herrington Consulting Ltd (May 2022) Flood Risk Assessment and Surface Water Management Strategy for the Proposed Development at Lower Road, Northfleet, Kent.

Invicta Planning (June 2022) Planning Statement. Change of use to Offices and Construction of First and Second Floor Extension, Unit K6, Northfleet Industrial Estate, Northfleet.

Ward and Associates (undated) Design and Access Statement Parts 1 and 2. Proposed Headquarters Building, Jackson Lift Group, Unit K6, Lower Road, Northfleet, Kent, DA11 9BL.

Ward and Associates (June 2021) Site and Location Plans. Proposed New Warehouse and Offices, Unit K6, Lower Road, Northfleet, Kent, DA11 9BL. 2521.WD.01

Ward and Associates (June 2021) Proposed Topographical Site Plan. Proposed New Warehouse and Offices, Unit K6, Lower Road, Northfleet, Kent, DA11 9BL. 2521.WD.10d

Ward and Associates (March, 2022) Proposed Rear South West and Side North West Elevations. Proposed New Warehouse and Offices, Unit K6, Lower Road, Northfleet, Kent, DA11 9BL. 2521.WD.08B.