



ECOLOGICAL ADVICE SERVICE

TO: Amanda Grout
FROM: Luke Wallace
DATE: 27 April 2022
SUBJECT: 20211478 / Little Acres, Gravesend

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.

We have reviewed the ecological information submitted by the applicant and advise that sufficient ecological information has been provided.

A primary ecological concern is the potential impact to the ancient woodland along the northern boundary. Whilst there is no proposed development within 15m (in alignment with current guidance), there are potential indirect impacts from lighting and non-native plant species. These issues can be addressed with the conditions below.

Biodiversity and Lighting

To mitigate against potential adverse effects on bats, and in alignment with recommendations within the ecology report, we suggest that the Bat Conservation Trust's 'Guidance Note 8 Bats and Artificial Lighting' is 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 wording:

Prior to occupation, a lighting design plan for biodiversity will be submitted to, and approved in writing by, the local planning authority. The plan will show the type and locations of external lighting, demonstrating that areas to be lit will not adversely impact biodiversity. All external

lighting will be installed in accordance with the specifications and locations set out in the plan and will be maintained thereafter.

Breeding Bird Informative

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 (March to August) 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 during construction. This includes examination by an experienced ecologist prior to starting work and if any nesting birds are found, development must cease until after the juveniles have fledged. We suggest the following informative is included with any planning consent:

The applicant is reminded that, 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. Planning consent for a development does not provide a defence against prosecution under this Act. Breeding bird habitat is present on the application site and assumed to contain nesting birds between 1st March and 31st August, unless a recent survey has been undertaken by a competent ecologist and has shown that nesting birds are not present.

Biodiversity and Ecological Enhancement

Under section 40 of the NERC Act (2006), paragraph 174 of the NPPF (2021) and the Environment Act (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 for biodiversity should be encouraged.

We are satisfied that the development can achieve a biodiversity net-gain, as denoted within the report. However, to safeguard the ecological integrity of the surrounding countryside (including the ancient woodland), we advise that any landscaping consists of native species only. Suggested condition wording:

Within six months of works commencing, details of how the development will enhance biodiversity will be submitted to, and approved in writing by, the local planning authority. This will include a native species-only landscape scheme. The approved details will be implemented and thereafter retained.

Luke Wallace
Biodiversity Officer

This response was submitted following consideration of the following documents:
Preliminary Ecological Appraisal and Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment. Urban Edge. Nov 2021.