



ECOLOGICAL ADVICE SERVICE

TO: Rebecca Harrison

FROM: Nancy Inman

DATE: 05 March 2025

SUBJECT: 20241087 112 Beaumont Drive, Northfleet

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 no ecological information is required for determination. This application is within a small, managed garden and therefore has limited habitats and features suitable for supporting biodiversity. The existing structure appears well maintained and therefore unlikely to support roosting bats. Recommended condition wording is provided.

Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) SELF-BUILD EXEMPTION

The applicant considers the proposals to be exempt from mandatory biodiversity net gain, so that a mandatory biodiversity net gain of 10% will not apply. The applicant has stated that proposals meet the following criteria:

- consists of no more than 9 dwellings;
- on a site that has an area no larger than 0.5 hectares; and
- consists exclusively of dwellings that are self-build or custom housebuilding as defined in section 1(A1) of the Self-build and Custom Housebuilding Act 2015

It is not within our remit to verify that the proposed dwelling(s) meet the definition of self-build or custom housebuilding as defined in the 2015 Act. The LPA should therefore ensure that the proposals meet the definition and that biodiversity net gain does not apply.

Government guidance on self-build and custom housebuilding indicates that “[in] considering whether a home is self-build or custom build home, relevant authorities must be satisfied that the initial owner of the home will have primary input into its final design and layout. Off-plan housing, homes purchased at the plan stage prior to construction and without input into the design and layout from the buyer, are not considered to meet the definition of self-build and custom housing”.

ECOLOGICAL ENHANCEMENTS

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. A condition wording is suggested below.

Condition

Within three months of works commencement, a detailed plan(s) showing how the development will enhance biodiversity, will be submitted to, and approved in writing by, the local planning authority. Native and wildlife-friendly planting, and integrated durable bat and bird boxes aimed at species of conservation concern should be incorporated. 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.

Nancy Inman
Biodiversity Officer

This response was submitted following consideration of the following documents:

- OS Plan
- Block plan – Proposed
- Floor plans and elevations – Proposed
- Roof plans – Existing and proposed
- Application Form