



## ECOLOGICAL ADVICE SERVICE

**TO:** Katherine Parkin  
**FROM:** Emma England  
**DATE:** 10 May 2023  
**SUBJECT:** 20230320 / Little Cottage, Meopham

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*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.*

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### **NO INFORMATION – MORE INFORMATION NEEDED**

No ecological information has been submitted with this application. As a result of reviewing the data we have available to us, and the information submitted with the planning application, we advise that further information is sought from the applicant with regards to the potential for ecological impacts to arise.

### **Protected Species**

Buildings are present on the site, as no photographs or ecological survey information have been supplied with the application, the potential for protected species roosting within the buildings on-site cannot be ruled out. To determine if further survey is required by a suitably qualified ecologist<sup>1</sup>, high quality photographs of the on-site buildings for removal are requested, particularly of the existing dwelling for removal. Photographs should show the buildings from all sides, and pay particular attention to the roof, soffits and fascias.

To ensure that the planning determination is adequately informed in respect of all potential ecological impacts, we advise that the photographs are sought prior to determination of the planning application. This is in alignment with paragraph 99 of ODPM 06/2005 which

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<sup>1</sup> Suitably qualified ecologists can be found using either the: [CIEEM Registered Practice Directory](#) or the [Environmental Data Services Directory](#).

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”.

### **Ancient Woodland**

It should also be noted that directly to the south and east of the site is woodland designated as ancient semi-natural woodland. As such, we highlight paragraph 180 of the NPPF which states that “*development resulting in the loss or deterioration of irreplaceable habitats (such as ancient woodland and ancient or veteran trees) should be refused, unless there are wholly exceptional reasons and a suitable compensation strategy exists*”. The Natural England/Forestry Commission standing advice states that there should normally be a minimum 15m buffer zone between development and ancient woodland<sup>2</sup>. It is noted that some development appears to have already occurred on ancient woodland to the east of the site, with trees cleared between 2003 and 2015.

It is recommended that an arboricultural consultant be engaged to determine the potential risks of the development upon ancient woodland, as well as any appropriate avoidance and mitigation measures necessary. This information should be sought prior to the determination of the planning application to ensure that the development will not result in the loss or deterioration of ancient woodland.

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:

*WS Planning and Architecture (12 April 2023) Cover Letter and Planning Statement.*

*WS Planning and Architecture (February 2023) As Existing, Block Plan.*

*WS Planning and Architecture (February 2023) As Existing, Site Plan.*

*WS Planning and Architecture (February 2023) As Existing, Site Plan with PD Extensions.*

*WS Planning and Architecture (February 2023) As Proposed, Site Plan.*

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<sup>2</sup> [Ancient woodland, ancient trees and veteran trees: advice for making planning decisions - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/ancient-woodland-ancient-trees-and-veteran-trees-advice-for-making-planning-decisions)