



ECOLOGICAL ADVICE SERVICE

TO: Kelly Joyce

FROM: Hannah Simmons

DATE: 29 January 2024

SUBJECT: 20231334 / Ashlea Horns, Meopham, DA13 0BX

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.

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, we advise that we are satisfied that there is no requirement for an ecological survey to be carried out.

We have taken this view because Google Street View shows that the building to be converted is in good condition limiting opportunities for gaps/cracks to be present which would support roosting bats. There will be little change to the building footprint which already exists on hardstanding and holds a low ecological value. We are satisfied from the small-scale works proposed that the nearby local wildlife sites will not be impacted.

Bat lightings

Lighting can negatively impact nocturnal species, like bats, that could be foraging and commuting on site and in the surrounding habitat. Currently there is no lighting plan or information submitted. Therefore, if bats are present foraging/commuting within the area, there is a risk that any lighting may have a negative impact.

To mitigate against potential adverse effects on bats, and in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework 2023, we suggest that the Bat Conservation Trust's 'Guidance Note 08/23: Bats and Artificial Lighting at night' is consulted in the lighting design of the development. We advise that the incorporation of sensitive lighting design for bats is

submitted to the local planning authority and secured via an attached condition with any planning permission.

Lighting - Suggested Wording:

Prior to occupation, a lighting plan demonstrating it has been designed to avoid impacts on roosting, foraging, and commuting bats will be submitted to, and approved in writing by, the local planning authority. The lighting will be designed to follow the recommendations within the Bat Conservation Trust's 'Guidance Note 08/23: Bats and Artificial Lighting at night' and the plan will confirm the type and locations of external lighting. All external lighting will be installed in accordance with the specifications and locations set out in the plan and will be maintained thereafter.

Ecological Enhancements

One of the principles of the National Planning Policy Framework is that “opportunities to incorporate biodiversity improvements in and around developments should be encouraged, especially where this can secure measurable net gains for biodiversity”.

We note that the site has a hedgerow consisting of large trees on the eastern side of the boundary that have the potential for breeding birds to be nesting in. The Design and Access statement says that there are already native wildflowers to the rear of the garden to benefit birds and other species on the applicant's land. We recommend that enhancements for (nesting) birds are incorporated into the site, such as bird boxes to support the local populations, along with integrated bat bricks/boxes into the proposed development itself. We advise that this should be conditioned if planning permission is granted.

Ecological Enhancement Condition – Suggested Wording

Within six months of works commencement a plan detailing how the development will enhance biodiversity will be submitted to, and approved in writing by, the local planning authority. This will include the installation of bat and bird bricks/boxes. 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.

Hannah Simmons
Biodiversity Officer