



ECOLOGICAL ADVICE SERVICE

TO: Lucy Hankin
FROM: Marie Thibault
DATE: 17 October 2024
SUBJECT: Ashdown, Gravesend / 20240835

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.

We have reviewed the information submitted in support of this planning application and advise that **sufficient information has been provided.**

If planning permission is granted, we advise that conditions securing ecological avoidance, mitigation measures and the implementation of ecological enhancements are attached.

Site of Special Scientific Interest

The proposed development is within 176m of the Shorne and Ashenbank Woods SSSI. The proposed development is small as it is only for a house extension and so it is considered unlikely that it will have a negative impact on the designated sites.

Bats

One side of the house will be extended and so it is our understanding that the roof will be amended on the rear elevation. Following our records, bats are present within the immediate area and as such we cannot fully rule out their presence onsite.

We suggest that a precautionary bat mitigation strategy must be undertaken prior to any demolition/construction works. In the unlikely event of a bat being found then works should cease immediately and a licence from Natural England sought.

We suggest the following condition wording :

Prior to any demolition/construction works, a precautionary bat mitigation strategy shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

To ensure no harm occurs to bats during the demolition/construction works, the precautionary strategy shall include :

- *A 1FD Schwegler bat box should be placed in a tree nearby prior to the start of works and it must be detailed within the site and landscape plans;*
- *A tool box talk will be undertaken to contractors involved in the demolition;*
- *A licenced bat ecologist will search for evidence of bat activity around the building (i.e. bat droppings, stains);*
- *Once any features for bats have been searched for or dismantled to the level required, and no bats found, the works may continue without further restriction.*

Artificial lighting has been proven to significantly impact on the behaviour of insects, birds, bats, and other nocturnal mammals, including those which will potentially benefit from any proposed landscaping and enhancements.

We advise that the Bat Conservation Trust's *Guidance Note 8 Bats and artificial lighting in the UK* is adhered to in the lighting design for the works undertaken and the proposed house extension. We advise to secure this as a condition of planning permission if granted.

Ecological enhancements

Under section 40 of the NERC Act (2006) and paragraph 180 of the NPPF (2023), biodiversity must be maintained and enhanced through the planning system. Additionally, in alignment with paragraph 186 of the NPPF (2023), the implementation of net gains for biodiversity should be encouraged.

Enhancement features are not considered as part of a measurable net gain; however, in addition to the measurable net gains we expect enhancement features to also be incorporated into an enhancement plan within the red line boundary. These can include bat and bird bricks/durable boxes, log piles, hibernacula, and hedgehog homes as well as generous native planting.

As such we suggest the following condition wording:

Within 3 months of planning permission being granted, details of how the development will enhance biodiversity will be included within the final site plan and submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The approved details will be implemented and thereafter retained.

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

Marie Thibault
Biodiversity Officer

This response was submitted following consideration of the following documents:

- Design and access Statement, Penfold Project Services, September 2024