



Delegated Report

Application No: 20230233

Location: Abbey Farm Barn, Church Street, Higham ME3 7LS

Description: Application for the approval of Condition 3 attached to planning permission reference 20220538 relating to Biodiversity Enhancement.

Applicant: Mr Nicholas Savage

Submitted Documents/Plans

Application form
Biodiversity Proposed Layout Plan

Relevant Planning History

20220538 Installation of a 10.88kw ground mounted PV array.
Approved 23.08.2022

Consultations, Publicity and Representations

KCC Ecology

We have reviewed the submitted documents in relation to condition 3 (Appendix 1) and advise that provided that the applicant can agree to the following recommendations, then sufficient information will be available to discharge the condition:

- Bird boxes¹ will be chosen for red or amber listed species² of bird and correctly sited. House sparrow boxes may be a good choice for this site. Bird boxes should be placed away from windows, doors and footpaths, be at the appropriate height for the target species, be sheltered and in an undisturbed location, and be sited on an appropriate aspect. For house sparrows, boxes would need to be sited above 2m (although 4-5m would be better) and have an entrance hole of 32mm diameter. Put the box on an aspect that does not allow the box to receive direct sunlight for large portions of the day. If the position provides lots of shade, any aspect may be acceptable, although if unsure, place the box on a northern or eastern aspect. Place the box in a way that avoids damage to any selected tree and select a large mature or semi-mature specimen. Young/small trees or bushes are unlikely to be suitable.
- The inclusion of a native wildflower meadow is welcomed. This will need ongoing management and careful installation if it is to be successful. Information should be included regarding the best location, installation and ongoing on management by the seller of the seed mix. Provided this advice is followed and remedial actions taken should the seed mix struggle to establish, then there should be wildlife benefits from this inclusion on-site.

1 Woodcrete boxes are generally recommended for development projects over wooden boxes. Wooden boxes are only likely to last 5-10 years before needing to be replaced to continue to provide a wildlife benefit. A woodcrete box has a much longer lifespan of 20-25 years before needing to be replaced. We would always recommend durable materials be selected for installation in order to minimise maintenance in the long-term and to provide a longer-term assurance of biodiversity net gain in line with the NPPF 2021. However, in this instance, due to the very small-scale nature of proposals, a wooden bird box is considered acceptable.

2 Birds of Conservation Concern | BTO - British Trust for Ornithology

Historic England

No comment.

Analysis

Condition 3 of 20220538 states:

Prior to the completion of the development hereby approved, details of how the development will enhance biodiversity will be submitted to, and approved in writing by, the Local Planning Authority. The approved details will be implemented and thereafter retained.

Reason: To ensure an acceptable standard of development upon completion through provision and long term management of soft landscaping and to enhance local provisions for wildlife and biodiversity to mitigate habitat lost by development, in accordance with adopted Gravesham Local Plan Core Strategy Policies CS12 and CS19.

The applicant provided a description of proposed mitigation measures within the planning application form to include two bird boxes (wooden nest box type) within the grounds of the garden (wall and tree mounted) and surround the soil area around the solar panels with a diverse native wildflower and grass mix. Following on from the comments made by the KCC Ecologist the applicant supplied a plan showing the location of the bird boxes and wildflower planting. The plan is shown below:



The proposals are considered acceptable and the condition can be discharged.

Recommendation:

Discharge condition 3.
See draft Decision

Case Officer:	Team Leader: Richard Hart
Signed: 	Signed: <i>R Hart</i>
Dated: 26 April 2023	Dated: 26 th April 2023