Biodiversity Mitigation and Enhancement Plan, February 2025

Planning Application Details

Arkady, Thicket Road, Houghton, Huntingdon, Cambridgeshire PE28 2BQ

LPA: Huntingdon District Council

Planning Reference No: 24/02002/HHFUL

Property owners: [redacted]

Ecological Consultants:

1. MKA Ecology Ltd, New Cambridge House, Bassingbourn Road, Litlington, Royston, SG8 0SS
    - Preliminary Ecology Appraisal, Preliminary Roost Assessments 2021 and Bat surveys 2021.
2. Greenwillows Associates Ltd, Green Willows Farm, First Turf Fen Drove, Warboys PE28 2TZ
    - Ecology appraisal update with further Bat Surveys 2024

Arboricultural Consultant:

[redacted], Cambridge Trees Ltd, Godmanchester, Cambs, PE29 2JE

Description of Development

Erection of one and a half storey side extension with dormers and rooflights. Relocation of entrance and gable frontage to side elevation with external insulated cladding to all facades and new windows and doors throughout. Conversion of existing storage barn and renovation into guest suite. Erection of greenhouse. Alteration to existing summer house with re-cladding and re-roofing and associated soft and hard landscaping works and drainage to site.

Features of interest on site

2021 Ecological Surveys

A Preliminary Ecological Appraisal and Preliminary Roost Assessment for bats was carried out by MKA Ecology Ltd. in July 2021.

The Preliminary Ecological Appraisal noted important native hedgerow habitat at the site as well as suitable habitat for a variety of nesting birds and hedgehogs; advice was

given with respect to retaining existing hedgerows and trees, avoiding the disturbance of nesting birds and providing for hedgehogs within the development.

The Preliminary Roost Assessment found evidence of brown long-eared bats (Plecotus

auritus) in the form of a small number of droppings of this species within the roof space of the bungalow and the building had numerous potential bat access points and roosting sites. The building was assessed as having high suitability for roosting bats.

No evidence of bats was found inside or outside of the storage barn, but a small number of possible bat access points and roosting sites were identified. The building was assessed as having low suitability for roosting bats.

Further bat surveys to determine the current presence or likely absence of bats were recommended and subsequently two dusk emergence surveys and a dawn return survey were carried out in August and September 2021. The surveys found the bungalow was used as a day roosting site by a small number of brown long-eared bats and a small number of soprano pipistrelle bats (Pipistrellus pygmaeus).

Mitigation measures, including the requirement of a development licence from Natural

England were recommended.

2024 Ecological Surveys

In order to obtain updated information on the use of the bungalow by bats, and to inform a Natural England licence application, three further survey visits were made to the site in May, June and July 2024.

Evidence of the presence of brown long-eared bats in the form of a small number of droppings was found inside the roof space of the bungalow. These were not fresh, and their number and distribution appeared similar to as found during the surveys in 2021.

No brown long-eared bats were recorded using the bungalow during the latest 2024 surveys, but two soprano pipistrelle bats were recorded emerging from the eastern side of the bungalow roof on the 11th July.

No evidence of bats was found anywhere on the inside or outside of the storage barn.

The site appeared unchanged and was as recorded by the initial surveys carried out in 2021; hedgerow habitat and suitable habitat for nesting birds and hedgehogs remains**.**

These updated surveys supported the recommendations originally made in 2021.

Ecological constraints, opportunities and recommendations

Recommendation 1

Retain and protect mature and semi-mature trees from accidental works in line with policy LP31 (Huntingdonshire District Council 2019).

A full tree survey and Tree Protection Plan has been developed by John Talbot of Cambridge Trees Ltd and was submitted as part of this planning application. A minimal number of trees and shrubs are scheduled for removal or pruning and tree protection measures will be put in place prior to commencement and for the full duration of the works in accordance with this plan.

Recommendation 2

Retain, protect and enhance the existing native hedgerow, which is a Habitat of Principal Importance.

This will be retained and UK native woody species will be planted where there is natural die back with the hedgerow. For example a Box Hedge has recently died back and so this will be replaced.

Recommendation 3

Schedule vegetation and building clearance works between the months of September and February inclusive to avoid impacts on breeding birds. Where this timing is not feasible works should be preceded by a nesting bird check.

Vegetation and building clearance works will be scheduled outside the bird breeding season between the months of September and February inclusive.

Recommendation 4

Undertake three nocturnal bat surveys on the residential building and a single survey of the barn

These were carried out by MKA Ecology limited in 2021 and updated by Greenwillows Ltd in 2024. Both of these reports have been previously submitted as part of this planning application.

Recommendation 5

Light pollution from exterior lighting should be minimised both during and after the construction phase. A sensitive lighting scheme should be developed to allow for suitable roosting and foraging areas for bats within the site with the maximum use of appropriate lighting luminaries and directed lighting. Direct lighting on mature trees and hedgerow habit must be avoided.

The external lighting scheme is limited to the main house and extension. There are no plans to light trees or hedgerows.

Recommendation 6

Install one hedgehog dome close to existing hedgerow habitat.

A suitable hedgehog dome will be installed on the property near the Beech Hedgerow.

Recommendation 7

Maintain habitat connectivity for hedgehog through the instalment of at least one 13cm x 13cm hole at the bottom of any fence, if they are to be installed.

There are no plans to install any fences as part of this development.

Recommendation 8 (Opportunity for biodiversity enhancement)

It is recommended that the existing hedgerow is augmented and enhanced with additional native British species to improve the overall value of the site for biodiversity in line with the requirements of the NPPF. This could include a range of habitats although enhancement of the hedgerow habitat is likely to be readily achievable.

Please see plan to implement Recommendation 2. In addition, it is intended to re-wild the area of the garden surrounding the mature Walnut tree.

Recommendation 9 (Opportunity for biodiversity enhancement)

Incorporate simple biodiversity enhancement measures at the site including the creation of a bee lawn and provision of deadwood features.

These opportunities will be explored as part of the re-wilding of the area of the garden surrounding the mature Walnut tree.

Recommendation 10 (Opportunity for biodiversity enhancement)

A minimum of four bird boxes should be installed at the site, to include provision for various UK native species.

These will be installed.

Recommendation 11 (Opportunity for biodiversity enhancement)

Create a small wildlife pond, planted with a range of UK native species, to include a range of emergent and marginal species.

This opportunity will be explored as part of the re-wilding of the area of the garden surrounding the mature Walnut tree.

Bats: Recommendations following Preliminary Roost Survey and Nocturnal Surveys 2021 and supported by Bat Emergence Surveys 2024

Recommendation 12

Obtain planning permission for the proposed development prior to the European Protected Species mitigation licence application.

This has been obtained.

Recommendation 13

Obtain the European Protected Species mitigation licence and undertake all works with the bat mitigation strategy agreed with Natural England.

An application to Natural England for a development licence will be made.

Recommendation 14 (Opportunity for biodiversity enhancement)

A Bat Box scheme should be developed for the site and incorporated into the design scheme.

A total of four Bat boxes will be installed on suitable trees across the property.

Timetable of implementation

Species	Pre-planning action	Pre-construction action	Construction phase mitigations	Proposed enhancements
Habitats	Tree Protection Plan has been developed Native Hedgerow is to be maintained		Tree Protection Measures as per the plan	Incorporate native planting, pond and habitat creation
Bats	Further survey work completed 2021 and updated 2024 Sensitive external lighting scheme has been designed	Obtain project licence from Natural England	Work completed in accordance with the method statement of the licence. Implement sensitive lighting scheme	Bat boxes to be installed on suitable trees on the site
Birds			Vegetation removal to be completed between September and February	Bird boxes to be installed on the site
Hedgehogs				Hedgehog dome to be installed on the site

Summary

Detailed Ecological, Arboricultural appraisals have been undertaken in 2021 and updated in 2024 including a number of Bat Emergence Surveys. Mitigation measures and opportunities to enhance biodiversity have been suggested by MKA Ecology Ltd and by Greenwillows Ltd, all of which have been incorporated into the scheme design and this implementation plan.

[redacted]

2nd January 2025