

Response to Paragraph 4 of General Planning Conditions Issued in Respect of Application Number 23/02474/HOUSE – 7 Willow Terrace, High Street, Eynsford, Dartford, Kent DA4 0AH

1. The following forms a response to paragraph 4 of General Planning Conditions Issued in Respect of Application Number 23/02474/HOUSE – 7 Willow Terrace, High Street, Eynsford, Dartford, Kent DA4 0AH which reads as follows: -

‘Prior to any works above damp-proof course level, a Biodiversity Enhancement Layout for bespoke biodiversity enhancements shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The content of the Biodiversity Enhancement Layout shall include the following: a) detailed designs or product descriptions for bespoke biodiversity enhancements, which may include native species planting and/or habitat features such as bird or bat boxes; and b) locations, orientations and heights for bespoke biodiversity enhancements by appropriate maps and plans, the enhancement measures shall be implemented in accordance with the approved details prior to occupation and all features shall be retained in that manner thereafter.

To enhance protected and Priority species & habitats and allow the LPA to discharge its duties under the NPPF 2023 and s40 of the NERC Act 2006 (Priority habitats & species).’

2. The development in question entails the demolition of an existing shed and its replacement with a single-story freestanding conservatory. The shed in question (which has now been taken down) was effectively a lean to against a brick wall that is part of an outhouse/shed owned by 8 Willow Terrace. The rest of the structure was built in brick to waist height and above that was of wooden construction in respect of both its walls and roof. There was neither animal nor plant life within it at the time it was removed, beyond possibly a few insects or spiders. Both the shed floor and its surround were/are made of concrete.

3. The new structure will have a concrete floor with brick surround to a height of 15 centimetres and on one side will consist totally of brick. The front and rear profiles are partially brick and other than that will be of double-glazed glass. The fourth side and roof will be constructed of double-glazed glass.

4. Elsewhere in the garden of 7 Willow Terrace there are pre-existing features to encourage biodiversity. For example, near to the proposed structure is a wall mounted birdbox which is yet to be occupied (marked as A on attached diagram). Elsewhere there are two ‘bug hotels’ (marked as C & D on attached diagram. The first is mounted (with her consent) on a neighbour’s shed and faces into the garden. The second is located on a freestanding platform approximately 4 feet off of the ground. There are also numerous species of plants of which roses (marked as F on attached diagram but actually placed at numerous locations within the garden), honeysuckle, lavender (marked as E on attached diagram) and cotoneaster (marked as B on the attached diagram) could particularly be said to attract pollinators such as bees and other insects.

5. As noted in paragraph 2 above, no animal life has apparently been disturbed as a result of the work to date and no plants have been removed. However, paragraph 4 of the General Planning Conditions makes specific reference to ‘habitat features such as bird and bat boxes.’ Whilst bats do indeed feed in the evenings from a ‘bug layer’ above the River Darent, they seem keen to avoid humans. The applicants did some years ago place a bat box at the bottom of the garden but found that it was never occupied; it is believed that the local bat population roosts in the nearby church belfry. Given the number of domestic pets owned by neighbours (mainly cats), it would seem that the provision of bird or bat boxes in the immediate vicinity of the new structure would be pointless and indeed could actually cause such species further problems. Surely the encouragement of birds or bats to roost or nest near the structure to be built would render them liable to attack by cats and

other pets. It is submitted that the encouragement of any other species such as small rodents would encourage similar behaviour.

6. The following measures are proposed to enhance the biodiverse environment of the garden further whilst avoiding those problems noted in the previous paragraph. Later in the year a further lavender bush would be planted as indicated at point 1 on the attached diagram. In addition, a buddleia would be planted at point 2 on the diagram. It is hoped that these would further encourage bees, butterflies, insects and other pollinators into the vicinity. In addition, a further bird box would be placed at point 3 on the diagram (adjacent to the River Darent). As previously noted, past attempts to attract bats to the location have been unsuccessful, but a bat box could be installed as an alternative if it was felt that this was more in keeping with the natural eco-system on the River Darent.

7. Submitted for consideration.