

Additional Ecology response for F/22/94159 103 Bournemouth Road, Chandler's Ford, Eastleigh, SO53 3AE

Part single, part two-storey extension to existing commercial building (Use Class E), including new refuse and cycle storage

Rebecca Altman

21/12/22

Ecology

I have reviewed the Preliminary Ecological Appraisal report by Arun Ecology (December 2022) and the Bat Dusk Emergence Survey report by Arun Ecology (December 2022).

The main building, Building 1, was assessed to have low bat roost potential and one dusk bat survey was done at the late end of the survey season in October 2022 but under suitable temperature conditions. One bat was recorded (heard but not seen) commuting in the area but no bats emerged from the building.

The loft was not accessible to the surveyors at that time due to the possible presence of asbestos containing materials. I don't see an asbestos/environmental survey in the documents on Salesforce but the bat survey report mentions that JTEC Environmental Ltd had identified these materials.

Building 1 was assessed to have negligible bat roost suitability in 2019 and low suitability in 2022. If construction does not commence in 2023 an update survey will be required as recommended in section 1.2.1 of the bat survey report. This can be conditioned only because the building is assessed as having negligible at this time, however if bats are found to be using the building at any time in the future, a license will be required from Natural England.

Building 2 was assessed to have negligible bat roost suitability.

Please could you add the following informative to the decision notice:

In the unlikely event of any bats being found during demolition or construction, all work must stop immediately, and Natural England must be informed. Additional information is available on the Bat Conservation Trust website at <https://www.bats.org.uk/advice/im-working-on-a-building-with-bats/ive-found-a-bat-during-works>.

Recommended condition: No vegetation clearance shall occur on site during the bird nesting season (between 1st March & 31st August- this may change with climate change) unless supervised by an appropriately qualified ecologist. If any active nests are found work must stop and the area around the nest must be protected with a suitable buffer (usually 5 m) until after the young have fledged and left the nest.

Reason: To prevent disturbance and harm to breeding birds.

A precautionary working method to protect hedgehogs will be required. Additional precautions will be required in the unlikely event that any other mammals are found on site. These can be conditioned in a construction environmental management plan (CEMP).

Although proposed landscaping plans are mentioned in section 5.5.2 of the PEA report I don't see these plans in the documents submitted on Salesforce. There is some landscaping information available on the amended proposed site plan by PLC (P8, October 2022), however this does not provide enough detail. I do need to review the planting specifications and landscape plans. Are these landscaping plans for this application or for a previous application? I don't see any landscape proposals in the documents submitted for the previous application on this site (F/21/91827 was withdrawn in September 2022).

The removal of most of the trees, mixed scrub and bramble scrub on site and retention of only two trees and a single hedgerow as mentioned in the PEA is not acceptable. The Bat Preliminary Ground Level Tree Roost Assessment results diagram (Figure 4a, rev 1) shows that 23 trees were assessed on this site. Retaining only 2 out of 23 trees is biodiversity net loss. Approximately 149 m² of grassland, 32 m² of bramble scrub, 119 m² of mixed scrub which includes some flowering shrubs and herbs, and 36m² of privet hedgerow were also recorded. The provision for 10% biodiversity net gain (BNG) is not yet required, however biodiversity net loss is not acceptable and is contrary to local plan policy DM11.

The PEA states that *the landscaping plans do present the opportunity to create new habitat that is more suitable to the long-term use of the site*, but this still needs to be assessed and the potential needs to be realised. Scrub is important habitat for nesting birds and insects and its ecological value as part of the green infrastructure of the site must not be discounted. The trees have been checked and do not have any potential bat roost features, but they are also important habitat for nesting birds and insects.

Biodiversity enhancements are required for this development, and net gain must be demonstrated. The recommendations for biodiversity enhancement proposed in section 7.4.4 of the PEA report are appropriate however they do not make up for the loss of so many trees and scrub habitat. Green walls or a green roof on the proposed extension would help to provide additional planting areas. Enhancements can be conditioned in a biodiversity enhancement management plan or a landscape environmental management plan (BEMP or LEMP).

Surface water drainage

What is the existing surface water drainage system for this site?

The proposal represents a large increase in hardstanding and roof area. Evidence must be provided that the proposals will not cause surface water flooding either on or off the property. The Geology of Britain viewer (available at www.geologyviewer.bgs.ac.uk) shows that the soil under this property consists of superficial deposits of River Terrace deposits

(sand and gravel) and the bedrock geology is the Wittering formation (sand, silt and clay). Permeable paving may be appropriate for the car park areas.

Lisa Malter

Ecologist

1/12/22

Thanks for sending these photos. Given the state of the building and scope of the proposed works, a preliminary ecological assessment will be required. This must include an internal assessment of the loft and assessment of the vegetation on the property. The ecologist should also recommend which biodiversity enhancements would be most appropriate for this site.

Lisa Malter

Ecologist

29/11/22

There are records of bats, nesting swifts and hedgehogs in the vicinity of this site.

Any permanent fencing that is erected at the property boundaries must have periodic holes (measuring 13cm by 13 cm minimum) at its base to allow the movement of animals, such as hedgehogs, to promote habitat connectivity and extended foraging ranges. A precautionary working method for hedgehogs may also be required.

Aerial photos show vegetation on site including a hedgerow (possibly privet) along Bournemouth Road, some shrubs along the fence on part of the western boundary, scrub and tall conifers at the southern boundary and amenity grassland along the eastern boundary.

Close-up photos are required of the parts of the building and surrounding land which would be impacted by the proposal.

Biodiversity enhancement will be required. A bat box and swift boxes may be appropriate for this site.

The Bat Conservation Trust recommends installing a bat brick/box at least 4 m above the ground, away from artificial light sources, sheltered from strong winds and exposed to the sun for part of the day, facing south, south-east or south-west. (<https://www.bats.org.uk/our-work/putting-up-your-box>)

Swift nest boxes are best positioned under the eaves or on walls facing north, northeast or north-west out of direct sunlight, five metres above the ground, with clear adjacent airspace

so swifts can access them in a high-speed direct flight.

(<https://www.swiftconservation.org/Nestboxes%26Attraction.htm>)

Additional information is available at:

<https://sussexwildlifetrust.org.uk/discover/in-your-garden/article/31>, planting for bats

<https://www.rhs.org.uk/science/conservation-biodiversity/wildlife/plants-for-pollinators>

<https://www.bats.org.uk/our-work/buildings-planning-and-development/bat-boxes>

<https://www.hampshireswifts.co.uk/nesting>

<https://www.rspb.org.uk/birds-and-wildlife/advice/how-you-can-help-birds/nestboxes/nestboxes-for-small-birds/>

<https://www.swift-conservation.org/OurLeaflets.htm>

<https://www.hedgehogstreet.org/help-hedgehogs/hedgehog-homes/>

Lisa Malter

Ecologist