

Ecology response amended for F/22/93701 Barncroft, Farm Close, Hamble-le-Rice, SO31 4RZ
Conversion of boat storage building to form self-contained 1 bedroom dwelling with 2no. dormer windows on western elevation, amenity space; construction of 1.7m brick built boundary wall; retention of boundary hedge at 2.0m in height; provision of secure cycle parking and refuse storage facilities with vehicle parking & landscaping (revision of refused planning application F/22/92654).

Clare Martin

Previous applications F/18/84270, F/20/88507, APP/W1715/W/20/3265825, F/21/91243

22/12/22

I have reviewed the Preliminary Ecological Assessment by Ecosupport (December 2022). Three potential bat roost features were identified, giving an assessment of low bat roost potential. Emergence surveys are not required as the proposal does not involve any works to the roof.

The hedge was assessed to have low potential for breeding and nesting birds. The report notes that the current proposals do not involve direct work to the roof. Adding loft insulation does not usually disturb bats nesting under roof tiles as the work would be done within one day. Internal works do not require planning permission.

Condition: Any maintenance of vegetation on site must take place outside of the bird nesting season (typically between 1st March and 31st August, dependent on weather). If this is not possible, the area to be cleared must be checked by a suitably qualified ecologist immediately prior to clearance. If any active nests are found, they must be left undisturbed with a suitable buffer (ca. 5m) until nestlings have fledged and left the nest.

Reason: To avoid disturbance of breeding and nesting birds or damage to their nests.

The recommended enhancements of a bat box, a bird box and a hedgehog home would be appropriate. The property is not suitable for a swift nest box due to lack of a large enough drop or clear flight lines.

Lisa Malter

Ecologist

28/11/22

I have received some additional site photos which show missing roof tiles (on a previously unseen elevation) which could be used by roosting bats (potential bat roost features) and a gap under one of the ridge tiles which could be used by nesting birds or possibly by bats. There are reports of regular bat activity in this courtyard. There is also a pile of building materials on site which could be used as shelter by hedgehogs. A preliminary ecological assessment is now required. This must be done before determination, as the presence of protected species is a material consideration.

Lisa Malter

Ecologist

14/11/22

Ecology has not been consulted on previous applications. The ecological issues include bat roost potential, surface water drainage and biodiversity enhancements.

There are records of bats in the area, but the site photos show that the roof is in good condition, and I don't see any potential bat roost features.

There are records of hedgehogs and nesting swifts nearby also. The hedgerow screening the building would provide shelter for nesting birds and small mammals such as hedgehogs and foraging for bats. Depending on how the hedgerow is managed it could also provide flowers for pollinators and fruit for birds.

Construction of a 1.7 m high brick boundary wall is proposed.

Any walls or fences should have hedgehog holes (13 x 13 cm minimum) in the base.

Any vegetation removal must be done outside of nesting bird season (March – August) or only after a pre-works check by a suitably qualified ecologist. Any active birds' nests must be protected from disturbance by a 5 m buffer until after the chicks have fledged and left the nest. Because this is a very small site, that would mean all work on site would need to stop to avoid disturbing a nest in the hedgerow.

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>

Biodiversity enhancements are required. A bat brick or a swift nest box may be appropriate. 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>

Lisa Malter

Ecologist