

Ecology response for F/22/94422 63 UNDERWOOD ROAD, BISHOPSTOKE, EASTLEIGH, SO50 6FX

First floor extension and proposed 4-bedroom, two storey end-of-terrace dwelling with associated parking provision

Alex Webb

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I object to this proposal due to the following:

This site is adjacent to Stoke Park Wood SINC. A 20 m buffer free from development must be provided to protect the SINC which is designated 1B/Cii. This means it is a woodland with a significant element of ancient semi-natural woodland surviving and contains other communities with restricted distribution in the county.

Eastleigh Borough Council requires a buffer free from development of 20 m from the canopy edge of woodland SINC. The current building, number 63, is approximately 5 m from this boundary at the closest point and 11 m at the furthest point. This development would not have been allowed under current guidelines. Extending the building closer to the SINC boundary is contrary to Local Plan policy DM11 and must not be considered.

In addition, the proposed layout would leave number 63 with very little rear garden/amenity space as three parking spaces are marked on the plan for each dwelling.

Additional information to consider for any future applications on this site:

There are records of bats very close to this property and the proposal involves extensive works to the roof. However, I don't see any potential bat roost features on the roof or the single storey extension, the tiles appear to be in good order with no gaps, and the fascia around the roof of the single storey extension appears to be intact. The static caravan does not appear to have any potential bat roost features.

The site visit photos of the garden show a small patch of amenity grass, cherry laurel in the rear raised bed, bamboo along the fence, a Japanese maple tree near the bamboo, a few stems of *Verbena bonariensis*, bramble and nettles along the brick wall and a few ruderal plants. The majority of the rear garden appears to be bare soil mixed with gravel and wood chips and cages for animals including chickens. There is a raised bed with flowering plants in the front garden. Cherry laurel and bamboo are both known for being invasive plants. They are not listed on Schedule 9 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act but should be controlled so that they do not spread on site and into neighbouring gardens.

There are records of slow worms in the area, but the presence of chickens in the garden and the lack of appropriate habitat makes it very unlikely that slow worms would be using this area now.

There are records of hedgehogs very close to this site. Chickens would eat any potential hedgehog prey species, so it is not likely that hedgehogs would be using this site now.

Condition: 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.

During construction any excavations or open pipes must be covered at night or fitted with a small mammal escape ramp (a rough board slanted at a shallow angle) to prevent hedgehogs from becoming trapped. If hedgehogs are found they should not be handled but be left to move away on their own to a place of shelter. *If a hedgehog is found during development and/or there are welfare concerns, the British Hedgehog Preservation Society can be contacted for advice and guidance on 01584 890 801.*

Further information is available at:

<https://www.britishhedgehogs.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/05/developers-1.pdf>

Biodiversity enhancements will be required. A bat brick and a swift brick may be appropriate for this building. Adding flowering plants would also enhance the 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/>

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