

Ecology response amended for H 22 94323 2 BROOK COTTAGES, BROAD OAK, BOTLEY, SOUTHAMPTON, SO30 2EU

Two storey side extension. Single storey rear extension

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2/3/23

The amended site plan involves developing the site all the way to the boundary, which may affect the conclusions drawn by the Preliminary Ecological Assessment (PEA). A new close boarded fence is proposed in at least two areas. This must include at least two openings in the baseboards in each area (front and side) (13 x 13 cm minimum) to allow hedgehogs to move freely through the garden. The position of these openings can be conditioned.

The amended plan also now includes a new porous block paved driveway. It needs to be clear whether any vegetation is proposed to be removed to accommodate the driveway and whether any of the invasive plant species listed in the Preliminary Ecological Assessment by Phillips Ecology (February 2023) are in this area (see below). The habitat map in Appendix 2 shows that part of the area proposed for the driveway is bare ground, but scrub is shown on the eastern edge of the property both on the habitat map and on aerial photos. The PEA must be updated to reflect the amended site plan and to establish whether any changes to are required to the proposed mitigation. The scrub which would be removed to accommodate the driveway would provide habitat for nesting birds and hedgehogs, which would result in an overall decrease in biodiversity.

The PEA was based on a survey on 2 February 2023. The amended plans were submitted on 28 February 2023.

In the PEA the dwelling was assessed to have negligible suitability for roosting bats but some foraging opportunities for badgers and hedgehogs. No evidence of badgers was recorded on site but there is suitable badger habitat nearby. The site was considered to have low potential for small numbers of reptiles and moderate potential for breeding birds.

No further surveys were considered necessary and the precautionary mitigation methods for bats, badgers, hedgehogs, reptiles and breeding birds specified in section 14 is appropriate and can be conditioned. From the site visit photos it appears that building materials are already being stored on site. Care must be taken that hedgehogs and reptiles are not sheltering under or within these materials.

The biodiversity enhancements recommended were two bat boxes and three swift boxes. This is appropriate and can be conditioned. Built-in boxes are preferable to externally mounted boxes if possible, as they cannot fall off and do not need maintenance.

The non-native invasive species yellow archangel *Lamiastrum galeobdolon*, and cotoneaster were reported to be in the area of introduced shrub in the southern and southeastern boundary. Yellow archangel and some species of cotoneaster are listed on Schedule 9 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act in England and Wales therefore, it is also an offence to plant or otherwise cause to grow these species in the wild. Bamboo was found within the scrub along the north-eastern boundary. Their specific locations have not been shown on the phase 1 habitat map. These plants must be prevented from spreading into the wild. The main habitats which will be directly impacted by these proposals are bare ground and hard standing so the risk of spreading these invasive plants is low if precautions are taken. They must be identified to the construction team and cordoned off during construction so that they are not spread accidentally or removed off site.

Lisa Malter

Ecologist