

Additional Ecology response for H/22/94266 68 TELEGRAPH ROAD, WEST END,
SOUTHAMPTON, SO30 3EY

Loft conversion with 2no. dormers to facilitate additional two bedrooms. Single storey flat projection at ground floor. Rear extension with alterations. Alterations to fenestrations.

Claire Campbell-Best

14/3/23

I have reviewed the Extended Phase 1 Habitat Survey by AEWC Ltd (2023). I have no further objections based on the findings of this report.

The report states that the previous site clearance was done sensitively and when birds and hedgehogs were not likely to be using the site. The house ceiling was removed in November 2022 due to structural damage, but the ecologist did not see any evidence of bats or potential access points. The building was assessed as having negligible bat roost potential. Cotoneaster, which is an invasive species (Schedule 9 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act) is still on site. It can be grown in domestic gardens but should be removed to prevent spreading into the wild. There was bamboo on site prior to clearance and if this re-grows it can also be invasive. Laurel (cherry laurel?) and butterfly bush were also recorded. These can be invasive if not managed, but there are no regulations to prevent these from growing in domestic gardens.

The report recommends biodiversity enhancements for hedgehogs, bats and nesting birds, which are appropriate. Mitigation for loss of hedgehog, invertebrate and nesting bird habitat should also include having some areas of dense vegetation in the garden and planting a wide range of flowering plants that provide flowers for pollinators, and fruit and seeds for birds and wildlife. Night scented flowering plants provide food for moths which are eaten by bats. The RHS plants for pollinators website can be used to select plants that will provide these valuable ecosystem services (<https://www.rhs.org.uk/science/conservation-biodiversity/wildlife/plants-for-pollinators>). Hedgehog holes can be cut into the baseboards of closed board fencing and should be a minimum of 13 x 13 cm.

Lisa Malter

Ecologist

6/2/23

I have reviewed the site visit photos taken on 10/1/23. It is obvious from the large puddles and mud at the rear of the house that the existing surface water drainage system is not working. This must be addressed before further damage is caused. It is also obvious that the site has been cleared to bare ground (now mud) before these photos were taken.

Aerial imagery from Google Maps and Google Earth, both dated 2023 (seen on 6/2/23) shows a vegetated garden with grass trees and shrubs. The Environment Act and BS42020 are both clear that any site where the habitats have been recently cleared in advance of a planning application shall be assessed at the ecological value they had before the site clearance. Photo 6.2 in the DAS by ATP Architectural Design (dated 29.11.22) shows a pond within a planting bed, shrubs and grass in the rear garden nearest to the house. Site clearance to facilitate a development may be a criminal offense if it is identified that habitat of a protected species has been destroyed.

The tree officer's response of 8/12/2022 states that "despite a TPO showing on our system, there are no significant trees within the proposed development area." When comparing the site photos with the aerial photos it appears that a very large tree is now missing from this garden. It may not have been within the development area for the proposed extensions, but it would represent a loss of habitat.

The site photos show an opening from a missing vent in a rear window of the house where bats and birds could enter the building. There are also numerous crevices in the exterior which could support roosting bats. A Preliminary Ecological Assessment (PEA) is required. This must also consider the potential for the original state of the garden to have supported protected species and make recommendations for compensation for habitats lost, mitigation for any habitats that would be lost as a result of the proposals and biodiversity enhancements that would be appropriate for this property.

A surface water drainage plan will also be required before determination.

Lisa Malter

Ecologist

16/1/23

There are records of bats and hedgehogs very close to this site and the proposal involves works to the roof and loft space. I cannot see all aspects of the roof from the photos in the DAS or on Google maps. Please could you send close-up photos of the entire roof, the soffits, fascia and flashings for review to determine whether further survey may be needed.

Biodiversity enhancements will be required. A bat box and a hedgehog home may be appropriate for this site and enhancing the garden with additional flowering plants to attract pollinators would also be helpful.

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>)

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