

Ecology response for F/23/94675 1 SOVEREIGN DRIVE, BOTLEY, SOUTHAMPTON, SO30 2SR

Erection of 3-bedroom, two-storey detached dwelling

Summer Sharpe

20/3/23

There are records of bats, common toads, badgers, and hedgehogs near this site. An existing garage is proposed to be removed to accommodate this dwelling. Photos on Google Maps show that the site is currently surrounded by a tall hedgerow which could provide habitat for hedgehogs and nesting birds. The garage may have some potential features for crevice roosting bats under the white wooden strips near the roof, but it is not likely that bats would be using the interior of the garage as there is a large window and a flat felt roof with no loft space. I would like to review close-up photos of the exterior of the garage on all sides. Bats might be using the hedgerow as a linear feature for foraging.

I am concerned that removal of the hedgerow and any additional vegetation in the garden would represent a net loss of biodiversity on site, which is contrary to local plan policy DM 11 so I would object to the proposal on that basis.

Should the application be granted, it must be able to demonstrate biodiversity net gain rather than net loss. Any construction work on site would need to be done under a precautionary method statement for hedgehogs, toads, badgers and nesting birds. Any lighting from the proposed dwelling would need to be designed in a wildlife-sensitive manner and no light can be allowed to shine on the vegetation in the hedgerow to the northeast, across the service road.

The following general information on biodiversity enhancements may 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>)

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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