

Ecology response for F/23/94860 Land at 15 & 17, Lower New Road, West End, Eastleigh, SO30 3FJ

Erection of a pair of semi-detached dwellings (1No. three-bed & 1No. four-bed) on land to rear and side of 15 & 17 Lower New Road, including revisions to existing garden boundaries, provision of off-road parking served via new highway access off Chapel Road.

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There are records of bats and hedgehogs very near this site.

The site appears to have had some trees which would have been suitable habitat for nesting birds and possibly bats, and scrub, which would have been suitable habitat for hedgehogs.

I have reviewed the PEA and PRA report by Arbtech (November 2022) for the previous application to extend numbers 15 and 17 and the demolition of an outbuilding. This report states that the council had cleared the land and felled the trees prior to this survey and following a Section 215 notice. Landscaping and habitat restoration recommendations have been made in this report, with a view to restoring the garden for numbers 15 and 17, not relating to this proposal.

The current photo of the application site on page 2 of the DAS by Eos Architecture (March 2023) shows that the site has already been cleared of most vegetation. Section 4.5 states that *The whole site with the exception of the trees on the north western boundary was cleared of vegetation in late 2022 in preparation for the treatment and excavation of the extensive Japanese knotweed present on the site. This is booked to be cleared by a licenced contractor in the coming months.*

I would strongly encourage the applicant to proceed with the Japanese knotweed treatment plan with a licensed contractor, as soon, as possible to prevent this schedule 9 invasive plant from spreading any further. The treatment plan and results must be submitted with this planning application, or any subsequent application.

There are no ecological reasons for refusal for this application, however I agree that two additional dwellings on this site would represent an overdevelopment of the site. However, should this application be permitted, the following information is required:

Surface water drainage information is required. The surface water drainage arrangements for numbers 15 and 17 may accommodate additional development in the garden, however it needs to be clear what system is currently in use and whether there is sufficient capacity for additional surface water drainage from two additional dwellings and related paving. Any soakaways must be located a minimum of 5 m from any built structure, so it is possible that

if there are soakaways for numbers 15 and 17 in the garden, there would not be room for additional buildings.

A landscape environmental management plan demonstrating biodiversity net gain on the site would also be required, in accord with DM 11. Any closed board fencing must have at least two openings in the base boards, at least 13 x 13 cm to allow small mammals such as hedgehogs free passage through the gardens.

A bat brick and a swift brick may be appropriate for each dwelling.

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](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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