

Ecology response amended for F/22/94044 242 LEIGH ROAD, CHANDLER'S FORD,
EASTLEIGH, SO53 3AW

Erection of 1no. four-bedroom detached house with associated car parking, bin and bike storage in rear garden of existing dwelling

Alex Webb

16/5/23

I object to this application because a very large area of the garden is proposed to be paved across the full width of the property in at least two areas to accommodate this proposal, with a large drive along most of the eastern boundary and extensive parking areas for two houses.

If this application is to progress the following changes must be made to the plan:

A corridor of green infrastructure must be maintained to provide shelter for wildlife such as hedgehogs to be able to move through the site. Less paving and more continuous green infrastructure is required.

The amended site plan proposed *surface water drainage within the soft landscaped areas of the site with water butts also located to collect greywater*. This is not enough information. A full surface water drainage plan will be required. This must include information about the current surface water drainage arrangements for the existing house. If there are currently functioning soakaways in use, then soakaways would be workable for this proposal and permeable paving can be used on the paved surfaces. Soakaways must be shown on the plan and positioned at least 5 m from any built structure, which includes fences, garages and neighbouring properties. If working soakaways are not currently on this property an alternative drainage strategy must be proposed.

Is it possible for this site to have vehicle access at the north-eastern corner of the property (through Falcon Rise/Tangmere Rise -2 maps show different road names) rather than extending the drive onto Leigh Road?

If this is not possible, then the extensive paved parking area (as shown on the Site Plans by Wildern Architecture Ltd, rev B, March 2023) must be reduced and more soft landscaping provided. The application for the existing house on site (H/22/93513, approved) was for changes to the house only and the paving of large areas of the garden for both houses and creating a long, paved drive adjacent to the eastern boundary is part of this application.

I have reviewed the Preliminary Ecological Assessment by Ecosupport (May 2023). The report found very low to low potential for reptiles, potential for foraging and commuting badgers, and low to moderate potential for breeding birds. The site had been recently cleared down to bare earth in advance of the survey (done for the previous application H/22/93513 in

October 2022), so compensatory habitat will be required using aerial photos (July 2021) as the baseline for habitat restoration.

Vegetation clearance removed grassland with flowering plants, mixed scrub, small trees and shrubs which would have provided shelter and food for wildlife including breeding birds, hedgehogs and invertebrates such as stag beetles (records of stag beetles also very close), and other invertebrates which provide food for bats, birds and hedgehogs. A laurel hedgerow (linear green infrastructure with shelter for nesting birds) was shown along the western boundary (PEA, photo fig 6, page 21) with a gravel driveway already installed. The proposal would involve loss of this hedgerow also.

There are multiple records of hedgehogs very close to this property and in the wider neighbourhood, but none for badgers. A records centre data search has not been done by Ecosupport, but it is not likely badgers may be present, as mentioned in the PEA report. Small mammals such as hedgehogs must be protected during construction by ensuring that open pipes are capped at night and any excavations have an escape ramp (a rough slanted wooden board) fitted at night. This can be conditioned.

It is possible that vegetation which would have provided shelter to hedgehogs may have been cleared before the survey and that the laurel hedgerow provides shelter for hedgehogs. Additional hedgehog habitat must be provided on site by adding a hedgehog house and habitat pile to the garden. Further information is available at:
<https://www.hedgehogstreet.org/help-hedgehogs/hedgehog-homes/>.

Any closed board fencing must have hedgehog holes in the baseboards (13 x 13 cm minimum) at regular intervals to allow free passage of small mammals through the gardens and to adjacent properties.

The recommendations in the PEA report include wildlife sensitive lighting if any exterior lighting is required and precautionary working methods for hedgehogs and reptiles. If any additional vegetation is proposed to be cleared this must be done outside of nesting bird season (March – August) and outside of hedgehog hibernation season (November through March), ie. only in September or October, or after a careful search by and under the supervision of a suitably qualified ecologist. If nesting birds are found they must not be disturbed and a 5 m buffer provided until the young have fledged and left the nest. If hibernating hedgehogs are found, they must be left undisturbed and the work postponed until after they emerge from hibernation. Additional advice or emergency hedgehog rescue information can be obtained from the British Hedgehog Preservation Society (www.britishhedgehogs.org.uk).

A bat brick, a swift brick and a hedgehog home will be required as biodiversity enhancements. Compensation for lost habitat will include additional hedgehog habitat and hedgehog holes (fence gaps), and enhancement of the gardens with either planting of mixed scrub and wildflower grassland or flowering garden shrubs (not only conifers), and flowering

annual and perennial plants. This could include garden beds containing a variety of flowering plants, (including night flowering scented plants) to support pollinators and provide a diverse population of insects including moths as food for bats and plants that would provide fruit and seeds for birds.

Lisa Malter

Ecologist

16/11/22

The photos in the DAS show piles of wood chips, no trees or shrubs, and there are outlines of dead brown areas where vegetation was cleared. I don't know how current these photos are, but it is clear that site clearance occurred at some point before the planning application. The ecological baseline for mitigation on the site will need to be taken from the earlier photos and descriptions. A preliminary ecological assessment of the garden will still be required to determine whether there are any remnants of the former habitats or invasive species on site.

In addition to mitigation for loss of habitat, biodiversity enhancement and a surface water drainage plan will be required.

There are records of bats, breeding swifts, toads and hedgehogs in the area. If this application is approved and appropriate habitat exists on site then precautionary working methods for hedgehogs, reptiles and toads may be required. Biodiversity enhancement could include a swift brick and a bat brick built into the new dwelling and a hedgehog house in the garden. Planting a range of flowering plants for pollinators and plants that produce fruit and seeds for birds would also be encouraged.

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.

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>

Lisa Malter

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