

Ecology response for F/23/94942 3 MANCHESTER ROAD, NETLEY ABBEY, SOUTHAMPTON, SO31 5DB

Erection of gabions at the end of the garden to restore sea defences.

Clare Martin

18/5/23

I have reviewed the Ecological Impact Assessment by Ecosa (Rev 2, March 2023). This site is adjacent to the Solent and Southampton Water Ramsar and SPA, the Solent and Southampton Water SPA, Lee-on-the Solent to Itchen Estuary SSSI, and Netley to Hamble Shore SINC. It is within 15 m of the Solent and Dorset Coast SPA. A Habitats Regulations Assessment will be required due to the proximity to these sites. There are also nearby Solent Waders and Brent Goose Strategy sites which can support qualifying features of the Solent and Southampton Water Ramsar and SPA.

Coastal vegetated shingle, a habitat of principle importance is adjacent to the site. There is suitability for individual notable invertebrates, hedgehogs, breeding birds, badgers, and foraging and commuting bats. There are habitats suitable for notable wintering birds adjacent to the site.

Condition: To protect nesting birds, vegetation clearance must be done outside breeding bird season, using hand tools only. If this is not possible the area must be checked by an ecologist prior to clearance. If an active nest is found it must be protected from disturbance with a 10 m buffer until the chicks have fledged and left the nest. **Reason:** to avoid disturbance to nesting birds.

Any other species must be allowed to move away on their own before vegetation is reduced or removed.

Condition: To avoid impacts to bird species that are associated with support areas of the Solent and Southampton Water Ramsar site and SPA the works must only take place outside of the wintering bird period (October to March, inclusive). **Reason:** to avoid disturbance to wintering birds.

A new 21 m² planting area is proposed within the wider property to compensate for the loss of vegetation at this site and provide replacement habitat for invertebrates and other animals. The species recommended in the report are appropriate. The new loose fill material in the new gabion baskets will also provide invertebrate habitat. The detailed planting plan by Landscape Perspective (Feb 2023) and the location of the planting area next to the new gabions is appropriate.

A tree-mounted bird box within the wider property is proposed to compensate for loss of bird nesting opportunities within the site. This can be conditioned. The planting area should be started as soon as possible to allow this area to develop as suitable habitat before the existing habitat is removed. Although the CEMP states that *the garden will be reinstated where disturbed by the works*, this might delay the ability of the garden to develop into suitable habitat. The bird box should be installed before the start of the next bird nesting season or before the start of works, whichever is soonest.

The new concrete post and gravel board fence shown on the Sea Defence Wall GA and Sections plan by Cowan Consultancy (Feb 2022) must have openings at ground level (13 x 13 cm minimum) to enable hedgehogs to move freely through the gardens.

In the planning statement there is a photograph of the cliff showing a similar stepped gabion structure at the adjacent property.

I have reviewed the CEMP by Cowan Consultancy (March 2023). It is appropriate and can be implemented. Construction access to the beach will be via Beach Lane and a site compound/materials storage area is proposed to be located at the end of Beach Lane as has been done with the works to gabion walls for neighbouring properties. An ecological clerk of works (ECOW) will be appointed to ensure that all protective measures are followed, and sensitive ecological receptors are protected.

I have reviewed the Flood Risk Assessment by BJC Planning (May 2023) and have no objections. Water will be able to move through the gabion baskets as in the previous structure.

I am satisfied that these documents are complete, and I have no ecological objections.

Lisa Malter

Ecologist