

Ecology response for F/23/95431 Home Farm, St Johns Road, Hedge End, SO30 4DF

Construction of [8.no](#) dwellings (2No. two bedroom, 4No. three bedroom and 2No. four bedroom) with associated access, parking and landscaping

Gary Osmond

24/7/23

I have reviewed the Preliminary Ecological Appraisal report by Ecosupport (January 2023), the proposed site plan by Pope Priestley Architects and the Drainage Strategy and Floor Risk Statement by (April 2023). I object to this proposal as it would be an overdevelopment of the 0.455 ha site and put more recreational pressure on the nearby areas of open space. It is not clear that biodiversity net gain can be provided in this proposal.

Ecology

There are records of bats, badgers, hedgehogs, and common reptiles near this site. Owls, deer and rabbits have been seen in the area. Tawny Owl, Buzzard, Long-tailed Tit, Nuthatch, members of the thrush and tit family, corvids and tree creeper were recorded in this area as part of the ecology surveys done for the earlier application F/15/76447 for the adjacent site. No landscaping information has been provided for this proposal.

If the application is to be permitted, then the discussion below contains recommended conditions.

The PEA report states that there is high potential for breeding and nesting birds, suitable habitat for dormice, and foraging and commuting bats.

Great crested newts: The site is in an amber impact risk zone for great crested newts (GCN) however there are no records within 1 km and no suitable habitat, so they are not likely to be present on site.

Dormice: there is moderate potential for dormice on site, but all suitable habitat is only around the site boundary and will be retained. During construction a 5 m grassland buffer around the site boundary is required to avoid harm to dormice.

Reptiles: the report states that there is low potential for common reptile species, however a precautionary clearance approach and maintaining a short sward after clearance must be used to avoid harm to any reptiles that may be using the retained scrub and grassland areas.

Badgers: Three badger sett entrances were identified in the adjacent woodland to the north of the site 15 m from the nearest proposed dwelling. This area will need to be monitored before determination with a trail camera for 4 weeks in line with survey guidance. It would need to be checked again as a condition before the start of any works if this application were

to be permitted. If badgers are present, a licence from Natural England would be needed with appropriate mitigation measures put into place to avoid harm to badgers.

A pre-works check for breeding birds and bats would also be required.

Prior to any tree work, a ground level bat roost assessment would be required. This would be done in winter when leaves are off the trees and potential roost features (prfs) would be more visible. If any prfs are found, emergence and re-entry surveys will be required during the next active bat season (May through September depending on suitable weather).

A wildlife sensitive lighting plan would be required and could be conditioned.

A CEMP would be required and could be conditioned, with precautionary working methods for badgers, hedgehogs, dormice, nesting birds and bats.

The eastern boundary was residential housing. This site to the east was permitted under F/15/76447 and involved the transfer of a parcel of off-site woodland as public open space to Hedge End Town Council in March 2017 as part of Schedule 7 of the S106 agreement for that application. A Woodland Management Plan was produced to run from 2018 to 2028, when it is due to be reviewed. The trees in this area are covered by TPO140-E. Tawny Owl, Buzzard, Long-tailed Tit, Nuthatch, members of the Thrush and Tit family, Corvids and Tree Creeper were recorded in this area.

A 3 m ecological buffer zone is proposed along the northern edge of the site with a post and rail boundary fence to maintain a visual connection to the woodland.

The biodiversity enhancements recommended in the PEA report must be amended to include a bat box and a swift nest box in every dwelling if the appropriate elevations are available.

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>).

At least two hedgehog openings per garden are required to allow free passage through the gardens for small mammals.

A detailed landscaping plan would need to be conditioned.

Surface water drainage

Porous pavement is proposed to provide attenuation as infiltration is limited on site due to soil conditions. A diffuser unit and a flow control device will limit the discharge rate into a shallow trench at the base of the NE embankment and discharge will mimic the existing run-off flows. Water butts will also be provided.

The letter report by Andy Traves (Aqua Callidus, January 2023) states that 15) *...A cut off ditch should be provided to the rear boundaries of plots 5-8 to prevent the small amount of natural runoff west of these plots from running towards the back of those plots. The plots should be slightly elevated above the central courtyard and the courtyard should be subtly graded in towards the central spine and then down the central spine towards the car port between plots 1 and 8. The car port should be open sided so the exceedance flow can freely pass from the back of the car port down the embankment slope and along the natural flow path to the northeast. The green space north of plots 1, 8 and the car port should also be subtly graded to maintain an overall pathway continuation onto the central axis and down the embankment.*

If this development is permitted, the surface water drainage strategy would be acceptable.

Lisa Malter

Ecologist