

Ecology response for F/23/95527 2,4,6,8 Toynbee Road and 2,3,4,5 Romsey Close, Eastleigh, SO50 9DP

Redevelopment for retirement living accommodation for older people comprising 83 retirement apartments including communal facilities, access, car parking and landscaping

Gary Osmond

2/8/23

Pre-app Q/23/94608

Documents reviewed

Ecological appraisal by Tyler Grange (Rev E, June 2023). Section 3.3 of this report refers to Mid Suffolk Council, which is likely to be a copy and paste error but must be corrected.

Bat Emergence Report by Tetra Tech (June 2023)

Flood Risk Drainage Technical Note by AWP (April 2023)

Landscaping Strategy by James Blake Associates (Rev A, December 2022)

Due to the size of these documents, I have been unable to review the DAS or the Planning Statement. If there is any additional information that may be relevant to ecology or surface water drainage and is not available elsewhere, please provide a compressed version or a copy of the relevant information.

Ecology

When comparing the amount of developed area in the existing and proposed plans, it is clear that there is a decrease in the area of green infrastructure and an increase in the area of pavement and buildings. The proposed landscaped areas are minimal. It is not clear that biodiversity net gain as required by DM 11 and national planning policy can be achieved on site, so I would raise an objection on these grounds. This site currently represents a green stepping stone in this area, along a line with the cemetery and allotments, the school sports ground, this site and Leigh Road Recreation Ground.

I have reviewed the Ecological Appraisal and Bat reports. If you are minded to approve this application, the following information must be considered.

Green walls or roofs to the main building, the mobility scooter area and the refuse store would improve the green infrastructure on site. These were mentioned in the ecology response to the pre-app Q/23/94608 but have not been included in the landscaping plan.

The northern part of the site falls within an amber great crested newt impact risk zone. This is due to the presence of a small garden pond in the rear garden of 6 Toynbee Road, which was checked but found to be unsuitable habitat for great crested newts.

There are records of slow worms at the Woodside Allotments and a large number of slow worms were translocated from the neighbouring Eastleigh Police Station site which has now been developed. There are records of bats from that site also. Hedgehogs have also been recorded close to this site and in the wider neighbourhood.

The habitats on site were assessed as having sub-optimal habitat for reptiles in the hedgerow bases. Although the report states that *it is extremely unlikely that the site could support more than a couple of individual reptiles* due to the previous presence of slow worms on the adjacent site, a precautionary working method for reptiles will be required to include scrub and hedgerow removal undertaken only under the supervision of a suitably qualified ecologist. Section 3.45 of the Ecological Assessment states that any reptiles or amphibians caught would be removed to suitable retained habitat by the supervising ecologist. This area of retained habitat must be clearly marked on a plan.

The amenity grassland and hedgerow were assessed to have some limited foraging and sheltering opportunities for hedgehogs. Due to the presence of hedgehogs in the neighbourhood, a precautionary working method for hedgehogs will be required to include scrub and hedgerow removal only when hedgehogs will not be hibernating and piles of leaves and brash to be cleared by hand in case hedgehogs are using them for shelter.

The buildings provide potential nesting habitat for bird species such as house sparrows. The trees and hedges provide some potential foraging and nesting habitats therefore a precautionary working method for nesting birds will be required. This will include vegetation removal outside of nesting bird season (can be done between September and February) or if this is not possible then only under the supervision of a suitably qualified ecologist. Some species may nest year-round. If evidence of an active bird's nest is found, a 5 m buffer must be erected around the nest to protect it from disturbance until after the chicks have fledged and left the nest.

No bats were seen to emerge during the emergence and re-entry surveys, however due to the presence of potential bat roost features, it is possible that bats could use these buildings in the future. The bat report states that an update survey will be required if works do not begin by June 2024.

The Ecological Assessment report recommends a precautionary approach for bats, using a soft strip supervised by a suitably qualified ecologist during the removal of key roost features. These are listed as the ridge tiles, eaves and gable ends. In the unlikely event of any bats being found during demolition or construction, all work must stop immediately, and a license from Natural England would be required.

These precautionary working methods can be conditioned within the CEMP or within a separate conditioned Biodiversity Mitigation and Enhancement Plan (BMEP) but must clearly specify the timing and methods to be used. The CEMP must also contain specific surface water runoff pollution control measures, timing of lighting to avoid times when bats would be active (daylight hours only during the active bat season of April to October), and measures to avoid impacts to off-site non-human receptors such as vegetation which might provide habitat or resources for bats, nesting birds, slow worms, and hedgehogs.

The locations of the recommended bat and bird boxes (2 bird nest boxes, 3 bat bricks) must be shown on a plan along with any exterior lighting fixtures, to ensure that light will not shine on these features. At least one of the bird boxes should be a swift nest box or swift brick. Built-in bat and bird boxes are preferred to externally mounted boxes as they don't need maintenance and cannot fall off.

Permanent lighting within the landscape design of the new development must follow the recommendations within the Institute of Lighting Professionals (ILP) Guidance Note 08/18 Bats and artificial lighting in the UK (ILP, 2018);

Non-bitumen Coated Roofing Membranes are to be avoided and instead Type 1F bitumen and hessian under-felt is to be used in new buildings so that bats cannot get trapped by the fibres in the synthetic coated roofing membranes.

This discussion from the Ecological Appraisal report mentions that *a relaxed mowing scheme for amenity grassland should be adopted to encourage wildlife and attract invertebrates thus creating replacement foraging habitat for bats*. There is such a small amount of proposed amenity grassland compared to the number of units proposed that it is highly unlikely that a relaxed mowing regime would be provided.

Surface water drainage

Existing surface water drainage is an adopted surface water sewer running south under Toynbee Road. Site size is 0.412 ha.

The Flood Risk Drainage Technical Note states that *Rainwater downpipes predominantly discharge on-to existing ground (driveways, patios, gardens etc), with runoff likely to drain towards areas of landscaping and the adopted highway of Toynbee Road and Romsey Close. There is no evidence of interception at the back edge of adopted highway and therefore greenfield and brownfield runoff from the site would likely reach the highway drainage system.*

In section 4.4 it states that investigations have shown that *infiltration is unlikely to be viable for this site.*

Runoff is proposed to be collected in a cellular attenuation tank under the access drive and parking area. Silt traps would be installed in chambers upstream of the tank, runoff from the tank will pass through a flow control chamber with a 100 mm diameter vortex flow control

proposed to achieve a peak flow of 3.8 l/s which is estimated to be the greenfield runoff rate for a 30-year return period.

A drainage maintenance plan can be conditioned.

Although attenuation has been considered in the drainage report, there is no information on pollution mitigation.

The Preliminary Drainage Layout by AWC (Rev C, April 2023) does not show any permeable paving or other method of surface water filtration as required by local plan policy DM 6. The simple index approach listed on tables 26.2 and 26.3 of the Ciria SuDS manual (p 568) must be used to demonstrate adequate pollution mitigation for surface water drainage.

Lisa Malter

Ecologist