

Ecology response for F 23 95483 34 MERDON AVENUE, CHANDLER'S FORD, EASTLEIGH, SO53 1EP

External prefabricated, single storey, timber clad office

Rachael Morris

14/8/23

This site is located in an amber great crested newt impact risk zone, however the nearest water is the stream coming out of Hiltingbury Lakes which is approximately 155 m east of the site. The nearest record of amphibians is for a common toad 300 m west of the site. There are also records of bats, stag beetles, swifts and hedgehogs nearby. The vegetation next to the site would support nesting birds and provide foraging and commuting areas for bats.

The proposed building is to be built on an existing concrete base and a grid of mini-piles is proposed where the building overlaps the base.

There is a large tree near the site, but from aerial photos it is not clear whether this is on the property or an adjacent property.

I don't think that this proposal is likely to impact great crested newts. Although the property might provide suitable terrestrial habitat, there are no records of great crested newts nearby.

A precautionary working method for small animals will be required. This must include the following:

Any vegetation that must be removed to accommodate the building must be removed either outside of nesting bird season (February through August) or if this is not possible only after a check for nesting birds by a suitably qualified ecologist. If an active nest is found all work must stop immediately and the nest must be protected from disturbance by a 5 m buffer until after the chicks have fledged and left the nest.

Any excavations or open pipes must be covered at night or fitted with a small animal escape ramp.

Animals found in the vicinity of the site must be allowed to move away on their own and should not be handled or disturbed. A stag beetle log pile in a quiet shaded area on the wider site would be a good biodiversity enhancement and could also provide shelter for other invertebrates, frogs, toads, and hedgehogs. Additional information can be found at <https://stagbeetles.ptes.org/how-to-build-a-log-pile>. A hedgehog home would be a good additional enhancement.

If there is any external lighting it must not shine on any vegetation, be pointed downwards, and be limited to what is required for safety. Further information is available at <https://www.theilp.org.uk/documents/guidance-note-8-bats-and-artificial-lighting/>

A surface water drainage plan is required and can be conditioned.

Lisa Malter

Ecologist