

Additional Ecology Response for F/22/93781 Hatts Copse Farm Brook Lane Botley SO30 2ER

The proposal includes the demolition of the existing main house with 4 Bedrooms and rebuild with a 5-Bedroom Main House.

Alex Webb

15/8/23

I have reviewed the PEA and Precautionary Measures letter report by Ecosupport (26 July 2023). The property was assessed to have moderate potential for roosting bats, and low potential for foraging and commuting badgers and hedgehogs. The area of impact of this proposal was assessed to have negligible potential for reptiles, but there is low potential reptile habitat in the wider site. The site has low potential for breeding and nesting birds, with some climbing vegetation on the main house and a large fig tree which must be checked for nesting birds before the demolition of the house. The site was assessed to have negligible potential for great crested newts but is within a red impact risk zone so precautionary measures for great crested newts are also recommended to avoid any potential risk of GCN impact.

Recommendations for mitigation are given in the report. These include:

Bat-sensitive lighting if external lighting is required for security purposes, as described in the report.

Any open excavations or pipes will be covered overnight to prevent animals falling in or escape ramps will be provided (slanted rough boards) to allow them to exit on their own.

Building materials and piles of soil must be stored on pallets or kept covered and away from the boundary vegetation to prevent animals sheltering under them.

All vegetation near the building must be kept mowed to a short sward before and during construction to prevent reptiles from using the vegetation as habitat.

To avoid disturbance to nesting birds or damage to nests, any works impacting the building, hedgerow or trees must be undertaken outside of the bird nesting season, (March through September depending on weather). If this is not possible, a nesting bird check must be done by a suitably qualified ecologist immediately before demolition and vegetation clearance. Any active nests must be protected from all disturbance by a 5 m buffer and monitored until the chicks have fledged and left the nest.

The trees, hedgerows, ponds, and any suitable habitat for protected and priority species (badgers, reptiles, amphibians, hedgehogs, and nesting birds) must be protected from damage by fencing during the works which must remain in place until all work is completed. This fencing will exclude any vehicles, machinery, and storage of materials from potential habitat areas.

A swift brick will be built in as a biodiversity enhancement for nesting birds and the garden will be enhanced for pollinators and other insects.

Mitigation and compensation for bat roosts was identified in the Phase II Bat Surveys and Mitigation Report by Ecosupport (June 2023) and is described in the ecology response of 18/7/23 below.

Lisa Malter

Ecologist

18/7/23

The Preliminary Ecological Assessment (Ecosupport, October 2022) was only submitted for the application for the annexe F/22/93780. Whilst the PEA describes the area inside the red line boundary of the annexe and some of the surrounding area, it does not describe the property immediately surrounding the main house within the red line boundary of this application and any areas near the house which would be affected by construction.

As this is a separate application from the annexe, an Ecological Impact Assessment is required to assess the impacts of replacing the main house separately from the bat survey report. This information has not been provided in either of the previous ecology reports submitted for this application or for the annexe application. This can be in the form of a brief letter report and does not need to contain the background information already provided in the PEA produced for the annexe application.

To avoid impacts on the bats commuting and foraging on the property exterior lighting and interior light spill must be minimised, with wildlife sensitive lighting recommendations included in the report.

There are records of badgers, grass snakes and common toads in the immediate area. Section 4.4 of the PEA states that there are *woodland and unmanaged grasslands nearby and therefore low potential for badgers and/or hedgehogs to commute through the site*.

This property is in a red impact risk zone for great crested newts. There are two ponds on the wider property and a stream which flows into Gould Copse SINC (designated ancient woodland and located to the south of the site) and then into a tributary of the River Hamble. There is an additional pond within 500 m of the site. Ponds 1 and 2 were assessed as having poor habitat suitability for great crested newts in the PEA. Reptiles, nesting birds were also mentioned in the PEA, however only the area to be impacted around the annex was assessed at that time, and not the area around the house. Aerial photos show some vegetation around the house. As the proposed new dwelling would have a different footprint from the original building, this application must be assessed for ecological impacts during construction and occupation of the proposed new dwelling.

A CEMP will be required and can be conditioned. It must include precautionary working methods to protect badgers, hedgehogs, nesting birds, reptiles and amphibians.

I have reviewed the Phase II Bat Surveys and Mitigation Report by Ecosupport (June 2023). The main dwelling has been confirmed as a common pipistrelle day roost. There were emergences of common pipistrelles on the western elevation and a re-entry on the eastern elevation. An EPS license is required from Natural England which can only be applied for once planning permission has been granted. The works can only take place under this license and under the supervision of a bat licensed ecologist. The works can only take place between March and October, under suitable weather conditions to avoid the hibernation period.

The methods outlined in sections 6.2 of the report are satisfactory. Two bat boxes are proposed to be erected on a suitable tree in the rear garden, one for mitigation and one for compensation. Built-in bat boxes/bricks are preferred over externally mounted boxes as they do not need maintenance and cannot fall off.

Biodiversity enhancement, (which is separate from mitigation and compensation) is also required in line with national and local policies. A swift brick or swift nest box built into the replacement dwelling and enhancement of the garden with night scented flowering plants to attract moths as food for bats and as pollinators would be appropriate.

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/ swift bricks 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.wildaboutgardens.org.uk/sites/default/files/2022-03/WAG16%20Bats%20updated%202022%20WEB.pdf> - Stars of the Night guide to attract bats into your garden

<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>

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