

Ecology response amended for F/23/94897 LAKE FARM, ALLINGTON LANE, FAIR OAK

Single story extension of existing industrial unit to create [1.no](#) additional unit

Rachel Morris

21/8/23

I have reviewed the Preliminary Ecological Appraisal Report by Enims (August 2023). This report states that bats were the primary consideration.

The PEA report recommends precautionary working methods to protect nesting birds, reptiles, commuting great crested newts, any other amphibians and hedgehogs which may be using other areas of the site or commuting across the property.

Great crested newts (GCN) have been scoped out due to barriers between the site and records of GCN. The report states that *The majority of the application site is unsuitable for great crested newt, being tarmac, hardstanding and amenity grassland habitat...The hedgerows, ditches, and long grass and weeds have low potential to be utilised as commuting habitat by great crested newt.*

The PEA report mentions wet ditches and other areas of potential GCN habitat (shown in photos 5, 8 and 10). There are no ponds on site, but there are 2 ponds within 250 m. Allington Lane is a substantial barrier between the site and the ponds so it is highly unlikely that GCN would be found on site, but not impossible.

A toolbox talk about GCN must be given to all site operatives. If any GCN are found on site, all work must stop, and Natural England must be consulted.

A CEMP can be conditioned to include the following recommendations from the report:

*Care should be taken when operating any plant or moving construction materials in proximity of the hedgerow habitats near the development footprint.*

*Standard pollution control measures should be followed when working on site, such as refuelling measures, spill response plans, dust suppression techniques and noise control measures.*

*Removal of any suitable nesting habitat for birds should be undertaken outside of the bird nesting season (i.e., works should take place September through February) to avoid acting unlawfully. If this is not possible, then vegetation must only be removed following a nesting bird check carried out immediately prior to works (or within 24 hours) by a suitably qualified ecologist. Any active nests must remain 'in situ' with an appropriate vegetation buffer (5m) until young have fledged and the nest is no longer in use.*

*Should the oak overhanging the driveway (site access) need to be pruned or removed, any necessary tree protection measures should be adhered to as per the advice of an arboricultural consultant. This tree was also assessed to have bat roost potential so would need to be assessed by a suitably qualified ecologist before any tree work can be done.*

*To avoid potential harm to other protected species that may be in the local area at the time of works, the following simple measures should be followed:*

*The work site should be kept tidy at the end of each shift, with chemicals and equipment stored securely. Excavations should be backfilled or covered to prevent badgers, reptiles, amphibians or hedgehogs from falling in. If this is not possible then a plank should be left in the excavation at an angle no greater than 45 degrees to provide a means of escape.*

*Removal of storage materials, debris piles, leaf litter and any ground vegetation within the boundary vegetation habitats should be undertaken carefully and with consideration to the potential presence of reptiles and hedgehogs. Any individuals encountered should be allowed to move away safely or be moved to an area of similar habitat away from the works.*

Bat boxes and bird boxes were recommended as possible biodiversity enhancements, however specific locations for the boxes with respect to the buildings and trees on site have not been provided.

A biodiversity enhancement and management plan (BEMP) can be conditioned which shows the proposed locations of any biodiversity enhancements and any guidance on the management of new and existing habitat for the benefit of wildlife. Placement of bird and bat boxes must avoid areas with exterior lighting and be placed in the correct orientations to provide access and the correct temperature regimes for these species.

The proposed new hedgerow around the parking bays and additional soft landscaping proposed in the DAS have not been shown on a plan. This can be included in the BEMP

The biodiversity enhancement and management plan must also include management of existing and new proposed hedgerows to maintain a constant supply of flowers, fruit and seeds by only cutting 1/3 of the hedgerow per year or cutting the top and alternate sides on a 3-year rotation.

Replacement of cherry laurel hedging by a range of native species would also be a good biodiversity enhancement.

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>

<https://www.hedgehogstreet.org/help-hedgehogs/hedgehog-homes/>

Lisa Malter

Ecologist

22/5/23

I have reviewed the Design and Access Statement and an aerial photo of the site on Google Earth. A Preliminary Ecological Assessment will be required. This report should include any habitat that could be impacted by this proposal, not just the area within the red line boundary. This site is in the amber impact risk zone for great crested newts. There are multiple records of bats in the area.

If any existing hedgerow could be affected by the proposal, then a hedgerow survey will also be required.

The applicant proposes to plant a hedgerow along the perimeter of the new parking bays and additional soft landscaping to slow surface water runoff, provide shade and create wildlife habitats and corridors. This has not been shown on the plan.

A surface water drainage strategy/plan will be required for the addition of the proposed building and hardstanding.

Biodiversity enhancements will be required in line with local and national policy.

Lisa Malter

Ecologist