

Ecology response for H/23/95514 5 LENNOX CLOSE, CHANDLER'S FORD, EASTLEIGH, SO53 1FR

Single storey side extension and new 2m boundary fence (Lennox Close)

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There is a stream which flows next to the house which comes from Hiltingbury Lakes and is a tributary of the Monks Brook. There are records of swifts, common toads, bats, stag beetles, hedgehogs nearby.

The impact of the proposed single storey side extension has been reviewed in the Phase 1 and 2 Bat Surveys report by Vesper Conservation and Ecology Ltd (July 2023). The building was assessed to have low bat roost suitability. During the activity survey in July 2022, 2 bats were seen re-entering the building under the hanging tiles above the window on the southern elevation, but all the proposed works would be on the northern elevation. Picture 3 shows gaps in the hanging tiles on the north-western end of the house. The western rear elevation is also clad in hanging tiles.

Any construction work affecting the hanging tiles must be done between November through April, outside of the active bat season, or if this is not possible, then any tiles which must be removed or disturbed shall be done only under ecological supervision.

In the event of any bats being found during demolition or construction, all work must stop immediately, and Natural England must be called. Additional information is available on the Bat Conservation Trust website at <https://www.bats.org.uk/advice/im-working-on-a-building-with-bats/ive-found-a-bat-during-works>.

Previous advice for application H/22/93949 involved removal of a rhododendron hedge to accommodate the timber fence and replanting of a hedge behind the new fence. This was permitted in December 2022 with the following conditions:

A CEMP to avoid any pollution to the stream that borders the property;

No vegetation clearance during bird nesting season unless supervised by an appropriately qualified ecologist. If an active birds nest is found, work must stop and the area around the nest must be protected from any disturbance by a 5 m buffer until after the young have fledged and left the nest.

Protection for hedgehogs: If hedgehogs are using the site they would be sheltering under dense vegetation or within long grass, dead leaves or piles of dead wood. These areas should be cleared by hand, not using a digger, to allow animals time to escape. Removal of potential habitat must not take place from November through March when animals may be hibernating. No fires can be lit on site;

The boundary fence must have at least 2 gaps for hedgehogs (13 x 13 cm minimum) on each side to allow free passage of small mammals through the gardens. Previous advice for application H/22/93949 involved removal of a rhododendron hedge to accommodate the timber fence and replanting of a hedge behind the new fence. What is the status of this hedge? It has not been mentioned in this application.

Care to be taken so that *Rhododendron ponticum* is not spread off site (*R. ponticum* is a non-native invasive species in the UK. It must not be allowed to spread into the wild. It spreads very easily by seeds so seed heads should be removed before moving the plants. It must be disposed of by a licensed contractor and not be allowed to spread into the wild where it outcompetes native plants and forms dense shade. It is very difficult to eradicate once spreading);

It is recommended to pile dead wood and brash piles in other areas around the site to mitigate for the removal of suitable hedgehog nesting sites. These can also be created behind hedges or out of the way for smaller developments with limited space. Replacement habitat can include log piles, leaf litter, dead wood and scrub. Hedgehog houses can also be made or purchased. <https://www.hedgehogstreet.org/help-hedgehogs/hedgehog-homes/>

Please refer to previous advice about hedgehogs which might be found on site from application H/22/93949.

Biodiversity enhancements will be required. A bat brick and a swift brick may be appropriate for this building.

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>)

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> )

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/>

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