

Ecology response amended for L/23/94926 FERRYSIDE COTTAGE, THE GREEN, GREEN LANE, HAMBLE-LE-RICE, SOUTHAMPTON, SO31 4JB

Adding 8 solar panels on South facing roof at the back of the drive

Dorothy Hei-Tung-Hoh

4/10/23

I have reviewed the Ecological Impact Assessment report by SoEcology (October 2023). Gaps have been noted between the roof under cloak and brickwork on the western gable wall and there are naturally lifted tiles on the roof which would provide roosting opportunities for bats and nesting opportunities for small birds. The building is assessed to be of high suitability for roosting bats, however the installation of solar panels is acceptable with proposed precautionary working method, compensation and enhancements described in the report.

The solar panels are proposed to be installed under a precautionary working method statement (PWMS) between November and February to avoid risks to nesting birds and roosting and hibernating bats. If this must be done in March, then a nesting bird check must be done by a suitably qualified ecologist within 24 hours prior to installation to ensure that birds are not nesting or beginning to build nests at this site. Any active nests or nests being built must be protected from disturbance by a suitable buffer (usually 5 m) until the young have fledged and left the nest. If the work cannot be done before the end of March, then it will need to wait until the following November to avoid the risk of disturbance to bats.

Once the scaffolding is installed an ecologist will inspect the area behind the tiles with an endoscope. If any evidence of bats is found, such as droppings, work will stop and a license will be sought from Natural England.

In the instance no evidence of bats is recorded during the endoscope inspection the works can go ahead following the PWMS:

- Works to be undertaken between November to March, inclusively.*
- A toolbox talk is to be undertaken to the solar panel installers prior to installation, explaining the protection afforded bats, how to identify presence of bats, and precautionary method of works that they must comply with. The PWMS is to be provided to the contractors, which will sign the document as evidence of their commitment and a copy of the PWMS will be kept on site during works.*
- A suitably qualified Ecologist will supervise the solar panel installation works. To avoid unnecessary impact on the roof it is advised that the solar panel installers use roof ladders instead of walking directly onto the tiles. Where there are points of impacts not covered by the endoscope inspection, the contractor will inform the Ecologist so that an endoscope inspection can be undertaken prior to impact.*

The artificial lifting of additional tiles on the southern elevation outside of the area of the solar panels will provide compensation for any potential bat roost openings in tiles covered by the solar panels. Biodiversity enhancements will include two swift nest boxes on the northern side of the property, a bat box on the southern elevation and night-scented climbing plants (where there is space). The solar panels will also provide additional nesting opportunities for birds.

Lisa Malter

Ecologist

25/9/23

There are records of bats very close to this site. I need to review close up photos of the roof, soffits, fascia and flashings to determine whether a preliminary bat roost survey is required.

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](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/>

Lisa Malter

Ecologist