

Ecology response for F/23/96117 71 HIGH STREET, BOTLEY, SOUTHAMPTON, SO30 2ES

Proposed 3-bedroom two storey detached dwelling with associated parking and access alterations, following removal of existing outbuildings.

Summer Sharpe

17/10/23

There are multiple records of bats near this site and the photos outbuildings available on Google maps show that they could have some potential bat roost features. Close-up photos of the outbuildings, (interior and exterior) and the existing garden are required to determine whether a survey will be required. There are also records of hedgehogs and badgers in this area. The site is within an amber great crested newt impact risk zone and is adjacent to a recreation ground with connectivity to a woodland belt along Pudbrook Lake. There are two ponds located to the north of the High Street, however there are no records of great crested newts in the area and there is more suitable habitat near the ponds. The High Street would form a barrier to dispersal for amphibians so it is not likely that they would be found on this property. The existing vegetation on site which looks like a privet hedge might provide habitat for hedgehogs and nesting birds.

Any required vegetation clearance should be done outside of nesting bird season which is generally between March and August inclusive. If this is not possible then the hedge must be checked for nesting birds by a suitably qualified ecologist just prior to removal. If evidence of an active bird's nest is found during construction, a 5 m buffer must be erected around the nest to protect it from disturbance until after the chicks have fledged and left the nest.

A check for hedgehogs must also be done before removing the hedge.

Any closed board fencing must contain openings in the baseboards (13 x 13 cm minimum) to allow free passage of small animals through the gardens.

A precautionary working method to protect hedgehogs and amphibians will be required.

During construction any excavations or open pipes must be covered at night or fitted with a small mammal escape ramp (a rough board slanted at a shallow angle) to prevent small animals such as hedgehogs from becoming trapped. If hedgehogs are found, they should not be handled but be left to move away on their own to a place of shelter.

In the unlikely event that great crested newts are found, all work must stop, and Natural England must be called for advice.

Surface water drainage

A soakaway and water butts have been proposed for surface water drainage. If there is a soakaway in operation for the existing dwelling, this will be appropriate for the new dwelling. If not, a soil infiltration test will be required to demonstrate whether a soakaway will function in this area.

Details are required for the surfacing of the parking spaces. Permeable paving or a permeable grid where plants can grow through are preferred options.

Biodiversity enhancements

Swift nest boxes and bat boxes have been proposed as biodiversity enhancements in the Design and Access Statement (DAS). Built-in boxes are preferred to externally mounted boxes as they do not require maintenance and cannot fall off.

In addition, it is important to plant flowering plants which have a long flowering season to attract pollinators as food for bats and birds. This should include night scented flowering plants to attract moths as food for bats. A grass lawn without flowering plants is not beneficial to wildlife.

An evergreen hedge is proposed, but flowering and fruiting native species hedge plants have a greater ecological benefit, providing food for pollinators, berries, and seeds for wildlife.

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/>

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