

Additional November 2023 Ecology response for H/23/95847 13 SATCHELL LANE, HAMBLE-LE-RICE, SOUTHAMPTON, SO31 4HF

Single/two storey front extension to incorporate balcony, single storey side extension, new roof with gable ends to provide habitable accommodation, two and single storey rear extensions, elevational alterations and enlargement to front parking area

Claire Campbell-Best

2/11/23

Ecology continues to object to this application due to the lack of the 2 required bat activity surveys recommended by Rob West of Vesper Conservation and Ecology) in March 2023. Rob is an experienced and licensed bat ecologist, and his recommendation was made on the basis of a site visit, with photos shown in his report. We do not agree with the Phase 1 bat survey review by Karl Forkasiewicz of KJF Consultancy, who did not make a site visit and whose reasoning is not supported. Further details are provided within the ecology response of 23/10/23.

Should you decide to proceed with this application against our ecological objection, an option would be to require an ecologist who is licensed to handle bats to supervise the removal of any potential bat roost features (which are those highlighted in the original Vesper Ecology report) during suitable temperature and weather conditions and place any bats found into bat boxes mounted on suitable retained trees on the property. This work is usually done under license from Natural England and it is not likely that a bat-licensed ecological consultant would agree to do this without the two bat activity surveys recommended in the original assessment.

Lisa Malter

Ecologist

23/10/23

To summarise,

The ecological consultant (Rob West of Vesper Conservation and Ecology Limited) who first looked at this site advised the applicant in March 2023 that the building had moderate bat roost suitability and requires two bat surveys within the active bat season (May through September). In September when this application came in for review I contacted the ecological consultant who confirmed that the applicant had not commissioned these surveys and he was no longer involved with this application.

The applicant then contacted another ecological consultant Karl Forkasiewicz of KJF Consultancy) to review the Phase 1 bat survey report **and without visiting the site, but only reading the report** has provided the opinion that phase 2 bat surveys are not necessary. He cites a change in good practice guidelines, however I do not agree with his reasoning and do not agree with his assessment.

In section 1.1.3 of his report Mr Forkasiewicz states that the garden does not contain foraging habitats for bats but that there are bramble and unmanaged garden borders. I have been on surveys with bats foraging extensively over bramble, which provided many insects for them to eat.

In my professional opinion, as previously stated, this dwelling has been assessed as having moderate bat suitability, with potential bat roost features by a reliable and experienced ecological consultant. It still requires two phase 2 activity surveys between May and September. It is normally the case that no bats or evidence of bats is seen if a building has moderate bat roost suitability. If bats or evidence of bats were found, the building would be assessed as having high suitability and three surveys would be required to inform a license application with Natural England.

Lisa Malter

Ecologist

20/9/23

There are records of bats, slow worms, hedgehogs and stag beetles near this site.

I have reviewed the Phase 1 Bat Survey (PRA) report by Vesper Conservation and Ecology (March 2023). The building has been assessed to have moderate bat roost suitability with gaps under the ridge, bonnet and roof tiles where bats could roost. In accordance with best practice guidelines a minimum of two bat activity surveys are required. These need to be done before determination, as the presence of protected species is a material consideration. The surveys must be at least two weeks apart, in suitable weather and temperature conditions, during the bat survey season which starts in May and ends at the end of September. There is not enough time to have them done this season. The survey season starts again in May 2024.

The planning statement says that the applicant has already obtained a bat survey which shows no evidence of bats present. The PRA report did not provide any evidence that the two required emergence and re-entry surveys have been done. Without this evidence, it is not possible to determine probable absence of bats. The Phase 2 bat survey report will provide additional information and mitigation recommendations.

The photos of the garden in the PRA report show that there is potential habitat for slow worms, hedgehogs and stag beetles. A precautionary working method for hedgehogs, stag beetles and slow worms will be required and could be conditioned as part of a CEMP. Mitigation for loss of habitat and a landscaping plan demonstrating sufficient green infrastructure will also be required. Any exterior lighting will need to follow wildlife-sensitive guidelines.

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/>

Lisa Malter

Ecologist