

Ecology response amended for F/23/95554 OLD OAK FARM, WINCHESTER ROAD, FAIR OAK, EASTLEIGH, SO50 7HD

Retention of 12no. structures associated with the agricultural small holding. (Retrospective Application) (Amended description)

Change of use to poultry and livestock farm, with associated structures, and hard surfacing. (Retrospective Application)

Summer Sharpe

24/5/23

As highlighted by Yacklin Panza, Pollution Control Specialist (17/11/23), the information requested about management and disposal of animal waste has not yet been provided.

The HCC Highways response (October 2023) mentions that visibility splays may require cutting back or re-aligning of adjacent hedgerows. The site photos show that the hedgerows would provide suitable habitat for nesting birds, reptiles, amphibians and small mammals. If hedgerows or other vegetation require cutting this will need to be assessed for ecological impact. Any vegetation removal will need to be done outside of nesting bird season (which is usually between March and August) and outside of hedgehog hibernation season (which is usually October/November through March/April, dependent on temperature). If this is not possible then a nesting bird and hedgehog check by a suitably qualified ecologist must be done immediately prior to vegetation removal. If any active bird nests are found all work must stop and a 5 m buffer must be set up to protect the nest from disturbance until after the young have fledged and left the nest. If hibernating hedgehogs are found, they must not be disturbed.

The taller grassland and hedgerow areas (as shown in the additional site photos) could provide habitat for terrestrial great crested newts and common reptiles. To avoid harm to any reptiles or amphibians, any disturbance of the hedgerows to improve the visibility splay should be done when these species would normally be active (between April and September), using a two-stage cut as a precautionary working method. The first cut would be 15 cm above the ground, working towards retained vegetation. After 24 hours a second cut can be made in the same direction, reducing the hedgerow vegetation to ground level.

Lisa Malter

Ecologist

5/10/20

I have reviewed aerial photos of the site and the Planning Statement by Knight Architectural Design (no date).

The site is approximately 100 m south of Bow Lake, a tributary of the River Itchen. There is a large field between this property and Bow Lake. It is largely in a green great crested newt impact risk zone, but the western third of the property is in an amber zone. There are no records of great crested newts near this site.

There are records of bats, hedgehogs and badgers near the site and records of swifts in the wider area.

The retrospective planning site drawing shows the locations of the site buildings, storage containers, and sheds with what appears to be woodland or overgrown hedgerow along the northern boundary. The drawing shows vegetation extending south into the site almost to the access road. The marshy area and what looks like a ditch, or a depression are also shown. Aerial photos show the southern extension of the hedgerow or scrub to be much smaller than what is shown on the drawing.

The planning statement shows a photo of the marshy central site left to grow wild (photo 4) and mentions an existing hedge bund at the entrance. The vegetation along the northern boundary is not shown except in the distance. Google maps shows a separate business, Winchester poultry and livestock farm located to the west of the B3354.

Surface water drainage would not be significantly impacted by this change of use application other than water quality concerns due to nutrient input from animal wastes. How is this waste disposed of? Excess nutrients from manure encourages the growth of plants such as thistles, nettles and dock and decreases plant diversity. What is the extent of the hard surfaces mentioned in the planning statement? How is this different from what was already on site before the changes due to this application?

An appropriate biodiversity enhancement would be a fenced off meadow area with flowering plants for pollinators or a flowering meadow mix which could be lightly grazed by the sheep once in the early spring and once in the autumn (after seeds have set and dropped). The marshy area could also be enhanced with additional bog/pond margin flowering plants and lightly managed to maintain a diversity of vegetation. This planting and biodiversity management plan can be conditioned.

Water butts and rain gutters can be installed on the buildings to store rainwater for topping up the marshy area and for watering the meadow area in dry periods. There is no information about toilet facilities on site.

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