

APPENDIX 2

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Dear Alex

First floor extension and proposed 4-bedroom, two storey end-of-terrace dwelling with associated parking provision at 63 Underwood Road, Eastleigh.

Further to our ongoing discussions with regard to the above planning application, you have requested a formal rebuttal of your ecology officer's further objection. This is despite the fact that Natural England, as the government's specialist ecology advisor, has no objection to the scheme subject to the submission of a Construction Environmental Management Plan to protect the ancient woodland adjacent to the site.

Specifically, you have asked me to respond to the points made with regard to potential root damage, shading and light pollution impacts. These are considered below.

Root Damage

You will have, no doubt, seen the formal written statement provided to you from my client's arboriculturist recommending the installation of tree protection fencing during the construction of the proposal, to which your tree officer has no objection. This fencing will protect any tree roots from damage during the construction period. With your specialist tree officer having no objection, I am not sure what else your ecologist might require.

Shading

I have no confirmation that your ecology officer has visited the woodland in this location, or had sight of my client's arboriculturist's statement, but there are only a Hazel stool and an Ash tree directly adjacent to the proposed garden of the new dwelling. Separate to this planning application, Forestry England have already agreed in writing that both the Ash and the Hazel can be felled, albeit the hazel will likely grow back and require ongoing control, which Forestry England have confirmed is acceptable.

The remaining woodland to the rear of my client's garden is located directly to the east on a very steep bank which slopes downhill away from the properties in Underwood Road. As such, the woodland, at ground level, is in constant shade. This will not change as a result of my client's

proposals. As can be seen from the photograph below (taken from the arboricultural statement), the woodland trees significantly exceed the height of the existing dwellings in Underwood Road, and their crowns will therefore not be affected by any shade created by my client's proposal for a new dwelling. Furthermore, the removal of the Ash tree and the hazel stool (carried out separately from the planning application) is likely to increase light into the woodland.



In short, there is no likely significant effect caused by shading that will result from the provision of an additional dwelling in this location.

Light Pollution

There appears to be no acknowledgement from your ecology officer that this site is currently a garden, not a pristine, edge of woodland, green field site where the impacts of development would be likely to be more significant. As such, this woodland is already affected by light pollution and has been affected for almost a century. Any adaptations that the woodland would have needed to make would already have been made. One additional dwelling will not have any likely further significant effect.

Additionally, it appears unlikely that your ecology officer has considered the plans submitted as part of the proposal. Currently, the existing dwelling has four large rooflights to its rear kitchen extension and side lounge extension. These will be removed as the new dwelling will be built as an extension over these kitchen and lounge extensions. Whilst it is acknowledged that the new dwelling will have both ground and first floor rear windows, the ground floor windows will be shielded from the woodland by the existing intervening 1.8m high fence, and the three first floor bedroom windows on the rear would not have any additional impact over and above the rooflights due for removal as part of the proposals.

Furthermore, natural human behaviour is likely to result in the closing of bedroom curtains or blinds at night, whereas there are no blinds or curtains to the large existing kitchen and lounge rooflights, and these rooms are much less likely to have blinds/curtains in any case.

Therefore, the light pollution impact would likely be improved rather than worsened by these proposals. In the worst case scenario, the impact would be no different to existing.

It is also notable that there was no objection in 2018 from the Local Planning Authority to the large lounge and kitchen rooflights on the grounds of light pollution when it gave planning permission for the rear and side extensions.

Conclusion

I hope the above provides the rebuttal required to reassure you that there will be no likely significant effects upon the ancient woodland, as already has been confirmed to be the case by Natural England, the government's specialist ecology adviser.

If you require anything further please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely



Louise Cutts BA(Hons) DipTP MRTPI

Director

Wessex Planning Ltd

