

Ecology response for F/23/96606 Land rear of 12 Sydney Avenue, Hamble le Rice, SO31 4JP

Construction of 7 no. bungalows with associated parking and landscaping, and vehicle access from Sydney Avenue.

Rebecca Altman

10/1/24

Ecology has provided pre-application advice for at least two previous applications on this site. These were Q/22/92369 and Q/21/89602. In both of those applications the site was described as heavily vegetated and containing trees. The vegetation and trees can be clearly seen on aerial photos of the site on Google Maps and Google Earth, with large trees also clearly visible from Hamble Lane street view past the Harrier Veterinary Surgery.

Ecology advice for Q/22/92369 (March 2022) stated that a preliminary ecological assessment including a potential bat roost assessment of any trees to be removed was required. The Ecological Impact Assessment by FPCR (November 2023) states that the site was recently cleared, and no site photos were provided.

Clearance of this site in advance of a planning application and paving most of it is contrary to Eastleigh Policy DM11 Nature Conservation and National Planning Policy Framework.

From the aerial photos of the site and nearby protected species records, this site would have provided habitat for nesting birds, common reptiles, bats, hedgehogs and stag beetles. It is on the border between green and white impact risk zones for great crested newts, with no records nearby so they are not likely to have been found on site. Current site photos are required.

In section 7.3 the Ecological Impact Assessment report states that *a BNG calculation was done using metric 4.0*, and that *The development will include areas of modified grassland and tree planting, along with the retention of vegetated garden and housing*. If a metric has been used, it should be submitted, however the use of Metric 4.0 is not appropriate for this site as it is less than 0.5 ha and the number of dwellings is between 1 and 9. The small sites metric would be more appropriate in this case, but since the site has been cleared in advance of the survey, I don't see how the use of any BNG metric could be accurate, or how vegetated garden is proposed to be retained when the report states that it has been removed. Any sheds or outbuildings removed to accommodate the proposals must also be described and checked to determine whether they have the potential to support nesting birds or bats.

I raise an ecological objection due to lack of biodiversity net gain. Compensation must be provided for loss of trees and shrubs that were on site before clearance. If the houses along Hamble Lane (56-66) and Sydney Avenue (12 and 14) or any of their outbuildings are not included in this proposal, as it appears that they would be retained, then the red line boundary for this proposal and the plot size should be adjusted accordingly.

Should you be minded to permit this application, a surface water drainage strategy based on pre-determination infiltration test results is also required. A detailed Landscape Environmental Management Plan will be required and can be conditioned to ensure that any landscape features

installed for the benefit of protected species is maintained in an appropriate condition. Hedgehog holes (13 x 13 cm minimum) must be cut in the baseboards of any closed board fencing to ensure the free passage of small animals across the site.

Lisa Malter

Ecologist