

Ecology response for H/23/96550 26 OATLANDS ROAD, BOTLEY, SOUTHAMPTON, SO32 2DE

Proposed rear extension and garage conversion with alterations to fenestration. Demolition of existing conservatory

Alex Stone

18/1/24

I have reviewed the site photos, which show that the garage is well illuminated by a large window and the roofing felt is intact. Although there are a few holes in the gable end of the garage the interior is so well lit that bats would not be likely to roost inside. There is one wooden feature at the end of the garage, shown in the last photo, above a bulkhead light which might be used by nesting birds and almost looks like a bird house. I would recommend removing the end piece of wood below the opening very soon, before bird nesting season (which starts at the end of February and ends at the end of August) to discourage any birds from nesting there. If there are any nest materials in this area, or elsewhere in the garage, then an additional bird nest box suitable for common garden birds should be added to a mature tree in the garden to compensate for the loss of this roosting feature. If an active bird's nest is found all work must stop and a 5 m buffer set up around the nest to protect it from disturbance until after the young have fledged and left the nest (possible 6-8 week delay).

If the gable wall is only one layer of bricks deep, then the round hole shown in the bricks will only lead directly into the main space. If this is not the case, and there is a gap between two layers of bricks, then this could be a potential bat roost feature (or a bird nest feature) and should be checked by a suitably qualified ecologist to avoid destroying or damaging a bat roost, which would be a wildlife crime under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 as amended.

The area around the conservatory, garage and the garden is paved, and the rest of the garden is mostly closely mown lawn with a few shrubs and trees. I don't see any potential bat roost features on the rear elevation of the house or any potential hedgehog habitat which would be disturbed by this proposal.

Lisa Malter

Ecologist

28/12/23

This site is in an amber great crested newt impact risk zone. There are records of bats and hedgehogs very close to this property. I need to review photos of any areas which would be impacted by these proposals to determine whether a survey will be required. This would

include interior and exterior photos of the existing garage, soffits, flashings, fascias, the rear elevation and the garden at the rear of the building.

Biodiversity enhancements will be required. A bat box and a swift box may be appropriate for the existing building if there are appropriate darker areas and a clear flight path. A bat box would not be appropriate above the proposed extension due to light spill from the roof windows.

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/>

Lisa Malter

Ecologist