

Ecology response for F/24/96914 PEAR TREE COTTAGE, BOTLEY ROAD, HORTON HEATH, EASTLEIGH, SO50 7DT

Erection of 1no. four bed detached dwelling and detached double garage with new vehicular access off Botley Road

Clare Martin

6/3/24

I raise an objection to this application for the following reasons:

The Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment report by Ecosupport (February 2024) and the associated biodiversity metric (4.0) show that this site is not able to provide any biodiversity net gain as required by local plan policy DM 11 and the National Planning Policy framework. The proposals would result in a net loss of 64.58% habitat units. The proposed site plan shown in Figure 2 in the Ecological Assessment report by Ecosupport (February 2024) shows that the majority of the site would consist of pavement or buildings with only small remnants of vegetation. This represents excessive loss of habitat/green infrastructure, and suitable mitigation has not been proposed.

The ecology advice for the pre-application (Q/23/95073) was *Extensive vegetation clearance would be required to enable this proposal according to the Design and Access statement. Biodiversity net gain is required by local and national policy. We do not support clearance of trees, a loss of green infrastructure or loss of biodiversity.... The proposal would need to demonstrate biodiversity net gain rather than loss.*

The provision of a bat brick and 2 bat boxes, a log pile for hedgehogs, a swift brick, two bird boxes, and 5 dormouse boxes are not sufficient mitigation for this very large loss of green infrastructure. These species require foraging areas and suitable vegetation to provide food or attract their invertebrate prey species. This can be provided by a wide variety of species with a long flowering period, untidy areas of a garden, linear features, cover for moving from one area to another, ie. continuous green infrastructure, not areas isolated by pavements. Since there are no dormouse records available from HBIC within 2 km of the site and all potential dormouse habitat is proposed to be removed, I don't think dormouse boxes are appropriate mitigation, even within the woodland to the west.

Surface water drainage information has not been provided. There would not be enough room for 2 forms of filtration for surface water drainage on site with this layout.

Aerial photos show that to create a new site access, a large area of vegetation would be removed from the site boundary along Botley Road. The green infrastructure shown on the site plan is separated by areas of paving, and the areas not connected to each other. This limits its value as wildlife habitat. There is an additional driveway shown to the north of the entrance gate. This also serves to isolate the vegetation along the northern site boundary.

A biological information centre records search was not done during the desk study. HBIC records show a record of great crested newts approximately 400 m to the south of the site. There is habitat connectivity between the two sites. The report states that there is suitable

habitat for great crested newts on site, with precautionary clearance recommended. If this application is approved at any point, a suitable receptor site must be identified in case great crested newts are found during site clearance.

There may be opportunities for biodiversity net gain within the blue line boundary of the wider site, however this has not been shown in any of the documents provided.

Lisa Malter

Ecologist