

Ecology response F/24/96839 ST MARTINS, CHURCH ROAD, BISHOPSTOKE, EASTLEIGH, SO50 6BH

Demolition of existing bungalow and construction of 2 x 4no. bed dwellings, including creation of vehicular access off Spring Lane and the construction of 2no. garages.

Summer Sharpe

25/3/24

I raise a holding objection pending a consultation response from the Naturespace Great Crested Newt officer and that the impact on the vegetated bank by creation of vehicular access along Spring Lane has not been sufficiently assessed. Adequate tree replacement mitigation has not been provided for removing 12 trees (T6, T8, T10, T11, T12, T22, T25, T29, T31, T27, T32 and T30).

Should you decide to permit this application the following information should be considered:

Ecology

This site is within amber and red impact risk zones for great crested newts and is located less than 150 m from two ponds. There are two further ponds and a stream within the approximately 240 m west to the Itchen Navigation. There is a record of great crested newts approximately 350 m south of the site. There are numerous records of bats very close to the site and records of slow worms, hedgehogs nearby. The garden wall at the northern edge of the site could support common lizards. Aerial photos of the site show buildings, trees and shrubs which could support breeding bird and bats (roosting, commuting and foraging).

Proposed to create a new vehicular access from Spring Lane with regrading of existing highway boundary bank. This will require removal of trees and their root systems.

I have reviewed the Ecological Appraisal report by Broadleaf Ecology (October 2023). It is not clear whether an HBIC data search was done as part of the desk study for this report, but it has not been mentioned. Data from the MAGIC website has been referenced, however this is not always up to date. The report is valid until March 2025. If work has not commenced before that date, a walkover update survey will be required.

Bats: The bungalow was assessed as having moderate bat roost potential. No emergences or re-entries were seen during the Phase 2 bat surveys, so bats were considered likely absent. The site was assessed to provide moderate foraging habitat for bats. The trees and shrubs along Spring Lane provide linear features for commuting and foraging bats. The trees were not found to have any potential bat roost features but must be checked again by a suitably qualified ecologist before felling or trimming.

Reptiles: suitable habitat and a low population of slow worms were found on site. Piles of rubble, mounds of earth and rough grassland vegetation provide a small area of reptile habitat with refugia.

Invertebrates: the site has been assessed to provide habitat for an assemblage of common and widespread invertebrates which provide food for the other species found on site.

Badgers: an active single hole badger outlier sett was found on site, with two additional single hole outlier setts just off site, one active and one disused.

Breeding birds: suitable habitat with high potential for birds to be using the buildings and vegetation on site.

Great crested newts: The report states that the rapid risk assessment result was offense highly unlikely. I do not agree with this assessment, as there is suitable terrestrial habitat, an HBIC record of great crested newts within 300 m to the south and four ponds within 250 m with partial connectivity to the site. The report states that only the MAGIC database was used, and this is not always up to date. There was also a small garden pond found on site. The great crested newt impact risk zones were not adequately considered in this report.

Hazel dormice: considered likely absent due to sub-optimal habitat and no connectivity to suitably large areas of habitat.

Hedgehogs: suitable habitat but the presence of badgers reduces the likelihood of hedgehogs being present on site. If the badger setts are closed under license to facilitate this proposal, there would be potential for hedgehogs.

Mitigation

Great crested newts: It cannot be assumed at this point that great crested newts are likely absent, and *the proposed works will remove areas of suitable terrestrial newt habitat.*

Badgers: A badger development license will be required to close Sett A and possibly Sett C. A precautionary working method will be required to protect any badgers which might be using the site from harm during construction. In addition to covering excavations and pipes or fitting an escape ramp, this will include secure storage of chemicals. Any permanent fencing must have holes which are accessible to badgers as well as hedgehogs.

Nesting birds:

Any suitable vegetation affected by the proposal must be cleared outside of nesting bird season which is usually between 1st March and 31st August but can vary. If this is not possible, a suitably qualified ecologist must check for nesting birds no more than 24 hours before vegetation clearance. If evidence of an active bird's nest is found during construction, all work must stop, and a 5 m buffer must be erected around the nest to protect it from disturbance until after the chicks have fledged and left the nest.

Bats: lighting must accord with the latest bat-sensitive lighting guidelines in guidance note (GN08/23) should be followed. This is available at [Guidance Note 8 Bats and Artificial Lighting | Institution of Lighting Professionals \(theilp.org.uk\)](https://theilp.org.uk/Guidance%20Note%208%20Bats%20and%20Artificial%20Lighting).

Slow worms: the reptile mitigation proposed in section 5.4.8 of the Ecological Appraisal report by Broadleaf Ecology (October 2023) is suitable and shall be implemented. The on-site retained habitat designated as the reptile receptor area (figure 13) must be protected and enhanced before the start of any works which would affect reptiles.

Invertebrates: wildflower meadow planting, green roofs with wildflower planting and dead wood log piles are proposed.

The **biodiversity enhancements** listed in section 5.5 are appropriate and can be conditioned.

This must include a biodiversity mitigation, enhancement and management plan which shows the locations of proposed mitigation and enhancements within the landscape plan.

Surface water drainage

I have reviewed the Flood Risk Assessment and Drainage Proposals report by Simon Jones-Parry (October 2023). In section 1.5 it states that no soil investigation has been undertaken. Table 1 reports the presence of surface water sewers on both Church Road and on Spring Lane. If the surface water sewers are used, every effort must be made to attenuate surface water on site, to use it for watering the gardens before discharge. A surface water drainage plan, based on soil permeability test results will be required.

Lisa Malter

Ecologist