

Ecology response 29 5 24 for H/23/96299 12 OAKMOUNT ROAD, CHANDLER'S FORD, EASTLEIGH, SO53 2LH

Part two storey, part single storey rear/side extension.

Alex Stone

29/5/24

I have reviewed the Bat Emergence Survey report by LHB Ecology (May 2024). One emergence survey has been done and no bats were seen emerging at that time. It is likely that bats are not using this building, however bats are mobile and move between roosts so please could you add the following informative to the decision notice:

In the unlikely event of any bats being found during demolition or construction, all work must stop immediately, and Natural England must be called. Additional information is available on the Bat Conservation Trust website at <https://www.bats.org.uk/advice/im-working-on-a-building-with-bats/ive-found-a-bat-during-works>

No additional external lighting has been proposed. The enhancement recommended in the report is *installing a bat box/ integrated bat box within the fabric of the building during construction. Integrated bat boxes should be positioned high on the building, close to the eaves and facing south or southwest and located away from artificial sources of light.*

13/12/23

I have reviewed the Preliminary Ecological Appraisal report by LHB Ecology (December 2023). The building has been assessed as having low bat roost potential and at least one emergence survey (between May and August) is required before determination. If bats are seen emerging during that survey, a license from Natural England will be required, and two further surveys would then be required to support the license application.

The hedgerows and shrubs seen in the site photos do provide linear features for foraging bats and also potential habitat for nesting birds. The site was assessed as having low potential for reptiles and amphibians and suitable foraging habitat for hedgehogs. I disagree with the assessment that this is an urban location, it is suburban. There are numerous records of hedgehogs in this area with the nearest being 5 houses away, to the southeast of this site.

These conditions were recommended in the report and can be combined in a CEMP, which can be conditioned:

Vegetation affected by the proposal must be cleared outside of nesting bird season (which is usually March-August inclusive). 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, 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.

Precautionary working methods to minimise the risk of killing or injuring wildlife during site clearance works is required. Contractors must be made aware of the potential presence of protected species. Taller vegetation must be cleared during the winter before bird nesting season and shorter vegetation cleared in spring or summer when reptiles, amphibians and hedgehogs are active (not hibernating).

The development area should be kept largely clear of vegetation in order to make it unattractive to reptiles. This clearance should be to ground level and be carried out in two stages, the latest stage undertaken at least 2 days prior to topsoil removal or other works to allow any reptiles present to move away. The first cut should be at about 150 mm from the ground (the current state of the site) and the second (between 1 and 3 days later) close to the ground, thereby preventing injury to reptiles during clearance. The vegetation should then be maintained at a very short level (less than 50 mm) even if there are delays in development. Likewise, compost heaps, log or rubble piles should be moved by hand prior to commencement of any work. In the highly unlikely event of a reptile or great crested newt being found, all works must cease, and a suitably qualified ecologist (must be) contacted for further advice.

To minimise the risk of protected species of amphibians being impacted by the proposed development, clearance of vegetation on site will be carried out under sensitive working methods:

- *Maintaining the grass at its current height of < 30 mm which is not suitable for amphibians.*
- *Vegetation clearance, including shrubs, to be undertaken when amphibians are active between March and September, inclusive.*

Any stored materials (piles of soil, vegetation, etc.) which could provide habitat must be raised off the ground on pallets or stored on hard standing.

- *In the unlikely event of an amphibian (other than great crested newts) being found during the development, it can be relocated to a shaded spot on the site boundary beyond the development area.*

Excavations should either be covered at night or have a slanted rough board placed overnight to allow any hedgehogs to escape if they fall in. All chemicals should be stored securely.

The biodiversity enhancements recommended in the report are appropriate for this site and can be conditioned.

This includes new areas of planting including native tree and shrub species along the site boundary. Flowering species which provide resources for pollinators, and fruit and seeds for wildlife are important to enhance this area. Conifers should not be used as they do not provide these resources.

A swift nest box/brick.

Bat boxes or bricks, details to be confirmed in the bat survey report following the emergence survey

I would also like to address the concerns expressed by John Essex of J Design & Planning Ltd (email 12/12/23). These were: *The ecologist has found NO evidence of bat utilisation and has also confirmed a LOW likelihood of potential usage, including the surrounding habitats and*

known bat roosts being fairly distant. However despite this and only identifying 2 possible entry points on the north side of the roof where we are carrying out the work (and least likely any crevice dwelling bats would reside), he has still suggested a further survey may be necessary, so I am rather perplexed. We are not touching the southern roof slope, and the new abutting roof structure will sit on top of the existing north slope on lay boards, so there will be no interference to the southern roof structure which seems to be the area of potential concern.

Any works to the roof would constitute a disturbance to bats which might be roosting under the tiles on the southern roof elevation and in the gap in the soffit, due to vibration, noise and dust. I would not expect bats to be using a potential summer roost site in December, and evidence of previous use, such as droppings, are quite fragile, so tend to crumble away when exposed to the elements, ie. outside. The guidelines require at least one emergence survey for roosts of low potential, and as the presence of protected species is a material consideration, the application will not be able to be determined without this survey. The Bat Conservation Trust website has additional information which will help everyone understand why this is important.

Our HBIC (Hampshire Biological Information Centre) bat record data shows at least one bat roost in an area immediately adjacent to this property and two additional roosts within a radius of 300 m. As bats fly, this is quite close and not fairly distant as Mr Essex has stated. These HBIC records are more up to date and comprehensive than the records on the publicly available Defra Magic Map, which also show at least three granted protected species applications for bats within 1 km (Table 4.4 in the PEA report), which is also close enough for bats to be present.

Lisa Malter

Ecologist

22/11/23

I have reviewed the photos and can see irregularities in some roof tiles which should be checked by a suitably qualified ecologist for bat roost potential. There may be potential habitat for amphibians and nesting birds in the garden. The ecologist should include appropriate biodiversity enhancements in their report.

Lisa Malter

Ecologist

2/11/23

This site is in an amber great crested newt impact risk zone. There are records of nesting swifts and bats very close to the site, possibly in an adjacent property, and records of hedgehogs in the neighbourhood.

The proposal involves the roof of the rear elevation. To determine whether further survey is required I need to review photos of the entire roof, soffits, fascia, and flashing especially around the chimney and the garden areas which would be impacted by the extension.

Biodiversity enhancements will be required. A bat brick and a swift brick may be appropriate for this building. Additional swift bricks/boxes are especially needed in this area of Chandler's Ford.

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