

Ecology response 23 10 24 for H/24/97912 DERRY DACY, PEEWIT HILL, BURSLEDON, SOUTHAMPTON, SO31 8BL

Side and rear extensions and raising of roof to provide first floor accommodation, first floor side facing balcony and temporary changes to existing ground levels (Part Retrospective) (Amended Plans)

Additional Notes: Re consultation following receipt of new Ecology Report (15/10)

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23/10/24

I have reviewed the Preliminary Ecological Appraisal report by Ecosupport (February 2023). This PEA was done before the extensive site clearance activities which appear to have occurred between February 2022 and March 2023. According to the UK Habs site map (September 2022) at the end of the report approximately 75% of the site had been vegetated before clearance activities. This is confirmed by the aerial photos on Google Earth and Google Maps. The September 2024 photo shows bare earth, a February 2023 photo shows bare earth, piles of soil, building materials and the site cleared of vegetation with a large orange digger and the March 2022 photo shows vegetation almost everywhere except for the buildings.

If habitat is cleared before an application is submitted, the baseline habitat value of the site will be taken to be its biodiversity value immediately before the carrying on of the activities, as per Schedule 14 of the Environment Act 2021.

The PEA assessed the site to have

- Moderate potential for roosting bats in dwelling
- Potential for foraging and commuting Badgers
- Low potential for reptiles (would have been higher before site clearance and habitat loss)
- Low potential for Hazel Dormouse (would have been higher before site clearance and habitat loss)
- High potential for breeding and nesting birds
- Negligible potential for great crested newts

Bats- The Phase II Bat Surveys and Mitigation Report by Ecosupport (August 2023) recorded bats foraging and commuting across the site, but no emergences from the house at that time. In the unlikely event of any bats being found during demolition or construction, all work must stop immediately, and Natural England must be informed. 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>.

The lighting recommendations given in the report are appropriate and shall be implemented. The report recommends one bat brick/box to be built into the new dwelling, however the PEA report (6.2.2.2) recommends two bat bricks/boxes, which will be required.

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))

The location of the proposed bat brick/boxes and any exterior lighting must be shown on an elevation plan. The bat bricks/boxes must be located in a dark area, away from light spill from windows and away from exterior lighting.

Badgers- The recommendations in section 6.3 area appropriate and must be incorporated into a precautionary working method. A walkover badger survey by a suitably qualified ecologist is required up to 1 week before the start of any ground works to ensure that badgers have not been active on site. If any new holes are found, they need to be monitored, and appropriate ecological precautions need to be taken. If any badgers or evidence of badgers is found on site, all work must stop, and Natural England and a suitably qualified ecological consultant must be called for advice.

Reptiles- The report recommends a suite of reptile presence/absence surveys; however, these can only be done during the active reptile season (usually in April, May and September, and in suitable temperatures. Since the presence of protected species is a material consideration this would need to be done before determination. If any reptiles are found on site, all work must stop, and Natural England and a suitably qualified ecological consultant must be called for advice.

Hazel dormice and retained woodland- The suitable dormouse habitat on site has already been disturbed. All retained woodland including the root protection zones of the trees and shrubs must be protected during construction by suitable fencing. Section 6.5 provides information in case trees must be removed; this would need to be discussed with the LPA ecologist and the LPA tree officer before any tree work. If any dormice or their nests are found on site, all work must stop and Natural England and a suitably qualified ecological consultant must be called for advice.

Nesting birds -No further vegetation clearance has been proposed, however if this changes, vegetation affected by the proposal must be cleared outside of nesting bird season (which is usually late February-August inclusive). If this is not possible, a suitably qualified ecologist must check for nesting birds no more than 48 hours before vegetation clearance.

If evidence of an active bird's nest is found before or during the works, 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.

A swift brick has also been proposed as a biodiversity enhancement in the new dwelling.

Great crested newts- Great crested newts have been considered in the report and scoped out due to lack of suitable habitat, however if any great crested newts are found on site, all work must stop, and Natural England and a suitably qualified ecological consultant must be called for advice.

A toolbox talk on protected species and precautionary working methods delivered by an Ecological Clerk of Works (EcOW) is required for all site operatives. A precautionary working method for protected species must be provided and can be conditioned.

Biodiversity net gain

Local plan policy DM11 and NPPF paragraph 180 require no net loss of biodiversity and at least some net gain.

The amended proposed site plan by Vivid Design Studio (Rev A, September 2024) proposes new native hedge and tree planting with new wildflower meadow planting after the area of residential curtilage has been restored to original ground levels with new topsoil installed. The grassland near the hedgerow should be planted with a specific hedgerow mixture (similar to Emorsgate EH1). The wildflower meadow mixture should be of local provenance. In addition to wildflower meadow an area of mixed scrub must be created along the woodland edge to replace some of the bramble scrub habitat lost to the development. It should be managed with a scalloped edge and a variety of heights to provide a range of light and temperature conditions for reptiles and invertebrates. The composition of the new topsoil should be low in nutrients and appropriate for wildflower meadow creation. A Landscape Environmental Management Plan will be required and can be conditioned. This will include planting specifications, soil and seed mix specifications, and management schedules to ensure that these enhancements are maintained in appropriate condition and provide resources for wildlife.

These enhancements, together with the proposed bat and swift nest bricks built into the new dwelling will provide some biodiversity net gain and comply with DM 11 and NPPF 180.

Surface water drainage information has not been provided with this application. Since this is a replacement dwelling the existing surface water drainage system can be used, however since the proposed dwelling is larger, additional volume would be collected. Rain water harvesting, water butts and rain garden planters should be considered.

Lisa Malter

Ecologist