

Ecology response for RM/24/98388 Land west of Allbrook Way, Allbrook, SO50 4LZ

Reserved matters relating to layout, scale, appearance and landscaping of the proposed development pursuant to outline permission O/19/86980 for the construction of [49.no](#) residential dwellings.

Rebecca Altman

31/10/24

Documents reviewed

Landscape Plan (sheets 1-4) by terrafirma (P02, October 2024)

Proposed Drainage Layout Plan (whole site and sheets 1- 3) by The Civil Engineering Practice (rev B, October 2024)

Drainage Management and Maintenance Schedule by The Civil Engineering Practice (October 2024)

Boundary Treatments Plan by Pegasus Group (October 2024)

Ecological Impact Assessment by Ecosa (October 2024, Rev 1)

Illustrative Cross section Plan by Pegasus Group (October 2024)

Design Statement by Pegasus Group/Bargate Homes (October 2024)

Layout

Green infrastructure is not consistently present around the edges of the site. Is there a reason for this? Discontinuous hedgerows or areas of scrub do not provide continuous cover for animals using or commuting across the site. Green infrastructure should be continuous with gaps only for access. The long-distance viewing corridors shown on page 16 can be maintained, but even a low level of planted scrub or a short hedgerow should connect the proposed plantings along the eastern site boundary.

The central green infrastructure corridor must include more varied planting with different levels, structure and cover, not just grass and trees.

Surface Water Drainage Layout

This appears to be a pipe to tank to pond system. The use of swales and rain gardens is preferable along the road and path edges before the water reaches the attenuation tank, SuDS ponds and wetland area.

Arrows showing the direction of surface water drainage, and the direction of exceedance flows must be added to the drainage plan. Each house should have a water butt to collect rainwater for use in the garden.

Gullies should be avoided if possible but, if necessary, then all gullies must have amphibian escape ramps.

In the Drainage Management and Maintenance schedule one of the required actions is to mow all margins to the wetland flow channels with vegetation height to be maintained at between 100mm and 150mm, monthly or as required, removal of silt from wetland ponds, cutting/ removal of weeds, inspection of wetlands. Any maintenance in these areas could have a detrimental effect on great crested newts and other wildlife. A precautionary working method and ecological supervision will be required. Amphibian escape ramps must be checked to ensure that they are in the correct position and be replaced immediately if dislodged or missing.

There is a brown dotted line along the top edge of the northernmost pond which wraps around the sides, but no information is given on the key. It is not shown on any other plans. Is it a fence, a wall or other boundary feature?

Ecology

The Ecological Impact Assessment report shows a line of bramble scrub along the eastern site boundary running south from the woodland (Figure 5). Although this has been labelled of low ecological value in the report it is an important linear feature and should be retained and can be enhanced by planting additional wildflowers along its length. It provides continuous green infrastructure, flowers for pollinators and fruit for birds and other wildlife. Moths foraging on the bramble also provide food for bats.

The site is suitable for badgers, bats, breeding birds, hedgehogs, common toads, terrestrial great crested newts and reptiles. Low populations of slow worms and grass snakes have been recorded on site. An eDNA test for great crested newts produced a positive result in Pond 7 which is 75 m to the west of the site. Smooth, common and palmate newts were also recorded present.

The mitigation and enhancements for these species outlined in the report are appropriate, however the quantities of bat and bird boxes must be increased. Bird boxes are proposed to be installed in every house (paragraph 5.7.5). Bat boxes should also be installed in every house which has an appropriate elevation and aspect (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).

Planting specifications should also include night scented flowering plants to ensure a sufficient supply of insects for bats. Swifts also eat insects but forage during the daytime. A wide variety of flowering plants is needed to attract insects as food for bats and swifts.

A European Protected Species Mitigation (EPSM) licence for great crested newts will be required. This can only be applied for after planning permission has been granted. Eastleigh Borough Council has a District Level Licensing scheme available which the applicants may wish to consider as an alternative to the traditional great crested newt licensing process.

Hedgehog holes (13 x 13 cm) are required in the baseboards of any suitable closed board fencing where there are no level differences between the gardens.

A more specific Biodiversity Mitigation and Enhancement Plan (BMEP) must be conditioned and approved before the start of any works, to show the location of all proposed biodiversity mitigation and enhancements.

A wildlife sensitive lighting scheme is required and can be conditioned.

A CEMP will be required. This must include precautionary working methods to avoid harm to wildlife. It must also include pollution protection methods, surface water drainage arrangements including sediment control and a wildlife sensitive lighting plan.

I note from the email by David Hopkins County Archaeologist (October 2024) that archaeological fieldwork/excavation will be required on this site. This must be coordinated with the ecological mitigation for great crested newts and reptiles so that suitable habitat is not manipulated before the newts and reptiles have been moved to a safe receptor area.

Lisa Malter

Ecologist