

Ecology response for F/24/97960 HATTS COPSE FARM, BROOK LANE, BOTLEY,
SOUTHAMPTON, SO30 2ER

Construction of 2-bedroom bungalow with adjoining garages following demolition of existing annex and outbuildings.

David Huckfield

November 2024

I have reviewed the following documents:

Preliminary Ecological Appraisal and Roost Assessment report (PEA/PRA) by Arbtech (Issue 1.0, November 2024).

Biodiversity Net Gain Part 1 Assessment by Arbtech (Issue 2, November 2024)

Statutory Biodiversity Metric Calculation Tool completed by A Dolby, Arbtech (October 2024)

Biodiversity Net Gain

The PEA/PRA report states that *The development plan includes the loss of modified grassland, which is less than 25m²...* and is claiming the de minimus exemption from providing 10% biodiversity net gain on that basis.

Although 10% biodiversity net gain is not required, some biodiversity enhancements will be required in accord with Local Plan policy DM 11 and NPPF paragraph 180. The development is required to demonstrate at least some net gain and no net loss.

The Statutory Biodiversity Metric Calculation Tool shows a net loss of 0.09 habitat units (modified grassland in poor condition). In the Biodiversity Net Gain Part 1 Assessment, Appendix 5 on p 18, Headline BNG Results lists 0.07 habitat units, but the metric spreadsheet lists 0.09 units.

A biodiversity enhancement and mitigation plan (BEMP) is required and can be conditioned. This will show the location and specification of any mitigation and enhancement features on the proposed building, grounds (proposed private amenity space) and on suitable trees on the wider site.

Protected Species

Bats

Building B2 has been assessed to have low suitability for bats and did contain evidence of nesting birds. It does not require a bat activity survey before determination. Instead, a pre-works inspection will be required and can be conditioned:

The cavity wall should be inspected immediately prior to commencement of work, by a suitably qualified professional. This should include the use of an endoscope to fully inspect the gaps within cavity walls. If the endoscope cannot view all of the available gaps, however, further survey effort may be required. In the unlikely event that a bat is identified during this

inspection, works must cease and a full suite of three surveys must be completed, and a licence acquired before works are able to proceed.

As compensation for the loss of these potential bat roost features the report recommends the installation of three built in bat boxes/bricks suitable for crevice dwelling or void dwelling bat species, *positioned at least 3-5m above ground level, eave level height is favourable, facing south or southwest with a clear flight path to and from the entrance, away from artificial light.* The gable end of the proposed south-east elevation would be suitable.

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

Nesting Birds

Building B1 contained several bird nests and at least one bird box. The precautionary working method for nesting birds recommended in the report is required:

Any building or vegetation removal should be undertaken outside of nesting bird season (1st March to 31st August). If this timeframe cannot be avoided, a close inspection of the vegetation should be undertaken by a qualified ecologist, immediately prior to the start of any work. All active nests will need to be retained and protected from disturbance with a 5 m minimum buffer until after the young have fledged and left the nest. Additional precautions should be taken with machinery and noise levels when working close to any retained nests so as not to disturb any nearby nesting birds during construction works.

As mitigation for the loss of potential bird nesting sites, two bird boxes will be required. These can be built in or mounted on existing mature trees. Built-in swift nest bricks/boxes have been recommended. The gable end of the proposed north-west elevation would be suitable. These can be used by other bird species when swifts are not in residence.

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>)

Precautionary working methods for reptiles, hedgehogs and badgers have been recommended and must be implemented.

Any closed board fencing must have at least two hedgehog holes (13 x 13 cm) in the baseboards to allow free passage of small animals through the garden.

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/>

www.bats.org.uk/resources/guidance-for-professionals/landscape-and-urban-design-for-bats-and-biodiversity

<https://ptes.org/my-garden/>

<https://www.ukbutterflies.co.uk/foodplants.php>

Lisa Malter

Ecologist