

Ecology response for F/24/98399 6 SEDGWICK ROAD, BISHOPSTOKE, EASTLEIGH, SO50 6FB

Construction of 2no. two bed bungalows in rear garden with associated car parking, amenity space, cycle and bin storage and access from Sedgwick Road

Clare Martin

5/12/24

Ecology

This site is in a green impact risk zone for great crested newts with a record of GCN adjacent to the River Itchen. There are nearby records of bats and stag beetles, with hedgehogs and nesting swifts in the wider area.

I have reviewed the Preliminary Ecological Appraisal by Nature's Cousins (October 2024).

The site was assessed to have habitat potential for common reptiles, hedgehogs and nesting birds. It is unlikely to support great crested newts, but common frogs or toads may be present. The large oak tree on site may have potential for roosting bats higher in the canopy, so no additional lighting must illuminate this tree or the eastern site boundary.

The recommendations in the report are appropriate and must be implemented:

Any buildings, sheds and introduced shrub must be removed over winter (avoiding nesting bird season between March and August) to avoid disturbance to nesting birds.

Precautionary working methods for hedgehogs and reptiles are recommended in the report and are required. Hedgehog holes (13 x 13 cm minimum) must be included in the baseboards of any closed board fences to allow the free passage of small mammals through the garden. If any great crested newts are found all work must stop and an ecologist or Natural England must be contacted for advice. If other animals are found on site they must not be handled but be allowed to move to a place of safety on their own.

Precautions against spreading the invasive plants cotoneaster, buddleia and cherry laurel must be taken. Removal by a specialist contractor has been recommended.

The biodiversity enhancements recommended in section 9.2.1 of the report are appropriate and can be implemented. A Landscape Environmental Management Plan can be conditioned to provide detailed planting specifications and the locations of recommended bat boxes, hedgehog access holes, and hibernacula for reptiles.

Biodiversity Net Gain

The PEA report includes the biodiversity net gain strategy.

The current habitat baseline calculations under the statutory metric are 0.145 habitat units and 0.01 hedgerow units. A total of 0.159 habitat units are required in order to meet 10% biodiversity net gain targets, and 0.011 hedgerow units are required. These can be achieved offsite by purchasing offsite mitigation credits.

The report states: *In order to achieve the 10% net gain score, it is recommended that the existing boundary fence is replaced and planted with native hedgerow species and the gardens of proposed new properties are seeded with a species rich grassland seed mix of local provenance to the area. Additional standard trees are also recommended to be planted such as English oak and hazel trees which will benefit local wildlife. Bat boxes have also been recommended to be installed on the two new proposed bungalows. Off-site credits can be purchased in order to conform with the 10% biodiversity net gain.*

A biodiversity net gain plan can be conditioned before the start of any development, with the finalised landscaping plan and confirmation of the purchase of off-site biodiversity credits.

Surface water drainage

The Design and Access Statement states that soakaways and permeable paving will be used for surface water drainage. Soakaways are shown in the rear gardens on the Site Plan as Proposed, but the extent and specifications of permeable paving has not been shown. Soil permeability test results must be submitted to demonstrate that soakaways are workable in this location. They must be located at least 5 m from any building and not be located within the root protection zone of any trees. This information is required before determination.

Lisa Malter

Ecologist