

Ecology response for H/24/98637 BARN COURT, HIGH STREET, BURSLEDON,
SOUTHAMPTON, SO31 8DL

Construction of detached annexe within rear garden

Charlie Vallis

6/1/25

Ecology

This site is in a red impact risk zone for great crested newts with records on an adjacent property. There are also records of bats, nesting swifts, hedgehogs and water shrews very close to the site. A secondary support area for Solent waders and Brent goose (E10) is located to the southeast, across the railway line. The use of this building for residential accommodation will add lighting, noise and visual disturbance during construction and more noise and disturbance at night than the previously permitted garden store.

The Proposed Plans and Elevations drawing by Applecore (rev H, Nov 2024) shows the proposed building within the root protection zone of at least three trees. I object to the building in this location due to the potential impact on the trees and bats and birds that may be using the trees. Residents could also want the trees to be pruned to allow more light into the building as there are two windows proposed on the southern elevation. Light spill from the windows would affect light sensitive animals such as bats that might be using the trees for foraging or roosting.

Ecology advice from the previous application H/22/93123 included the following:

This application was flagged up as being within 50 m of a record of great crested newts (GCN). I have looked at aerial photos of the site and it does not seem likely that GCN would be using the property in their terrestrial phase, (however) there is a possibility that they could be in the area. Please could you add the following advisory to the decision letter:

This application has been flagged up as being within 50 m of a record of great crested newts. There is more suitable habitat closer to the pond so it is not likely that they will be found on this property, however the following precautions should be taken during construction. The grass in this area should be kept mowed short and should be checked for the presence of any newts or other small animals before the start of works. Any piles of vegetation or rubble should be cleared by hand making sure that no animals are present before digging. If any newts or other amphibians are found, they should not be handled but be allowed to move away from the area on their own.

If this application is permitted:

Windows must be covered at night to avoid light spill into the surrounding area.

A precautionary working method statement can be conditioned, to include the information above along with additional precautions to protect and avoid disturbance to hedgehogs, water shrews and indirect effects on Solent waders and Brent geese during the construction phase.

The following information must be included:

Brent geese and Solent wading birds are migratory and most likely to be using the neighbouring site between October and March, so construction must only take place when birds are not there, ie. between April and September.

All building materials to be stored on hard standing or on pallets, as far as possible from hedgerows, scrub or potential habitat.

Any excavations must be covered at night or be fitted with a small animal escape ramp

No fires can be lit on site.

Waste must be stored in a skip and not be allowed to accumulate in piles which could be used by wildlife.

Any animals found on site should not be handled but be allowed to move away to a place of safety on their own.

Any vegetation to be removed to facilitate the development must be removed outside of bird nesting season (which is usually between the beginning of March and the end of August) or if this is not possible then only after being checked for nesting birds by a suitably qualified ecologist up to 24 hours before the start of works. If any active nests are found, work must stop, and a 5 m buffer must be erected around the nest to protect it from disturbance until after the birds have fledged and left the nest.

Surface water drainage

Two water butts are shown in the Proposed Plans and Elevations drawing by Applecore (rev H, Nov 2024). There would be times when capacity is exceeded. Further information is required on provision for excess surface water drainage.

In the previous application it was agreed to use a 1600L rainwater harvesting system to prevent on site and off-site surface water flooding.

A surface water drainage statement/plan will be required and can be conditioned.

Biodiversity enhancements

Biodiversity enhancements will be required in accord with Local Plan policy DM 11 and NPPF (December 2024) paragraphs 187d and 192 b. A bat box and a bird box may be appropriate for this building. Planting for pollinators is strongly encouraged.

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>)

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.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