

Ecology response for F/24/97740 THE LOG CABIN, HILLVIEW MANOR PARK, WINCHESTER ROAD, FAIR OAK, EASTLEIGH, SO50 7HD

The erection of a dwelling to replace an existing residential Lodge

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Ecology

The Planning Statement by Mark Simmonds Planning Services (June 2024) notes that the new proposal moves the replacement dwelling away from sensitive boundaries, especially the woodland, which is a positive step. It mentions "sufficient distance," but no measurements have been given. What is the shortest measured distance between the woodland edge and the dwelling in this proposal?

This was a concern in the previous application F/23/95179 (Ecology response 9/6/23):

This site is adjacent to Hill Copse, Fair Oak and Horton Heath SINC which is designated as 1A ancient and semi-natural woodland. A buffer of at least 20 m from the woodland edge would be required to avoid impact on the woodland boundary. It is not clear from the proposed site plan how close the proposed dwelling or residential curtilage would be with respect to the woodland boundary. There is another area of woodland to the south of this site which may also be impacted by this proposal.

I raise a holding objection until this information has been provided and the suitability of the proposed woodland buffer can be assessed.

A Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA) (by Weddells, November 2024) has been submitted which covers three planning applications within the wider site of Hillview Manor Park (1.31 ha). This makes it more difficult to extract the appropriate information specific for this application.

Bats

This site has been shown with outbuildings in addition to the main dwelling. The UK Habs baseline plan shows three buildings in this area. A range of outbuildings are shown in the wider site PEA and other than B1 the lodge on a brick base with a timber deck, the specific outbuildings for this application have not been identified in the report. All of the buildings have been assessed as having negligible bat roost suitability. Some of the sheds may be used as feeding perches due to the site having moderate suitability to support foraging and commuting bats.

The following informative for bats can be applied:

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>

Nesting birds

The buildings, hedgerows, trees and dense scrub have been assessed to provide cover, foraging and nesting opportunities for birds.

Condition: 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.

Reptiles

It is not clear from the PEA whether this particular area of the wider site has potential habitat for reptiles. The site photos and description imply that this area may be particularly suitable for reptiles. Reptiles have not been included in the Summary of Recommendations table in section 5.2 and there are no records of reptiles in the area, however this may be due to a lack of surveys due to a lack of development adjacent to the site, rather than a lack of reptiles. A reptile survey will be required.

The applicant has requested that ecology assessments be conditioned, but as the presence of protected species and priority habitats is a material consideration and may affect the plans, this information must be provided before determination and cannot be conditioned.

The PEA recommends reasonable avoidance measures to protect wildlife that might be using the site, a CEMP, an Ecological Enhancement Plan, a wildlife sensitive lighting plan, and a Japanese knotweed removal plan (treatment should start immediately, see end of response). These can all be conditioned.

The addition of two areas of green roof are positive enhancements. The addition of flowering plants and shrubs in the garden around the house would provide additional resources for pollinators and food for birds and other wildlife.

The new building must be enhanced for protected species with at least one bat box, swift nest box, sparrow terrace or similar bird nest box. If the building is not suitable, bat and bird boxes can be added to mature trees on site.

New exterior lighting should be avoided, but if necessary for security purposes, then the latest updated lighting guidance note (GN08/23) should be followed. This is available at [Guidance Note 8 Bats and Artificial Lighting | Institution of Lighting Professionals \(theilp.org.uk\)](https://www.theilp.org.uk/Guidance%20Note%208%20Bats%20and%20Artificial%20Lighting%20-%202023.pdf). No lighting should illuminate any trees, hedges or woodland areas. There may be potential for light spill from windows towards the woodland edge. Shades or curtains may be needed to avoid this.

Biodiversity net gain

On the application form the applicant has claimed the self-build exemption from the requirement to provide 10% biodiversity net gain. As this dwelling is proposed for a paid site

manager rather than being commissioned by an owner-occupier, it is not clear that it would qualify under this exemption. More information is required if we are to consider this exemption. Even with an exemption all applications are required to demonstrate no net loss and some net gain under local plan policy DM11 and NPPF (December 2024) paragraphs 187d and 192 b.

A biodiversity metric showing the baseline habitat value of this specific site has been provided (by Weddles, final check 7/11/2024, no issue date). It would be helpful if the report titles were not identical but reflected the specific site name.

This site has been assessed at baseline to provide 0.40 habitat units and 0.01 hedgerow units with a decrease in 0.14 units listed in the report (or 0.18 units listed in the metric) habitat units post development (-33.98% or more) and no change in hedgerow units.

The report states that 0.18 habitat units would be needed to meet the target of 10% biodiversity net gain on site.

The post development plan shows a loss of mixed scrub at the north of the site which does not appear to be necessary given the position of the replacement building. Mixed scrub and hedgerows can be used as a woodland buffer around the site boundaries to provide additional onsite biodiversity area and hedgerow units. By reducing the amount of scrub lost it may be possible to provide 10% biodiversity net gain on site.

Surface water drainage

The Surface Water Drainage Strategy for single dwelling and access road by EWE Associates (January 2025) shows surface water in blue collected from the drive (SWPPIC manhole), running down a pipe under the road and into a feature labelled 1 m deep pond. From the pond it is shown entering a ditch/watercourse.

Further information is required on forms of filtration, pollution mitigation and permeable paving if this is feasible. The drainage strategy must explain how this system meets the water quality requirements of DM6 for above ground forms of filtration and the pollution hazard mitigation using the simple index approach in the Ciria SuDS manual. Exceedance flow routes must be shown on the plan.

Japanese Knotweed

The report has identified 3 stands of Japanese Knotweed (*Fallopia japonica*) on the wider site at grid references SU 48781 20509, SU 48823 20497 and SU 48836 20520 respectively. Japanese knotweed removal must be acted upon straight away, as it can take several years to be eradicated, requires repeated treatments and precautionary working methods so that it is not inadvertently spread during before, during or after construction. Any progress towards eradication of Japanese knotweed on the wider site must be reported to the LPA.

Lisa Malter

Ecologist

