

Ecology response for H/25/98940 56 MERDON AVENUE, CHANDLER'S FORD, EASTLEIGH, SO53 1GF

Two storey front extension with roof and porch alterations

Alex Stone

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This site is in a green impact risk zone for great crested newts. There are nearby records of bats, common toads, stag beetles, swifts and hedgehogs.

The ecology response for this application is similar to the response for the previous application H/24/98305 which was permitted in November 2024 for a first-floor side extension, single storey side and rear extension, new vehicular access to existing driveway. It is not clear whether this permitted building work is in process or has been completed, as the proposed elevations drawing submitted for this application does not show the previously approved rear and side extensions in place.

I have reviewed the Preliminary Roost Assessment report by Hampshire Ecological Services Ltd. (August 2024) which was submitted for the previous application. This report includes the proposal for a two-storey front extension with a new porch and is still in date (valid for 12 months), so is appropriate for this application. The roof alterations were not listed in the PRA, however the entire house was assessed by the ecologist at that time and all potential bat roost features were identified in the report.

The building has been assessed to have negligible bat roost suitability, however there are exterior features such as gaps under lifted tiles, under lead flashing and under the roofing material on the extension which could provide potential roost sites for bats. As the report recommends, to ensure protected species compliance, the front porch roof tiles and flashing (shown in image 4.3.1.1) must be removed under ecological supervision. If any bats are found, all work must stop and a mitigation license from Natural England would be required to continue with the works.

No vegetation is currently proposed to be removed to facilitate these proposals. If there are any changes, the precautionary measures specified to protect nesting birds must be followed.

Montbretia, a non-native invasive plant species was recorded in the garden. This must be prevented from spreading into the wild as explained in the report.

The lighting recommendations are appropriate and should be followed if there are any proposed changes to exterior lighting.

A precautionary working method is required. This must include 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, and 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.

The biodiversity enhancements recommended in the report were required for the previous application, so additional biodiversity enhancements will be required for this application in accord with Local Plan policy DM 11 and NPPF (December 2024) paragraphs 187d and 192 b.

As the front elevation faces north-west, a built-in swift brick in the apex of the front extension gable may be appropriate for this building. Swift bricks can be used by other birds 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>)

Additional information on biodiversity enhancements has been provided in the report and is also 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