Ecology response 10 3 25 for F/25/98780 Land adjacent to Wayside, Woodhouse Lane, Botley, SO30 2DJ

Provision of new vehicle access from the public highway

Rachael Morris

10/3/25

I have reviewed the Biodiversity Enhancements report by Southern Planning Practice (March 2025). The recommendations in the report are appropriate and shall be implemented.

Lisa Malter

Ecologist

4/2/25

I have reviewed the Design, Access and Planning Statement by Southern Planning Practice (January 2025) and an email update from their ecologist Nikki Windebank (February 2025).

Although the trees along the front boundary have been assessed as not having potential bat roost features, they may be suitable for use by nesting birds. The site is in a green impact risk zone for great crested newts. There is a pond near the site, but no records of great crested newts in the area. There are records of hedgehogs very close to this site.

Removal of the vegetation along the existing fence is proposed under permitted development. This has the potential to affect hedgehogs and nesting birds. It is possible that great crested newts or hedgehogs could be using this vegetation for shelter.

If great crested newts are found on site, all work must stop, and an ecologist should be consulted for advice.

To avoid disturbance to nesting birds, vegetation clearance must be done outside of bird nesting season (late February through the end of August) or only after a check for active birds' nests by a suitably qualified ecologist.

To avoid disturbance to hedgehogs, low level vegetation clearance must be done between March and November when they are not likely to be hibernating. The area should be cleared by hand to allow any animals time to escape. Piles of dead wood and brash piles can be created in other areas around the site to mitigate for the removal of suitable nesting sites. These can be created behind hedges or out of the way for smaller developments with limited space. Replacement habitat can include log piles, leaf litter, dead wood and scrub. Hedgehog houses can also be made or purchased. https://www.hedgehogstreet.org/help-hedgehogs/hedgehog-homes/. If hedgehogs are found, they should not be handled but be left to move away on their own to a place of shelter. *If a hedgehog is found during development and/or there are welfare concerns, the British Hedgehog Preservation Society can be contacted for advice and guidance on 01584 890 801.*

The applicant must be advised that although planning permission is not required to remove this vegetation and fencing, wildlife protection laws still apply. Hedgehogs are a priority species, and nesting birds are protected by law.

The application has correctly claimed the de minimus (below the threshold) exemption from providing 10% biodiversity net gain, however no net loss and some net gain is required in accord with Local Plan policy DM 11 and NPPF (December 2024) paragraphs 187d and 192 b.

Replacement trees are also proposed for biodiversity enhancement. As these are not likely to be large enough to provide cover for nesting birds for quite some time, at least one bird box must be installed on a suitable building or tree as a replacement for lost nesting opportunities. Further information about nest boxes for birds can be found on the RSPB website: https://www.rspb.org.uk/birds-and-wildlife/advice/how-you-can-help-birds/nestboxes/nestboxes-for-small-birds/.

Alternatively, a nest box for swifts or sparrows could be mounted on the house. Hampshire Swifts will be able to advise whether the building is suitable for nesting swifts. https://www.hampshireswifts.co.uk/nesting

The following resources may be helpful

The Wildlife Trusts https://www.wildlifetrusts.org/uk-wildlife-law

CIEEM https://cieem.net/i-need/finding-a-consultant/

Crown Prosecution Service *Wildlife Offenses* available at: https://www.cps.gov.uk/legal-guidance/wildlife-offences

Lisa Malter

Ecologist