

Ecology response for F/25/99151 Land in between 27 & 31 Crows Nest Lane, Boorley Green, Southampton, SO32 2DD

Construction of 1no. 5 bedroom detached dwelling with detached double garage, associated parking and landscaping, and access from Crows Nest Lane

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6/5/25

Biodiversity Net Gain

On the application form the applicant has claimed the self-build and custom build exemption from the requirement of 10% biodiversity net gain, however all applications are still required to demonstrate some measurable net gain and no net loss of biodiversity. The proposed site layout shows removal of at least 25% of the eastern boundary hedgerow and paving over of at least 75% of the site which would result in net loss of biodiversity. The small sites metric must be used to demonstrate whether this proposal can provide a measurable biodiversity net gain.

Ecology

This site is partly within an amber impact risk zone for great crested newts, with records of brown long-eared bats at the adjacent property on Crows Nest Lane. There are records of hedgehogs in the local area and nesting swifts in the wider area.

I have reviewed the Preliminary Ecological Appraisal by South Coast Ecology (March 2025). The species records accessed by the ecological consultant (3.1.3) did not include the records of bats at the adjacent property, but found two EPSL applications for common pipistrelle bats within 2 km.

There is a box hedgerow along the eastern boundary with Crows Nest Lane which could be used by foraging and commuting bats. This is proposed to be replaced with native hedgerow (as mentioned in the conclusion section of the Design and Access Statement (March 2025). The existing vegetation must not be removed during nesting bird season. If this is not possible then it must be checked by a suitably qualified ecologist immediately prior to removal and nesting birds, which are protected by law and must not be disturbed (see below).

A proposed hedgerow species list is required. This can be annotated on the proposed site plan. A flowering lawn mix must be considered if the area marked garden is proposed to be landscaped as a lawn.

Three existing fruit trees have been identified on site. It is not clear whether any of these trees are proposed to be retained, however the tree in the western part of the site is not shown on the proposed site layout. The Eastleigh Borough Council Tree replacement policy must be considered if mature or semi-mature trees are proposed to be removed or replaced. This can be found in the Trees and Development SPD available at [adopted-trees-and-](#)

[development-spd-april-22.pdf](#). The species of proposed trees must be annotated on the plan.

The recommendations in the PEA report are appropriate and can be conditioned.

Recommendations for conditions include the following, which can be conditioned in a CEMP or a Landscape Environmental Management Plan (LEMP).

Guidelines for exterior lighting if required for safety and security purposes.

Tree protection measures

Any vegetation removal, such as widening site access must take outside of bird nesting season (i.e. between October – February). If this is not possible, then no more than 24 hours before the start of works, a nesting bird check must be undertaken by a suitably qualified ecologist. If a nest is found, no work must take place until a minimum 5m buffer must be established to protect the nest from disturbance until the chicks have fledged and left the nest.

A precautionary working method to 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 or open pipes must be covered at night or be fitted with a small animal escape ramp (slanted rough board)

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 grassland must be maintained as a short sward to prevent the development of reptile habitat.

Any new fencing must have at least two gaps per side for hedgehogs (13 x 13 cm minimum) to have free access to the gardens.

The planting recommendations (or similar) in section 6 of the report are appropriate and should be included in the proposed landscape design.

A bat box and a swift nest box must be built into the dwelling as biodiversity enhancements, in accord with Local Plan policy DM 11 and NPPF (December 2024) paragraphs 187d and 192 b. The report recommends a bat box to be built into the house, and at least 3 bird nest boxes, one on each tree. Built-in swift nest boxes can be used by other species when swifts are not in residence. Sparrow terraces are another option that can be considered. The southern elevation appears suitable for bat boxes and the northern elevation appears suitable for swift nest boxes.

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](https://www.bats.org.uk/our-work/putting-up-your-box)).

Swift nest boxes/bricks 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 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.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>

Surface water drainage

No specific information about surface water drainage has been provided. The DAS (p 29) states that grey water recycling and rainwater harvesting could be used if practicable. This is encouraged.

Surface water drainage information is required before determination and can be annotated on the existing site plan.

Soil percolation test results are required to support a proposal to use soakaways, If the soil is suitable, permeable paving is required in the driveway and patio areas.

Lisa Malter

Ecologist