

Ecology response for F/25/99457 6 SEDGWICK ROAD, BISHOPSTOKE, EASTLEIGH, SO50 6FB

Erection of 2no. semi-detached two-bedroom bungalows

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Ecology

The ecology response is basically the same as for the previous application F/24/ 98399:

This site is in a green impact risk zone for great crested newts with a record of GCN adjacent to the River Itchen. There are nearby records of bats and stag beetles, with hedgehogs and nesting swifts in the wider area.

I have reviewed the Preliminary Ecological Appraisal by Nature's Cousins (October 2024).

The site was assessed to have habitat potential for common reptiles, hedgehogs and nesting birds. It is unlikely to support great crested newts, but common frogs or toads may be present. The large oak tree on site may have potential for roosting bats higher in the canopy, so no additional lighting must illuminate this tree or the eastern site boundary.

The recommendations in the report are appropriate and must be implemented:

Any buildings, sheds and introduced shrub must be removed over winter (avoiding nesting bird season between March and August) to avoid disturbance to nesting birds.

Precautionary working methods for hedgehogs and reptiles are recommended in the report and are required. These precautionary working methods must also be included in a CEMP, which can be conditioned.

Hedgehog holes (13 x 13 cm minimum) must be included in the baseboards of any closed board fences to allow the free passage of small mammals through the garden. If any great crested newts are found all work must stop and an ecologist or Natural England must be contacted for advice. If other animals are found on site, they must not be handled but be allowed to move to a place of safety on their own.

Precautions must be taken against spreading of the invasive plants cotoneaster, buddleia and cherry laurel into the wild. Removal by a specialist contractor has been recommended.

The biodiversity enhancements recommended in section 9.2.1 of the report are appropriate and can be implemented. These include a small hibernaculum for slow worms, bat boxes on the new bungalows, hedgehog access holes in the fences, native species plants and a diverse wildlife-friendly grass seed mixture for grass areas.

A Landscape Environmental Management Plan can be conditioned to provide detailed planting specifications and the locations of recommended bat boxes, hedgehog access holes, and hibernacula for reptiles.

Two trees have been described in the Tree Survey report by Mark Hinsley Arboricultural Consultants (April 2025). The oak tree (T1) is covered by a tree preservation order and there is also a multi-stemmed hawthorn (G2) which the report states, shows signs of being a hedge originally.

The Preliminary Ecological Appraisal also mentioned a 10 m stretch of cherry laurel hedging along the driveway, buddleia, laurel sp. and privet, with a semi-mature ash tree, and a hazel. The tree replacement policy must be followed if any trees are to be removed.

Biodiversity Net Gain

The small sites metric has been submitted with this application. It shows that all habitat is proposed to be removed from the site and no habitat is to be added.

The metric was assessed to have the following errors:

- The net gain for *area habitats* is -100.0%. It must be at least 10.0%.
- The net gain for *hedgerows* is -100.0%. It must be at least 10.0%.
- There are net losses of Medium distinctiveness *area habitats* in 1 broad habitat group, and too few gains at higher distinctiveness categories to offset these losses. The broad habitat group concerned is:
 - Heathland and shrub, which loses 0.012 BU, from "Bramble scrub" (0.012 BU pre-intervention, and 0.0 BU post-intervention, so a loss of 0.012 BU)
- There are too many net losses of Low distinctiveness *area habitats*, and too few gains at higher distinctiveness categories to offset these losses. The net change of Low distinctiveness *area habitats* is -0.13 BU.
- There are too many net losses of Very Low distinctiveness *hedgerows*, and too few gains at higher distinctiveness categories to offset these losses. The net change of Very Low distinctiveness *hedgerows* is -0.01 BU.
- For *area habitats*, the total area of lost habitat was found to be 636.7 m², and the total area of created habitat was found to be 0.0 m². These areas should be equal.

The application has been validated on the basis that the applicant intends to biodiversity net gain credits. The metric will not remove the error until the reference for the credits is added, and this can't be done until they have been purchased. Since they are not refundable, purchase of credits would be completed only once the application has been permitted. An updated metric will be required after determination to accord with the requirements of the Environment Act 2021. This can be conditioned.

"Further BNG Recommendations: Based on the current proposed plans (October 2024) and the space available on site, it is unlikely that the 10% net gain can be achieved on site, as the new retained habitat areas will be gardens for the new bungalows (Appendix 5). In order to achieve the 10% net gain score, it is recommended that the existing boundary fence is replaced and planted with native hedgerow species and the gardens of proposed new properties are seeded with a species rich grassland seed mix of local provenance to the area. Additional standard trees are also recommended to be planted such as English oak and hazel trees which will

benefit local wildlife. Bat boxes have also been recommended to be installed on the two new proposed bungalows. Off-site credits/units can be purchased in order to conform with the 10% biodiversity net gain."

Following these recommendations from the PEA would create some biodiversity net gain on site and thus require the purchase of fewer credits/units.

Surface water drainage

One soakaway is shown for both properties, with the drainage pipes from D1 crossing under the garden of D2. This is not appropriate. Each property should have its own soakaway, and the drainage pipes should not cross into the other property if possible.

Unless soakaways are in use for the adjacent properties, percolation testing is required to determine whether soakaways will be successful on this site. They must not be located in the root protection zone of any trees.

Permeable paving is required for the driveways and pathways.

Lisa Malter

Ecologist