

Ecology response for F/25/99876 32-34 BOURNEMOUTH ROAD, CHANDLER'S FORD, EASTLEIGH, SO53 3ZL

Re-development of site including demolition of existing office building and replacement with a three-storey headquarters office building, together with associated supporting infrastructure, including car parking and hard and soft landscaping (amended description).

Andy Amery

2/9/25

The red line boundaries of the demolition plan and block plan include an area larger than is covered by the site plan and drainage plan. The additional area has been described and mapped as developed land, sealed surface in the PEA/PRA report and appears to be paved and used for car parking. It is not clear what is proposed to be demolished in that area or why it is included within the red line boundary for this application. Please could you explain this discrepancy?

The applicant has provided a biodiversity net gain report which demonstrates that 10% net gain can be achieved on site with a landscaping plan and green walls. This is a positive improvement to the site and the local area. This development has the potential to set a good example of how to increase biodiversity for other industrial parks in Eastleigh Borough.

Ecology

This site is mostly in a green impact risk zone for great crested newts, but the northeastern corner is in an amber zone. There are records of bats, hedgehogs and nesting swifts nearby and slow worms along the railway corridor.

I have reviewed the PEA/PRA by Arbtech (July 2025). The site has been described as developed land sealed surface with one building. There were no potential bat roost features found on site and no potential habitat for protected species other than nesting birds.

Nesting birds: The buildings on site have been assessed to have some potential to support nesting birds.

Demolition of the existing building must be done outside the nesting bird season which is considered to be between the end of February through August. If this is not possible the building must be inspected for nesting birds within 24 hours of demolition. If any active nests are found, they must be protected from disturbance by a 5 m buffer until after the young have fledged and left the nest.

Enhancements for nesting birds have been recommended in the report. Two bird boxes have been recommended on mature trees once they have established. This may take quite a while and would be difficult to monitor. It would be better to have bird nest boxes, such as swift bricks or swift nest boxes built into the building rather than waiting for new trees to mature to the point where they would provide suitable mounting points or cover for nest boxes. Swift nest bricks could be incorporated into this design behind the facade on the northern

elevation. They should not be placed on a southern elevation because the nest boxes could overheat.

Biodiversity net gain

The Biodiversity Net Gain report by Arbtech (July 2025) states that the development is anticipated to result in a net gain greater than 10% in area and hedgerow habitats.

The proposed building would have a living green wall covering over 80% of the southern façade, the northeast corner and the western corner. It will include flowering species to provide nectar and pollen throughout a long season. Additional soft landscaping is proposed for the boundaries along Bournemouth Road, School Lane, the southern and western boundaries and the proposed courtyard. These would greatly enhance the site for wildlife and provide biodiversity net gain.

A screenshot of the headline results of a biodiversity metric has been shown in the Biodiversity Net Gain report, but the full metric excel spreadsheet should be submitted as required by the local validation list so that this information can be checked using Mycelia software.

A draft Habitat Management and Monitoring Plan must be submitted before determination and the final report can be conditioned.

Surface water drainage

The surface water drainage plan for this replacement building uses the existing surface water sewer but provides new permeable soft landscaping and permeable paving in the car park which will provide some additional filtration before discharge. Attenuation crates are also proposed. Flow control is provided with a discharge rate of 2 l/s. The collection and storage of rainwater for use in watering the soft landscaping is strongly encouraged. Rainwater harvesting is mentioned in the BREEAM assessment (5 out of a possible 5 credits have been pursued) but has not been shown on the landscaping or drainage plans.

Landscaping

I agree with the Landscape officer's response that additional green infrastructure and trees could be added to the site. Small flowering/fruit trees as suggested would provide additional resources for pollinators and wildlife. If a Christmas tree is needed in the corner, then I agree that a permanently planted tree would provide year-round effect and nesting opportunities for birds.

I agree that the inclusion of bay with the Portuguese laurel would provide some resilience. A native hedging mix for some of the hedging on the southern boundary, linking into the area of native screen planting would be a good wildlife feature. Hawthorn, blackthorn, privet and *Viburnum tinus* are also useful hedging plants that provide resources for pollinators and berries for birds. Flowering climbing plants can be used to cover fences and can climb up the pergola. Having a variety of species with different flowering times will provide flowers and fruit over a longer season.

Stone filled gabions provide crevices for invertebrates and can have planting pits included to provide additional green infrastructure.

The soft landscaping and green wall planting specifications and maintenance can be conditioned. I do not agree with the suggestion of lighting green walls at night. Plants and insects rely on a seasonal cycle of light and dark periods for growth and reproduction, and additional lighting of these areas at night in the winter would disrupt their natural cycles.

Lisa Malter

Ecologist