

Ecology response for F/25/100193 253 WINCHESTER ROAD, CHANDLER'S FORD, EASTLEIGH, SO53 2DX

Construction of 2no. semi-detached dwellings with associated / car parking /bin store / cycle storage, following the demolition of existing dwelling.

Clare Martin

29/12/25

Ecology

No objection

This site is in an amber impact risk zone for great crested newts. There are records of bats and hedgehogs nearby with nesting swifts in the wider area.

I have reviewed the Preliminary Ecological Appraisal and Roost Assessment (June/November 2024) and the Bat Emergence Survey report (August 2025) by Arbtech.

Bats

The building was assessed to have low bat roost potential, and one emergence survey was done. No bats were seen emerging, but bats were seen and heard commuting through the garden.

The report recommends the installation of **two built-in bat boxes** in the new buildings and a **wildlife-sensitive lighting strategy**.

Please could you add the following informative to the decision notice:

- In the unlikely event of any bats being found during demolition or construction, all work must stop immediately, and Natural England must be informed. Additional information is available on the Bat Conservation Trust website at <https://www.bats.org.uk/advice/im-working-on-a-building-with-bats/ive-found-a-bat-during-works>.

Nesting birds

The vegetation on site provides potential habitat for nesting birds.

The report recommends the following enhancements for birds:

*The installation of **a minimum of two bird boxes on the walls of the new building** will provide additional nesting habitat for birds e.g. Schwegler No 17 Swift Nest Box (buildings) Schwegler 1SP Sparrow Terrace (buildings) or a similar alternative brand.*

Swift and sparrow boxes should be positioned at the eaves of a building and can be incorporated into the fabric of the building during construction to be a permanently integrated feature. This should be installed on the northern walls of the building.

Please could you add the following condition to the decision notice:

- The building demolition and hedgerow management must be done outside of bird nesting season (which is usually between the beginning of March and the end of August). If this is not possible then vegetation can be cleared only after being checked for nesting birds by a suitably qualified ecologist immediately before the start of works. If any active nests are found (in vegetation or in/on the building), work must stop, and a 5 m buffer must be erected around the nest to protect it from disturbance until after the birds have fledged and left the nest.

Reptiles, amphibians and hedgehogs

Due to limited management of the site, there is some suitable habitat for reptiles, amphibians and hedgehogs. The base of the hedgerow, piles of brash and log piles could provide shelter for reptiles such as slow worms, and for great crested newts. A hedgehog dropping was found in the southern grass area.

- A precautionary working method must be used to prevent harm to wildlife that could be using this site. It should include:
 - Vegetation will be maintained at a short sward (5cm) to discourage reptiles in the garden as much as possible.
 - Any excavations will be covered overnight, or a ramp will be installed to enable any trapped animals to escape.
 - Any chemicals or pollutants used or created by the development should be stored and disposed of correctly according to COSHH regulations.
 - Brash, log and rubble piles will be dismantled by hand, and should avoid the hibernation period for reptiles and hedgehogs- (Nov-March) to avoid potentially disturbing and hibernating animals that may be present.
 - If any reptiles, amphibians and hedgehogs are found in the working area these should be allowed to disperse of their own accord or, if at immediate risk, should be moved by hand to a sheltered, vegetated area away from disturbance, such as transferred to the woodland 100m south of the site

The site could be enhanced by building **a hibernation area in the northern hedge boundary using the brash and logs piles** that are cleared from the site.

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 such as hedgehogs through the garden.

A plan showing the locations of these enhancements and any exterior lighting must be submitted, and must demonstrate that areas used by bats will be kept dark.

Biodiversity Net Gain

More information needed

The BNG metric submitted shows the following errors:

- The net gain for *area habitats* is -42.62%. It must be at least 10.0%.
- The net gain for *hedgerows* is 5.82%. It must be at least 10.0%.
- 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 -0.055 BU.

The unit shortfall is 0.068 BU (biodiversity units) for area habitats and 0.0046 BU for hedgerows.

I have reviewed the Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment by Arbtech (May 2025) which states that there is a unit deficit of 0.07 area- based units and 0.01 hedgerow units which are proposed to be purchased from a habitat bank. The purchase of biodiversity units is acceptable and must be completed after determination. Evidence must be provided before determination that the applicant has located a suitable habitat bank which has suitable units available and that the applicant is aware of the cost of these units.

Please see the EBC web page [Ecology and Biodiversity Net Gain for Planning Applications](#) for a link to the Biodiversity Planning Guidance note ([biodiversity-planning-guidance-note-3-july-2025.pdf](#)). Please note:

9.2 A final Biodiversity Net Gain Strategy/Plan must be submitted and approved by the LPA. This will include the details of the purchase of biodiversity units or statutory credits.

9.2.1 Separate proof of purchase must be submitted to the LPA. For units, this must include the Biodiversity gain site register reference number. Further information is available at Statutory biodiversity credits - GOV.UK.

Lisa Malter

Ecologist