

Re: Application P/20/116/OUT

Sefter Road, Bognor Regis,
West Sussex.

Ecology Enhancements

By

Elizabeth Lawrence BTP MRTPI

Chartered Town Planner

Elizabeth Lawrence Ltd
Woodend, Water Lane, Storrington, West Sussex, RH20 3LY
Tel: 01903 743681 Mobile: 07885 486759 E_mail: elawrencex@yahoo.com

This reports addresses and in particular addresses the ecology recommendations and enhancements set out in the Ecological Impact Assessment by Lizard Landscape Design and Ecology, the consultation comments made by the Council's Ecologist and the discussion between Elizabeth Lawrence and the planning case officer, David Spring.

Ecological Impact Assessment

This comprised a preliminary Ecological Appraisal and Ground- Level Bat Roost Assessment (Phase 1 Habitat Survey) undertaken in December 2019, to appraise the existing ecological resource within the land and the surrounding area. This informed a full Ecological Impact Assessment undertaken by a senior ecologist.

The assessment addressed and took into consideration the following legislation:

- The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017
- The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended)
- The Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006
- The National Planning Policy Framework 2019 (Framework)
- Circular 06/2005
- Local Plan Policies ENV DM1, DM3 & DM5
- 9w

The Appraisal assessed documentary information regarding priority habitats and statutory Designated sites within 2km of the site, which includes:

Bognor Reef SSSI (1.7km)

Solent and Dorset Coast SPA (1.9km)

Pagham Harbour SPA (2.1km)

Chichester & Langstone Harbours SPA (6.5 KM)

It was noted that the site is within the Impact Risk Zone of Pagham Harbour and that Natural England would need to be consulted as a result.

The habitat afforded by the site in relation to amphibians, reptiles, bats, dormouse, badger, water vole and bats was assessed and found to be of negligible value other than the boundary trees and ditches which offer some value.

Regarding the IRZ of Pagham Harbour SPA it was found that in the absence of mitigation, impacts could include increased recreational pressure leading to disturbance of overwintering and breeding birds. However, such impacts are currently mitigated through Developer Contributions to Strategic Management and Monitoring (SAMM).

Overall, the appraisal concludes that there would be no likely significant effects upon any of the surrounding protected sites.

In relation to habitats the scattered trees and ditches that lie immediately adjacent to the boundary of the site could be degraded during the construction stage, although impacts would be minor/moderate. To mitigate and compensate for this:

- 1) A landscape scheme should be implemented which includes retained trees, areas of grassland, trees and shrubs, using wildlife friendly plants, to increase the overall biodiversity value of the site.
- 2) Standard control measures during the construction phase.
- 3) Retention of boundary planting and dark Corridors for bats.
- 4) The use of soft boundaries treatments throughout most of the site, with gaps provided below fences.

Subject to this the report concluded that the initial impact would be negligible, with long term benefits.

The report identified/recommended a number of ecological enhancements within the development, including:

- 5) The use of flowering plants within the RHS 'Plants for Pollinators' list to provide year round interest for invertebrates.
- 6) The use of night scented species and pale flowers for bats;
- 7) The provision of bird nesting boxes;
- 8) The installation of bat boxes;
- 9) The use of a sympathetic external lighting scheme.
- 10) The installation of insect boxes.
- 11) New species-rich hedge planting to the site frontage;
- 12) Native fruit and nut producing trees and shrubs;
- 13) The maintenance of the on-site ditch.

As stated in the appraisal the above measures will create biodiversity gain in line with local and national planning policies and guidance.

Council's Ecologist

The Council's Ecologist, Amanda Scholes, was consulted and suggested a range of similar enhancements to create biodiversity gain on the site and its surroundings. The measures include:

- 14) The replacement of removed trees at a ratio of 2:1;
- 15) Wildflower meadow planting, which can readily be accommodated.
- 16) Tree infill planting;
- 17) Bat bricks/tiles;
- 18) Bird boxes;
- 19) Manage grassland areas;
- 20) Log pile;
- 21) Gaps below fences;
- 22) Hedgehog nesting boxes.

To be more specific we confirm that the applicant is happy to agree to the enhancements suggested by the Council's ecologist as well as those in the Ecology Appraisal. To provide further details we can confirm that:

- a) Any tree lost would be replaced with 2 trees;
- b) A wildflower meadow can be incorporated along the site frontage both in front and to the rear of a new boundary hedge.
- c) New tree planting will be carried out along the eastern boundary of the site to infill any existing gaps in the tree line;
- d) Bird and bat boxes/tiles will be provided at a ratio of one of each per new dwelling;
- e) The grassland outside the domestic curtilages will be the subject of a management scheme, to be agreed with the Council;
- f) At least one log pile and 2 hedgehog boxes will be provided on the site;
- g) All fences will be either post and rail or will have 30cm gaps below them for hedgehogs, etc.

As an outline application it would be inappropriate to specify exactly and locate the proposed enhancements and mitigation measures at this stage. They can however all be dealt with by conditions relating to:

- a construction method statement;
- tree/hedge and grassed area protection plans and specifications;
- hard and soft landscaping;
- The retention of all existing boundary trees, hedges and grassland.
- ecology enhancements including bat, bird, insect and hedgehog boxes/tiles/habitats, ditch management, grassland management.
- External lighting details.

If preferred by the Council all or any of the above could be controlled through a legal agreement rather than a condition. The SAMMs has already been complied with via a Unilateral Undertaking.

Such measures will ensure that the proposal does not have a significant a significant effect on a European site, alone or in combination with other plans or proposals. On the contrary the proposal will have a positive effect on habitats that are important to Pagham Harbour and the surrounding area in general.

Elizabeth Lawrence Ltd

Woodend, Water Lane, Storrington, West Sussex, RH20 3LY

Tel: 01903 743681 Mobile: 07885 486759 E_mail: elawrencex@yahoo.com