

APP/17/00863 | Hybrid Application - Full Application for change of use, alterations to and extension of existing buildings to 20 Residential units, (13 dwellings in the main house and 7 in other Listed Buildings) with associated landscaping parking and amenity space. Outline Application (All Matters Reserved except means of access) for the demolition of 1983 office building and associated brick and glass corridor link and development of up to 70 residential units, associated landscaping, parking and infrastructure works. | Southleigh Park House, Eastleigh Road, Havant, PO9 2PE 17.1680

Thank you for consulting me on this application. Please accept my apologies for the delay in responding to you.

I was able to attend a site visit in late 2016 with the applicant and ecologist so am familiar with the site and its ecological constraints.

The application is accompanied by an Ecological Assessment (ECOSA, July 2017). The site overall is of limited ecological value in terms of its habitats: the site is dominated by buildings and associated mature plantings, including much non-native tall scrub. There is an area of managed lawn within the south of the site, bordering an extensive area of parkland.

A considerable amount of survey work has been carried out at this site, focussing mostly on bats but also including great crested newt surveys. I am satisfied that the suite of surveys carried out is likely to have provided a robust picture of the site's ecological value (although please see comments below on buildings). In terms of protected species, GCN are considered absent and the site is considered to offer negligible potential for supporting reptiles and hazel dormouse. The scrub and trees are likely to support a range of 'garden' bird species.

The most significant ecological constraint is the confirmed presence of the rare Bechstein's bat, with three individuals captured on site. The grounds of the buildings therefore constitute confirmed foraging/commuting habitat for this rare bat, although I do accept that the site likely only forms a very small percentage of the available habitat in the surrounding landscape. The site has also been shown to support a number of other bat species, including western barbastelle, another uncommon species, as well as Nathusius' pipistrelle an uncommon migratory species.

The proposals will entail the loss of considerable vegetation cover from the site. This includes areas of non-native shrubs as well as large, mature trees and low scrub. Whilst the loss of trees in particular is unfortunate, in terms of impacts to protected species sufficient survey effort has been employed (with the exception of buildings and bats) to have a good degree of certainty that impacts will be minimal.

Several of the buildings have been assessed as offering bat roosting potential and requiring additional survey effort. I am unsure as to whether these surveys have been carried out: clearly if not then we cannot be certain of the potential impacts. I would request clarification on this issue.

Once this issue has been clarified (if possible) I would be willing to recommend that ecological mitigation measures are secured by condition. The most important factor

here is to ensure that site lighting is absolutely minimal, with darkened corridors available for flying bats.

If you have any queries please don't hesitate to contact me.

Kind regards,

Tristan

Tristan Norton

**Senior Ecologist
Ecology Team**