

MEMORANDUM

From:	Tina Cuss Ecology Officer		
Service	WBC Ecology	App No:	242712
Address:	Little Gables, Sindlesham Road, Arborfield, Wokingham, RG2 9QE.		
Proposal:	Householder application for the proposed erection of a new front porch, single storey front/side extension and two first floor rear extensions with changes to existing fenestrations.		
Type of Development:	Other Householder		
Site Visit Made:	No		

Summary Of Recommendations

- ☐ No comment
- ☐ No objection
- ☐ No objection subject to conditions (and reasons) **stated below**
- ☒ Request further information before determination as **stated below**
- ☐ Objection due to the reason(s) **stated below**

Comments On Proposal

I have read the Preliminary Bat Roost Assessment (GS Ecology, Ref ECO3668, 5 December 2024) and reviewed the plans and elevations submitted in support of the application.

All species of British bat are protected under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 and the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981, as amended. Under this legislation it is an offence to deliberately or recklessly to destroy or damage their roosts, or to disturb, kill or injure them without first having obtained the relevant licence for derogation from the regulations from Natural England in England. A bat roost is interpreted as "any structure or place used for shelter or protection" whether or not bats are present at the time.

The house has numerous features potentially suitable for use by roosting bats including:

- Numerous gaps under raised roof tiles on the rear elevation
- Gap between verge tiles and barge board at both front and side gable ends
- Small gaps under raised and slipped roof tiles on the rear single storey section.

The void below the rear roof was inaccessible to the Ecologist. The habitats surrounding were predominantly 'high' suitability for commuting and foraging bats. The Preliminary Bat Roost Assessment has been undertaken to the appropriate standard, and I agree with the assessment that the house has 'high' potential to host

a bat roost. I agree with the with the Ecologist's conclusion that three dusk emergence surveys need to be undertaken to determine the presence or likely absence of roosting bats within the building and to determine the planning application. In line with the Bat Survey Guidelines Emergence surveys should be carried out between 1 May and 30 August (one can be carried out sub-optimally in September). At least two of these should be carried out between May and the end of August.

In accordance with the Ecologist's advice in paragraph 4.19 and local plan policy, because the extent to which a protected species will be affected has not been established, the LPA should not issue planning permission. Protected species are a material consideration and the presence/absence of a species and the implications of the proposal on protected species must be considered at the point of determination. It is not possible to condition these surveys as part of granting permission.

Summary

An emergence survey report providing results of the further surveys undertaken to rule out presence of bats and any mitigation proposal must be submitted for the LPA to consider impacts on protected species and secure avoidance, mitigation and enhancement measures needed. The application should not be determined until the survey has been carried out, or lack of ecological information can be included in reasons for refusal.

Conditions & Reasons (if required)

Awaiting bat emergence survey and mitigation enhancement strategy.

Date:	22/01/25	Signed:	TCuss
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