

MEMORANDUM

From:	Tina Cuss Ecology Officer		
Service	WBC Ecology	App No:	260739
Address:	121 Nash Grove Lane, Finchampstead, Wokingham, RG40 4HG.		
Proposal:	Submission of details to comply with the following condition of planning consent 251223 dated 26/ 8/2025. Condition numbers 1-16, refers to Timescale, Approved Plans, Materials, Self Build, Biodiversity Enhancements, Homes/Water standards, Landscaping, Trees, Design, Drainage, Demolition/removal of demolished materials, Obscure glazing and restriction of permitted development rights.		
Type of Development:			
Site Visit Made:	No		

Summary Of Recommendations

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

Comments On Proposal

I have read OPUS Architecture and Design's cover letter and reviewed Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (AA Environmental, Ref 253069, April 2025) and Arboricultural Report (MW.2412.NLF.AIA, July 2025), Landscaping and Planting Strategy (OPUS Architecture and Design, April 2025), Landscape Strategy and Root Protection Plan (OPUS, Drwg Ref 431.P.13.A, April 2025) and WBC Trees & Landscape comments of June and August 2025.

I must disagree that WBC has acknowledge that there is no statutory requirement for provision of ecological enhancements. Self-build development is exempt only from biodiversity net gain 10% biodiversity habitat creation required under a statutory framework introduced by the TCPA 1990 Schedule 7A. Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (AA Environmental, Ref 253069, April 2025) paragraph 4.3 stated enhancement measures to increase the nature conservation value of the site in the long term was in accordance with Government guidance as set out in National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 2024. The bird and bat boxes, insect nest sites and planting of wildflowers were recommended by the Ecologist. Paragraph 187 states that planning "*decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and*

local environment by:...d) minimising impacts on and providing net gains for biodiversity, including by establishing coherent ecological networks that are more resilient to current and future pressures and incorporating features which support priority or threatened species such as swifts, bats and hedgehogs”.

WBC Local Plan policy CP3 states planning permission will be granted for proposals that maintain or enhance the ability of the site to support fauna and flora including protected species and have no detrimental impact upon important ecological features. According to the Local Plan development proposals are required to demonstrate how they have responded to the above through the submission of clear and informative plans and elevations. MDD TB23 states planning permission for development proposals will only be granted where they comply with policy CP7 – Biodiversity and also demonstrate how they:

- a) Provide opportunities, including through design, layout and landscaping to incorporate new biodiversity features or enhance existing....and
- c) Ensure that all existing and new developments are ecologically permeable through the protection of existing and the provision of new continuous wildlife corridors, which shall be integrated and linked to the wider green infrastructure network.

In the absence of a plan to show the location, orientation and height where bird and bat boxes will be erected, and amendment of the box types to Woodcrete to ensure retention for the lifetime of the development and avoid frequent replacement of the wooden boxes propose, location of hedgehog/badger gaps or fencing details the submission does not currently comply with planning policy and the detailed requirement of condition 5. Landscape and Planting Strategy 31/MP/21.3.25/v1 included no wildflowers, native trees and minimal native herbaceous or shrub species.

No Arboricultural Method Statement, foundation designs, or revised (or 2025 revision) landscaping plans and amended planting schedules have been submitted. The Trees & Landscape Officer requested conditions securing a hard and soft landscaping plan and information on foundation design. 251223 Condition 2 therefore did not include the Landscaping and Planting Strategy or the Landscape Strategy and Root Protection Plan. T&L commented that the Landscape Strategy drawing didn't identify any possible fencing between the red line boundary and the adjacent paddock and the new dwelling curtilage should remain within the red line to maintain the rural character of the paddock. The 2025 Landscaping and Planting Strategy and Plan appear to include no details of tree, shrub or hedge nor the wildflower grassland/ wildflowers recommended by the Ecologist.

The agent and all contractors should be reminded development should be implemented in full accordance with Preliminary Ecological Appraisal paragraphs 4.5 to 4.9 (AAE 253069, April 2025). As the Ecologist advised the Owners, all contractors should be given an induction toolbox talks so that they are aware of wildlife protection legislation and the possibility of encountering protected species including reptiles recorded. Contrary to Condition 4, no timetable for construction and occupation is provided. To avoid breach of the WCA 1981, site and vegetation clearance works should be timed to avoid the main bird nesting season, from mid-February to 31 August. If this is not possible, a check by a competent Ecologist should be carried out prior to any clearance works to ensure there are no active

nests present. To minimise disturbance to mammals using the site all fencing installed was proposed to be raised 200 mm off the ground or gaps, to allow badgers unrestricted access throughout the site. Any deep excavations that are to be left open overnight will include a means of escape for any reptiles, hedgehog or other animals that may fall in, using planks of wood to act as ramps. No pipework should remain open with any exposed ends capped off at the end of the working day to prevent any animals entering pipework. In the event of any wildlife species being found, works should stop and AA Environmental or suitably qualified contacted so that appropriate advice can be provided.

Summary

I recommend that the cover letter is not approved and conditions 4, 5, 8 and 11 are not discharged.

I am happy to provide comments when detailed landscaping plans including wildflower planting and schedule and timetable, plan and revised schedule of ecological enhancements, SUDS scheme, foundation design details and contact details of the supervising arborist are submitted.

Conditions & Reasons (if required)

Awaiting plan of detail of proposed location of ecological enhancement, revised landscaping plan and schedule including native wildflowers, trees or shrubs and perennials.

Date:	22/04/26	Signed:	T Cuss
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