

MEMORANDUM

From:	Tina Cuss Ecology Officer	To (Case Officer):	Rowan Reynolds
Service	WBC Ecology	App No:	251538
Address:	Shinfield Baptist Church, Fairmead Road, Shinfield, Wokingham, RG2 9DL.		
Type of Development:	Minor All other developments		
Proposal:	Full planning application for the proposed partial demolition of existing church and associated buildings and replacement with new church building, upgrade to existing building together with reorganisation of parking area, landscaping and associated site works.		
Site Visit Made:	No		

Summary Of Recommendations

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

Comments On Proposal

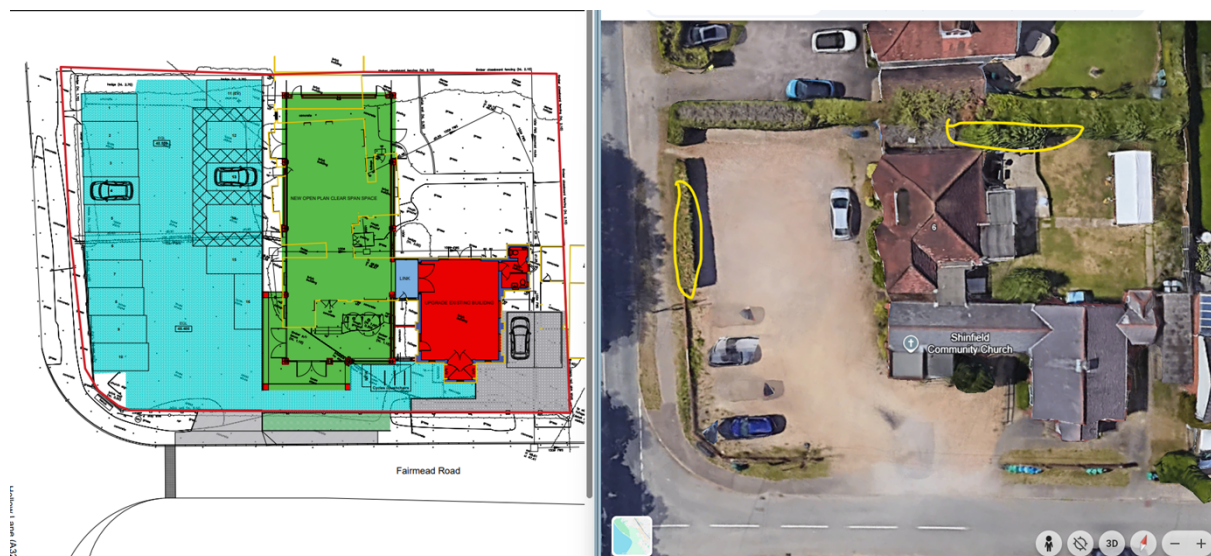
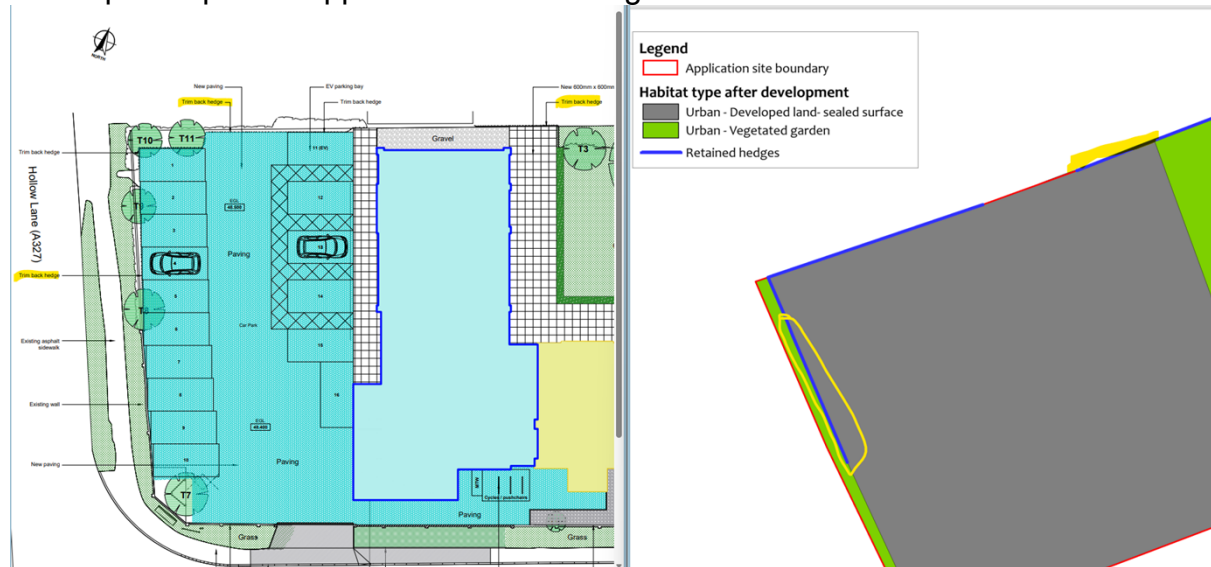
I have reviewed the Proposed Block Plan (JBKS Architects, Dwg 06001 Rev02, 26 November 2025), Proposed Landscaping Plan (JBKS Architects, Dwg SHIN06901 Rev2, 26 November 2025) and Proposed Site Plan (Dwg 06003 Rev00).

According to Local Plan Policy CP3 Planning permission will be granted for proposals that d) Maintain or enhance the ability of the site to support fauna and flora including protected species. Development proposals will be required to demonstrate how they have responded to the criteria through the submission of clear and informative plans, elevations and streetscenes. The removal hedgerow on west of the car park and works to or part-removal of the northern boundary and construction of hard surfacing in the Root Protection Area are inconsistent with the Biodiversity Net Gain Calculation, and the habitat calculated as retained in the Metric proposing the west and northern hedges are both retained. The impact on bird nesting, and on foraging and commuting has not been assessed in the Ecological Assessment.

I am concerned that it will not be possible to plant and maintain the trees proposed

in the Landscaping Plan. In particular hedge would need to be removed to establish proposed trees T10 and T11. There is limited rooting environment for the proposed T7 and T8. It is unlikely trees T4 T5 and T6 can be established and retained within the gravel round the southeast access to the site and the retained brick wall. I consider that the ecological reports, metric and Proposed Landscaping and Site Plans do not currently demonstrate that net biodiversity gain can be achieved on site by planting of 8 small trees and changes would need to be made to proposed hard surfacing or compensation must be provided off site.

The area of hedgerow and dense shrubs on the north of the building proposed to be removed is also more than shown by the Ecologist in the Habitat type after development plan in appendix 3. The Ecologist has not taken account



If the application is approved the metric and the biodiversity gain plan that are approved by the LPA must take into account the additional habitat loss or impact of tree works proposed or the layout should be revised to retain and protect the northern habitat corridor in particular.

To secure net biodiversity gain and compensation in accordance with policy I request that Proposed Landscaping Plan (JBKS Architects, Dwg SHIN06901 Rev2, 26 November 2025) is not approved. A detailed landscaping plan which includes tree and shrub species, sizes and densities and a schedule of maintenance to establishment and proposals to ensure trees are maintained for 30 years after completion must be secured if the development is approved.

In line with GSE advice, if works to implement the development haven't commenced on-site by May 2027 an updated bat survey must be undertaken to determine if the status of the site has changed. I request I17 is included in the decision notice.

Conditions & Reasons (if required)

Biodiversity Net Gain

The effect of paragraph 13 of Schedule 7A to the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 is that planning permission granted for the development of land in England is deemed to have been granted subject to the condition "(the biodiversity gain condition)" that development may not begin unless:

- (a) a Biodiversity Gain Plan has been submitted to the planning authority, and
- (b) the planning authority has approved the plan.

The Biodiversity Gain Plan shall be prepared in accordance with the Biodiversity Net Gain Calculation dated 14 January 2025 and prepared by GS Ecology.

The planning authority, for the purposes of determining whether to approve a Biodiversity Gain Plan if one is required in respect of this permission would Wokingham Borough Council.

Condition CL7

Reason: To secure the protection throughout the time that the development is being carried out of trees shrubs or hedges growing within or adjacent to the site which are of biodiversity habitat value to the area, and to allow for verification by the local planning authority that the necessary measures are in place before development and other works commence Relevant policy: Core Strategy policies CP3 and CP7 and Managing Development Delivery Local Plan policy TB23

Condition: Prior to the commencement of the development, full details of both hard and soft landscape proposals shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. These details shall include, as appropriate, proposed finished floor levels or contours, means of enclosure, car parking layouts, other vehicle and pedestrian access and circulation areas, hard surfacing materials and refuse or other storage units, lighting and external services. Soft landscaping details shall include planting plan, specification (including cultivation and other operations associated with plant and grass establishment), schedules of plants, noting species, planting sizes and proposed numbers/densities where appropriate, and implementation timetable.

All hard and soft landscape works shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details prior to the occupation of any part of the development or in accordance with a timetable approved in writing by the local planning authority. Any trees or plants which, within a period of **thirty years** after planting, are removed, die or become seriously damaged or defective, shall be replaced in the next planting season with others of species, size and number as originally approved and permanently retained.

Reason: To secure implementation of the Statutory Biodiversity Gain Condition.

Relevant policy: The NPPF 2024 Section 15, Local Plan Core Strategy policies CP3 and CP7 and Managing Development Delivery policies TB21 and TB23.

Condition: No retained tree or hedge shall be cut down, uprooted or destroyed, nor shall any retained tree be topped or lopped other than in accordance with the approved plans and particulars. If within a period of thirty years from the date completion of development any tree, or any tree planted in replacement for it, is removed, uprooted or destroyed or dies, another tree of the same species and size as that originally planted shall be planted at the same place, unless the local planning authority gives its written consent to any variation.

Reason: To secure implementation of the Statutory Biodiversity Gain Condition and ensure that biodiversity, protected and priority species are not adversely affected by the proposals. Relevant policy: The NPPF 2024 Section 15, Local Plan Core Strategy policies CP3 and CP7 and Managing Development Delivery policies TB21 and TB23.

Despite ecological surveys being undertaken which suggest that protected species are not using the application site, bats are mobile creatures, and it is possible that protected species may be encountered once works commence. I recommend the following informative should be appended to any such consent:

Informative: Bats are a protected species under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended). Should any bats or evidence of bats be found prior to or during the development, all works must stop immediately and an ecological consultant contacted for further advice before works can proceed. All contractors working on site should be made aware of the advice and provided with the contact details of a relevant ecological consultant.

Date
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03/02/26

Signed:

T Cuss