

MEMORANDUM

From:	Tina Cuss Ecology Officer		
Service	WBC Ecology	App No:	253035
Address:	Arlington, Basingstoke Road, Spencers Wood, Wokingham, RG7 1AE.		
Proposal:	Householder application for the proposed erection of a single storey rear extension, a two-storey side extension over the existing garage, conversion of the existing loft space to create additional habitable accommodation facilitated by the removal of 2 no. chimneys on the rear elevation, 2 no. rooflights and 1 no. pitched roof dormer to the front elevation, and 1 no. flat roof dormer to the rear elevation (part-retrospective).		
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 Ecological Appraisal DBW (Urban Tree Experts, Ref SPH/NP/PEA-24/10.2, 3 January 2025), Ecological Survey Report (Urban Tree Experts Ref SPH/ESR-25/26.06, 4 July 2025) and Heritage Statement. I have also reviewed the plans and elevations submitted in support of the application, as well as Existing Ground, First & Roof Plans (Rammurti Design, Dwg Arlington:003Rev- June 2024) and Proposed Amended Elevations (DP7a:016, March 2024) approved under application 250020.

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 a criminal 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 from Natural 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 January 2025 external inspection of the property and garage/utility found multiple gaps in the roof and hanging tiles and verges that could provide potential

roosting opportunities or access into the building for roosting bats. Emergence surveys were undertaken on 31 May and 26 June 2025 in general accordance with Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines (4th Edition). Bat activity recorded was low.

I am satisfied that the survey effort and methodology are adequate for the ecologist to conclude the development as proposed is currently unlikely to cause legal disturbance to bats or bat roosts. Informative I17 should be included on the decision notice and remind the owner and their contractors that it is criminal offence to destroy or damage their roosts, or to disturb, kill or injure them without a mitigation licence.



Figure 3. Rear garden. Arlington, Basingstoke Road, Spencers Wood. 10.12.24



Figure 5. Missing roof/broken tiles. Arlington, Basingstoke Road, Spencers Wood. 10.12.24



Figure 6. Well cemented verge on main property. Arlington, Basingstoke Road, Spencers Wood. 10.12.24



The cumulative impact on wildlife of proposals 253035, 242472 and 250020 should be taken in account by the LPA and adverse effects mitigated in line with planning policy. Paragraph 187 of the 2024 NPPF 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 and incorporating features which support priority or threatened species such as swifts, bats and hedgehogs. Local Plan MDD policy TB23 states planning permission for development proposals will only be granted where they comply with policy CP7 and also demonstrate how they ensure that all developments are ecologically permeable through the protection of wildlife corridors. According to policy CP3 planning permission will be granted for proposals that Maintain or enhance the ability of the site to support fauna and flora including protected species. Replacement or addition potential bat roosting features, gaps for hedgehogs in boundary fencing and a bat-sensitive lighting scheme should therefore be secured in order to maintain access for foraging and commuting of mammals and minimize impacts for wildlife.

Summary

Provided that that biodiversity-sensitive external lighting, bat boxes, hedgehog gaps and the landscaping scheme previously requested by the Trees & Landscape Officer are secured by condition, there are no ecological objections to the development proposals.

Conditions & Reasons (if required)

Condition: Within one month of the date of this decision a scheme for biodiversity enhancements, to include at least one Habitat bat tube (or similar equivalent) into the building and hedgehog gaps in boundary fencing, shall have been submitted for the written approval of the local planning authority and the scheme shall include a timetable for its implementation. The biodiversity enhancements shall thereafter be installed and maintained as approved.

Reason To incorporate enhancements and ensure that priority species are not adversely affected by the proposals. Relevant policy: NPPF paragraph Core Strategy policies CP3 and CP7 and Managing Development Delivery policy TB23.

Condition: At no time shall external lighting be installed on the site or affixed to any buildings on the site without the prior written approval of the local planning.

Reason To ensure that biodiversity, protected and priority species are not adversely affected by the proposals. Relevant policy: NPPF paragraph 198 and Section 15 (Conserving and Enhancing the Natural Environment), Local Plan Core Strategy policies CP1, CP3 and CP7 and Managing Development Delivery policy TB23.

Despite ecological surveys being undertaken which suggest that protected species are not currently roosting in 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:	30/12/25	Signed:	T Cuss
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