

BIODIVERSITY & ECOLOGICAL STATEMENT

Preliminary Ecological Assessment & Enhancement Strategy | Householder Rear Extension

Site Address: 91 Finchampstead Road, Wokingham, Berkshire RG41 2PE

Proposal: 35m² Single-Storey Rear Extension

Application Type: Householder Planning Permission

Date: August 2026

Recipient: Local Planning Authority (LPA)

1. Executive Summary & Development Proposal

This Biodiversity Statement accompanies a householder planning permission application for a proposed 35 m² single-storey rear extension to a single-family residential dwelling. The objective of this report is to describe the baseline ecological features within the proposed build zone, assess potential impacts on protected species and habitats, and outline proportionate mitigation and enhancement measures in compliance with national planning policy (NPPF) and Local Planning Authority (LPA) guidelines.

The extension footprint lies entirely within the enclosed private rear garden, extending over an existing paved stone patio and a small strip of species-poor amenity lawn. No mature trees, native hedgerows, watercourses, or priority habitats will be removed or affected.

2. Baseline Ecological Assessment

A site inspection confirmed that the affected development envelope comprises low-value domestic habitats:

- Hardstanding (Patio): Paved stone patio adjoining the rear wall. Sealed surface with zero plant cover. Value: Negligible. Direct Impact: Loss of approx. 20 m².
- Amenity Grassland: Frequently mown, species-poor lawn (Perennial Ryegrass dominant). Value: Very Low. Direct Impact: Loss of approx. 15 m².
- Boundary Fencing: Close-boarded timber fences with low ornamental shrub borders. Value: Low. Direct Impact: Retained in full (0% loss).
- Trees & Hedgerows: No mature trees or native hedgerows lie within or adjacent to the build zone. Value: N/A. Direct Impact: No impact / None removed.

3. Protected Species Risk Assessment

An evaluation of potential protected species constraints yielded the following conclusions:

- **Bats (Roosting):** The existing rear roofline, soffits, and brickwork at the tie-in point are fully intact, with no gaps or cavities suitable for bat roosting. Roost suitability is assessed as Negligible.
- **Nesting Birds:** No trees, shrubs, or dense woody vegetation will be removed. No active bird nests will be disturbed.
- **Small Mammals (Hedgehogs):** Hedgehogs (*Erinaceus europaeus*) may occasionally traverse the wider garden. Precautionary site measures will protect transient wildlife during construction.
- **Amphibians & Reptiles:** No water bodies or suitable hibernacula (e.g., log piles, compost heaps) exist in the area.

4. Statutory Policy & BNG Exemption Status

Under current statutory legislation (Environment Act 2021 / Town and Country Planning Act), Householder Planning Applications are statutory EXEMPT from mandatory 10% Biodiversity Net Gain metric requirements. A formal BNG calculation metric tool is therefore not required. However, in accordance with Paragraphs 180 and 186 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), this application includes voluntary, proportionate biodiversity enhancements.

5. Precautionary Mitigation Strategy (Construction Phase)

To avoid harm to local wildlife during construction works, the following standard protocols will be implemented:

- 1. Material Elevation:** Building materials, soils, and aggregates will be stored on raised pallets or existing hardstanding to avoid creating temporary animal refuges.
- 2. Excavation Safety:** Open trenches or foundations left open overnight will include a sloped escape ramp (30° wooden board) to allow small mammals to exit safely.
- 3. Sensitive Lighting:** Temporary and permanent external lighting will be downward-directed, low-intensity warm LED (<3000K), motion-sensored to avoid light pollution into boundary habitats.

6. Summary & Conclusion

The proposed 35 m² single-storey rear extension is minor in scale and confined to low-value hardstanding and amenity lawn. No protected species or sensitive habitats will be adversely impacted. Through precautionary construction methods and integrated enhancements (wildlife box, hedgehog highway, native planting), the development delivers an overall net ecological benefit in full compliance with local and national planning policies.