

MEMORANDUM

From:	Louise Aparo Ecology Officer		
Service	WBC Ecology	App No:	251618
Address:	Land Next to 236 Reading Road, Winnersh, RG41 5AA.		
Proposal:	Full application for the proposed erection of 1no. two storey dwelling, with associated parking and landscaping, following demolition of existing double garage and part demolition of the existing brick shed.		
Type of Development:	Minor Dwellings (1-9)		
Site Visit Made:	Yes/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

Documents reviewed in support of this application:

- Application for Planning Permission
- Existing and Proposed Plans and Elevations brick shed(bathhouse), Rev P1, 15/07/25 by Holtham and Newman Architects.
- Proposed Floor Plans, P5, 15.07/25 by Holtham and Newman Architects.
- Preliminary Roost Assessment, July 2024, Report ref: R2990_PRA_a by John Wenman Ecological Consultancy.

Biodiversity Net Gain

This proposed development is exempt for the Statutory BNG, as it qualifies as a 'self-build, meeting all criteria; consist of no more than 9 dwellings, on a site no larger than 0.5ha and consist exclusively of self-build dwellings.

As this is proposed development is exempts from Statutory Biodiversity Net Gain, it does not have to provide a 10% net gain of habitat and hedgerow units on site.

Bats

The applicant ecologist has provided clear evidence and justification for categorising the dwellings as having negligible roosting potential. I agree with this assessment.

Bats are European Protected Species, protected under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017. It is an offence to kill, injure, or disturb bats, or to damage or destroy their breeding or resting sites. Artificial light is known to hinder and negatively impact the foraging behaviour for bats and disturb roosting sites. The application ecologist notes that there is a wooded corridor south of the site, which connects to lowland deciduous woodland and a further local wildlife site. This woodland corridor provides foraging and commuting habitat as well as the potential for roosting opportunities. To avoid adverse impacts on the wooded corridor from artificial lighting associated with the proposed development, a sensitive lighting scheme should be implemented.

A sensitive lighting scheme will adhere to national guidance and Policy CP7 – Biodiversity of the Wokingham Core Strategy, developments that may impact species of principal importance—such as bats—must include appropriate mitigation measures. In this instance, for appropriate mitigation, a detailed lighting plan will be sufficient.

The applicant should submit a Lighting Plan detailing the location, type, and specification of all proposed lighting. This plan should follow the *Bat Conservation Trust Guidance Note 08: Bats and Artificial Lighting*. It is recommended that a Lighting Design Strategy for Light-Sensitive Biodiversity condition be required to secure details of the lighting plan.

The applicant ecologist identifies the proposed development as an opportunity to provide new bat roosting features. I recommend the installation of an integrated bat box within the dwelling to deliver biodiversity enhancement in accordance with Wokingham Development Management Delivery Policy TB23, paragraph (a), ‘which requires that all new development incorporates biodiversity features’. It is further recommended that these enhancements be secured through a Species Compensation and Biodiversity Enhancement condition.

Hedgehogs

No documentation relating to hedgehogs has been submitted for this proposed development. Hedgehogs are a Species of Principal Importance both nationally and locally and are identified within the Wokingham Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP), which sets out targets to protect and enhance biodiversity across the borough. This species is known to utilise both urban and wooded habitats.

Policy TB23 *Biodiversity and Development*, paragraph (c), states that developments should “ensure that all existing and new developments are ecologically permeable through the protection of existing and the provision of new continuous wildlife corridors.” To align with Policy TB23 and support the objectives of the Wokingham BAP, I recommend the inclusion of hedgehog highways. These consist of 13 cm x 13 cm gaps in boundary features—or, in the case of brick walls, the removal of a single brick at ground level—to ensure habitat connectivity and allow hedgehogs to move freely across the site.

I recommend securing the biodiversity enhancement of hedgehog highways as a part of the Species compensation and enhancement condition.

Conditions & Reasons (if required)

Lighting design strategy for light-sensitive biodiversity – Condition

Prior to occupation, a “lighting design strategy for biodiversity” for bats should specify buildings, features or areas to be lit shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The strategy shall:

- a) identify those areas/features on site that are particularly sensitive for bats and that are likely to cause disturbance in or around their breeding sites and resting places or along important routes used to access key areas of their territory, for example, for foraging; and
- b) show how and where external lighting will be installed (through the provision of appropriate lighting contour plans and technical specifications) so that it can be clearly demonstrated that areas to be lit will not disturb or prevent the above species using their territory or having access to their breeding sites and resting places. All external lighting shall be installed in accordance with the specifications and locations set out in the strategy, and these shall be maintained thereafter in accordance with the strategy. Under no circumstances should any other external lighting be installed without prior consent from the local planning authority.

Species Compensation and Enhancement Condition

Condition: Prior to construction, a scheme for ecological permeability and biodiversity compensation and enhancement, such as the incorporation of one permanent bat roosting feature(s) per dwelling and access points for hedgehog, shall be submitted to and agreed in writing with the Local Planning Authority. The approved details thereafter shall be implemented, retained and maintained for their designed purpose in accordance with the approved scheme. The scheme shall include, but not limited to, the following details:

- a) Description, design or specification of the type of feature(s) or measure(s) to be undertaken;
- b) Materials and construction to ensure long lifespan of the feature/measure
- c) A drawing(s) showing the location and where appropriate the elevation of the features or measures to be installed or undertaken.
- d) When the features or measures will be installed within the construction, occupation, or phase of the development.

Reason: To ensure the development is policy compliant with regards to Policy TB23: Biodiversity and Development of the Wokingham Borough Development Plan.

Date:	31/10/25	Signed:	Louise Aparo
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