

29th September 2025

Wokingham Borough Council
Civic Offices
Shute End
Wokingham
Berkshire
RG40 1BN

Our Ref: 4686
Planning Portal Ref: PP-14250892

Dear Sir / Madam,

Alterations to listed building (including lowering of the basement floor, refurbishment and repair of historic fabric), demolition of existing rear lean-to extension, erection of single storey rear extension with basement, and erection of a roof terrace.

Bird Place, Henley, Henley-On-Thames, RG9 2LN

The application comprises the following:

- Application forms, duly completed;
- This covering letter;
- CIL Form 1: Additional Information, duly completed;
- Design and Access Statement, prepared by Shack (September 2025);
- Heritage Statement, prepared by Smith Jenkins Planning & Heritage (September 2025);
- Window Refurbishment Specification, prepared by Shack (September 2025);
- Window Details, prepared by Shack (September 2025);
- Building Photos, prepared by Shack (September 2025);
- Contractor Estimates, prepared by Allwood Sash (March 2025);
- Window Condition Report, prepared by Allwood Sash (June 2025);
- Extended Phase 1 Ecological Assessment, prepared by Phillips Ecology (June 2025);
- Bat Emergence Survey, prepared by Morph Ecological Consultants (September 2025);
- Arboricultural Report Rev A, prepared by Sylva Consultancy (September 2025);
- Arboricultural Impact Assessment, prepared by Sylva Consultancy (September 2025);
- Flood Risk Assessment and Surface Water Drainage Strategy, prepared by Create (September 2025);
- Phase 1 Contaminated Land Assessment vol. 1, prepared by Create (September 2025);
- Phase 1 Contaminated Land Assessment vol. 2, prepared by Create (September 2025);

Drawings

- Site Location Plan (ref. PA-01-PL1);
- Existing Site and Roof Plan (ref. PA-02-PL1);
- Existing Floor Plans (ref. PA-03-PL1);
- Demolition Floor Plans (ref. PA-04-PL1);
- Existing Elevations (ref. PA-05-PL1);
- Proposed Site and Roof Plan (ref. PA-06-PL1);
- Proposed Floor Plans (ref. PA-07-PL1);
- Proposed First and Second Floor Plans (ref. PA-08-PL1);
- Proposed Elevations (ref. PA-09-PL1);
- Proposed Sections (ref. PA-10-PL1);
- Existing Lower Ground Floor Plan (ref. PA-20-PL1);
- Existing Ground Floor Plan (ref. PA-21-PL1);
- Existing First Floor Plan (ref. PA-22-PL1);
- Existing Second Floor Plan (ref. PA-23-PL1);
- Existing Windows and Doors – Front Elevation (ref. PA-25-PL1);
- Existing Windows and Doors – Side Elevation (ref. PA-26-PL1);
- Existing Windows and Doors – Rear Elevation (ref. PA-27-PL1);
- Proposed Lower Ground Floor Plan (ref. PA-100-PL1);
- Proposed Ground Floor Plan (ref. PA-101-PL1);
- Proposed First Floor Plan (ref. PA-102-PL1);
- Proposed Second Floor (ref. PA-103-PL1).

The required application fee of £528.00 has been paid via the Planning Portal.

Site and Context

The site comprises Bird Place which is a Grade II listed residential dwelling located to the east the River Thames and south-east of Henley Bridge. The site is located within the Parish of Remenham and within the Local Planning Authority (LPA) of Wokingham Borough Council.

Bird Place comprises a 10-bedroom dwelling with associated landscaping, a swimming pool, an attached/integrated annexe (known as Rose Cottage) and an area to the east which in the past been used for commercial parking. This use has been confirmed as lawful by way of an approved Certificate of Lawfulness application (203127).

Bird Place was designated as a Grade II listed building in 1983. It is located to the east of, and adjoins, Bird Place Cottage which is also Grade II Listed. The Site is located within the Remenham Henley Bridge Conservation Area, and within close proximity to a number of other listed buildings, including the Grade I listed Henley Bridge and the Grade II listed Henley Royal Regatta Headquarters.

There is a Tree Preservation Order (TPO) to the north of Bird Place within the site's curtilage (TPO reference TPO-1843-2022), and another TPO within the locality of Bird Place Cottage to the west (TPO reference TPO-1106-2006). It is noted that all trees within a conservation area are protected by the provisions in Section 211 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.

The site is within Flood Zone 3 but at a very low risk of surface water flooding.

The site is located within the Green Belt.

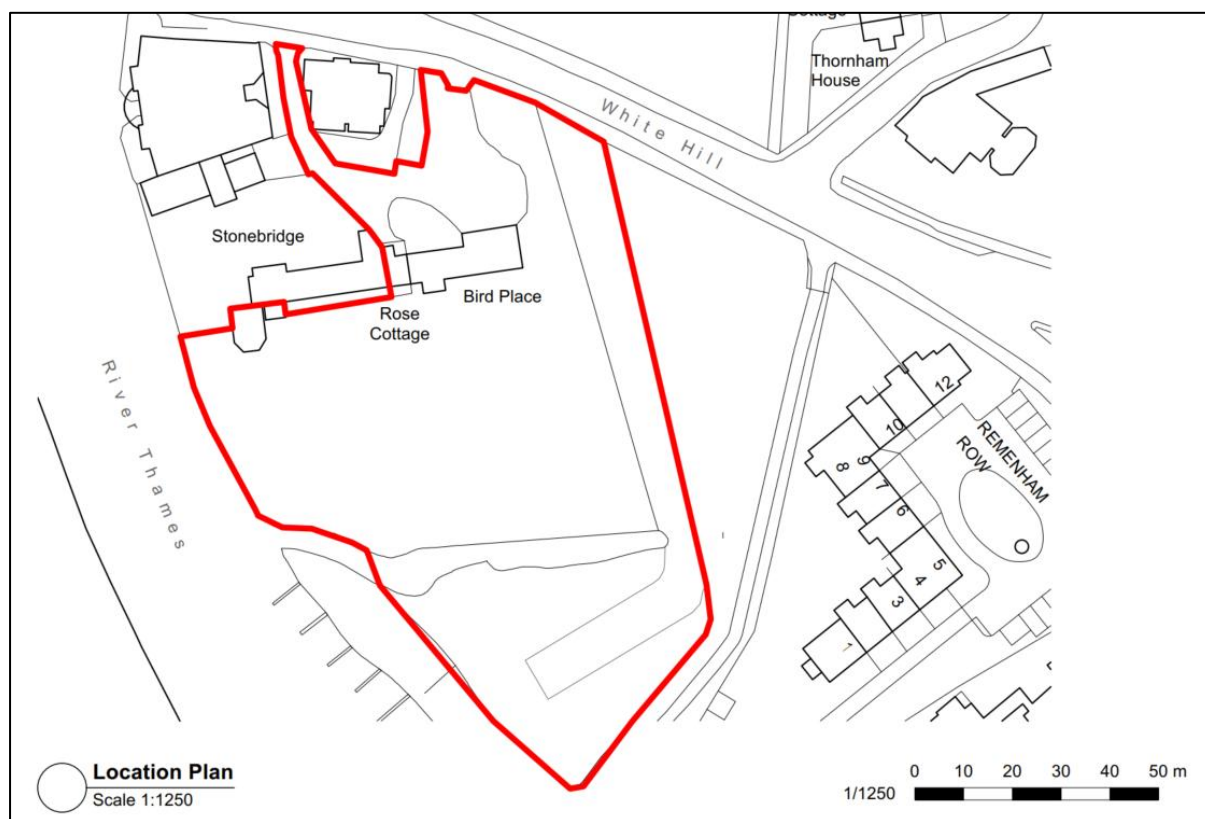


Figure 1: Site Location Plan (drawing ref. PA-01-PL1)

Planning History

The planning history for Bird Place is set out in **Table 1** below.

Reference	Description	Decision
203127	Application for a certificate of existing lawful development for both the stationing of motor vehicles incidental to the enjoyment of residential dwelling(s) and the stationing of motor vehicles for uses other than incidental to the enjoyment of residential use, consisting a mixed use.	Approved 10/02/2021
202203	Application for Listed Building consent for demolition of the existing coach house following partial collapse of the building (retrospective).	Approved 13/10/2020
201423	Householder application for the proposed erection of a carport and store with first floor accommodation to form an artist's studio, to replace existing (collapsed) coach house.	Approved 21/09/2020
201424	Application for Listed Building consent for the proposed erection of a carport and store with first floor accommodation to form an artist's studio, to replace existing (collapsed) coach house.	Withdrawn 15/07/2020
181402	Application for a certificate of existing lawful development for use of the land for the stationing of motor vehicles other than those incidental to the enjoyment of residential use.	Refused 16/08/2018
44599	Conservatory	Approved

		31/07/1995
R/73/68	Conversion of integral wing to separate cottage at Bird Place (Rose Cottage)	Approved 19/04/1968

Pre-application Advice

Pre-application advice was sought in respect of this proposal (and other proposed development at Bird Place) in March 2025 (under reference 250789). A written response was received from Wokingham Borough Council on 12th May 2025, following a site meeting on 24th April 2025.

Officers confirmed that the internal works to the listed building along with the rear extension and “crow’s nest” roof terrace were unlikely to raise any adverse character concerns, nor would they cause adverse harm to the openness of the Green Belt.

Separate advice was later received from the Council’s Built Heritage Officer on 26th June 2025 which confirmed that the proposed development would be acceptable in principle in terms of heritage, subject to further details being provided, particularly relating to the proposed alterations to the listed building.

Proposed Development

The proposals include the removal of an existing modern lean-to at the rear of the dwelling and its replacement with a single-storey extension to house a kitchen, dining and seating area. This will involve modest reconfiguration of the existing internal layout to tie-in with the extension. The proposed extension will be single storey (with basement), of a high-quality design and be in keeping with the scale of Bird Place. The removal of the poor-quality lean-to and provision of a high-quality design will represent an improvement to the rear elevation.

The existing and proposed floorspaces and volumes created by the proposed extension are provided at **Table 2** below.

Table 2: Existing and Proposed Floorspaces and Volumes

	Existing building total	Existing to be demolished	Proposed Extension (aboveground)	Increase
Gross Internal Area (m²)	561	7.4	67.5	+60.1 (12.2% of original)
Volume (m³)	1780	25	220	+195 (12.5% of original)

The proposals also include lowering the existing basement floor to increase the head height to make it a useable space and connect the existing main stairway from the floor above down into the basement.

Further refurbishment works including masonry repairs and repointing; roof repairs; replacement rainwater goods and MEP; repair/upgrading/replacement of windows; internal redecoration/refurbishment; and internal layout amendments are also proposed and detailed in the accompanying plans.

Additionally, it is proposed to create a small roof terrace within the roof valley at the rear of the main part of Bird Place.

The proposals are described in more detail in the accompanying Design and Access Statement and plans accompanying the application.

Planning Policy

Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires planning applications to be determined in accordance with the Development Plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise. This section of the report sets out the planning policy relevant to the proposed development.

The Development plan for the site comprises of the Wokingham Borough Core Strategy (2010), Managing Development Delivery Plan (MDDP) (2014) and a Joint Minerals and Waste Plan (2023).

The Council submitted the Local Plan Update (LPU) (Regulation 22) to the Secretary of State for independent examination. The Council has advised that initial commentary from the Planning Inspectorate has raised several queries and concerns about the 'soundness' of the LPU and, as such, the Council will only apply limited weight to its proposed policies.

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (2024), Planning Practice Guidance (2024) and Supplementary Planning Documents are also material considerations. There is no made or emerging neighbourhood plan relevant to the site.

Wokingham Borough Core Strategy (2010)

- Policy CP1: Sustainable development
- Policy CP3: General Principles for Development
- Policy CP6: Managing Travel Demand
- Policy CP7: Biodiversity
- Policy CP11: Proposals outside Development Limits (including countryside)
- Policy CP1: Green Belt

Wokingham Borough Managing Development Delivery (MDD) (2014)

- Policy CC01: Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development
- Policy CC03: Green Infrastructure, Trees and Landscaping
- Policy CC04: Sustainable Design and Construction
- Policy CC09: Development and Flood Risk (from all sources)

- Policy CC10: Sustainable Drainage
- Policy TB01: Development within the Green Belt
- Policy TB21: Landscape Character
- Policy TB23: Biodiversity and Development
- Policy TB24: Designated Heritage Assets (Listed Buildings, Historic Parks and Gardens, Scheduled Ancient Monuments and Conservation Areas)

Local Plan Update (Reg 22) (emerging)

- Policy SS5: Development in the Countryside
- Policy SS6: Development in the Green Belt
- Policy NE5: Landscape and Design

Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs)

- Sustainable Design and Construction SPD (2010) and Companion Document to the Sustainable Design and Construction SPD (2010)
- Wokingham Borough Council Borough Design Guide (2012)

Planning Assessment

Principle of Development

The rear extension to Bird Place is proposed in order to replace the existing poor quality lean-to extension and provide extending living accommodation connected with the garden. The extension will allow for a new, open plan kitchen and living space, which would improve the views into and accessibility to the garden.

Policy TB01 of the MDD sets out that Development within the Green Belt will only be permitted where it maintains the openness of the Green Belt. The policy also states that extensions to dwellings in the Green Belt should be limited in scale and the supporting test advises that 'limited' means a cumulative increase of generally no more than a 35% increase in volume over and above the original dwelling. The extension to Bird Place will be modest in scale relative to the existing dwelling, adding circa 67.5m² of floorspace / 220m³ in volume above ground, plus an additional 67.5m² for the proposed fully subterranean basement excavation with an additional volume of 79m³. The basement may be distracted on the basis it will be entirely subterranean and therefore would have no impact on Green Belt openness. As such, there will be a net increase in both floorspace and volume of around 12%, well under the guideline allowance intended to preserve Green Belt openness. The principle of development is therefore considered to be acceptable under Policy TB01 on the basis that it would not be inappropriate development and would not impact on the openness of the Green Belt.

Officers advised at pre-application that the provision of a rear extension to Bird Place would unlikely raise any concerns in regard to criterion 4 of Core Strategy Policy CP11 which permits development in the countryside in exceptional circumstances (such as, in the case of residential extensions) and where it does not result in inappropriate increases in the scale, form or footprint of the original building.

The principle of a basement excavation can also be established by way of Policy TB01 although it would have no impact on the openness of the Green Belt or indeed the external appearance of the existing

dwelling to any degree with no external alterations proposed. Since the basement excavation would not have any visible impact on the scale of the existing building it is considered it would also comply with Policy TB01.

Heritage Impacts

The Site comprises the Grade II listed 'Bird Place' and its associated grounds, within the town of Henley-on-Thames. The Site is also located within the Remenham Henley Bridge Conservation Area, and within proximity to a number of listed buildings, including the Grade I listed Henley Bridge and Bird Place Cottage (Grade II) adjacent to the site.

Paragraph 207 of the NPPF states that In determining applications, local planning authorities should require an applicant to describe the significance of any heritage assets affected, including any contribution made by their setting. Where a site on which development is proposed includes, or has the potential to include, heritage assets with archaeological interest, local planning authorities should require developers to submit an appropriate desk-based assessment.

Policy CP3c supports the granting of planning permission where there is no impact on heritage. Policy TB24 states that designated heritage assets will be conserved and enhanced by requiring works to or affecting heritage assets or their setting to demonstrate that the proposals would at least conserve and, where possible enhance the important character and special architectural or historic interest of the building and Conservation Area including its setting and views. Proposals should retain and incorporate existing features or details of historic significance into the scheme.

The application is supported by a Heritage Statement, prepared by Smith Jenkins Planning & Heritage (September 2025) and provides a summary of the significance of heritage assets and an assessment of the proposals on how they may affect these heritage assets.

The Heritage Statement concludes that the proposals would preserve the significance of the Grade II listed Bird Place, and the identified listed buildings and locally listed buildings in the surrounding area. The proposals will also preserve the character and appearance of the identified conservation area. As such, the proposals are in accordance with the statutory duties as set out in the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, national policy set out in the NPPF (2024) and relevant regional and local policy and guidance.

Design

Policy CC04 of the MDD sets out the principles for sustainable development through sustainable design and construction. The Borough Design Guide, Sustainable Design and Construction SPD and its companion document, and the Interactive Design Guide SPD are also material considerations.

Paragraph 4.11 of the Design Guide sets out the expectation that extensions to buildings should be well designed, respond positively to the original building and its local character, as well as nearby properties.

The application is supported by a Design and Access Statement, prepared by the architects Shack (September 2025) which provides detail on how the proposals address sustainable design. The Design and Access Statement confirms that the proposals aim to enhance the energy efficiency of the existing

building to reduce the carbon dioxide emissions associated with energy use systems whilst preserving the historic fabric of the building. As such, the proposals incorporate: thermal improvements to existing windows; renewal of building services systems and above ground foul drainage; replacement of gas central heating and hot water system; provision of PV integrated skylight; and improved thermal efficiency through glazing, insulation and services upgrades.

The proposals therefore adopt the principles of achieving sustainable development set out in accordance with Policy CC04 of the MDD.

Residential Amenity

The Borough Design Guide considers the impact of new development on amenity. The proposals will cause no detrimental impacts on the privacy or amenity of any neighbours and ample amenity space for the existing dwelling would be retained.

The nearest neighbouring dwelling (Bird Place Cottage) immediately adjoins to the west but the proposed rear extension would be set away from the common boundary such that they would not impact on light, privacy or outlook.

Officers confirmed at pre-application that they were satisfied that development proposals at the site were sited well away from the boundaries of Bird Place and therefore there were no anticipated neighbouring amenity impacts, nor would the proposals harm the usability of the dwelling's rear amenity space.

Ecology

Policy CC03 of the MDD relates to green infrastructure, trees and landscaping, and provides criteria that development proposals should demonstrate how they have considered and achieved these criteria. These criteria include seeking to protect green infrastructure, promote linkages between public open space and the countryside, retain existing trees and establish appropriate landscaping.

Policy TB23 of the MDD requires development proposals to provide opportunities, including through design, layout and landscaping to incorporate new biodiversity features or enhance existing ones.

The application is accompanied by an Extended Phase 1 Ecological Assessment, prepared by Phillips Ecology (June 2025) which confirms that the site supports opportunities for a range of protected species including bats, reptiles, dormice, hedgehogs and breeding birds.

The Extended Phase 1 Ecological Assessment confirmed that the house and attached cottage supports high suitability for roosting bats and therefore further surveys were recommended to confirm the presence/absence of roosting bats. It also recommends lighting mitigation measures to comprise of the following:

- *Lighting to the completed dwellings should be as low brightness as possible, kept at a low level and directed away from all structures, boundaries and the designated site. Lighting on sensors should not be so sensitive that foraging bats trigger them.*

- *All lighting must follow the Bat Conservation Trusts and Institute of Lighting Professionals guidance on bats and artificial lighting (BCT, 2023).*

The application is accompanied by a Bat Emergence Survey, prepared by Morph Ecological Consultants (September 2025) which confirms that general bat activity around the site was high, with five bat roosts recorded, although attributed with low conservation value. As such, a Bat Earned Recognition route is recommended alongside any works to the roof and windows requiring the supervision by a licenced ecologist, with bat boxes erected nearby as construction phase mitigation. To compensate for any potential roosting features to be lost, three bat boxes are recommended to be erected along the western gable end wall of Bird Place, and access features for the brown long-eared bat roost should be retained/incorporated within Rose Cottage. No further surveys are required.

The Extended Phase 1 Ecological Assessment further confirms that, subject to appropriate mitigation measures, the proposals will not result in any significant impacts on other species or habitats and that no further surveys are necessary.

Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) is now mandatory under Schedule 7A of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as inserted by Schedule 14 of the Environment Act 2021) and as such, developers must now deliver a BNG of 10% unless they qualify below the threshold and are exempt. Development that does not impact a priority habitat and impacts less than 25sqm of on-site habitat and 5m of on-site linear habitats such as hedgerows. Notwithstanding this, householder planning applications are exempt from the mandatory BNG requirements, as confirmed in the Planning Practice Guidance.

In light of the above, this householder planning application is exempt from the mandatory biodiversity net gain requirements.

Accordingly, the proposals are considered to accord with relevant local and national policy and legislation in respect of ecological considerations.

Trees

Policy TB21 of the MDD requires consideration of the landscape character, including retention or enhancement of the condition, character and features that contribute to the landscape.

The application is supported by an Arboricultural Impact Assessment, prepared by Sylva Consultancy (September 2025) which confirms that the arboricultural impact of the proposals on the tree stock, including the removal of a single category B and category C tree, will not result in an adverse impact on the character and appearance of the site or wider landscape.

The Arboricultural Impact Assessment provides detail on how the construction of the proposals must be carried out to ensure the protection of trees and their root protection areas.

Officers confirmed at pre-application that there were likely to be no arboricultural concerns pertaining to the single storey rear extension, internal works or terrace proposed. However, the scheme has since evolved insofar that a number of trees are proposed for removal in order to accommodate the proposals. These trees are assessed to provide minimal visual value to the character of the River Thames, nor will their removal cause harm to the setting of the listed building.

Accordingly, the proposals are considered to accord with relevant local and national policy and legislation in respect of arboricultural considerations.

Flooding

Policy CC09 of the MDD states that development proposals in Flood Zones 2 or 3 must take into account the vulnerability of the proposed development on exacerbating the flood risk. A Flood Risk Assessment (FRA) is required for all proposals in areas of known historic flooding from all sources.

The site is within Flood Zone 3, land with a high probability of flooding from rivers or the sea.

The application is supported by a Flood Risk Assessment & Surface Water Drainage Strategy, prepared by Create Consulting Engineers (September 2025) which confirms that the site is at risk of fluvial flooding during a flood event and smaller events. As such, the proposals incorporate a 600mm raised finished floor level in accordance with the Environment Agency Standing Advice, a flood-resilient basement construction design in accordance with the CIRIA Code of Practice for Property Flood Resilience, and sustainable drainage systems. Raising the floor level further is not possible due to the constraints attributed by the building's grade II listed status.

The implementation of the measures set out in the Flood Risk Assessment will ensure that occupiers of the dwelling can manage the risks associated with flood events. These precautions will also help to minimise internal flooding within the property, protecting the dwelling as a home as well as a heritage asset.

The Surface Water Drainage Strategy sets out the proposed Sustainable Drainage System (SuDS) strategy. The detailed design of the permeable paved areas, attenuation crates, and associated connections will be completed during the detailed design stage of the development.

The proposed floor level mitigation, incorporation of flood-resilient construction measures, and implementation of a robust SuDS strategy limiting runoff to 2 l/s, the development can be considered safe for occupants, resilient to flooding, and compliant with national and local planning policy, without increasing flood risk to third parties.

Accordingly, the proposed development suitably addresses flood risk and would accord with national and local planning policy in this respect.

Summary

The site comprises Bird Place which is a Grade II listed residential dwelling located to the east the River Thames and south-east of Henley Bridge. The site is within the Remenham Henley Bridge Conservation Area, and within close proximity to a number of other listed buildings, including the Grade I listed Henley Bridge and the Grade II listed Henley Royal Regatta Headquarters. There is a single TPO on site to the north of the dwelling. The site is within Flood Zone 3 but at a very low risk of surface water flooding. The site is within the Green Belt.

The proposals include the removal of an existing lean-to at the rear of the dwelling and its replacement with a single-storey extension to house a kitchen, dining and seating area. This will involve modest reconfiguration of the existing internal layout to tie-in with the extension. The proposed extension will be single storey, of a high-quality design and be in keeping with the scale of Bird Place. The proposals

also include excavating the existing basement floor to increase the head height to make it a useable space and connect the existing main stairway from the floor above down into the basement and various internal and external alterations and refurbishment works. A small roof terrace is also proposed in the roof valley to the rear of the building.

The proposals will result in a net increase in volume of 12% relative to the original building, well under the guideline allowance intended to preserve Green Belt openness. The principle of development is therefore considered to be acceptable under Policy TB01. In addition, the residential extension does not result in inappropriate increases in the scale, form or footprint of the original building, in accordance with Core Strategy Policy CP11.

The proposals would preserve the significance of the Grade II listed Bird Place, and the identified listed buildings and locally listed buildings in the surrounding area. The proposals also preserve the character and appearance of the identified conservation area. As such, the proposals accord with Policy CP3c and Policy TB24, and the NPPF.

The proposals result in the removal of one Category B tree and one Category C tree to accommodate the proposed extension. The removal of these trees will not negatively impact the character or setting of the site or listed building. The proposals are in accordance with Policy CC03 and Policy TB21 of the MDD.

The proposals are accompanied by ecological reports which confirm the proposals will result in the loss of high suitability habitat for roosting bats and suitable habitat for breeding birds. Three bat boxes are recommended to be erected along the western gable end wall of Bird Place. Precautionary mitigation measures are recommended for all other relevant protected species.

This householder planning application is exempt from the mandatory biodiversity net gain requirements.

The proposals incorporate a 600mm raised finished floor level, a flood-resilient basement construction design, and sustainable drainage systems. The implementation of the measures set out in the Flood Risk Assessment will ensure that occupiers of the dwelling can manage the risks associated with flood events, and help to minimise internal flooding within the property, protecting the dwelling as a home as well as a heritage asset. The proposals are compliant with Policy CC09 of the MDD and the NPPF.

Should you have any queries in relation to the above please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours faithfully



Marcus Taylor MRTPI
Planner
Smith Jenkins Ltd

Enc.