

From:	Duncan Fisher Ecology Officer		
Service	WBC Ecology	App No:	242151
Address:	Phoenix Unit, Wokingham Hospital, Barkham Road, Wokingham, RG41 2XR.		
Proposal:	Full application for the proposed erection of a log cabin building to provide a sensory room.		
Type of Development:	Minor All other developments		
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			
This application will result in greater than 25m² of scoring habitat change. I agree that it therefore would be subject to the general biodiversity gain condition, should permission be granted. A completed statutory metric has been submitted (dated: 16 August 2024; iteration 1) and this is accompanied by a technical note (Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment, LHB Ecology, no ref, 16 August 2024). The Location Plan submitted is of a scale that it is not possible to accurately measure the red line boundary area, although it does indicate that the red line boundary is square. The Site Plan submitted does not show the red line boundary and so cannot be used to confirm the area either. Looking at the Proposed Plan and Elevation of the Cabin the area of the cabin can be calculated (5.12m x 5.62m = 28.77m²). The biodiversity net gain metric that has been submitted considers a survey area of 47m² – indicating a red line boundary area of just under 7m x 7m. I agree with the habitat type and condition identified at baseline.			

It is not appropriate to approve a detailed biodiversity net gain plan at this stage (this needs to be via condition discharge). However, it is helpful to understand the strategy for achieving biodiversity net gain, which is indicated in the Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment. The strategy relies on delivery on-site (via tree planting adjacent to the log cabin). Necessarily, this relies on there being space within the red line boundary for the development and the tree. Although the tree planting, log cabin and red line boundary are not currently shown in any plan, I am of the view that the measurements for the log cabin and the area given in the baseline implies that there is space for tree planting on-site.

Delivery of on-site biodiversity net gain should be secured by condition, planning obligation, or conservation covenant. In this instance, I recommend that a condition is a proportionate approach.

Providing that implementation of the on-site landscaping to deliver biodiversity net gain is secured, I can recommend that this proposal is acceptable in ecological terms.

Conditions & Reasons (if required)

CL4 - LANDSCAPING DETAILS (SMALL SCALE) can be adapted as below
CL4 Landscaping

Prior to the commencement of the development there shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority a scheme of landscaping, which shall specify species, planting sizes, spacing and numbers of trees/shrubs to be planted, and any existing trees or shrubs to be retained.

Planting shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details in the first planting and seeding seasons following the occupation of the building(s). Any trees or plants which, within a period of 30 years from the date of the planting die, are removed or become seriously damaged or diseased shall be replaced in the next planting season with others of similar size and species or otherwise as approved in writing by the local planning authority.

RL4 To ensure adequate planting in the interests of biodiversity net gain and visual amenity. Relevant policy: Core Strategy policy CP3 and CP7 and Managing Development Delivery Local Plan policies CC03 , TB21 and TB23. Relevant legislation: Environment Act 2021 and consequent regulations.

Date:	24 October 2024	Signed:	D. Fisher
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