

By email only

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26 February 2025
Our reference: ECO3450c

Dear Jon,

Re: Bat roost at 1 Norton Road, Riseley, Wokingham, RG7 1SH

- 1.1 I am writing following my visit to 1 Norton Road, Riseley, Wokingham, RG7 1SH on the 14 February 2025. This report details the findings from my visit and provides way forward recommendations.

2.0 Background

- 2.1 Planning permission was granted by Wokingham Borough Council for a residential extension to a dwelling house at Norton Road. The application is described as:

“Householder application for proposed two storey side extension, two storey rear extension, plus changes to fenestration, following demolition of existing outbuilding.”

- 2.2 The planning application reference is 240471 and permission was granted on 20 September 2024.

The planning application was informed by a bat survey of the building carried out by GS Ecology Ltd (report reference ECO3450b, dated 30 August 2024). The report concluded that:

“5.1 The presence of fresh bat droppings in 1 Norton Road indicates that bats have roosted in the building (likely within the last 12months). However, no bats emerged from the building during the dusk surveys and it is therefore considered that bats were not roosting in the building at the time of the dusk surveys. The bats (or bat) were likely to have been roosting in the main loft space, and possibly in the boxed pipes within the south eastern bedroom.

5.2 There are therefore two options for this development.

- Carry out works under a non licensed method statement. However if a bat were to be found then works would need to stop until a licence had been obtained from Natural England which would cause delays. Regardless in accordance with planning policy new roosting provisions would need to be provided.
- Register the site under Class Licence WML-CL21, which is “to permit activities resulting in disturbance / capture of bats and/or damage/destruction of bat roosts of low conservation significance only”. This would mean that works would not need to stop if bats were found.

5.3 Our advice is that the second option would be the best course of action as it would minimise the risk of delays (and associated costs). Regardless the Mitigation Strategy detailed in sections 4.15 and 4.16 of this report would need to be adhered to.”

- 2.3 The planning permission was granted to four planning conditions, one of which, condition 4 related to bats. The wording of the condition is provided below:

“4. No works shall commence until a licence for development works affecting bats has been obtained from Natural England and a copy (or an email from Natural England confirming that the site has been registered under the Bat Mitigation Class Licence) has been submitted to the local planning authority. Thereafter mitigation measures approved in the licence shall be maintained in accordance with the approved details.

Reason: To ensure that bats, a material consideration, are not adversely affected by the development. Relevant policy NPPF Section 15 and Core Strategy policies CP3 and CP7 and Managing Development Delivery Local Plan policy TB23.”

- 2.4 We sent you a quote to apply for the licence on 14 January 2025. It is understood that you were then “advised [by the applicant] that the strip out works to the house have been undertaken in error.”
- 2.5 I advised you that it was likely that the bat roost had been destroyed and that a licence could no longer be obtained. I visited the site on the 14 Feb and found that the roof at the rear of the house, the windows and the second floor ceiling had been removed and that the house had been stripped out internally. Photos of the house as I found it on the 14 Feb are provided below:





- 2.6 No bats or signs of bats were found in the building. Any bat roost that had existed in the building had been destroyed.

3.0 Way forwards

- 3.1 As the bat roost that was in the building is no longer there, a licence cannot be obtained from Natural England to allow destruction of the roost nor can the site be registered under the low impact class licence.

- 3.2 It is therefore no longer possible to comply with planning condition 4. You will therefore need to apply to the council to remove or vary the planning condition under section 73 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.
- 3.3 It is strongly recommended that the new roosting provision detailed in section 4.16, and Figures 3 and 4 of our bat survey report is provided and if you wish to do this you should seek to vary condition 4 so that it reads:

“Prior to occupation of the development the new bat roosting features detailed in section 4.16, and Figures 3 and 4 of the bat survey report [GS Ecology Ltd - report reference ECO3450b, dated 30 August 2024] is to be provided and a report, from a suitably qualified ecologist confirming that it has been installed as specified, is to be submitted and approved in writing by the council”

- 3.4 I will also send this report to the police in case they wish to investigate whether a breach of wildlife legislation has occurred.
- 3.5 I trust that the above is clear but please do not hesitate to call or email if you have any questions.

Yours sincerely,



Giles Sutton MSc MCIEEM CEnv
Director
GS Ecology LTD