

PLANNING REF : 250464
PROPERTY ADDRESS : Bryony Cottage
: 5 Station Road Earley, 5 Station Road, Earley, Berkshire
: RG6 7DY
SUBMITTED BY : Mrs Christina Micuta
DATE SUBMITTED : 26/03/2025

COMMENTS:

The previous owner/occupier loved nature and where some may view the garden as overgrown, Mr Roderick Mackie valued it as a home for wildlife. He would, therefore, be greatly distressed to see every tree and shred of greenery stripped away in October 2024 and replaced with bare ground and shingle.

Bats are a legally protected species and it is illegal to disturb their roost and breeding site. The Planning Application submitted makes much of the unsafe condition of the property citing reports dated: 12 December 2024; 26 February 2025; Howlett February 2025; and the Bat Reports Arbtech 27 February 2025/5.3.2025.

February 2025 Howlett referring to the main house: "Its condition was clearly very poor, and a structural engineer has inspected the structure and confirmed that it is in a dangerous state of disrepair ... " and " in view of its condition and its position abutting a shared boundary with the neighbouring residential property ... in the interests of safety it is proposed for early demolition ... "

The main house is/was located in the centrally within the plot, with large garden at the front and small garden to the rear as recorded in other surveys. The main house does/did NOT abut neighbouring properties. There was therefore no requirement for "early demolition" and such action pre-emptive and unjustified.

The Bat Report 27 February 2025 states " ... the building is in a very dilapidated state and on the verge of falling down ... The roof tiles which remain are well sealed together ... and the only gaps created are from the caved-in roof" And "The doors and windows are wooden framed and appear in relatively good condition ... (and) there is no glass within the windows". With the main building allowing weather ingress and "high levels of temperature fluctuation", these conditions lead the surveyor to conclude: "B1 has very low to negligible habitat value for roosting bats. There was no activity located internally or externally on the survey building."

However, I am greatly concerned, for prior to September/October 2024 the property was largely sound, there were no split walls and the windows and roof were in tact, with just one small pane broken, and just a very few tiles missing; as recorded in the photograph taken and displayed on the local Facebook website Oct/Nov 2024.

Given the conditions upon which the survey concludes the property unlikely to support roosting bats, gives rise to concern these conditions were rendered in order to lead to such conclusions.

The Bat surveyor 27.2.25 observes: "The site itself has no habitat value for foraging and commuting bats as it is comprised of bare ground and shingle." Whist I understand any new owner would wish to render the property and grounds fully habitable and wish them well,

it is a great shame that every shred of greenery and tree has been removed from the entire plot; especially the beautiful yew tree. Prior to September/October 2024 there was no bare ground or shingle, and the greenery and multiple trees provided ample foraging for bats and other wildlife.

The Bat surveyor 27.2.25 states "The adjacent dwellings also have limited value for commuting bats in form of small section of tree line/hedgerow along the northern boundary."

I would observe that there are many and large established native trees within the plot on the northern boundary and environs; that there is an established pond; all of which directly support the bats that have frequently and many times been recorded flying, foraging, and breeding, both in 299 Wokingham and 5 Station road and neighbouring properties, over the past forty years. And moreover, despite

Arbtech's negative conclusions, that bats were indeed recorded flying and foraging within 5 Station road and neighbouring properties on 4 March 2025; 19 March 2025; and 24 March 2025. Given the renditions to the property and inevitable destruction of evidence since

September/October 2024, I do not find Arbtech conclusions in any way reliable nor an accurate record of the site's ability to support bat roosting, breeding, and foraging sites.

Despite the above, Bats remain a legally protected species, and it is illegal to disturb or damage their roosts and breeding grounds. Bats were seen to be breeding here with visible offspring; and moreover there was more than one species. I am greatly concerned as to their welfare and that roosting and breeding site has been destroyed. Bats are delightful creatures, a mammal that has learnt to fly. They need very little, but vulnerable, defenceless against modern technology and destruction; and in need of legal, practical, protection. Just because bats live in a roof does not follow that rooves cannot be repaired; it just means bats need to be taken into account with ecological support.

What practical measures can be done in order to ensure bat survival in this now impoverished environment?

Bats appear to shun noise, banging, and machinery. Demolition and building work continues through dusk and after dark; today demolition/building work continues @ 20.00 hours.

As it stands, bats have failed to be protected here in real and practical terms.

A security camera appears to have been mounted upon a municipal post or street light in Wokingham Road.

An unattractive high concrete wall has been erected.

What greenery will be planted along the northern section of the property?

The reports submitted with the planning application are not a fair or accurate account of the property prior to September/October 2024; it was pre-emptive and unjustified to demolish the cottage as it stood in autumn 2024.

It is disappointing and sad to see a pretty traditional cottage that could have been repaired, demolished; and every of the many trees cut down; and a loss to the neighbourhood.