

MEMORANDUM

From:	Tina Cuss Ecology Officer		
Service	WBC Ecology	App No:	250020
Address:	Arlington, Basingstoke Road, Spencers Wood, Wokingham, RG7 1AE.		
Proposal:	Householder application for the proposed first floor side extension over garage, including the removal of 2 no. existing chimneys and the addition of 2 no. roof lights.		
Type of Development:	Other Householder		
Site Visit Made:	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

I have read the Preliminary Ecological Appraisal DBW (Urban Tree Experts, Ref SPH/NP/PEA-24/10.2, 3 January 2025) and Heritage Statement and reviewed the plans and elevations submitted in support of the application.

All species of British bat are protected under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 and the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981, as amended. Under this legislation it is a criminal offence to deliberately or recklessly to destroy or damage their roosts, or to disturb, kill or injure them without first having obtained the relevant licence from Natural England. A bat roost is interpreted as "*any structure or place used for shelter or protection*" whether or not bats are present at the time.

The Ecologist describes the site as comprising a small front garden, parking/driveway, and an overgrown rear garden and a vacant, semi-detached, brick-built property with attached garage/utility. They conclude that the site offers some foraging and commuting habitat for bats and good ecological connectivity to foraging and commuting habitat in the wider landscape.

The survey constraints meant it was not possible for the Ecologist to undertake a thorough inspection of all parts of the loft. The loft space of the house is in a poor condition internally and due to the condition of the roof of the property and lack of lining beneath the roof tiles, bats could potentially access the building to roost. The

the external inspection of the property and garage/utility found multiple gaps in the roof and hanging tiles and verges that could provide potential roosting opportunities or access into the building for roosting bats. The Ecologist has not included a drawing identifying the potential roosting features for crevice-dwelling bats and potential access points and features were not surveyed with an endoscope.

The methodology used by the ecologist and basic desktop survey undertaken support the ecologist's conclusion that the property has at least moderate potential to support roosting bats and that at least two dusk emergence surveys must be completed in line with the recommendation in section 7 of the DBW to establish presence or absence of roosting bats and inform detailed mitigation proposals if necessary. If bats are recorded emerging from the building during the surveys, further activity survey and a European protected species licence will be required in order for the development to proceed legally.

Government Circular 06/05 states that: *"It is essential that the presence or otherwise of protected species, and the extent that they may be affected by the proposed development, is established before the planning permission is granted, otherwise all relevant material considerations may not have been addressed in making the decision. The need to ensure ecological surveys are carried out should therefore only be left to coverage under planning conditions in exceptional circumstances, with the result that the surveys are carried out after planning permission has been granted."* In this case as the extent to which protected species could be affected by the proposals has not been established, and there are no exceptional circumstances, the application would not be in accordance with the above planning policy.

Local Plan policy CP3 states planning permission will be granted for proposals that d) maintain or enhance the ability of the site to support fauna and flora including protected species. Development proposals will be required to demonstrate how they have responded to the above criteria through the submission of clear and informative plans. According to CP7 development which may harm habitats or, species of principle importance whether directly or indirectly, will be only permitted if it has clearly demonstrated mitigation measures can be put in place to prevent damaging impacts

Summary

The house and garage have a number of features potentially suitable for roosting bats and further surveys need to be undertaken to rule out or confirm presence. The application should not be determined until further survey have been carried out and the results, including a mitigation strategy is submitted to the Council.

Conditions & Reasons (if required)

Awaiting further bat surveys and mitigation strategy.

CL4 and/or CL6

Reason: To ensure adequate planting and retention of habitat to support wildlife. Relevant policy: Core Strategy policies CP3 and CP7 Managing Development Delivery Local Plan policy TB23.

Date:	10/03/25	Signed:	T Cuss
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