

MEMORANDUM

From:	Louise Aparo Ecology Officer		
Service	WBC Ecology	App No:	251596
Address:	6 Old Bath Road, Sonning, Wokingham, RG4 6TA.		
Proposal:	Full application for the proposed erection of 1 no. detached dwelling following demolition of the existing dwelling and garage.		
Type of Development:	Minor Dwellings (1-9)		
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

Documents reviewed for this proposal are as follows;

- 'Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (DBW) ref: SPH/NP/PEA-25/20.06' by Urban Tree Experts.
- 'Ecological Survey Report (Bat) ref: SPH/ESR-25/20.07' by Urban Tree Experts.
- Design and Access Statement.
- Biodiversity Net Gain Plan in Support of the development proposals at 7 Old Bath Road, Sonning, Reading, Berkshire RG4 6TA; 17/07/2025 by Planning Direct hereby known as BNG Report.
- the Landscape Design by Dream Gardens 18/09/25.

Biodiversity Net Gain Report:

I agree with the applicant ecologist on the classification of the baseline habitats, proposed enhancements and retained habitats as discussed with the BNG report and reflected within the 4.0 Small Sites Metric.

I support the application ecologist's biodiversity enhancements specifying a bird and bat box for the development site. These enhancements are policy compliant, aligning with Policy TB21: Biodiversity and Development 2a: encouraging opportunities through design to incorporate new biodiversity features. However, the report proposes regularly checking these enhancements for verify if the boxes are housing birds and/or bats. It must be emphasised that any internal checks are to be undertaken by a suitably licenced ecologist to ensure protected species are not

disturbed or injured. External visual checks may be carried out as appropriate, provided they do not disturb or risk harm to the protected species.

To secure these enhancements I recommend a species compensation and enhancement condition.

Bats:

The application ecologist has provided sufficient evidence to conclude that no roosting bats are present within the development site. I am satisfied that the development poses no harm to this protected species.

Birds:

Under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981, it is a criminal offence to remove, damage or destroy the nest of any wild bird and their eggs. The BNG Report proposes the removal of three trees and the enhancement of a hedgerow with native planting. However, neither the BNG Report or Preliminary Ecological Appraisal specify any mitigation measures for birds during the removal and enhancement of potential nesting habitats. To ensure that this protected species is not impacted by the removal of the three trees and the planting of a hedgerow, I recommend Protection of Breeding bird's condition.

Species of Principle importance:

Hedgehogs are listed as a Species of Principal Importance under Section 41 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006. Although the Preliminary Ecological Appraisal and BNG Report do not address this species, urban gardens can provide valuable foraging habitat. While the existing vegetated garden is to be retained, to ensure compliance with Wokingham Development Plan Policy TB21 2c) which seeks to maintain ecological permeability through continuous wildlife corridors and ensure favourable conservation status of this species, I recommend that a Permeability Plan be secured by condition.

The permeability plan should include the provision of hedgehog highways and form part of a wider Species Habitat and Enhancement Plan.

Conditions & Reasons (if required)

Protection of Breeding Birds During Construction Condition

No removal, planting or impact of hedgerows and trees shall take place between 1st March and 31st August inclusive, unless a competent ecologist has undertaken a careful, detailed check of vegetation for active birds' nests immediately before the vegetation is cleared and provided written confirmation that no birds will be harmed and/or that there are appropriate measures in place to protect nesting bird interest on site. Any such written confirmation should be submitted to the local planning authority.

Reason: To ensure this protected species is not impacted by the development and in keeping with national legislation Countryside and Wildlife Act 1981.

Species Compensation and Enhancement Condition

Condition: Prior to construction, a scheme for ecological permeability and biodiversity compensation and enhancement, such as the incorporation of

one bird and one bat box and access points for hedgehogs shall be submitted to and agreed in writing with the Local Planning Authority. The approved details thereafter shall be implemented, retained and maintained for their designed purpose in accordance with the approved scheme. The scheme shall include, but not limited to, the following details:

- a) Description, design or specification of the type of feature(s) or measure(s) to be undertaken;
- b) Materials and construction to ensure long lifespan of the feature/measure
- c) A drawing(s) showing the location and where appropriate the elevation of the features or measures to be installed or undertaken.
- d) When the features or measures will be installed within the construction, occupation, or phase of the development.

Reason: To ensure the development is policy compliant with regards to Policy TB23: Biodiversity and Development of the Wokingham Borough Development Plan.

Date:	08/10/2025	Signed:	L.Aparo
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