

MEMORANDUM

From:	Tina Cuss Ecology Officer		
Service	WBC Ecology	App No:	251538
Address:	Shinfield Baptist Church, Fairmead Road, Shinfield, Wokingham, RG2 9DL.		
Proposal:	Full planning application for the proposed partial demolition of existing church and associated buildings and replacement with new church building, upgrade to existing building together with reorganisation of parking area, landscaping and associated site works.		
Type of Development:	Minor All other developments		
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 Ecological Assessment (GS Ecology Ref Eco3634c, 16 June 2025), Biodiversity Net Gain Calculation (GS Ecology, Ref Eco3634b, 14 January 2025), and reviewed Statutory Biodiversity Metric (GS Ecology, 16 December 2024) and the plans and elevation submitted in support of the application.

Protected Species

All species of bats receive special protection under UK law and it is a criminal offence under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) and The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (The Habitat Regulations), deliberately or recklessly to destroy or damage their roosts, or to disturb, kill or injure them without first having obtained the relevant licence for derogation from the regulations from Natural England).

The church hall has a number of features potentially suitable for use by roosting bats including

- Gaps under ridge tiles on the western ridge due to slipped and missing slates
- Missing verge mortar at the western gable end
- Gap between fascia and brick wall on the northwestern elevation
- Gaps between roof slates on the southern roof

- Gaps due to slipped and missing slates on the northeastern hip

A dusk emergence survey carried out on 15 May 2025 recorded bats foraging over the adjacent gardens. No bats emerged from or went to roost in the building. I am satisfied the bat survey methodology and survey effort is sufficient for the ecologist to conclude that the buildings do not currently host a bat roost and there should be no bat related constraints to the proposed works. If the works on site haven't commenced by May 2027 (i.e. 2 active seasons after the last survey) an updated survey must be undertaken to determine if the status of the site for bats has changed.

Biodiversity Net Gain

I agree with calculation of baseline values in the submitted metric and summarized in the BNG Calculation report ref Eco3634b. I support the assessment that there are 0.06 area biodiversity habitat units pre-development and 0.05 linear habitat units. To ensure a net increase of biodiversity habitat and linear habitat units, implementation of a biodiversity gain plan must be secured by condition. The detail of the statutory biodiversity gain condition is set out in report Eco3634b.

I am concerned that the parking and hard landscaping proposals don't take adequate account of the need to retain and protect the root protection are the existing hedgerows. I request a condition securing an Arboricultural Method Statement or Tree Protection Plan to protect retained hedgerows during construction of additional car parking and hard standing and ensure the retention of linear habitats as assessed in the BNG Calculation and Metric. Full details of the landscaping and ecological enhancements in line with the recommendations made in reports Eco3634b and Eco3634b and outlined in JBSK Architects Dwg SHIN 069001 Rev00 should be submitted to and approved by the LPA prior to commencement of development and implemented as approved.

To discharge the statutory biodiversity gain condition, local authorities must be satisfied that the habitat creation and enhancements will be maintained for 30 years from the completion of development. To ensure the on-site biodiversity habitat unit secured by the gain plan condition, an amended condition CL6 which secures maintenance and retention of existing and new trees and hedges for 30 years from completion is needed.

Summary

Provided that the development is implemented in accordance with the recommendations in the submitted Ecological Assessment, retained trees and hedges are properly protected during clearance and construction, and hard and soft landscaping, retention of tree, shrubs and hedges and implementation of the gain plan condition are secured there are no ecological objections to the development.

Conditions & Reasons (if required)

Condition: The Biodiversity Gain Plan shall be prepared in accordance with the Biodiversity Net Gain Calculation dated 14 January and prepared by GS Ecology.

Reason: To secure implementation of the Statutory Biodiversity Gain Condition.

Condition CL7

Reason: To secure the protection throughout the time that the development is being

carried out of trees shrubs or hedges growing within or adjacent to the site which are of biodiversity habitat value to the area, and to allow for verification by the local planning authority that the necessary measures are in place before development and other works commence Relevant policy: Core Strategy policies CP3 and CP7 and Managing Development Delivery Local Plan policy TB223

Condition: Prior to the commencement of the development, full details of both hard and soft landscape proposals shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. These details shall include, as appropriate, proposed finished floor levels or contours, means of enclosure, car parking layouts, other vehicle and pedestrian access and circulation areas, hard surfacing materials and refuse or other storage units, lighting and external services. Soft landscaping details shall include planting plan, specification (including cultivation and other operations associated with plant and grass establishment), schedules of plants, noting species, planting sizes and proposed numbers/densities where appropriate, and implementation timetable.

All hard and soft landscape works shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details prior to the occupation of any part of the development or in accordance with a timetable approved in writing by the local planning authority. Any trees or plants which, within a period of **thirty years** after planting, are removed, die or become seriously damaged or defective, shall be replaced in the next planting season with others of species, size and number as originally approved and permanently retained.

Reason: To secure implementation of the Statutory Biodiversity Gain Condition. Relevant policy: The NPPF Section 15, Local Plan Core Strategy policies CP3 and CP7 and Managing Development Delivery policies TB21 and TB23.

Condition: No retained tree or hedge shall be cut down, uprooted or destroyed, nor shall any retained tree be topped or lopped other than in accordance with the approved plans and particulars, without the written approval of the local planning authority. If within a period of thirty years from the date completion of development any tree, or any tree planted in replacement for it, is removed, uprooted or destroyed or dies, another tree of the same species and size as that originally planted shall be planted at the same place, unless the local planning authority gives its written consent to any variation.

Reason: To secure implementation of the Statutory Biodiversity Gain Condition.

Date:	11/09/25	Signed:	T Cuss
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