

MEMORANDUM

From:	Louise Aparo Ecology Officer		
Service	WBC Ecology	App No:	261098
Address:	Whiteknights Campus, Reading, URS Building Faculty of Urban Regenerative Studies, Reading, RG6 6EN.		
Proposal:	Full application for the removal and replacement of existing boundary fencing and gates to Whiteknights Campus.		
Type of Development:	Minor All other developments		
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

I have reviewed the Arboricultural Impact Assessment (Chalice Consulting, 28th April), planning statement (May 2025, Stantech), Design and Access Statement (April 2026, Nicholas Pearson Associates Ltd) and the Ecological Impact Assessment (May 2026, Nicholas Pearson Associates) and accompanying statutory metric.

Statutory Biodiversity Net Gain

I agree with the applicant ecologist's assessment of baseline habitats. The proposed works will require small amount of vegetation removal of invasive species, which will benefit the surrounding priority habitat. Due to the location of the proposed development, there is limited space for habitat compensation, and although there is proposed compensation in the form of mixed scrub, the development will result in a -1.60% net gain, not meeting the statutory 10%.

To comply with the Environment Act 2021, the application proposes the purchase off off-site units. I agree this is required to meet the 10% net gain obligation and that BNG hierarchy has been adhered to for this development.

The use of off-site units is acceptable in principle, subject to compliance with Environment Act 2021, which stipulates any off-site units must be secured via the statutory Biodiversity Gain Site Register. As such, prior to commencement, the

applicant must submit a biodiversity gain plan and provide a biodiversity Gain Site Register number to discharge the condition.

Protected Species

The development will require a small amount of vegetation removal and although trees are to be retained, some branches will be cut back for access. The applicant ecologist recognises that this may impact nesting 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.

To mitigate any construction impact to nesting birds, the applicant ecologist recommends standard mitigation measures in the form of sensitive time periods, with clearance of vegetation to take place outside of the nesting bird season.

Additionally, the ecologist recommends no branch removal of trees over 50mm to prevent impact to roosting bats. All bats and their roosts are legally protected by national and European legislation including Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 and Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017.

However, as the trees have not been assessed (I acknowledge that this because no trees are to be removed) branches removal can still impact roosting bats dependent on roosting features present. Therefore, I recommend securing an ecological clerk of works condition to ensure the trees/vegetation have been checked prior to any tree impacts to ensure compliance with the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 and Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017.

The applicant ecologist also notes in table 6.1 'Potential Impacts and Mitigation' of the EIA Report, that length and location of the proposed fence is be walked prior to installation to ensure no new badger setts and ensure no current setts are impacted. This mitigation can be secured via the ecological clerk of works condition.

Biodiversity Enhancements

Chapter 15 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and the Wokingham Borough Development Plan require development proposals to deliver measurable biodiversity benefits through building layout, design, or landscaping.

In order to comply with policy and to compensate for the loss of bird nesting habitat, the applicant's ecologist has recommended the incorporation 5 No. 1B Schwegler nest boxes to be installed on mature trees adjacent to the Site. This recommend enhancement is proportionate and would benefit wild birds. I recommend securing these enhancements with a species compensation and enhancement condition.

Conditions & Reasons (if required)

Securing on-site ecological expertise during construction – Condition

No development shall commence until the role and responsibilities and operations to be overseen by an appropriately competent person, an ecological clerk of works have been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The appointed person shall undertake all activities, and works shall be carried out, in accordance with the approved details within the Ecological Impact Assessment (1st May 2026 Revision P02,

Nicholas Pearson Associates).

Species Compensation and Enhancement Condition

Condition: Prior to construction, a scheme for biodiversity compensation and enhancement, such as the incorporation of 5 bird boxes, 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:	25.06.26	Signed:	L.Aparo
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