

MEMORANDUM

From:	Louise Aparo Ecology Officer		
Service	WBC Ecology	App No:	252167
Address:	11 Mayflower Meadow, Spencers Wood, Wokingham, RG7 1YD.		
Proposal:	Full application for the proposed material change of use from amenity land to residential to facilitate the erection a single storey side/rear extension with installation of roof lights and erection of outbuilding (part retrospective).		
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

Context

The application seeks full planning permission to change the use of land from amenity open space to residential.

The site was originally required to retain an existing hedgerow as part of a wider permeability strategy associated with Reserved Matters application 201337. The approved drawing '*Residential Area RMA Detailed Landscape Proposals North*' (Figure 1) shows the hedgerow as retained and located outside the development red line. The hedgerow is also included within the *Approved Hedgerow Management Plan (August 2015)* for the neighbouring housing estate under Reserved Matters application 150543.

The expectation under these approvals was that the hedgerow would be retained and enhanced to support wildlife movement (permeability). However, aerial imagery and site photographs indicate that these enhancements were not implemented. The hedgerow appears to have remained in its original condition, largely consisting of bramble. Furthermore, parts of the hedgerow have been removed, leaving only a small, isolated section in which this application applies to.

The current proposal includes an extension to the main dwellings, removal of the remaining bramble hedgerow and replacement with a native species hedgerow, planted at a density of two plants per linear metre (as shown on the Proposed Ground Floor Plan, August 2025). Additional measures include reseeding grassland and incorporating ecological enhancements such as:

- One bird box on the existing hawthorn tree
- Hedgehog highways
- An integrated bat box

These landscaping and enhancement measures will improve opportunities for wildlife movement in line with Policy TB23 of the Wokingham Borough Development Plan and broadly reflect the original aim of the Hedgerow Management Plan. While the replacement hedgerow will remain somewhat isolated, it will increase species diversity and provide improved foraging opportunities for wildlife along the length of the site.

Figure 1: Snip of Drawing 'Residential Area RMA Detailed Landscape Proposals North'. Yellow highlighter indicates application site land.

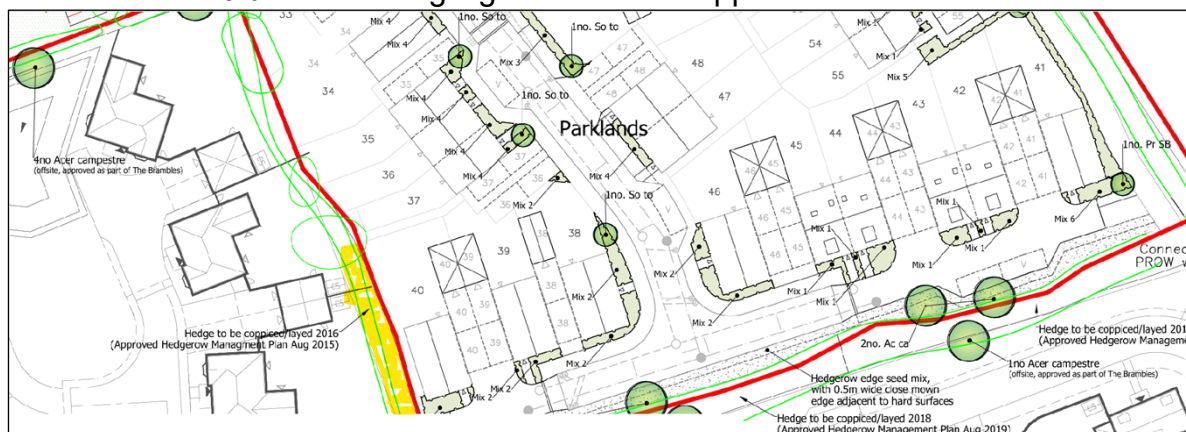


Figure 2: The Approved Hedgerow Management Plan August 2015 for the neighbouring housing estate: Reserved Matters application: 150543.

Protected Species

Bats

The applicant has submitted a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal and Roost Assessment (Arbtech, May 2026). As the proposal includes the extension of the main dwelling, the applicant has had a preliminary roost assessment undertaken, in which it was shown the house and associated outbuilds were negligible for roosting bats. I agree with this assessment.

Nesting birds

The bramble scrub proposed for removal provides suitable habitat for 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. In keeping with Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 and Wokingham Core Strategy CP7: Biodiversity, the applicant has suggested precautionary mitigation in the form of undertaking

hedgerow removal outside of bird nesting season. I agree this approach is required and recommend securing the mitigation with an appropriate condition.

Species enhancements

As detailed above, the species enhancements include the following:

- One bird box on the existing hawthorn tree
- Hedgehog highways
- An integrated bat box

These enhancements are required not only to ensure compliance with the NPPF and Policy TB23 of the Wokingham Borough Development Management Plan, but also to accord with the RM Permeability Strategy (150543). To ensure their delivery, I recommend imposing a condition requiring photographic evidence to confirm implementation.

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.

Compliance with existing detailed biodiversity method statements, strategies, plans and schemes – Condition

All ecological measures and/or works shall be carried out in accordance with the details contained Preliminary Ecological Appraisal and Roost Assessment, (Arbtech, 27th May 2026) and the Proposed Ground Floor Plan (Archytas Ltd, August 2025) as submitted with the planning application and agreed in principle by the Local Planning Authority. Within 6 months of the completion of development, the applicant shall submit to the Local Planning Authority photographic evidence demonstrating that all approved ecological measures and enhancements (including hedgerow planting and biodiversity features) have been fully implemented in accordance with the approved details. The submitted evidence shall be approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: Compliance with Wokingham Brough Development Plan, Policy TB23 and the NPPF, Chapter 15.

Date:

11/06/26

Signed:

L.Aparo