

MEMORANDUM

From:	Tina Cuss Ecology Officer		
Service	WBC Ecology	App No:	252930
Address:	10 Shepherds Avenue, Earley, Wokingham, RG6 1AY.		
Proposal:	Householder application for the proposed erection of a single storey front extension creating porch area with a disabled access ramp plus single storey side rear extension following conversion of existing garage to create habitable accommodation.		
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 Roost Assessment (John Wenman Ecological Consultancy, Ref R3047_PRA_a, November 2025) and reviewed the plans and elevations submitted in support of the application.

All bats are protected by The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) and by The Conservation and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended). In summary the legislation combined makes it an illegal offence without first having obtained the relevant licence from Natural England to:

- damage or destroy a breeding site or resting place or intentionally or recklessly obstruct access to a structure or place used for shelter by a bat;
- deliberately, intentionally or recklessly disturb bats; in particular any disturbance which is likely to impair the ability of bats to survive, breed or reproduce or nurture their young; or in the case of hibernating or migrating bats, to hibernate or migrate' or to affect significantly the local distribution or abundance of the species; and
- deliberately kill, injure or take any bat.

A bat roost is interpreted as "*any structure or place used for shelter or protection*" whether or not bats are present at the time.

According to the external and internal surveys carried out on 10 November 2025, the house had limited potential bat roosting features,

The property had limited bat access points for crevice-dwelling bats under a slightly lifted roof tile, behind a small gap in the soffit, a lifted section of uPVC barge board on the northern elevation offering a potential access point and a low-level gap below a lifted roof tile on the front elevation. I am satisfied that the survey methodology and effort are adequate for the ecologist to assign the property low suitability for bats overall. The low-level gap was able to be closely investigated and only offered sub-optimal conditions for bats. thorough inspection of the crevice to be affected showed it to be of limited extent and confirmed an absence of roosting bats giving a sufficient level of confidence in the assessment of the proposed impacts.

The potential roost feature below the barge board on the northern elevation is to be retained and unaffected during construction.

The potential crevice roost sites in the building were considered to be of low suitability for use by typically crevice-dwelling bat species, such as the abundant and widespread Soprano pipistrelle and Common pipistrelle bats. The presence of a maternity colony is considered highly unlikely due to the nature and scale of the features observed and furthermore, no evidence of roosting bats was found during the survey. In line with good practice guidelines (Collins 2023; refer to Appendix 3 for further survey rationale), the thorough inspection of the low-level crevice-roost opportunity and the detailed building assessment concluded that the environmental conditions were only suitable for opportunistic use by individual bats and the lack of evidence gave a sufficient level of confidence in the absence of roosting bats.

According to the PRA and the submitted plans, the development proposals will only impact a low-level crevice feature at the front of the property. Provided the development is implemented at propose the potential roost feature below the barge board on the northern elevation will be retained and unaffected by construction. I therefore support the Ecologist's assessment that the proposed works are unlikely to result in the damage and/or destruction of a bat roost or cause disturbance and/or harm to bats. The owner and the applicant must be aware that the PRA report contains information regarding a mobile species so it will likely be valid for less than 12 months and surveys. Provided that the barge boards are retained and protected I am satisfied that the development is unlikely to result in the damage and/or destruction of a bat roost or cause disturbance and/or harm to bats. Should proposal be amended I advised additional surveys must be carried out to rule out presence and impact to bats and bat roost.

The Ecologist advised that if bats, or any evidence of bats, is discovered are encountered during the construction activities, all works must stop immediately and a licensed ecologist should be called to site to attend and provide advice on how to proceed. Work should only continue once further written advice has been received. At this stage, an EPS mitigation licence may be required to permit the work to recommence lawfully.

There are no ecological objections, provided WBC informative I17 is included in the decision notice, and the development is implemented at proposed.

