

Memo

To: Anthony Scholes

From: Cathy Holwill (RBC Ecology Consultations)

CC:

Date: 28 January 2025

Re: Planning application ref: PL/24/1731

Address: HAWK COTTAGES, SILVER STREET, READING

Description: Extension of the existing terrace of cottages to form a new car-free single family dwelling with private amenity space

The application site is a small area of land lying to the east of a short terrace of houses. It is proposed to add a new house to the end of the terrace with a small area of garden to the east.

The site currently comprises predominantly hardstanding and building and as such would not be subject to mandatory Biodiversity Net Gain.

However, in line with paragraph 186 of the NPPF, which states that “opportunities to improve biodiversity in and around developments should be integrated as part of their design, especially where this can secure measurable net gains for biodiversity”, it would be appropriate to include set a condition to ensure that enhancements for wildlife are provided within the new development. Example wording is given below.

Furthermore as the site appears to be surrounded by vegetation in the form of bamboo and small fir trees there is a risk that birds may nesting in this vegetation and an informative should be included on the decision notice, wording is provided below.

Conditions:

Informative: All birds, their nests and eggs, are protected by law. It is a criminal offence (with certain exemptions) to deliberately or recklessly take, damage or destroy the nest of any wild bird whilst it is in use or being built. The buildings and vegetation on the site are likely to be used by nesting birds and any works to buildings with bird nests or vegetation clearance should take place outside the bird nesting season (March - August inclusive). If this is not practicable areas to be cleared should first be checked for bird nests by an appropriately qualified person. If bird nests are found works that could disturb it must stop until any young have fledged the nest.

Condition: Prior to the commencement of works, details of biodiversity enhancements, to include a minimum of 3 universal nest bricks built into the new building and native and wildlife friendly landscaping (including gaps at the bases of fences to allow hedgehogs to traverse through the gardens), shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the council. The biodiversity enhancements shall thereafter be installed as approved and prior to occupation of the development a letter report from a suitably qualified ecologist with photos of the bricks in situ shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the council.

Reason: To incorporate biodiversity in and around developments in accordance with paragraph 185 and 186 of the NPPF