

Memo

To: Louise Fuller

From: Cathy Holwill (RBC Ecology Consultations)

CC:

Date: 17 June 2025

Re: Planning application ref: PL/25/0834

Address: 4 Manor House Court, Heath Road, Reading RG6 1NA

Description: *Demolish existing pool house and construction of new detached dwelling*

The application site is an area of land located in a residential area of East Reading. It is proposed to demolish the two buildings on site and replace with a dwelling with associated parking and landscaping.

The bat survey report (Naturebureau, March 2025, ref: eco25-11) concludes that the buildings are unlikely to host roosting bats. As such, since the proposals are unlikely to affect bats, there are no objections to this application on ecological grounds.

There is however a small risk that birds may nest in these buildings and an informative should be included on the decision notice, wording below:

Biodiversity Net Gain and Biodiversity enhancement

The site comprises an area of predominantly hardstanding and buildings with negligible wildlife value and is therefore would be exempt from mandatory Biodiversity Net Gain.

Nonetheless, the development will need to comply with local and national planning policies including:

a) Local Planning policy EN12 which reads:

“b) On all sites, development should not result in a net loss of biodiversity and geodiversity, and should provide a net gain for biodiversity wherever possible.

Development should:

- *Protect and wherever possible enhance features of biodiversity interest on and adjacent to the application site, incorporating and integrating them into development proposals wherever practicable; and*
- *Provide new tree planting, wildlife friendly landscaping and ecological enhancements (such as wildlife ponds, bird and bat boxes) wherever practicable.”*

(b) 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”

In accordance with these policies, a condition should be set to ensure that enhancements for

wildlife are provided within the new development. Suggested wording is given below.

Condition: Prior to commencement of development, details of biodiversity enhancements, to include four swift bricks built into the walls of the new building shall be submitted and approved in writing by the council. The biodiversity enhancements shall thereafter be installed as approved and a short letter report (including photos of the bricks/boxes/tiles in situ), stating that the bat and bird roosting facilities have been installed as per the approved plan is to be submitted to the Council prior to the occupation of the dwelling

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 outbuildings may be used by nesting birds and any works to these buildings should take place outside the bird nesting season (March - August inclusive). If this is not practicable, they should first be checked for bird nests. If bird nests are found works that could disturb it must stop until any young have fledged the nest and the nest is no longer in use.”