

Memo

To: Anthony Scholes

From: Cathy Holwill (RBC Ecology Consultations)

CC:

Date: 9 June 2026

Re: Planning application ref: PL/26/0330

Address: 90 STONE STREET, READING, RG30 1HU

Description: Reinstatement of Lapsed Permission PL/02/0654 for Two Semi-Detached Dwellings at 90 Stone Street

The application site is an area of land at the end of Stone Street in Tilehurst. It is proposed to build a pair of semidetached dwellings. The site lies on a designated Green Link as per local planning policy EN12 and lies 150 metres south of a tree lined railway corridor which provides optimal commuting and foraging habitat for bats.

Planning permission was granted for the construction of two dwellings (ref: PL/02/0654 – December 2002) on the same area of land and the principle of development on the site has been established

Effect of development upon wildlife

The ecology report (John Wenman Ecological Consultancy, March 2026, ref: R3059_PEA_a DRAFT) has been undertaken to the appropriate standard and states that the site is not considered to be suitable for bats, badgers or other protected species.

The report includes a number of precautionary measures to be adopted during development. These measures include maintaining areas of bare ground across the site as such prior to the commencement of development works, as well as precautionary measures to be followed during construction. Subject to the implementation of these measures, the risk of adversely impacting protected species is considered to be minimal. These measures should be secured through a planning condition (example wording provided below).

Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG)

From 2024, it is a legal requirement under the Environment Act 2021 that all developments (unless exempt) must demonstrate a net gain of at least 10%.

The application site has been cleared prior to works commencing. Nevertheless, the BNG calculation has been correctly undertaken using the baseline habitat assessment carried out before clearance when the site comprised a mix of scrub and grassland habitats.

A completed BNG metric has been submitted together with an accompanying report (John Wenman Ecological Consultancy, March 2026, ref: R3059_BNG_a DRAFT) which indicates that the

development will lead to a net loss of -0.33 Area Habitat Units (equivalent to a loss of -90.73%). A total of 0.37 AHU will be needed to meet the statutory 10% uplift in BNG.

Biodiversity Enhancements

The site is on a Green Link and the proposals will need to also comply with EN12. EN12 reads:

[...] 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.[...]

As such, full details of enhancements including integrated bat and bird boxes and native and wildlife friendly planting will need to be provided. This information can be submitted prior to the determination of the application or secured by condition.

Summary

The applicant will need to provide details that show that the proposals comply with Policy EN12, currently this information has not been provided.

Conditions

Condition: The development hereby approved shall be carried out in accordance with all of the ecological avoidance and mitigation measures set out in Section 10 of the supporting Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (John Wenman Ecological Consultancy, March 2026, ref: R3059_PEA_a).

Reason: To minimise the ecological impacts of development, in accordance with Policy EN12 of the Reading Local Plan and paragraph 187 and 192 of the NPPF (2024)

Condition: Prior to the commencement of the development (excluding demolition and clearance), details of biodiversity enhancements, to include two integrated bird and two integrated bat boxes, tiles or bricks on each of the new dwellings 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 boxes, tiles or 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 EN12 and the NPPF.

Informative: Please note that this permission has been granted subject to the statutory condition ("the biodiversity gain condition") that development may not begin unless:

- (a) a Biodiversity Gain Plan has been submitted to the planning authority, and
- (b) the planning authority has approved the plan.

Failure to submit a Biodiversity Gain Plan prior to the commencement of development is a breach of planning consent and may lead to formal enforcement action being taken that will require all development on site to cease.

You should ensure that works do not commence until Biodiversity Gain Plan has been submitted to and approved in writing by the council and "the biodiversity gain condition" has been discharged.

