

Memo

To: Jonathan Markwell
From: Cathy Holwill (RBC Ecology Consultations)
CC:
Date: 28 September 2026
Re: PL/26/1061

Address: 22 NORTHCOURT AVENUE, READING, RG2 7HA

Description: Erection of a part one, part two-storey rear extension, hip to gable roof extension, standalone cycle and refuse store, altered front and side boundary treatments and related works, all associated with the existing two self-contained flats (Class C3).

The application site is a detached house located on a residential road in Reading adjacent to a University hall of residence. The building is currently used as two dwellings with garden which includes a number of mature boundary trees. The proposals include the extension of the building to allow the building to be converted into six flats with a communal garden.

Effect of proposals upon wildlife

The Ecology report (AKB Ecology, November 2025) has been undertaken to the appropriate standard and concluded that the house has moderate potential to host roosting bats. As such further surveys were undertaken in Summer 2026 (Wild Earth Ecology, July 2026). No bats were observed emerging from the building and the report concludes that the proposals are unlikely to adversely affect roosting bats. The current plans do not appear to include works to the existing trees - however, should plans change and require works to the trees, a further assessment of the trees for roosting bats may be required.

As such, based on the current plans there would be no bat related objections to the proposals.

Photos from the report show vegetated areas that appear likely to be removed to facilitate the development, including the construction of a new brick wall along the northern side of the site and the proposals may adversely impact upon nesting birds. An informative should be added to a decision notice to ensure that the impacts are avoided

National and Local policies regarding Biodiversity

The application was submitted after August 2026 and as no priority habitats will be impacted and the site area is smaller than 0.2 hectares, the proposals would be exempt from mandatory biodiversity net gain requirements. However, the proposals are still subject to local policy requirements (EN12) which require planning proposals to lead to no net loss in biodiversity. Typically, a BNG calculation would be requested to demonstrate that the proposals will not lead to a net loss in biodiversity. However, given that it appears only a small amount of grassland/lawn will be lost to the development and the proposals include the planting of two new trees and the addition of bird and bat boxes, it is considered that these will enhancements would likely address the requirements of EN12. A condition should be included on the decision notice to secure the proposed planting and biodiversity enhancements are implemented and retained as such.

NB: Biodiversity enhancements – some clarification is required regarding the bird and bat roosting features. The DAS states that 2 each of integrated bat boxes and swift bricks are proposed and a plan has been submitted showing the locations. However, the ecology report refers to these enhancements as “... *facing locations to hang bat boxes* “ and as such it is not clear whether these will be integrated into the buildings as indicated. Clarity is required on this aspect of the proposals to ensure that these enhancements are integrated into the building rather than attached to the outside of the building.