

Memo

To: Marcelina Rejwerska

From: Cathy Holwill (RBC Ecology Consultations)

CC:

Date: 14 October 2026

Re: Planning application ref: PL/26/1281

Address: SPRINGWOOD, THE WARREN, CAVERSHAM, READING, RG4 7TQ

Description: DISCHARGE OF CONDITIONS APPLICATION FOR APPLICATION REF: PL/25/1324 IN RELATION TO CONDITIONS 5 (TREES), 6 (HARD AND SOFT LANDSCAPING SCHEME), 7 (CEMP) AND 9 (BIODIVERSITY ENHANCEMENTS)

The application is for the discharge of Condition 5, 6, 7 and 9 of planning application PL/25/1324
[Erection of extensions and outdoor seating area]

Condition 6 reads:

No development shall commence on site until a comprehensive scheme of hard and soft landscaping has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. These details shall include:

- a. Means of enclosure (including mammal gaps where appropriate);*
- b. Hard surfacing materials*
- c. Soft landscaping details shall include planting plan, specification (including cultivation and other operations associated with plant and grass establishment), tree pit specifications, schedules of plants, noting species, planting sizes and proposed numbers/densities where appropriate, and implementation timetable;*
- d. A maintenance programme detailing all operations to be carried out in order to allow successful establishment of planting;*

The approved hard and soft landscaping scheme shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details prior to the occupation of any part of the development or in accordance with a timetable approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

Any trees or plants which, within a period of 5 years from the date of planting, die, are removed or become seriously damaged or diseased shall be replaced in the next planting season with others of similar size and species, to be agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

REASON: These details are required prior to commencement of development because of insufficient information contained within this submission and in the interest of ensuring that the landscaping of the development enhances the visual local environment and in accordance with Policy CC7 and EN12 of the Reading Borough Local Plan 2019

The applicant has submitted landscaping Proposals plan. This shows three new trees (two of which are native) areas of grassland, grass path and shrub planting. It also includes maintenance and management of the above.

However, there are a few issues that need clarification:

- The plans shows “Proposed Grass - Left to grow to a taller height” but the management details for this area is as wildflower grassland. These are two completely different habitats and clarification is needed whether this is actually long grass or a wildflower planting area
- The Shrub planting is labelled as “Proposed Shrub Planting - At applicants discretion”. As such this does not satisfy the requirements of Part (c) in the condition above which requires, schedules of plants, noting species, planting sizes and proposed numbers/densities where appropriate, and implementation timetable;

As such a revised document will need to be provided addressing the points above and ensuring that the schedule of plans also complies with the requirements of Condition -9.

Condition 7 reads:

No development shall take place (including demolition, ground works, vegetation clearance) until a construction environmental management plan (CEMP: Biodiversity) has been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The CEMP (Biodiversity) shall include the following.

- a) Risk assessment of potentially damaging construction activities.*
- b) Identification of “biodiversity protection zones”.*
- c) Practical measures (both physical measures and sensitive working practices) to avoid or reduce impacts during construction (may be provided as a set of method statements).*
- d) The location and timing of sensitive works to avoid harm to biodiversity features.*
- e) The times during construction when specialist ecologists need to be present on site to oversee works.*
- f) Responsible persons and lines of communication.*
- g) The role and responsibilities on site of an ecological clerk of works (ECoW) or similarly competent person.*
- h) Use of protective fences, exclusion barriers and warning signs.*

The approved CEMP shall be adhered to and implemented throughout the construction period strictly in accordance with the approved details, unless otherwise agreed in writing by the local planning authority.

Reason: To minimise impacts on biodiversity in accordance with Chapter 15 of the NPPF

The Construction Environmental Management Plan (Biodiversity) – Windrush Ecology August 2026 has been submitted and generally is acceptable as it provides a range of measures to ensure impacts on protected species and habitats are minimised. However there are a few issues that need clarification regarding the River Thames corridor:

The CEMP reads: :

“The rivers (priority habitat) will be retained and protected during development. No works are proposed for within 10m of the River Thames. Potential for damage to retained and

protected areas of the bank through vehicle movements. Potential pollution of the river, such as surface runoff, sediment fall, litter, spillage”

Page 10 then states:

“ Protective fencing will be used to ensure no heavy machinery is used in proximity to the river to ensure no collapse of banks or damage occurs. Also, to prevent storage of materials in the vicinity of the river corridor to prevent pollution events i.e. no tools, equipment or materials may be washed into the watercourse”

This fencing however is not shown on the plan in Appendix 3 which only shows fencing around the tree to the rear of the property. The CEMP should identify this area adjacent to the River Thames on the plan – this should show the extent of this area as well as the location of the protective fencing around it This area will be one where no construction activities, vegetation clearance, storage, machinery will take place – if works within this area are required, details of the works should be submitted to the LPA

-Furthermore it is unclear what is proposed for the area of hardstanding adjacent to the river.

Aerial photography shows the hardstanding in a L shape – however the landscaping plans show this as part hardstanding and part grassland :



I think we raised this issue during the original application PL/25/1324 and it seems in spite of the assurances given then, the information provided still does not clearly identify the full extent of the hardstanding and what works are proposed for it. If it is proposed to remove any of this

hardstanding, full details of the proposed works will need to be provided along with mitigation measures to ensure the R Thames and associated habitats are fully protected.

Condition 9 reads:

Prior to the commencement of works above slab level, details of biodiversity enhancements, to include a minimum of one bird and one bat boxes 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 Policy EN12 of the Reading Borough Local Plan 2019 and paragraph 192 and 193 of the NPPF 2024.

The applicant has submitted a Biodiversity Enhancement Plan report (Windrush Ecology, August 2026). This includes location and elevation plans of the bat and bird roosting features, as well as locations of hedgehog holes within any new fencing and these would appear to be acceptable

However the landscaping details include statements such as :

- It is recommended that any new areas of landscape planting...
- Planting should aim...
- ... low-growing ground cover should be encouraged.
- Native species such as bugle *Ajuga reptans*, ivy and periwinkle *Vinca* sp. could be used for this purpose
- A diversity of structure should also be encouraged through the planting of small trees,...
- Etc etc

To ensure the landscaping scheme is enforceable, the report should be updated to set out clearly what biodiversity enhancements will be carried out rather than what should be or could be done, or what is recommended or encouraged. Furthermore the recommended species list includes greater and lesser periwinkle – these are not native species and can be invasive and given the site's location next to the R Thames these should be removed from the list. All species provided should align with the landscaping plans submitted to discharge condition 6.