



Date: 14 July 2026

Our ref: 19066

Daniel Holmes
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Parkside,
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By email only: Planning Department, planning@horsham.gov.uk

Thank you for requesting advice on this application from Place Services' ecological advice service. This service provides advice to planning officers to inform Horsham District Council planning decisions with regard to potential ecological impacts from development.

Application: DC/26/0567
Location: 9 Montpelier Gardens Washington West Sussex RH20 3BW
Proposal: Erection of 2no. semi-detached houses on land to the side of 9 Montpelier Gardens. Demolition of single storey element to side of existing No. 9 and erection of a two storey rear extension to the host dwelling.

Thank you for consulting Place Services on the above application.

No ecological objection	☐
No ecological objection subject to attached conditions	☐
Further information required/Temporary holding objection: • European Protected Species (bats)	☒
Recommend Refusal	☐
Subject to Natural England's formal comments on the conclusion of the LPA's Appropriate Assessment	☐

[Please refer to Horsham District Councils advice regarding Water Neutrality requirements following Natural England's Withdrawal Statement \(31st October 2025\).](#)

Summary

We have reviewed the Preliminary Ecological Appraisal & Preliminary Roost Assessment (Arbtech Consulting Ltd., March 2026), relating to the likely impacts of development on designated sites, protected and Priority species and habitats and the identification of proportionate mitigation. Please note that comments on Biodiversity Net Gain are provided by Horsham District Council in-house.

We are not satisfied that there is sufficient ecological information available for determination of this application and recommend that additional information on bats is provided prior to determination.

European Protected Species (bats)

We note from the Preliminary Ecological Appraisal & Preliminary Roost Assessment (Arbtech Consulting Ltd., March 2026) that Building B1 (two-storey residential building) has low bat roost potential, particularly as there is a gap between the soffit and the wall with holes which provide suitable bat roost features. As the single storey element to the side of the existing building will be demolished and a two-storey rear extension will be erected, we request further clarification as to whether the ecologist is satisfied that there is sufficient evidence of likely absence of bats (Figure 5.1 and Section 5.2.44 of the 4th Ed. Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists Bat Conservation Trust (Collins ed., 2023)). If this is the case, then we recommend the implementation of a non-licensed Precautionary Method Statement for bats. We highlight that the outline measures for this Method Statement need to be submitted prior to determination.

In addition, as there are trees on the site (Application Form), we request confirmation as to whether any trees will be impacted by the proposals. If this is the case, then we highlight that a Ground Level Tree Assessment for impacts to roosting bats would be required.

To fully assess the impacts of the proposal the LPA needs ecological information for the site, particularly for bats, which are European Protected Species. This information is required prior to determination ([Government Standing Advice](#)).

The information is required prior to determination because paragraph 99 of the ODPM Circular 06/2005 highlights that: *“It is essential that the presence or otherwise of protected species, and the extent that they may be affected by the proposed development, is established before the planning permission is granted, otherwise all relevant material considerations may not have been addressed in making the decision.”*

This information is therefore required to provide the LPA with certainty of likely impacts on legally protected species and be able to secure appropriate mitigation either by a mitigation licence from Natural England or a condition of any consent. This will enable the LPA to demonstrate compliance with its statutory duties, including its biodiversity duty under s40

NERC Act 2006 (as amended) and prevent wildlife crime under s17 Crime and Disorder Act 1998.

Furthermore, the Local Planning Authority, as a competent authority, should have regard to the requirements of The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended) when reaching planning decisions including the Favourable Conservation Status licensing test and must not leave this until the licence application stage. Therefore, if a European Protected Species Mitigation Licence is required for this application, appropriate mitigation measures to support the provision of the licence must also be outlined prior to determination to allow certainty to the LPA that a licence will likely be granted.

This is needed to enable the LPA to demonstrate its compliance with its statutory duties including its biodiversity duty under s40 NERC Act 2006 (as amended).

Additional comments

We note from the Preliminary Ecological Appraisal & Preliminary Roost Assessment (Arbtech Consulting Ltd., March 2026) that Buildings B2 and B3 (timber-framed outbuildings) will be demolished, but both have negligible bat roost potential. Therefore, we agree that no further surveys for bats are required for these buildings. However, we support demolishing these buildings between November and March to avoid impacts on bats (page 15 of the Preliminary Ecological Appraisal & Preliminary Roost Assessment (Arbtech Consulting Ltd., March 2026)). This needs to be secured by a condition of any consent and implemented in full.

The site lies approximately 12.4km east of The Mens Special Area of Conservation (SAC) [MAGIC maps](#) and therefore lies outside within the 12km Wider Conservation Area for The Mens SAC. Therefore, a project level Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) will not be required.

We support the Precautionary Method Statement for mobile protected and Priority species (including Hedgehog, which is a threatened and Priority species) in the Other e.g. small mammals Section of the Preliminary Ecological Appraisal & Preliminary Roost Assessment (Arbtech Consulting Ltd., March 2026). This needs to be secured by a condition of any consent and implemented in full.

We also support the proposed reasonable biodiversity enhancements for protected, Priority and threatened species, which have been recommended in the Preliminary Ecological Appraisal & Preliminary Roost Assessment (Arbtech Consulting Ltd., March 2026) to secure net gains for biodiversity, as outlined under Paragraph 187d and 193d of the National Planning Policy Framework (December 2024). The reasonable biodiversity enhancement measures should be outlined within a separate Biodiversity Enhancement Layout and need to be secured by a condition of any consent.

Please note that we have no comments on Great Crested Newt as we have been instructed to leave comments on this European Protected Species to the [NatureSpace Partnership](#).

We look forward to working with the LPA and the applicant to receive the additional information required to support a lawful decision and overcome our holding objection.

Please do not hesitate to contact us if you have any queries in relation to this advice.

Hayley Dean MCIEEM MSc BSc (Hons)
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Place Services provide ecological advice on behalf of Horsham District Council.

Please note:

This letter is advisory and should only be considered as the opinion formed by specialist staff in relation to this particular matter.

We are unable to respond directly to applicants/agents or other interested parties.

Any additional information, queries or comments on this advice that the applicant/agent or other interested parties may have, must be directed to the Planning Officer at the relevant LPA, who will seek further advice from us where appropriate.