Wiltshire Council Planning Consultation Response

ECOLOGY

Officer name:	Jenna Buss
Date:	04/09/2023
Application number:	PL/2023/05387
Proposal:	Conversion and Re-use of a Redundant Rural Building for Economic Development B2/B8 use
Site address:	Land at Littledown, Shaftesbury, SP7 9HD (Easting 38700, Northing 124850)
Case officer:	Joe Richardson

Recommendations:

	No Comment
	Support
	No objection
x	Condition (no objection subject to conditions)
	Objection - further information required
	Objection in principle
	HRA completed

Matters Considered:

Thank you for consulting Ecology, I have reviewed the application and supporting documents against OS Maps and aerial photography of the site and surrounding area, together with GIS layers of statutory and non-statutory sites and existing records of protected species.

We welcome the Ecological Impact Assessment submitted in support of the application and note that the agricultural building was assessed as having *negligible* potential to support roosting bats and nesting birds and limited potential to support reptiles. We note that records of dormice were identified within close proximity.

The Landscape strategy proposes a new species rich hedgerow along the western boundary and the ecological impact assessment recommends bat and bird boxes on the new building, all of which would contribute to a biodiversity net gain on site.

The site exists within the Cranborne Chase and West Wiltshire Downs AONB which has been designated a dark sky reserve. Artificial light at night can have a substantial adverse effect on biodiversity. Any new lighting should be for the purposes for safe access and security and be in accordance with the appropriate Environmental Zone standards set out by the Institute of Lighting Engineers in their publication GN01:2021, 'Guidance for the Reduction of Obtrusive Light' (ILP, 2021), and Guidance note GN08-23 "Bats and artificial lighting at night", issued by the Bat Conservation Trust and Institution of Lighting Professionals.

Conditions:

1. The development will be carried out in strict accordance with the following documents:

- Landscape Strategy 23011 LHC-00-XX-DR-L-94.101 dated 9/6/23 by lhc Design.

REASON: For the avoidance of doubt and for the protection, mitigation and enhancement of biodiversity.

2. No new external artificial lighting shall be installed at the site unless otherwise agreed in writing by the local planning authority.

REASON: In the interests of conserving biodiversity.

Informatives:

Bats
There is a low risk that bats may occur at the development site. Many species of bat depend on buildings for roosting, with each having its own preferred type of roost. Most species roost in crevices such as under ridge tiles, behind roofing felt or in cavity walls and are therefore not often seen in the roof space. Bat roosts are protected all times by the Conservation of Habitats and Species (Amendment) (EU Exit) Regulations 2019 even when bats are temporarily absent because, being creatures of habit, they usually return to the same roost site every year. Planning permission for development does not provide a defence against prosecution under this legislation or substitute for the need to obtain a bat licence if an offence is likely. If bats or evidence of bats is found during the works, the applicant is advised to stop work and follow advice from an independent ecologist or the applicant is advised to follow the advice of a professional ecologist or to contact Natural England's Batline through the internet.

Reptiles
There is a residual risk that reptiles could occur on the application site. These species are legally protected and planning permission does not provide a defence against prosecution. In order to minimise the risk of these species occurring on the site, the developer is advised to clear vegetation during the winter, remove all waste arising from such clearance and maintain vegetation as short as possible in line with the recommendations made in (Extended Phase 1 Survey by Stark Ecology dated September 2022). If these species are found during the works, the applicant is advised to stop work and follow advice from an independent ecologist or the Council Landscape and Design Team (ecologyconsultations@wiltshire.gov.uk)

Breeding Birds
The adults, young, eggs and nests of all species of birds are protected by the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) while they are breeding.
Please be advised that works should not take place that will harm nesting birds from March to August inclusive. All British birds, their nests and eggs are protected under Section 1 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) and the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 while birds are nesting, building nests and sitting on eggs. The applicant is advised to check any structure or vegetation capable of supporting breeding birds and delay removing or altering such features until after young birds have fledged. Damage to extensive areas that could contain nests/breeding birds should be undertaken outside the breeding season. This season is usually taken to be the period between 1st March and 31st August but some species are known to breed outside these limits.

Final sign off – all matters addressed:

Ecologist	Date
Jenna Buss	04/09/23