Wiltshire Council Planning Consultation Response

ECOLOGY

Officer name:	Jenna Buss
Date:	25/09/2023
Application number:	PL/2023/06131
Proposal:	Change of Use and Conversion of Two Barns to Create x2 Dwellings under Class Q Prior Approval
Site address:	NEW HOUSE FARM, PINK LANE, CHARLTON, WILTSHIRE, SN16 9DS
Case officer:	Tim Furmidge

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.

The ecological surveys outline the sites low potential to support protected species including bats, and nesting birds, we support the conclusions made within the ecological report.

Core Policy 50 of the Wiltshire Core Strategy requires all development to demonstrate no net loss of biodiversity and encourages developments to seek opportunities to enhance biodiversity. A number of enhancement proposals have been suggested to include habitat creation in the form of a hedgerow and bird boxes. Inclusion of these features would be in accordance with Core Policy 50.

CONDITIONS:

1. Prior to the commencement of any works, including vegetation removal and demolition, details of the biodiversity net gain measures shall be submitted to the local authority for approval. The approved details shall be implemented before occupation of the final works. This condition will be discharged once photographic evidence of installed features has been submitted to and been approved by the local planning authority.

REASON: To provide mitigation /enhancement for biodiversity.

INFORMATIVES:

Roosting Bats

There is a low risk that bats may be encountered 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.

Nesting Birds

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.

Artificial Lighting

The habitat within the proposed development site and the surrounding area is suitable for roosting, foraging and commuting bats. An increase in artificial lux levels can deter bats which could result in roost abandonment and/or the severance of key foraging areas. This will likely result in a significant negative impact upon the health of bat populations across the region. 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 GN08-18 "Bats and artificial lighting in the UK", issued by the Bat Conservation Trust and Institution of Lighting Professionals.

Final sign off – all matters addressed:

Ecologist	Date
Jenna Buss	25/09/23