Wiltshire Council Planning Consultation Response

ECOLOGY

Officer name:	Rachel Whyte
Date:	03/11/2023
Application number:	PL/2023/07340
Proposal:	Change of Use from C3 Holiday Let to C3 Residential Dwelling (resubmission of PL/2021/07119)
Site address:	Stable Cottage, West Ashton Road, West Ashton, Trowbridge, BA14 6DQ
Case officer:	David Cox

Recommendations:

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

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 application is supported by an Ecological Walkover Survey report by Zebra Ecology (15th August 2023).

Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA)

The application site is located within a consultation zone for bats associated with the Bath & Bradford on Avon SAC, as well as being located within the red zone of the Trowbridge Bat Mitigation Strategy (TBMS), and therefore has potential to result in significant adverse impact on the special features of the SAC.

TBMS Red Zone

The application site is located within the red high-risk zone of the TBMS SPD (adopted February 2020). The red zone is located within 600 m of woodlands or trees known to support maternity roosts for Bechstein's bat. New development of greenfield or residential brownfield sites within this zone is likely to result in high and unacceptable risks to bat populations as a result of increased recreational pressure on key woodland sites and/or as a result of habitat loss. As such, development of new sites within this zone is highly unlikely to be permitted, and there should be no net increase in new residential curtilage or light levels within the zone.

HRA Outcome

A test of likely significance has been carried out by the relevant Competent Authority (Wiltshire Council) as required by Regulation 63 Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended). The test of likely significance concluded that there is no mechanism for adverse effect for the following reasons:

- The proposals comprise a change of use only of an existing house used for holiday accommodation to a residential dwelling, therefore no additional construction or land take within the red zone of the TBMS is proposed.
- There will be no vegetation removal.
- No external alterations are proposed, and a lighting condition would be applied in the event planning permission is granted to ensure any future lighting proposals are appropriate and agreed with the LPA.
- No increase in recreational pressure is anticipated as there will be no increase in occupancy.
- The ecology report produced by Zebra Ecology (August 2023) concludes that there will be no impacts to bats associated with the SAC.

Additionally, for the reasons given above operational impacts of the development would be de-minimis.

The HRA has concluded that the application is not likely to have significant impacts on the SAC and Appropriate Assessment is not required.

Given the nature of the proposals no TBMS financial contributions will be required.

CONDITIONS:

1. No external lighting shall be installed on site until plans showing the type of light appliance, the height and position of fitting, illumination levels and light spillage have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The plans will be in accordance with the appropriate Environmental Zone standards set out by the Institute of Lighting Engineers in their publication GN01:2011, 'Guidance for the Reduction of Obtrusive Light' (ILP, 2011), and Guidance note GN08/23 "Bats and artificial lighting at night", issued by the Bat Conservation Trust and Institution of Lighting Professionals.

   Where light spill has the potential to impact bat habitat, a lighting impact assessment must be submitted to demonstrate the requirements of section 8.3 of the Trowbridge Bat Mitigation Strategy February 2020 are met.

   The approved lighting shall be installed and maintained in accordance with the approved details and no additional external lighting shall be installed.

   REASON: In the interests of the amenities of the area, to minimize unnecessary light spillage above and outside the development site and to ensure lighting meets the requirements of the Trowbridge Bat Mitigation Strategy.

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 2017 (as amended) 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.

Final sign off – all matters addressed:

Ecologist **Rachel Whyte**	Date **03/11/2023**