Wiltshire Council Planning Consultation Response

ECOLOGY

Officer name:	Jenna Buss
Date:	6/11/23
Application number:	PL/2023/07723
Proposal:	Demolition of single storey extension. New single storey extension and new 2 storey extension. General refurbishment of interior.
Site address:	Home Farm Cottage, Oare, Marlborough, SN8 4JA
Case officer:	Meredith Baker

Recommendations:

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

Further Information Required:

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 following submitted documentation was reviewed to inform this response:

- Preliminary Ecological Appraisal Bat and Protected Species Survey and Bat Emergence Survey. October 2023. Ecologic;
- Proposed Landscape Plan 22228/4_P_06. September 2023. Hiscox Parlade and;
- Proposed Ground, First Floor Plans 22228/4_p_01. September 2023. Hiscox Parlade.

Protected Species

The Bat Survey Report (Ecologic 2023) submitted in support of the application identified a pipistrelle bat roost and likely brown long eared bat roost within building 1. From the surveys undertaken, the roosts appeared to be a non-breeding day roost for pipistrelle and evidence of droppings for brown long eared bats which is yet to be confirmed by DNA analysis. Bats and their roosts are afforded stringent protection under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2019 (as amended) and as such are a material consideration within the planning consultation process. It is unclear if the existing roosts will be impacted by the proposals. Mitigation within the ecology report is to be included within a new building and states that building 1 will be demolished. It would appear however, that building 1 will be retained modified. Additional information will therefore be required to clarify the impacts upon the bat roosts and where appropriate, details of any measures to mitigate the impacts. The details and location of all bat mitigation should also be included on technical drawings.

A European Protected Species (EPS) bat Mitigation Licence will need to be obtained for the lawful construction of this development.

No evidence of other protected species were identified on site. However, reasonable avoidance measures to ensure impacts upon breeding birds are minimised were included within the ecology appraisal.

BNG

Core Policy 50 of the Wiltshire Core Strategy requires all development to demonstrate no net loss of biodiversity and for major applications the expectation is that development will deliver a net gain. The NPPF also encourages applications to deliver measurable net gains (para 174 d) and the government has signalled its intention to bring forward legislation to require development to deliver 10% net biodiversity gain. Natural England has now prepared version 4.0 of the Biodiversity Metric that includes a small site metric Beta version. At the current time therefore, the Council expects all applications to demonstrate no net loss of biodiversity and where appropriate to deliver a net gain.

The plot is located on the northern-eastern edge of Oare within the North Wessex Downs AONB. The hedgerows along the boundaries appear to provide a functional link to the wider countryside and to priority woodland to the north. The Landscaping Plan (Hiscox Parlade 23) shows the retention of hedgerows and standing trees together with enhancements including a traditional orchard and wildflower meadow.

In addition, the ecology report details biodiversity enhancements which include the provision of bird and bat boxes which are welcomed and can be secured through condition.

Artificial Lighting

The habitat within the proposed development site and the surrounding area is suitable for roosting, foraging and commuting bats. Details of the proposed external lighting have yet to be provided, however, 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 GN08-23 "Bats and artificial lighting at night", issued by the Bat Conservation Trust and Institution of Lighting Professionals.

A lighting plan will be required to ensure the bat access points retained are not directly lit and that flight lines remain dark to allow for foraging and commuting. This information can be secured through condition.

Hampshire River Avon Catchment

This development falls within the catchment of the River Avon SAC and has potential to cause adverse effects alone or in combination with other developments through discharge of phosphorus in wastewater. 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). This concluded that as the proposals are for a replacement dwelling there is no mechanism for adverse effect and operational impacts would be de-minimis.

Additional Information

Additional information is required to clarify the impacts to the existing bat roosts on site. The details and location of mitigation must be included on technical drawings.

Final sign off – all matters addressed:

Ecologist Jenna Buss	Date