Wiltshire Council Planning Consultation Response

ECOLOGY

Officer name:	Rachel Whyte
Date:	26/01/2024 20/03/2024
Application number:	PL/2023/09814
Proposal:	Extension and renovation of house, garage with annexe, new equestrian stables with relocated horse walker and manege, new agricultural barn, new access to highway (resubmission of PL/2023/04007).
Site address:	Southcroft, South Cross Lane, Worton, Devizes, SN10 5UW
Case officer:	Steve Tapscott

Recommendations:

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

Further Information Required:

	Issue	Policy/Legislative Compliance	Date Information Requested & Further Information Required	Satisfactorily Addressed (Document & Date)
1.	Ecological mitigation	CP50, Habs Regs.	**26/01/2024** – Update plans to show bat loft and mitigation for nesting birds. Inclusion of a hibernaculum on site plans is encouraged.	**YES 20/03/2024** - New Stables. Drawing no: 3990-31 Rev E. Dolman. - New Agricultural Barn. Drawing no: 3990-30 Rev E. Dolman - Proposed Garage & Annexe Plan, Section & Elevations. Drawing no: 3990-20. Rev. L. Dolman.

The outstanding document(s) listed above are needed to enable the council's ecology team to consider all the relevant impacts and benefits of the proposed scheme. The council's ecologists will provide a further response once <u>all</u> the above information has been submitted via the case officer.
Please Note: When resubmitting a revised document, ALL changes must be highlighted to enable review.

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.

Ecological survey of the site was carried out by Stark Ecology Ltd at a suitable time of year and following industry guidelines. I consider that the level of survey has been thorough and appropriate to both the nature of the site and the scale of the development. I am satisfied that there is sufficient information to be able to make a judgement as to whether protected habitats and/or species are likely to be adversely impacted by the proposed development and that no further survey is required in relation to the current application.

Low numbers of common pipistrelle and brown long-eared bats were confirmed to roost in the roof and loft space of the house. As the proposals will result in the loss and/or disturbance of these roosts **a European Protected Species (EPS) bat Mitigation Licence will need to be obtained for the lawful construction of this development.** In terms of ecology sufficient information has been provided to ensure that favourable conservation status of bats can be maintained should the application be approved. Roosts for common pipistrelle and soprano pipistrelle bats were also identified in stables, however this was in a section of the stables that would not be affected by these proposals.

The development must be carried out in strict accordance with recommendations in the 'Discussions and Conclusions' section of the Preliminary Ecological Appraisal. This section sets out a working method statement for bats and precautionary working measures for badgers, hedgehogs, brown hare and reptiles.

The proposals include the removal of a length of laurel hedgerow, however new hedgerow planting is proposed within the site and on the site boundaries, this is welcomed. New hedgerow planting should comprise of at least five woody native species to produce a species-rich hedgerow.

Further Information Required:

1. ~~The locations of integrated bat tubes and bat access tiles are shown on the Proposed Elevations drawing and Proposed Garage & Annexe Plan, Section & Elevations. This is welcomed, however for clarity, the void in the garage should be identified as a bat loft on the plan, as per the ecology report. The recommendations for swallow nest cups and a hibernacula do not appear to be shown on any plans. Given that the proposals will result in the loss of existing swallow nesting places, the provision of compensatory measures for this species is required. Provision of a hibernaculum is encouraged.~~

Updated plans have been submitted which show the bat loft (Drawing No. 3990-20L) and eight swallow nesting cups (Drawing No. 3990-30E and Drawing No. 3990-31E). The requested information has been satisfactorily addressed and no further information is required.

Salisbury Plain

This application lies within the 6.4 km buffer zone of the Salisbury Plain SPA and in light of the HRA for the Wiltshire Core Strategy and the HRA for the Wiltshire Housing Site Allocations Plan it is screened into Appropriate Assessment due to the potential impact of recreational pressure on stone curlew in combination with other plans and projects. In April 2023 Natural England (NE) confirmed that the 2018 Appropriate Assessment for Salisbury Plain continues to be supported by NE. That Appropriate Assessment reached a conclusion of no adverse effects on site integrity for development within 6.4 km of the SPA boundary provided that the mitigation scheme continues to be implemented. Annual stone curlew monitoring and protection measures continue to be secured by the Council.

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 GN08/23 "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:
    - Preliminary Ecological Appraisal. Stark Ecology Ltd. October 2023.
    - Proposed Garage & Annexe Plan, Section & Elevations. Drawing no: 3990-20. Rev. L. Dolman.
    - Proposed Site Plan. Drawing no: 3990-11. Rev. G. Dolman.
    - New Stables. Drawing no: 3990-31 Rev E. Dolman.
    - New Agricultural Barn. Drawing no: 3990-30 Rev E. Dolman
    - Proposed Elevations. Drawing no: 3990-05. Rev. E. Dolman.

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

2. Bat roosts and bat access points will be incorporated into the development in accordance with:
    - Preliminary Ecological Appraisal. Stark Ecology Ltd. October 2023.
    - Proposed Elevations. Drawing no: 3990-05. Rev. E. Dolman.
    - Proposed Garage & Annexe Plan, Section & Elevations. Drawing no: 3990-20. Rev. L. Dolman.

    or as otherwise specified in a relevant European Protected Species Licence superseding this permission. The installation of these bat roosts and access features will be supervised by a professional ecologist and this part of the condition will be discharged when photographic evidence of installed features have been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. These bat roosts and access points will continue to be available for bats for the lifetime of the development.

    REASON: To mitigate for impacts to bats arising from the development.

3. 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

The roof space of the house and stables is used as a bat roost. Under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended), it is an offence to harm or disturb bats or

damage or destroy their roosts. Planning permission for development does not provide a defence against prosecution under this legislation. The applicant is advised that a European Protected Species Licence will be required before any work is undertaken to implement this planning permission. Future conversion of the roof space to living accommodation or replacing the roof could also breach this legislation and advice should be obtained from a professional bat ecologist before proceeding with work of this nature.

Protected Species General

The applicant should note that under the terms of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) and the Habitats Regulations 2017 (as amended) it is an offence to disturb or harm any protected species including for example, breeding birds and reptiles. The protection offered to some species such as bats, extends beyond the individual animals to the places they use for shelter or resting. Please note that this consent does not override the statutory protection afforded to any such species. In the event that your proposals could potentially affect a protected species you should seek the advice of a suitably qualified and experienced ecologist and consider the need for a licence from Natural England prior to commencing works. Please see Natural England's website for further information on protected species.

Final sign off – all matters addressed:

Ecologist **Rachel Whyte**	Date **20/03/2024**