

Wiltshire Council Planning Consultation Response

ECOLOGY

Officer name:	Jessica Cracknell (Ecologist)
Date:	04/02/2025
Application number:	PL/2024/11095
Proposal:	The erection of a self build dwelling and associated works
Site address:	Greenacres, Blounts Court, Potterne, Devizes, SN10 5QF
Case officer:	Adrian Smith

Recommendations:

☐	No Comment
☐	Support
☐	No objection
☐	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 Impact Assessment (EcIA)	Habs Regs, WCA, NPPF, CP50	04/02/2025 The redline boundary used in the PEA must align with the redline boundary shown in all other site documentation. An updated PEA/Ecological Assessment must be undertaken to determine potential impacts on the following habitats and protected species within the site boundary: – Great Crested Newts – Habitats – Priority Habitats including, Traditional Orchard and Deciduous Woodland	NO

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 all 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.

The following submitted documentation was reviewed to inform this response:

- Preliminary Ecological Assessment Report. 29 November 2023. Greena Ecological Consultancy;
- Arboricultural Impact Assessment & Method Statement to BS 5837: 2012. Acer Tree Surgeons;
- Appendix 8.1 Arboricultural survey to BS 5837: 2012. 20 November 2024. Acer Tree Surgeons Ltd;
- Appendix 8.2 Tree Protection Plan. 24 November 2024. Acer Tree Surgeons Ltd;
- Design & Access Statement. November 2024. 00/A;
- Planning Statement. November 2024. Context Planning
- Location Plan. 03 December 2024. Planning Portal. Ref. PP-13599607v1;
- Proposed Block Plan. December 2024. 00/A. Project No. OCD_BAM;
- Site Sections 01. December 2024. 00/A. Project No. OC_BAM;
- Site Sections 02. December 2024. 00/A. Project No. OC_BAM;
- Proposed Elevations 01. December 2024. 00/A. Project No. OC_BAM;
- Proposed Elevations 02. December 2024. 00/A. Project No. OC_BAM;
- Proposed Elevations 03. December 2024. 00/A. Project No. OC_BAM;
- Proposed Roof Plan. December 2024. 00/A. Project No. OC_BAM;
- Proposed GF Plan. December 2024. 00/A. Project No. OC_BAM;
- Proposed FF Plan. December 2024. 00/A. Project No. OC_BAM;
- Existing Block Plan. December 2024. 00/A. Project No. OC_BAM.

Salisbury Plain Special Protection Area (SPA)

This application lies within the 6.4km zone of influence 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.

A strategic Appropriate Assessment (AA) has been prepared pertaining to development within the 6.4km zone of influence that could result in a likely significant effect on the SPA as a result of an increase in recreational / visitor pressure. The AA reached a conclusion of no adverse effects on the integrity of the SPA or its qualifying features provided that the council's mitigation strategy continues to be implemented. Annual stone curlew monitoring and protection measures continue to be secured by the Council.

In July 2024 Natural England (NE) confirmed that the 2024 strategic AA for Salisbury Plain SPA continues to be supported by NE.

Protected Species

A Preliminary Ecological Assessment Report has been submitted in support of this application however the redline boundary as identified in figure 2 (Site Plan) within the *Preliminary Ecological Assessment Report. 29 November 2023. Greena Ecological Consultancy* is different from the redline boundary shown on other documents such as the *Proposed Block Plan. December 2024. 00/A. Project No. OCD_BAM*. The redline application boundary and site boundary used for the ecological surveys must match. Therefore, an updated ecological assessment is required which provides sufficient information to determine potential impacts on the habitats and protected species within the site boundary. In carrying out its statutory function, the LPA must be reasonably sure that the proposal will not result in significant adverse effects on protected habitats or species. The information outlined above must therefore be submitted and reviewed by the LPA's ecology team prior to determination of the application.

The submitted application currently lacks sufficient information to confirm the presence or absence of Great Crested Newts (GCN). As ponds are present onsite, the applicant must submit a Habitat Suitability Index Assessment, along with eDNA surveys and suitable mitigation for the existing ponds within the site. This information is necessary to accurately assess the potential impact of the proposed development on GCN populations.

The woodland and traditional orchard onsite is classified as a priority habitat. In accordance with Core Policy 50, development proposals must demonstrate how they protect features of nature conservation and geological value as part of the design rationale. There is an expectation that such features shall be retained, buffered, and managed favourably in order to maintain their ecological value, connectivity and functionality in the long-term. Where it has been demonstrated that such features cannot be retained, removal or damage shall only be acceptable in circumstances where the anticipated ecological impacts have been mitigated as far as possible and appropriate compensatory measures can be secured to ensure no net loss of the local biodiversity resource.

Biodiversity Net Gain

From 12 February 2024 Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) became mandatory under Schedule 7A of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as inserted by Schedule 14 of the Environment Act 2021). Based on the information available the biodiversity gain planning condition is not considered to apply to this application as the application is for self and Custom Build Development, meaning development which:

- consists of no more than 9 dwellings;
- is carried out on a site which has an area no larger than 0.5 hectares; and
- consists exclusively of dwellings which are self-build or custom housebuilding (as defined in section 1(A1) of the Self-build and Custom Housebuilding Act 2015).

Note to case officer: you should be satisfied that the proposals meet the above criteria and act accordingly. Further information will be required from the applicant prior to determination in the event the application is considered to be subject to mandatory biodiversity net gain.

Core Policy 50

This application does not meet the threshold for Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG), therefore BNG *per se* is not obligatory. However, Core Policy 50 of the Wiltshire Core Strategy requires all development to demonstrate no net loss of biodiversity and to seek opportunities to enhance biodiversity. The NPPF also encourages applications to deliver measurable net gains (para 186 d).

Priority Habitat Traditional Orchard and Broadleaved Woodland sits within the site boundary. It is essential that the assessment takes into account the ecological value of these habitats prior to the proposed development including measures should be included to mitigate any adverse impacts, such as habitat creation or retention to compensate for any loss.

Core Policy 50 of the Wiltshire Core Strategy requires all development to demonstrate:

- (i) No net loss of local biodiversity resource and
- (ii) Secure the integrity of local ecological networks

Insufficient information to demonstrate no net loss of the following local biodiversity resource has been submitted:

- Approximately 534m² of priority habitat (Deciduous Woodland)
- Approximately 455m² of priority habitat (Traditional Orchard)

The updated ecological assessment must clearly outline which habitats are to be retained within the site, which are to be enhanced and any to be created to demonstrate no net loss of habitat functionality, providing detailed information on how these habitats will be managed or protected throughout the development process. Further information regarding how the proposed changes could potentially impact wildlife, taking into account both direct and indirect effects, must also be provided. Evidence demonstrating no net loss of local biodiversity resource and that the integrity of ecological networks must be submitted and reviewed by the LPA's ecology team prior to a planning permission being given.

CONDITIONS: these will be added once the issues above have been addressed

Final sign off – all matters addressed:

Ecologist	Date
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