

Wiltshire Council Planning Consultation Response

ECOLOGY

Officer name:	Abi Gazzard
Date:	18/08/2025
Application number:	PL/2025/06133
Proposal:	Demolish the modern extension to the south and lower the modern extension to the north to a single storey whilst restoring the historic core of the building, erection of a new wing to run parallel to the farmhouse, providing a new frontage to the building.
Site address:	Springbottom Farm, Wilsford cum Lake, Salisbury, SP4 7BY
Case officer:	Hayley Clark

Recommendations:

☐	No Comment
☐	Support
☐	No objection
☒	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 following submitted documentation was reviewed to inform this response:

- 'Preliminary Ecological Appraisal', Stark Ecology, 07/2025
- 'Existing Site & Location Plan', ML Architecture
- 'Proposed Site & Location Plan', ML Architecture
- 'Design and Access Statement', ML Architecture, 07/2025

The site comprises a detached, disused water-damaged farmhouse where it is proposed to restore the building involving an extension and demolition of some sections. The site also contains a garden and area of hardstanding, adjacent to a cluster of farm buildings, patches of woodland and agricultural fields.

Matters Considered:

Salisbury Plain Special Protection Area (SPA) 6.4km buffer

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 March 2025 Natural England (NE) confirmed that the 2024 strategic AA for Salisbury Plain SPA continues to be supported by NE.

River Avon Special Area of Conservation (SAC) Hampshire 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 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended). Given that technically there will be no net increase in overnight accommodation (the proposed works are not to add a new dwelling, but to restore an existing dwelling), it can be considered that there would be no overall mechanism for adverse effect. The HRA has concluded that the application is not likely to have significant impacts on the SAC and subsequently the application is screened out of Appropriate Assessment.

Other Protected Habitats and Species

Bats

Some of the roof has collapsed, leaving much of the loft space open and exposed. During the preliminary roost assessment (May 2025), no lifted, slipped or damaged roof slates were observed, nor were there any gaps at the ridges. Overall, the building was assessed as having low potential to support roosting bats. As such, one emergence survey was conducted in July 2025 in line with good practice guidelines. No bats were observed emerging from the building, and no further surveys will be required.

The habitat within and surrounding the site is suitable for roosting, foraging, and commuting bats, as demonstrated in the ecology report. Artificial light at night can have a substantial adverse effect on biodiversity. An increase in artificial lux levels can deter bats which could result in roost abandonment and/or the severance of key foraging areas. New lighting should therefore 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.

Amphibians and reptiles

The ecology report notes that the pond present on site is a derelict ornamental pond that no longer holds water, therefore, is unsuitable for use by great crested newts (GCN). There are no other ponds mapped within 500m of the site.

Within the garden, the grassland and scrub may provide some suitable habitat for reptiles. However, much of these vegetated areas are to be retained, and there is ample suitable habitat surrounding for reptiles to disperse into. Therefore, compliance with the precautionary measures outlined in the Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (including progressive mowing to gradually reduce the length and density of the vegetation on site) will be sufficient to ensure the risk posed to reptiles and amphibians is minimal.

Other

The site and surrounding areas are suitable for use by badgers. Although no evidence of badgers was found during the ecology survey, the report recommends some measures to be taken that will reduce the risk posed to badgers during construction works, if present.

Active swallow and wren nests were noted in the carport. As advised in the report, works should not take place that will harm nesting birds from March to August inclusive, as the adults, young, eggs and nests of all species of birds are protected by the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) while they are breeding.

Approximately 260m west of the site is a County Wildlife Site (Spring Bottom Bank), and 100m southwest is an area of deciduous woodland priority habitat. Parcels of calcareous grassland priority habitat have been recorded in the field to the north. Considering the scale of the development (the proposed footprint is not significantly greater than the existing) and habitats to be directly affected (primarily an existing building), it is considered unlikely that the proposal will adversely affect these protected and priority habitats.

In line with NPPF and with CP50, applications that do not fall into the category where Biodiversity Net Gain is required must still ensure that no net loss of functional habitat for the benefit of wildlife in the local area will occur as a result of the proposed development. In addition, gains for biodiversity, relevant to local habitats and wildlife populations, should form part of the proposed development. It is understood that the tree on site, as well as the connecting habitat within the wider property (e.g., the bordering trees and hedgerow), will be retained. However, there is opportunity for the site to provide gains for wildlife (such as bird and bat boxes) and such ecological enhancements, whether achieved via BNG or otherwise, should be secured via a condition.

Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG)

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).

I note that the applicant has submitted a biodiversity metric calculation. However, based on the information available the biodiversity gain planning condition is not considered to apply to this application as the application is for development which is subject of a householder application within the meaning of article 2(1) of the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 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.

CONDITIONS

Compliance with submitted documents

The development will be carried out in strict accordance with the following documents:

- The recommendations detailed on pages 17-19 of 'Preliminary Ecological Appraisal', Stark Ecology, 07/2025

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

Enhancements for Biodiversity

Prior to the commencement of any works, including vegetation removal and demolition, details of the number, design and locations of ecological enhancements – such as wildlife-friendly plantings, bat roosts and nesting opportunities for birds (e.g. bat and bird boxes) – shall be submitted to the local authority for approval. The approved details shall be implemented before occupation of the final works.

REASON: To provide mitigation/enhancement for biodiversity.

Lighting

No external light fixture or fitting will be installed within the application site unless details of existing and proposed new lighting have been submitted to and approved by the Local Planning Authority in writing. The submitted details will demonstrate how the proposed lighting will impact on bat habitat compared to the existing situation.

The plans will be in accordance with the appropriate Environmental Zone standards set out by the Institution of Lighting Professionals (ILP) Guidance Notes on the Avoidance of Obtrusive Light (GN 01/2021) and Guidance note GN08/23 "Bats and artificial lighting at night", issued by the Bat Conservation Trust and Institution of Lighting Professionals.

REASON: To avoid illumination of habitat used by bats and other wildlife.

INFORMATIVE – birds and the nesting season

The adults, young, eggs and nests of all species of birds are protected by the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) while they are breeding. Please be advised that works should not take place that will harm nesting birds from March to August inclusive. 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.

INFORMATIVE – bats

There is a low risk that roosting bats may occur in the farmhouse. 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	Date
Abi Gazzard	18/08/2025