

Wiltshire Council Planning Consultation Response

ECOLOGY

Officer name:	Abi Gazzard
Date:	04/12/2025
Application number:	PL/2025/08245
Proposal:	Alterations to the main house to link with outbuildings, creating additional living space. Includes restoration of the former barn for ancillary use, partial barn conversion to office, refurbishment of stables, and garage repairs. Also proposes a tennis court, swimming pool, and solar panels within the historic farmstead grounds
Site address:	Latimer Manor, West Kington, Chippenham, SN14 7JQ
Case officer:	Peter Crozier

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)
	Protected species – bats	Habitat Regulations, CP50	04/12/2025 Mitigation shown on enforceable plans	

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, aerial photography of the site and surrounding area, together with GIS layers of statutory and non-statutory designated sites and existing records of protected species.

Information considered:

- Ecological Assessment, Luscinia Ecology, October 2025
- Biodiversity Statement and Biodiversity Gain Plan, Luscinia Ecology, October 2025
- Statutory Biodiversity Metric, Jenn Senft, September 2025
- Planning, Design & Access Statement, LPC, October 2025

The site comprises a farmhouse and agricultural buildings, neighboured by an area of woodland to the north, and fields with trees to the southwest and southeast. The proposals include

alterations to the main house, creation of a pool and leisure area, solar panel installation, barn repairs, and barn conversion into offices/work spaces.

COMMENTS:

Protected species and habitats

Bats

There are 11 buildings on site. B1 and B2 were assessed as having high roosting potential. B4-B6 have moderate roosting potential, and B3 has no roosting potential, with no roof/void and no potential roosting features. B7-11 were not subject to a bat survey, as the works will either not impact these buildings, or are of minimal impact (e.g., internal works to the farmhouse, B11). The single tree within the site was not found to support any potential roost features.

Suitable emergence surveys were undertaken in line with the Bat Conservation Trust's Bat Survey Guidelines, and revealed the presence of one soprano pipistrelle day roost (B1), lesser horseshoe day/night roost (B2), serotine night roost (B2, with serotine droppings confirming presence), and common pipistrelle day roost (B2, B4, B5). The proposed development will result in the loss of these roosts. Under the Conservation of Species and Habitat Regulations 2017, 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 mitigation licence will be required before any work is undertaken to implement this planning permission.

The bat survey report recommends mitigation including a toolbox talk, a method statement to follow in the event that bats are found and pre-works inspections – **this should be adhered to, and secured via a planning condition**. The report also recommends compensatory roosts to comprise a bat loft, lifted tiles, bat box, and recreation of lost lintel features used as a roost currently. The replacement roosts are not currently shown on any plans, with details of specifications of features, and dimensions, materials and features of the bat loft, not provided. The proposed roosting opportunities must be shown on enforceable plans (e.g., site plan/technical elevations drawings). **As such, please can the applicant submit a separate plan showing the details and locations of all proposed bat roosting features?**

The bat survey report also recommends implementation of a sensitive lighting scheme. Given the proximity of the site to two core roost buffers for lesser horseshoe bats associated with the Bath and Bradford-on-Avon Bats SAC (400m south and 600m east), as well as the presence of lesser horseshoe bats on-site, I agree that there is risk of adverse impact from an increase in artificial lighting. **A lighting condition is therefore recommended to manage any residual risk to light-sensitive species.**

Great Crested Newts (GCN)

There is one pond immediately adjacent to the site's southeastern boundary, and three more within 500m. GCN were recorded in the pond adjacent to the site during the ecology walkover survey (photo 2 on page 32 of the Ecological Assessment). Whilst the pond will not be directly impacted by the works, the surrounding grassland likely provides habitat suitable for GCN during their terrestrial phase, and GCN may be present occasionally in the vegetated garden, and/or use features on-site for hibernating. However, none of these habitats will be removed, with the works primarily affecting existing buildings. Therefore, a licence will not be required to carry out these works, provided the reasonable avoidance measures detailed in Section 5 of the Ecological Assessment are strictly adhered to (hand searches by a licenced ecologist, dismantling of rubble piles by ecologist, staggered mowing regime for solar panel installation, etc.). **This should be secured via a condition.**

Other

There is some possibility that badgers, nesting birds, hedgehogs and reptiles could use the site and would be impacted by the construction works. However, adherence to the precautionary mitigation outlined in the Ecological Assessment will ensure the risk posed to these species remains minimal.

There are multiple County Wildlife Sites (CWSs) within the vicinity. Approximately 80m northwest is By Brook CWS, with Brook Farm Fields CWS and Latimer Lodge Slope CWS both 100m northwest of the site boundaries, containing calcareous grassland. To the west is Ebbdown Slope, ~260m away. The Ecological Assessment sets out measures that will control adverse impacts on surrounding habitats, such as measures to reduce dust, noise and light pollution. Therefore, subject to compliance to the mitigation outlined in the Ecological Assessment, the risk posed to nearby CWSs and other habitats is considered to be manageable.

In line with the NPPF and with CP50, applications must ensure that gains for biodiversity, relevant to local habitats and wildlife populations, should form part of the proposed development. The ecology report's recommendations of bird nest boxes, compost and log piles are welcomed.

Biodiversity enhancements should be secured via a condition.

Biodiversity Net Gain

Under Schedule 7A of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as inserted by Schedule 14 of the Environment Act 2021) this application is required to deliver 10% Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG). The Biodiversity Gain Plan condition will automatically apply if approval is forthcoming.

A completed statutory metric calculation (*Biodiversity Statement and Biodiversity Gain Plan, Luscinia Ecology, October 2025; Statutory Biodiversity Metric, Jenn Senft, September 2025*) stating the baseline and predicted post-development biodiversity units of the site has been submitted (including maps and condition assessment sheets).

Information in the completed on-site baseline habitat tabs is accepted as accurate based on the information submitted. The pre-development (baseline) situation is summarised below.

On-site pre-development (baseline) biodiversity value	1.14 Habitat units
	0.00 Hedgerow units
	0.00 Watercourse units
Are there any irreplaceable habitats on-site?	No
Has any habitat degradation of occurred?	No

Final confirmation of how the development will achieve BNG is a post-determination matter, however, consideration should be given to how any proposed BNG will be secured.

IN SUMMARY: Insufficient information has been submitted. 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. I therefore maintain a holding objection until all the issues listed above have been suitably addressed.

DRAFT CONDITIONS:

1. Compliance with submitted documents

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

- Chapter 5 (mitigation for bats, reasonable avoidance measures for GCN, and other precautions for nesting birds, badgers, reptiles and habitats) of the Ecological Assessment, Luscinia Ecology, October 2025
- **Plan showing bat mitigation – see consultation comments above.**

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

2. 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 wildlife-sensitive habitats, including habitat used by bats.

3. 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 nesting opportunities for birds and log piles – 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.

Sign off by WC Ecologist will only be given once ALL outstanding information has been submitted and agreed sufficient.

Ecologist	Date
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