

Wiltshire Council Planning Consultation Response

ECOLOGY

Officer name:	Abi Gazzard
Date:	08/12/2025
Application number:	PL/2025/08535
Proposal:	Proposed Wildlife Building
Site address:	Manor Farm, Wilcot, Pewsey, SN9 5NS
Case officer:	Lucy Rutter-Dowd

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, 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:

- Planning statement 'The Wildlife Building', Bryan J Pinchen
- Proposed Wildlife Building, Proposed 01, September 2025

General comments

The site comprises a grassland field/meadow, sometimes used by livestock. It is proposed to construct a 'wildlife building', primarily to provide a nesting site for barn owls, but also to offer features for other wildlife, including a hedgehog nest box, solitary bee and wasp posts, bat bricks and tiles, and bird nest bricks, cups and boxes. The proposed features are very much welcomed as they will provide long-lasting opportunities for wildlife locally.

The consideration for flight room (i.e., no internal trusses) and exclusion of livestock at fledging time is appropriate. Bat bricks (and other roosts) are generally recommended for installation at heights of 2m and above, however, it is acknowledged that different heights of features might favourably offer different microclimates, and the applicant's ecologist appears to have considered this, with alternative roosting provisions to be installed at greater heights (such as the bat tiles and cladding).

The application site is close to several ponds, the nearest being 60m from the proposed building footprint. There are no records of great crested newts or reptiles within the vicinity, though the applicant should be mindful that they could occur on site, and care should be taken to avoid potential adverse impacts. For example, the grassland to be lost should be maintained as short (it appears to be grazed) prior to the commencement of works, to deter use by reptiles or amphibians. Should protected species such as nesting birds, reptiles or amphibians, be encountered during the works, works should cease and the applicant should seek the advice of a suitably qualified ecologist immediately.

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, the potential impact of recreational pressure on stone curlew must be considered in combination with other plans and projects.

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 the scale and nature of the development (there will be no additional overnight accommodation created), there is no mechanism for adverse effect (i.e., no increase in recreational pressure). The HRA has concluded that the application is not likely to have significant impacts on Salisbury Plain SPA and subsequently the application is screened out of Appropriate Assessment.

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 the scale and nature of the development (there will be no additional overnight accommodation created), there is no mechanism for adverse effect (i.e., no increase in recreational pressure). 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.

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 development meets the following criteria and is therefore below the de minimis threshold, meaning the development:

- o does not impact an onsite priority habitat (a habitat specified in a list published under section 41 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006); and
- o impacts less than 25 square metres of onsite habitat that has biodiversity value greater than zero and less than 5 metres in length of onsite linear habitat (as defined in the statutory metric).

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:

1. Compliance with submitted documents

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

- Planning statement 'The Wildlife Building', Bryan J Pinchen
- Proposed Wildlife Building, Proposed 01, September 2025

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

INFORMATIVE

The applicant should note that under the terms of the Wildlife and Countryside Act (1981) and the Conservation of Habitats and Species 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.

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

Ecologist Abi Gazzard	Date 08/12/2025
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