

Wiltshire Council Planning Consultation Response

ECOLOGY

Officer name:	Abi Gazzard
Date:	08/12/2025, 16/01/2026
Application number:	PL/2025/08677
Proposal:	Part retrospective full application for change of use of an agricultural building and yard to storage (use class B8) and creation of an associated car park and soft landscaping.
Site address:	Salterton Down Buildings, High Post, Salisbury, SP4 6BG
Case officer:	Sarah Hill

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)
	BNG	Environment Act 2021	08/12/2025 The extent and type(s) of baseline habitat to be impacted (and clarification of where the retrospective works/change of use has occurred). If over 25m ² of habitats with biodiversity value >0 are to be impacted by the full planning permission, then a BNG metric will be required.	16/01/2026 YES See documents listed below.

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:

- Planning Statement, Atlas Planning Group, October 2025
- Proposed Block Plan and Location Plan
- [Proposed Site Plan, Salterton Buildings, uploaded 17/12/2025](#)
- [Resubmission cover letter, Atlas Planning Group, December 2025](#)
- Ecological Enhancement Plan, LDS, LDS/19956

The site comprises an agricultural building and yard. The wider site is surrounded by agricultural fields in all directions. The proposal seeks part retrospective permission for the change of use of part of an existing barn and a yard to 'storage', and the addition of a car park. The application is partly retrospective as areas of the yard are already being used for storage purposes.

Thank you for re-consulting Ecology. A cover letter has been provided to address the BNG comments below, as well as a plan of biodiversity enhancements. My updated comments (blue) are shown in the relevant sections below.

COMMENTS:

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). This concluded that since there is no proposal to create additional overnight accommodation, 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.

Protected species

The habitats to be affected appear to comprise a small area of hedgerow, scrub, cropland and hardstanding. It is not clear whether any clearance works have been undertaken, or will be undertaken.

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 (such as vegetation clearance or building demolition) from March to August inclusive. 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.

Given the scope of the proposal, the risk posed to other protected wildlife, such as reptiles, great crested newts and bats, is considered to be minimal. In line with the NPPF and 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. Therefore, it is recommended that biodiversity enhancements (e.g., bat or bird box, or wildlife-friendly plantings within the proposed soft landscaping) are secured via a planning condition.

One bat box and one bird box have been marked on an Ecological Enhancement Plan. The cover letter states that these will comprise a crevice-type woodcrete bat box, at least 3m from the ground and away from any light source. A bird box will be added to the western elevation of the existing barn away from machinery to reduce potential disturbance. Ideally, details of the design and specifications of each feature would be submitted, but, in this case, considering the scale of the proposal and details of the types of bat and bird boxes already provided, it is considered that sufficient information has been submitted. The enhancements are welcomed, and compliance with the Ecological Enhancement Plan and cover letter should be secured via a condition.

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). The applicant is seeking to apply the BNG exemption for retrospective planning permission made under section 73A. However, this application is only part-retrospective. As per the site plans and aerial imagery, an area of ~645m² (0.6ha), containing scrub and other vegetation, is proposed for soft landscaping. It is also not clear which areas of the yard are already used for storage (i.e., to which areas the retrospective permission would apply), and it appears that some habitat loss (of arable land and hedgerow) is proposed to accommodate this. Further clarification is needed regarding the type and extent of habitats to be impacted by the non-retrospective aspect of the plans.

Please see [Biodiversity net gain - GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk/biodiversity-net-gain) for full details about BNG as well as its exemptions.

The revised redline boundary now excludes areas of habitat (with a biodiversity value >0) to be impacted “non-retrospectively”. Therefore, based on the information available the biodiversity gain planning condition is not considered to apply to this application as (1) the planning application relates to development to which section 73A of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (planning permission for development already carried out) applies, and (2) the development meets the following criteria and is therefore below the de minimis threshold, meaning the development:

- 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
- 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. Enhancements for Biodiversity

~~Within six months of the granting of planning permission, plans showing the design and locations of ecological enhancements — such as bat and/or bird boxes or wildlife-friendly plantings — and including evidence of installation of said enhancements, shall be submitted to the local authority for approval.~~

~~REASON: To provide mitigation/enhancement for biodiversity.~~

~~**Note to Case Officer: It is acknowledged that this application is part-retrospective, and therefore a pre-commencement condition for securing biodiversity enhancements will not be possible. Please amend the suggested trigger above (“within six months”) as considered appropriate.**~~

1. Compliance with submitted documents

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

- Ecological Enhancement Plan, LDS, LDS/19956
- Resubmission cover letter, Atlas Planning Group, December 2025

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

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

Ecologist Abi Gazzard	Date 16/01/2026
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