

Wiltshire Council Planning Consultation Response

ECOLOGY

Officer name:	Abi Gazzard
Date:	04/02/2026
Application number:	PL/2025/09845
Proposal:	The partial deconstruction, extension, refurbishment and change of use of an unlisted former care home (C2) to 20no. Affordable Housing independent living apartments (C3) for older people, with communal facilities.
Site address:	Fives Court, Angel Lane, Mere, Warminster, BA12 6DH
Case officer:	Joe Richardson

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	04/02/2026 -Condition assessment sheets	

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:

- Design and Access Statement, one50studio, December 2025
- Site Plan Proposed, Revision P07, one50studio, November 2025
- Ecological Impact Assessment, ethos Environmental Planning, October 2024
- BNG Technical Note, ethos Environmental Planning, December 2025
- Statutory Biodiversity Metric, Anna Harrison, December 2025

The site comprises a large care home, garage and garden. It is proposed to redevelop the site into 20 independent living apartments. The works will include partial demolition and renovation. The site is located within a suburban area, with properties neighbouring to the east, north and south, and areas of grassland and trees to the west and further south.

COMMENTS:

Protected species and habitats

Date of surveys

A site survey was undertaken in March 2024, and bat emergence surveys in May-July 2024. As per CIEEM's (Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management) Advice Note ([Advice-Note.pdf](#)), referred to in the Government's standing advice on protected species and development, if data were collected over 18 months ago, the results may no longer be valid and an update may be required. In the current case (considering the relatively urban setting, roosting potential/species likely to be present, building condition and recent aerial imagery), the condition of the site is considered unlikely to have changed significantly, and the survey results remain valid. **Further survey work is likely to be required should the works commence more than 2 years after the date of the first bat emergence survey.**

Bats

The main building was found to have two potential roosting features and assessed as having moderate bat roosting potential. Similarly, the garage was of moderate potential. The third building – a storage building – and trees were assessed as having negligible potential to support roosting bats. As such, emergence surveys of the main building and garage were undertaken during May-July 2024. Five common pipistrelle emergence locations were identified (all individual pipistrelles, with the exception of the barge board where two common pipistrelles emerged).

The works are likely to disturb/destroy the common pipistrelle bat 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 the addition of ten integrated bat boxes, as well as measures such as a toolbox talk and soft strip. **Compliance with these recommendations should be secured via a condition.**

Other

The site is dominated by developed land (sealed surfaces) with some garden areas. The habitats are overall of relatively low value and unlikely to be of significance to other protected species. In any case, the ecology report recommends a number of precautionary measures, such as sensitive vegetation removal.

The site is close to some ecologically sensitive areas, such as the large ponds and watercourse 100m to the west, tree line bordering the grassland to the west, and County Wildlife Site (Long Hill and Castle Hill) 320m northwest. **As such, and given the scale of the works, a Construction Method Statement (CMS) should be prepared and adhered to, and secured via a planning condition.** The CMS should include details of precautions for habitats, bats, great crested newts, and other risks highlighting in the ecology report.

In line with the NPPF and with CP50, applications must 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. **Biodiversity enhancements, including new bat roosting opportunities, should be secured via a condition.** The report's recommendations of bat boxes, bird boxes (including swift bricks), and bee bricks are welcomed. The applicant is directed to the comment from Salisbury & Wilton Swifts which advises between 6-10 swift bricks should be incorporated into the development.

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 and map (BNG Technical Note, ethos Environmental Planning, December 2025; Statutory Biodiversity Metric, Anna Harrison, December 2025) stating the baseline and predicted post-development biodiversity units of the site have been submitted:

The pre-development (baseline) situation is summarised below.

On-site pre-development (baseline) biodiversity value	0.37 Habitat units
	0.05 Hedgerow units
	0.00 Watercourse units
Are there any irreplaceable habitats on-site?	No
Has any habitat degradation occurred?	No

The following issue must be addressed in the baseline prior to determination:

Condition assessments: The condition assessment sheets for the baseline habitats have not been submitted. This information is a minimum requirement set out in Article 7 of The Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015 and must therefore be submitted for review by the ecology team prior to determination.

DRAFT CONDITIONS:

1. Compliance with submitted documents

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

- Sections 6 and 7 of the Ecological Impact Assessment, ethos Environmental Planning, October 2024
- BNG Technical Note, ethos Environmental Planning, December 2025

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

2. Construction Method Statement

No development shall commence on site (including any vegetation removal, works to the roof or internal works) until a Construction Method Statement has been submitted to, and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The Construction Method Statement shall include measures for the protection of the natural environment, stating how adverse impacts upon habitats, bats, nesting birds, reptiles and amphibians and other species as relevant will be prevented during construction works. The development shall not be carried out otherwise than in accordance with the approved construction method statement.

REASON: To ensure adequate protection and mitigation for ecological receptors prior to and during construction, and that works are undertaken in line with current best practice and industry standards and are supervised by a suitably licensed and competent professional ecological consultant where applicable.

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 bat roosts and nesting opportunities for birds – shall be submitted to the local authority for approval. Development shall be carried out in strict accordance with the approved enhancement plan.

REASON: To provide mitigation/enhancement for biodiversity.

Informative – bats

The garage and main building at Fives Court are used as bat roosts. Under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended), 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. Future conversion of the roof space or replacing the roof could also breach this legislation and advice should be obtained from a professional bat ecologist before proceeding with work of this nature.

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

Ecologist Abi Gazzard	Date
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