

Wiltshire Council Planning Consultation Response

ECOLOGY

Officer name:	Jessica Cracknell
Date:	13/02/2026
Application Number:	PL/2025/08930
Proposal:	Change of use of an office/storage building (Building 1) and stable (Building 2) to short term holiday lets with associated external works.
Site Address:	The Old Quarry, Velley Hill, Gastard, SN13 9PU
Case Officer:	Lucie Turner

Recommendations:

☐	No Comment
☐	Support
☐	No objection
☒	Condition (no objection subject to conditions)
☐	Objection - further information required
☐	Objection in principle
☐	HRA.

Thank you for your consultation on the above application. I have reviewed the submitted documents against OS maps, aerial photographs of the site and surrounding area, together with GIS layers of statutory and non-statutory designated sites and existing records of protected species.

The following submitted documentation was reviewed to inform this response:

- Preliminary Ecological Appraisal Survey Report. 07 January 2026. Daniel Ahern Ecology. Doc Ref. 5728.3;
- Building 1 – Plans and Elevations – As Proposed. Project. 4528. Drawing No. 202. Rev. A;
- Building 2 – Plans and Elevations – As Proposed. Project. 4528. Drawing No. 203. Rev. A;
- Site Plan as Proposed. 23 October 2025. BBA Architects & Planners. Project No. 4528. Drawing No. 201;
- Site Plan as Existing. 10 November 2025. BBA Architects & Planners. Project No. 4528. Drawing No. 101;
- Building 1 – Plans and Elevations – As Existing. Project. 4528. Drawing No. 102;
- Building 2 – Plans and Elevations – As Existing. Project. 4528. Drawing No. 103.

The proposed site does not lie within or adjacent to any sites designated for conservation and there are no areas of significant ecological importance within a zone of influence, it is expected that minor adverse impacts could be suitably mitigated through an appropriate design scheme and timing of works.

Protected Species

The Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA) found that the stable building (building 2) holds negligible potential for roosting bats, and the office/store building (building 1) has moderate potential for roosting bats. Under the current proposals, works to the office/store building (building 1) will not impact areas of potential bat roosting, as identified within the PEA. Should plans change and works to the roof or potential roosting features be required, further surveys should be undertaken and the mitigation measures will need to be revised accordingly. The site is assessed to offering low suitability for foraging and commuting bats. The proposed change of use of an office/storage building and stable to short term holiday lets will not require the removal of vegetation considered to be functionally important for bat foraging or commuting. No new lighting has been proposed as part of the development and in the absence of such, together with retention of all

vegetation, it is very likely that the functionality of the habitats within the site and their availability to bats will not be adversely affected.

The habitat within the proposed development site and the surrounding area is suitable for roosting, foraging and commuting bats. An increase in artificial lux levels can deter bats which could result in roost abandonment and/or the severance of key foraging areas. This will likely result in a significant negative impact upon the health of bat populations across the region. Artificial light at night can have a substantial adverse effect on biodiversity. Any new lighting should 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. Suitable lighting to ensure dark foraging and commuting routes can be retained could be secured via condition.

Where possible, vegetation removal should be scheduled outside the bird breeding season (1st March–31st August) to avoid potential disturbance. If removal during this period is unavoidable, a pre-works nesting bird inspection must be conducted no more than two weeks before tree felling begins. 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.

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). 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:

- 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.

Core Policy 50

Core Policy 50 of the Wiltshire Core Strategy requires all development to demonstrate no net loss of biodiversity and to seek opportunities to enhance biodiversity. The NPPF also encourages applications to deliver measurable net gains (para 186 d).

CP50 and NPPF requires the inclusion of biodiversity enhancements. Ecological enhancements as stated within the Preliminary Ecological Appraisal are provided through the installation of a bird box, bat box and insect block. The location of the enhancements must be included in the site plan drawings and will become an enforceable part of the planning permission. Please see condition below.

CONDITIONS:

1. Compliance with submitted documents

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

- Preliminary Ecological Appraisal Survey Report. 07 January 2026. Daniel Ahern Ecology. Doc Ref. 5728.3.

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

2. Ecological Enhancements

Prior to the commencement of any works, including vegetation removal and demolition, details of the number, design and locations of 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.

3. 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.

INFORMATIVES:

Protected Species

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.

Final sign off – all matters addressed:

Ecologist	Date
Jessica Cracknell	13/02/2026