

Wiltshire Council Planning Consultation Response

ECOLOGY

Officer name:	Abi Gazzard
Date:	17/02/2026
Application number:	PL/2026/00119
Proposal:	Conversion of redundant farm buildings into a single dwelling
Site address:	Manor Farm, Rodbourne, Malmesbury, SN16 0EX
Case officer:	Audrey Lo

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:

- Design & Access Statement, Mathewson Waters, June 2025
- Proposed Site Plan Masterplan, Mathewson Waters, January 2025
- Protected Species Report, Pure Ecology, July 2025
- Statutory Biodiversity Metric, Dr Stephen Dangerfield, May 2025
- Biodiversity Net Gain Report, Malford Environmental Consulting, July 2025
- Proposed Elevations – Environmental Consultation, Mathewson Waters, May 2025

The site comprises 9 farm buildings. It is proposed to convert some of the buildings into a single dwelling, and demolish three (two pole barns and a steel-framed barn). The site is bordered by residential properties to the east and west, with woodland to the north, and grassland with hedgerow/trees to the south.

COMMENTS:

Protected species

Survey timings

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. In this case, surveys were undertaken between June-August 2024, between 18-20 months ago. It is considered unlikely that the conditions on site have altered significantly, but should there be any further delay to the proposal, update surveys will be required.

Bats

In 2016, Building 4 (the main barn) was found to be a confirmed roost for a low number of brown long-eared and soprano pipistrelle bats. A preliminary site survey undertaken in June 2024 also

found evidence of bats in Building 4 (20-30 droppings), with Buildings 1, 2, 5 and 6 also identified as having low bat roosting potential. Subsequently, three bat emergence surveys were undertaken in June-August 2024 of buildings 1, 2, and 4-6.

Building 4 was found to support an individual roosting lesser horseshoe bat, and low numbers of roosting brown long-eared and soprano pipistrelle bats. The bats were noted to be using internal features, such as a timber enclosure at the roof apex, and gaps at the ridge board.

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. As noted in the report, update surveys may be required to inform the licence application, but is considered unlikely that this would result in a change to the proposed mitigation.

The ecology report states that a dedicated bat loft will be constructed within Building 1, with features for crevice-dwelling species incorporated, and three bat boxes installed elsewhere on the site. The bat loft is to include two triangular baffles with squeeze boards, and an internal bat box. Bat boxes will also be installed externally on Buildings 1, 4 and 6. The location, dimensions and details of baffle boards, internal bat box and entrance point of the bat loft are shown in the “Proposed Elevations – Environmental Consultation” plan, which should be secured via a planning condition.

Great Crested Newts (GCN)

An eDNA survey of a pond 160m northwest of the site confirmed presence of GCN off-site, despite it being assessed to be of “poor” suitability for use by GCN. Most of the site comprises hardstanding and buildings, though there is a small area at the southeastern corner that contains grassland which could be used by amphibians during their terrestrial phase. This area of grassland is over 200m from the GCN pond, and is to be retained. Overall, the risk posed to GCN is considered to be low, but should any GCN be encountered prior to or during the works, works must cease and a professional ecologist must be contacted. As per the masterplan, vegetated areas (including hedgerow and scrub) will be increased on-site, likely improving opportunities for amphibians post-development.

Nesting birds

Evidence of nesting stock dove, house sparrow and pied wagtail was observed in Buildings 1,5 and 7. Six integrated swift bricks are proposed, as shown on the “Proposed Elevations – Environmental Consultation” plan, which is to be secured via a condition. House sparrow is also a declining species, and the applicant should consider incorporating house sparrow terraces.

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.

Biodiversity Net Gain

A completed statutory metric calculation, map and habitat condition assessments (*Statutory Biodiversity Metric, Dr Stephen Dangerfield, May 2025; Biodiversity Net Gain Report, Malford Environmental Consulting, July 2025*) confirming the baseline and predicted post-development biodiversity units of the site have been submitted.

It is noted that the site photographs show very small patches of ruderals or scrub, primarily within the footprints of the open barns, which haven't been captured within the BNG metric. Given that these minor areas are technically overlaid by buildings (as counted in the metric), the information in the completed on-site baseline habitat tabs is accepted as accurate. In any case, a relatively large on-site gain is proposed (0.15 habitat units [an 84% increase], and 0.5 hedgerow units). The pre-development (baseline) situation is summarised below.

On-site pre-development (baseline) biodiversity value	0.18 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

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.

CONDITIONS:

1. Compliance with submitted documents

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

- Section 6 of the Protected Species Report, Pure Ecology, July 2025
- Statutory Biodiversity Metric, Dr Stephen Dangerfield, May 2025
- Biodiversity Net Gain Report, Malford Environmental Consulting, July 2025
- Proposed Elevations – Environmental Consultation, Mathewson Waters, May 2025

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 sensitive 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.

Informative – Bats

The barn at Manor Farm is used as a bat roost. 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 European Protected Species Licence will be required before any work is undertaken to implement this planning permission. Future conversion of a roof space to living accommodation or replacing a 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 17/02/2026
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