

Wiltshire Council Planning Consultation Response

ECOLOGY

Officer name:	Abi Gazzard
Date:	18/02/2026
Application number:	PL/2026/00194
Proposal:	Demolition of existing dwelling and associated outbuildings and erection of a replacement dwelling; with associated parking, landscaping, private amenity space and access arrangements.
Site address:	Astra Cottage, Oare, Marlborough, SN8 4JA
Case officer:	Joe Leesam

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)
	Protected species	CP50, Habs Regs, NPPF	18/02/2026 Bats: -Clarification of trees to be removed, and roost assessments of said trees -Location and specifications of proposed integrated bat roost features shown on plans GCN and reptiles: -Clarification of habitats present and potential for use by GCN and reptiles -Mitigation as appropriate	

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:

- PRA Nesting Birds and Bat Activity Survey Report, ABR Ecology, August 2025
- Existing Site Plan, Milton Architects, January 2026

- Proposed Site Plan, Milton Architects, January 2026
- Proposed Elevations Sheet 1, Milton Architects, January 2026
- Proposed Elevations Sheet 2, Milton Architects, January 2026
- Design Statement, Milton Architects, January 2026

The site comprises a bungalow proposed for demolition and replacement. The site is neighboured by residential dwellings to the north and south, with grassland fields, patches of woodland and ponds within the 500m surrounding.

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 (i.e., there will be no net increase as the existing dwelling is to be replaced by 1 dwelling), 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

Bats

A preliminary roost assessment identified brown long-eared bat droppings in the bungalow and garage buildings. As such, three emergence surveys were undertaken between May-July 2025. No bats were recorded emerging from the building, but several species were noted to be making use of the wider site for foraging/commuting. 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. Given the evidence of roosting bats (via bat droppings), the applicant is advised that a mitigation licence will be required before any work is undertaken to implement this planning permission.

It appears that a number of trees will be removed to accommodate the proposal, as shown when comparing the Existing Site Plan to the Proposed Site Plan. However, no tree plan has been provided, and the ecology report does not provide any information about potential roosting features within said trees. **Further information is required regarding the potential roosting value of these trees (and any relevant mitigation) prior to the determination of the application.**

As per the ecology report, the proposed compensatory roosts will comprise four integrated woodstone bat boxes. This was confirmed at the pre-application stage to be considered proportionate to the level of impact, given that no bats were recorded entering or leaving the building, and that no loft void will be available in the new development in which to create a bat loft. **The integrated mitigation, however, must be shown on separate, enforceable plans.** [NB. The bat boxes shown on page 40 of the ecology report do not appear to align with current elevation schemes]

Great Crested Newts (GCN)

There is a pond 200m east and 317m west of the application site. As advised at the pre-application stage, there is potential for GCN to be present on site. However, the ecology report does not provide an assessment of potential impacts on GCN. **Further information is required to clarify the types of habitats present, and whether they provide any opportunities for GCN and other protected species such as reptiles.**

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 it is for self and Custom Build Development, meaning development which:

- consists of no more than 9 dwellings;
- is carried out on a site which has an area no larger than 0.5 hectares; and
- consists exclusively of dwellings which are self-build or custom housebuilding (as defined in section 1(A1) of the Self-build and Custom Housebuilding Act 2015), as indicated in the application form.

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.

Biodiversity enhancements

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. Further, gains for biodiversity, relevant to local habitats and wildlife populations, should form part of the proposed development. Details of enhancements should be shown on a biodiversity enhancement plan and implemented as approved, **to be secured via a condition.**

IN SUMMARY: Insufficient information has been submitted. In carrying out its statutory function, the LPA must be reasonably sure that the proposal will not result in significant adverse effects on protected species. The information outlined above must therefore be submitted and reviewed by the LPA's ecology team prior to determination of the application. I therefore maintain a holding objection until all the issues listed above have been suitably addressed.

CONDITIONS: wording to be provided once above issues addressed.

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

Ecologist	Date
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