

Wiltshire Council Planning Consultation Response

ECOLOGY

Officer name:	Abi Gazzard
Date:	18/02/2026
Application number:	PL/2026/00281
Proposal:	Erection of detached one bedroom building to be used for B&B and AirBNB purposes.
Site address:	The Oikos, 35 Hilperton Road, Trowbridge, BA14 7JD
Case officer:	Steven Vellance

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:

- Proposed Plans, SJF Planning & Design Services, December 2025
- Existing Site Plan, SJF Planning & Design Services, December 2025
- Proposed Site Plan, SJF Planning & Design Services, December 2025

The site comprises a detached property where it is proposed to construct a one-bedroom building in the existing garden, for use as a B&B. It is surrounded by residential properties to the north, south and west, with a care home to the east.

COMMENTS:

Bath & Bradford on Avon Special Area of Conservation (SAC) TWBMS Grey Zone

The application site is located within the grey zone of the Trowbridge & Westbury Bat Mitigation Strategy (TWBMS), which is associated with the Bath & Bradford on Avon Bats Special Area of Conservation (SAC), and therefore has potential to result in significant adverse impact on the special features of the SAC. The application must be considered under the Habitats Regulations.

The grey medium risk zone represents an area where new residential development is likely to result in increased recreational use of important woodland bat sites. In order to conclude the AA favourably, new residential development proposals for 49 dwellings or less within the grey hatched medium recreational risk zone will be expected to provide a financial contribution per dwelling towards the council's strategic recreational pressure mitigation scheme. However, in this case, the application is not for residential development, and represents a very small development of 1-bedroom guest accommodation.

A test of likely significance (screening assessment) has been carried out by Wiltshire Council as required under Regulation 63 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended) (also known as the Habitat Regulations). The site is already subject to disturbance from human activities (it falls within an existing residential property) and the proposals do not represent a significant increase in human disturbance in this area. The proposed building footprint is small (20.25m²), with no trees to be removed. As per recent aerial imagery, the area of the habitat to be impacted already comprises hardstanding, and loss of green habitat is unlikely. Therefore, the proposal is not considered likely to adversely affect roosting bats, or foraging or commuting habitat, and the principles of the TWBMS are not considered further. The application is screened out of Appropriate Assessment with respect to the Bath and Bradford-on-Avon Bat SAC.

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 the development meets the following criteria and is therefore below the de minimis threshold, meaning the development:

- o 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
- o 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.

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**.

CONDITIONS:

1. 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 bird and bat boxes – 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 – Artificial Lighting

The habitat within 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 GN08-18 "Bats and artificial lighting in the UK", issued by the Bat Conservation Trust and Institution of Lighting Professionals.

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

Ecologist Abi Gazzard	Date 18/02/2026
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