

Wiltshire Council Planning Consultation Response

ECOLOGY

Officer name:	Abi Gazzard
Date:	09/03/2026
Application number:	PL/2026/00453
Proposal:	<u>Technical details consent</u> for the erection of 4 no. dwellings together with associated ancillary works.
Site address:	Land adj. Filands Farm, Filands, Malmesbury, SN16 9JN
Case officer:	Hilary Quixley

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:

- Existing and Proposed Site Block Plan, Coombes Everitt Architects Ltd, November 2025
- Proposed Site Layout Plan, Coombes Everitt Architects Ltd, November 2025
- Design and Access Statement, Coombes Everitt Architects Ltd, December 2025
- Preliminary Ecological Appraisal, Cotswold Environmental, August 2025
- Habitats maps, existing and proposed, Cotswold Environmental, December 2025
- Statutory Biodiversity Net Gain Feasibility Assessment, Cotswold Environmental, December 2025
- Statutory Biodiversity Metric, Ben Livick, December 2025

The site comprises a section of a pastoral field, neighboured by further grassland fields to the east, north and west, and a road to the south. This application concerns the technical details of the proposal, following permission in principle (PL/2025/02543).

COMMENTS:

Protected species

Bats

There are four buildings onsite which will need to be removed to accommodate the proposal. No potential roosting features were identified internally or externally, and the buildings were assessed as having negligible bat roosting potential.

The habitats at the peripheries (hedgerow) and the surrounding area provide foraging and commuting opportunities for bats. As per the ecology report, any new lighting must be wildlife-sensitive and avoid illuminating boundary features.

Reptiles and amphibians

One pond was identified within 250m of the site, though it was dry at the time of survey (August 2025). In any case, the site's habitats are not likely to be of significant value to amphibians or reptiles, given the grassland is to be maintained as short, and is interspersed with hardstanding. The boundary hedgerow may be of some value, but is being retained. Precautionary working measures – as detailed in Section 4 of the ecology report – should be sufficient to ensure the risk posed to reptiles and amphibians remains minimal. Compliance with the report should therefore be secured via condition.

Nesting birds

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.

Other

No adverse impacts are anticipated on any other protected species. The site is 150m south of a river, with at least two patches of deciduous woodland within 370m (priority habitats). Whilst these habitats will not be directly impacted, it should be noted that 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, and gains for biodiversity, relevant to local habitats and wildlife populations, should form part of the development. The ecology report's recommendations of bird and bat boxes are welcomed. Biodiversity enhancements should be secured via a condition.

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, maps and condition assessments (*Statutory Biodiversity Net Gain Feasibility Assessment, Cotswold Environmental, December 2025; Statutory Biodiversity Metric, Ben Livick, December 2025*) stating the baseline and predicted post-development biodiversity units of the site has been submitted.

Information in the completed on-site baseline habitat tabs is accepted as accurate based on the information submitted. The pre-development (baseline) situation is summarised below.

On-site pre-development (baseline) biodiversity value	0.55 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

Final 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.

The submitted metric indicates that 0.28 biodiversity units are required to meet the 10% BNG requirement and that on-site BNG is not achievable. All land located outside the redline application boundary of the development site is considered off-site. All off-site biodiversity gains sites must be registered on the national biodiversity gains site register. Guidance on how to register a biodiversity gains site, and/or allocate off-site gains to your development (e.g., through the purchase of biodiversity units) can be found here: [Make off-site biodiversity gains as a developer - GOV.UK](#). In order for the Biodiversity Gain Plan condition to be discharged, all off-site gains must be shown on the Biodiversity Gain Plan as allocated to this development on the national biodiversity gains site register.

CONDITIONS:

1. Compliance with submitted documents

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

- Section 4 (Mitigation) of Preliminary Ecological Appraisal, Cotswold Environmental, August 2025
- Statutory Biodiversity Net Gain Feasibility Assessment, Cotswold Environmental, December 2025

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

2. 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 the type and locations of bird boxes and bat 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.

Informative – Artificial Lighting

The habitat within the proposed development site and the surrounding area is suitable for 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 09/03/2026
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