

Wiltshire Council Planning Consultation Response

ECOLOGY

Officer name:	Jessica Cracknell
Date:	18/03/2026
Application Number:	PL/2026/00940
Proposal:	Alterations and extensions to dwelling, replacement detached garage and oil tank, and alterations to boundary treatment (Retrospective)
Site Address:	17 Happy Land, Ashton Keynes, Swindon, SN6 6PN
Case Officer:	Brook Bishop

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 and Roost Assessment. 06 August 2025. Arbtech Consulting Ltd;
- Location and Site Block Plan. 23 February 2026. Spicer Architects. Drawing Ref. P/001. Rev. A;
- Proposed Elevations. 02 February 2026. Spicer Architects. Drawing Ref. P/201;
- Proposed Garage Elevations. 10 February 2026. Spicer Architects. Drawing Ref. P/202;
- Existing Elevations. September 2025. Spicer Architects. Drawing Ref. P/201;
- Existing Garage Elevations. 10 February 2026. Spicer Architects. Drawing Ref. P/202;
- Design and Access Statement. February 2026. Spicer Architects.

North Meadow and Clattinger Farm Special Area of Conservation (SAC)

The development lies within the inner zone of influence (0-4.2km) for the North Meadow National Nature Reserve (NNR)/Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) component of North Meadow and Clattinger Farm SAC, notified as an exceptional example of lowland meadow with a very high proportion of the surviving UK population of snake's head fritillary. The development is screened into Appropriate Assessment under the Habitat Regulations 2017 (as amended) on account of its potential to cause adverse effects through increased recreational pressure, which may occur alone or in-combination with other plans and projects.

A test of likely significance has been carried out by the relevant Competent Authority (Wiltshire Council) as required by Regulation 63 Conservation of Habitats and Species (Amendment) (EU Exit) Regulations 2019. This concluded that given the scale and nature of the development there is no mechanism for adverse effect/any temporary construction impacts and operational impacts would be de-minimus. The Habitat Regulation Assessment (HRA) has concluded that the application will not result in any mechanism for adverse effect on the conservation objectives of the SAC and subsequently is screened out of Appropriate Assessment.

Protected Species

The Preliminary Ecological Appraisal and Roost Assessment confirms that the existing buildings were assessed as having negligible potential to support roosting bats. The site is assessed to offering limited suitability for foraging and commuting bats. The alterations and extensions to dwelling 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, it is very likely that the functionality of habitats 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. 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.

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 vegetation clearance 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.

A Natural England Rapid risk assessment returned a result of 'offence highly unlikely' for GCN. Habitats on site are proposed to be retained as part of the development and the probability of GCN that will be affected as part of the development is considered low. There remains potential for amphibians to be present and a precautionary working method statement is provided within the Preliminary Ecological Appraisal and Roost Assessment which is welcomed and will be secured by condition.

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 application is for development which is subject of a householder application within the meaning of article 2(1) of the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015.

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). The Preliminary Ecological Appraisal and Roost Assessment recommends the inclusion of a bat and bird box. The locations of these features must be provided on site plan/elevation drawings and will become an enforceable part of the planning permission. Bird/bat boxes will continue to be available for birds/bats for the lifetime of the development. 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 and Roost Assessment. 06 August 2025. Arbtech Consulting Ltd.

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 opportunities for bats and 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.

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	18/03/2026