

Wiltshire Council Planning Consultation Response

ECOLOGY

Officer name:	Abi Gazzard
Date:	23/03/2026
Application number:	PL/2026/01374
Proposal:	Change of Use, repair works and upgrades to the existing building to provide a Class E use (Commercial, Business and Service) for a future tenant.
Site address:	The Weighbridge , Old Road , Chippenham, SN15 1JA
Case officer:	Rose Fox

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 and Heritage Statement, BBA Architects & Planners, August 2025
- External Condition Survey, BBA Architects & Planners, October 2025
- Proposed Elevations, BBA Architects & Planners, October 2025
- Ecological Impact Assessment, Ethos, December 2025

The site comprises a historic two-storey building with a weighbridge, in an urban centre and adjacent to Chippenham Railway Station. It is proposed to repair the building for use as a Class E (commercial, business and service) premise. The repair works and alterations will include re-roofing, repairs to trusses and frames, new flooring and insulation.

COMMENTS:

Protected species

Bats

No evidence of bats was found during the preliminary roost assessment. However, several features potentially suitable for roosting bats were identified, and the building was initially assessed as having moderate roosting potential. A single emergence survey was undertaken in August 2025, during which no bats were recorded roosting, nor commuting or foraging in the surrounding area. High levels of artificial lighting were noted, with all elevations of the building lit. As such, the building was 'downgraded' to an assessment of low roosting potential, and no further survey required, in line with best practice guidelines.

Overall, the works are considered unlikely to adversely impact bats.

Nesting birds

The ecologist observed some gaps suitable for access by 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

The proposal is not likely to impact any other protected wildlife.

In line with the NPPF and with CP50, applications must ensure that gains for biodiversity, relevant to local habitats and wildlife populations, should form part of the proposed development. Biodiversity enhancements (such as wildlife-friendly plantings, bird boxes or invertebrate bricks) should be secured via a condition. Bat boxes are not advisable in this case, given the low suitability of the site in general.

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.

CONDITIONS:

1. Compliance with submitted documents

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

- Section 6 of Ecological Impact Assessment, Ethos, 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 demolition, details of the number, design and locations of ecological enhancements 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.

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

Ecologist Abi Gazzard	Date 23/03/2026
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