

Wiltshire Council Planning Consultation Response

ECOLOGY

Officer name:	Abi Gazzard
Date:	24/03/2026
Application number:	PL/2026/00914
Proposal:	Proposed new dwelling set within the existing boundaries of 65 Longcroft Road and involves the removal of the existing porch on No. 65
Site address:	65 Longcroft Road, Devizes, SN10 3AX
Case officer:	David Cox

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 Statement revised March 2026
- Preliminary Ecological Appraisal, Johns Associates, March 2026
- Preliminary Ecological Appraisal, Johns Associates, February 2026

The site comprises a semi-detached dwelling where it is proposed to construct a detached dwelling within the existing curtilage. This will involve the demolition of a porch on the existing property.

COMMENTS:

Salisbury Plain Special Protection Area (SPA) 6.4km buffer

This application lies within the 6.4km zone of influence of the Salisbury Plain SPA and in light of the HRA for the Wiltshire Core Strategy and the HRA for the Wiltshire Housing Site Allocations Plan it is screened into Appropriate Assessment due to the potential impact of recreational pressure on stone curlew in combination with other plans and projects.

A strategic Appropriate Assessment (AA) has been prepared pertaining to development within the 6.4km zone of influence that could result in a likely significant effect on the SPA as a result of an increase in recreational / visitor pressure. The AA reached a conclusion of no adverse effects on the integrity of the SPA or its qualifying features provided that the council's mitigation strategy continues to be implemented. Annual stone curlew monitoring and protection measures continue to be secured by the Council.

In January 2026 Natural England (NE) confirmed that the 2026 strategic AA for Salisbury Plain SPA continues to be supported by NE.

Protected species

The site contains habitat of minimal value to foraging/commuting bats, amphibians, reptiles, nesting birds and badgers (hardstanding, buildings, mown lawn, hardstanding and sparsely vegetated land). The building was subject to a preliminary bat roost assessment, and described as having “negligible-low” bat roosting potential. However, old bat droppings (confirmed via DNA analysis as belonging to brown long-eared bats) were observed internally, therefore the house has been used by roosting bats and definitively cannot be described as having “negligible” roosting potential as it is a confirmed roost. Multiple potential roosting features were noted, including gaps under the flashing, tiles and mortar.

A revised ecology report omits photos included in the initial report, which showed gaps under the end roof tiles on the porch extension, and had recommended further bat survey. However, further communication from the ecologist has confirmed that the droppings were not observed in the northwest loft void (connecting to the porch), and that there are no access points between the porch and said void. The porch – to be demolished – is single-storey, neighboured by another building to the north, and subject to disturbance and light spill from the street light opposite. It also appears to be hung with LED light strips at the eaves.

The revised report suggests that precautionary mitigation will be sufficient in place of further survey work. This would include a toolbox talk and supervision of the works by an ecologist. Considering the site’s urban setting, scale of the works and features to be impacted (porch only), it is highly unlikely that a roost of conservation significance could be present, and I agree that the precautionary measures are proportionate to the works in this case. However, should any species of bat, or signs of bats, be found within the porch area, all works must cease and a licence may be required before works can proceed. **Compliance with the precautionary measures outlined in the report must be secured via condition.**

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. The ecology report’s recommendations of a bat box is welcomed, though there is opportunity for further enhancement such as by providing an invertebrate brick, bird box, hedgehog nest box, wildlife-friendly plantings, etc. **Biodiversity enhancements should be secured via a 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 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 Design and Access Statement

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 document:

- Section 4 of Preliminary Ecological Appraisal, Johns Associates, March 2026

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 nesting opportunities for birds and roosting opportunities for bats – 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 – Roosting Bats

There is a low risk that bats may occur in the porch extension. Many species of bat depend on buildings for roosting, with each having its own preferred type of roost. Most species roost in crevices such as under ridge tiles, behind roofing felt or in cavity walls and are therefore not often seen in the roof space. Bat roosts are protected all times by the Conservation of Habitats and Species 2017 (as amended) even when bats are temporarily absent because, being creatures of habit, they usually return to the same roost site every year. Planning permission for development does not provide a defence against prosecution under this legislation or substitute for the need to obtain a bat licence if an offence is likely. If bats or evidence of bats is found during the works, the applicant is advised to stop work and follow advice from an independent ecologist.

Informative – Artificial Lighting

The habitat within the proposed development site and the surrounding area is suitable for roosting 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 24/03/2026
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