

## Wiltshire Council Planning Consultation Response

### ECOLOGY

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| <b>Officer name:</b>       | Abi Gazzard                                                                       |
| <b>Date:</b>               | 25/03/2026                                                                        |
| <b>Application number:</b> | PL/2025/09767                                                                     |
| <b>Proposal:</b>           | Outline: The construction of a self-build dwelling and associated infrastructure. |
| <b>Site address:</b>       | The Lodge, Summers Lane, Broad Hinton, Swindon, SN4 9PA                           |
| <b>Case officer:</b>       | Hilary Quixley                                                                    |

### Recommendations:

|                                     |                                                |
|-------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/>            | No Comment                                     |
| <input type="checkbox"/>            | Support                                        |
| <input type="checkbox"/>            | No objection                                   |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Condition (no objection subject to conditions) |
| <input type="checkbox"/>            | Objection - further information required       |
| <input type="checkbox"/>            | Objection in principle                         |
| <input type="checkbox"/>            | 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:

- Preliminary Ecological Appraisal and Roost Assessment, Arbtech, November 2025
- Site Layout Plan (Proposed), Mark Doodes Planning, December 2025
- Location Plan (Proposed), Mark Doodes Planning, December 2025
- Letter from Wiltshire Badger Group

The site comprises land to the rear of an existing dwelling, where it is proposed to construct a new dwelling. The site contains scrub, trees, hedgerow and grassland, and is surrounded by agricultural land to the north, east and south.

### COMMENTS:

#### Protected wildlife

The bramble scrub that had encroached the site was cleared prior to the ecology survey (November 2025). This may have been of some value to reptiles, but, given the site's surroundings (arable, with no ponds within 250m), it is considered unlikely that the site provided significant opportunities for herpetofauna.

All trees were assessed as being unsuitable for use by roosting bats. However, the site likely provides some bat foraging and commuting habitat. The boundary trees and hedgerow will largely be retained (bar an access point), ensuring commuting routes remain functional. Subject to comments from the Arboricultural Officer, a tree protection plan may be required. From an ecological perspective, it is advised that a Construction Method Statement (CMS) is secured via condition, to include details of measures that will ensure trees and hedgerows are protected during the construction phase.

The CMS should also include details of precautionary measures for badgers. This is because a disused sett was identified on site, as well as snuffle holes, and badger remains. The two disused sett entrances (one partially collapsed) fall within an area set back from the proposed dwelling. Under the Protection of Badgers Act 1992, it is an offence to harm badgers or damage or destroy their setts or disturb badgers within their setts. Planning permission for development does not provide a defence against prosecution under these legislations. If evidence of an active badger sett is found before or during the works, the applicant is advised to stop work and seek advice from an independent ecologist.

It is advised that no heavy machinery is used in this section of the garden, and that pre-commencement checks for signs of badgers are undertaken, as new badger holes can be created in a short space of time. Details of how these sett entrances will be checked (and protected, if necessary), must be included in the CMS. The CMS must also include measures to be taken during the construction phase that will minimise the risk posed to badgers, e.g., the covering of any excavations left overnight (or provision of a ramp for wildlife).

In line with the NPPF and with CP50, gains for biodiversity, relevant to local habitats and wildlife populations, should form part of the proposed development. The ecology report recommends the addition of bee bricks, native wildflowers, deadwood piles, bat boxes and bird boxes. **These ecological enhancements should be included within an ecological enhancement plan, to be secured via a planning 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 self and Custom Build Development, meaning development which:

- o consists of no more than 9 dwellings;
- o is carried out on a site which has an area no larger than 0.5 hectares; and
- o 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).

*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. Construction Method Statement**

No development shall commence on site (including any vegetation removal, works to the roof or internal works) until a Construction Method Statement has been submitted to, and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The Construction Method Statement shall include measures for the protection of the natural environment, stating how adverse impacts upon habitats, badgers, nesting birds and other species, as relevant, will be prevented during construction works. The development shall not be carried out otherwise than in accordance with the approved construction method statement.

**REASON:** To ensure adequate protection and mitigation for ecological receptors prior to and during construction, and that works are undertaken in line with current best practice and industry standards and are supervised by a suitably licensed and competent professional ecological consultant where applicable.

## **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 – 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.**

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|---------------------------------|---------------------------|
| <b>Ecologist</b><br>Abi Gazzard | <b>Date</b><br>25/03/2026 |
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