

Wiltshire Council Planning Consultation Response

ECOLOGY

Officer name:	Abi Gazzard
Date:	30/03/2026
Application number:	PL/2026/01225
Proposal:	Erection of link extension between plot 2 and 3 with a cantilevered plunge pool set on the roof
Site address:	Hesdin Estate, Thoulstone, Chapmanslade
Case officer:	Alex Edge

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:

- Planning Statement, Squares Planning, February 2026
- Proposed Site Layout, Blockworks, December 2020, revision E
- Site Layout – As Consented, Blockworks, December 2020, revision B

General comments

The site comprises three dwellings currently under construction, with hardstanding set between them. It is proposed to add a link extension and pool between two of the dwellings. The site was formerly occupied by a barn. This application follows permission to demolish said barn and construct the three dwellings (PL/2021/06497) to be used as holiday lets (PL/2024/09973). The current proposal does not appear to conflict with any mitigation previously agreed for these applications [NB. it is unclear if any was indeed agreed for the current site], or the wider development (19/10721/FUL) [bats and birds]. However, it is noted that there will be a loss of greenspace proposed under PL/2021/06497, between the two buildings where the extension is proposed. Further, additional paving/patio is shown on the plans as connecting each building, resulting in a further reduction of proposed green habitat.

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). The applicant is seeking apply the de minimis exemption, whereby development does not impact an onsite priority habitat *and* 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). This is because the proposal impacts an area of land previously comprising an agricultural barn.

The [Levelling Up and Regeneration Act 2023](#) makes clear that for any authorised works (e.g., PL/2021/06497) undertaken after the 25 August 2023, the current pre-development biodiversity value of the onsite habitat must be biodiversity value immediately before the carrying out of such works. Therefore, if the works associated with PL/2021/06497 commenced after August 2023, the pre-development baseline would be taken as the previous habitats: a barn/building (0 biodiversity units). If the works commenced prior to August 2023, then the pre-development baseline would be taken as the current habitats present, which, as per site photographs, appear to comprise hardstanding and the three dwellings (0 biodiversity units).

I am therefore satisfied that, in either scenario, the development is below the de minimis threshold, and the BNG condition does not apply to this application.

Biodiversity enhancements

Notwithstanding the BNG exemption, it is recognised that the proposals will result in a loss of some of the greenspace agreed under PL/2021/06497 (potentially vegetated garden). In line with NPPF and with CP50, applications that do not fall into the category where BNG is required must still 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. In addition, gains for biodiversity, relevant to local habitats and wildlife populations, should form part of the proposed development. As such, ecological enhancements should be secured via a condition. These should include wildlife-friendly plantings, as well as features such as bat or bird boxes, or invertebrate bricks.

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 potential impact of recreational pressure on stone curlew, in combination with other plans and projects, must be considered.

A test of likely significance has been carried out by the relevant Competent Authority (Wiltshire Council) as required by Regulation 63 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended). This concluded that given the scale and nature of the development (there will be no new overnight accommodation created), there is no mechanism for adverse effect, and any temporary construction impacts and operational impacts would be de-minimis. The HRA has concluded that the application is not likely to have significant impacts on Salisbury Plain SPA and subsequently the application is screened out of Appropriate Assessment.

Bath and Bradford-on-Avon Bats Special Area for Conservation (SAC)

The site is located at the edge of a Lesser Horseshoe core roost buffer (consultation zone) associated with the Bath and Bradford-on-Avon SAC. The current proposal therefore has potential to result in significant adverse impact on the special features of the Bath and Bradford-on-Avon SAC.

A test of likely significance has been carried out by the relevant Competent Authority (Wiltshire Council) as required by Regulation 63 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended). This concluded that given the scale and nature of the currently proposed development which (i) involves no overall loss of a roost of a qualifying species, (ii) does not propose removal of any vegetation, and (iii) does not propose any additional external lighting, there is no mechanism for adverse impact on the Conservation Objectives of the SAC, and the proposal can be screened out of Appropriate Assessment.

CONDITIONS:

1. 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 – including wildlife-friendly

plantings – 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 30/03/2026
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