

Wiltshire Council Planning Consultation Response

ECOLOGY

Officer name:	Abi Gazzard
Date:	31/03/2026
Application number:	PL/2026/00920
Proposal:	Proposed natural wildlife pond with ancillary recreational swimming
Site address:	Hinton House, 13 Hinton Lane, Great Hinton, Trowbridge, BA14 6BS
Case officer:	Verity Giles-Franklin

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:

- Ecological Assessment, Brakes Ecology, February 2026
- Small Sites Metric (Statutory Biodiversity Metric), Craig Brakes, March 2026
- Pool Floor Plan, 3Eko Architectural Design Ltd, February 2026

The site comprises a paddock, which extends into a lawned garden, where it is proposed to create a natural swimming pond.

COMMENTS:

Bath & Bradford on Avon Special Area of Conservation (SAC)

TWBMS Grey Zone

The application site is located just within the boundary of the grey zone of the Trowbridge & Westbury Bat Mitigation Strategy (TWBMS), as well as a Greater Horseshoe core roost buffer associated with the Bath & Bradford on Avon Bats Special Area of Conservation (SAC), and therefore has potential to result in significant adverse impact on the special features of the SAC. The application must be considered under the Habitats Regulations.

The grey medium risk zone represents an area where new residential development is likely to result in increased recreational use of important woodland bat sites. In order to conclude the AA favourably, new residential development proposals for 49 dwellings or less within the grey hatched medium recreational risk zone will be expected to provide a financial contribution per dwelling towards the council's strategic recreational pressure mitigation scheme. This application is not for residential development, and therefore, a financial contribution is not required.

A test of likely significance (screening assessment) has been carried out by Wiltshire Council as required under Regulation 63 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended) (also known as the Habitat Regulations). The proposal is not considered likely to

significantly adversely affect roosting bats, or foraging or commuting habitat, and the principles of the TWBMS are not considered further. The application is screened out of Appropriate Assessment with respect to the Bath and Bradford-on-Avon Bat SAC.

Protected species

As per the plans, the works will not require the removal of any trees, though a very small area of box hedge may be removed. This hedge is suffering from box blight and is of low ecological value. Nonetheless, it should be noted that 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.

During the preliminary roost assessment, no trees with potential bat roosting features were recorded. There are no buildings that will be impacted by the works. Further, the habitats to be affected (mown lawn and box hedge) are of limited value to great crested newts, reptiles, and other protected wildlife.

Overall, the proposed creation of a natural pond will enhance the site for wildlife, relative to the current situation.

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).

A completed small sites statutory metric (Ecological Assessment, Brakes Ecology, February 2026) confirming the baseline units of the site has been submitted. The pre-development (baseline) situation is summarised below.

On-site pre-development (baseline) biodiversity value	2.03 Habitat units
	0.00 Hedgerow units
	0.00 Watercourse units
Are there any irreplaceable habitats on-site?	No
Has any habitat degradation of occurred?	No

Confirmation of how the development will achieve BNG is a post-determination matter however consideration should be given to how any proposed BNG will be secured. It is anticipated that the creation of the pond will generate ample biodiversity units.

CONDITIONS:

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.

Ecologist Abi Gazzard	Date 31/03/2026
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