

Wiltshire Council Planning Consultation Response

ECOLOGY

Officer name:	Abi Gazzard
Date:	01/04/2026
Application number:	PL/2026/01499
Proposal:	Creation of 1No dwelling
Site address:	Barn at Piccadilly House, Folly Lane West, Lacock, Chippenham, SN15 2LP
Case officer:	Jonathan James

Recommendations:

☐	No Comment
☐	Support
☐	No objection
☒	Condition (no objection subject to conditions)
☐	Objection - further information required
☐	Objection in principle
☐	HRA completed

Further Information Required:

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:

- Cover letter, LPC, March 2026
- Proposed Site Plan, Artel31, March 2026
- Site photos

The site comprises a former agricultural building with permission for conversion to two dwellings (PL/2024/09383). The current proposal seeks to create one dwelling instead of two.

COMMENTS:

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

The northern half of the site, containing the building, lies within a core roost buffer for Bechstein's bats associated with the Bath and Bradford-on-Avon Bats SAC, and therefore may have potential to result in significant adverse impact on the special features of that site. Appropriate Assessment (AA) under Section 63 of the Habitats Regulations must be carried out by the relevant Competent Authority (the LPA) to determine the potential significant effects and the suitability of any measures proposed to avoid or mitigate those effects.

The existing building comprises a single-storey structure, is partially open (with missing windows and doors) and has no enclosed roof void. The roof is a corrugated metal pitched roof, and the walls are timber-clad. This building is not likely to offer any suitable roosting features for Bechstein's bats, which are most strongly associated with roosts in woodlands and trees. Further, there will be no loss of foraging or commuting habitat. Therefore, it is my view that there is no mechanism for adverse effect on Annex II bats and therefore on the Conservation Objectives of the SAC. The application can be screened out of Appropriate Assessment.

Other species

The building is not likely to offer significant opportunities for other species of roosting bats. It experiences significant light spill (with windows across each elevation) and is open to the elements (missing doorways). Although gaps under cladding can be used by crevice-dwelling species, the photos show that the cladding is generally in good condition, with much of it obstructed by a fence line to the east, as well as falling beneath large extents of glazing. The unobstructed cladding is low in height, which does not align well with the general height of entry requirement for roosting bats. Overall, given the size and condition of the building, very low likelihood of presence, and retention of much of the cladding, as well as existing planning permission, it is considered disproportionate to request a bat survey.

Under the Conservation of Species and Habitat Regulations 2017, it is an offence to harm or disturb bats or damage or destroy their roosts. Planning permission for development does not provide a defence against prosecution under this legislation. If bats, or evidence of bats, is found during the works, all works must cease immediately and an ecologist contacted for further advice.

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 GN08-23 "Bats and artificial lighting at night", issued by the Bat Conservation Trust and Institution of Lighting Professionals.

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, whether achieved via BNG or otherwise, 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) requiring applications to deliver 10% BNG unless exempt. 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:

- 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
- 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. Ecological enhancements

Prior to the commencement of any works, including vegetation removal and demolition, details of the number, design and locations of bat roosts and nesting opportunities for birds (e.g. bat and

bird boxes) 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 – protected species

The applicant should note that under the terms of the Wildlife and Countryside Act (1981) and the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended) it is an offence to disturb or harm any protected species including for example, breeding birds and bats. The protection offered to some species such as bats, extends beyond the individual animals to the places they use for shelter or resting. Please note that this consent does not override the statutory protection afforded to any such species. In the event that your proposals could potentially affect a protected species you should seek the advice of a suitably qualified and experienced ecologist and consider the need for a licence from Natural England prior to commencing works. Please see Natural England's website for further information on protected species.

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

Ecologist Abi Gazzard	Date 01/04/2026
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