

Wiltshire Council Planning Consultation Response

ECOLOGY

Officer name:	Abi Gazzard
Date:	02/04/2026
Application number:	PL/2025/09574
Proposal:	Small Granary - Remove roof coverings and timber cladding to allow further investigation allowing repairs to timber structure
Site address:	Countess Farm, Countess Road, Amesbury, Salisbury, SP4 7AS
Case officer:	Andrew Minting

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:

- Stage II Bat Surveys, Greena Ecological Consultancy
- Proposed Bat Boxes, National Trust, December 2025
- Method Statement, National Trust

The site comprises a granary building proposed for repair works including the removal of cladding for structural inspections, and removal of roofing battens. Another building within the wider site has recently been subject to an application for re-thatching, and was found to be used by Pipistrelle bats (PL/2025/07524).

COMMENTS:

River Avon Special Area of Conservation (SAC) Hampshire Catchment

This development falls within the catchment of the River Avon SAC and has potential to cause adverse effects alone or in combination with other developments through discharge of phosphorus in wastewater. Appropriate Assessment 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.

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 since there is no proposal to create additional overnight accommodation, there would be no overall mechanism for adverse effect. The HRA has concluded that the application is not likely to have significant impacts on the SAC and subsequently the application is screened out of Appropriate Assessment.

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 additional overnight accommodation created), there is no mechanism for adverse effect. 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.

Bats

A preliminary bat roost assessment in April 2025 found no signs of bats externally, but a number of potential roosting features, such as gaps under the cladding and cracks in brick work. The building was assessed as having moderate bat roosting potential. Subsequently, two bat emergence surveys were conducted in September-October 2025. A maximum of four individual bats were recorded emerging from the building, including Soprano Pipistrelle, Common Pipistrelle and Brown Long-eared bats.

Typically, surveys of a building of “moderate” roosting potential should be conducted between May-September, with at least one in August, as per the Bat Conservation Trust’s Bat Survey Guidelines. On the balance of evidence, however, the two surveys are considered adequate in this case, because:

- The surveys were undertaken during the most recent survey ‘year’ and are not outdated
- The surveys were conducted on nights with appropriate weather conditions, including starting and ending temperatures above 10 degrees Celsius, and low wind speeds
- A low number of common species were recorded, and given the site’s location and roosting potential, it is not likely that the building hosts rarer bats or roosts of greater conservation significance
- A further survey may potentially be needed for the licence application, but appropriate mitigation for the types of roosts and bats present can be secured.

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. The applicant is advised that a mitigation licence will be required before any work is undertaken to implement this planning permission. The bat survey report recommends the addition of at least three bat boxes, as well as measures such as presence of an ecologist during works that will impact the roosts. These are marked on a ‘Proposed Bat Boxes’ plan. **Compliance with these recommendations should be secured via a condition.**

Please note, the mitigation/enhancements required for the adjacent application (PL/2025/07524) must not comprise the mitigation proposed for the current application.

In line with the NPPF and with CP50, applications must 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. Given the presence of roosting bats and the surrounding suitable habitats, **a lighting condition has been recommended to manage any residual risk to light-sensitive species.**

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 development meets the following criteria and is therefore below the de minimis threshold, meaning the development:

- o 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
- o 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. Compliance with submitted documents

The development will be carried out in strict accordance with the following document:

- Stage II Bat Surveys, Greena Ecological Consultancy
- Proposed Bat Boxes, National Trust, December 2025

REASON: For the avoidance of doubt and for the protection, mitigation and enhancement of biodiversity.

2. Lighting

No external light fixture or fitting will be installed within the application site unless details of existing and proposed new lighting have been submitted to and approved by the Local Planning Authority in writing. The submitted details will demonstrate how the proposed lighting will impact on bat habitat compared to the existing situation. The plans will be in accordance with the appropriate Environmental Zone standards set out by the Institution of Lighting Professionals (ILP) Guidance Notes on the Avoidance of Obtrusive Light (GN 01/2021) and Guidance note GN08/23 "Bats and artificial lighting at night", issued by the Bat Conservation Trust and Institution of Lighting Professionals.

REASON: To avoid illumination of habitat used by bats and other wildlife.

Informative – bats

The granary at Countess Farm is used as a bat roost. Under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended), 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. The applicant is advised that a mitigation licence will be required before any work is undertaken to implement this planning permission. Future works to the building could also breach this legislation and advice should be obtained from a professional bat ecologist before proceeding with work of this nature.

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

Ecologist Abi Gazzard	Date 02/04/2026
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