

Wiltshire Council Planning Consultation Response

ECOLOGY

Officer name:	Abi Gazzard
Date:	20/04/2026
Application number:	PL/2026/01346
Proposal:	Conversion of barn outbuilding and adjoining outbuilding to create function room and food preparation area for use by the pub and hotel, including repairs and refurbishment throughout, new WCs within existing mezzanine, and new internal door. Construction of rear extension to barn. Application of cedar cladding to the southwest end elevation of the modern timber garage block and laying of gravel to the yard area to provide for staff parking.
Site address:	Methuen Arms Hotel, High Street, Corsham, SN13 0HB
Case officer:	James Webster

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:

- Bat Emergence and Re-Entry Surveys, Arbtech, February 2026
- Proposed Site Plan, Concorde BGW Group, November 2025
- Existing Site Plan, Concorde BGW Group, March 2025
- Planning, Design & Access Statement, Walsingham Planning, February 2026

The site comprises a barn building and outbuilding to the east of a hotel/pub complex. It is proposed to refurbish and convert the barn and an adjoining outbuilding, and create a gravel parking area in existing yard. This application forms a resubmission of PL/2025/04024, but adds a single-storey rear extension and other alterations.

COMMENTS:

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

The site is located within a core roost buffer (consultation zone) for Greater Horseshoe bats, 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 will not result in the loss of a Greater Horseshoe roost nor foraging habitat, there is no mechanism for adverse impact on the Conservation Objectives of the SAC, and the proposal can be screened out of Appropriate Assessment.

Other protected species and habitats

As above, the proposals are not considered likely to have significant adverse impact on the bat SAC. Nonetheless, consideration must be given to potential impacts upon bats as European Protected Species.

The barn was surveyed for evidence of roosting bats via three dusk emergence surveys undertaken between July and September 2025. Whilst no emergences were recorded, the barn was found to have been used by bats with three individual droppings found within the loft void. DNA analysis confirmed that the droppings were that of Common Pipistrelle bats. The ecology report states that this is indicative of an “exploratory visit” by a Common Pipistrelle and implies that a licence will not be required. It is not clear how this conclusion has been drawn. In any case, the results suggest that there is elevated risk that bats will be disturbed, and a resting place damaged or destroyed, which would be an offence under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017.

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 a supervised roof strip.

Compliance with these recommendations should be secured via a condition.

The site borders an area of Deciduous Woodland Priority Habitat, which was described as a key foraging area in the bat survey report. The proposed carpark and single-storey extension back onto the wooded area, and lighting might be required here. An increase in artificial lux levels can deter bats which could result in roost abandonment and/or the severance of key foraging areas.

Any new lighting scheme should ensure that dark foraging and commuting routes can be retained – in line with the Corsham Batscape Strategy (Corsham Town Council) – and this should be secured via condition.

In line with NPPF and with CP50, applications that do not fall into the category where Biodiversity Net Gain 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). 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. Compliance with submitted documents

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

- “Recommendations” and “Enhancements” sections from pages 36-38 of Bat Emergence and Re-Entry Surveys, Arbtech, September 2025

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

2. Lighting

Prior to commencement of development, a lighting plan that includes a Lux Plot, shall be submitted to the LPA for approval. The plan will demonstrate that bat habitat (trees, scrub and hedgerows) on the perimeter of the site will remain below 0.5 lux. All lighting provided on site shall 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.

REASON: In the interests of the amenities of the area and to minimize impacts on biodiversity caused by light spillage to areas above and outside the development site.

3. Enhancements for Biodiversity

Prior to the commencement of any works, details of the number, design and locations of ecological enhancements – such as 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 – Bats

The roof space of the barn as Methuen Arms Hotel has been used by bats. 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 European Protected Species Licence will be required before any work is undertaken to implement this planning permission. Future conversion of the roof space or replacing the roof 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 20/04/2026
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