

Wiltshire Council Planning Consultation Response

ECOLOGY

Officer name:	Jessica Cracknell
Date:	28/04/2026
Application Number:	PL/2026/00854
Proposal:	Garage conversion, provision of a storage shed, and general landscaping works to rear garden.
Site Address:	5 Mead Villas, High Street, Box, Corsham, SN13 8NJ
Case Officer:	Rose Fox

Recommendations:

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

Thank you for your consultation on the above application. I have reviewed the submitted documents against OS maps, aerial photographs of the site and surrounding area, together with GIS layers of statutory and non-statutory designated sites and existing records of protected species.

The following submitted documentation was reviewed to inform this response:

- Preliminary Roost Assessment. December 2025. Apt Ecology. Version. 2;
- PR site plan. 06/03/2026. No. 12-3-11. Rev. A;
- PR elevations 1-2. 07/02/2026. No. 12-3-17. Rev. A;
- PR elevation 2-2. 07/02/2026. No. 12-3-18. Rev. A;
- Design and Access Statement. November 2025.

Bath and Bradford on Avon Bat Special Area of Conservation (SAC): Habitat Regulations Assessment (HRA)

The application site is located within a consultation zone for Greater Horseshoe bats, Lesser Horseshoe bats and Bechstein's bats associated with the Bath and Bradford on Avon Bats Special Area of Conservation (SAC) and therefore has potential to result in significant adverse impact on the special features of that site. Appropriate Assessment (AA) under Section 63 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended) 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 Preliminary Roost Assessment identified the existing buildings as having negligible potential to support roosting bats. The site is assessed to offering suitability for foraging and commuting bats. The conversation of the existing garage, provision of a storage shed, and general landscaping works will not require the removal of vegetation considered to be functionally important for bat foraging or commuting. Subject to retention of key boundary features and implementation of a sensitive lighting strategy, it is likely that the functionality of the habitats within the site and their availability to bats will not be adversely affected. Should the proposals change such that trees or boundary features with potential roosting features are affected, or additional/new lighting is proposed, further survey work would be required and mitigation measures would need to be reviewed and updated accordingly.

A test of likely significance has been carried out by the relevant Competent Authority (Wiltshire Council) as required by Regulation 63 Conservation of Habitats and Species (Amendment) (EU Exit) Regulations 2019. This concluded that given the scale and nature of the development there is no mechanism for adverse effect/any temporary construction impacts and operational impacts would be de-minimus. The Habitat Regulation Assessment (HRA) has concluded that the application will not result in any mechanism for adverse effect on Annex II bats, or on the conservation objectives of the SAC and subsequently is screened out of Appropriate Assessment.

The habitat within the proposed development site and the surrounding area is suitable for roosting, 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 GN08/23 "Bats and artificial lighting at night", issued by the Bat Conservation Trust and Institution of Lighting Professionals. Suitable lighting to ensure dark foraging and commuting routes can be retained could be secured via 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 application is for development which is subject of a householder application within the meaning of article 2(1) of the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015.

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.

Core Policy 50

Core Policy 50 of the Wiltshire Core Strategy requires all development to demonstrate no net loss of biodiversity and to seek opportunities to enhance biodiversity. The NPPF also encourages applications to deliver measurable net gains (para 186 d). It is anticipated that all developments will deliver no net loss of biodiversity. For this application, biodiversity measures should focus on delivering continued ecological functionality for bats, swifts and hedgehog.

All details on exact locations and specifications must be added to all working plans (PR elevation 2-2. 07/02/2026. No. 12-3-18. Rev. A) and will become an enforceable part of the planning permission to avoid oversight and to ensure consistency and enforceability. Integrated features are generally maintenance-free and seek to benefit a target species/s or group/s and should demonstrate viability in terms of position on the building, location and clustering in accordance with relevant guidance and the additional features. Bird/bat boxes will continue to be available for birds/bats for the lifetime of the development.

CONDITIONS:

1. Compliance with submitted documents

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

- Section 4 of the Preliminary Roost Assessment. December 2025. Apt Ecology. Version. 2;
- PR elevation 2-2. 07/02/2026. No. 12-3-18. Rev. A.

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.

INFORMATIVES:

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 reptiles. 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.

Final sign off – all matters addressed:

Ecologist	Date
Jessica Cracknell	28/04/2026