

Wiltshire Council Planning Consultation Response

ECOLOGY

Officer name:	Abi Gazzard
Date:	19/05/2026
Application number:	PL/2026/02084
Proposal:	Proposed erection of 1no. high-quality, sustainable, single storey dwelling including car port, home office; new planting and biodiversity enhancement measures.
Site address:	554 Canal Bridge, Semington, Trowbridge, BA14 6JT
Case officer:	Lucie Turner

Recommendations:

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

Further Information Required:

	Issue	Policy/Legislative Compliance	Date information requested & Further information required	Satisfactorily addressed (Document & Date)
1	GCN	Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 Wiltshire Core Policy 50	19/05/2026 Great crested newt survey results and mitigation plan OR signed and countersigned Impact Assessment Conservation Payment Certificate (IACPC) for District Level Licencing See below for further detail.	

The outstanding document(s) listed above are needed to enable the council's ecology team to consider all the relevant impacts and benefits of the proposed scheme. The council's ecologists will provide a further response once all the above information has been submitted via the case officer. Please Note: When resubmitting a revised document, ALL changes must be highlighted to enable review.

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:

- Planning, Design, Access & Materials Statement, AB Architectural Design Ltd, March 2026
- Preliminary Ecological Appraisal, Seasons Ecology, February 2026
- Existing and Proposed Site Plans, AB Architectural Design Ltd, January 2026, Rev C
- Proposed floor plans and elevations, AB Architectural Design Ltd, January 2026, Rev A

The site comprises a small field (0.15 ha) where it is proposed to construct one dwelling, a car port/office, and attenuation pond. The site is bordered by hedgerow, with grassland fields to the north and west, and a road to the east.

COMMENTS:

Protected species and habitats

The site does not appear to be directly within any European designated sites, nor any of their consultation/buffer zones.

The surrounding area is likely suitable for use by foraging and commuting bats. 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.

There are two ponds within 250m of the site, as well as a section of old canal to the east (neighbouring the road). The site contains some habitats suitable for use by great crested newts (GCN) during their terrestrial phase, as well as ditches alongside the bordering hedgerows. The ecology report concludes that further survey for GCN is necessary. However, no survey results have yet been provided.

GCN are a European Protected Species afforded stringent protection under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended) and as such are a material consideration within the planning consultation process. Sufficient and appropriate mitigation measures to ensure that GCN are not adversely affected as a result of the proposed development must be submitted as part of the proposal.

The applicant may wish to consider District Level Licensing (DLL). Instead of carrying out site-specific surveys, mitigation and compensation, the applicant could consider applying to Natural England to determine whether the scheme is eligible for DLL. Once the scheme is accepted under the District Level Licensing Scheme for Great Crested Newts, the Impact Assessment and Conservation Payment Certificate (IACPC), which must be signed by the applicant and countersigned by Natural England is submitted to the LPA.

Please can the applicant confirm whether GCN surveys will be undertaken to inform site-specific mitigation, or whether they intend to apply for the DLL scheme?

Biodiversity enhancements

In line with the NPPF and with CP50, applications must ensure that gains for biodiversity, relevant to local habitats and wildlife populations, should form part of the proposed development. The ecology report's recommendations of bat and bird boxes, bee bricks, hibernacula and wildlife-friendly plantings, are welcomed. **Biodiversity enhancements 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 it is for self and Custom Build Development, meaning development which:

- consists of no more than 9 dwellings;
- is carried out on a site which has an area no larger than 0.5 hectares; and
- consists exclusively of dwellings which are self-build or custom housebuilding (as defined in section 1(A1) of the Self-build and Custom Housebuilding Act 2015), as indicated in the application form.

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.

IN SUMMARY: Insufficient information has been submitted. In carrying out its statutory function, the LPA must be reasonably sure that the proposal will not result in significant adverse effects on protected species. The information outlined above must therefore be submitted and reviewed by the LPA's ecology team prior to determination of the application. I therefore maintain a holding objection until all the issues listed above have been suitably addressed.

DRAFT CONDITIONS:

1. 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 sensitive 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 wildlife-sensitive habitats, including habitat used by bats.

2. Enhancements for Biodiversity

Prior to the commencement of any works, including vegetation removal and demolition, details of the number, design and locations of ecological enhancements – such as bat boxes, swift boxes, bee bricks and herpetofauna hibernacula – 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.

Plus any relevant conditions/informatives concerning great crested newts, once resolved.

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

Ecologist	Date
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