

Wiltshire Council Planning Consultation Response

ECOLOGY

Officer name:	Abi Gazzard
Date:	30/06/2026
Application number:	PL/2026/01736
Proposal:	Extension to farm shop; retention of dining structure, convert barn to a flexible space, storage container, livestock display area; and parking area (part retrospective).
Site address:	Freckles Farm Brinkworth Road Royal Wootton Bassett Swindon SN4 8DT
Case officer:	Isabel Gatier

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:

- Proposed Barn Elevations, Custom House Studio, April 2025
- Proposed Farm Shop Elevations, Custom House Studio, June 2025
- Site Location Plan, Custom House Studio, June 2025
- Proposed Car Park Extension, Custom House Studio, April 2025
- Planning Letter, Willis & Co, May 2026

The site comprises a farm shop where it is proposed to extend the building and convert a barn into 'flexible space'. This application also seeks retrospective permission for the installation of a storage container and car park.

COMMENTS:

Protected species and sites

The site does not fall within any designated areas or associated consultation/buffer zones. The works to the barn and farm shop are unlikely to impact any key habitats, also given that both buildings are already subject to relatively high levels of human disturbance. However, the installation of two parking areas appeared to result in the loss of a large area of grassland. The implementation of precautionary measures to avoid adversely affecting species, such as reptiles or ground nesting birds, would have been appropriate. No new lighting is proposed, but the applicant should note that an increase in artificial lux levels can deter bats which could result in roost abandonment and/or the severance of key foraging areas. New lighting should therefore be for the purposes for safe access and security and be in accordance with the appropriate standards.

Despite this proposal being exempt from BNG requirements (see below), 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 193d).

The site is well-connected to good habitat for bats and nesting birds (with a hedge line to the west and north, and wooded areas to the north and southeast). There are multiple records of curlew, badger and bats (including horseshoe and barbastelle) locally. Given that there has been a loss in grassland habitat (to accommodate the parking areas), and in line with CP50, a **condition for biodiversity enhancement is recommended.**

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). The biodiversity gain planning condition is not considered to apply to the retrospective aspects of this proposal (i.e., parking areas and storage container), as when an application relates to development to which section 73A of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (planning permission for development already carried out) applies, the development is exempt from BNG.

With regard to the barn conversion and building extension, 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) (the farm shop extension will have a footprint of 16.25m²).

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:

Enhancements for Biodiversity

Prior to the commencement of any works, details of the number, design and locations of ecological enhancements – including the type and locations of wildlife-friendly plantings and bat 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 – Artificial Lighting

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 GN08-18 “Bats and artificial lighting in the UK”, issued by the Bat Conservation Trust and Institution of Lighting Professionals.

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

Ecologist Abi Gazzard	Date 30/06/2026
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