

Appropriate Assessment of Effects on a National Network Site

This is a record of the appropriate assessment of Wiltshire Council required by Regulation 63 Conservation of Habitats and Species (Amendment) (EU Exit) Regulations 2019. The project has been assessed as likely to have significant effects on one or more National Network Sites (previously European Site) and is not directly connected to or required for the management of such sites.

PART A: INFORMATION REVIEWED	
Information about the plan or project	Proposal: Application PL/2026/01558 Erection of a single new dwelling and associated works. (Technical details consent following approval of permission in principle reference PL/2025/03764). Site address: Rectory Barn, Whaddon, Hilperton, Trowbridge, BA14 6NR Background: The application site is located within the yellow medium risk zone of the Trowbridge & Westbury Bat Mitigation Strategy (TWBMS). The application must therefore be considered under the Habitats Regulations. The yellow medium risk zone represents the areas where habitat has been shown to be of importance, or is highly likely to be of importance for bats associated with the Bath and Bradford-on-Avon Bat SAC, and in particular the yellow zone takes into consideration the foraging areas and flightlines of horseshoe species and Bechstein's bats and is anticipated to be able to accept a degree of development pressure provided applications are designed in accordance with the principles in the TWBMS. Impacts will arise on individual sites and in-combination with other sites as a result of loss and/degradation of habitat of importance to the qualifying bats. The development will result in the loss of a small area of garden which survey confirm is used by SAC qualifying bat species probably for foraging and commuting. Boundary hedgerows to the north and west are shown to be retained on the Proposed Site Plan and protected via the submitted Rectory Barn - Hedgerow Protection Plan (ethos environmental planning, submitted 17th August 2026).
National Site(s) Network	Bath and Bradford on Avon Bats Special Area of Conservation (SAC)
List of European Site interest features	Qualifying Features: 1. S1303 Lesser horseshoe bat <i>Rhinolophus hipposideros</i> 2. S1304 Greater horseshoe bat <i>Rhinolophus ferrumequinum</i> 3. S1323 Bechstein's bat <i>Myotis bechsteinii</i> The <u>conservation objectives</u> for the site are: "To ensure that the integrity of the site is maintained or restored as appropriate, and ensure that the site contributes to achieving the Favourable

	<i>Conservation Status of its Qualifying Features, by maintaining or restoring;</i> <i>• The extent and distribution of the habitats of qualifying species;</i> <i>• The structure and function of the habitats of qualifying species;</i> <i>• The supporting processes on which the habitats of qualifying species rely</i> <i>• The populations of qualifying species; and</i> <i>• The distribution of qualifying species within the site.”</i> Publication Date: 27th November 2018 – version 3. This document updates and replaces an earlier version dated 30 June 2014 to reflect the consolidation of the Habitats Regulations 2017.
Information about the SAC	The current condition of the European site is favourable. The SSSI components of the SAC comprise disused stone mines which are of key importance as a hibernation and swarming site for the above three bat species (greater horseshoe, lesser horseshoe and Bechstein's) because of the combination of temperature and humidity conditions, suitable access, lack of pollution and infilling, and lack of disturbance. The SAC bat populations are also supported by habitats beyond the boundaries of the SAC. Such habitats include watercourses, tree-lines, hedgerows and open farmland which provide foraging habitat, flight corridors and summer roosting habitat.
Other relevant plans or projects	• Wiltshire Core Strategy • Wiltshire Housing Site Allocations Plan (WHSAP) (adopted February 2020). • Trowbridge & Westbury Bat Mitigation Strategy (TWBMS). • Current applications for the site or adjacent land have not been found. These are considered to be the most relevant plans and projects but is unlikely to be an exhaustive list of all projects and plans within the zone of influence.
PART B: IMPACT PREDICTION ALONE	
Impact	Predicted Effect of Impact
Temporary / permanent loss of foraging and roosting habitat and flight corridors.	The development will result in the permanent loss of a small area of garden known to be used by SAC bats. Alone the impact on bat foraging functionality is considered to be low. The hedgerow that represents a commuting corridor will be retained but is at risk of degradation through anthropogenic impacts (development encroachment and artificial light spill). As mitigation the development will be carried out in accordance with the Proposed Site Plan and Hedgerow Protection Plan ensuring no long-term adverse impacts on this corridor. Given the minor scale of development this level of mitigation is considered acceptable and adverse impacts on flight corridors are not predicted. There will be no loss of roosting habitat.

	The residual temporary / permanent loss of foraging and roosting habitat and flight corridors is considered not significant.
Risk of collision and bat fatality	No risk considered likely.
Disturbance to bat flight/foraging/roosting activity from light spill.	To minimise artificial light spill onto the hedgerows/ commuting habitat the dwelling has been designed with minimal fenestration along the northern and western elevations. External lighting units are not proposed. Additional external lighting will be controlled by condition to ensure that bat habitats are not adversely affected by any future external lighting. Impacts on roosting habitat is not predicted. The residual impact on bat flight/foraging activity from light spill is considered not significant.
Disturbance to bat flight/foraging/roosting activity from noise or human presence – construction and operational phases	There is a risk of loss or damage to hedgerows/ flight corridors during construction. To safeguard the hedgerows construction will be carried out in accordance with measures detailed in the Hedgerow Protection Plan. Given the sites location recreational impacts on Bliss Wood and Green Lane Wood are not predicted. The residual impact on bat flight/foraging activity from noise or human presence – construction and operational phases is considered not significant.
PART C: IMPACT PREDICTION IN-COMBINATION	
Impact	Predicted Effect of Impact
Temporary / permanent loss of foraging and roosting habitat and flight corridors	The application site is located within the yellow medium risk zone of the Trowbridge & Westbury Bat Mitigation Strategy (TWBMS). The yellow medium risk zone represents the areas where habitat has been shown to be of importance, or is highly likely to be of importance for bats associated with the Bath and Bradford-on-Avon Bat SAC, and in particular the yellow zone takes into consideration the foraging areas and flightlines of horseshoe species and Bechstein's bats. Surveys have confirmed SAC bats use the site. Impacts will therefore arise in-combination with other development as a result of loss and/degradation of low value habitat. To mitigate in-combination effects of habitat loss the development will contribute to the councils off-site strategic habitat mitigation measures set out in section 9.1 of the TWBMS.
Risk of collision and bat fatality	No impacts with current scheme and therefore none likely in-combination.
Disturbance to bat flight/foraging/roosting activity from light spill	With mitigation adverse impacts alone are not predicted. Applications within or in close proximity to the development have not been found. In-combination impacts on foraging and commuting habitat from light spill is not predicted

Disturbance to bat flight/foraging activity from noise or human presence – construction and operational phases	With mitigation adverse impacts alone are not predicted. Applications within or in close proximity to the development have not been found. In-combination impacts from noise or human presence on foraging and commuting habitat is not predicted.
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PART D: CONSEQUENCES FOR CONSERVATION OBJECTIVES

All of the risks below have been assessed in relation to habitat lying outside the SAC which is functionally related to the SAC either as roosting, foraging or commuting habitat.

Does the project or plan have the potential to:

Cause delays in progress towards maintaining and restoring the extent and distribution of the habitats of qualifying species;	Yes, without mitigation the development has potential to result in the loss of foraging and commuting habitat (grassland and hedgerows).
Cause delays in progress towards maintaining and restoring the structure and function of the habitats of qualifying species;	Yes, without mitigation the development has potential to result in adverse impacts on foraging and commuting habitat through loss a small area of grassland and loss or degradation of retained hedgerow habitat.
Cause delays in progress towards maintaining and restoring the supporting processes on which the habitats of qualifying species rely.	No, direct impacts on the SAC are not predicted.
Cause delays in progress towards maintaining and restoring the populations of qualifying species; and	Yes, due to foraging and commuting habitat loss.
Cause delays in progress towards maintaining and restoring the distribution of qualifying species within the site (SAC).	No, direct impacts on the SAC are not predicted.

PART E: MITIGATION FOR APPLICATION PL/2026/01558

Mitigation proposed	How will these measures avoid or reduce impacts upon site integrity?
Adherence to the Proposed Site Plan and Hedgerow Protection Plan that requires the	Retain existing bat commuting corridor and ensure flight corridors are retained.

retention and protection of commuting habitat (hedgerow) during construction and operation.		
The dwelling has been designed with minimal fenestration along the northern and western elevations. External lighting units are not proposed. Additional external lighting will be controlled by condition.		To minimise disturbance to bat flight/foraging activity from light spill.
Contribution to the councils off-site strategic habitat mitigation measures set out in section 9.1 of the TWBMS		To mitigate in-combination effects of habitat loss the development.
Recommended Conditions:		
Compliance		The development will be carried out in <u>strict</u> accordance with the following documents: • Rectory Barn - Hedgerow Protection Plan (ethos environmental planning, submitted 17th August 2026). • Proposed Site Plan. Drawing No: 25/856/P003 Rev B. (Richmond Ball Architects, Jan 2026).
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.
PART F: CONCLUSION		
Is the project likely to affect site integrity?		
Alone?		
No. Mitigation will ensure no loss of bat foraging and commuting function.		
b) In combination with other plans or projects?	No.	
Recommendation:		
This AA has concluded that the application is not likely to have significant impacts on the SAC alone or in combination with other projects or plans.		

Name of officer(s) making the assessment and date	Elizabeth Burrows Ecologist, Landscape and Design Team, Wiltshire Council 17/08/2026.
Natural England Comments	
Name of Natural England officer and date	