

Wiltshire Council Planning Consultation Response

ECOLOGY

Officer name:	Jessica Cracknell
Date:	16/02/2026 11/09/2026 updated comments
Application Number:	PL/2025/06396
Proposal:	Demolition of existing dwelling, erection of two detached dwellings and associated works.
Site Address:	Marshfield, 85 High Street, Great Cheverell, Devizes, SN10 5XR
Case Officer:	Helena Carney

Recommendations:

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

Further Information Required:

	Issue	Policy/Legislative Compliance	Date information requested & Further information required	Satisfactorily addressed (Document & Date submitted)
1	Baseline Surveys: Impacts on sensitive wildlife species (reptiles)	CP50, Wildlife and Countryside Act (1981)	16/02/2026 Reptile Survey. Reptile Mitigation and Enhancement Scheme.	YES 11/09/2026 - Reptile Mitigation Method Statement and Plan for Site Measured Clearing. July 2026. Applewood Designs Ltd. NHBC; - Reptile Presence/Absence Surveys. 12 July 2026. Arbtech Consulting Ltd.
2	Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG)	Schedule 7A of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as inserted by Schedule 14 of the Environment Act 2021)	09/02/2026 Submission of statutory metric calculation with the all correct baseline habitats and the associated baseline condition assessments	YES 11/09/2026 - The Statutory Biodiversity Metric. 28 August 2026. Iteration. V4; - Biodiversity Net Gain Report. 28 August 2026. Arbtech; - Arbicultural Survey Records. September 2025. Wessex Tree Consultancy. Report Ref. 7497.

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 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:

- [Reptile Mitigation Method Statement and Plan for Site Measured Clearing. July 2026. Applewood Designs Ltd. NHBC;](#)
- [Reptile Presence/Absence Surveys. 12 July 2026. Arbtech Consulting Ltd;](#)
- Ecological Survey Report (Bats). 18 May 2025. Batcraft. Ref. NWP/ESR-12/5/25;
- Preliminary Ecological Appraisal & Preliminary Roost Assessment. 17 December 2025. Arbtech;
- [The Statutory Biodiversity Metric. 28 August 2026. Iteration. V4;](#)
- Biodiversity Net Gain – Part 1 Assessment. 21 April 2025. Arbtech;
- [Biodiversity Net Gain Report. 28 August 2026. Arbtech;](#)
- [Arboricultural Survey Records. September 2025. Wessex Tree Consultancy. Report Ref. 7497;](#)
- Tree Survey/Tree Constraints Plan. June 2025. Wessex Tree Consultancy;
- [Proposed Drawings. July 2025. Poulson. Drawing No. 351/103. Rev. F;](#)
- [Site Location Plan, Existing and Proposed Drawings. July 2025. Poulson. Drawing No. 351/102. Rev. b;](#)
- Existing Site Drawing. September 2025. Poulson. Drawing No. 351/104;
- Topographical Survey. 09 May 2026. Dando Surveying Ltd. Sheet ID. OO85hsgchevTOPO;
- Planning Statement. Poulson.

Salisbury Plain Special Protection Area (SPA)

This application lies within the 6.4km zone of influence of the Salisbury Plain SPA and in light of the HRA for the Wiltshire Core Strategy and the HRA for the Wiltshire Housing Site Allocations Plan it is screened into Appropriate Assessment due to the potential impact of recreational pressure on stone curlew in combination with other plans and projects.

A strategic Appropriate Assessment (AA) has been prepared pertaining to development within the 6.4km zone of influence that could result in a likely significant effect on the SPA as a result of an increase in recreational / visitor pressure. The AA reached a conclusion of no adverse effects on the integrity of the SPA or its qualifying features provided that the council's mitigation strategy continues to be implemented. Annual stone curlew monitoring and protection measures continue to be secured by the Council.

In January 2026 Natural England (NE) confirmed that the 2026 strategic AA for Salisbury Plain SPA continues to be supported by NE.

Bat Species

Batcraft undertook, a dusk emergence surveys in May 2025. The results of the surveys detected no emergences from the building. The site is assessed to offering suitability for foraging and commuting bats. A number of mature trees on site have been assessed for bat roosting features and were identified as having negligible potential to support roosting bats. Should the proposals change, or if any trees are subsequently found to have roosting potential or bats are identified during works, further surveys will be required and the mitigation strategy will need to be reviewed and updated accordingly. The proposed replacement dwelling would not require the removal of vegetation considered to be functionally important for bat foraging or commuting. No new lighting has been proposed as part of the development and in the absence of such, together with retention of all vegetation, it is very likely that the functionality of the habitats within the site and their availability to bats will not be adversely affected.

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. 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.

Nesting Birds

Where possible, vegetation removal should be scheduled outside the bird breeding season (1st March–31st August) to avoid potential disturbance. If removal during this period is unavoidable, a pre-works nesting bird inspection must be conducted no more than two weeks before tree felling begins. The applicant is advised to check any structure or vegetation capable of supporting breeding birds and delay removing or altering such features until after young birds have fledged. Damage to extensive areas that could contain nests/breeding birds should be undertaken outside the breeding season.

Reptiles

The Ecology Report (Ref: SWE 577, Version 2, dated 27 October 2022 by South West Ecology) submitted in support of application PL/2022/09110 confirmed a 'good' population of slow worms within the site which would be significantly impacted by the proposed works. The applicant previously failed to provide sufficient information to demonstrate that the proposal would not result in significant adverse effects on the identified slow worm population, in particular due to the absence of a confirmed and suitable translocation receptor site. This application was refused, citing the following as one of the reasons: *"The applicant has failed to provide sufficient information to determine ecological impacts of the proposal; and, as a consequence, the application is not considered to be environmentally sustainable. The proposed development therefore does not comply with Core Policy 50 of the Wiltshire Core Strategy, or advice contained in the National Planning Policy Framework (2021)."*

The current application (PL/2025/06396) sits within the same red line boundary. The submitted Preliminary Ecological Appraisal & Preliminary Roost Assessment (Arbtech, 17 December 2025) identifies that the site comprises grassland, bramble scrub and a native hedgerow, with these habitats reported to have been unmanaged for several years. The report concludes that, due to the small scale of the proposal and a perceived low probability of reptile presence, a full suite of reptile surveys would be disproportionate, and instead proposes a precautionary method of working. However, given that a 'good' population of slow worms was confirmed on site in 2022 by South West Ecology, and that the habitats have since remained unmanaged, it is reasonable to conclude that the suitability of the site for reptiles has increased since that time.

~~Updated reptile presence/absence and population class surveys are required to establish the current status of slow worms on site and to inform appropriate mitigation. Should reptiles be confirmed present, a Reptile Mitigation and Enhancement Scheme will be required, to include:~~

- ~~• Confirmation of the location of the proposed translocation site;~~
- ~~• An assessment of the site's suitability and its carrying capacity to support the existing slow worm population;~~
- ~~• Details of habitat creation and/or enhancement measures to ensure the site provides appropriate long-term conditions for reptiles; and~~
- ~~• Monitoring and management proposals to maintain the suitability of the receptor site post-construction.~~

~~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 habitats or 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.~~

The reptile presence/absence surveys undertaken at the site recorded a maximum count of 13 slow worms and one grass snake, resulting in the site being assessed as supporting a good population of slow worm and a low population of grass snake. The survey concludes that a significant proportion of reptile habitat will be lost as a result of the development. The submission of the Reptile Mitigation Method Statement And Plan For Site Measured Clearing.pdf is welcomed. The strategy proposes phased directional vegetation clearance, retention of an approximately 70m² habitat area along the north-western boundary of the site, creation of two hibernacula and installation of reptile fencing during the construction phase.

Further details will be required regarding the proposed mitigation measures, including the timing and ecological supervision of vegetation clearance works, the specification and installation of reptile exclusion fencing, the design and location of the proposed hibernacula and other habitat enhancement features, and

the long-term management of retained reptile habitat areas. In addition, clarification should be provided regarding any monitoring requirements and contingency measures should reptiles be recorded in higher numbers than anticipated during the clearance process.

Subject to the submission and approval of a detailed Reptile Mitigation Strategy and the implementation of the proposed measures, it is considered likely that the functionality of habitats within the site, and their availability for reptiles , will not be adversely affected.

Biodiversity Net Gain

Under Schedule 7A of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as inserted by Schedule 14 of the Environment Act 2021) this application is required to deliver 10% Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG). The Biodiversity Gain Plan condition will automatically apply if approval is forthcoming.

A completed statutory metric calculation (28 August 2026. Iteration. V4) confirming the baseline and predicted post- development biodiversity units of the site has been submitted (including the condition assessment sheets and maps).

~~The following issues must be addressed in the baseline prior to determination:-~~

- ~~• The submitted Biodiversity Net Gain Report (17 December 2025. Arbtech) identifies an Individual Tree (T7), condition ‘poor’ within Appendix C: Habitat Condition Assessment Sheets, however, this baseline habitat has not be recorded within the Statutory Biodiversity Metric baseline habitats. All submitted documentation must align, with the same recorded baseline habitat area reflected across all documentation.~~

~~The information outlined above must therefore be submitted and reviewed by the LPA’s ecology team prior to determination of the application.~~

Information in the completed on-site baseline habitat tabs is accepted as accurate based on the information submitted. The pre-development (baseline) situation is summarised below.

On-site pre-development (baseline) biodiversity value	2.99 Habitat units
	0.04 Hedgerow units
	0.00 Watercourse units
Are there any <u>irreplaceable</u> habitats on-site?	No
Has any habitat <u>degradation</u> of occurred?	No

Note to case officer: Appendix D: Post-Development Habitat Plan (Biodiversity Net Gain Report. 17 December 2025. Arbtech) identifies the areas of habitat creation/enhancement which contributes to the applications proposed BNG, however, detail on the plan is limited and does not provide information on how the development will achieve 10% BNG. Confirmation of how the development will achieve BNG is a post-determination matter however consideration should be given to how any proposed BNG will be secured.

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 187 d).

While it is not expected that this development will result in significant loss of habitat, both CP50 and NPPF requires the inclusion of biodiversity enhancements. Ecological enhancements are provided through the installation of 2 bird boxes, 2 bee bricks and a hibernaculum within the Preliminary Ecological Appraisal & Preliminary Roost Assessment. The location of ecological/biodiversity enhancements must be included in the site plan drawings (Proposed Drawings. July 2025. Poulson. Drawing No. 351/103. Rev. B) and will become an enforceable part of the planning permission.

CONDITIONS:

1. Compliance with submitted documents

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

- Reptile Mitigation Method Statement and Plan for Site Measured Clearing. July 2026. Applewood Designs Ltd. NHBC;
- Reptile Presence/Absence Surveys. 12 July 2026. Arbtech Consulting Ltd;
- Ecological Survey Report (Bats). 18 May 2025. Batcraft. Ref. NWP/ESR-12/5/25;
- Preliminary Ecological Appraisal & Preliminary Roost Assessment. 17 December 2025. Arbtech;
- The Statutory Biodiversity Metric. 28 August 2026. Iteration. V4;
- Biodiversity Net Gain Report. 28 August 2026. Arbtech;
- Tree Survey/Tree Constraints Plan. June 2025. Wessex Tree Consultancy;
- Proposed Drawings. July 2025. Poulson. Drawing No. 351/103. Rev. F.

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

2. Construction Method Statement (CMS)

No development shall commence on site (including any vegetation removal or works to existing structures), until a Construction Method Statement has been submitted to, and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The Construction Method Statement shall provide details of the avoidance, mitigation and protective measures to be implemented before and during the construction phase, including but not necessarily limited to, the following:

- a. Identification of ecological protection areas/buffer zones and tree root protection areas and details of physical means of protection, e.g. exclusion fencing.
- b. Working method statements for protected/priority species, such as bats, nesting birds and reptiles.
- c. Mitigation strategies already agreed with the local planning authority prior to determination, such as for bats, reptiles and nesting birds; this should comprise the pre-construction/construction related elements of strategies only.
- d. Work schedules for activities with specific timing requirements in order to avoid/reduce potential harm to ecological receptors; including details of when a licensed ecologist and/or ecological clerk of works (ECoW) shall be present on site.

The development shall be carried out in strict accordance with the approved Construction Method Statement.

REASON: To ensure adequate protection, mitigation and compensation for protected species and priority habitats throughout the construction period.

3. Reptile Mitigation and Management Strategy

Prior to the commencement of works, including demolition, ground works/excavation, site clearance, vegetation clearance and boundary treatment works, a Reptile Mitigation and Management Strategy shall be submitted to the local planning authority for approval in writing.

The Strategy shall include all precautionary measures to be implemented during the construction period, details of the retained features to support dispersed reptiles and the details of the proposed translocation site and translocation proposals to ensure safeguarding of reptiles. The development shall be carried out in strict accordance with the approved Reptile Mitigation Method Statement and Plan for Site Measured Clearing and Reptile Presence/Absence Surveys.

REASON: To ensure adequate protection, mitigation and compensation for protected species throughout the construction period and operation.

4. 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:

Reptiles

There is a residual risk that reptiles could occur on the application site. These species are legally protected and planning permission does not provide a defence against prosecution. In order to minimise the risk of these species occurring on the site, the developer is advised to clear vegetation during the winter, remove all waste arising from such clearance and maintain vegetation as short as possible in line with the recommendations made in (Preliminary Ecological Appraisal & Preliminary Roost Assessment. 17 December 2025. Arbtech; Reptile Mitigation Method Statement and Plan for Site Measured Clearing. July 2026. Applewood Designs Ltd. NHBC; and Reptile Presence/Absence Surveys. 12 July 2026. Arbtech Consulting Ltd). If these species are found during the works, the applicant is advised to stop work and follow advice from an independent ecologist or the Council Landscape and Design Team (ecologyconsultations@wiltshire.gov.uk).

Final sign off – all matters addressed:

Ecologist	Date
Jessica Cracknell	11/09/2026