

Wiltshire Council Planning Consultation Response

ECOLOGY

Officer name:	Jessica Cracknell
Date:	22/09/2026
Application Number:	PL/2026/04986
Proposal:	Alterations to residential conversion of agricultural barn permitted under prior notification PL/2025/02369, extended residential curtilage and erection of ancillary stables and studio outbuildings, and associated works
Site Address:	Maunditts Park Farm, Little Somerford, Chippenham, SN15 5BH
Case Officer:	Audrey Lo

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:

- Ecological Impact Assessment. February 2025. Ethos Environmental Planning. Project No. ETH25-036;
- Proposed Site Plan. 24 July 2026. Mitchell Eley Gould Architects. Drawing No. 2401 AP(0)10. Rev. K;
- Proposed Elevations. 20 July 2026. Mitchell Eley Gould Architects. Drawing No. 2401 AP(0)21. Rev. J;
- Existing Block Plan. 20 July 2026. Mitchell Eley Gould Architects. Drawing No. 2401 AP(0)02. Rev. J;
- Existing Elevations. 20 July 2026. Mitchell Eley Gould Architects. Drawing No. 2401 AP(0)05. Rev. J;
- Planning Design and Access Statement. August 2026. PlanningSphere Limited.

Cook's Meadows County Wildlife Site (CWS)

Cook's Meadows County Wildlife Site (CWS) lies within the site boundary, designated for its neutral grassland and lowland meadows. In accordance with Core Policy 50, development proposals must demonstrate how they protect features of nature conservation and geological value as part of the design rationale. There is an expectation that such features shall be retained, buffered, and managed favourably in order to maintain their ecological value, connectivity and functionality in the long-term. Where it has been demonstrated that such features cannot be retained, removal or damage shall only be acceptable in circumstances where the anticipated ecological impacts have been mitigated as far as possible and appropriate compensatory measures can be secured to ensure no net loss of the local biodiversity resource. Given the proximity of the development to sensitive receptors, there is potential for adverse effects arising from construction-related activities. Appropriate protection measures will be secured through the implementation of a Construction Method Statement (CMS). Further mitigation measures will be required should any adverse effects arise on the neighbouring CWS.

Protected Species

A UKHab survey was undertaken in February 2026 in support of the application. Although the survey was undertaken outside the optimal period for certain protected species survey work, given the nature of the site, the information provided is considered sufficient to inform the assessment in this instance. However, it is expected that any future protected species surveys are undertaken during the optimal survey window.

The Ecological Survey report identified the existing building as having low to negligible potential to support roosting bats. The site is assessed to offering suitability for foraging and commuting bats. The alterations to residential conversion of agricultural barn permitted under prior notification PL/2025/02369, extended residential curtilage and erection of ancillary stables and studio outbuildings, and associated works will not require the removal of vegetation considered to be functionally valuable for foraging or commuting bats. 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 existing features with potential roosting features are affected, further survey work would be required and mitigation measures would need to be reviewed and updated accordingly.

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.

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.

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 development meets the following criteria;

- does not impact a priority habitat (a habitat specified in a list published under section 41 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006); and
- where the site area within the red line boundary is 0.2 hectares or below.

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.

The Preliminary Ecological Appraisal proposes the inclusion of a bat and bird boxes which is welcomed. The locations of these features must be provided on site plan/elevation drawings (Figure 9 and 10 Ecological enhancements. Ecological Impact Assessment. February 2025. Ethos Environmental Planning. Project No. ETH25-036) and will become an enforceable part of the planning permission. 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. Locations should be chosen in consultation with a professional ecologist to ensure they are appropriately positioned, and the following details must be provided: location, number, type (include make/model, if appropriate) and positioning (height, aspect, surrounding habitat, as applicable). 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:

- Sections 6, 7, 8 and 9 of the Ecological Impact Assessment. February 2025. Ethos Environmental Planning. Project No. ETH25-036.

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 include all precautionary measures to be implemented during the construction period, for the protection of sensitive habitats and species known to be present within or adjacent the site, with particular reference to bats, nesting birds and Cook's Meadows County Wildlife 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. Lighting

All lighting provided on site shall 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.

REASON: In the interests of the amenities of the area and to minimize impacts on biodiversity caused by light spillage to areas above and outside the development site.

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	22/09/2026