

Wiltshire Council Planning Consultation Response

ECOLOGY

Officer name:	Abi Gazzard
Date:	07/10/2026
Application number:	PL/2026/05309
Proposal:	Construction of driveway, hardstanding and agricultural barn for hay storage, sheep pens and general agricultural store (Application '2').
Site address:	Land northeast of Heath Cottage, Moor Lane, Garsdon, Malmesbury, SN16 9NW
Case officer:	Alex Edge

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:

- Letter Re: Biodiversity Net Gain, Bengrove Ltd, August 2026
- Preliminary Ecological Appraisal, Cotswold Environmental, August 2025
- Planning Statement, RCC Town Planning Consultancy, August 2026
- Combined Plans, A M Design, March 2026
- Location Plan, A M Design, March 2026
- Proposed Floor Plans & Elevations, A M Design, July 2025
- Block Plans, A M Design, March 2026

The site comprises a section of a field that is bordered by trees and hedgerows. It is proposed to construct an agricultural barn with surrounding hardstanding, and an access track. This application is one of four applications recently submitted to support the change of use, and the creation of access, a track and barns. The barn is intended to connect to a barn proposed under PL/2026/05313, and access track will connect to field access proposed under PL/2026/05311. The larger site connects to further fields in all directions, with some dwellings to the northeast and southwest, and woodland parcels in the wider landscape. The site does not fall within any designated sites or associated consultation zones.

COMMENTS:

Protected species

The red line boundary excludes the bordering hedgerow and contains only an internal area of the arable field. It appears that up to 0.16ha of arable land will be lost to accommodate the proposed barn and track. This habitat is of limited value to protected wildlife.

The surrounding hedgerow was found to contain a number of potential bat roosting features. 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 GN08-18 "Bats and artificial lighting in the UK", issued by the Bat Conservation Trust and Institution of Lighting Professionals. Accordingly, a downward-facing PIR security light is proposed on the southern elevation, which faces the field, rather than the boundary habitats; this is considered acceptable from an ecological perspective. If any further lighting is proposed, Ecology must be consulted.

The applicant should be made aware that the adults, young, eggs and nests of all species of birds are protected by the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) while they are breeding. Please be advised that works should not take place that will harm nesting birds (such as vegetation clearance) from March to August inclusive. Structures or vegetation capable of supporting breeding birds should be checked prior to commencement, and any removal or altering of such features should be delayed until after young birds have fledged.

In line with the NPPF and CP50, applications must ensure that gains for biodiversity, relevant to local habitats and wildlife populations, should form part of the proposed development. As such – and considering the overall proposals for this site (represented via multiple applications) which will involve an increase in disturbance and a loss of grassland and hedgerow – ecological enhancements should be secured via a condition. The proposed bat box, as shown on the elevation plans, is welcomed in principle. However, the specification of this feature has not been provided. The box is also shown close to a PIR light, which may not be the most appropriate location for installation. Further enhancements would be appropriate, including bird nest boxes and/or invertebrate bricks, or wildlife-friendly plantings.

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:

- o the site area within the red line boundary is 0.2 hectares or below, and
- o the proposed development 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)

The applicant should note that whilst this proposal does not involve any direct loss of hedgerow, it is understood that field access is being proposed under application PL/2026/05311 which will require the removal of a section of hedgerow (thereby, that application is not exempt from BNG). If said application is *not* permitted, BNG condition not discharged, and/or access is required to be created at another location to accommodate the current proposal, then BNG will need to be re-addressed for such a scenario and Ecology consulted.

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:**1. Enhancements for Biodiversity**

Prior to the commencement of any works, details of the number, design and locations of ecological enhancement features – such as nest boxes or invertebrate bricks – shall be submitted to the local authority for approval. The approved details shall be implemented for the lifetime of the development and before completion 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 can result in a negative impact upon the health of bat populations across the region. 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 07/10/2026
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