Oatlands *Ecology*

Consultant Ecologists

Initial Bat Scoping Report

Barn and Outbuilding at:

Birka Carr Farm

Risplith

Ripon

HG4 3EY

April 2022

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Contents

1 Summary

1.1 Potential Impacts

Bats

Both buildings were assessed as having a *Negligible Potential to Support Bats* and it is considered unlikely bats will be impacted as a result of the development.

Breeding Birds

Works to Building 1: Small Stone Barn is likely to result in the destruction of 2 x swallows nests if conducted between March / April until September/October.

1.2 Recommendations

Further Surveys

No further surveys are recommended.

Timing of Works

All species of breeding birds are protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 and disturbance to breeding birds while nesting or to active nests is an offence. Work to Building 1: Small Stone Barn should not take place if breeding swallows are present and may need to be carried out outside the main breeding season (the breeding season may be between April and September inclusive).

Provision of Swallow Nest Sites

Alternative nest sites should be provided within Building 2: Outbuilding to compensate for the loss of nests sites in Building 1: Small Stone Barn.

This can be achieved by:

- Creation of an access point into the room within Building 2 that is least disturbed during the summer.
    - This can be created by the removal of one of the small existing window panes.
- At least two commcerially available swallow nest cups should be attached inside Building 2 high up on the internal walls (one close to each internal gable apex) out of reach of cats and other predators.

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2 Introduction

2.1 Preamble

This report presents the results of the Initial Bat Scoping Survey at a small barn and an outbuilding at Birka Carr Farm, Risplith, North Yorkshire.

It is intended to demonstrate a reasonable effort has been undertaken to ensure the likely presence, or otherwise, of a bat roost has been confidently ascertained and is intended to demonstrate that the LPA's obligations under the NERC Act 2006[1] and the National Planning Policy Framework will be met.

2.2 Site Location

The properties subject to this report are a small stone barn and a detached outbuilding at Birka Carr Farm, Risplith, Ripon, HG4 3EY.

OS Grid Reference: SE 2359 6855.

2.3 Description of the Site

See Section 7 Photographs & Figure 1: Site Location

Buildings

Only two buildings were within the scope of the survey with all other buildings unimpacted by the proposed development.

Building 1: Small Stone Barn:

A small, single storey stone barn – with a small end room - used to store a variety of household items with an unlined slate roof supported on a wooden frame.

Building 2: Outbuilding:

A small, detached, stone building divided into two small rooms used respectively as a utility store and coal / timber store. The roof is constructed with an unlined corrugated panels supported on a wooden frame.

Wider Context

Birka Carr is located ~850m south-west of the small, rural village of Risplith in a somewhat isolated and very rural location within the Nidderdale Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. The surrounding landscape is a mixture of large pasture fields divided by dry stone walls with an extensive network of boundary tree belts in the immediate vicinity of the farm.

[1]The Duty is set out in Section 40 of the Act, and states that: "*Every public authority must, in exercising its functions, have regard, so far as is consistent with the proper exercise of those functions, to the purpose of conserving biodiversity*"

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There are several woodlands and a large lake within 1km of the Birka Carr Farm:

- Fishpond Wood: A large (35ha) plantation located ~320m west of Birka Carr Farm.

  Although mostly conifer plantation the central and western sections of Fishpond Wood support deciduous woodland (~15ha) and extends around Eavestone Lake, a large (~ 5ha) lake ~ 800m south-west of Birka Carr Farm.

- There a several smaller deciduous woodlands within 1km of Birka Carr Farm:
  - Miss Wood: 450m north.
  - Dog Kennel Wood: 575m north-east.
  - Hungate Wood: 600m north
  - Raw Fall (mixed woodland): 650m north-west.

All woodlands are connected by a network of tree belts which extend both north and south of Birka Carr Farm into the wider landscape.

2.4 Details of the Surveyors Experience

The surveys were carried out by Andrew Perry, B.Sc. (Hons), CEnv MCIEEM. He is a Chartered Environmentalist and a licensed bat ecologist[2] with over 18 year's professional experience of bat surveys for a variety of developments including large commercial developments, large road and pipeline schemes throughout the UK as well as smaller residential surveys.

Andrew is an active member of the West Yorkshire Bat Group (Records Officer and Commercial Enquiries Officer) and a Natural England Volunteer Bat Warden.

2.5 Survey & Report Objectives

- To search for and identify features with the potential to support a bat roost and assess the potential of the property to support bats.
- To recommend further surveys which – if necessary – will allow an accurate assessment of:
  - The type and location of any roost present.
  - The species and numbers of bats present.
  - The conservation significance of any bat roosts present roost and the likely impacts as a result of the development.

[2] Class Survey Licence – WML: CL18 (Bat Survey Level 2). Registration No.2015-11912-CLS-CLS.

3 Methodology

Although the survey methodology described below is focussed on the presence of bats, and was conducted outside the bird breeding season, it is a suitable survey methodology for identifying evidence of recently breeding birds within the buildings (such as inactive nests and accumulations of droppings) and evidence of recently breeding birds was actively searched for during the survey.

3.1 Desk Study / Consultations

- The North Yorkshire Bat Group was contacted for existing bat records within 2km of the property.
- OS maps and publicly available aerial photography were used to identify relevant habitats and features within the vicinity of the survey site and it was considered in terms of connectivity to potentially important foraging areas and landscape features.

3.2 Initial Scoping Survey

An Initial Bat Scoping Survey was conducted on 28th March 2022.

Features with the potential to allow bats entry to, and egress from, the buildings such as gaps in the walls, roof/ ridge tiles, masonry and window frames, and evidence of bats were actively searched for.

Evidence for bats was sought primarily in the form of bat droppings although evidence of urine staining on windows and scratch marks / smoothing beneath potential roost sites also searched for.

External Building Inspection

Using high quality close focussing binoculars and a See-Snake flexible endoscope (7mm camera width) and ladders where necessary - all accessible exterior surfaces were inspected including:

- The surfaces of all external walls and surfaces with particular attention paid to the surfaces below eaves and gutters, windows and frames and the ground at the foot of the walls.
- The interior of all accessible gaps, holes and crevices within the masonry using both ladders and the endoscope.
- All sheltered and undisturbed areas i.e., corners, behind pipes, on the tops of bins and areas of accumulated dust and webs.

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Internal Building Inspection

Each building was fully accessible and the interiors were surveyed using a powerful Cree LED head torch to ensure adequate illumination and a See Snake flexible endoscope (7mm camera width) where necessary.

Survey areas included:

- The surfaces of all internal walls with particular attention paid to the upper wall surfaces, windows and frames and the ground at the foot of the walls.
- The floors and upper surfaces of all stored equipment.
- The interior of all accessible gaps, holes and crevices within the masonry using both ladders and the endoscope.
- The tops of all stored equipment.
- All sheltered and undisturbed areas i.e., corners, behind pipes and areas of accumulated dust and webs.

Survey Limitations

There were no limitations to the survey.

Assessment of Potential

The potential of the buildings to support bat roosts was considered using the surveyors' considerable experience and training and the criteria outlined in Appendix 1.

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4 Results

4.1 Desk Study

The North Yorkshire Bat Group hold records of multiple roosts within at least seven properties within 2km of the survey site. There are no bat records for the survey site itself.

Table 4.1: Bat Records from North Yorkshire Bat Group within 2km

Roost Records				
Record Type	**Species & no. of bats if provided**	**Location**	**Distance from property**	**Record date**
Summer roosts in various buildings	Common pipistrelle x 12 Soprano pipistrelle x Brown long eared Natterers Myotis x 2	Grantley Hall	850m north-east	2015
Summer roost	Brown long eared x 3	Ned Hole, Eavestone	1.1km south-west	1988
Maternity roost	Brown long eared x 14 Common pipistrelle x 15	Sawley	1.3km south-west	2015
Summer roost	Brown long eared x 1	Risplith	1.3km east	1990
Summer roost	Pipistrelle species x 1	Eavestone Cragg	1.4km south-west	2005
Summer roost	Common pipistrelle x 4	High Grantley	1.7km north	2015
Maternity roost	Common pipistrelle x 300	Low Grantley	1.7km north-east	2010

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4.2 Initial Bat Scoping Survey

See Section 7: Photographs

Building 1: Small Stone Barn

Exterior

- Pointing in very good condition with no gaps in the mortar or brick work observed on any elevation.
- Rake edges (edge of roof tiles at gable ends) sealed with no missing mortar or potential bat access observed.
- Roof tiles in good condition with no missing or displaced tiles and all ridge tiles sealed with no displaced mortar observed.

Interior

- Pointing in the small end room was in good condition with the walls rendered, painted white with no gaps at the gable ends.
- Remnants of render and paint present on the walls in all other areas with small, shallow gaps between the roof tiles and walls at the gable ends.
- The roof frame was in good condition with few gaps at the joins observed.
- The roof tiles were unlined and back pointed was constructed of unlined corrugated panels on a wooden frame.

Evidence of Bats

Despite a thorough search of the entire barn no evidence of bats was observed at any location.

Building 2: Outbuilding:

Exterior

- Pointing in very good condition with no gaps in the mortar or brick work observed.
- Gables ends sealed with no missing mortar or potential bat access observed.
- Roof panels – unlined corrugated sheets.

Interior

- Pointing in good condition with no gaps in the mortar or brick work observed.
- The corrugated roof panels unlined.

Evidence of Bats

No evidence of bats was observed at any location.

4.3 Breeding Birds

Two inactive swallow nests were present in the small end room of Building 1.

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5 Interpretation and Potential Impacts

5.1 Interpretation of Results

Bats

Building 1: Small Stone Barn

Very few features with the potential l to support bats were observed at any location within the barn. Although there was a small gap between the roof tiles and wall at the internal gable ends of the barn on closer inspection, these were shallow and sub-optimal for bats.

Given the accessibility, ease of survey and use of bans to store items long-term it is considered highly likely that should a bat roost have been present – even a small non-breeding roost – evidence of bats would have been observed during the survey.

Given the lack of field evidence and the paucity of feature suitable for bats Building 1: Small Stone Barn was considered to have a *Negligible Potential to Support a Bat Roost.*

Building 2: Outbuilding

This building was very well pointed inside and out with an unlined corrugated roof and no evidence of bats was observed.

Given the lack of field evidence and the paucity of feature suitable for bats Building 2: Outbuilding was considered to have a *Negligible Potential to Support a Bat Roost.*

Breeding Birds

Two inactive swallow *Hirundo rustica* nests were observed in the small end room of Building 1: Small Stone Barn.

Swallows typically return to the same nest sites each year (between March / April until September / October) an it is highly likely this part of the barn will support nesting swallows each year.

5.2 Potential Impacts

Bats

Both buildings were considered to have a *Negligible Potential to Support a Bat Roost* and the proposed works are therefore considered highly unlikely to impact a bat roost.

Breeding Birds

Works to the small end room in Building 1: Small Stone Barn may result in the destruction of two active swallow nests if conducted between March / April and September/October.

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6 Recommendations

6.1 Bats

Further Surveys

No further surveys are recommended.

6.2 Breeding Birds

Timing of Works

All species of breeding birds are protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 and disturbance to breeding birds and active nests is an offence. Work to Building 1: Small Stone Barn should not take place if breeding swallows are present and may need to be carried out outside the main breeding season (typically between April and September inclusive).

Provision of Swallow Nest Sites

Alternative nest sites should be provided within Building 2: Outbuilding to compensate for the loss of nests sites in Building 1: Small Stone Barn.

This can be achieved by:

- Creation of access into the room within Building 2 that is least disturbed during the summer.
    - This can be created by the removal of one of the small existing window panes.
- At least two commcerially available swallow nest cups should be attached inside Building 2 high up on the internal walls (one close to each internal gable apex) out of reach of cats and other predators.

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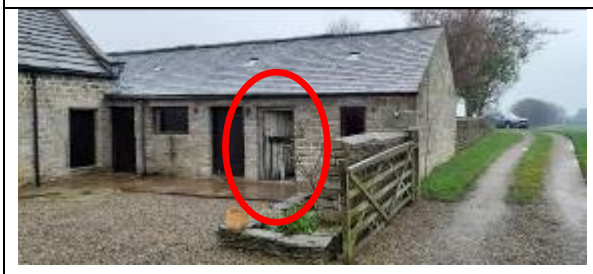
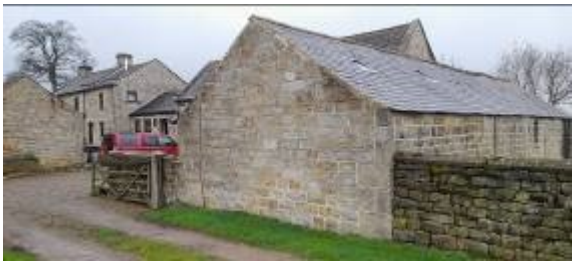
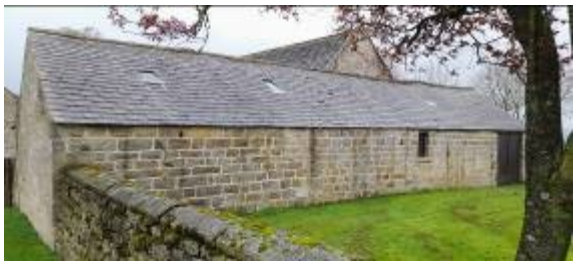
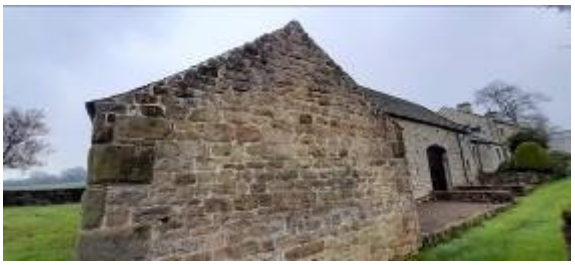
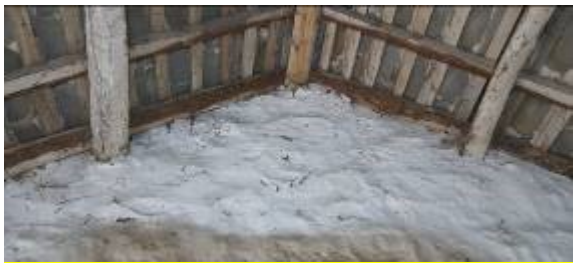
7 Photographs

Building 1: Small Stone Barn

West elevation – access to small end room circled	South gable end and east elevation
	
East Elevation	North gable end
	
Internal gable end – small end room	Swallow nest – small end room
	

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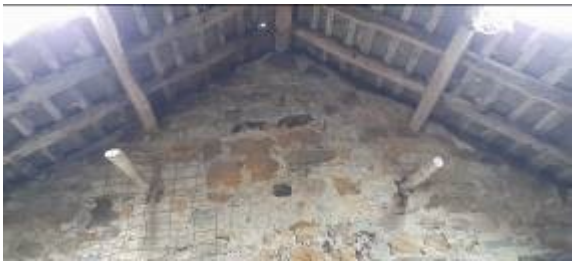
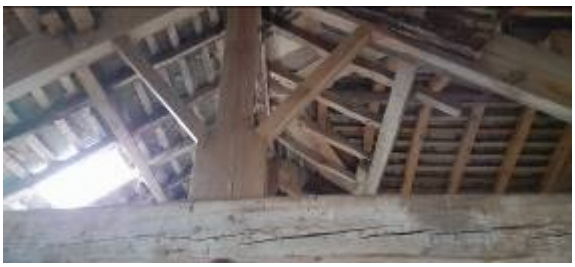
Interior of main barn area	Internal gable of main barn area
	
Internal roof tiles	Roof frame
	

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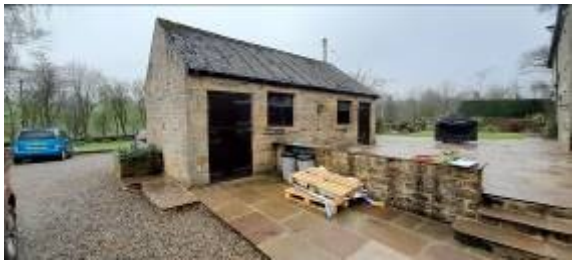
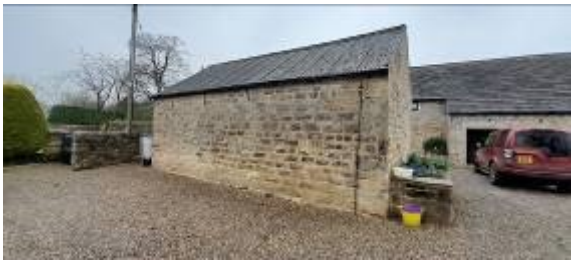
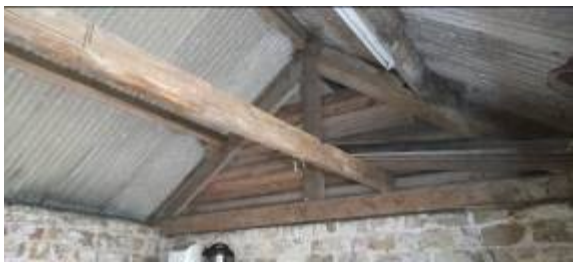
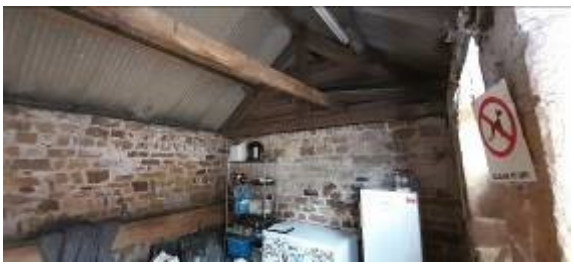
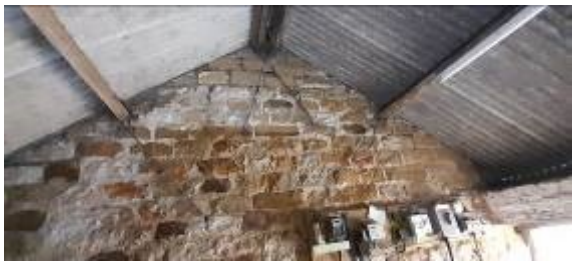
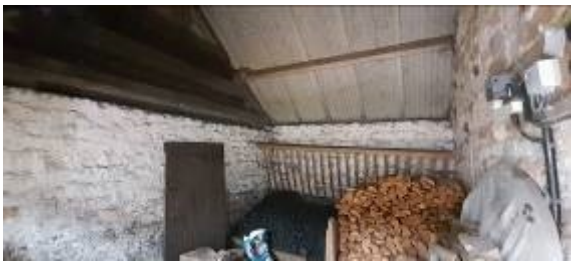
Building 2: Outbuilding

North elevation (front)	South elevation (rear)
	
Ceiling of utility room	Utility room
	
Cielng of coal store	Coal store
	

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Figures

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Figure 1: Site Location Plan

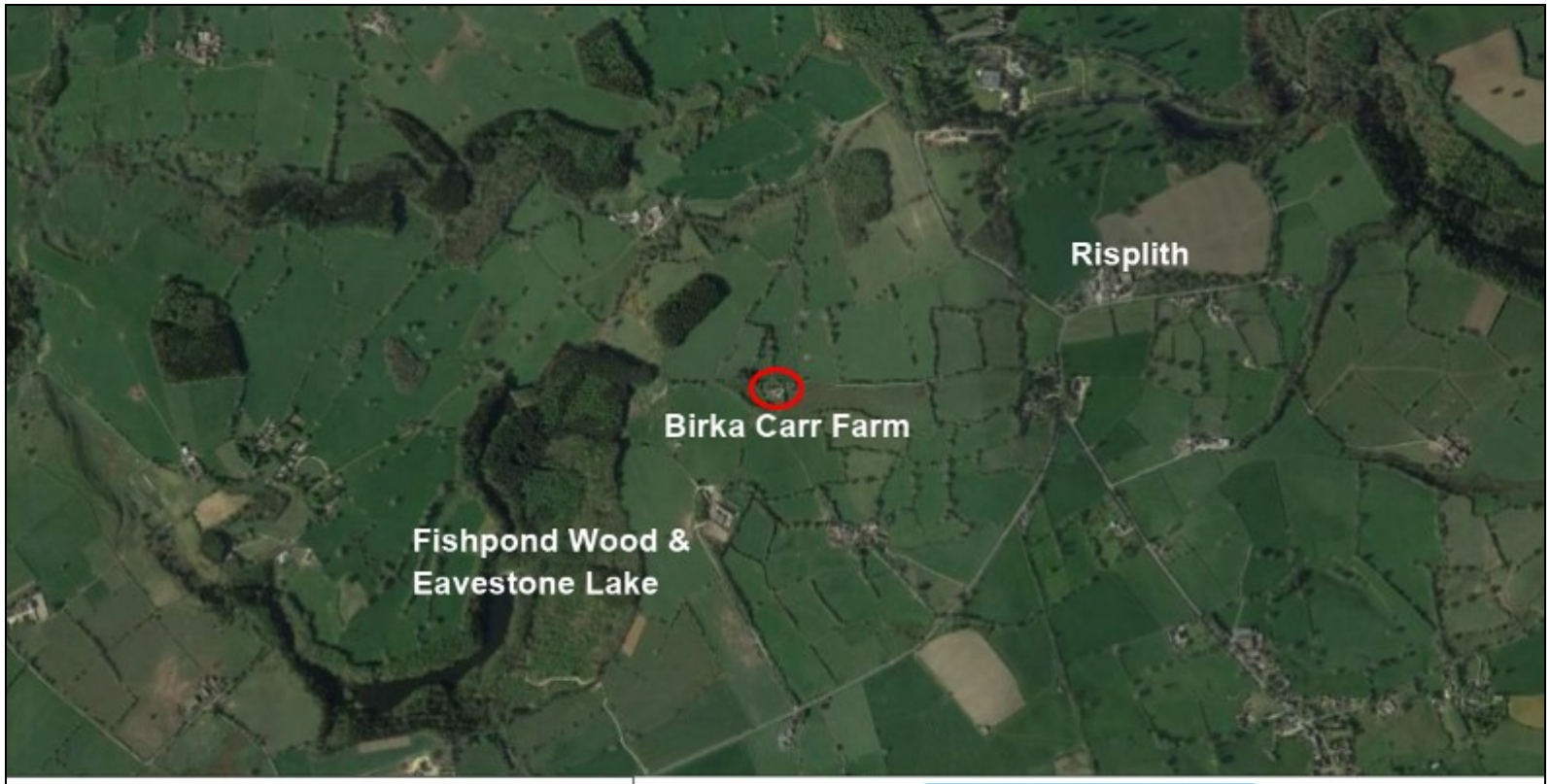

Figure 1: Site Location
Site: Birka Carr Farm, Risplith

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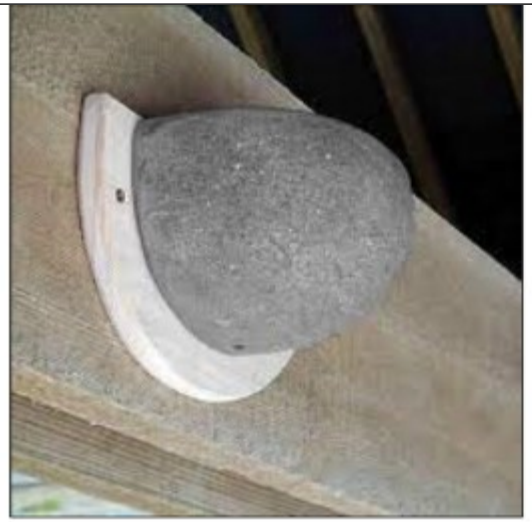
Figure 2: Examples of Commercially Available Swallow Nest



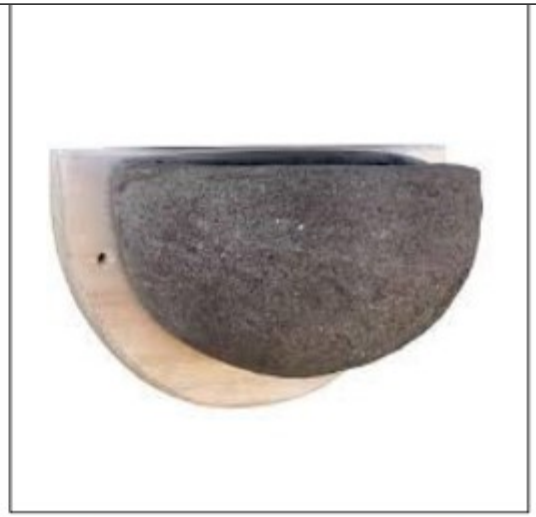


Figure 2: Examples of Commercially Available Swallow Nest

Site: Birka Carr Farm, Risplith

Photos taken from https://shopping.rspb.org.uk

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Appendices

Appendix 1: Probability of a Site Being Used by Bats

Factors Affecting the Probable Value of Development Sites for Bats.

Value for bats	Features within or adjacent to the site
Lower  Higher	• No features likely to be used by bats (roosting, foraging or commuting) • No suitable foraging habitat • Small number of potential roost sites in buildings or trees (i.e., probably not maternity roost of hibernacula). • Isolated foraging habitat not connected to the wider landscape by linear features such as water courses, tree lines etc. • Site is close to known bat roosts. • Bats recorded or observed using an area for foraging of commuting close to a potential roost. • Site is connected with the wider landscape by strong linear features that could be used by commuting bats e.g., river valleys, streams or hedgerows. • High quality habitat for foraging bats e.g., broad laved woodland, tree lines watercourses and grazed parkland • Buildings or trees with many potential roost sites • Presence of structures with particular significance for roosting bats (e.g., mines, caves, tunnels, ice houses & cellars).
Confirmed Presence	• Evidence indicates that a building, tree or other structure is used by bats e.g. • Bats seen roosting or observed flying form a roost or freely in the habitat • Droppings, carcasses feeding remains etc. found • Bats heard “chattering” inside the roost on a warm day or at dusk.

Adapted from BCT. 2012. Bat Surveys - Good Practice Guidelines BCT, London - Table 4.2 Page 24

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Assessing the Potential of Buildings to Support Bats in Summer

Likelihood of bats being present	Feature of the building or structure and its location
High bat roost potential  Negligible bat roost potential	• Pre 20th century / early 20th century structures and traditional stone / timber agricultural buildings • Large, complex buildings with large, unobstructed roof voids • Warm roof void - warmed by sun, boilers, heating pipes *etc* • Large (>20cm) roof timbers with mortice joints, cracks and holes. • High number of potential access points i.e., gaps / holes between masonry, under the eaves, in soffits and in the roof tiles and gable ends • Hanging tiles or wood cladding, esp. on south facing walls • Largely undisturbed structures / roof voids • Close or adjacent to suitable foraging habitat e.g., to water or woodland of linear features leading to foraging areas • Rural setting
	• Modern construction of steel and sheet materials • Modern well-maintained buildings with few potential access points • Cool, draughty, cluttered roof voids, with dense covering of webs and dust. • Active industrial setting or high levels of disturbance • Highly urbanised environment with few potential feeding areas close by • No adjacent commuting corridors / linear features to foraging areas • High levels of external lighting • No / few potential access points

Adapted from JNCC. 2004. Bat Mitigation Guidelines. JNCC, Peterborough - Table 5.1 Page 22 and BCT. 2016. Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists - Good Practice Guidelines BCT, London - Table 4.1 Page 35

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Appendix 2: Relevant Planning Policy and Legislation

National Planning Policy Framework[3]

Section 15: Conserving and Enhancing the Natural Environment

170. Planning policies and decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by:

a. Protecting and enhancing valued landscapes, sites of biodiversity or geological value and soils (in a manner commensurate with their statutory status or identified quality in the development plan)
b. …
c. …
d. Minimising impacts on and providing net gains for biodiversity, including by establishing coherent ecological networks that are more resilient to current and future pressures;
e. …
f. …

Habitats and Biodiversity

174. To protect and enhance biodiversity and geodiversity, plans should:

a Identify, map and safeguard components of local wildlife-rich habitats and wider ecological networks, including the hierarchy of international, national and locally designated sites of importance for biodiversity; wildlife corridors and stepping stones that connect them; and areas identified by national and local partnerships for habitat management, enhancement, restoration or creation and
b Promote the conservation, restoration and enhancement of priority habitats, ecological networks and the protection and recovery of priority species; and identify and pursue opportunities for securing measurable net gains for biodiversity.

Harrogate District Local Plan 2014 – 2035:

Policy NE3: Protecting the Natural Environment

- Proposals that protect and enhance features of ecological and geological interest and provide net gains in biodiversity will be supported.

Nesting Birds

All birds, their nests and eggs are protected by law under the Wildlife and Countryside Act (WCA) 1981. Under the legislation it is an offence, with certain exceptions to:

- Intentionally kill, injure or take any wild bird.
- Intentionally take, damage or destroy the nest of any wild bird whilst it is in use or being built.

[3] Available from: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/810197/NPPF_Feb_2019_revised.pdf.

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- Intentionally take or destroy the egg of any wild bird.
- Intentionally or recklessly disturb any wild bird listed on Schedule 1 while it is nest building, or at a nest containing eggs or young, or disturb the dependent young of such a bird.

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