

# **Moor Farm**

Talaton

## **Topic-specific Ecological Appraisal**

For

Ms. Pascoe

May 2022



### **Ecological Consultancy**

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Written on 26.05.2022

Reference *MoorFarmTsEA.doc*

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## Topic-specific Ecological Appraisal

### **The purpose and scope of the appraisal**

The author has been instructed by Stephen Boundy MSc. MRTPI. of Stags Professional Services, who are acting for Ms. Pascoe, to carry out an ecological appraisal of the interior and exterior of a stable cum barn at Moor Farm. The owner proposes to convert the building and to add on an extension, to provide residential accommodation. The conversion would be for her own use and since the building adjoins a livery business, it is very important that she would be able to continue to live on site.

The specific purpose of the survey, which was carried out on the 19<sup>th</sup> May 2022, was to identify any opportunities for bats to roost or birds to nest within any part of the building, or to note evidence of recent or past use. A number of images were taken during the survey and eight of these are used, as an appendix, to illustrate this report. Devon County Council Wildlife checklists (version 2) have also been populated.

The building was constructed with blockstone walls, capped with bricks. Blockstone pillars were constructed to support the ends of the single span roof support joists. The corrugated metal roof rests on wooden beams laid onto the brick wall-capping, as shown in the images. The interior of the building was surveyed, to detect any evidence of bat roosting or previous bird nesting activity within the stable and integral barn. The survey indicted no evidence of use by bats, but an old blackbird's nest had been constructed on top of one of the blockstone pillars (see image 06120) There was no evidence of swallows nesting within the building on the 19th May. The images show that there are large openings in the front and side of the single floor-area building. There are, in addition, eight ventilation openings in the back wall of both parts of the building. The combination of access and ventilation openings in the walls and clear plastic panels in the roof, results in the whole building being both light and very well ventilated.

A combination of regular disturbance, high light levels and very effective ventilation, make the building unsuitable as a bat roost. The farm is located to the south of the village and it is surrounded by hedged fields with blocks of woodland. It is therefore likely that the area around the building itself will be attractive to foraging bats. But, the building itself will have minimal impact on foraging within the area. Reconfiguration of the building is extremely unlikely to have any deleterious impact any protected species,

No native vegetation would be affected by the owner's proposals to convert and to extend the building.

### **Conclusions**

It is the author's professional opinion, that there are no ecological or habitat factors that would constrain the owner's plans to convert the existing building and to add an extension, in order to provide living accommodation for her own use. There is currently no evidence of swallows or other birds nesting within the building, so there would be no time or seasonal constraints, as to when the work would need to be carried out.

Since there is no evidence of existing use by birds or bats, no recommendations are made for the installation of any bat roost boxes or bricks, in or on the outside of the re-configured building. Ms. Pascoe will consider the feasibility to installing swallow nest cups in another of her stable buildings. She may wish to consider planting a native species hedge around a garden enclosure in which the building is located. The feasibility of planting a wildflower meadow is also being considered.

The author would be very willing to advise Ms. Pascoe as to how best to make the areas within the farm as wildlife friendly as possible, in order to achieve an obligatory >10% enhancement in biodiversity.

## 9 References

**HMSO** Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 – as amended

**HMSO** The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010 - as amended

**HMSO** Habitats Directive (92/43/EC)

**HMSO** Hedgerow Regulations 1997

**Gov. UK** The National Planning and Policies Framework 2012 (revised in July 2021)

**HMSO Government Circular** (ODPM 06/2005 & DEFRA 01/2005) *Biodiversity and Geological Conservation – Statutory Obligations and Their Impact within the Planning System*

**JNCC's** Manual *Handbook for Phase 1 Habitat Survey a technique for environmental audit* (2010).

**British Standards Institution** (2013) *BS42020 Biodiversity – A code of practice for planning and development*

**Mitchell Jones A J.** (2004) *Bat Mitigation Guidelines* English Nature

**Andrew Salisbury et al** (August 2015). *Enhancing gardens as habitats for flower-visiting aerial insects (pollinators): should we plant native or exotic species ?*. Journal of Applied Ecology

**10 Appendices** (provided as separate files and not as an integral part of this Ecological Assessment)

1 Digital images

2 Wildlife checklists

## Footnote

Research carried out by Andrew Salisbury, the Royal Horticultural Society's Principal Entomologist and colleagues, has demonstrated in a peer-reviewed paper *Enhancing gardens as habitats for flower-visiting aerial insects (pollinators): should we plant native or exotic species*, that gardens with a range of native, northern and southern hemisphere plants provide optimum nectar and pollen availability for insects that play a critically important role in pollinating crops and other flowering plants.