

Devon Wildlife Checklist (to be filled in by the ecological consultant and included in the front of the Wildlife Report)

A.1 Protected and priority species (relates to question 13a in the planning application form).

A tick or cross must be placed in all boxes in column two (shaded) and then, where there is a tick, all other boxes in that row. Where species are present please email this form to Devon Biodiversity Records Centre - DBRC@dbrc.org.uk.

Location Beaford Grid reference for centre of site (6 digit) SS 550156 Planning Application reference: The Old Parsonage
 Name of surveyor and consultancy: C Carter, Brookside Ecology Date that surveys carried out: May 2021 Sent to DBRC: n

Species - terrestrial, intertidal, marine	Walkover shows that suitable habitat present and reasonably likely that the species will be found? <small>Tick or cross</small>	Detailed survey needed to clarify impacts and mitigation requirements?	Detailed survey carried out and included?	Species Present or Assumed to be present on site <small>Indicate with P or A and name the species</small>	Impact on species?	Detailed Conservation Action Statement included?	EPS offence committed? Three tests met?	Grid reference for specific location of species (if required for large sites)
Bats (roost)	X							
Bats (flight line / foraging habitat)	X							
Dormice	X							
Otters	X							
Great crested newts (*check consultation zone)	X							
Cirl buntings (*check consultation zone)	X							
Barn owls	X							
Other Schedule 1 birds	X							
Breeding birds	√	X	X	A Several	Likely low	Recommendations made	X	
Reptiles	X							
Native crayfish	X							
Water voles	X							
Badgers	X							
Other protected species	X							
UK BAP priority species	X							
Devon BAP key species	X							
Invasive species	X							

- Devon consultation zones for cirl buntings and great crested newts - <http://www.devon.gov.uk/index/wildlife.htm>
- UK BAP priority species - <http://incc.defra.gov.uk/page-5717>
- Devon BAP key species - http://www.devon.gov.uk/dbap-section_e.pdf (note that this list is currently being updated)

A.2 Designations / important habitats / sites of geological importance (relates to questions 13 b & c in the planning application form)

A tick or cross must be placed in all boxes in column two and then, where there is a tick, all other boxes in that row.

Designation	Within site or potential impact. <small>TICK OR CROSS</small>	Name of site / habitat	Detailed Conservation Action Statement included in report ?	Habitat balance sheet included (showing area of habitats lost, gained and overall net gain)	Relevant organisation consulted & response included in the application?
Terrestrial, intertidal, marine					
Statutory designations					
European designations - Special Area of Conservation (SAC), Special Protection Area (SPA) and RAMSAR site or within Greater Horseshoe consultation zone	x				
Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs)	x				
Marine Conservation Zone (MCZ)	x				
Local Nature Reserve (LNR)	x				
Non statutory wildlife designations					
County Wildlife Site (CWS)	x				
Ancient woodland	x				
Special Verges	x				
UK BAP Priority habitat	x				
Local Biodiversity Network (mapped by Devon Wildlife Trust / through Green Infrastructure work)	x				
Non statutory geological designation					
County Geological Site (CGS or RIGS)					

- List of UK BAP priority habitats -

Building at
The Old Parsonage,
Beaford,
Winkleigh, Devon,
EX19 8AQ.
Ecological Assessment
Report

May 2021

Client Name:	Mr Rogers
Version:	1
Survey Date(s):	10 th May 2021
Report Date:	17 th May 2021
Prepared by:	Craig Carter BSc (Hons) MEnvSc
Position:	Principal Ecologist

Quality assurance

This survey work and report has been undertaken with reference to; The publication 'Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists' Collins, J. (ed) 2016, 3rd edition, Bat Conservation Trust, London.

Description	Ecological Assessment
Produced for	Rogers
Issue	1
Report Reference	The Old Parsonage
Date of Survey Work	10/05/2021
Author	Craig Carter Bsc(Hons) MCIEEM, MiEnvSc Principal Ecologist
Checked & reviewed by	Marcus Pearmain

DISCLAIMER

This report provides a broad overview of the legal protection of wildlife and specifically relates to how the law is applied in England. The law applied to other countries of the United Kingdom may differ. This report does not offer formal legal advice and no liability is accepted. If legal advice is required related to wildlife issues, this should be sought from appropriate professionals.

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Brief Summary

Brookside Ecology was commissioned by Mr Rogers to undertake an Ecological Assessment of a building at The Old Parsonage, Beaford, Winkleigh. The assessment was undertaken to inform proposals for the conversion of a building in relation to the potential presence of protected species for legislative and planning requirements.

The assessment found the building to be in an area that provides suitable habitat for bats and other wildlife. The assessment concludes the area has 'high suitability for bat commuting and foraging habitat.'

The desk study revealed the site is within an 'impact risk zone' of statutory sites designated for their scientific or conservation value. This proposal does not appear to fall into one of the identified risk categories that might require the local planning authority to consult Natural England on the likely risks to designated sites.

The building was assessed as having 'negligible suitability for roosting bats.' The building's simple construction type of single sheet materials provide no hidden voids where bats might roost unseen and would provide sub-optimal conditions as a bat roost site, and no evidence of their presence was found.

Evidence of previous seasons birds nests was found within the building and accordingly, the report makes recommendation for a precautionary approach to works to avoid the disturbance of nesting birds. This approach is detailed in the Conservation Action Statement included in the report along with proposals to retain sites for nesting birds and enhance the site for other wildlife post development in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework documents and Devon County Council requirements.

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1. Introduction

1. Brookside Ecology was commissioned by Mr Rogers to undertake an Ecological Assessment of a building at The Old Parsonage at Ordnance Survey Grid Reference (OSGR) SS 5509 1560. The assessment was undertaken to inform proposals in relation to the potential presence of protected species for planning and legislative requirements.

Proposed Development

2. Proposals are to convert the building for residential accommodation.

Objectives

3. The purpose of this preliminary assessment is to:
 - Identify any ecological, bat or other protected or notable species issues that may impact the proposals.
 - Make preliminary recommendations for mitigation and enhancement opportunities where required.
 - Specify further survey work if required in accordance with best practice guidance.

2. Methods

- 2.1. The assessment of the building was undertaken 10th May 2021 by Craig Carter and Marcus Pearmain, experienced Natural England registered bat workers.
- 2.2. A visual inspection of the interior and exterior of a building is undertaken for evidence of bat use following standard survey methodologies. The publication 'Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists'¹ is used for reference and guidance.
- 2.3. Several factors are taken into consideration during an assessment. These include; features present within or on the site that would support roosting bats; the potential for disturbance; lighting impacts; proximity of features to foraging habitat; connectivity to the site between it and the wider countryside.
- 2.4. A thorough examination of the exterior of a building is undertaken to search for evidence of bat use with a visual inspection of structures such as window and door lintels, gaps in walls, lead flashing, fascia boards, ridge, roof and hanging tiles where present. Underneath these features a search for evidence of droppings, staining from urine and fur oil that might indicate use by bats.
- 2.5. The internal search of a building follows a similar approach with a thorough search made of crevices in timber joints, wall sockets and gaps in walls where present. Evidence of bat droppings, urine stains plus prey residues such as fly, butterfly or moth wings and any live bats or bat carcasses that might be present.
- 2.6. Equipment available for use include close-focussing binoculars - Vistron 10 x 40, Endoscope - Scopecam, 3.8 metre extendable ladders and high powered torches – Clulite.
- 2.7. The bat roosting potential of a building is assessed along with the surrounding habitat/commuting features and classified into one of the following categories:

Suitability	Description of roost potential
Negligible	Negligible feature/s likely to be used by roosting bats
Low	Structures with one or more potential roost sites that could be used by individual bats opportunistically. However, these potential roost sites do not provide enough space, shelter, protection, appropriate conditions and/or suitable surrounding habitat to be used on a regular basis or by larger numbers of bats (i.e. unlikely to be suitable for maternity or hibernation).
Moderate	Structures with one or more potential roost sites that could be used by bats due to their size, shelter, protection, conditions and surrounding habitat but unlikely to support a roost of high conservation status (with respect to roost type only – the assessments in this table are made irrespective of species conservation status, which is established after presence is confirmed).
High	Structures with one or more potential roost sites that are obviously suitable for use by larger number of bats on a more regular basis and potentially for longer periods of time due to their size, shelter, protection, conditions and surrounding habitat.
Roost	Known or confirmed roost

Table 1. Bat roosting potential of buildings/structures, adapted from Collins 2016 (Description of commuting/habitat aspects removed for simplicity)

¹ Collins, J. (ed) 2016, Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines. 3rd edition, Bat Conservation Trust, London.

Other notable species and ecological issues

- 2.8. Full consideration is given to how the development might impact other species and habitats on, and immediately surrounding the development.
- 2.9. In a development such as this the most likely wildlife that might be encountered would be nesting birds and hence a search is made for nests and faecal deposits.

Desk Study

- 2.10. The Multi-Agency Geographic Information for the Countryside (MAGIC) website was consulted to identify sites designated for their conservation or biological interest. The Natural England website was used to obtain citation details of statutory sites.
- 2.11. Google satellite view was used to identify habitats of value to protected and notable species including woodland, tree lines and hedgerows, scrub, areas of grassland and waterbodies.
- 2.12. An inspection of the planning portal revealed a bat survey report of a survey undertaken in 2016 to inform a roof replacement. This found a small number of bat droppings which the consultant considered indicative of a likely single bat of Brown Long-eared species. The report made recommendations for a precautionary approach to the roof replacement.

Limitations

- 2.13. None.

3. Legislation & Planning Policy

- 3.1. A brief outline of relevant wildlife legislation is detailed below with a focus on that relevant to the site in question. It is not meant to be an in depth treatise of all wildlife regulations as this is not possible within the scope of this report. It is advised that individuals should seek professional legal advice if necessary.

Bats

- 3.2. All British bats are protected under both UK and EU law; The Conservation of Habitats and Species (Amendment) (EU Exit) Regulations 2019 ('Habitats Regulations'), as amended and carried over under Brexit legislation to English law.
- 3.3. The Regulations makes it an offence to:
- Deliberately capture, injure or kill bat(s);
 - Deliberately disturb bat(s) affecting their ability to survive, breed, rear young or significantly affect local distribution or abundance;
 - Damage or destroy a breeding site or resting place, whether present or not;
 - Intentionally or recklessly disturb a bat roost;
 - Intentionally or recklessly obstruct access to roost sites;
 - Possess, control, transport, sell, exchange or offer for sale or exchange, live or dead bats, or parts thereof.
- 3.7. Some rare bat species, namely Greater Horseshoe *Rhinolophus ferrumequinum*, Lesser Horseshoe *Rhinolophus hipposideros*, Barbastelle *Barbastellus barbastellus* and Bechstein's *Myotis bechsteinii*, are afforded greater protection under European legislation, being listed under Annex II of the EC Habitats Directive which lists species whose conservation requires the designation of Special Areas of Conservation (SACs).

Birds

- 3.8. All wild birds are protected under the Habitats Regulations. Under this legislation it is an offence to:
- Kill, injure or take any wild bird;
 - Take, damage or destroy the nest of any wild bird while it is in use or being built; and
 - Take or destroy the egg of any wild bird.

National Planning Policy

- 3.6. The relevant adopted policy at the national level is set out in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) as amended 2019, which sets out the Government's planning policies for England and how these are expected to be applied. This emphasises the need for planning authorities to consider biological conservation and the need for maintaining and enhancing biodiversity within planning policies and decisions. Specific sections of particular relevance to development include:
- 3.7. Paragraph 175 states; when determining planning applications, local planning authorities should apply the following principles:
- 3.8. a) if significant harm to biodiversity resulting from a development cannot be avoided (through locating on an alternative site with less harmful impacts), adequately mitigated, or, as a last resort, compensated for, then planning permission should be refused;
- 3.9. b) development on land within or outside a Site of Special Scientific Interest, and which is likely to have an adverse effect on it (either individually or in combination with other developments), should not normally be

permitted. The only exception is where the benefits of the development in the location proposed clearly outweigh both its likely impact on the features of the site that make it of special scientific interest, and any broader impacts on the national network of Sites of Special Scientific Interest;

- 3.10. c) development resulting in the loss or deterioration of irreplaceable habitats (such as ancient woodland and ancient or veteran trees) should be refused, unless there are wholly exceptional reasons and a suitable compensation strategy exists; and
- 3.11. d) development whose primary objective is to conserve or enhance biodiversity should be supported; while opportunities to incorporate biodiversity improvements in and around developments should be encouraged, especially where this can secure measurable net gains for biodiversity.

4. Results

Weather

4.1. Dry, 90% Cloud Cover, Temperature 11°C, Wind speed Beaufort <1

Site Context



Figure 1. Red marker indicates location

4.2. The site is located to the north of the village of Beaford in Devon, approximately 96 metres above sea level. The building is surrounded by fields of grassland and arable bordered by Devon hedges and some light residential and agricultural development. Adjacent hedges would provide connectivity to the wider countryside for wildlife that use such features. There would be low levels of light pollution in the area of the building.



Plate 1. Google satellite view, red area indicates building surveyed



Plate 2. Northern elevation of building

Building

- 4.3. The building (Plate 2) is a building of part concrete block, part corrugated sheet material sides and a steel girder supported corrugated metal sheet roof. To the eastern elevation is an attached lean-to of similar construction with corrugated cement fibre roof.
- 4.4. Externally the building has a multiple of gaps between roofing and walling sheets, to the eaves and surrounding entrances large enough to provide easy access to wildlife such as bats and birds.
- 4.5. Internally (Plate 6), the building is open to the underside of the roof. All areas were clearly visible for inspection.
- 4.6. The search of the building found two previous seasons birds nests (Plates 7,8). No evidence of bats was found to the building.



Plate 3. Side, eastern elevation of building.



Plate 4. Rear, southern elevation



Plate 5. Internal view of main building



Plate 6. Internal view of lean-to



Plate 7. Previous seasons Barn Swallow nest



Plate 8. Previous seasons passerine nest

Surrounds

- 4.7. The building is bordered by a local road on its northern side. The western border is a hedge with trees of Sycamore *Acer pseudoplatanus* and Blackthorn *Prunus spinosa*. The southern border is a grassy bank that borders the neighbouring field of grassland. The remainder to the east of the building is an agricultural yard of compacted hardcore (Plate 3).

Desk Study

- 4.8. The Multi-Agency Geographic Information for the Countryside (MAGIC) website was consulted and revealed the site is within 'impact risk zone' of statutory sites. However, this proposal does not appear to require the planning authority to consult Natural England on potential risks to such sites.
- The 1km search revealed;
 - North Devon Biosphere Reserve

5. Conclusions and Recommendations

- 5.1. The assessment found the building to be in an area that provides suitable habitat for bats and other wildlife and good habitat of open countryside with adjacent hedges that would provide connectivity from the site and the wider country side. There are high levels of light pollution in the area of the building. The assessment concludes the area has 'high suitability for bat commuting and foraging habitat.'
- 5.2. The desk study revealed the site is within an 'impact risk zone' of statutory sites designated for their scientific or conservation value. Impact risk zones are used in the assessment of planning applications for likely impacts on SSSIs, SACs, Special Protection Areas (SPAs) and Ramsar sites. This proposal does not appear to fall into one of the identified risk categories that might require the local planning authority to consult Natural England on the likely risks to designated sites.
- 5.3. The building was assessed as having 'negligible suitability for roosting bats' (see assessment criteria page 6). The building's simple construction type of single sheet materials provide no hidden voids where bats might roost unseen and not be found in a daytime search. The building provides sub-optimal conditions as a bat roost site and no evidence of their presence was found.
- 5.4. Evidence of previous seasons birds nests was found within the building and accordingly, a precautionary approach is recommended to the conversion works to avoid the disturbance of nesting birds. This approach is detailed in the Conservation Action Statement included along with proposals to retain sites for nesting birds and enhance the site for other wildlife in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework documents and Devon County Council requirements.

Further Survey

- 5.5. None required.

Conservation Action Statement

Mitigation

The building should be checked for actively nesting birds before proceeding with works. If actively nesting birds are present, works must not commence until they have completed nesting and their young have fully fledged.

Ecological enhancement proposal

A House 'Sparrow Terrace' bird box, two Barn Swallow nest cups and a bat box to be provided on site as per Figure 2 below.



Figure 2. Ecological enhancement proposal