



BiOME
CONSULTING

www.BiOMEconsulting.com

**Buildings at Spooners
The Heath, Woolpit
Suffolk**

Preliminary Roost Assessment Report

ANGLIA DESIGN LLP

VERSION 2
Final

22 February 2023

BiOME Consulting Limited, Horseshoe Barn, Halvergate, Norfolk, NR13 3AJ
info@biomeconsulting.com

COPYRIGHT: The concepts and information contained in this document are the property of BiOME Consulting Limited. Use or copying of this document in whole or in part without the written permission of BiOME Consulting Limited constitutes an infringement of copyright.

LIMITATION: This report has been prepared on behalf of and for the exclusive use of BiOME Consulting Limited's Client, and is subject to and issued in connection with the provisions of the agreement between BiOME Consulting Limited and its Client. BiOME Consulting Limited accepts no liability or responsibility whatsoever for or in respect of any use of or reliance upon this report by any third party.



Document History and Status

| Revision | Date Issued | Reviewed By | Approved By | Date Approved | Revision Type |
|----------|-------------|-------------|-------------|---------------|----------------------------|
| 1 | 22/02/2023 | MO | | | Draft for Technical Review |
| 2 | 22/02/2023 | MO | MO | 22/02/2023 | Final |

| | |
|-------------------------|--|
| Author | Richard Moores |
| Project Manager | Richard Moores |
| Client | Anglia Design LLP |
| Name of Project | Buildings at Spooners, The Heath, Woolpit, Suffolk |
| Name of Document | Preliminary Roost Assessment Report |
| Document Version | 2 |
| Document Status | Final |

Contents

| | | |
|-------------|---|-----------|
| 1. | Introduction | 1 |
| 2. | Legislative Context | 3 |
| 2.1. | Bats | 3 |
| 2.2. | Nesting Birds | 3 |
| 3. | Methodologies | 5 |
| 3.1. | Desk Study | 5 |
| 3.2. | Field Surveys | 5 |
| 3.2.1. | Suitably Qualified Ecologist Details | 5 |
| 3.2.2. | Preliminary Roost Assessment | 5 |
| 3.3. | Limitations | 7 |
| 4. | Results | 8 |
| 4.1. | Desk Study | 8 |
| 4.2. | Site Survey Results | 8 |
| 4.2.1. | Bats | 8 |
| 4.2.2.1 | Other Species | 11 |
| 5. | Conclusions and Required Actions | 12 |
| 5.1. | Designated Sites | 12 |
| 5.2. | Bats | 12 |
| 5.3. | Report/Survey Validity | 12 |

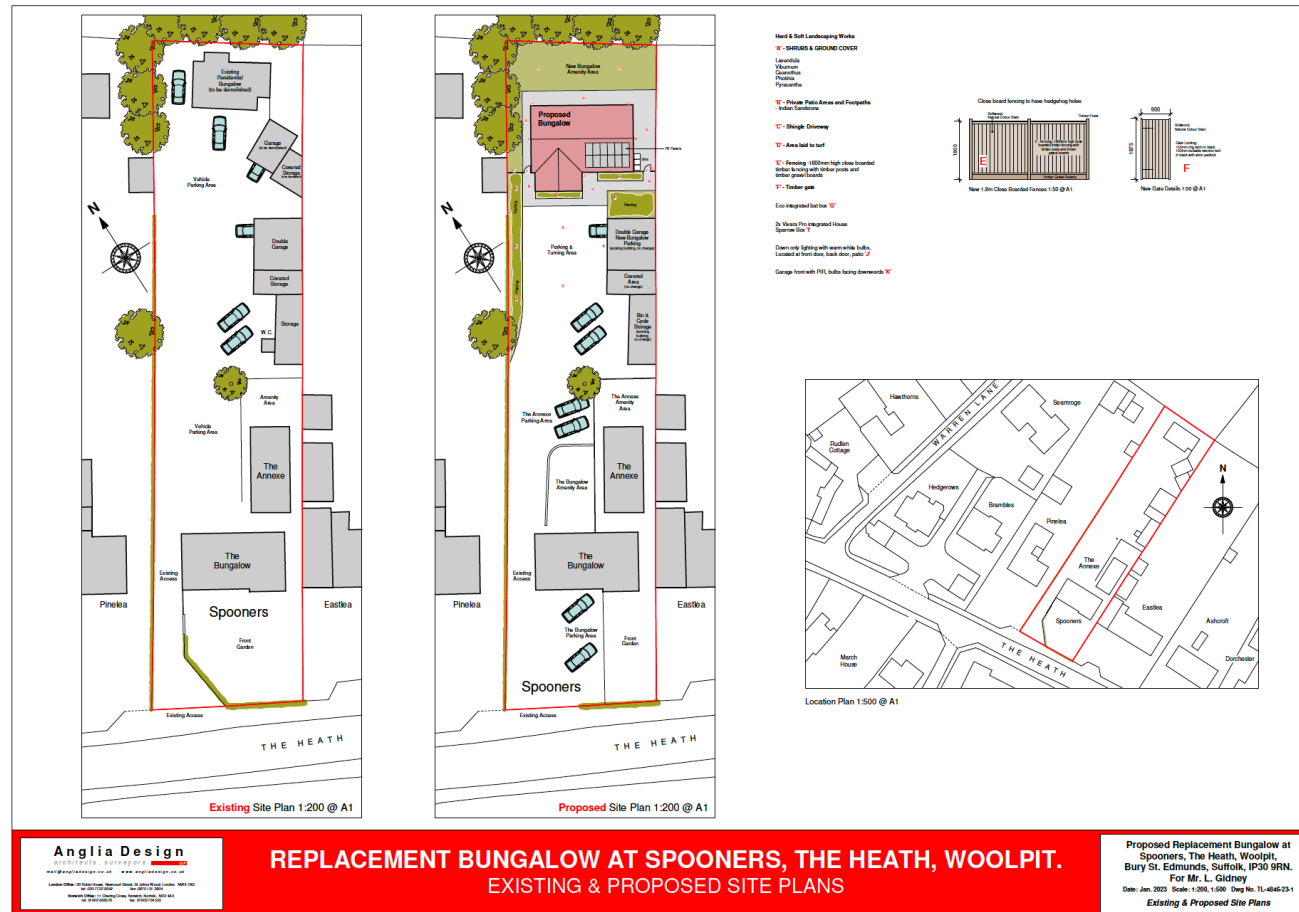
1. Introduction

BiOME Consulting Ltd was appointed by Anglia Design LLP in February 2023 to undertake a Preliminary Roost Assessment (PRA) in relation to proposed demolition of a bungalow and associated garage located at Spooners, The Heath, Woolpit, Suffolk (*'the site'*) (TL985615) (Figures 1 & 2).

Due to the nature of the project, this appraisal focussed on assessing the potential presence/likely absence of roosting bats. In addition, the potential presence of nesting birds was assessed, as well as considering potential impacts to statutorily designated sites.



Figure 2. Site Plans



2. Legislative Context

2.1. Bats

All British bat species are fully protected at national and European levels, through their inclusion in Schedule 5 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended)¹ and in Schedule 2 of the Conservation of Habitat and Species Regulations 2010². Under this legislation, it is an offence to deliberately kill, injure or take a bat as well as intentionally or recklessly damage, destroy or obstruct access to any structure or resting place used for shelter or protection by a bat or disturb an animal while it is occupying a structure or place which it uses for that purpose.

Four species of bat, Greater Horseshoe Bat *Rhinolophus ferrumequinum*, Lesser Horseshoe Bat *R. hipposideros*, Bechstein's Bat *Myotis bechsteinii* and Western Barbastelle *Barbastella barbastellus*, are included on Annex II of the Habitats Directive³, which requires the designation of Special Areas of Conservation to ensure the maintenance of favourable conservation status (and these are therefore generally considered as perhaps the most important UK species). Seven bat species are listed as Section 41⁴ priority species; Barbastelle, Bechstein's Bat, Noctule *Nyctalus noctula*, Soprano Pipistrelle *Pipistrellus pygmaeus*, Brown Long-eared Bat *Plecotus auritus*, Greater Horseshoe Bat and Lesser Horseshoe Bat.

2.2. Nesting Birds

All birds, their nests and eggs are protected by law and it is thus 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 while it is in use or being built.

1 The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended)

2 The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010

3 Council Directive 92/43/EEC of 21 May 1992 on the conservation of natural habitats and of wild fauna and flora

4 Of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006

- Intentionally take or destroy the egg of any wild bird.
- Have in one's possession or control any wild bird, dead or alive, or any part of a wild bird, which has been taken in contravention of the Act or the Protection of Birds Act 1954.
- Have in one's possession or control any egg or part of an egg which has been taken in contravention of the Act or the Protection of Birds Act 1954.
- Use traps or similar items to kill, injure or take wild birds.
- Have in one's possession or control any bird of a species occurring on Schedule 4 of the Act unless registered, and in most cases ringed, in accordance with the Secretary of State's regulations (see Schedules).
- 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.

Penalties that can be imposed for criminal offences in respect of a single bird, nest or egg contrary to the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) is an unlimited fine, up to six months imprisonment or both.

3. Methodologies

3.1. Desk Study

Information in relation to internationally designated sites and nationally designated sites within 2km were obtained from www.magic.gov.uk. A search was also completed using the same database for granted European Protected Species (EPS) development licences in relation to bats within 2km of the site.

Due to the nature of the proposals, the extent of potential impacts and the results of the site survey, the purchase of species records from the local biological records centre was considered unnecessary at this time.

3.2. Field Surveys

3.2.1. Suitably Qualified Ecologist Details

The site survey was completed by Richard Moores BSc (Hons) MCIEEM, Natural England (NE) bat licence no. 2015-12259-CLS-CLS and 2015-12257-CLS-CLS with assistance from David Bratt ACIEEM.

3.2.2. Preliminary Roost Assessment

A Preliminary Roost Assessment (PRA) survey of the bungalow and garage was completed on 20 February 2023, in line with appropriate survey guidance⁵. Weather conditions on the day were appropriate for such a survey: 1/8 cloud cover, light westerly wind, 10⁰C, dry.

The survey involved a systematic search of the exterior of the buildings to identify potential or actual bat access points and roosting sites, and to locate any evidence of bats such as live or dead specimens, bat droppings, urine splashes, fur-oil staining and/or squeaking noises. It should be noted that sometimes bats leave no visible sign of their presence on the outside of a building (and even when they do wet weather can wash away evidence).

5 Collins, J. (ed.) (2016). *Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines* (3rd edn.). The Bat Conservation Trust, London

The external inspection also included the examination of the ground, particularly beneath any potential bat access points, for example any windowsills, window panes, walls, hanging tiles, weatherboarding, eaves, soffit boxes, fascias, lead flashing, gaps under felt, and under tiles/slates.

A systematic search of the interiors of the buildings was also completed, searching for actual/potential bat access points, roosting sites and to locate any evidence of bats (e.g. live/dead specimens, droppings, urine splashes, fur-oil staining, feeding remains (such as moth wings), squeaking noises, bat-fly *Nycteribiidae* or odour). Again, it should be noted that occasionally bats leave no visible sign of their presence in a building's interior, particularly when there are hidden cracks, crevices and/or voids.

The inspection of buildings and built structures for evidence of bats, which can be conducted at all times of year, was facilitated by the use of ladders, a high-powered torch, endoscope and small dental mirrors to inspect accessible crevices considered likely to support bats. Weather conditions on the day of the survey were appropriate for undertaking ecological fieldwork (overcast and dry).

The potential suitability of the building for roosting bats was assessed in line with relevant guidelines⁵ and allocated to one of the categories detailed within **Table 1**.

Table 1. Guidelines for assessing the potential suitability of proposed development sites for bats

| Suitability | Description of Roosting Habitats |
|------------------------|---|
| Negligible | Negligible habitat features on site likely to be used by roosting bats. |
| Low | A structure/tree 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 | A structure/tree 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 | A structure/tree with one or more potential roost sites that are obviously suitable for use by larger numbers of bats on a more regular basis and potentially for longer periods of time due to their size, shelter, protection, conditions and surrounding habitat. |
| Confirmed Roost | Definitive evidence of roosting bats, i.e. live animals or accumulation of droppings associated with Potential Roost Features (PRF). |

3.3. Limitations

The findings presented in this study represent those at the time of survey and reporting, and data collected from available sources. Ecological surveys are limited by factors which affect the presence of plants and animals, such as the time of year, migration patterns and behaviour.

4. Results

4.1. Desk Study

There were no internationally or nationally designated statutorily sites within the relevant search area. Further, no details of any EPS licences granted in relation to bats (within 2km) were available.

4.2. Site Survey

4.2.1. Bats

Bungalow

The bungalow was constructed of wood with a chipboard roof covered with 1F bitumen felt (**Photograph 1**).

Photograph 1. Bungalow – south aspect



A single roof void was present (**Photograph 2**) measuring ca. 8m x 6m x 1.5m that was unlined below the chipboard and with breathable membrane at each gable end. No evidence of bats was recorded in the void.

Photograph 2. Roof void



A deceased Common Pipistrelle *Pipistrellus pipistrellus* bat was present in the window-frame just east of the entrance door (**Photograph 3**) with ca. 30 droppings around the frame, on the sills (both external and internal) and also around/in a broken vent above the window (**Photograph 4**).

This is considered likely to be an occasionally used day roost of a single individual bat (probably only the individual found deceased). However, the potential for more than one bat using this roost cannot be discounted at this stage.

No other bat evidence of Potential Roost Features (PRFs) were recorded.

The bungalow is a confirmed roost (**Table 1**).

Photograph 3. Deceased Common Pipistrelle



Photograph 4. Common Pipistrelle droppings around window frame (with broken vent visible above)



Garage

The garage (**Photograph 5**) was constructed of wood and was without any bat evidence or PRFs. Consequently, the garage was assessed to be of negligible potential to support roosting bats (**Table 1**).

Photograph 5. Garage



4.2.2.1 Other Species

No evidence of any nesting birds was recorded in association with either building and no potential for any nesting bird species was recorded.

No impacts to any other species are considered likely given the proposals.

5. Conclusions and Required Actions

5.1. Designated Sites

No impacts in relation to designated sites are anticipated and no further works are required.

5.2. Bats

Bungalow

A single roost site of a Common Pipistrelle was recorded around a window frame/broken vent above, with a deceased individual present.

Given the results of the PRA, further survey work to inform a Natural England European Protected Species (EPS) mitigation licence application will be required prior to any works commencing (to enable the works to be completed legally). This further survey work should take the form of two nocturnal surveys (emergence/re-entry surveys) completed May-August inclusive by a single surveyor (and infra-red cameras).

Garage

No evidence/potential for roosting bats was recorded and no further survey work in relation to this building is considered necessary.

5.3. Report/Survey Validity

The findings of this PRA report are considered valid for up to 18 months from the date of this report⁶. If further survey work is delayed beyond August 2024, an updated PRA will be required.

⁶ CIEEM (2019). *Advice Note on The Lifespan of Ecological Reports and Surveys* [online] available at: <https://cieem.net/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/Advice-Note.pdf>