



PRELIMINARY BAT ROOST ASSESSMENT

SHEEPWASH FARM (GARAGE), SHEEPWASH LANE, WATERLOOVILLE,
HAMPSHIRE

INTERIM DRAFT REPORT

August 2023

Report conditions

<i>Report title</i>	Preliminary Bat Roost Assessment – Sheepwash Farm (Garage), Sheepwash Lane, Waterlooville, Hampshire.		
<i>Client</i>	Rosehill Advisors Limited as Agents for the Southwick Estate		
<i>Report status</i>	Draft		
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<i>Written by</i>	Trevor Codlin MCIEEM	<i>Date</i>	14 th August 2023
<i>Finalised by</i>	XXXXXX	<i>Date</i>	

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Executive Summary

- This preliminary roost assessment report has been prepared in order to support a planning application for the demolition of an existing garage, and construction of a new replacement.
- A preliminary roost assessment survey was undertaken on the 24th July 2023.
- The building was assessed as providing suitability for bats and as a result there is considered to be a reasonable likelihood that bats will be present and impacted by the proposed works.
- Further phase 2 surveys work is recommended. This will take the form of two surveys, one dusk emergence and one dawn re-entry, to be carried out during the bat active season, which extends from May to the end of August.
- Precautionary measures have been provided for nesting birds, should they be found to be nesting on the building, although no evidence of such was recorded during the Phase 1 survey.
- The mitigation strategy will be designed upon completion of the proposed Phase 2 bat works and enhancement measures for bats have been recommended.
- Information regarding the length of time the findings of this report are valid for can be found in section 5.

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1. Introduction

1.1 Report purpose

This report presents the findings of the preliminary bat roost assessment undertaken on the garage at Sheepwash Farm, Sheepwash Lane, Waterlooville, Hampshire, centred at National Grid Reference SU 65730 09569.

1.2 Description of proposal

The proposals for the site are for the demolition of the existing garage, and replacement with new, modern structure.

1.3 Report context

Phillips Ecology have been instructed by Rosehill Advisors Limited as Agents for the Southwick Estate, to undertake this preliminary bat roost assessment of the garage.

1.4 Survey area

The survey area comprised an external inspectional and internal assessment of the garage, and the immediate surrounds.

1.5 Limitations

No imitations were encountered during the course of the survey.

1.6 Relevant documents

Relevant plans are provided in Appendix 1.

2. Survey Methodology

2.1 Surveyor/s

The survey was carried out by Trevor Codlin MCIEEM a Level 2 (CL18) licenced bat surveyor.

2.2 Survey area

The survey area comprised the existing garage, and the immediate surrounds where they will be impacted by the proposals. The survey area extended to all areas which will be modified by the proposed works in such a way that bats or their roosts could be impacted (directly or indirectly).

2.3 Survey date

The survey was carried out during the daytime on the 24th July 2023.

2.4 Survey description

The survey did not depart from the Bat Conservation Trust's (BCT) Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines (3rd edition) which states that "A preliminary roost inspection survey is a detailed inspection of the exterior and interior of a structure to look for features that bats could use for entry/exit and roosting and to search for signs of bats".

The external and internal features of the structure which will be modified by the proposed works in such a way that bats or their roosts could be impacted (directly or indirectly) if present, were systematically inspected in detail to compile information on potential and actual bat access points and roosting places such as lifted or broken tiles, loose brickwork and open eaves. This included a thorough search for evidence of bat activity such as bat droppings, urine splashes and fur staining.

2.5 Survey equipment

Survey equipment comprised:

- High-powered torch
- Camera
- 8x magnification binoculars
- Ladder
- Endoscope

2.6 Weather conditions

Weather during the survey can be described as dry, with 50% cloud cover, a light (BF-1) northerly breeze and a temperature of 17°C. The weather conditions did not hinder the ecologist's ability to carry out the survey effectively.

2.7 Assessment methodology

The suitability of the building for supporting bat roosts will be assessed against the guidelines within Table 1 which have been adapted from the BCT Good Practice Guidelines.

Table 1: Suitability assessment guidelines

<i>Suitability</i>	<i>Description of Roosting Habitats</i>
<i>Negligible</i>	Structure has no reasonable likelihood of supporting roosting bats i.e. no suitable roosting features present.
<i>Low</i>	A structure which could be used opportunistically by individual bats i.e. one or more potential roost sites which do not provide sufficient space, shelter, protection, appropriate conditions (e.g. temperature, light, humidity) and/or suitable surrounding habitat to be used on a regular basis or by larger numbers of bats.
<i>Moderate</i>	A structure which could be used by bats but is not likely to support a roost of high conservation status (e.g. maternity roost). This structure would support features which exhibit suitable size, shelter, protection, conditions and surrounding habitat for roosting bats.
<i>High</i>	A structure which is obviously suitable for supporting larger numbers of bats, on a regular basis and for longer periods of time.

3. Survey results

3.1 General site overview

The site itself comprises a dilapidated garage located within the grounds of Sheepwash Farm. Several buildings are located within the farm, including a variety of barns, with corrugated metal and asbestos roof designs, a farmhouse and other outbuildings.

The site is located in a rural location along Sheepwash Lane. The landscape is rural in nature, comprising agricultural fields interspersed with a network of mature hedgerows, some with mature trees present. Scattered trees are located in some of the meadows. To the south an extensive area of semi-natural and replanted ancient woodland is located.

3.2 Building description

The garage building comprises a timber framed structure with a clay, peg tiled roof constructed in a pitched and half-hipped design (Figure 1). Several additional structures have been added to the building over time, these all comprise timber framed buildings with corrugated metal, shallow pitched, flat roofs (Figure 2). These structures are attached to the northern and western elevations, the structure attached to the western elevation forms part of a larger building that extends in a northerly direction.



Figure 1: Southern elevation of garage.



Figure 2: Northern and western elevation of garage.



Figure 3: Metal clad extension on western elevation.



Figure 4: Metal clad extension on northern elevation.

The southern elevation supports three up-and-over metal garage doors, with the remaining elevations wooden clad. The western extension is in good order and used to

store refrigeration units (Figure 3), whereas the northern extension is partially collapsed (Figure 4).

The building is constructed in a King post design, with the eastern side open plan. The western side is partitioned from the eastern side (Figure 5), and a ladder leads to a first-floor area. In the eastern part of the garage the clay peg tiles are unlined beneath and side elevations single skin. There are gaps in the roof where hip tiles have fallen off at the eastern end and along the ridge. The first-floor section is clad internally with timber and the underside of the tiles are not visible.



Figure 5: Interior view of eastern part of the building, showing timber partition wall.



Figure 6: First floor section with wooden panelling beneath clay tiles and behind side panels.

Where the northern section of the building adjoins the northern elevation, the building has partially collapsed and large gaps are present in the roof tiles.

Potential bat features

No evidence of bat activity was recorded during the survey, and parts of the building were in a dilapidated state, and therefore unlikely to support a high-status bat roost, such as a maternity roost. However, there were numerous features present, both externally and internally that could support roosting bats.

These features included, against the ridge board (Figure 7, red oval), in the apex of the roof, where the main support beams are situated next to wooden cladding (Figure 7, red arrows) and beneath ridge tiles.



Figure 7: Interior view of garage showing potentially suitable roosting locations.

Table 2 below, provides a summary of potential roost and access features, and any confirmed bat evidence.

Table 2: Summary of potential roost and access features and confirmed bat evidence

	Suitability	Evidence
<i>Sheepwash Farm</i> - <i>Garage exterior</i>	Potential bat access features noted during the survey are as follows: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Beneath ridge tiles where suitable exist 	No evidence of bat activity was recorded externally on the building.
- <i>Interior</i>	Potential bat access features noted during the survey are as follows: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adjacent to the ridge board, within the apex of the building. • Behind main support beams, where they are situated next to cladding. • On the side elevations where the cladding attached to the timber frame. 	No evidence of bat activity was recorded externally on the building.

Assessment

When assessed against the criteria in Table 1, the garage at Sheepwash Farm, to be directly impacted by the proposals was assessed as providing moderate suitability i.e. “A structure which could be used by bats but is not likely to support a roost of high conservation status (e.g. maternity roost)”.

Given the overall condition of the building, it is considered that it has the potential to be used on an occasional basis, by small numbers of bats, for example a day roost or male

mating roost.

3.3 Site grounds description relevant to bats

Phillips Ecology understands that there will be no changes to any areas of habitat, except where some small patches of scrub have established within the northern part of the building. These areas are so small that it is considered there will be no impact on bat foraging potential as a result of their loss.

3.4 Other protected or notable species

Breeding birds

The proposals do not involve the removal of any significant areas of vegetation and therefore impacts on other species are only possible if birds, chose to nest within the building or vegetation in the immediate vicinity to it. No evidence of previous bird nesting was recorded during the survey.

4. Discussion and Assessment of Impacts

4.1 Preliminary assessment of suitability and potential impacts

The results of the Preliminary roost assessment of the building have identified it as providing a moderate suitability for bat roosting based on features identified during the survey. However, no evidence of bat activity was recorded.

On the basis that the garage supports moderate suitability for roosting bats, there is considered to be a reasonable likelihood that bats will be present and affected by the proposed demolition works which will impact the features detailed in Table 2.

In the absence of avoidance measures the proposed extension works have the potential to result in the destruction of the features identified as providing bat roost potential.

4.2 Relevant legislation and policy

Circular 06/2005 identifies that applicants should not be required to provide information on protected species unless there is a reasonable likelihood that they will be present and affected by the proposed development. The site is considered to support habitats with suitability and potential for protected species and these may be affected by the proposed development. Therefore, the proposal triggers 'reasonable likelihood' under the Circular.

The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) and the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (commonly referred to as the Habitats Regulations) may apply should protected species be confirmed on site.

In the case that a protected species is found to be present and impacted by the proposal, the local planning authority will be required to engage with the Habitat Regulations. Permission will be granted unless:

- a) the development is likely to result in a breach of the Habitat Regulations, and
- b) is unlikely to be granted an EPS licence from Natural England to allow the development to proceed under a derogation from the law (under licence).

When considering whether Natural England would not be unlikely to grant a licence for the identified impact, the local planning authority must consider the three tests which are set out in the Habitat Regulations:

1. the consented operation must be for 'preserving public health or public safety or other imperative reasons of overriding public interest including those of a social or economic nature and beneficial consequences of primary importance for the environment'; (Regulation 53(2)(e))
2. there must be 'no satisfactory alternative' (Regulation 53(9)(a)); and
3. the action authorised 'will not be detrimental to the maintenance of the population of the species concerned at a favourable conservation status in their natural range' (Regulation 53(9)(b)).

Case-law (Morge vs. Hampshire County Council) has clarified that planning authorities are able to grant permission for developments that would cause a breach of the Regulations is likely (i.e. in the case of this proposal, destruction of a bat roost), provided that sufficient information is provided to give the planning authority assurance that the relevant EPSM licence is not unlikely to be granted - i.e. planning authorities also have a duty to assess planning applications against these tests.

5. Recommendations

5.1 Requirement for further surveys

Where there is a reasonable likelihood that a protected species will be present and impacted by the proposed development, planning authorities require further surveys to properly assess development proposals against relevant planning policy. An assessment into the requirement for further surveys is presented below, however in summary, further surveys are considered necessary, for the proposed replacement of the existing garage building.

It is important that planning decisions are informed by current ecological survey data. Due to this, there is a limited time frame that phase 1 and phase 2 surveys are valid before becoming outdated. This time frame can vary depending on any changes in project circumstances or plans but it is generally considered that phase 1 ecological surveys are valid for a period of 18 months (CIEEM, 2019). Projects that take place over periods longer than 18 months might be required to carry out further ecological surveys to ensure planning authorities have the necessary up-to-date information to make well informed, evidence-based decisions.

5.1.1 *Bats*

In order to provide robust confirmation of the status of bat roosts at the site and the extent to which they may be affected by the proposed works as required by Circular 06/2005, further survey work in accordance with Natural England standing advice and the BCT Good Practice Guidelines is required for the proposed extension. This same survey work will be used to inform the third test of the Habitat Regulations (see section 4.2).

In accordance with the current guidelines, further survey effort will take the form of two surveys, comprising one dusk emergence and/or one dawn re-entry presence/absence survey, undertaken during the bat active season. The current recommended minimum number of presence/absence surveys for a building with moderate roost suitability is two. Each surveyor will be equipped with high specification time expansion or full spectrum bat detectors with digital recording capability. If the surveys identify higher than expected activity, a further survey may be required.

Each surveyor will need to be positioned to ensure that all identified access locations and suitable roosting features are visible. The surveyor will remain in place monitoring and recording bat activity from 15 minutes before sunset to up to 1.5 - 2 hours after sunset for a dusk visit or 2 hours before sunrise until up to 15 minutes after sunrise for a dawn visit. There needs to be a minimum of two weeks between each visit.

The bat active season extends from April until September. However, for a building with moderate suitability, it is recommended that the two of the surveys are undertaken between the beginning of May and end of August, inclusive, during suitable weather conditions. The first survey is scheduled for the evening of the 20th August 2023.

5.1.2 *Breeding birds*

Subject to the precautionary mitigation measures set out in Section 5.2.3, no further surveys are considered necessary.

5.2 Mitigation strategy

5.2.1 *Introduction*

The overarching aim of the ecological survey and assessment work carried out at the Sheepwash Farm site is to inform the planning proposals in order to demonstrate how the proposals can proceed whilst avoiding or mitigating impacts on ecological receptors. The 'mitigation hierarchy' is an accepted approach which guides this process. The first consideration should always be to design a scheme that avoids the identified impact. Where this is not possible the next step should be to mitigate any impacts that cannot be avoided. The third, which should be used as a last resort, is compensation: this should only be used to off-set any unavoidable impacts.

5.2.2 *Bats*

Further survey work is required to determine the impact of the scheme on bats and ensure that any mitigation is fit for purpose. A Natural England EPSM licence will be required in accordance with section 4.2 prior to any works which will impact roosting bats. The mitigation strategy should aim to retain any existing roosts in situ, but where that is not possible it will likely entail the provision of alternative roosts which are proportionate to the status of those identified. In addition it will require the supervised removal of any identified roost features, exclusion of bats from crevice features and timing constraints on works to minimise impacts on bats as necessary. However, this will depend on the results of the further surveys.

- Given the location of the potential roost features identified, if it is not possible to retain the roost in the current location. It is likely that any mitigation strategy would aim to mimic the existing features, such as, the creation of voids under roof tiles if they are present. If, however, roof tiles are not proposed, then alternative roosting features will need to be provided. This will likely involve the provision of bat boxes on mature trees on the site.
- Traditional roof membrane - Modern breathable membranes can be extremely harmful to bats, causing them to become entangled and die, while the bats make the membrane ineffective as they damage it. Traditional bitumen membrane should be used instead. Natural England will refuse bat licence applications where modern breathable membranes are proposed. See <https://www.bats.org.uk/our-work/buildings-planning-and-development/non-bitumen-coated-roofing-membranes> for more information on the current research into this.

In order to limit any effects on foraging and commuting bats, external lighting should be limited to only that which is absolutely necessary for safety purposes, both during the construction phase and once the proposals are complete. The following lighting measures are required:

- Construction works between March and October should be undertaken during daylight hours only to avoid disturbance to bats that may forage and commute through or near the site.
- Lighting to the completed development should be as low brightness as possible, kept at a low level and directed away from all boundaries including the mature hedgerows and boundary features. Lighting on sensors should not be so sensitive that foraging bats trigger them.

All lighting must follow the Bat Conservation Trusts and Institute of Lighting Professionals guidance on bats and artificial lighting (BCT, 2018).

5.2.3 *Breeding birds*

Care should be taken that the proposed works does not disturb breeding birds. The bird nesting season is taken to be March to August, inclusive. If an occupied nest is present, then the nest must not be removed and works around the nest can only recommence once the nest becomes unoccupied of its own accord.

5.3 **Enhancements**

The delivery of biodiversity enhancement is promoted by the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and Section 40 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006.

Where opportunities exist, it is best practice to provide enhancement features which encourage greater biodiversity within development sites in accordance with the NPPF and Local Planning Authority's responsibilities under the NERC Act.

Opportunities for enhancement which are proportionate to the scale of the proposed works could include the provision of the following:

- The provision of additional bat boxes to be erected on mature trees within the site or around the site boundary. The number of boxes will be determined following the conclusion of the Phase 2 bat surveys.

6. Conclusion

The preliminary roost assessment has confirmed that the garage at Sheepwash Farm to be impacted by the proposals provides moderate suitability for bat roosting.

Given the moderate suitability assessment further survey work will be required in order to confirm presence/likely absence and status of any roosts present. If presence is confirmed it will be necessary to devise a suitable mitigation strategy.

If a bat roost is confirmed it will be necessary to apply for an EPSM licence from Natural England, for any works that will directly or indirectly impact the identified roost.

Precautionary measures have been provided for breeding birds, but only in the event they are nesting within the building.

Enhancement measures have been recommended for bats.

7. References

- **Altringham J D, 2003**, British Bats, Collins New Naturalist
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- **Mitchell Jones AJ, 2004**, *Bat Mitigation guidelines*, English Nature
- **Mitchell Jones AJ and McLeish A P, The Bat Workers Manual**, JNCC
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Appendix 1 – Site Proposals - TBC

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