



**Fenswood
Ecology**

**Mill Barn, Wrington
Preliminary Roost Assessment
October 2023**

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Mill Barn, Wrington Preliminary Roost Assessment

Report prepared for: Mr Steve Pole

Report Title: Mill Barn, Wrington: Preliminary Roost Assessment

Issue date: October 2023

Revision: 001

Report reference: MBWPRA23.01

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Summary

Fenswood Ecology was commissioned by Mr Steve Pole, to undertake a Preliminary Roost Assessment (PRA) on the residential dwelling of Mill Barn, Wrington (centred around Ordnance Survey Grid Reference: ST 47491 61887). An assessment of the site was undertaken by Grace Temlett in October 2023.

An assessment was completed on the dwelling and adjacent habitats which is proposed to have the construction of an oak framed porchway, and a garage/workshop with adjoining log store within the garden curtilage.

Although the building has been identified to have **confirmed** bat roosting potential the proposed works will not result in disturbance to any possible bats using the loft space or any of the features identified on the building. The proposed porchway on the northern elevation will not require any significant construction works – only battening onto the stonework for stability.

The residential dwelling has **negligible** nesting bird potential and no further surveys for nesting birds are recommended.

The car port has **negligible** bat roost potential and there are no proposed works to the car port at this stage. No further surveys on the building are recommended for bats. However, the building has **confirmed** nesting bird potential and any future construction/modification works to the car port should be completed outside of the nesting bird season (March -August inclusive) and the bird boxes/swallow cup re located nearby.

The garden curtilage has **negligible** bat roost potential and no further surveys for bats is recommended. The introduced shrub and laurel hedge have **high** nesting bird potential and their removal should be completed outside of the nesting bird season. If this cannot be done, then a nesting bird check by a competent ecologist should be undertaken immediately prior to the vegetation removal. If a nesting bird is identified, then works will be postponed until the ecologist is satisfied that the chicks have fledged, or the nest has become naturally abandoned.

Introduction

Fenswood Ecology was commissioned by Mr Steve Pole, to undertake a Preliminary Roost Assessment (PRA) on the residential dwelling of Mill Barn, Wrington (centred around Ordnance Survey Grid Reference: ST 47491 61887). An assessment of the site was undertaken by Grace Temlett in October 2023.

Bats are protected and considered to be of primary importance under UK legislation, namely the Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981 (as amended), the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010 and the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006.

All nesting birds are protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) against destruction of the nest during the bird nesting season, which falls between March and August, inclusive.

This report details the findings of the survey work, methodologies employed are described including site surveys and evaluation and the need for any further survey work and/or mitigation measures are included, where appropriate.

Site Location

Mill Barn is situated on the southern outskirts of the village of Wrington in North Somerset. It is currently the residential dwelling of the client with associated garden and parking curtilage to the north. The surrounding landscape is dominated by agricultural land with a couple of other residential dwellings. The Congresbury Yeo River is approximately 110m south of the site.

Figure 1: MAGIC map showing surrounding landscape in relation to the survey site.



Project Overview

An assessment was completed on the residential dwelling which is proposed to have several modifications including;

- The construction of an oak framed “open” entrance porch.
- The construction of a garage/workshop with adjoining log store.

Methodology

Desk Study

Records held on Magic.gov.uk on designated sites and granted European protected species licences were reviewed in October 2023.

Field Study

The survey was undertaken by Grace Temlett, BSc (Hons), Arb L2, ACIEEM on 3rd October 2023.

The building was inspected to assess its potential to support roosting bats, in accordance with current best practice guidelines (Collins, 2016).

The building was also inspected to assess its potential to support nesting birds.

An internal and external inspection of the building on site was undertaken during daylight to determine the suitability for bats and breeding birds and establish if bats and breeding birds are using the building or have been using the building in the past.

All accessible parts of the building were inspected, to look for bats and breeding birds and signs of the presence of the species, including:

- Droppings.
- Feeding remains including moth and butterfly wings.
- Staining from urine or oils near crevices or holes or on timber (such as roof beams), walls, chimney breasts etc.
- Scratch marks on walls and timber.
- Squeaking or chattering calls.
- Bird nests or signs of nesting (i.e eggshell, feathers, faeces)
- Owl Pellets

The systematic search inside the building included inspection of the ceiling, walls, floors and surfaces. Potential access into the building was also inspected by searching for holes in walls, the roof and any light penetration into the interior from the outside.

The assessment outside the building included inspection of all walls, any boarding and a search for any crevices, and any other potential bat roost opportunities.

A building may have several features of potential interest to roosting bats. It is not always possible to confirm usage of a feature by bats as often the animals may be present on one day and no evidence of occupation may be found on the next. Consequently, it is normal practice when undertaking such surveys to assign each feature to a defined category of roosting potential as follows:

Negligible: Negligible habitat features onsite likely to be used by roosting bats

Low: A structure 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 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 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: This category is used where positive evidence of bats usage has been recorded from a feature. For example, bats or bat droppings may be present, or existing bat records may be associated with the feature. A licence from Natural England is likely to be required if the bat roost is to be disturbed by the development.

Limitations to Survey

Access to the full application site was provided.

The survey was undertaken within the optimal survey season, and as such it is considered that a robust evaluation of bat roosting potential within the site character has been made.

Findings and Evaluation

Designated Sites

There are no statutory designated sites within 1km of the proposed site. The site falls within the SSSI/SAC impact zones for Kingswood and Urchin Wood SSSI/North Somerset and Mendip Bat SAC approximately 2.5km north, Tickenham, Nailsea and Kenn Moors SSSI/SAC approximately 4.8km northwest, and Bourne SSSI approximately 1.7km south of the site.

The site does fall within the Forest of Avon Community Forest designation.

The site falls within consultation Zone B of the North Somerset and Mendip Bat SAC (NSC, 2018).

See appendix for designated site locations.

European Protected Species Mitigation (EPSM) Licences

There are two records of granted European Protected Species Mitigation (EPSM) Licences for bats or Schedule 1 bird species shown on MAGIC within 2km of the site.

Table 1 – EPSM license for bats/birds within 2km of the site.

Case Reference	Species	Start of Licence	End of Licence	Distance from Site	Impact
2017-27948-EPS-MIT	Greater horseshoe, lesser horseshoe	10/05/2017	10/05/2027	1.2km north	Damage of a resting place
2017-28274-EPS-MIT	Soprano pipistrelle	21/03/2017	31/10/2017	1.5km southwest	Destruction of a resting place

See appendix for EPSM licence locations.

Field Survey

Preliminary Roost Appraisal

The dwelling to be developed is currently the residential dwelling of the client. The main part of the building is a single pitch, two storeys build with a single storey extension on the western elevation which connects them to the neighbouring dwelling. The building is stone and mortar in structure with a pan tiled roof structure which extends in length on the southern elevation. There are two Velux windows on the southern elevation roof also. There is lead cladding on both gable ends onto the tiles. Wooden fascia boards are present along both the northern and southern elevations with plastic guttering. There is a loft space along the southern side of the building which was inspected and found to have

500+ rodent droppings but also 20+ old possible bat droppings no more than 3mm in length attached to one of the timber beams (see photo below). There were several points within the loft space where light was coming in from outside. From the outside, the southern elevation (parallel with the loft space) had numerous slipped or raised tiles across the whole elevation. The fascia boards on both the southern and northern elevations are not flush with the main building creating crevices throughout. There was also one raised tile and lifted lead flashing on the northern elevation too. Considering the above, it is considered that the building has confirmed bat roost potential. No evidence of nesting birds or opportunities for nesting birds was observed within or externally on the main dwelling and as such it is considered that the building has negligible nesting bird potential.

There is also a car port on the northern elevation immediately adjacent but not connected to the main dwelling. This has a timber structure, single pitched roof with matching pan tiles and felt lining. The car port had two standard small bird nest boxes on the northern elevation and a swallow cup on the internal southern elevation of the building. Evidence of swallow nesting was identified just above where the cup was located. The car port is considered to have negligible bat roost potential due to its open structure and good condition roof. The car port is considered to have confirmed nesting bird potential due to the evidence already on site for swallows and the added nest boxes encouraging the species to the building.

The garden curtilage is a combination of amenity grassland, intact laurel hedging, bare ground vegetable patches and introduced shrubs. None of the garden curtilage had any features that would attract roosting bats. The garden, therefore, has negligible bat roost potential but could be use by foraging and commuting bats within the wider landscape.



Photograph 1 – internal loft space.

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Photograph 2 – internal loft space continued. Light coming through.



Photograph 3 – old bat droppings found attached to timber beam in loft space of building.

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Photograph 4 – loft space continued.



Photograph 5 – northern elevation where proposed porch way will be located.

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Photograph 6 – northern elevation with car port.



Photograph 7 – southern and eastern elevations of building.



Photograph 8 – southern elevation on building.

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Photograph 9 – northern elevation of car port with two bird nest boxes.



Photograph 10 – internal of car port with swallow cup and part of a natural swallow nest at the pitch of the roof.



Photograph 11 – garden curtilage for proposed garage/workshop location.

Conclusion & Recommendations

The residential dwelling has **confirmed** bat roost potential with the droppings identified within the loft space – the droppings were collected but have not been DNA analysed to determine species. Although the building has been identified to have bat roosting potential the proposed works will not result in disturbance to any possible bats using the loft space or any of the features identified on the building. The proposed garage/workshop will be in the garden curtilage not connected to the building and the proposed porchway on the northern elevation will not require any significant construction works – only battening onto the stonework for stability. Therefore, no further surveys are recommended. However, any future construction/modification works on the building should be subject to a minimum of three bat activity surveys and a mitigation license from Natural England. The residential dwelling has **negligible** nesting bird potential and no further surveys for nesting birds are recommended.

The car port has **negligible** bat roost potential and there are no proposed works to the car port at this stage. No further surveys on the building are recommended for bats. However, the building has **confirmed** nesting bird potential and any future construction/modification works to the car port should be completed outside of the nesting bird season (March -August inclusive) and the bird boxes/swallow cup re located nearby.

The garden curtilage has **negligible** bat roost potential and no further surveys for bats is recommended. The introduced shrub and laurel hedge have **high** nesting bird potential and their removal should be completed outside of the nesting bird season. If this cannot be done, then a nesting bird check by a competent ecologist should be undertaken immediately prior to the vegetation removal. If a nesting bird is identified, then works will be postponed until the ecologist is satisfied that the chicks have fledged, or the nest has become naturally abandoned.

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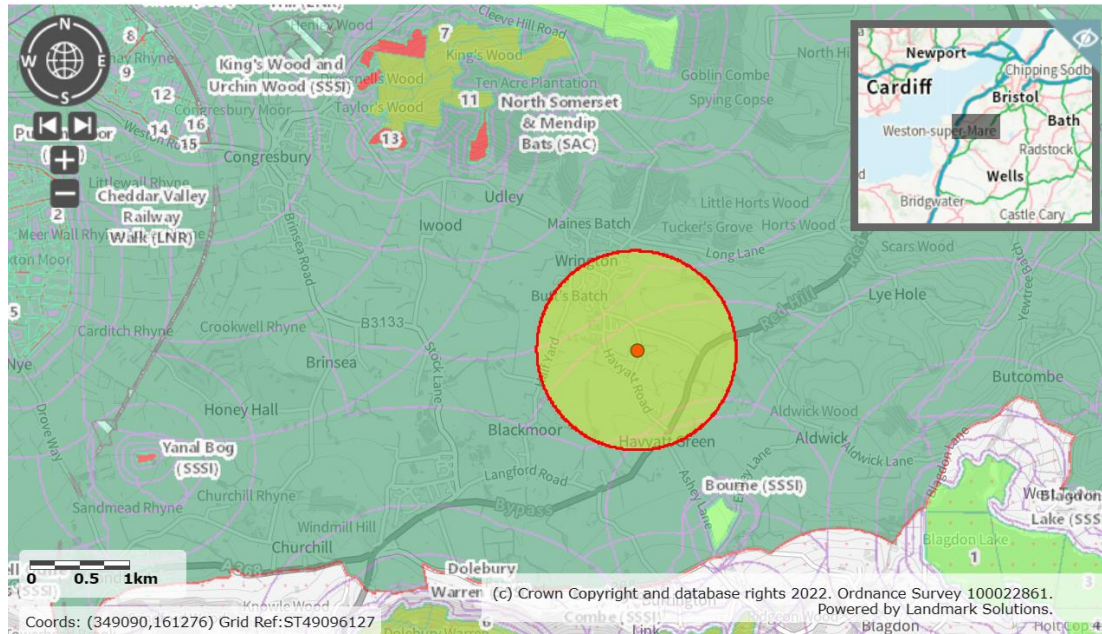
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<http://magic.defra.gov.uk>
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NSC (2018) *North Somerset and Mendip Bats SAC Guidance on Development: Supplementary Planning Document*.

Appendix 1

Designated Sites 1km buffer



Granted European Protected Species Mitigation Licenses within 2km.

