



Unit 3, 5 Fore Street, Chudleigh, Devon TQ13 0HX

Steven Lang  
Carpenters  
Yarcombe  
Honiton  
EX14 9BD

9<sup>th</sup> November 2023

Our Ref. 0281

Dear Steven,

**RE: Outbuilding and Land at Carpenters, Yarcombe**

Thank you for appointing Devon Ecology to undertake an ecological assessment of your property.

**Introduction**

I am a qualified ecologist with 20 years' experience. I am also a full member of the Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (CIEEM) and as such abide by their professional code of conduct. I have held a Class 2 bat licence with Natural England since 2007. My registration number is 2015-12404-CLS-CLS. I am registered to use the Bat Mitigation Class Licence (BMCL) registration number RC154 and I am a registered consultant on Natural England's Bat Earned Recognition Pilot Scheme (WML-CL47 Ref: BER0102).

I inspected the property on the 26<sup>th</sup> October 2023, which is located at grid reference ST 24445 08226 (What3Words: [arranges.tidy.remarked](https://www.what3words.com/arranges.tidy.remarked)). The survey was undertaken primarily for bats which was consistent with current good practice guidelines (Collins, 2023<sup>1</sup>), whereby the building was assessed for its potential to hold roosting bats using the criteria in **Table 1**.

**Table 1: Bat roosting potential (adapted from Collins, 2023)**

| Potential Suitability | Description  |
|-----------------------|--|
| None                  | No habitat features on site likely to be used by any roosting bats at any time of the year (i.e. a complete absence of crevices/suitable shelter at all ground/underground levels).  |
| Negligible            | No obvious habitat features on site likely to be used by roosting bats; however, a small element of uncertainty remains as bats can use small and apparently unsuitable features on occasion.  |
| Low                   | A structure with one or more potential roost sites that could be used opportunistically at any time of year. 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 |

<sup>1</sup> Collins, J. (ed.) (2023) *Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines (4<sup>th</sup> edition)*. The Bat Conservation Trust, London

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|          |  |
|----------|--|
| 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.  |
| 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. These structures have potential to support high conservation status roosts e.g. maternity or classic cool/ stable hibernation sites. |
| Roost    | Bats and/or evidence of bats found.  |

Other protected species such as nesting birds were also taken into account.

In addition to the building inspection, the garden area to be affected by the proposed development was walked over and habitats identified, the survey was extended to highlight the potential presence of protected and priority species in accordance with CIEEM's Guidelines for Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (2017<sup>2</sup>). This involved a search to identify the presence or potential presence of notable and protected species such as breeding birds, badger *Meles meles*, dormouse *Muscardinus avellanarius*, bats, reptiles and amphibians.

It is understood that you (the applicant) wish to demolish the outbuilding and construct a dwelling in the footprint of the outbuilding and extend into the garden.

This assessment is valid for one year from the date on the report.

## Desk Study

A search of the government website MAGIC was undertaken within 10km radius of the Site for international designations and 2km radius for national statutory designations for nature conservation. MAGIC was also searched for priority habitats as well as European Protected Species Licences (EPSLs) listed within 2km of the site. The Devon Environment viewer was also searched for Devon Species Consultation Zones. These searches were undertaken on the 8<sup>th</sup> of November 2023.

As the proposals are very small and in a built-up area, a data search from the local environmental records centre was not considered necessary as it would be unlikely to add significantly to the assessment.

## Protected Sites

There is one internationally important site for nature conservation within the 10km search area:

- ☛ River Axe Special Area of Conservation (SAC) is located approximately 10km southeast of the Site at its closest point. The primary Annex I habitat for selection is water courses of plain to montane levels with the Ranunculion fluitantis and Callitriche-Batrachion vegetation. Annex II qualifying species are Sea lamprey *Petromyzon marinus*, Brook lamprey *Lampetra planeri* and Bullhead *Cottus gobio*.

There is one nationally important site for nature conservation within the 2km search area:

<sup>2</sup> CIEEM (2017) *Guidelines for Preliminary Ecological Appraisal, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition*. Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management, Winchester.

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- ☛ The Site is within the Blackdown Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB).

### Priority Habitats

There are several priority habitats within the 2km search area including:

- ☛ Grassland: Good quality semi-improved grassland and lowland meadows.
- ☛ Woodland: Ancient, replanted woodland, deciduous woodland and traditional orchards.

There are no priority habitats on or close to the Site.

### Granted EPSLs

There is one EPSL for bats granted within the 2km search radius:

- ☛ Licence no. EPSM2010-2226 granted to allow the destruction of a breeding site and resting place for common pipistrelle *Pipistrellus pipistrellus* and brown long-eared *Plecotus auritus* bats, located approximately 2km south of the Site.

### Devon Species Consultation Zones

The Site is within the following Devon Species Consultation Zones:

- ☛ Great Crested Newt Consultation Zone (5km radius around known GCN records).

### **Outbuilding Description**

The outbuilding is a corrugated metal shed with a shallow sloping roof. It has double timber doors and a timber-framed window on the northeast elevation and an open door on the southwest elevation. The rear northwest elevation is adjacent to a box *Buxus sp.* hedge and has a small timber fascia in one place and corrugated sheet missing revealing a timber and asbestos sheet lining.

Internally, the outbuilding is divided into two sections by a timber wall. The northeast section has an earth floor, asbestos and timber sheets on the rear (northwest) wall. It is used for firewood storage. The southwest section has a concrete floor. There are remnants of asbestos sheet on the back wall and a broken window covered with chicken wire.

### Evidence of, or Features Suitable for Bats

There are some gaps at the tops of the walls underneath the corrugations of the metal sheets, but no close cover is present that bats are likely to use. The rear small timber fascia had no evidence of bat use.

Internally, there was potential for night roosting, but there was no evidence in the form of droppings or feeding remains to suggest this was the case.

### Birds

The remnants of one old swallow's *Hirundo rustica* nest was present on roof timbers inside the northeast section and a very old wren's *Troglodytes troglodytes* nest was present in the southwest section.

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## Garden Area

The garden area to be affected was mainly amenity grassland and a variety of flower beds and raised beds and rockeries with ornamental planting with e.g., bamboo, pampas grass, hydrangeas, fuchsias day lilies, and other small shrubs. There is one small holly *Ilex aquifolium* bush near the outbuilding that will be lost. There was a small dry former pond present in the centre of the garden, which had no liner, thus cannot hold water.

Boundaries are laurel *Laurus sp.* dominated hedge to the southwest, a box hedge with hazel *Corylus avellana* to the northwest which has an area of grassy verge containing broad-leaved plantain *Plantago major*, ribwort plantain *P. lanceolata*, male-fern *Dryopteris filix-mas*, harts tongue fern *Asplenium scolopendrium* and ivy *Helix hedera*. To the northeast there is a box hedge with ornamental shrubs.

See photographs in **Appendix 1**.

## Protected Species

There was no evidence of protected species found during the survey, although it was considered likely that slow worm *Anguis fragilis* are present in the garden.

## Assessment, Recommendations and Mitigation

### Protected Sites and Priority Habitats

There are no predicted adverse effects to protected sites or priority habitats due to the distances involved and small nature of the proposals.

Mitigation: None required.

### Devon Species Consultation Zones

The Site is within a Great Crested Newt Consultation Zone. It is unlikely this species is present in the garden, a search of aerial photography and the ordnance survey map found no suitable ponds within a 500m radius of the Site.

Mitigation: None required.

### Bats

All bat species are protected under current legislation.

There was no evidence of bats within the outbuilding, and it is considered to be of negligible bat roost potential (Collins, 2023). Works can continue with minimal risk to roosting bats and no further surveys are required and no licence is needed from Natural England.

Although no evidence was found it is possible that bats could roost on the wall tops, particularly on the front elevation and northeast gable end accessed under the eaves.

Mitigation: It is recommended that if any exterior lighting is used then it should be on a short timer (30 seconds or less), triggered by a motion sensor, with the sensitivity set to detect humans, rather than passing wildlife. It should also be low level, directional and downward pointing to avoid causing

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a barrier to foraging and commuting bats. It is recommended that recessed lighting rather than pendant lighting is used internally as this reduces external light spill. Best practice guidance detailed in Guidance Note 08/23 - Bats and Artificial Lighting at Night (BCT, ILP, 2023<sup>3</sup>) should be followed when siting lights both on and within buildings.

If any bats are found during works, work must stop immediately in that area and the ecologist called for advice. The procedure in **Appendix 2** must be followed.

### Birds

All wild bird species are protected while nesting by current legislation.

There was old evidence of nesting swallows and wren inside the outbuilding, although no access to the end where the swallow's nest is currently available. The demolition will result in loss of nesting habitat for these two species.

Mitigation: To avoid possible delays if any birds are found nesting in the outbuilding, demolition of the outbuilding should be undertaken outside the nesting season (March-August). Alternatively, a search for active nests should be undertaken prior to demolition.

If any active nests are found during works, work must stop in that area and left undisturbed until nesting has finished.

### Slow Worms

Slow worms are protected from injury or killing by current legislation.

As there is potential for slow worms to be present in the garden area, there is a risk of injury or death to slow worms if ground works are undertaken mechanically. This would be an offence under current legislation.

Mitigation: Clearance of rockery stones, paving slabs and any other surface cover, will be undertaken by hand, carefully looking underneath for slow worms. If present, they can be caught by hand, placed in a bucket and released in the lower section of the garden which will be retained.

### **Biodiversity Enhancements**

As a measure of good practice and in line with national and local planning policy, ecological enhancements should be incorporated into the design to achieve a biodiversity net gain.

Rockery stones removed from the garden area should be put in piles in the retained area of garden to provide additional habitat for slow worms.

A bat box can be mounted on the southeast elevation and two house sparrow terraces on the northeast elevation (**Appendix 3**).

If there is a desire to improve the garden areas for bees and other pollinators, the Royal Horticultural Society provides a 'Plants for Pollinators' list available free on line at [Plants for Pollinators advice and downloadable lists / RHS Gardening](#).

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<sup>3</sup> Bat Conservation Trust/ Institute of Lighting Professionals (2023) Guidance Note 08/23 - Bats and Artificial Lighting at Night, BCT/ILP London/Warwick.

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I am happy to provide further advice on enhancements on request.

If you require any further information, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of several overlapping loops and a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Mark Witherall BSc. (Hons) MCIEEM  
Director and Principal Ecologist


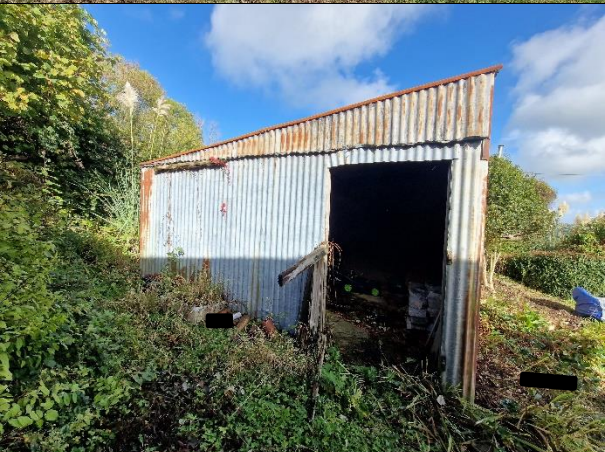

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**Appendix 1: Photographs (red arrows indicate potential roosting feature).**

| <b>Notes</b>                     | <b>Photograph</b>  |
|----------------------------------|--|
| Outbuilding southeast elevation. |    |
| Outbuilding southwest elevation. |   |
| Outbuilding northeast elevation. |  |

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| Notes  | Photograph   |
|--|--|
| <p>Rear (northwest) elevation wall.</p> <p>Potential bat roost features: None.</p> |    |
| <p>Outbuilding northwest elevation.</p>  |   |
| <p>Internal: Northeast section.</p>  |  |

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| Notes  | Photograph   |
|--|--|
| Internal: Southwest section.                   |    |
| Garden: Looking northwest toward outbuilding.  |   |
| Garden: Looking southeast from the outbuilding |  |

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| Notes  | Photograph  |
|--|---|
| Garden: Northwest boundary box hedge and grassy verge. |  A photograph showing a gravel driveway in the foreground. In the background, there is a house with a brown roof and a white wall. A dark green box hedge runs along the side of the house. A red arrow points to a grassy verge area between the driveway and the hedge. The sky is blue with some clouds. |

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## Appendix 2: Procedure to Follow if Bats are Found During Development Works

- ☛ If at any point during the works bats are discovered, contractors should stop work immediately and telephone Devon Ecology on 07786564196;
- ☛ Devon Ecology will either provide a licensed bat ecologist to the site or liaise directly with Natural England. Actions will then be taken following advice given by Natural England. This may include removal of bats, but only where direct written or verbal permission is gained from Natural England;
- ☛ Only when Natural England is satisfied that the risk to bats is no longer an issue will works recommence.
- ☛ Should it be found that the operation being carried out is of more risk to bats than was originally thought, then it is likely that works will only be able to proceed under a development licence from Natural England;
- ☛ If a bat is found under a tile or any other aperture, works will stop immediately (as above). If the bat does not voluntarily fly out, then the aperture will be carefully covered over to protect the bat(s) from the elements, leaving a small gap for the bat to escape voluntarily. Further advice will then be sought from Natural England (as above). Any covering should be free from grease or other contaminants, and should not be fibreglass-based materials;
- ☛ Avoid handling bats. Bats should not be handled with bare hands. If a decision is made to handle a bat (e.g. for good reason in the case of an injured bat or a bat in immediate danger of injury or death) then gloves must be worn to avoid being bitten. Any injured bats should be placed in a secure ventilated box (e.g. cardboard box) by the contractor for the bat's protection whilst awaiting the arrival of the bat ecologist;
- ☛ If during the course of works anyone is bitten by a bat then the area of the bite should be washed immediately with soap and water and medical advice sought.

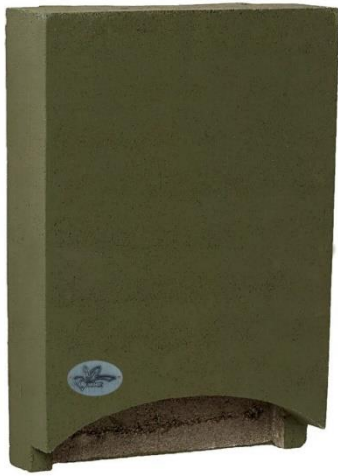
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### Appendix 3: Biodiversity Enhancements



The Elisa Bat Box is a suitable box for wall or tree mounting. Available from [Elisa Bat Box | NHBS Practical Conservation Equipment](#)

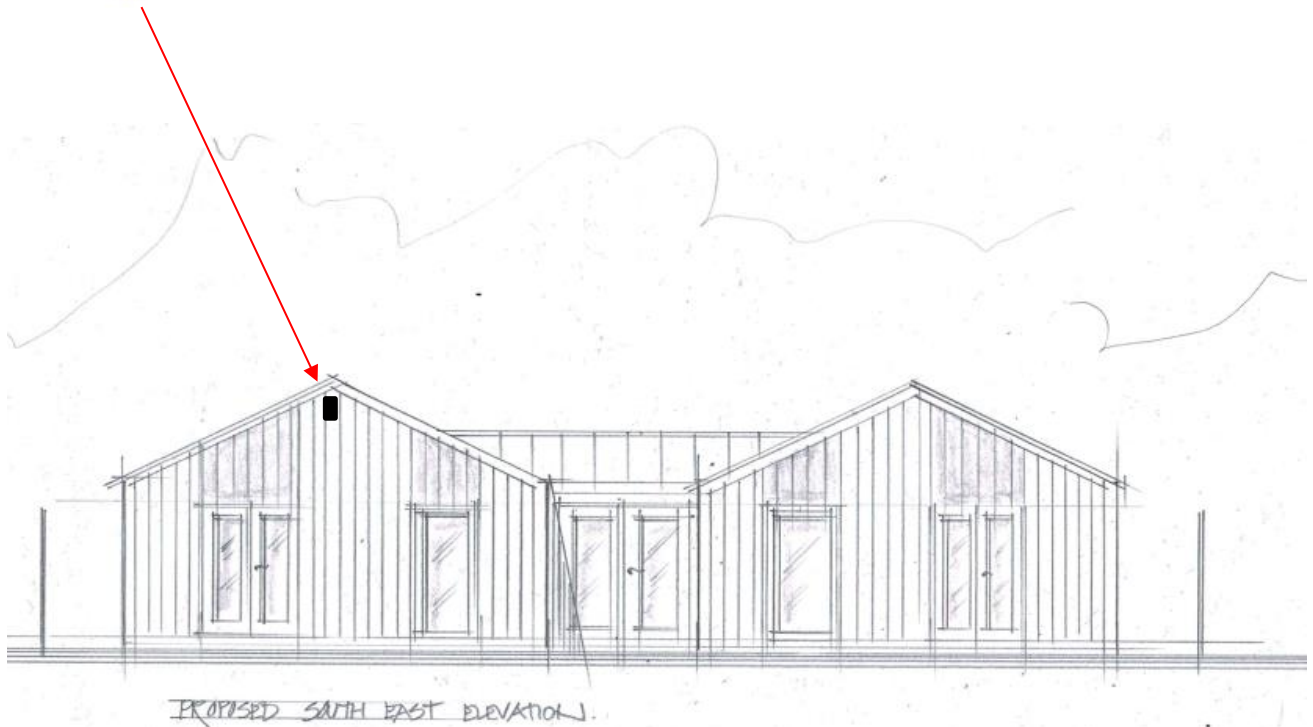


Image taken from Apple Planning and Design Drawing no. 106/619/2023

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Vivaro Woodstone sparrow nest box. Available from Wildcare [Woodstone Sparrow Nest Box \(wildcare.co.uk\)](https://www.wildcare.co.uk), NHBS or other suppliers.

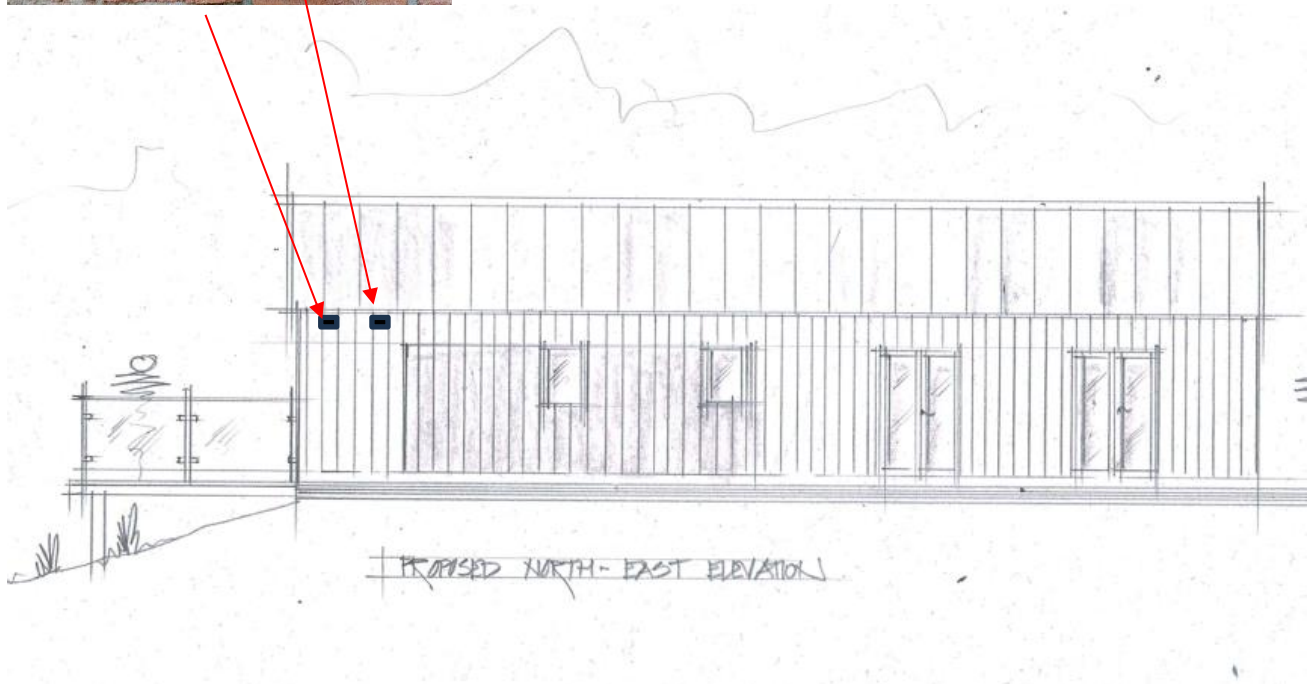


Image taken from Apple Planning and Design Drawing no. 100/620/2023

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