

Vine Farm, Collingham

Protected Species Survey Report

November 2023



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Executive Summary

This report presents the findings and recommendations from a protected species survey of three outbuildings at Vine Farm, 121 High Street, Collingham, Nottinghamshire, NG23 7NG, which are hereafter referred to as ‘the buildings’.

It is understood that the owners wish to renovate the buildings and that the protected species survey and this report are required to support the planning application for this. The primary objectives of the protected species survey were to determine the presence or likelihood of roosting bats in the buildings and to identify building features that roosting bats might use. In addition, any evidence of nesting birds was recorded. Bats and their roosts and nesting birds are legally protected in the UK and legally protected species are a Material Consideration within the planning system.

The central Ordnance Survey Grid Reference of the buildings is SK 83042 62010 and they can be viewed [here](#).

The protected species survey was undertaken on 6 November 2023 by a suitably qualified and experienced professional ecologist. The bat survey was undertaken in accordance with Collins, J (ed.) (2023) *Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines* (4th edition). The Bat Conservation Trust, London. A desk study has also been completed to inform the appraisal.

The desk study did not identify any constraints to the proposals for these buildings due to nearby sites of nature conservation importance or redevelopment already licensed by Natural England.

There was no evidence of any bat roosts within the buildings.

There was evidence (feeding remains) of a seldom used brown long-eared bat feeding perch within Building 2 (the storage shed), however, there were no potential roost features – PRF - for day roosting bats in the same area and only one PRF for day roosting bats elsewhere within this building, which showed no evidence of usage.

The buildings do not support any PRF for high conservation status bat roosts. There are some PRF present within the buildings that could theoretically support individual bats in keeping with most old outbuildings, however, the suitability of most of these is limited and their usage by roosting bats is unlikely. Most of the PRF present within the buildings could be inspected for evidence of roosting bats from ground level or a ladder and none was identified.

In accordance with Collins (ed.) 2023 Buildings 1 and 2 (the workshop and storage shed respectively) were assessed to be of ‘negligible suitability’ for roosting bats. Building 3 (the garage) was assessed to be of ‘low suitability’ because there were several PRF associated with the ridge and roof tiles that could not be accessed.

It is understood that the proposals for the buildings do not involve any impacts on the roof of Building 3; if so, further bat surveys of the buildings are not recommended. If, however, the roof of Building 3 will be impacted then an evening emergence survey of this roof is recommended prior to this, to determine the presence or likely absence of roosting bats with more confidence, in keeping with current best practice guidelines (Collins (ed.), 2023). Note that the nocturnal bat survey can only be undertaken in suitable weather when bats are most active, which is within the period May to September annually.

There was no recent evidence of nesting bird activity, however, Buildings 1 and 2 could easily be accessed and used by nesting birds during the annual breeding season, which is typically March through August. It is therefore strongly recommended that a pre-start check for nesting birds is undertaken before any renovations of the buildings commence within this period.

To provide some additional habitat for wildlife on the site upon completion of the project it is recommended that two bat and bird boxes are installed on the buildings or in the garden.

1 Introduction

1.1 Background

- 1.1.1 This report presents the findings and recommendations from a protected species survey of three outbuildings at Vine Farm, 121 High Street, Collingham, Nottinghamshire, NG23 7NG, which are hereafter referred to as ‘the buildings’.
- 1.1.2 It is understood that the owners wish to renovate the buildings and that the protected species survey and this report are required to support the planning application for this.
- 1.1.3 The primary objectives of the protected species survey were to determine the presence or likelihood of roosting bats in the buildings and to identify building features that roosting bats might use. In addition, any evidence of nesting birds was recorded. Bats and their roosts and nesting birds are legally protected in the UK and legally protected species are a [Material Consideration within the planning system](#) - see Section 2.

1.2 Site Location

- 1.2.1 The central Ordnance Survey Grid Reference (OS GR) of the buildings is SK 83042 62010. The Architects plans of the buildings are shown in Figure 1.2.1. The buildings can be viewed [here](#) and they comprise the following:

- Building 1 – a workshop including an outside toilet (wc)
- Building 2 – a storage shed
- Building 3 – a garage

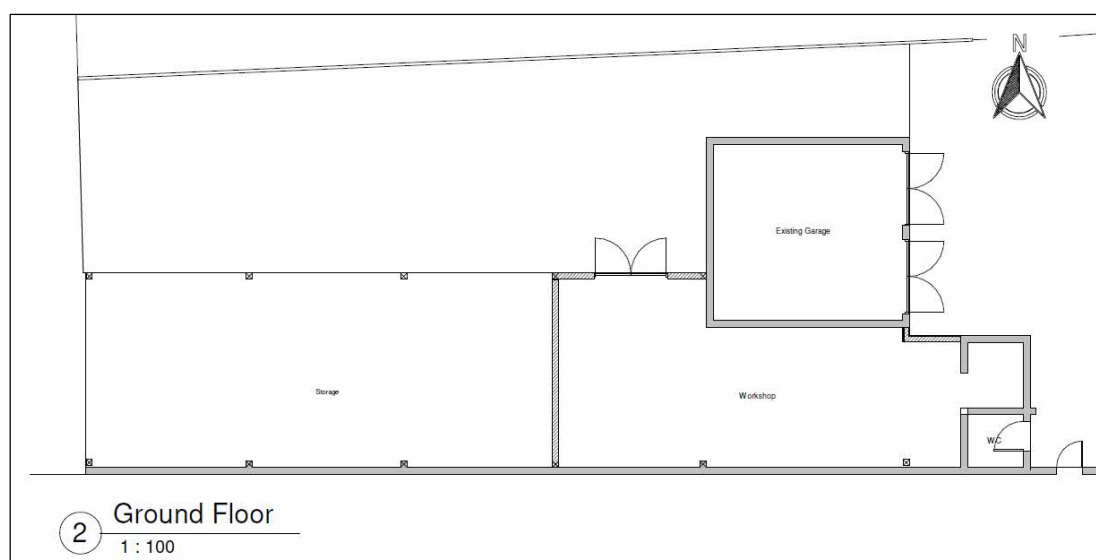


Figure 1.2.1: The surveyed buildings are shown above. Figure reproduced from drawings dated April 2023 provided by MO Architects, Collingham.

- 1.2.2 The buildings are situated to the west and rear of the main dwelling at Vine Farm, which is on the west side of High Street, Collingham. Collingham is c.7 km to the north of Newark in Nottinghamshire.

1.3 Building and Site Descriptions

- 1.3.1 Photographs 1.3.1 to 1.3.4 show the surveyed buildings. Further photographs of the buildings in relation to the findings are provided in Section 4.

Photograph 1.3.1: View of the east elevation of Building 1 (the workshop and toilet) to the left (south) and the front west elevation of Building 3 (the garage) to the right (north).



Photograph 1.3.2: View of the south elevations of Building 1 (the workshop) on the right (east) and Building 2 (the storage shed) to the left (west).



Photograph 1.3.3: View of part of the north elevation of Buildings 1 (the workshop) to the left (east) and the adjoining Building 2 (the storage shed) to the right (west).



Photograph 1.3.4: View of the north and west elevations of Building 3 (the garage) from its north-west corner.



Building 1

- 1.3.2 Building 1 principally comprises a large workshop, but which incorporates a toilet at its eastern end. It adjoins Buildings 2 and 3. The southern elevation of Building 1 comprises corrugated metal sheeting above a brick wall, which has concrete coping stones on the top. The eastern half (approx.) of the northern elevation of Building 1 comprises the external brick wall of the southern elevation of Building 3, and the western half of the northern elevation of Building 1 comprises two large wooden doors. The western elevation of Building 1 (also the eastern elevation of Building 2) comprises a wood-panelled wall.
- 1.3.3 The roof of the workshop comprises corrugated metal sheets at a shallow angle on a timber frame.
- 1.3.4 Within the eastern aspect of Building 1 is the outside toilet and a small room to the north of this, both of which have brick walls. There is a small, pitched roof at this end of the building with the north-facing pitch larger and lower than the south-facing pitch. There is a small inaccessible roof void (c.0.5 m in height and c.2m across) above the toilet. The pitched roof at this eastern end of Building 1 is covered with unlined clay pantiles.

Building 2

- 1.3.5 Building 2 comprises the storage shed adjoining Building 1. It is principally constructed from the same materials and methods as the main workshop area of Building 1 although it is open on the northern elevation. The western half of the roof of Building 2 is sagging.

Building 3

- 1.3.6 Building 3 comprises the car garage. The walls, which have been renovated relatively recently, comprise bricks externally and concrete blocks internally. There are two wooden garage doors within the eastern elevation.

- 1.3.7 Building 3 has a pitched roof covered in clay pantiles underlined with bitumen felt, with clay ridge tiles. The roof has timber trusses within an open internal roof space used for storage. There is no internal ridge board present.
- 1.3.8 The environment immediately surrounding the buildings comprises the main dwelling to the east and similar buildings and associated gardens to the north, south, and east on the opposite side of High Street. Immediately to the west of the buildings are two small grassland fields and the church and the cemetery are beyond these. Further afield, beyond the village, is open countryside.

2 Relevant Wildlife Legislation and Planning Policy

2.1 General

2.1.1 The following is intended only as a guide to the relevant wildlife legislation and planning policy. This report does not purport to give legal or planning advice and the relevant Acts and policies should be referred to directly for the precise wording.

2.2 Legislation - Bats

2.2.1 All bats and their roosts are protected in England and Wales via the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended, including by the Conservation of Habitats and Species (Amendment) (EU Exit) Regulations 2019) which are commonly referred to as 'the Habitats Regulations'. Bats and their roosts are also protected in the UK under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended), which was reinforced in England and Wales by the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000.

2.2.2 In combination, the above legislation makes it an offence to:

Deliberately capture, injure, or kill a bat.

Deliberately disturb any bat; in particular, any disturbance which is likely to (i) impair a bats' ability to survive, breed, reproduce or to rear or nurture their young; or in the case of hibernating or migratory species, to hibernate or migrate; or (ii) to affect significantly the local distribution or abundance of the species to which they belong.

To be in possession or control of any live or dead bat or any part of, or anything derived from a bat.

Damage or destroy a breeding site or resting place of a bat.

Intentionally or recklessly obstruct access to any place that a bat uses for shelter or protection.

Intentionally or recklessly disturb a bat while it is occupying a structure or place that it uses for shelter or protection.

2.2.3 The term 'roost' is not used in the above legislation, however, a site that a bat uses for breeding, resting, shelter or protection is called a roost in ecological terms. Bats tend to re-use the same roost sites and sometimes over many years but may not always be in residence. Current legal opinion is that a roost is protected irrespective of whether the bats are present.

2.2.4 Damaging or destroying a place used by a bat for breeding or resting anywhere in the UK is an absolute offence carrying strict liability under the Habitats Regulations. This means that no element of intent, reckless, or deliberate action needs to be evidenced to establish guilt; the prosecution only needs to demonstrate that the accused performed the prohibited act.

2.2.5 Where an activity will result in any destruction, damage, or obstruction of any bat roost, whether occupied or not, or it risks harming or disturbing bats, then a European Protected Species (EPS) Mitigation Licence (EPSML) is required from the Statutory Nature Conservation Body (e.g., Natural England) to derogate the law to facilitate this activity.

2.2.6 In determining whether to grant a licence for an activity affecting a legally protected species Natural England must apply the requirements of Regulation 53 of the Habitats Regulations, and, in particular, the following three tests set out in sub-paragraphs (2)(e), (9)(a) and (9)(b):

1. Regulation 53(2)(e) states that: a licence can [only] be granted for the purposes of "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”.

2. Regulation 53(9)(a) states that the appropriate authority (i.e., Natural England) shall not grant a licence unless they are satisfied “that there is no satisfactory alternative” to the proposed actions; and,
3. Regulation 53(9)(b) states that the appropriate authority shall not grant a licence unless they are satisfied “that 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”.

2.2.7 These three tests are often referred to as the ‘purpose test’, the ‘NSA test’ and the ‘FCS test’ respectively.

2.2.8 Note that the original legislation which provides the framework for licensing in respect of bats was transposed from European Union (EU) directives, and as such bats may continue to be referred to as EPS despite the UK’s withdrawal from the EU.

2.3 Legislation - Birds

2.3.1 All species of bird are protected under Section 1 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended). This protection was extended by the Countryside & Rights of Way Act, 2000. This legislation makes it an offence to:

Kill, injure, or take any wild bird.

Take, damage, or destroy the nest of any wild bird while that nest is in use or being built.

Take or destroy an egg of any wild bird.

2.3.2 In addition to the above, certain species of bird (e.g., the barn owl *Tyto alba*) are listed on Schedule 1 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) and receive protection under Sections 1(4) and 1(5) of this Act. This protection was extended by the Countryside & Rights of Way Act, 2000. This legislation confers special penalties where the above offences are committed for any such bird, and it also makes it an offence to intentionally or recklessly:

Disturb any such bird, while building its nest or it is in or near a nest containing dependant young; and / or,

Disturb the dependant young of such a bird.

2.4 Relevant Planning Policy

2.4.1 In 2005, ODPM (Office of the Deputy Prime Minister) Circular 06/2005: Biodiversity and Geological Conservation – Statutory Obligations and their impact within the Planning System stated that “the presence of a protected species is a material consideration when a planning authority is considering a development proposal that, if carried out, would be likely to result in harm to the species or its habitat”. It also stated that it is “essential that the presence or otherwise of protected species, and the extent that they may be affected by the proposed development, is established before the planning permission is granted, otherwise all relevant material considerations may not have been addressed in making the decision”.

2.4.2 In 2006, Section 40 (S40) of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006 placed a statutory duty on every public authority to have due regard to conserving biodiversity. Furthermore, Section 41 (S41) of this Act required the Secretary of State to publish a list of the living organisms and types of habitats that are of ‘Principal Importance’ for the purpose of conserving biodiversity, and the Secretary of State must then take steps, as appear reasonably practicable, to further the conservation of the living organisms and

habitats in any list published under this Section. The list of Species of Principal Importance currently includes 943 species, including seven bat species and 49 bird species, and the list of Habitats of Principal Importance currently includes 56 habitat types.

- 2.4.3 In 2012, the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) was introduced to help deliver sustainable development in the UK, and environmental objectives comprise one of three key elements within this policy framework. The NPPF includes a range of statements and policies intended to contribute to conserving and enhancing our natural and local environment (primarily chapter 15), including the protection and enhancement of biodiversity by, for example, minimising impacts on and providing net gains for it, and by promoting the conservation, restoration and enhancement of priority habitats, ecological networks and the protection and recovery of priority species. The NPPF has been updated several times since 2012.
- 2.4.4 The National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG) adds further context to the NPPF. In relation to the natural environment, amongst other things, it provides guidance on how protected and priority species and biodiversity should be considered in preparing a planning application. The NPPG states that:
- information on biodiversity and geodiversity impacts and opportunities needs to inform all stages of development (including site selection and design, pre-application consultation and the application itself)
 - an ecological survey will be necessary in advance of a planning application if the type and location of development could have a significant impact on biodiversity and existing information is lacking or inadequate
 - where an Environmental Impact Assessment is not needed it might still be appropriate to undertake an ecological survey, for example, where protected species may be present.
- 2.4.5 The NPPG also states, however, that LPAs should only require ecological surveys where clearly justified, and that assessments should be proportionate to the nature and scale of the development proposed and the likely impact on biodiversity.
- 2.4.6 On behalf of the UK Government and the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra), Natural England provides standing advice for Local Planning Authorities (LPAs) on where protected species are likely to be present, when to survey for them, and how to assess a planning application when there are protected species on or near a proposed development site. This standing advice, which is also useful for developers, can be viewed [here](#).
- 2.4.7 The NPPF and NPPG also reference the principle of Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) and in 2019 the UK Government announced that, via Defra and an Environment Bill, it would mandate almost all development in England to deliver net gains for biodiversity, except where the development area is below 25 m² or it comprises a householder application.
- 2.4.8 BNG is intended to ensure that all development leaves biodiversity in a better state than before, and as such it is hoped that the current loss of biodiversity through development will be halted, and ecological networks can be restored. The Environment Bill was finally passed by Parliament in late 2021. The fundamental principle of BNG is that where a development has an impact on biodiversity, planning consent should only be given if the project increases levels of biodiversity present on a site by providing appropriate natural habitat and ecological features.

3 Methods

3.1 General

- 3.1.1 The protected species survey was undertaken by a suitably qualified and experienced professional ecologist – see Section 3.5 for more information.
- 3.1.2 The bat survey was undertaken in accordance with [Collins, J \(ed.\) \(2023\) Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines \(4th edition\). The Bat Conservation Trust, London.](#)

3.2 Desk Study

- 3.2.1 Using an eight-figure OS GR for the building of SK 8304 6200, a search of the Natural England Multi-Agency Geographic Information for the Countryside (MAGIC) web portal was undertaken on 20 November 2023 for:
- Any statutory designated sites of nature conservation importance within a 2 km radius of the building e.g., Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), Local Nature Reserves (LNR) or National Nature Reserves (NNR); and,
 - Any EPSML issued for bats within 2 km of the Site since 2008.
- 3.2.2 Aerial images (Google Earth) and OS maps were also reviewed to assess the value of the habitats surrounding the building for bats.

3.3 Daytime Bat Roost Inspection and Assessment

- 3.3.1 A bat roost inspection and assessment of the buildings was completed on 6 November 2023 by Matt Cook BSc (Hons) MSc MCIEEM, an experienced ecologist who is licensed to an advanced level by Natural England to undertake professional bat surveys - see Section 3.5 for more information.
- 3.3.2 The inspection of the buildings comprised a thorough search of all accessible internal areas and external building surfaces for evidence of roosting bats, which typically comprises bat droppings, the remains of prey (such as moth wings), characteristic staining from urine or fur, marking from bat movement, a distinctive smell, and / or the presence of live or dead bats.
- 3.3.3 The surveyor also appraised the buildings for their general suitability for roosting bats based on the presence or absence of features where bats might roost or may access or egress a roost - potential roost features (PRF). Such building features might include but are not limited to apertures beneath and between roof tiles, ridge tiles, and lead flashing; cavities in masonry; accessible soffits and roof voids; gaps behind cladding, bargeboards, and fascia's; and apertures around window and door frames including those associated with lintels.
- 3.3.4 For the bat roost suitability assessment Collins (ed.) 2023 requires a category from Table 3.3.1 to be assigned to a target building. This categorisation applies irrespective of whether a roost is identified.

Table 3.3.1: Guidelines for assessing the potential suitability of buildings for roosting bats based on the presence of habitat features (PRF), to be applied using professional judgement. Table based on Collins (ed.) 2023 Table 4.1, p.44.

Suitability	Description
None	No habitat features on site likely to be used by any roosting bats at any time of year (i.e., a complete absence of crevices / suitable shelter at all ground / underground levels).

Suitability	Description
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 building with one or more potential roost sites that could be used by individual bats 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 (i.e., unlikely to be suitable for maternity and not a classic cool / stable hibernation site but could be used by individual hibernating bats).
Moderate	A building 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, such as maternity and hibernation – the categorisation described in this table is made irrespective of species conservation status, which is established after presence is confirmed).
High	A building 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 buildings have the potential to support high conservation status roosts e.g., maternity, or classic cool / stable hibernation site.

* Negligible is defined as ‘so small or unimportant as to be not worth considering, insignificant’. This category may be used where there are places that a bat could roost or forage (due to one attribute) but it is unlikely that they actually would (due to another attribute).

** For example, in terms of temperature, humidity, height above ground level, light levels, or levels of disturbance.

3.4 Nesting Birds

3.4.1 During the above survey any evidence of nesting bird activity within the buildings was also recorded; for example, any active or old nests, any accumulations of droppings, any regurgitated pellets or prey items, and / or any birds entering or exiting the building.

3.4.2 The buildings were also assessed for their accessibility and suitability for birds to nest within during the main annual bird nesting season of March to August.

3.5 Personnel

3.5.1 The survey and this report have been completed by Matt Cook BSc (Hons) MSc MCIEEM, who has been a professional ecologist for over 15 years. Matt has been licensed by Natural England to undertake professional bat surveys since 2011 and has held Natural England advanced survey licenses since 2013. Matt has been the Named Ecologist or Registered Consultant on various EPSML, Bat Mitigation Class Licences and Bats in Churches Class Licences covering a range of bat species and roost types since 2013.

3.5.2 Matt has also been undertaking professional surveys of buildings for nesting birds for over 15 years. Matt has held a barn owl survey licence from Natural England since 2010.

3.5.1 Natural England survey licence reference numbers can be provided upon request.

3.5.2 Matt is a Full Member of the Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (CIEEM) and is therefore bound by its professional [Code of Conduct](#).

3.6 Equipment

- 3.6.1 Equipment used for the daytime assessment and inspection comprised a 450 lumen Lenser P7R LED hand-torch and Clulite Clu-Briter Sport 1000 lumen cree torch, close-focusing German Precision Optics binoculars, and an Apple iPad and Panasonic Lumix DC-FZ82 digital camera for taking notes and / or photographs.

4 Results

4.1 Desk Study

- 4.1.1 There are no statutorily designated sites of nature conservation importance within 2 km of the buildings.
- 4.1.2 There are no records of EPSML issued by Natural England to allow the damage or destruction of any bat roosts within 2 km of the buildings.
- 4.1.3 The landscape around the buildings supports the following habitats that are likely to be important for roosting, foraging, and commuting local bat populations:

Nearby buildings including the church (c.50 m to the north-west), dwellings and farm buildings.

Nearby mature gardens and greenspaces (including the church cemetery).

Open countryside including hedgerows, scattered trees, ponds, streams, and small areas of woodland.

The River Trent and associated floodplain habitats and gravel pits c.2 km to the west, north-west and south-west.

4.2 Daytime Bat Roost Inspection and Assessment

- 4.2.1 Photographs 4.2.1 to 4.2.11 depict the findings of the bat roost inspection and assessment.
- 4.2.2 There was no evidence of any bat roosts within the buildings.
- 4.2.3 There was evidence (feeding remains) of a seldom used brown long-eared bat feeding perch within Building 2 – see Photographs 4.2.9 and 4.2.10 – however, there were no PRF for day roosting bats in the same area and only one PRF for day roosting bats elsewhere within this building – see Photograph 4.2.6 – where there was no evidence of bat usage.
- 4.2.4 The buildings do not support any PRF for high conservation status bat roosts. There are some PRF present within the buildings that could theoretically support individual bats, in keeping with most old outbuildings, however, the suitability of most of these is limited and their usage by roosting bats is unlikely.
- 4.2.5 Most of the PRF present within the buildings could be inspected for evidence of roosting bats from ground level or a ladder; only the small roof void above the toilet within Building 1 and the roof of Building 3 were inaccessible but only the latter can potentially be accessed by bats.
- 4.2.6 The following PRF were identified:

Building 1

Gaps beneath / between the lower roof tiles of the small, pitched roof at the eastern elevation of this building, including on top of the verge mortar where it meets the tiles - see Photographs 4.2.1 and 4.2.2.

Narrow subsidence cracks within the internal brickwork of the room to the north of the toilet, and a narrow crevice between the wall and the doorframe of this room – see Photographs 4.2.3 and 4.2.4.

Some missing bricks within the lower internal wall of the south elevation, some of which provide a suitably sized recess for low numbers of bats within the wall cavity – see Photograph 4.2.5.

The interior of Building 1 is accessible for bats via several small openings within the walls and doors.

Building 2

A narrow gap between two structural roof timbers – see Photograph 4.2.6.

The interior of Building 1 is accessible for bats in flight because the north elevation is open-sided.

Building 3

Several apertures between and beneath the clay ridge tiles and roof tiles – see Photograph 4.2.7.

The interior of Building 3 appears to be inaccessible to bats.

Photograph 4.2.1: Apertures between the verge mortar and tiles at the eastern end of Building 1.



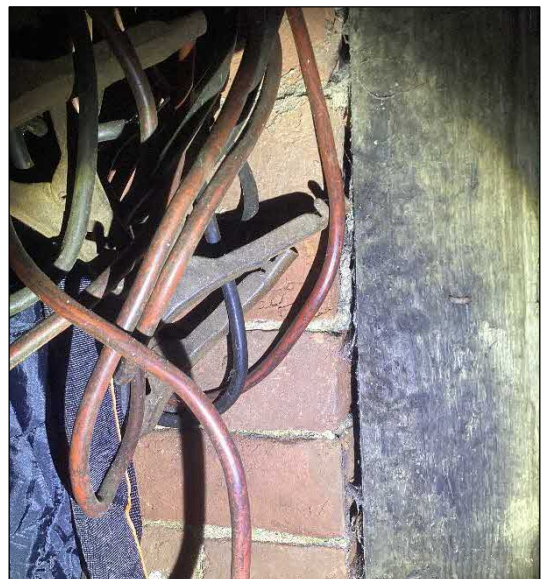
Photograph 4.2.2: Apertures beneath and between the clay tiles at the eastern end of Building 1.



Photograph 4.2.3: View of one of the subsidence cracks within the internal brickwork of the small room to the north of the toilet within Building 1.



Photograph 4.2.4: View of the narrow gap between the brickwork and the doorframe of the small room to the north of the toilet within Building 1.



Photograph 4.2.5: View of two of the bricks missing from the interior wall of Building 1.



Photograph 4.2.6: A narrow crevice between two roof timbers within Building 2.



Photograph 4.2.7: The roof of Building 3. There are several apertures between and beneath the ridge and roof tiles of this roof that could potentially support low numbers of roosting bats.



Photograph 4.2.8: View inside Building 1, facing west.



Photograph 4.2.9: View inside Building 2, from its north-west corner facing east. The feeding remains from the brown long-eared bat were found on the blue tarpaulin in the distance.



Photograph 4.2.10: The remains of the large yellow underwing moths found on the blue tarpaulin inside Building 2, which indicates feeding by a brown long-eared bat.



Photograph 4.2.11: View of the roof space of Building 3 (the garage).



4.2.7 There are no PRF apparent elsewhere within the fabric of these buildings; for example, there are no PRF within the exterior faces of the walls, and no PRF between the corrugated sheets on the roofs of Buildings 1 and 2. The small roof void above the toilet within Building 1 was not accessible for inspection, however, this is also inaccessible for bats.

4.2.8 Overall, in accordance with Collins (ed.) 2023 – Table 3.3.1 above - the buildings were assessed as follows:

Buildings 1 and 2 – ‘negligible suitability’ for roosting bats i.e., “there are no obvious habitat features 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”.

Building 3 – ‘low suitability’ for roosting bats i.e., it is “a building with one or more potential roost sites that could be used by individual bats 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”. The PRF within this building are all associated with the roof and ridge tiles.

4.3 Nesting Birds

4.3.1 There was no recent evidence of nesting bird activity although the survey was undertaken outside of the main annual nesting bird season (typically March to August). Buildings 1 and 2 could easily be accessed and used by nesting birds in the future.

5 Conclusions and Recommendations

5.1 Desk Study

5.1.1 The desk study did not identify any constraints to the proposals for these buildings due to nearby sites of nature conservation importance or redevelopment already licensed by Natural England.

5.2 Bats

5.2.1 There was no evidence of any bat roosts within the buildings.

5.2.2 There was evidence (feeding remains) of a seldom used brown long-eared bat feeding perch within Building 2, however, there were no PRF for day roosting bats in the same area and only one PRF for day roosting bats elsewhere within this building, which showed no evidence of usage.

5.2.3 The buildings do not support any PRF for high conservation status bat roosts. There are some PRF present within the buildings that could theoretically support individual bats in keeping with most old outbuildings, however, the suitability of most of these is limited and their usage by roosting bats is unlikely. Most of the PRF present within the buildings could be inspected for evidence of roosting bats from ground level or a ladder and none was identified.

5.2.4 In accordance with Collins (ed.) 2023 – Table 3.3.1 above – Buildings 1 and 2 were assessed to be of ‘negligible suitability’ for roosting bats. Building 3 (the garage) was assessed to be of ‘low suitability’ because there were several PRF associated with the ridge and roof tiles that could not be accessed.

5.2.5 It is understood that the proposals for the buildings do not involve any impacts on the roof of Building 3; if so, further bat surveys of the buildings are not recommended. If, however, the roof of Building 3 will be impacted then an evening emergence survey of this roof is recommended, to determine the presence or likely absence of roosting bats with more confidence, in keeping with current best practice guidelines (Collins (ed.), 2023) in respect of buildings with ‘low suitability’.

5.2.6 Note that the nocturnal bat survey can only be undertaken in suitable weather when bats are most active, which is within the period May to September annually.

5.3 Nesting Birds

5.3.1 There was no recent evidence of nesting bird activity, however, Buildings 1 and 2 could easily be accessed and used by nesting birds during the annual breeding season, which is typically March through August.

5.3.2 It is therefore strongly recommended that a pre-start check for nesting birds is undertaken before any renovations of the buildings commence within this period.

5.4 Biodiversity Enhancements

5.4.1 To provide some additional habitat for wildlife on the site upon completion of the project it is recommended that two bat and bird boxes are installed on the buildings or in the garden.

5.4.2 These should be installed away from regular disturbance, including from pets, and close to established shrubs and / or trees to provide commuting and foraging connectivity to the wider area. The bat boxes should be installed in an area of darkness and at a height of at least 3m.

5.5 General

- 5.5.1 As a matter of standard good practice, it is advisable that anyone working on this project always be vigilant for the possible presence of roosting bats and nesting birds however unlikely this may seem.

6 Evaluation

- 6.1.1 The protected species survey was undertaken by a suitably qualified and experienced professional ecologist.
- 6.1.2 The bat survey was undertaken in accordance with Collins, J (ed.) (2023) *Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines* (4th edition). The Bat Conservation Trust, London. This document is widely considered best practice guidance regarding professional bat surveys, and as such it should be referenced by all professional ecologists, developers, planners, and the policy-makers responsible for reviewing and assessing the implications of professional bat surveys.
- 6.1.3 Overall, every effort has been made during this study to provide a comprehensive ecological assessment pertaining to the relevant protected species in the context of the commissioned scope of works. It is considered that the survey findings provide a robust platform for the recommendations contained within this report.
- 6.1.4 Notwithstanding the above, however, it remains important to note that no investigation can completely characterise or predict the natural environment because wild animals are inherently unpredictable, all habitats are subject to change, and species may colonise or vacate areas for a variety of reasons after surveys have taken place. The results, conclusions, and recommendations within any ecological report therefore become less reliable over time.

END OF REPORT



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