

**12 Harefield
Cottages**

Lympstone

Devon

**Bat and Breeding
Bird Survey**

Revision 00

**Client: Mrs Hindle &
Mrs Wootton
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JG Ecological Surveys Ltd
33 Cranford Avenue
Exmouth
EX8 2QA

Tel: 01395 271417
Mob: 07909920283

Company reg no: 6623813

jason@jgecologicalsurveys.co.uk

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12 Harefield Cottages Protected Species Survey

1. INTRODUCTION AND SCOPE

1.1 General

JG Ecological Surveys Ltd was commissioned by the property owners Mrs Hindle and Mrs Wootton, to undertake a bat and breeding bird survey of 12 Harefield Cottages, Lypstone, Devon, EX8 5EX. The survey was triggered by the proposal to alter the existing roof structure.

The survey took place on the 15th December 2023.

The site was centred on OS grid reference SX 9885 8408.

1.2 Survey Aims

Fieldwork was undertaken in order to identify whether the building supported roosting bats, breeding birds or Barn owl *Tyto alba*, ahead of the proposed works.

1.3 Summary of Results

Bats

No bat field signs were found in or on the surveyed structure.

Barn owl

The structure was unsuitable for Barn owl and the species will not be considered further in the report.

Breeding Birds

No old nest sites were found on or in the surveyed building.

1.4 Implications for the Proposed Works

Bats

The results of the survey indicated that there would be no implications with respect to bats as no signs of roosting were noted. All bat species and their roosts are protected under Section 9 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended), through their inclusion on Schedule 5, as well as under Schedule 2 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations, which defines 'European protected species of animals'. These pieces of legislation combine to give substantial protection to bats and their roost sites (defined as 'dwelling places'). The Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 (now replaced by the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act (NERC) 2006) introduced the term 'reckless disturbance' into the Wildlife and Countryside Act; this is a substantial strengthening of the legislation. The Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) and

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the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations (2017) combine to make it an offence to undertake the following acts:

- Kill, injure or capture bats
- Damage, destroy or obstruct access to any place used by bats for shelter or protection
- Recklessly disturb bats.

Nesting birds

The presence of nesting birds either within, or on, the buildings would impose timing constraints on any works that might disturb them due to their legal protection under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended). The nesting season is typically mid March to mid to end August but is prone to local variation depending on such things as weather conditions and food supply. Works that might impact on nesting birds would need to be timed for commencement after the last fledgling has stopped returning to the nest, and prior to the nesting season of the following year (the initiation of nest building is considered the point at which the sites are protected from disturbance).

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2. SURVEY METHODOLOGY

2.1 Site Survey

Visual Inspection

A visual inspection survey was undertaken of the building by Jason Gillingham (a Natural England licensed bat surveyor) on the 15th December 2023. The building was searched visually, using a high powered torch, binoculars and endoscope where required, for field evidence of bats and breeding birds with particular attention being paid to sheltered areas such as window ledges and pipes where bat droppings might lie undisturbed from the weather. The interiors and floors were inspected in detail for bat droppings, urine staining or actual bats. The building was assigned a category for its potential to support a bat roost on the basis of Table 1 of Appendix 1.

The presence of current, or deserted bird nest sites were noted during survey.

2.2 Survey Limitations

A bitumen felt lining was present beneath the slates, however in combination with a full external inspection of both the interior and exterior (from ladders and with an endoscope where required) it was possible to say that the limitations did not impact the assessment of whether bats were using the building as a roost site.

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3. RESULTS

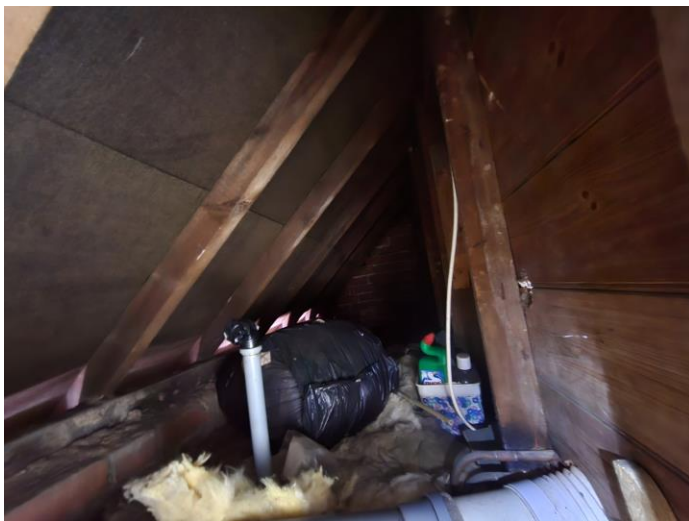
3.1 12 Harefield Cottages

Description

Wall construction	Brick
Roof construction	Timber framework with a covering of slates with a bitumen felt lining.



Photograph 1: 12 Harefield Cottages



Photograph 2: Eaves roof space



Photograph 3: Close up of the sealed soffit to wall top join where the north elevation dormer will be located

Findings

Bats

The building had very limited roof spaces as rooms had been built into the roof structure along with roof lights and an existing dormer. The eaves roof spaces were fully inspected with a torch and an endoscope to view behind the bitumen felt. No bat field signs were found. The wall to soffit join was inspected with binoculars from the ground and appeared sealed (refer to Photograph 3 which shows where the proposed northern elevation dormer will be located). The south elevation dormer location had no slipped or missing slates and no wall top gaps that could be exploited by bats to gain access to the roof structure.

In combination the absence of bat field signs within the small roof spaces or behind the felt lining, the limited works to the roof coverings to construct the dormers and their location in areas that appeared in good condition with no potential bat access points enabled the assessment that the areas proposed for the works offered no bat roost potential.

Breeding birds

No signs of nesting activity were noted on or within the building.

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4. CONCLUSIONS

4.1 12 Harefield Cottages

Bats

In combination the absence of bat field signs within the small roof spaces or behind the felt lining, the limited works to the roof coverings to construct the dormers and their location in areas that appeared in good condition with no potential bat access points enabled the conclusion that bats did not use the building as a roost site. It was reasonable to conclude based on the survey findings that bats would not be disturbed as a result of the proposed roof works.

Breeding birds

It was concluded that birds were not using the building for breeding.

5. RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 12 Harefield Cottages

Bats

Legislative recommendations

It could be determined from the survey findings that the building was not being used as roost location by bats therefore there are no legislative recommendations with respect to bats. It is not considered necessary to recommend or carry out emergence surveys due to the condition and accessibility of the site to visual inspection and the absence of bat field signs. However individual bats use a variety of roost sites throughout the year and on rare occasions a single bat might use the building for temporary shelter. If bats are found during the limited roof strip then works in the vicinity should cease and JG Ecological Surveys Ltd be contacted on 07909920283 for further advice.

Breeding birds

Legislative recommendations

The works should ideally avoid the bird breeding season which is typically March to August inclusive as the building has the potential to be adopted by nesting birds during future breeding seasons. All nesting birds are legally protected from disturbance. If these timing constraints cannot be applied a check immediately prior to commencement of works would need to be undertaken. If no actively nesting/breeding birds were noted then works could commence. If nesting/raising of young was taking place the works would need to be delayed until completion of breeding activity.

6. REFERENCES

Mitchell-Jones A. (2004). *Bat Mitigation Guidelines*. English Nature, Peterborough.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1

Classification criteria for assessing the potential value of buildings

It should be noted that the grading system below only reports on the situation at the time of survey; should bat activity levels change after the initial survey, or should the buildings be modified (for example if roof tiles are removed or fascia boards develop cracks), the category may need revision.

Please note: Intermediate categories (for example Low – Moderate value) may apply.

Category (Potential value)	Description
No/negligible value	Buildings with no or very few features capable of supporting roosting bats. Often buildings are of 'sound' well-sealed structure, or have a single skin and no roof void. They tend to have high interior light-levels, and little or no insulation. Buildings without any roofs may also fall into this category.
Low value	Buildings of largely unsuitable construction, but with few features of potential value to bats (e.g. gaps above windows, apparently shallow crevices). No supporting evidence (e.g. droppings / staining) found. Buildings may be surrounded by poor or sub-optimal bat foraging habitat, as is often the case in urban-centre locations.
Moderate value	Buildings usually of brick or stone construction with a number of features of obvious potential value to roosting bats e.g. loose roof / ridge tiles, gaps in brickwork, gaps under fascia boards, and/or warm sealed roof-spaces with under-felt.
High value	Buildings with a large number of features of obvious potential value to bats (as above). Bats may be suspected to roost within the building (at least at certain times of year), but no supporting evidence found.
Confirmed roost	Bats discovered roosting within the building, or recorded emerging from / entering the building at dusk and / or dawn. Building found to contain conclusive evidence of occupation by bats, such as bat droppings. A confirmed record (as supplied by an established source such as the local bat group) would also apply to this category.

Table 1. Appendix 1