

My Ref: 2022#053#CJ

Mr C Jourdan
Poulner Farm House
5 Butlers Lane
Ringwood
Hampshire
BH24 1UB

2nd October 2022

Dear Chris,

Re: PRELIMINARY ROOST ASSESSMENT at POULNER FARM HOUSE, 5 BUTLERS LANE, RINGWOOD, BH24 1UB

I am writing to provide you with the results of the Preliminary Roost Assessment (PRA) that was recently undertaken at the above property.

BACKGROUND

A planning application is due to be submitted to New Forest District Council to demolish and rebuild an existing extension to the above property, as well as modifying and extending the existing detached garage. Full details are provided on the plans and drawings that accompany the planning application. A Preliminary Roost Assessment (PRA) is required to inform any potential impacts on roosting bats that may occur as a result of the proposed works.

PLANNING POLICY

This report has been prepared with consideration to *Policy ENV1* contained within the *NFDC Local Plan 2016-2036 Part One: Planning Strategy* (adopted in July 2020), as well as *Saved Policy DM2: Nature Conservation, Biodiversity and Geodiversity* from the *Local Plan Part 2: Sites and Development Management Development Plan*. Relevant legislation includes the '*Conservation of Habitats & Species Regulations 2017 (as amended)*', the '*Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981 (as amended)*', '*The Environment Act 2021*' and the '*Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006*'.

METHODS

A Preliminary Roost Assessment (PRA) for bats was undertaken in accordance with the guidance provided in '*Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists*' (Collins et al., 2016). The survey was undertaken on 30th September 2022 by a licensed bat ecologist (licence: 2015-13625-CLS-CLS) and used torches, endoscope and binoculars to inspect both the interior and exterior of the parts of the properties that will be affected. The survey also included a search for evidence of nesting birds and other protected species.

No formal data search was undertaken on this occasion as the Bat Conservation Trust guidelines (Collins, J., 2016) states that for small projects: "*Relevant elements such as a study of maps, aerial photographs and site photographs, may provide enough information to skip straight to a preliminary roost assessment... with elements of the desk study (such as a background data search from a Local Records Centre) carried out afterwards if potential for bats or evidence of bats is found*".

Survey Limitations

All parts of the property were accessible and the survey was undertaken without any constraints.

RESULTS

Designated Sites

Poulner Farm House is not located within, or adjacent to, any statutory or non-statutory designated sites. The development will not result in a net increase in living accommodation, so no negative effects on European sites (resulting from increased recreational or nutrient discharge impacts) are predicted.

Preliminary Roost Assessment

Photographs of the property are provided at **Annex I**.

Poulner Farm House is a grade II listed detached thatched farm house that has seen numerous extensions and modifications since the original property was constructed in the 17th Century. This includes a single-storey, flat roofed extension to the rear, built in the 1980's. This extension was poorly constructed and is proposed for demolition and rebuild.

Farm House

The flat roofed extension (**Photograph 1**) that is proposed for demolition & rebuild is a single-storey flat roofed structure with no internal roof void. It is constructed from a mix of brick infill around wooden beams and supports wooden doors, windows and fascia boards. The bricks within the walls are well sealed with no areas of missing mortar or other crevices that could be utilised by roosting bats. Similarly, the fascia boards are tightly sealed to the walls and do not provide sufficient gaps that could provide bat roosting habitat.

The first-floor window on the main dwelling (that is proposed to be converted to a door on to the new balcony) is tightly sealed to the walls. The roofing tiles in the affected area are also well-fitted (**Photograph 2**) and no evidence of bat presence was recorded within the internal roof void. No evidence of bat presence (bats, droppings, feeding remains, etc) was recorded anywhere within the main farm house.

Garage

The existing garage (**Photograph 3**) is constructed from single-skin brickwork and supports a single pitched roof covered in flat clay roofing tiles. It supports a wooden boxed soffit that is tightly sealed to the walls (**Photograph 4**) and contains double-garage doors to the front and a large door to the rear. The roof void (**Photograph 5**) contains struts & perkins, is lit at one end by a window and is lined with a bitumen style roofing membrane. It is largely un-boarded with some areas of fibreglass fleece insulation. No evidence of bat presence was recorded within the roof void and no light gaps to the outside were visible (that would indicate bat access points).

Externally, the part of the garage that will be affected by the proposals is heavily covered in Virginia creeper (*Parthenocissus quinquefolia*) (**Photograph 6**). The density of this vegetation precluded a full external inspection but equally precludes bat access due to the density of the foliage.

Conclusions

Given the lack of bat evidence (internally and externally) and lack of external roosting features, the affected parts of the property (both the farm house and the garage collectively) is currently considered to have **NEGLIGIBLE SUITABILITY TO SUPPORT ROOSTING BATS**, conforming to the description within the BCT Guidelines as "*Negligible habitat features on site likely to be used by roosting bats*". Bat roosting habitat may be present in other parts of the farm house, but these would remain unaffected by the development proposals.

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Other Considerations

No nesting birds were recorded within either the farm house or garage. It is possible that the Virginia creeper on the garage may provide suitable nesting bird habitat, so measures to address this are presented below. The footprints of the proposed development (**Photographs 7a & 7b**) comprise existing paving slabs and/or ornamental flowerbeds. Being regularly disturbed and with no semi-natural habitats, the development footprint does not provide suitable habitat to support protected species.

MITIGATION

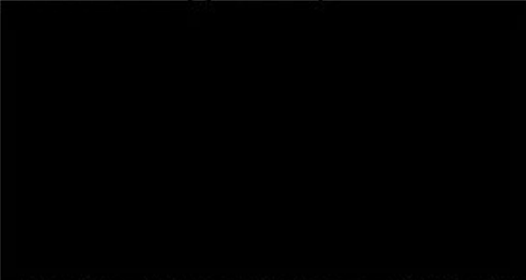
It is recommended that the Virginia creeper on the garage is removed outside of the nesting bird season (which runs from March – August inclusive) to avoid any impacts on nesting birds.

CONCLUSIONS

The property was surveyed in accordance with current best practice guidelines and no evidence of bat presence or suitable roosting habitat was recorded. It is therefore considered that, provided mitigation is implemented for nesting birds, the proposed works can proceed in accordance with wildlife legislation & planning policy.

I hope that the above provides the advice and guidance that you require. If you have any further queries, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Kind regards,



Pete Etheridge BSc MCIEEM MCMA
Owner & Principal Ecologist

ANNEX I: SITE PHOTOGRAPHS



Photograph 1: Flat roofed extension scheduled for demolition & rebuild



Photograph 2: Tightly fitted roof tiles in location of proposed door



Photograph 3: Detached garage



Photograph 3: Detached garage



Photograph 5: Garage roof void



Photograph 6: Virginia creeper on garage that precludes bat access



Photographs 7a & 7b: Footprints of proposed extensions

