
**STABLES, THE PRIORY,
LONG NEWNTON, GLOUCESTERSHIRE**

PROTECTED SPECIES SURVEY

Final Report

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Prepared by

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Contents

1 Introduction.....1

2 Scope of Work and Methodology2

3 Baseline Conditions3

3.1 Building description.....3

3.2 Bat roost inspection3

3.3 Other protected species.....3

4 Conclusions4

5 Protecting nesting birds.....5

Appendix A Site photographs.....6

1 Introduction

The client is seeking planning permission to convert an existing stable block to a residential dwelling. The stable block is located within the curtilage of The Priory, Long Newnton, Gloucestershire, GL8 8RR. The stables are located adjacent to other residential dwellings, and surrounded by the hard-standing yard, adjacent road and horse-grazed paddocks.

AD Ecology was commissioned to undertake a Phase 1 (bat roost inspection and protected species) survey of the barn. The survey was undertaken by Jonathan Adey who is a Natural England licensed bat worker (NE Class Licence Level 1 WLM-CL17), Chartered Environmentalist and full member of the Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (CIEEM).

The survey concentrated on identifying the presence of, or potential for, roosting bats and other protected species (e.g. nesting birds) inhabiting or using the building. This report sets out the findings of the survey, and where necessary makes recommendations for actions to ensure the proposed development complies with nature conservation legislation and meets the requirements of planning policy.

Section 40 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006 (NERC Act) requires all public bodies to have regard to biodiversity conservation when carrying out their functions. Under the NERC Act the local planning authority should not determine a planning application if there are any surveys outstanding for European protected species. The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), revised February 2019, requires the planning system should conserve and enhance the natural environment (Section 15) by, *inter alia*, 'protecting and enhancing sites of biodiversity value' and minimising impacts and providing net gains for biodiversity' (para 170).

2 Scope of Work and Methodology

A Phase 1 bat roost inspection and protected species survey was undertaken on 22nd July 2019. The survey was undertaken by a licensed bat surveyor in accordance with Bat Conservation Trust guidelines¹. The survey included an internal and external inspection of the building looking for signs of, or the potential for the building to support, roosting bats. A ladder, high-powered torch and binoculars were available and were used where necessary to examine roof space, crevices and other small spaces potentially suitable for roosting bats to occupy.

Evidence of bats, considered during the search included:

- ❖ Droppings.
- ❖ Urine staining.
- ❖ Feeding remains (such as moth wings).
- ❖ Smudge marks and scratches around potential bat roost holes.
- ❖ Live roosting bats, bat skeletal remains or dead bats.

Conditions indicating an absence of bats can include the presence of spider webs, bird nesting material and wasp nest material blocking access holes or possible roosting gaps, or sheltering live butterflies/moths or cluster flies.

Bat roost potential was established using the following scale:

1. *Negligible potential/not a roost*: no suitable features
2. *Low potential*: one or more suitable features that could be used by individual bats opportunistically
3. *Moderate potential*: one or more suitable features that could be used by bats, but unlikely to support a roost of high conservation status
4. *High potential*: one or more suitable features that are suitable for use by larger numbers of bats on a regular basis
5. *Confirmed roost*: evidence of current/recent bat occupation

The survey also assessed the building for the presence of nesting birds and other protected species.

¹ Collins, J. (ed.) (2016). *Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines (3rd edn)*. The Bat Conservation Trust, London

3 Baseline Conditions

Photographs of the building are presented in Appendix A.

3.1 Building description

The stable block is a single-storey structure, which is constructed with sealed brick and stone walls with some tight-fitting timber ship-lap. Walls are sealed brick or rendered on the inside. All walls are sealed and leave no gaps. The roof is shallow pitched and clad in slate tiles and ridge caps. All roof tiles are intact and the ridge lines are sealed with mortar leaving no gaps. End roof and ridge tiles are sealed with mortar leaving no gaps. The roof overhangs the stable compartments supported on softwood timber uprights. There are tight-fitting timber barge boards that leave no gaps. There is security lighting on the exterior of the building.

The stables are divided into seven separate compartments, including two tack-rooms and five stable compartments (three of which are connected internally with 2/3 high dividing timber walls). The roof of all compartments comprises close-fitting timber sarking or boarding, and there is no exposed ridge board. There are electric lights in all compartments. The end tack room and each stable compartment has a single, glazed window, and all doors are intact and maintained shut.

On the end of the side of the barn is a small open lean-to, which is constructed with softwood timber uprights. The roof is a continuation of the shallow pitched slate roof, which is boarded underneath.

This building has no external or internal gaps/recesses or hidden voids suitable for crevice-dwelling bats to use, there are no exposed roof timbers, no access points into the building interior, and the building provides unsuitable environmental conditions being light.

3.2 Bat roost inspection

There are no external or internal recesses or hidden voids, and the building interior provides unsuitable conditions for roosting bats being sealed and light (including natural and artificial lighting).

No evidence of bat roosting (no live bats, no dead bats, no accumulations or scattered droppings, no feeding remains, and no urine staining, scratching or oil staining) was found within or on the outside of the building.

The stable block is classed as Category 1 (not a roost/negligible roost potential).

3.3 Other protected species

There is evidence of previous pigeon (*Columba* sp) and one old swallow (*Hirundo rustica*) nesting within the stable compartments.

There are no other protected species associated with this building.

4 Conclusions

The stables are not used by bats for roosting or as a place of rest, and provide negligible opportunities for roosting bats given the construction of the building. The conversion of this building does not require a Natural England licence under the provisions of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017. No mitigation for the protection of bats is necessary.

Given the structure of the building and proposed work, there are no opportunities for integrating wildlife features into the building alterations. Therefore, in order to provide an enhancement for bats it is recommended that an external bat box (see nhbs.co.uk or wildcare.co.uk for suitable boxes) is fitted to a gable end or a nearby mature tree within the curtilage of the grounds. Boxes can be viewed on-line, with one example is a Schwegler 1FF general purpose bat box suitable for a variety of crevice-dwelling bats. Guidance on locating such features is also provided by the supplier. In general, these boxes should be located on in an east, south, or western orientation with clear flight lines in and no external lighting being present.

There is evidence of bird nesting within the building, and mitigation to ensure protection of nesting birds is presented in Section 5.

5 Protecting nesting birds

There is evidence of previous bird nesting activity within the building. Therefore, to ensure compliance with the Wildlife and Countryside Act, 1981 (as amended) the following action will be implemented:

- ❖ Work to seal the building undertaken during the bird breeding season, which is generally considered to be from 1st March to 31st August, will require an inspection for nesting birds be undertaken immediately prior to work commencing (maximum 2 weeks in advance). The presence of nesting birds (including birds constructing nests) and/or fledglings may result in some work being delayed to allow birds to vacate the nest site.
- ❖ Any work undertaken outside the bird breeding and fledgling season (i.e. Between 1st September and 28th February) will not require an inspection for nesting birds prior to work commencing.

Regardless of the timing of work or findings or previous survey, if nesting birds are found on-site during work to the building then work should stop and an ecologist consulted.

Appendix A Site photographs



Photographs 1, 2 & 3: External front views of the building



Photograph 4: External rear view of the building



Photographs 5, 6 & 7: Internal views of the main section of the stable



Photographs 8 & 9: internal views of other sections of the stable block