

Ecological Assessment for Bats and Breeding Birds

4 High Street, Bampton, Devon



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www.wildlifesurveying.co.uk
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Code of Professional Conduct

The information contained within this report is true and has been prepared and provided in accordance with the Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management's Code of Professional Conduct. We confirm that the opinions expressed are our true and professional bona fide opinions.

BS 42020:2013

This survey has been undertaken in accordance with British Standard 42020:2013 Biodiversity, Code of practice for planning and development.

Validity of survey data and report

The findings of this report are valid for 12 months from the date of survey.

If a European Protected Species Licence application (if required) has not been made within this period, updated surveys will be required to support a licence application.

Report author	Kari Bettoney BSc (Hons) ACIEEM
Checked by	Ceridwyn Adkins BSc (Hons) MCIEEM
Site address	4 High Street, Bampton, Tiverton, Devon EX16 9NQ
Commissioned by	Damien Fieldhouse
OS grid reference	SS955223
Survey dates	Preliminary visual assessment: 8 th February 2024
Surveyors	Kari Bettoney Bat Licence: Class 1 and 2 Dormouse Licence: Class 1 Registered Consultant: Bat Mitigation Class Licence
Report date	12 th February 2024
Report number	KB24/108
Report expiry date	12 th February 2025

Checklist - Devon Householder / Building Applications with only bat roost / bird nesting issues

To speed up assessment by the LPA, this form should be completed by the Ecological Consultant and submitted at the beginning of the Ecology Report.

Ecological consultant: Kari Bettoney

1. Impact assessment / survey effort

<p>Has the impact assessment / survey been done within the last 12 months, and does it meet national guidance requirements? If there have been any deviations from national guidance, please select No in the right-hand column.</p>	<p>Yes</p>	<p>No</p>
	<p>Dates: Preliminary survey: 8th February 2024</p>	

2. Ecological impacts

<p>2a. Proposal impacts on bats / birds and mitigation measures are specified.</p>		<p>Yes (conditions needed) No (no conditions needed)</p>
<p>2b. Proposal has other ecological impacts which the LPA needs to consider.</p>	<p>No</p>	<p>Yes</p>
<p>2c. Is the proposal likely to result in an offence under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations?</p>		<p>Yes (go to 2.d) No (go to 2.e)</p>
<p>2d. If YES (an offence IS likely) Could the works be undertaken, under a Low Impact Class Licence i.e.:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Three or fewer roosts are impacted by the proposals, and • The proposal will have a low or temporary impact, and • The proposal only effects: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Low conservation status roosts for low numbers of: common pipistrelle, soprano pipistrelle, brown long-eared, whiskered, Brandt's, Daubenton's Natterer's and/or - • Feeding, day, night and/or transitional roosts for low numbers of serotine and/or • Day and/or transitional roosts for low numbers of lesser horseshoe. 	<p>Yes</p>	<p>No</p>

<p>2e. If NO (an offence is NOT likely) Does the roost meet any of the following criteria:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • maternity or hibernation roost • greater horseshoe bat roost • grey long-eared bat roost • more than three species of bat found in small numbers 	<p>No (none are met)</p>	<p>Yes (one or more are met)</p>
<p>2f. Does the proposal potentially impact on barn owls?</p>	<p>No</p>	<p>Yes</p>

3. Expertise

<p>Are you, the ecological consultant, registered under either the Level 1 or the Level 2 Bat Survey Class Licence?</p>	<p>Yes</p>	<p>No</p>
<p>Are you a member of CIEEM or a Registered Consultant under Annex B of the Low Impact Class Licence for bats (or under Annex C or D for a serotine or lesser horseshoe roost where relevant)?</p>	<p>Yes</p>	<p>No</p>

Executive Summary

A survey of a building at 4 High Street, Bampton, Tiverton, Devon EX16 9NQ, was undertaken by Kari Bettoney BSc Hons ACIEEM AECOW, a Natural England Class 2 bat licence holder on 8th February 2024.

A detailed visual and internal assessment of the building was made, to assess the site for the presence of protected species, or the potential to support protected species and to make recommendations for further survey work as appropriate.

During the preliminary survey, no evidence of roosting bats or the potential for roosting bats to occur within the buildings was recorded. No evidence of current or historic nesting birds was observed. No further surveys are required to inform this project.

Bats

The results of the preliminary visual assessment indicate that it is unlikely that bats are roosting within the buildings at 4 High Street, Bampton.

No bat enhancements are recommended as there is no suitable location to mount a bat box.

Works can proceed with negligible risk to bats following the precautionary working method given in Section 6.2 and Appendix 1. A copy of the method statement must be retained on site during the period of works and must be communicated to all workers before any works commence.

In the unlikely event that a bat is found at any point during works, then the measures in the Precautionary Method Statement in Appendix 1 must be followed, and the ecologist must be called immediately on 07762 051481.

Breeding birds

No evidence of current or historic breeding birds was observed within any part of the buildings.

Small access points were present at the gutter line under the tiles on the kitchen extension which could be used by birds (such as blue tits or sparrows) to gain access to the crevice under the lines and fascia.

Works can proceed with negligible risk to breeding birds providing a pre-works check is carried out, and if nesting birds are found, works are postponed until the chicks have fledged.

The proposed development is considered to have a very low likelihood of any negative impact on nesting sites for breeding birds.

Lighting

Any additional exterior lighting must be low level, hooded lighting which points downwards, and must be on a timer so it goes off when not in use.

This is to reduce any negative impacts on foraging and commuting bats in the areas surrounding the buildings.

Legal responsibilities	
Precautionary working method	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The precautionary working method given in Section 6.2 and Appendix 1 must be followed by all workers. • A copy of the precautionary method statement must be kept on site and the contents must be communicated to all workers.
Protection of unexpected bats	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Care must be taken to check under any roof tiles, flashing, soffits, fascias and verge covering material to check for any unexpected bats. If in the unlikely event that a bat is found, work must pause, and the ecologist must be contacted immediately by calling 07762 051481. • The bat should be covered back up if <u>it is safe to do so</u>, or if not, it should be carefully handled <u>wearing gloves</u> and placed in a cardboard box with a lid and air holes which is then stored in a cool place, and the ecologist must be contacted immediately by calling 07762 051481. <p>See Appendix 1 for full Precautionary Method Statement</p>
Nesting bird check	<p>Immediately prior to the start of works (and not more than 48 hours before start of works, a check should be made for nesting birds. If nesting birds are found, then works must be postponed until the checks have fledged which may be for a period of several weeks.</p>



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1. Introduction

A preliminary visual assessment for bats and breeding birds of the at 4 High Street, Bampton, Tiverton, Devon EX16 9NQ, was undertaken at grid reference SS955223. The survey was carried out on 8th February 2024 by Kari Bettoney.

1.1. Survey aims

The aim of the preliminary assessment is to provide baseline information on the possible presence or absence of habitats or features likely to support protected species.

The report will make recommendations for any further surveys that are required in order to make a thorough assessment of the impacts of the development on protected species.

The results of these surveys will be used to inform working methods, including avoidance, mitigation, compensation, and enhancement measures required to safeguard protected species throughout the development and to inform the local Planning Authority when reviewing the planning application.

The additional surveys will also determine if a European Protected Species (EPS) licence will be required to allow the proposed development to proceed lawfully.

This survey has been prepared in accordance with the Bat Conservation Trust's "Bat Surveys Good Practice Guidelines 4th Edition" (Collins, 2023).

1.2. Site description

The building is located on the High Street in Bampton within Exmoor National Park in Devon.

The house is surrounded by pavement to front, with a hardstanding and a terraced garden of introduced shrubs and amenity grassland to rear. The garden is accessed by steep steps from ground level at the rear.

The adjacent gardens create a green corridor to open countryside to the north. The wider landscape provides excellent bat foraging habitat and is well-linked by Devon hedges and watercourses to larger areas of woodland to the north, and to the River Exe corridor to the west.

1.3. Building description

The main house is a historic two-storey terraced cottage constructed of stone which is unrendered, with a pitched slate roof laid to wooden trusses which is underlined with 1F bitumen felt. The loft floor is insulated with rockwool insulation.

A single storey kitchen extension (with loft above) is located to rear with a small flat roof lobby area adjacent.

1.4. Lighting

The surroundings of the site are lit by nearby municipal streetlights. Some domestic lighting is already present within the garden with some darker areas within the nearby garden to the rear of the terrace.

1.5. Proposed works

It is understood that the proposed works are to extend the rear extension upwards, remove the chimney and alter the loft dimensions.



Figure 1 Landscape view of the building surveyed (© 2024 Google Earth: CNES/Airbus)

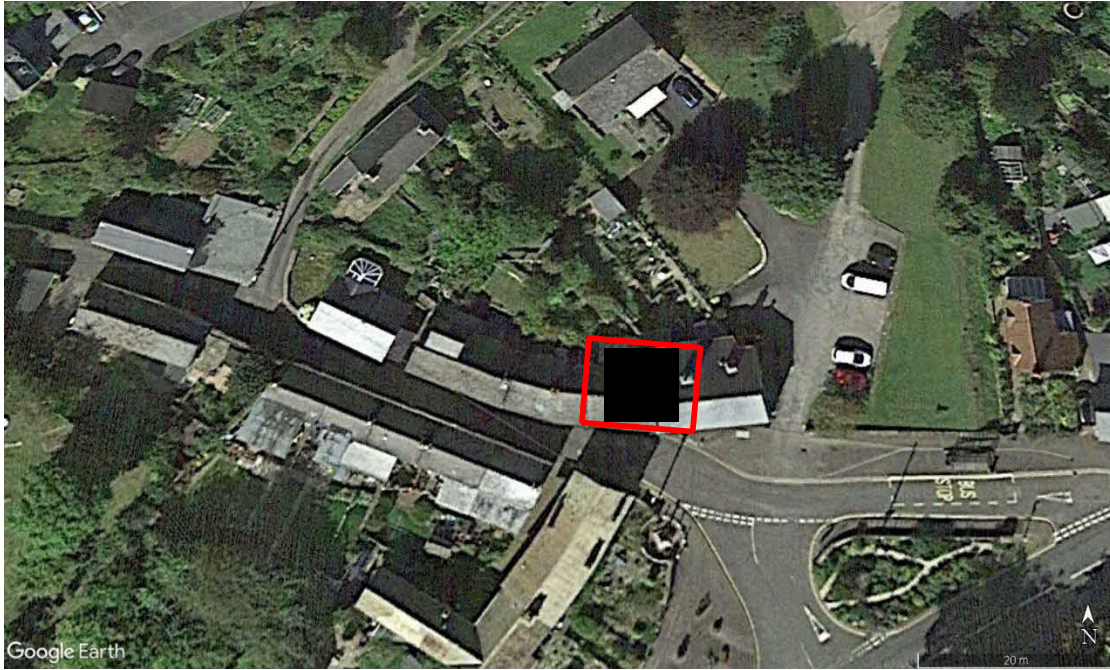


Figure 2 Location of the building and land surveyed (© 2024 Google Earth)

2. Methods

2.1. Bat roost assessment

A preliminary visual assessment was undertaken to check for field signs of bats such as droppings, urine staining, rubbing, feeding remains or other evidence that would indicate the building is used by bats or nesting birds. Any bat droppings seen were identified by colour, texture and size, and a sample was collected for DNA testing (if appropriate), which may be required for certain species. An assessment of the potential for roosting within any accessible voids or cavities within the building was undertaken, and any possible access points that have potential to be used by bats were identified.

The preliminary visual assessment survey was completed at an optimal time for the inspection of buildings and structures for bat roosts. Areas searched had not been cleaned/swept prior to survey. The survey method complies with guidelines produced by the Bat Conservation Trust 4th Edition (Collins, 2023).

2.2. Surveyor details

The survey was completed by Kari Bettoney on 8th February 2024 at 11:30pm.

2.3. Weather

The weather was dry, cloudy 8/8 oktas, with a gentle breeze, and a temperature of 12°C.

2.4. Site and habitats assessment

A visual assessment was made to assess the suitability of habitats present to support protected species or to be otherwise impacted by the proposed development.

A search for field signs of species likely to be found within the habitats present was made and any evidence was target noted.

2.5. Survey constraints


No survey constraints were encountered.

2.6. Breeding birds

A search of suitable locations within the interior and exterior of the buildings was carried out to locate any evidence of recent or historic nesting bird species.

2.7. Surveyor

The survey was completed by Kari Bettoney, an Associate Member of the Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (ACIEEM), an ecologist with nine years of professional experience, and qualified as having the required Competency for Species Survey as outlined by the Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management. Kari Bettoney holds a Level 2 Class Licence in relation to bats,



which permits the surveying of bats using artificial light, endoscopes, hand, and static hand nets. Kari holds a Level 1 dormouse licence which permits surveying and handling of hazel dormouse.

2.8. Desk study

A search was made on Magic Map (2024) for nearby statutory and non-statutory designations and priority habitats and species likely to be impacted by the proposed development, and European Protected Species Licences (EPSL) within 2 kilometres of the site.

2.9. Data search

A data search from Devon Biodiversity Records Centre and Devon Bat Group was not carried out due to the small nature of the works. At least 16 bat species are known to be present within the county of Devon. All bat species will be considered within the assessment. It was therefore considered that a further data search would not provide any meaningful information for this proposed development.

3. Results

3.1. Desk study

Statutory and non-statutory designations

The site is not within any protected statutory and non-statutory designations. There are two statutory protected sites within 2km of the site (see Table 1).

The small nature of the works is considered unlikely to directly impact any protected habitats.

Table 1 Local Statutory Designated Protected Sites

Site name	Designation	Reason for designation
Five Oaks Bampton SSSI	Site of Special Scientific Interest	Geological interest
Kersdown Quarry SSSI	Site of Special Scientific Interest	Geological interest

Bat species

There are two European Mitigation Licences for the following six bat species recorded within 2km of the site. This indicates that bat roosts for at least six species have been confirmed within 2 kilometres, and that these roosts have been impacted in 2012 and 2020 (see Table 2).

Table 2 Bat species data from Bat Mitigation Licences within 2km of the building

Bat species	Scientific name
Common pipistrelle	<i>Pipistrellus pipistrellus</i>
Soprano pipistrelle	<i>Pipistrellus pygmaeus</i>
Whiskered bat	<i>Myotis mystacinus</i>
Brandt's bat	<i>Myotis brandtii</i>
Brown long eared bat	<i>Plecotus auritus</i>
Serotine	<i>Eptesicus serotinus</i>

3.2. Building

Bats

The building has Negligible potential to be used by bats, and no further surveys are required.

No field signs of bats, and no access points suitable for use by roosting bats were identified within the loft void. No evidence of roosting bats was found within the building on any floors, walls, ledges or stored items within the loft and storage cupboard that forms the kitchen loft. No feeding remains, droppings, staining or other field signs were observed within the interior or exterior of any of the buildings.

The roof and eaves have closely fitted ridge tiles, slates, and flashing in most areas. The rear kitchen extension features gaps behind soffits and at the corner, but all were full of thick cobwebs and lack

suitable flight paths below, due to the low height and proximity of nearby walls and banks within the garden.

No droppings were seen on insulation or boarding within the loft and no evidence of droppings on walls, although cobwebs were present on the gable end walls.

Breeding birds

No evidence of current or historic breeding birds was recorded within the building.

The building is unsuitable for use by Barn Owl *Tyto alba* or other Schedule 1 birds.

The building has negligible suitability for breeding birds.

3.3. Site photographs



Lobby extension



Storage cupboard which forms void over kitchen



Kitchen extension – showing potential nesting location. Currently full of thick cobwebs.



Interior of main loft

3.4. Habitats

The buildings are immediately surrounded by hardstanding, amenity lawn areas with introduced shrubs, and flower beds. The garden is bounded by buildings, and the surrounding residential gardens.

The building is situated close to high-quality well-linked open countryside that provides a landscape suitable for foraging and commuting bats.

The proposed development will not result in an increased footprint, so there will be negligible impact on surrounding habitats.

3.5. Lighting

The surroundings of the site are well-lit, by several municipal streetlights at the front of the property. Some domestic lighting is already present within the garden and wider surroundings. Some corridors exist via darker patches of habitat in rear gardens of nearby properties.

4. Assessment

4.1. Assessment of potential impacts

Impacts of the proposed development on protected species such as bats or breeding birds include the low likelihood of finding unexpected bats or nesting birds at any time during the construction period.

To avoid a negative impact to protected species due to unexpectedly finding a bat or nesting birds the following measures must be taken.

4.2. Assessment of potential impacts on bats

The house lacks visible potential bat access points with suitable clear flight paths below. The house and extensions have Negligible potential to be used by roosting bats.

To avoid a negative impact due to unexpectedly finding a bat the following Precautionary Method Statement must be followed by all workers at all times during the construction.

Bats roost in a wide variety of locations and their presence can never be completely ruled out. Removal of building materials may open up suitable access points for bats if the roof is open overnight or small crevices are created as the new structure is built. Therefore, the precautionary method statement provided in Appendix 1 must be followed by all workers throughout the duration on the construction period to ensure that in the unlikely event that bats are found, they are safeguarded.

4.3. Precautionary Working Method Statement

Works to remove any roof coverings should be carried out carefully, following the Method Statement outlined in Section 6. 2 and Appendix 1. This is to ensure the works avoid the chance of causing death or injury to bats, in the unlikely event of encountering unexpected bats at any point during the development.

No negative impact on roosting bats is anticipated as a result of this development.

4.4. Assessment of potential impact on birds

No evidence of nesting birds was observed within any part of the building.

There is a possibility that birds may move into voids accessed by gaps under the tiles at the gutter line of the kitchen extension at the rear of the structure. No evidence of historic nesting by breeding birds was in any part of the building, although a prospecting blue tit *Cyanistes caeruleus* was seen showing interest in the area. House sparrows *Passer domesticus* also favour these kinds of nests sites and may move into this crevice in future.

The redesign of this building will not result in the loss of any visible nesting sites.

Some bird field signs could have been missed as the preliminary survey was carried out outside the bird nesting season, so it is possible signs may have been missed.

To prevent inadvertent damage to breeding birds, their nests and young, a breeding bird check should be completed a minimum of 48 hours before works commences to ensure there are no nesting birds. In the unlikely event that birds are found to be using the buildings, works must be postponed until the chicks have fledged, which may be for a period of several weeks. All species of birds are protected when nesting, brooding eggs, or rearing chicks right up to fledging.

No negative impact on nesting is anticipated as a result of this development if these precautions methods are adhered to.

4.5. Lighting

Current light levels in the locality are high, with nearby streetlights visible from the property. Some darker areas exist to the side of the property, and also to the rear through the various gardens and out to the woodlands and the wider countryside.

Lighting can have a negative impact on foraging areas and commuting routes used by light-averse species of bats, which use hedges to navigate around the landscape. Lighting that illuminates bat commuting areas and foraging routes can cause light-sensitive bats to avoid these areas. This may create a Negative impact on the breeding and foraging success of bats that use the area.

This impact can be minimised by fitting curtains or blinds to any new windows and by using low-lux, low-level lighting with warm white LEDs that is hooded to point downwards and on a motion sensor and timer, so it goes off when not in use.

Lighting impacts on the surroundings of the new building must be minimised, and details of these requirements are given in Section 6.4.

5. Legislation

5.1. Bats

The results of the preliminary visual assessment indicate that the house has Negligible potential to be used by roosting bats.

No further bat surveys of the house will be required.

Works to remove the roof coverings and underlining of the house and garage must be carried out under the Precautionary Method Statement (Appendix 1), due to the remote possibility of encountering bats that may enter the structure or parts of the new construction at any point during works.

5.2. Precautionary Method Statement

5.3. Mitigation for bats

No mitigation is required. No suitable locations to erect a bat box were identified within the new design, as the rear of the building will be too low to be suitable, and the front of the building emerges directly onto a road.

5.4. Mitigation for breeding birds

No mitigation is required. It is recommended that at least one bird box suitable for blue tits is erected within the garden at a minimum height of 2 metres (see Appendix 2 for details).

5.5. Timing considerations

Works to remove the roof or building should ideally be timed to start outside the bird nesting season (March to August inclusive) to prevent delays in the event of unexpected nesting birds.

If works commence between April and September (inclusive) then a nesting bird check must be carried out before works begin. If nesting birds are found, then works must be delayed until the chicks have fledged, which may be a period of several weeks.

Some species of birds can nest at all times of year, and their nests are protected at all times when in use. In the unlikely event that nesting birds are found outside of the usual nesting season, works that may cause damage or disturbance to the nest must still pause until chicks have fledged.

5.6. Lighting

Any additional exterior lighting must be low level, hooded lighting which points downwards, and must be on a timer so it goes off when not in use. This is in line with Guidance Note 08/18. 4. Institution of Lighting Professionals (2018) Bats and artificial lighting in the UK.

This is to reduce any negative impacts on foraging and commuting bats in the areas surrounding this new building.

The windows on the new building should be fitted with blackout curtains or blinds to prevent light spill onto the garden.

5.7. Post-development monitoring

No post-development monitoring is required.

6. Legislation

Bats

Bats and their breeding or resting places (roosts) are protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended), and the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2019 (as amended). The law applies regardless of whether or not the bats are present at the time.

Under these laws it is an offence to:

- capture, kill, disturb or injure bats (on purpose or by not taking enough care);
- damage or destroy a breeding or resting place (even accidentally);
- obstruct access to their resting or sheltering places (on purpose or by not taking enough care); or
- possess, sell, control or transport live or dead bats, or parts of them.

Seven species of bat are listed as being of principal importance, in the Secretary of State's opinion, for the purposes of conserving biodiversity. Under Section 41 (England) of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act (2006) there is a need for these species to be taken into consideration by a public body when performing any of its functions with a view to conserving biodiversity.

These seven bat species are barbastelle, Bechstein's, noctule, soprano pipistrelle, brown long-eared, greater horseshoe and lesser horseshoe, and these are the subjects of National and Local Biodiversity Action Plans.

Works that can affect bats

Advice must always be sought from a licensed ecologist or the Bat Conservation Trust or Natural England before carrying out any of the following works where a bat roost is present, to prevent potentially committing an offence:

- renovating, converting or demolishing a building
- cutting down or removing branches from a mature tree
- repairing or replacing a roof
- repointing brickwork
- insulating or converting a loft
- installing lighting in a roost, or outside if it lights up the entrance to the roost
- removing commuting habitats such as hedgerows, watercourses or woodland
- changing or removing their foraging areas
- using insecticide
- treating timber

Nesting birds

All wild birds are protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) from being killed, injured or captured, whilst their nests and eggs are protected from being damaged, destroyed or taken. Birds which are listed under Schedule 1 of the Act are given additional protection against disturbance.

7. References

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

BCT, (2016), National Bat Monitoring Programme Annual Report. Downloaded on 08/02/24 from the Bat Conservation Trust website at: http://www.bats.org.uk/pages/nbmp_annual_report.html

Institution of Lighting Professionals (2018) Bats and artificial lighting in the UK. Guidance Note 08/18. 4.

Magic Map, (2024) accessed 87/02/24 from <https://magic.defra.gov.uk/MagicMap.aspx>

Mitchell-Jones, A. J., (2004). Bat mitigation guidelines. Version: January 2004. Natural England.

Mitchell-Jones, A.J. & Mcleish, A.P. (2004) Bat Workers' Manual. JNCC, Peterborough

Wray et al. (2010). Valuing Bats in Ecological Impact Assessment. CIEEM In Practice Volume70 p23-25. (December 2010)

Appendix 1 Precautionary method statement

To print, and retain on site at all times while work is in progress

A copy of this statement must be kept on site at all times and communicated to all workers before works commence.

The method statement must be followed at all times by all workers.

All workers must be provided with a copy of this method statement. A copy must be kept available at all times during the development.

- Workers must work carefully when lifting tiles, flashing, timbers, or other roof coverings or removing soffits or fascias or other materials and look carefully for roosting bats.
- Workers must check the underside of each roof sheet/tile or piece of flashing for roosting bats.
- If a bat is found, the bat must be carefully covered back up if it is safe to do so without crushing or injuring the bat. If the bat cannot be covered back up safely then it must be captured using thick gloves and placed in a secure box with small air holes, which is then placed in a cool area.
- If bats are found unexpectedly at any point during the works, and all works must pause, and the ecologist must be contacted immediately via 07762 051481. If the ecologist cannot be contacted, then the National Bat Helpline must be contacted on 0345 1300 228 before proceeding.

Nesting birds

- To prevent inadvertent damage to breeding birds, their nests and young, a breeding bird check must be completed a minimum of 48 hours before works commences to ensure there are no nesting birds.
- In the unlikely event that birds are found to be using the buildings, works must be postponed until the chicks have fledged, which may be for a period of several weeks. All species of birds are protected when nesting, brooding eggs or rearing chicks right up to fledging. The ecologist should be contacted immediately via 07762 051481 if nesting birds are found in or within 5 metres of the work area.

Bird Boxes



Tit/robin/wren box

Manufacturer: Vivara

Model: Pro Seville WoodStone® Nest Box

Material: Woodcrete



Sparrow terrace

Manufacturer: Vivara

Model: Pro WoodStone House Sparrow Nest Box

Material: Woodcrete

Other woodcretebird boxes are available.

Woodcrete/woodstone boxes are long-lasting and maintenance free, made from a mixture of sawdust and concrete. Most are supplied with fittings to mount them onto trees and houses as appropriate to each model.