



Bat and Bird Report

Barn at Pinneywood, Axminster

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1 Introduction and approach

1.1 Introduction

1.1.1 Hamilton Ecology was commissioned by Mrs Sue Herrod to prepare a Bat and Bird Report for a planning application to replace an agricultural barn with a dwelling at Pinneywood, Axminster, EX13 5RT (approximate NGR ST3170 0026; refer to Figures 1 and 2), hereafter referred to as 'the site'. This report was prepared in accordance with BS42020:2013 and following Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (CIEEM) Guidelines (2018). It includes the following sections:

- Description of the existing bat and bird baseline;
- Identification of the potential effects of the proposals;
- Proposed avoidance, mitigation and enhancement measures (where applicable); and,
- Conclusion regarding compliance with legislation and planning policy.

1.2 Relevant planning policy and legislation

National planning policy

1.2.1 The Government's key national planning policy is set out in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), updated in 2023. The NPPF includes the Government's policy on the protection of biodiversity through the planning system. It states that local plan policies and planning decisions should seek to minimise impacts on biodiversity and provide net gains in biodiversity. Planning policies should promote the conservation, restoration and enhancement of priority habitats, ecological networks and the protection and recovery of priority species populations (e.g., Habitats and Species of Principal Importance under the NERC Act 2006).

Local planning policy

1.2.2 Current planning policy for development in East Devon is contained in the East Devon District Local Plan 2013-2031 (Adopted 2016). Policies and strategies relevant to biodiversity and nature conservation are summarised below:

- Policy EN5: Wildlife Habitats and Features - this states that wherever possible sites supporting important wildlife habitats or features not otherwise protected by policies will be protected from development proposals which would result in the loss of or damage to their nature conservation value, particularly where these form a link between or buffer to designated wildlife sites. Where potential arises, positive opportunities for habitat creation will be encouraged through the development process. Where development is permitted on such sites, mitigation and compensation measures are required to be taken to ensure impacts on ecological features are mitigated to their fullest practical extent.
- Strategy 47: Nature Conservation and Geology – this emphasises that all development proposals will need to (1) conserve the biodiversity and geodiversity value of land and minimise habitat fragmentation, (2) maximise opportunities for restoration, enhancement and connection of natural habitats, and (3) incorporate beneficial biodiversity conservation features. This strategy also restricts development that causes harm to internationally and nationally designated sites.

Wildlife legislation

- 1.2.3 Bats and their roosts are fully protected by UK legislation. All birds and their nests, eggs and young are protected under UK legislation. Several bat and bird species are also Species of Principal Importance for the Conservation of Biodiversity in England (Priority Species); refer to Appendix 1 for further information.

1.3 Approach

Ecological baseline

- 1.3.1 An understanding of the ecological baseline of the site was derived through desk study and site survey.

Desk Study

- 1.3.2 Information on statutory designated sites of nature conservation value within 500m of the site was obtained by searching the following websites:

- MAGIC website (www.magic.defra.gov.uk); and
- Devon County Council Environmental Viewer (<http://map.devon.gov.uk/DCCViewer>).

- 1.3.3 The information obtained from the above websites was considered sufficient for this ecological assessment given the nature of the proposals.

Site Survey

- 1.3.4 The site survey comprised the following elements:

- A Preliminary Roost Assessment of the barn; and,
- A search for evidence of nesting birds.

Preliminary Roost Assessment

- 1.3.5 A Preliminary Roost Assessment of the property was undertaken on 08 March 2024 in accordance with standard bat survey protocols (Collins, 2023). This involved a detailed search of the building for evidence of bats (e.g., bats, droppings, feeding remains, staining). Potential or actual bat access points and roost locations were also recorded. An endoscope and high-powered torch were used as necessary and the survey was carried out under a Natural England bat survey licence (Linda Hamilton CEnv MCIEEM Licence No. 2015-10586-CLS Level 2).

- 1.3.6 Based on the survey results, the building was categorised in line with bat survey guidelines on a scale of 'None' to 'High' bat roost suitability.

Survey limitations

- 1.3.7 No survey limitations were noted.

Surveyor Experience and Code of Conduct

- 1.3.8 The author and surveyor, Linda Hamilton, is a Full member of the Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (CIEEM) and a Chartered Environmentalist. She has extensive experience of protected species survey and Natural England (NE) licensing and has undertaken professional bat surveys for over 20 years. She holds a Class 2 Natural England (NE) bat survey licence and is a Registered Consultant on NE's Low Impact Class Licence for bats. CIEEM's Code of Conduct was followed during the survey and reporting.

2 Results

2.1 *Designated sites*

2.1.1 The River Axe Special Area of Conservation (SAC) and Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) lies approximately 375m to the northwest of the site. Reasons for notification primarily relate to the river's diverse flora, invertebrates, fish and valuable habitats for breeding birds; otters are also present. None of these designations relate to bats, and no potential impact pathways on them as a result of the development have been identified.

2.2 *Habitats within and adjacent to the site*

Building description and surroundings

2.2.1 The barn had a metal frame with timber purlins supporting the roof. The walls on the northwest and southwest elevations were of concrete block base with corrugated iron sheets above. The roof also comprised corrugated iron sheets. The northeast and southeast elevations were open-sided. There were no enclosed voids and all parts of the structure were accessible for survey.



Photograph 1. Southwest and northwest elevations



Photograph 2: Southeast and northeast elevations



Photograph 3: Internal structure

- 2.2.2 The barn was situated adjacent to a dwelling and was surrounded by open farmland with managed hedgerows.

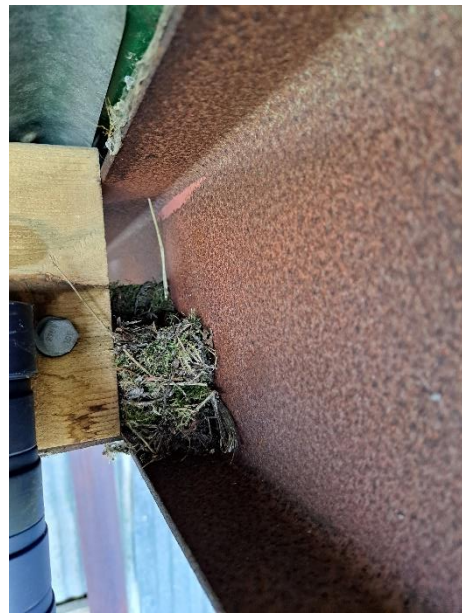
2.3 *Bats*

Preliminary roost assessment

- 2.3.1 No evidence of bats was recorded during the preliminary roost assessment. Some gaps of suitable size for bats were present between the corrugated sheets and timber purlins, and also where the purlins rested on the metal frame; however, these were generally open to both sides, meaning that they were exposed and draughty; all such gaps were inspected, and no evidence of bats recorded. The barn was considered to have **negligible** bat roost suitability.

Birds

- 2.3.2 Old bird nests were present at three locations in the roof. No active nests were recorded at the time of survey.



Photographs 4-6: Old bird nests associated with the barn's metal frame

3 Assessment, Mitigation and Conclusions

3.1 *The proposed development*

Development description

3.1.1 The development proposals are shown in Figure 2.

3.2 *Assessment and mitigation*

Bats

3.2.1 As no bats were recorded using the building, no negative effects on bats are predicted as a result of the proposals. No specific mitigation is considered necessary; however, in the unlikely event that a bat is found during the development, work should cease until advice on how to proceed has been obtained from an experienced bat ecologist.

3.2.2 The site would be enhanced for bats through the installation of a bat box suitable for pipistrelle bats¹, on the new building or an adjacent tree. The bat box should be placed as high as possible, avoiding north-facing aspects.

Birds

3.2.3 The replacement of the barn with a new dwelling would result in the loss of bird nesting habitat. To compensate for this, two bird boxes² will be installed on the new building, or on adjacent trees.

3.3 *Conclusions*

3.3.1 Providing the measures detailed in Section 3.2 are implemented, the proposed development would protect and maintain biodiversity in accordance with policies concerning the conservation of biodiversity in the National Planning Policy Framework (2023) and the East Devon Local Plan (2016).

¹ e.g. 2F Schwegler Bat Box or similar

² e.g. 1B Schwegler Bird Box or similar

4 References

British Standards Institute (2013) *BS 42020:2013 Biodiversity - Code of practice for planning and development*. BSI, London.

CIEEM (2018) *Guidelines for Ecological Impact Assessment in the UK and Ireland – Terrestrial, Freshwater, Coastal and Marine*. Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management, Winchester.

Collins, J (2023) *Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines (3rd edn)*. The Bat Conservation Trust, London.

Figure 1: Site location plan / existing layout

General Notes:

- 1) do not scale from this drawing except for planning purposes
- 2) all dimensions to be checked on site by the contractor
- 3) report all omissions and/ or errors to the author
- 4) all dimensions in millimetres unless otherwise stated
- 5) if in doubt contact administrator for clarification



Revisions

Rev	Date	Revision notes
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Job title
Pinneywood Farm
Axminster

Drawing title
Site Location Plan

Drawing sheet size
A3

Scale
1:1250

Status
PL

Drawing number
P-100

Revision
-

Figure 2: Proposed site layout



Proposed Site Plan

Scale 1:200



General Notes:
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 2) all dimensions to be checked on site by the contractor
 3) report all omissions and/ or errors to the author
 4) all dimensions in millimetres unless otherwise stated

- Proposed materials:
- 1 Main entrance
 - 2 Utility entrance
 - 3 Parking
 - 4 New hedge planting to boundary
 - 5 Wildflower grassed bank
 - 6 Lawn
 - 7 Existing dwelling
 - 8 Retained existing hedgerow
 - 9 Existing garage buildings
 - 10 Fruit tree planting
 - 11 Electric vehicle charging point

Revisions		
Rev	Date	Revision notes

Job title
**Pinneywood Farm
 Axminster**

Drawing title
Proposed Site Plan

Drawing sheet size	A3
Scale	1:200
Status	PL
Drawing number	P-101
Revision	-

Appendix 1:

Relevant species legislation and conservation status

Species	Legislation/conservation status
Bats	<p>All bat species are afforded full protection under UK legislation, including the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) and the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended). Together, this legislation makes it illegal to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deliberately capture, injure or kill a bat. • Damage or destroy a bat roost; or intentionally or recklessly obstruct access to bat roosts. • Deliberately, intentionally or recklessly disturb a bat, including in particular any disturbance which is likely: • to impair their ability to survive, to breed or reproduce, or to rear or nurture their young, or • in the case of animals of a hibernating or migratory species, to hibernate or migrate; or • to affect significantly the local distribution or abundance of the species to which they belong. <p>A bat roost is defined in the legislation as “any structure or place which a bat uses for shelter or protection”. Roosts are protected whether or not bats are present at the time.</p> <p>Several bat species are also Priority Species.</p>
Birds	<p>The bird breeding season generally lasts from March to early September for most species. All birds are protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act (1981) (as amended) and the Countryside & Rights of Way (CROW) Act 2000. This legislation makes it illegal, both intentionally and recklessly, to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • kill, injure or take any wild bird; • take, damage or destroy the nest of any wild bird while it is being built or in use; • take or destroy the eggs of any wild bird <p>Furthermore, birds listed on Schedule 1 of the Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) are protected against intentional or reckless disturbance whilst nest building and when at or near a nest containing eggs or young. Dependent young of Schedule 1 species are also protected against disturbance.</p> <p>In addition to this legal protection, the leading governmental and non-governmental conservation organisations in the UK have reviewed the population status of the birds regularly found here and produced a list of birds of conservation concern. Of the 247 species assessed, 67 were placed on the Red List of high conservation concern, 96 on the Amber List of medium conservation concern and 81 on the Green List of low conservation concern:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Red list species are those that are Globally Threatened according to IUCN criteria; those whose population or range has declined rapidly in recent years; and those that have declined historically and not shown a substantial recent recovery. • Amber list species are those with an unfavourable conservation status in Europe; those whose population or range has declined moderately in recent years; and those with internationally important or localised populations.