

## Preliminary Ecological Assessment Report

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Survey Site: High Grosvenor,  
Bridgnorth,  
Shropshire.  
WV15 5PN

Grid reference: SO77059362

Survey Dates: 28<sup>th</sup> February 2024

Report Reference: 038/23a

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Questions arising from the survey report should be directed to Shropshire Wildlife Surveys who will be pleased to clarify any issues raised.

Whilst the surveyor makes every reasonable effort, Shropshire Wildlife Surveys cannot guarantee that all protected species have been identified and survey results are definitive.

Reports are not normally valid for more than two years. It is recommended that Surveys are checked after one year for change of status of protected species.

Where EPS Licences are recommended / required; reports over two years old will not normally be acceptable. In the case of Low Impact Class Licences surveys must be up to date and have been conducted within the current or most recent optimal season.

All species records will belong to the surveyor and will be passed to the LRC in accordance with current guidelines.



## Executive Summary

Shropshire Wildlife Surveys were commissioned by the owners to carry out an ecological assessment of a Business Unit at High Grosvenor, Claverley, Shropshire, WV15 5PN, grid reference: SO77059362 in relation to conversion to overnight accommodation for an adjacent wedding venue.

Species included in the survey were Bats and nesting birds; other protected species were not included because of the unlikelihood of them being impacted by the proposed works.

The visual survey was carried out on 28<sup>th</sup> February 2024 by John Morgan of Shropshire Wildlife Surveys.

## Results.

### Bats.

No evidence of bats was found within the building. However; several crevices and gaps within the exterior of the building give potential access for roosting bats.

Based on the visual survey, the building was assessed as having a **Low to Medium potential of being used by roosting bats.**

### Birds

No evidence of nesting birds was observed within the building.

## Summary.

**Bats:** In accordance with current guidelines, emergence surveys will be required at an optimal time of year to determine likely presence / absence of use by bats.

**Nesting birds:** The surveyor is of the opinion that the proposed works will have no impact on breeding birds in the local area providing the advice within the full report is complied with.

A series of recommendations is shown within the full report. These recommendations are provisional and dependant on the emergence surveys for bats.

**If any protected species are found at any stage of the development, then work in that area must stop and Shropshire Wildlife Surveys contacted on 01952 416307 / 07854025807 or alternatively, Natural England on 0300 060 3900 for advice.**

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "JMorgan".

John Morgan  
February 2024



## 1.0 Introduction.

Shropshire Wildlife Surveys were commissioned by the owners to carry out an ecological assessment of a Business Unit at High Grosvenor, Claverley, Shropshire, WV15 5PN, grid reference: SO77059362 in relation to conversion to overnight accommodation for an adjacent wedding venue.

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The visual survey was carried out on 28<sup>th</sup> February 2024 by John Morgan of Shropshire Wildlife Surveys. Current Natural England licence numbers:-

### Bats

CLS19 - 2015-17229-CLS-CLS

CLS20 - 2015-14388-CLS-CLS

### Great Crested Newts.

CLS08 - 2015-17175-CLS-CLS

The building investigated is highlighted in red on the appended documents:

Ordnance Survey map abstract and Aerial photograph (Appendix 1)

Site plan (Appendix 2)

In accordance with the guidance given in The Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act (NERC) 2006, National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), ODPM Circular 06/2005 and The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010:

Evidence was sought of the presence or absence of protected species as defined in:

The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 - as listed in:

Schedule 1. Birds protected by special penalties at all times,

Schedule 5. Protected animals

Schedule 9. Part II Invasive Weeds

The Conservation [Natural Habitats, &c.] Regulations 1994 - as listed in:

Schedule 2. European protected species of animals

The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010.

## 2.0 Site Description.

The site comprises former agricultural buildings that have been converted to business use. It is located within a predominantly arable farmscape approximately 5km east of Bridgnorth, Shropshire.

## 3.0 Methodology

### 3.1 Desk Study.

A desk study was carried out to locate any national and local nature conservation designations and any species records which already exist for the area. The desk study was based upon a search of the NBN Gateway with the view of consultation of the Local



Record Centre should the NBN suggest the need for more in-depth results.

Ordnance Survey, Magimap, and Aerial photographs were scrutinised for any features that might indicate probable species to be found.

The Local Planning website was trawled for additional information from local planning permission to determine if any Protected Species records have not yet been entered onto the local record centre data set.

### **3.1 Bats**

Using '*The Good Practice Guidelines 3<sup>rd</sup> edition*' as guidance, the buildings were systematically searched (where accessible) for any signs of bats. The signs included droppings, urine stains, feeding signs, colouration of access points or perches by rubbing and scratch marks.

Mirrors, bright torches, close focus binoculars, digital camera with x50 optical magnification with x2 digital magnification (total x100), ladders and inspection camera (endoscope) were available to examine parts which were otherwise inaccessible.

### **3.2 Birds**

Mukes, pellets and feathers would indicate the presence of Owls and the nests of birds would be found during the course of the bat survey.

### **4.0 Constraints.**

There was no access into two ground floor compartments, a first-floor compartment, or a shallow roof void above vaulted ceilings on first floor.

### **5.0 Results.**

#### **5.1 Desk Survey**

The desk top survey did not identify any ponds within 250m using Ordnance Survey mapping or aerial photographs.

No online records of Protected Species within 500m of the site.

According to MagicMap the site does not fall within any Statutory Land-Based Designations (SSSI, Ramsar, Nature Reserve or their Impact Zones etc.)

According to Uk.Gov website, the site is within Flood Zone 1 with Very Low potential of surface flooding.

#### **5.2 Building.**

This former timber framed barn is believed to originally date from around same time as adjacent C16th farmhouse. It has been much altered over its lifetime up to modern conversion around 1986 to business units of varied usage. Only the west gable wall part of the rear wall and some internal roof timbers remain of the original building.

The front of the original barn has been extended on the ground floor to accommodate roller



shutter doors with a single storey rear extension used for storage.

The walls are brick, presumed cavity wall construction to the modern extensions with solid brick on the older sections.

The main roof is pitched and tiled with plain clay tiles over bitumastic felt.

Internally there is a shallow void above the front extension which accommodates the roller shutter door mechanisms and some storage, there were hatchways to access critical parts of the doors, no attempt was made to inspect these areas because of the unlikelihood of finding evidence in such cramped locations and no external indications of potential access for bats or nesting birds.

The first-floor ceiling is vaulted with an approximate internal height of 1.25m. There is no human access into this space.

The building is in business use, the western compartment is currently vacant, but all other sections are in daily use.

There was no access into the easterly unit.

The rear single storey extension has a lean too mono-pitch roof of a steel profile sandwich panel construction over timber purlins and steel rafters. This compartment was subdivided at the western end to provide separate storage rooms. There was no access to these rooms on the day of the survey.

The building is surrounded by hardstanding of various types with a small section of party wall to adjacent dwelling on the rear extension.

### **5.3 Bats.**

No evidence of bats was observed within the building.

In general, the building is in a very good state of repair, with only one tile observed to have slipped, indications are that this is a recent occurrence from closely viewing the tile with x100 magnification.

Suitable potential gaps at timber / brick junctions at wall tops and purlins along with vent hole at west gable apex, missing mortar at one location only on front ground floor extension verge and the slipped tile gave potential for access by roosting bats.

### **5.4 Nesting birds Summary.**

No evidence of nesting birds was observed within the building. Potential gaps mentioned within para 5.3 above could be used by nesting birds.

### **5.5 Other protected Species.**

No potential habitat for other protected species exists where they might be impacted by the proposed works.



## 6.0 Assessment

### 6.1 Bats.

Taking into consideration the items within para 5.3 and the overall well-maintained state of the building, the surveyor is of the opinion that there is a **Low to Medium potential of the building being used by roosting bats.**

**In accordance with current guidelines, emergence surveys will be required at an optimal time of year to determine likely absence of bats to satisfy planning requirements.**

A summary of Legal considerations / licensing for bats is shown at appendix 5.

### 6.2 Nesting birds.

The surveyor is of the opinion that the proposed works will have no impact of any species of bird that might be nesting within holes or crevices within the building.

## 7.0 Recommendations (Dependant on Emergence Surveys.)

The following is dependent on results of emergence surveys for bats but expected to be broadly the same.

To meet local council ecological policies and current best practice guidelines it is recommend that the following ecological requirements, enhancements, and precautions are included in the overall scheme and shown on relevant drawings.

### 7.1 External Lighting.

- Any exterior security or decorative lights to be installed on the development site shall be less than 3m from the ground and fitted with hoods to direct the light below the horizontal plane, at an angle of less than seventy degrees from vertical, and shall not be fixed to, or directed at, bat boxes or gables or eaves.
- Lighting must be less than 3 lux at ground level and there shall be no light splay exceeding 1 lux along buildings, eaves or roof or adjacent hedgerows or trees.
- Any lighting shall be Passive Infrared (PIR) triggered.

**Reason:** To minimise disturbance to bats, which are European Protected Species.

### 7.2 Nesting birds.

- No development works or vegetation clearance shall take place at any time within the bird breeding season (March 1st to August 31st inclusive) unless the site checked by a suitably competent person and there are no breeding birds, their young, nests or eggs that would be disturbed by the works to be carried out.
- If breeding birds, their young or eggs are found, no works may take place until the bird breeding season is completed or they have left the nest and there is no evidence of their returning. (Further advice at appendix 6)



**Reason:** To ensure the protection of nesting birds, which are protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended).

#### 7.4 Enhancements.

A minimum of two external woodcrete bat box or integrated bat brick, suitable for nursery or summer roosting for small crevice dwelling bat species, and a minimum of two artificial bird nests, of either integrated brick design or external box design, shall be erected on the site prior to first use of the development.

The boxes shall be sited at an appropriate height above the ground, with a clear flight path and where they will be unaffected by artificial lighting. The boxes shall thereafter be maintained for the lifetime of the development.

**Reason:** To ensure the provision of nesting opportunities for birds and roosting opportunities for bats, in accordance with current council policies and section 175 of the NPPF.

#### 7.5 Site Precautions during development.

It is possible that wildlife might cross the site during the construction phase.

To remove any danger of an animal becoming trapped in trenches it is recommended that trenches are either back filled at the end of each day, or securely covered to prevent access or more practically, the ends of the trenches are sloped, or mammal ramp installed to allow any animal accidentally falling into the trench to escape on its own.

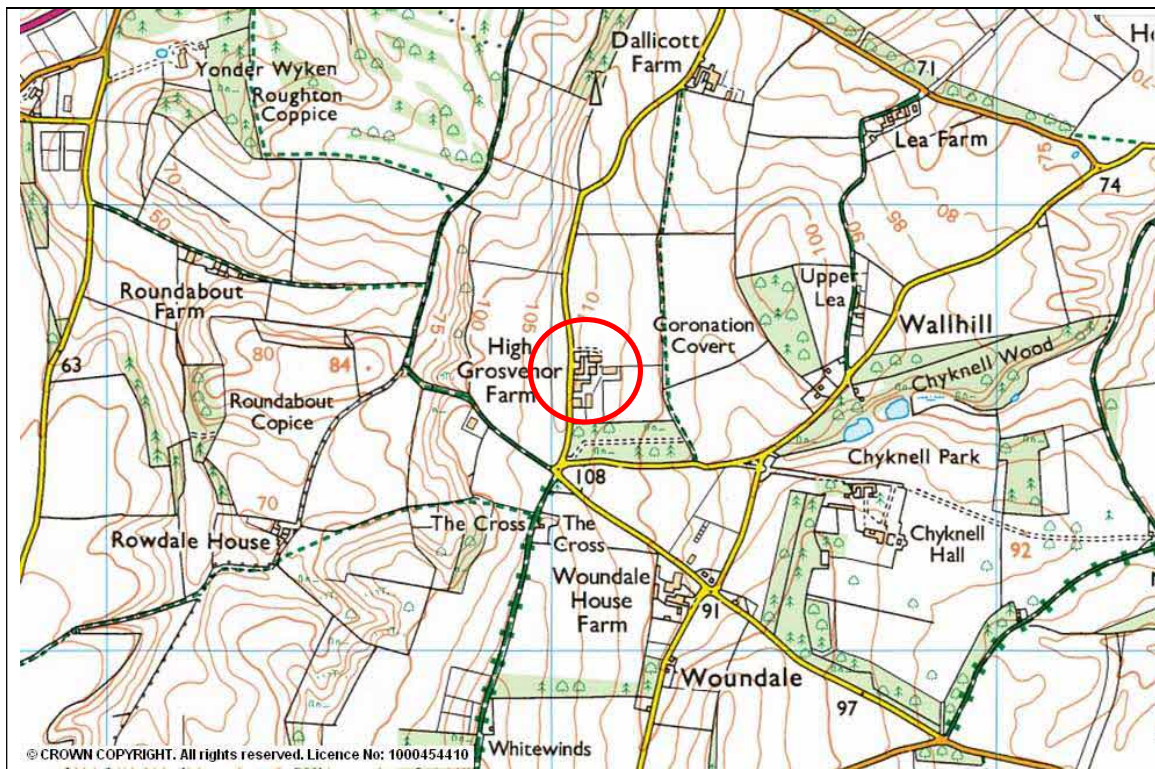
Pipe work with a diameter of more than 120mm must be securely covered at the end of each working day to prevent animals gaining access and getting trapped.

**If any protected species are found at any stage of the development, then work in that area must stop and Shropshire Wildlife Surveys contacted on 01952 416307 / 07854025807 or alternatively, Natural England on 0300 060 3900 for advice.**



John Morgan.  
February 2024



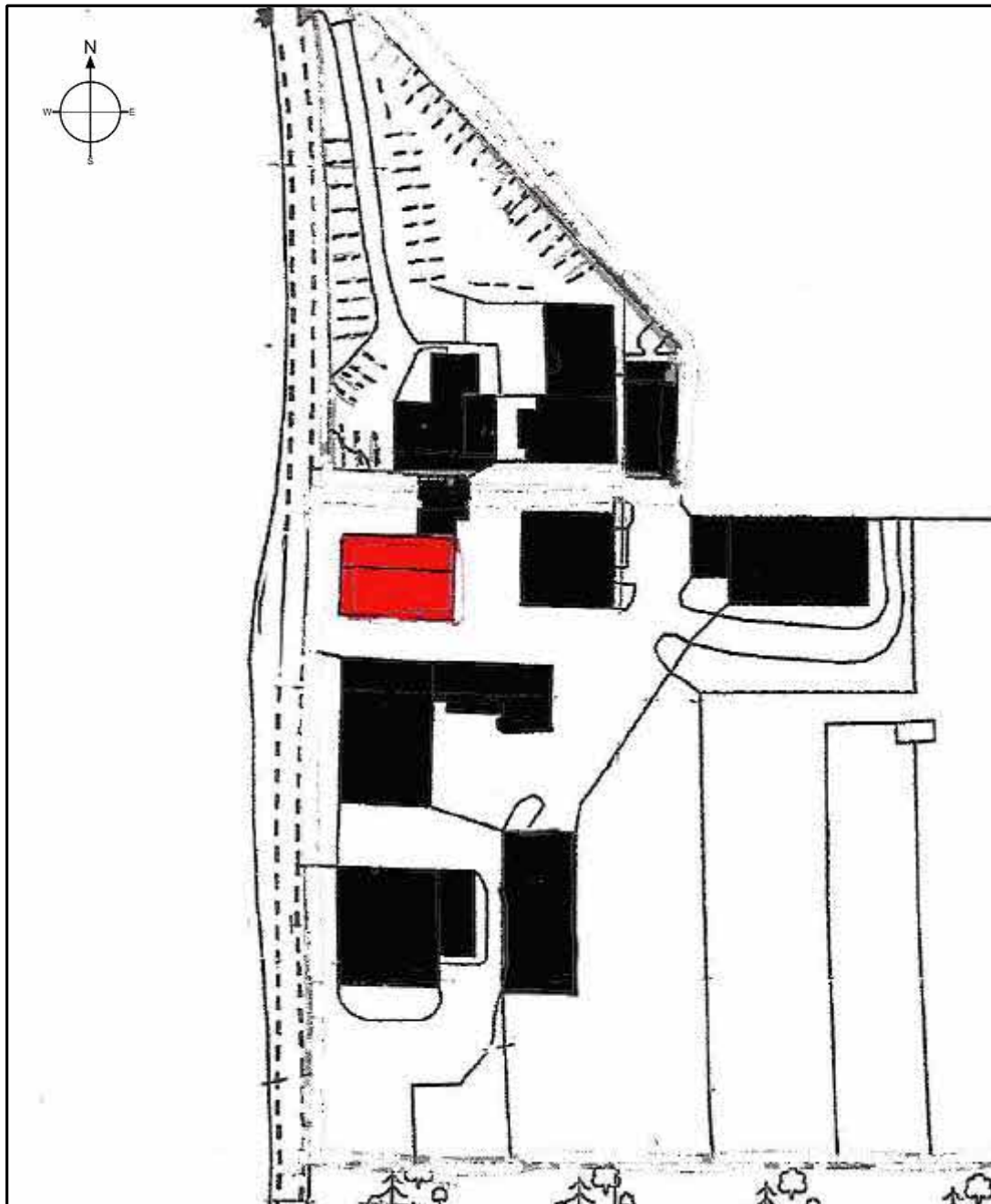


1:25,000 scale





**Site plan. (Target building in red)**





**Floor Plans**

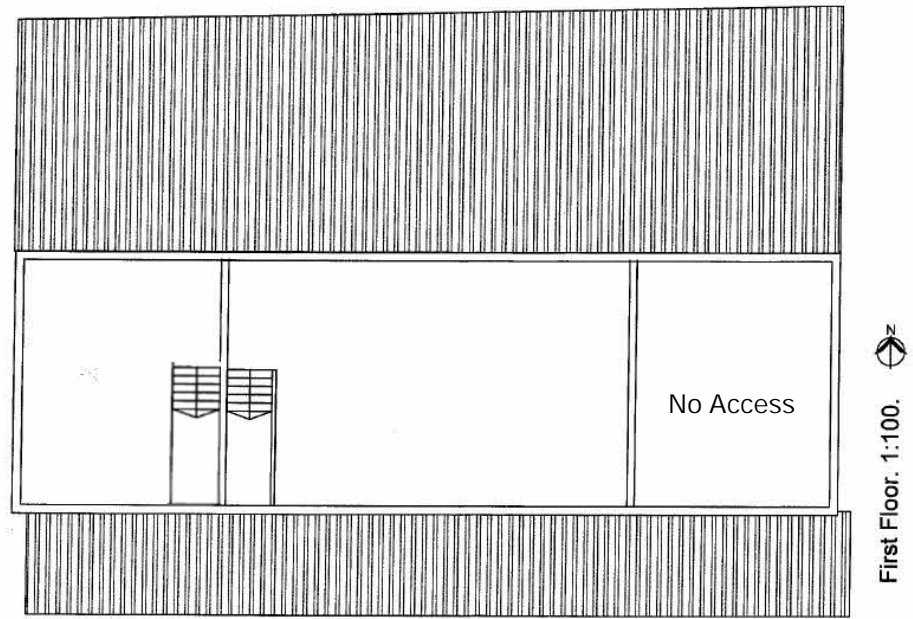
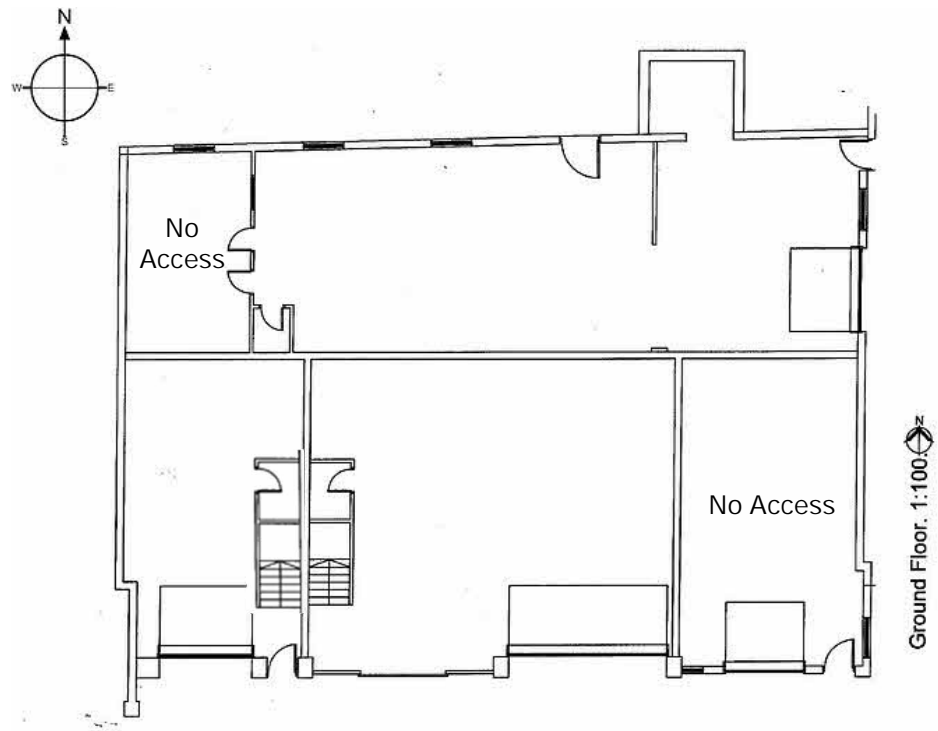




Fig 1. Describing north face of building and rear extension.



Fig 2. Describing building from northwest.



Fig 3. Describing west gable. Inset photos describe potential roosting places for bats.



Fig 4. Describing southerly face (front) of building and the side extension enclosing entrances and roller shutter doors. Inset photo describes missing mortar on verge giving potential access for roosting bats.



Fig 5. Describing building from southeast. Inset photo of dislodged tile with potential access to ridge tiles for roosting bats.



Fig 6. Describing east gable. Inset photos show gaps at wall top / timber wall plate junctions which could give access for roosting bats.



Fig 7. Describing northerly lean too extension at rear of building and its junction with adjacent building.



Fig 8. Looking along inside of rear extension, describing roof construction. Doors at far end are into storage rooms. No access was available on the day of the survey. Note open space above doors used for storage, so room deemed highly unlikely to be used by roosting bats.



Fig 9. Describing ground floor of westerly compartment.



Fig 10. Describing hatchway to access roller shutter mechanism.





Fig 11. Describing 1<sup>st</sup> floor of westerly compartment, note rafters for front extension.



Fig 12. Describing vaulted ceiling which runs full length of building above other first floor compartments.



Fig 13. Typical view of central compartment on ground floor.

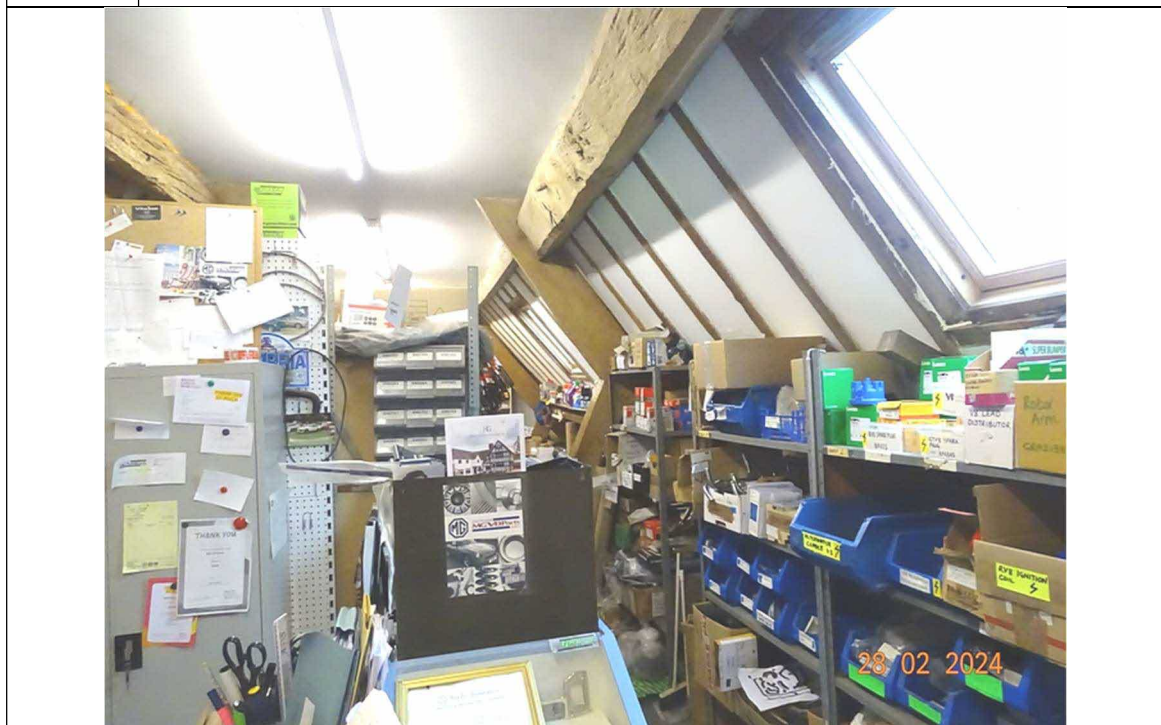


Fig 14. Typical view of central compartment on first floor.



## Bats and the Law

Taken together, the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (WCA) (as amended), the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 (CRoW), and the Conservation (Natural Habitats, &c.) Regulations 1994, make it illegal to:

- intentionally or deliberately kill, injure or capture (or take) bats;
- deliberately disturb bats (whether in a roost or not);
- recklessly disturb roosting bats or obstruct access to their roosts.
- damage or destroy bat roosts;
- possess or transport a bat or any part of a bat, unless acquired legally;
- sell (or offer for sale) or exchange bats, or parts of bats.

The word 'roost' is not used in the legislation but is used here for simplicity.

The actual wording in the legislation is 'any structure or place which any wild animal...uses for shelter or protection' (WCA) or 'breeding site or resting place' (Habitats Regulations).

Because bats tend to re-use the same roosts after periods of vacancy, legal opinion is that the roost is protected whether or not the bats are present at the time.

### Enforcement

The police are the main enforcement body for wildlife offences, and in some cases local authorities may also take action.

Section 24(4) of the 1981 Act gives English Nature the function of providing advice or assistance to the police in respect of alleged offences.

The maximum fine on conviction of offences under Section 9 of the 1981 and Regulation 39 currently stands at £5000.

The CRoW Act 2000 amended the 1981 Act to allow for a custodial sentence of up to six months instead of, or in addition to, a fine.

**Note:** Fines may be imposed in relation to each offence committed, so operations involving many animals or repeated offences can potentially accrue large fines.

In addition, items which may constitute evidence of the commission of an offence may be seized and detained.

The CRoW Act 2000 also amends the Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984 to render Section 9 offences 'arrestable', giving the police significant additional powers.

### The use of an EPS licence in respect of bat species

An EPS licence is a licence which permits an action that is otherwise unlawful,

To ensure that no illegal activities are undertaken during the course of a development, it is recommended that a licence is applied for if, on the basis of survey information and specialist knowledge, it is considered that

- the site in question is demonstrably a breeding site or resting place for bats
- the proposed activity is reasonably likely to result in an offence

No licence is required if the proposed activity is unlikely to result in an offence.

### Examples of works that are likely to need an EPS licence

Works that are likely to need a licence because they may result in the destruction of a breeding or resting place and/ or disturbance of bats include:

- Demolition of buildings known to be used by bats;
- Conversion of barns or other buildings known to be used by bats;
- Removal of trees known to be used by bats, when carried out as part of a development;
- Significant alterations to roof voids known to be used by bats.



## Examples of works that may not need an EPS licence

Examples of works that, if carefully planned, may not need a licence include:

- Re-roofing, if carried out while bats are not present, and the access points and roosting area are not affected
- Remedial timber treatment carried out with the correct chemicals while bats are not present.

## Conditions under which an EPS licence may be issued

Under the Conservation (Natural Habitats, &c.) Regulations 1994, DEFRA issues licences for the purposes of:

- preserving public health or public safety or other imperative reasons of overriding public interest including those of a social or economic nature and beneficial consequences of primary importance/or the environment [R. 44(2)(e)].
- Preventing the spread of disease [R. 44(20)9f)].
- Preventing serious damage to livestock, foodstuffs for livestock, crops, vegetables, fruit, growing timber or any other forms of property or to fisheries [R. 44(2)(f)].

In every case, a licence cannot be granted unless:

- There is no satisfactory alternative" [R. 44(3)(a)], and
- The action authorised will not be detrimental to the maintenance of the population of the species concerned at a favourable conservation status \* in their natural range" [R. 44(3)(b)].

\* Favourable conservation status' is defined in the Habitats and Species Directive (Article 1(i)). Conservation status is defined as "the sum of the influences acting on the species concerned that may affect the long-term distribution and abundance of its population within the territory".

It is assessed as favourable when:

"population dynamics data on the species concerned indicate that it is maintaining itself on a long term basis as a viable component of its natural habitats, and the natural range of the species is neither being reduced nor is likely to be reduced for the foreseeable future, and there is, or will probably continue to be, a sufficiently large habitat to maintain its populations on a long term basis."

In order to obtain a licence to allow the destruction of bat roosts etc, in advance of any otherwise legitimate development which may impact on the favourable conservation status of bats, it must be demonstrated by the applicant that all reasonable steps have been taken to minimise the impact (to satisfy R. 44(3) (a)) and any remaining damage will be adequately compensated for (to satisfy R. 44(3) (b)).

Current Natural England advice is that there should be no net loss in local bat population status, taking into account factors such as population size, viability and connectivity. Hence, when it is unavoidable that a development will affect a bat population, the mitigation should aim to maintain a population of equivalent status in the area.



**Summary of Legislation applicable to Nesting Birds.**

The basic protection afforded to birds is listed below:

All birds, their nests and eggs are protected by law and it is an offence, with certain exceptions, to:

- a) intentionally kill, injure or take any wild bird
- b) intentionally take, damage or destroy the nest of any wild bird while it is in use or being built
- c) intentionally take or destroy the egg of any wild bird
- d) have in one's possession or control any wild bird (dead or alive) or part of a wild bird which has been taken in contravention of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 or the Protection of Birds Act 1954
- e) have in one's possession or control an egg or part of an egg which has been taken in contravention of the Act
- f) have in one's possession or control any birds of a species occurring on Schedule 4 of the Act unless registered and ringed in accordance with the Secretary of State's regulations.
- g) intentionally (or recklessly, in England and Wales only) disturb any wild bird listed on Schedule 1 while it is nest building or is at (or near) a nest with eggs or young; or disturb the dependent young of such a bird.

The impacts which the proposed development might have on breeding birds should be small.

If birds start nesting during the development phase, delays will be inevitable, up to the moment when the young birds leave the nest.

**Example of garden birds nesting times**

