



Unit 3, 5 Fore Street, Chudleigh, Devon TQ13 0HX

Alan Elmes
Marrick
Bunts Lane
Seaton
Devon
EX12 2HT

14th May 2024

Our Ref. 0335

Dear Alan,

RE: Marrick, Bunts Lane, Seaton – Householder Ecological Assessment

Thank you for appointing Devon Ecology to undertake an ecological assessment of your property.

Introduction

I am a qualified ecologist with 20 years' experience. I am also a full member of the Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (CIEEM) and as such abide by their professional code of conduct. I have held a Class 2 bat licence with Natural England since 2007. My registration number is 2015-12404-CLS-CLS. I am registered to use the Bat Mitigation Class Licence (BMCL) registration number RC154 and I am a registered consultant on Natural England's Bat Earned Recognition Scheme (WML-CL47 Ref: BER0102).

I inspected the garage and carport on the 8th May 2024, which is located at grid reference SY 23668 90317 (What3Words: lighters.parading.areas). The survey was undertaken primarily for bats which was consistent with current good practice guidelines (Collins, 2023¹), whereby the buildings were assessed for their potential to hold roosting bats using the criteria in **Table 1**, using ladders, binoculars, torch and endoscope where appropriate. Other protected species such as nesting birds were also taken into account.

Table 1: Bat roosting potential (adapted from Collins, 2023)

Potential Suitability	Description
None	No habitat features on site likely to be used by any roosting bats at any time of the year (i.e. a complete absence of crevices/suitable shelter at all ground/underground levels).
Negligible	No obvious habitat features on site likely to be used by roosting bats; however, a small element of uncertainty remains as bats can use small and apparently unsuitable features on occasion.
Low	A structure with one or more potential roost sites that could be used opportunistically at any time of year. However, these potential roost sites do not provide enough space, shelter, protection, appropriate conditions and/ or suitable surrounding habitat to be used on a regular basis or by larger numbers of bats

¹ Collins, J. (ed.) (2023) *Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines (4th edition)*. The Bat Conservation Trust, London

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Moderate	A structure with one or more potential roost sites that could be used by bats due to their size, shelter, protection, conditions and surrounding habitat but unlikely to support a roost of high conservation status.
High	A structure with one or more potential roost sites that are obviously suitable for use by larger numbers of bats on a more regular basis and potentially for longer periods of time due to their size, shelter, protection, conditions and surrounding habitat. These structures have potential to support high conservation status roosts e.g. maternity or classic cool/stable hibernation sites.
Roost	Bats and/or evidence of bats found.

The Site comprises a detached garage and car port in the grounds of the detached dwelling 'Marrick'. It is located in a residential area of Seaton with open countryside of fields and hedgerows within 500m south and west of the property.

It is understood that you (the applicant) wish to demolish the car port and extend the garage in its place. This will involve joining into the existing garage roof on the northwest elevation.

Desk Study

A search of the government website MAGIC was undertaken within 2km radius of the Site for international and national statutory designations for nature conservation. MAGIC was also searched for priority habitats as well as European Protected Species Licences (EPSL) listed within 2km of the Site. The Devon Environment viewer was also searched for Devon Species Consultation Zones. These searches were undertaken on the 14th of May 2024.

As the proposals are very small and within the curtilage of the existing building, a data search from the local environmental records centre was not considered necessary as it would be unlikely to add significantly to the assessment.

Protected Sites

There are two statutory internationally important sites for nature conservation within the 2km search area:

- ☛ Lyme Bay and Torbay Special Area of Conservation (SAC) is a marine SAC and is located approximately 0.6km south of the Site at its closest point. The primary Annex I habitats for selection of this site are reefs and submerged or partially submerged sea caves.
- ☛ Sidmouth to West Bay SAC is located approximately 0.7km south-southwest of the Site at its closest point. The primary Annex I habitats for selection of this site are vegetated sea cliffs of the Atlantic and Baltic coasts, Tilio-Acerion forests of slopes, screes and ravines, also qualifying but not a primary reason for selection is annual vegetation of drift lines.
- ☛ Beer Quarry and Caves SAC is located just outside the search area 2.1km southwest of the Site at its closest point. The primary Annex II species for selection of this site is Bechstein's *Myotis bechsteinii* bats also qualifying but not a primary reason for selection are lesser horseshoe *Rhinolophus hipposideros* and greater horseshoe bat *R. ferrumequinum*.

There are six statutory nationally important sites for nature conservation within the 2km search area:

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- ☛ Sidmouth to Beer Coast Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) is located approximately 0.7km south-southwest of the Site at its closest point. It is notified for its species rich chalk grassland and associated diverse invertebrate fauna, as well as its geological interest.
- ☛ Seaton Marshes Local Nature Reserve (LNR) is located approximately 1.2km east-northeast of the Site at its closest point. It is designated for its freshwater grazing marsh with scrapes, ditches and ponds attracting wildfowl and wading birds and a variety of dragonflies and butterflies.
- ☛ East Devon Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) is located approximately 1.3km northwest of the Site at its closest point.
- ☛ Holyford Woods LNR is located approximately 1.5km northwest of the Site at its closest point. It is designated for its deciduous woodland with good examples of veteran trees and associated wildlife.
- ☛ Axe Estuary Marine Conservation Zone (MCZ) is located approximately 1.5km east of the Site at its closest point. It is designated for its coastal saltmarshes, intertidal sediments, rocky habitats, saline reedbeds and associated species.
- ☛ Axmouth to Lyme Regis Undercliffs National Nature Reserve (NNR) is located approximately 1.9km southeast of the Site at its closest point. It is designated for its important active coastal landslip, with habitats including woodland, lowland grassland, rocky shore and cliffs.

Devon Species Consultation Zones

The Site is within the following Devon species consultation zones:

- ☛ Beer Quarry and Caves SAC Greater Horseshoe Bat Landscape Connectivity Zone (10km radius around SAC).
- ☛ Beer Quarry and Caves SAC Lesser Horseshoe Bat Sustenance Zone (2.5km radius around SAC and known hibernation sites).
- ☛ Beer Quarry and Caves SAC Lesser Horseshoe Bat Landscape Connectivity Zone (11.2km radius around SAC and other key roosts).
- ☛ Beer Quarry and Caves SAC Bechstein's Bat Landscape Connectivity Zone (10.25 radius around SAC and known key roosts).
- ☛ Great Crested Newt Consultation Zone (within 5km radius of known records).

Granted EPSLs

There is one EPSL for bats within the 2km search radius:

- ☛ Licence no. 2020-49755-EPS-MIT granted to allow the destruction of a resting place for common pipistrelle *Pipistrellus pipistrellus* and lesser horseshoe *Rhinolophus hipposideros* bats, located approximately 1.3km southwest of the Site.

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Priority Habitats

There are several priority habitats within the 2km search area including:

- ☛ Coastal: Coastal saltmarsh, maritime cliffs and slopes, mudflats and saline lagoons.
- ☛ Grassland: Coastal and floodplain grazing marsh, good quality semi-improved grassland, lowland calcareous grassland,
- ☛ Marine: Intertidal foreshore substrate: gravel and rock platform.
- ☛ Wetland: Reedbeds.
- ☛ Woodland: Ancient and semi-natural woodland, ancient, replanted woodland, deciduous woodland and traditional orchards.
- ☛ Other: Open mosaic.

There are no priority habitats on or close to the Site.

Building Description

The car port to be demolished is a timber structure with a corrugated plastic sheet roof open on all sides, with a hardstanding floor.

The detached garage is constructed of block, brick and timber with a clay tiled hipped roof, hip tiles are concrete. A skylight is present in the southeast facing roof. There are no soffits or fascias but protruding eaves. There is timber cladding on the northwest, southwest and southeast elevations. It has two large timber double doors for vehicles and a single pedestrian door on the southeast elevation, leading to a covered seating area attached to the southeast elevation.

Internally the roof is open to the rafters with a modern breathable roof membrane visible. There is a small mezzanine level used for storage. The floor is painted concrete.

Features Suitable for Bats or Nesting Birds

There are no suitable features for roosting bats in the car port. The garage hip and roof tiles were all tight with no suitable gaps for bats to access. There were no gaps under the eaves on any elevation and the timber cladding had no gaps behind where bats could access. Internally there was no evidence of bats anywhere inside the garage.

There was no evidence of bats or nesting birds anywhere on or inside the garage or car port.

See photographs in **Appendix 1**.

Assessment, Recommendations and Mitigation

Protected Sites and Priority Habitats

There are no predicted effects to protected sites or priority habitats due to the minor nature of the proposed development and the distances involved.

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Devon Species Consultation Zones

The Site is within various Sustainance and Landscape Connectivity Zones for three species of bat associated with the Beer Quarry and Caves SAC namely greater and lesser horseshoe and Bechstein's bats. Inappropriate lighting can affect these species by forming a barrier, severing commuting and foraging routes and therefore negatively impact on these and other bat species. However, it is unlikely that these species commute through the grounds of this property and there is no additional external lighting proposed.

Mitigation: None required.

The Site is within a great crested newt consultation zone, however as the proposals are mostly within the footprint of the existing car port which has a hardstanding floor there is no predicted risk to this species, even in the unlikely event it was present in the garden.

Mitigation: None required.

Bats

All bat species are protected by current legislation, and it is an offence to disturb/injure/kill them or damage/destroy their roosts. There were no visible features likely to be used by bats anywhere on or in the property. The property is regarded as having no bat roost potential (Collins, 2023). No further surveys for bats or licence from Natural England will be required and work can proceed as planned with negligible risk to roosting bats.

See comments above in Devon Species Consultation Zones regarding bats and lighting.

Mitigation: In the extremely unlikely event that a bat is discovered during any work on the property, works must stop immediately in that area and the project ecologist must be called for advice and the procedure in **Appendix 2** followed.

Birds

All wild bird species are protected while nesting by current legislation. There was no evidence of nesting birds on or in the garage or car port.

Mitigation: In the extremely unlikely event any active nests are found during development activities, work must be delayed in this area and the nest must be left undisturbed and a suitable buffer put around it until nesting has finished and chicks have fledged.

Biodiversity Net Gain

Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) legislation has recently come into force under the Environment Act 2021. This requires many developments to demonstrate a 10% BNG. However, householder applications are exempt from this requirement.

As a measure of good practice and in line with national and local planning policy, biodiversity enhancements should still be incorporated into the design to achieve a biodiversity net gain. In this case two house sparrow terraces can be mounted on the northeast elevation as proposed (see **Appendix 3**).

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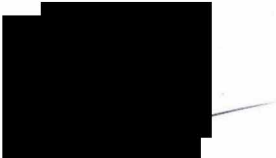
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If you wish to provide additional biodiversity enhancements, there are opportunities to plant flowering species suitable for bees and other pollinators in the garden. The Royal Horticultural Society (RHS) provide a Plants for Pollinators list available to download from [Plants for Pollinators advice and downloadable lists / RHS Gardening](#).

I am happy to provide further advice on enhancements on request.

If you require any further information, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely,



Mark Witherall BSc. (Hons) MCIEEM
Director and Principal Ecologist

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Appendix 1: Photographs

Notes	Photograph
Car port (northeast elevation)	 A photograph showing a car port structure with a flat roof supported by wooden posts. A silver car is parked inside the port. The ground is gravel. In the background, there are green bins and a wooden fence.
Garage Front (northeast) elevation.	 A photograph of the front elevation of a garage. It has a dark brown tiled roof and a dark wooden door on the left. The right side is an open bay with a wooden door. The ground is gravel.
Southeast elevation showing existing garage and location of the proposed new extension.	 A photograph showing the southeast elevation of the garage. The existing structure has a tiled roof and wooden siding. A concrete path leads to the garage. To the right, a white wall indicates the location of a proposed new extension.

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Notes	Photograph
Garage southeast elevation.	 A photograph showing the exterior of a wooden garage. The garage has a gabled roof and a covered patio area with a table and chairs. A wooden gate is visible on the right side. The sky is blue with some clouds.
Garage internal.	 A photograph showing the interior of a garage. The ceiling is made of exposed wooden beams. There are various items, including boxes, a ladder, and tools, scattered on the floor. The walls are white.

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Appendix 2: Procedure to Follow if Bats are Found During Development Works

- ☛ If at any point during the works bats are discovered, contractors should stop work immediately and telephone Devon Ecology on 07786564196;
- ☛ Devon Ecology will either provide a licensed bat ecologist to the site or liaise directly with Natural England. Actions will then be taken following advice given by Natural England. This may include removal of bats, but only where direct written or verbal permission is gained from Natural England;
- ☛ Only when Natural England is satisfied that the risk to bats is no longer an issue will works recommence.
- ☛ Should it be found that the operation being carried out is of more risk to bats than was originally thought, then it is likely that works will only be able to proceed under a development licence from Natural England;
- ☛ If a bat is found under a tile or any other aperture, works will stop immediately (as above). If the bat does not voluntarily fly out, then the aperture will be carefully covered over to protect the bat(s) from the elements, leaving a small gap for the bat to escape voluntarily. Further advice will then be sought from Natural England (as above). Any covering should be free from grease or other contaminants, and should not be fibreglass-based materials;
- ☛ Avoid handling bats. Bats should not be handled with bare hands. If a decision is made to handle a bat (e.g. for good reason in the case of an injured bat or a bat in immediate danger of injury or death) then gloves must be worn to avoid being bitten. Any injured bats should be placed in a secure ventilated box (e.g. cardboard box) by the contractor for the bat's protection whilst awaiting the arrival of the bat ecologist;
- ☛ If during the course of works anyone is bitten by a bat then the area of the bite should be washed immediately with soap and water and medical advice sought.

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Appendix 3: Biodiversity Enhancements



Vivaro Woodstone sparrow nest box. Available from Wildcare [Woodstone Sparrow Nest Box \(wildcare.co.uk\)](http://wildcare.co.uk), NHBS or other suppliers.

Suitable location for sparrow terraces on northwest elevation.

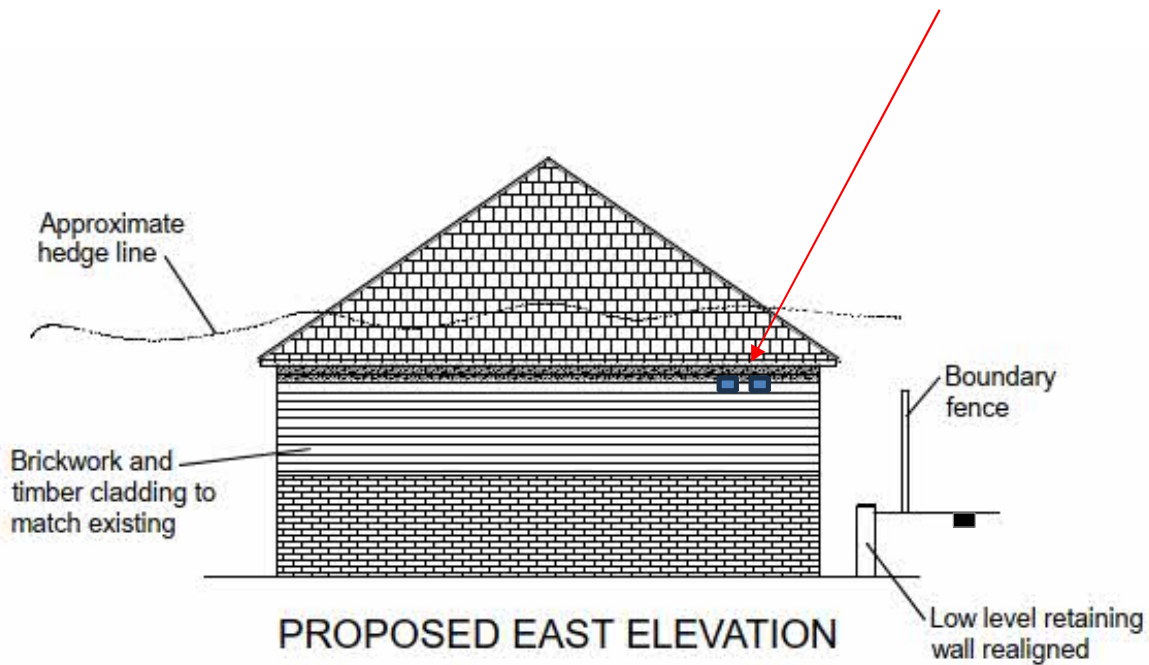


Image taken from Palfrey Design Ltd drawing nos. 3935/02 as proposed.

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