PRELIMINARY ROOST APPRAISAL (PRA) REPORT

25th May 2023

Forest View, East Grafton, Wiltshire, SN8 3DB

On behalf of: Bill and Sara Clemence

Agent/planner: Fowler Architecture & Planning

ABR Ecology Ltd

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Survey data lifespan

Information and data provided within this report is considered accurate at the time of writing. Bat survey data is considered valid for 18 months from the survey date for planning purposes only. However, as bats are a highly mobile species, update survey(s) will likely be required if (but not limited to):

a) The condition of the building(s) and/or general site changes; and/or
b) If the nature and/or extent of the proposed works change.

If a Natural England bat licence is required (i.e., if a bat roost is identified during an update survey(s) and impacts on the bat roost(s) will occur), update bat survey(s) will likely be required for the bat licence application. Preliminary Roost Appraisal (PRA) (i.e., building inspections) data is considered valid for 3 months prior to a bat licence application; and bat activity survey data (emergence/re-entry surveys) is considered valid within the then 'current' bat survey season (e.g., if activity surveys are conducted in the summer survey season (May-September) 2022, emergence/re-entry data is considered valid until 30th April 2023 for the bat licence application).

Reporting and data validity

This report has been produced using all reasonable skill and care, and a Quality Assurance (QA) review process has been conducted prior to issue of this report. However, ABR Ecology Ltd cannot accept responsibility for any inaccuracies and/or discrepancies with third-party data supplied within this report.

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Executive summary

- ABR Ecology Ltd were commissioned by Bill and Sara Clemence to undertake a Preliminary Roost Appraisal (PRA) of two sheds and one garage at Forest View, East Grafton, Wiltshire, SN8 3DB to advise on the presence/absence of bats at the property. This report was requested to support a planning application for three buildings to be demolished and erect two dwellings on site with new landscaping and driveway.

- The PRA was undertaken on the 11th April February 2023 by Natural England class 2 licensed bat ecologist Russell Hoyle and graduate ecologist Aaron Templer. The survey revealed no evidence of bats in the form of droppings, staining or the presence of bats internally and the external assessment of the property revealed that the buildings held '**negligible potential'** for roosting bats due to a lack of access points and roosting provisions.

- The buildings are not considered to hold the potential to support roosting bats and so no further works are required. However, should 18 months pass without works taking place (and/or any material change occur to the buildings or roofs, this report will no longer be valid and an update site visit to reassess the buildings would be required.

- There are bat records within 2km of the site. A 'bat-friendly' lighting strategy is detailed in Section 5 to ensure the proposed works do not impede foraging and commuting bats which may be using the gardens and general surrounding area.

- To ensure the proposed development is compliant with the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), biodiversity enhancements will include integrated bat roosting features and bird nest boxes. Further information is provided in Section 5.

1. Introduction

ABR Ecology Ltd were commissioned Fowler Architecture & Planning on behalf of Bill and Sara Clemence to undertake a Preliminary Roost Appraisal (PRA) of two sheds and one garage at Forest View, East Grafton, Wiltshire, SN8 3DB (central grid reference: SU 25488 60521) to advise on the presence/absence of bats at the property. This report was requested to support a planning application for three buildings to be demolished and erect two dwellings on site with new landscaping and driveway.

The PRA was undertaken on the 11th May 2023 by Natural England class 2 licensed bat ecologist Russell Hoyle and graduate ecologist Aaron Templer. Existing site location is provided in Appendix 1 and proposed elevations are provided in Appendix 2.

Site context

The application site comprises a residential property consisting of a dwelling (not part of the works) with a detached garage, shepherds hut and two sheds in East Grafton, Wiltshire within a semi-rural area. The immediate surrounding landscape comprises residential housing and gardens with scattered trees, areas of woodland and hedgerow connectivity. To the north, east and south is situated grasslands. In the wider surrounding landscape, areas of arable land and woodland are present. The surrounding landscapes are considered to provide excellent foraging opportunities and commuting corridors for bats.

Aims and scope of this report

This report is based on the results of the PRA and bats data search from Wiltshire & Swindon Biological Records Centre (WSBRC, 2023) which were principally aimed at determining if a bat roost is present within the buildings and/or whether the buildings hold 'potential' to support roosting bats in line with The BCT Good Practice Survey Guidelines (Collins, 2016).

This report aims to establish whether the proposed works hold the potential to impact on roosting bats and identifies whether there is a requirement for further activity (emergence/re-entry) surveys, which may inform the need for a bat European Protected Species (EPS) licence or a Bat Mitigation Class Licence (BMCL) to allow the works to proceed lawfully following planning approval.

2. Legislation and planning policy

Legislation and UK BAP priority bat species

Legislation

In England, all bats are legally protected under Schedule 5 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act (1981) (as amended). Additionally, all bats are fully protected under Annex IV of the EC Habitats and Species Directive (1992), which is transposed into UK law under the Conservation of Habitats and Species (Amendment) (EU Exit) Regulations 2019.

The legislation protects bats from many activities and acts, including to:

1. Deliberately take, injure or kill a wild bat.
2. Intentionally or recklessly disturb a bat in its roost or deliberately disturbing a group of bats.
3. Destroy or damage a place used by bats for breeding or roosts (even if bats are not occupying them at the time).
4. Intentionally or recklessly obstruct access to a bat roost.
5. Possess or advertise/sell/exchange a bat species found in the wild in the EU (dead or alive) or any part of a bat.

UK BAP priority bat species

Several species are listed under the UK Biodiversity Action Plan (UK BAP) (JNCC, 2016) as priority species due to their vulnerability or rarity as listed under Section 41 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act (2006), and Section 40 places a duty to conserve biodiversity on all public authorities.

These include bats including barbastelle (*Barbastella barbastellus*), Bechstein's bat (*Myotis bechsteinii*), brown long-eared bat (*Plecotus auritus*), both species of horseshoe bat (*Rhinolophus spp*.), soprano pipistrelle (*Pipistrellus pygmaeus*) and noctule (*Nyctalus noctula*).

National and local policy

NPPF – The National Planning Policy Framework

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government, 2021) sets out the Government's planning policies for England and how these should be applied. In the context of this report, Section 15 of NPPF is relevant and applicable, Section 15 states:

'*Planning policies and decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural environment by, minimising impacts on and providing net gains for biodiversity, including by establishing coherent ecological networks that are more resilient to current and future pressures*.'

New developments and projects are supported where plans promote the conservation, restoration and enhancement of priority habitats, ecological networks and the protection and recovery of priority species; and identify and pursue measurable net gains for biodiversity.

To ensure this application is compliant with Section 15 of NPPF, ecological enhancements are required as part of the project/development.

The Wiltshire Core Strategy

The Wiltshire Core Strategy (2015) (Wiltshire Council, 2015) Core Policy 50 'Biodiversity and geodiversity' states that all proposals for development, including those which will affect sites of regional and local biodiversity, nationally and internationally protected sites will:

'Development proposals must demonstrate how they protect features of nature conservation and geological value as part of the design rationale. There is an expectation that such features shall be retained, buffered, and managed favourably in order to maintain their ecological value, connectivity and functionality in the long-term. Where it has been demonstrated that such features cannot be retained, removal or damage shall only be acceptable in circumstances where the anticipated ecological impacts have been mitigated as far as possible and appropriate compensatory measures can be secured to ensure no net loss of the local biodiversity resource'.

Core Policy 50 also states that all development should seek opportunities to enhance biodiversity. Major development in particular must include measures to deliver biodiversity gains through opportunities to restore, enhance and create valuable habitats, ecological networks and ecosystem services. Such enhancement measures will contribute to the objectives and targets of the Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) or River Basin/ Catchment Management Plan, particularly through landscape scale projects, and be relevant to the local landscape character.

It is the applicant's/landowner's responsibility to ensure that the proposed development proceeds in full compliance with this report and/or any update version report thereafter, that works are undertaken lawfully, in compliance with national and local policy, and in accordance with all conditions of the obtained planning consent.

3. Methodology

Desktop data search

Wiltshire & Swindon Biological Records Centre (WSBRC) (WSBRC, 2023) was contacted to provide any records of bats and any bat roosts within a 2km radius of the application site. These records were used to inform the assessment of the site in its potential to support roosting bats and identifying any potential cumulative impacts on bats from the proposed development.

Preliminary Roost Appraisal (PRA)

Natural England class 2 licensed bat ecologist Russell Hoyle and graduate ecologist Aaron Templer undertook the PRA of the buildings on site. Timing and weather conditions for the survey are provided in the table below:

Survey date	Time of survey	Surveyor(s)	Equipment used	Weather conditions		
11/04/2023	14:00	Russell Hoyle & Aaron Templer	High-powered torch, extendable ladder, and binoculars	Temp:	Oktas cloud cover:	Beaufort wind force:
				12°c	8/8	1/12

The survey was undertaken in accordance with the Bat Conservation Trust (BCT) Good Practice Survey Guidelines (Collins, 2016). A thorough search for evidence of bats was undertaken in any internal loft spaces or voids and on any external features of the buildings, notably any windowsills, walls, floors and flat surfaces. Evidence of roosting bats include:

- Presence of live/dead bats;
- Bat droppings - distinguished from rat/mouse droppings by their crumbly texture;
- Staining from fur around access points; and
- The presence of feeding remains, such as insect wings and casings.

The buildings would be identified as a 'confirmed' bat roost if evidence of roosting bats was recorded. If bat droppings were present, a sample of droppings were collected and sent to Swift Ecology Ltd for DNA analysis to confirm the species of bat present.

Most native bats in the UK are crevice-dwelling species, with bats roosting in remote areas, such as between tiles and membrane, behind cladding, at wall tops, in cavities, soffits and behind lead flashing, to name a few examples. Evidence of these species is often concealed and/or inaccessible due to the remote nature of the roost.

Therefore, where no evidence of roosting bats was recorded, an assessment on the availability of potential roosting areas and bat access points around the buildings, as well as the quality/availability of surrounding bat habitat, was conducted. The building was then assigned a category based on a sliding scale of 'negligible' to 'high potential', in accordance with the BCT Guidelines (Collins, 2016):

Bat roosting potential	Description
'High potential'	A building with one or more potential roosting sites that are highly suitable for use by many bats on a regular basis and for a longer period of time.
'Moderate potential'	A building with one or more potential roosting features that could be used by bats due to appropriate conditions but are unlikely to support a bat roost of important conservation status (roost type only, not species).
'Low potential'	The building features one or more potential roosting features that could be used by bats opportunistically. These features do not provide the appropriate conditions to be used on a regular basis by large numbers of roosting bats.
'Negligible potential'	The features of the building are negligible and are highly unlikely to be used by roosting bats.

Survey limitations

Preliminary Roost Appraisal (PRA) – property survey

Potential evidence of crevice-dwelling bats may have been missed due to the nature and remote location of potential roosting areas. However, binoculars were used to identify any potential bat droppings on the exterior features of the buildings, where possible.

The site visit provides a 'snapshot' of the site and does not take into account seasonal variation. Species may have been overlooked due to the constraints of the season and time in which the survey was undertaken. A lack of evidence of a species does not confirm its absence from site, rather there was no indication of its presence at the time of survey.

Reporting and data validity

The data within this report should not be seen as comprehensive. Data obtained from the Wiltshire & Swindon Biological Records Centre (WSBRC, 2023) data search is unlikely to provide a complete record of species within the search area. It is therefore possible that a bat species may occur within the vicinity that has not previously been identified within the data search.

This report is considered valid for 18 months from the survey date for planning purposes only; and is only intended for the proposed plans outlined within this report. If any material changes to the building(s)/site occur or if the nature and/or extent of the proposed development changes, an update visit to reassess the building(s) will be required, as any conclusions provided herein may not be valid.

4. Results

Desktop data search

Wiltshire & Swindon Biological Records Centre (WSBRC) (WSBRC, 2023) provided records of bats and bat roosts within a 2km radius of the site, and the results of which are provided below.

Species	Number of records	Most recent record	Closest record to site
Brown long-eared	1	2003	713m southwest
Common pipistrelle	1	2020	Within 2km of the site
Natterer's bat	1	2020	Within 2km of the site
Noctule	1	2020	Within 2km of the site
Pipistrelle sp.	1	2003	713m southwest
Soprano pipistrelle	1	2020	Within 2km of the site

There are records for brown long-eared and natterer's within 713m of the property, as bats are known to be within the area, a 'bat-friendly' lighting strategy is detailed in Section 5 of this report.

Preliminary Roost Appraisal (PRA)

Building description

Description of the buildings surveyed for roosting bats is provided in the table below and photographs of the building are provided in Appendix 3:

Building name	Description
Garage	▪ The building comprises a detached rendered garage. ▪ uPVC soffits and barge boards are present. ▪ The roof is hipped and pitched and covered in clay tiles. ▪ The garage is being utilised for storage. ▪ Internally no loft is present in the garage. ▪ The roof is lined with plastic membrane. ▪ A swallow nest was present but seemed disused.
Shed 1 & 2	▪ The two buildings comprise wooden sheds. ▪ The roofs are pitched and covered with felt. ▪ Wooden window and door frames are present. ▪ No voids are present. ▪ Evidence of rats is present.

Evidence of bats recorded

No evidence of roosting bats was recorded within or around the buildings on site.

Building assessment – potential bat roosting areas and bat access points

An inspection of the internal and external features of the buildings were undertaken to identify any potential bat access points and potential areas where bats could roost, and these are summarised below:

Building name	Potential bat access points	Potential roosting provisions	Potential of the building
Garage	▪ No potential access points noted around the building.	▪ No potential roosting provisions were noted.	'Negligible potential' for roosting bats
Shed 1 & 2	▪ No potential access points noted around the building.	▪ No potential roosting provisions were noted.	'Negligible potential' for roosting bats

The garage and two sheds were assessed and were deemed to hold 'negligible potential' for roosting bats in line with the Bat Conservation Trust (BCT) Good Practice Survey Guidelines (Collins, 2016); this was due to a lack of potential bat roosting provisions and/or bat access points around the building's exterior. Roosting bats are not considered to be impacted by the proposals for the demolition of the buildings. Further details regarding the validity of this report are provided in Section 5 below.

5. Conclusions, mitigation and biodiversity enhancement

Conclusions on roosting bats

The PRA of the garage and two sheds was undertaken, and the buildings were considered to hold 'negligible potential' for roosting bats due to a lack of suitable bat roosting provisions and potential access points around the property. Roosting bats are not considered to be impacted as part of the proposed works and therefore no further action is recommended in relation to demolishing the three buildings.

It must be noted that the PRA provides a 'snapshot' of the conditions at the time of survey and does not account for seasonal changes. It is always possible for bat species to ingress at any point in the future, and therefore it is recommended that if 18 months pass and no works have been undertaken, and/or if the condition of the buildings change, an update PRA is undertaken to assess whether the potential of the buildings to support roosting bats has altered.

In the unlikely event bat(s) are encountered at any stage, work will cease and Natural England or a suitably qualified bat ecologist must be sought for advice by the applicant/landowner. The applicant must be aware of the severe penalties associated with bat crimes and their legal obligation to report this information.

In the event a bat is discovered, the nature of the advice will concern allowing the bat(s) to leave on their own accord or waiting for a licensed person to remove the bat(s). A bat licence may then be deemed necessary following the necessary survey work. **All building contractors/roofers are explicitly forbidden from handling bats or interfering with bats in any way.**

Foraging and commuting bats

The site is likely to support general commuting and foraging bats. Artificial lighting can impact local bats as it can impede their ability to forage successfully and can deter bats from commuting across the property (BCT & ILP, 2018). Therefore, to ensure any lighting disturbance on bats is minimized, the following strategy for artificial lighting around the property will be strictly adhered to:

- Preferably, no additional external lighting will be permitted around the properties. Where lighting is required for health and safety purposes only, any external lighting required as part of the scheme (e.g., security lighting) will be motion-triggered, set on timers (1 minute or less) and directional towards the ground to avoid upward light spill.
- Any light spill must be directed away from the roof and from surrounding tree canopies and vegetation.

- All luminaires used will lack UV elements when manufactured. Metal halide, fluorescent sources will not be used.
- LED luminaires will be used due to their sharp cut-off, lower intensity, good colour rendition and dimming capability.
- A warm white spectrum (ideally <2700Kelvin) must be adopted to reduce blue light component.
- Luminaires must feature peak wavelengths higher than 550nm to avoid the component of light most disturbing to bats (Stone, 2012).
- Internal luminaires will be recessed where installed in proximity to windows to reduce glare and light spill.
- The use of specialist bollard or low-level downward directional luminaires to reduce upwards lighting spill can be considered, however, should be used as a final resort.
- Column heights should be carefully considered to minimise light spill. Only luminaires with an upward light ratio of 0% and with good optical control must be used.
- Luminaires will always be mounted on the horizontal, i.e., no upward tilt.
- No lighting will be erected within 5m of the bat tubes and bird nesting boxes (see 'Biodiversity enhancement' below).

Biodiversity enhancements

To ensure the proposed development is compliant with the NPPF and local planning policy, the following biodiversity enhancements will be included as part of the scheme to support local biodiversity (see Appendix 4 for locations and design):

- One 'Vivara Pro Build-in Woodstone Bat Tube' will be built into the eastern elevation of 'B1' and into southern elevation of 'B2' as close to the eaves as possible and away from external light sources.
- One integrated 'PRO UK Rendered Build-In Swift Boxes' or similar will be built into the western elevation of 'B1' and into the north elevation of 'B2' as close to the eaves as possible.

6. References

Bat Conservation Trust (BCT) and Institute of Lighting Professionals (ILP) (2018). *Bats and artificial lighting in the UK - Bats and the Built Environment series.*

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

Department for Communities and Local Government (2005). *Circular 06/2005: Biodiversity and Geological Conservation – Statutory Obligations and their Impact within the Planning System.*

JNCC (The Joint Nature Conservation Committee) (2016). *UK BAP priority terrestrial mammal species.*

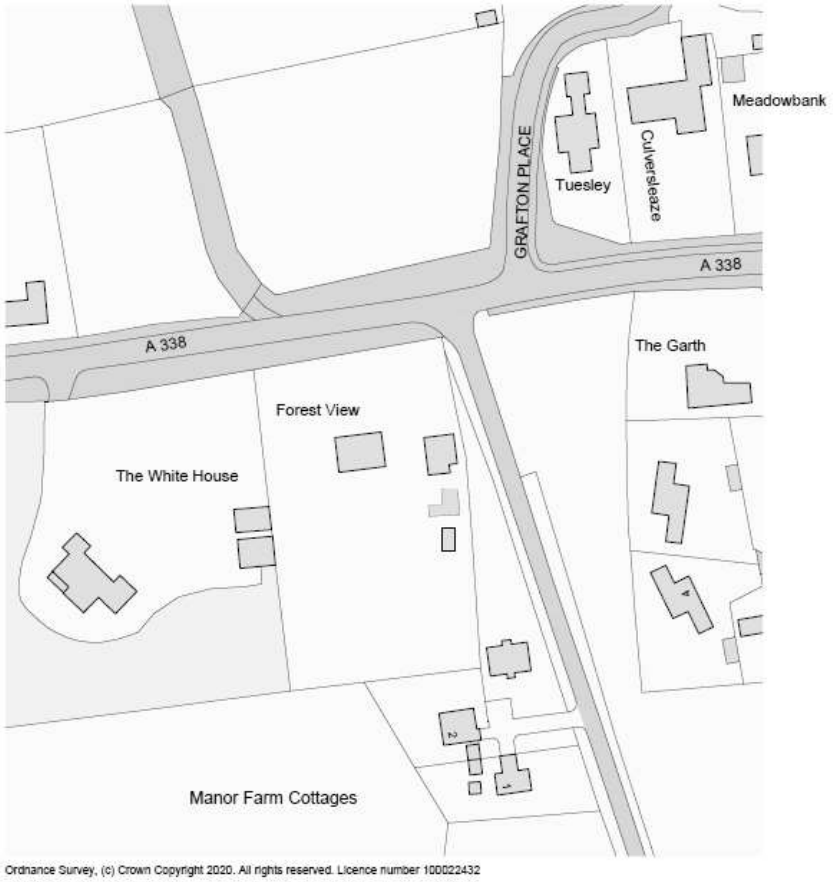
Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (2021). *National Planning Policy Framework.*

Stone, E.L., Jones, G., Harris, S. (2012). *Conserving energy at a cost to biodiversity? Impacts of LED lighting on bats.* Glob. Change Biol. 18, 2458–2465.

Wiltshire & Swindon Biological Records Centre (WSBRC) (2023). *Forest View, East Grafton, Wiltshire - bats only data search 1km/2km radius.*

Wiltshire Council (2015). *The Wiltshire Core Strategy.*

Appendix 1: Existing site location



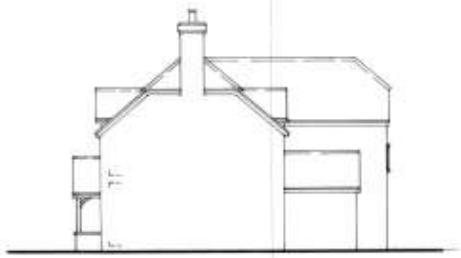
Location Plan
1:1250
0m 20m 40m 60m

Appendix 2: Proposed plans





north elevation



west elevation



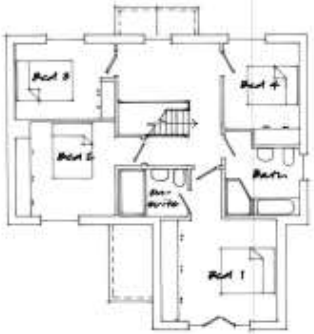
south elevation



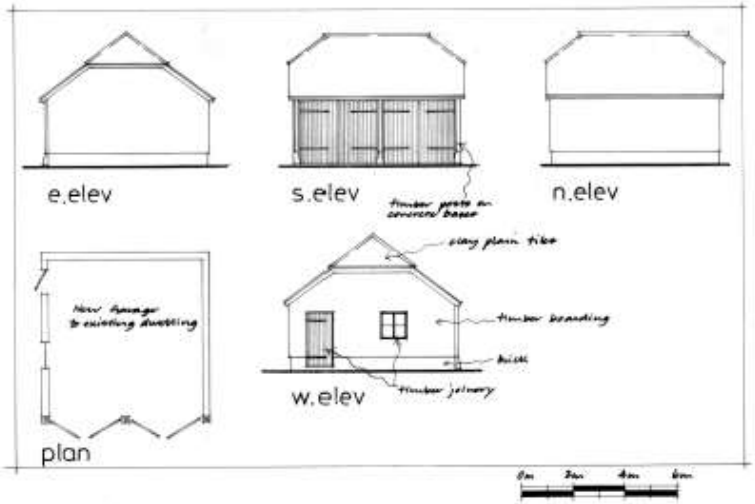
east elevation

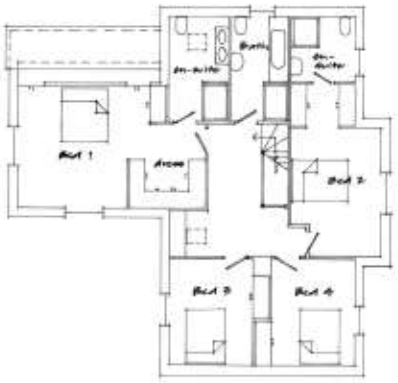


ground floor plan



first floor plan





first floor plan



east elevation



north elevation



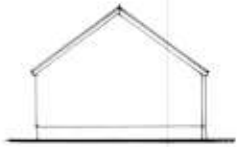
south elevation



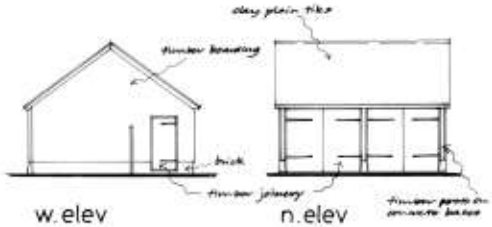
west elevation



ground floor plan



e.elev

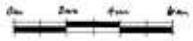


w.elev

n.elev



s.elev



Appendix 3: Photographs



Photo 1: Northern elevation of the garage.



Photo 2: Southern elevation of the garage.



Photo 3: Rear south elevation of the garage.



Photo 4: Roof of garage covered in moss.



Photo 5: Internal of the garage.



Photo 6: Swallow nest attached on the rafters.



Photo 7: Exteriors of shed 1.



Photo 8: Exteriors of shed 2.

Appendix 4: Biodiversity enhancements



One ‘Vivara Pro Build-in Woodstone Bat Tube’ will be built into the eastern elevation of ‘B1’ and into southern elevation of ‘B2’ as close to the eaves as possible and away from external light sources.



One integrated ‘PRO UK Rendered Build-In Swift Boxes’ or similar will be built into the western elevation of ‘B1’ and into the north elevation of ‘B2’ as close to the eaves as possible.

