3 November 2022

Robert Buttle
Buttle Farm
Compton Bassett
Calne
SN11 8RE

Dear Robert,

Preliminary Roost Assessment – Buttle Farm, Compton Bassett, Calne, SN11 8RE

I am writing to provide you with a short, written report of my survey findings at the above site on 31 October 2022. The site is centred on Ordnance Survey grid reference SU 029 717. I am a licensed bat surveyor (Natural England licence: 2022-10699-CL17-BAT). I used the following equipment during the survey: telescopic ladder, high-powered torch with red filter, binoculars and collecting pots for droppings.

Access to the entire site was made available and no significant survey limitations were encountered. Weather conditions on the date of survey were dry, still, and mild (13° C).

Buttle Farm has undergone extensive development works within the last 10 years, with the former cow and milking sheds converted into an office, pig meat processing plant, residential use, and holiday lets. As part of these previous development works, a bat survey was carried out by Dorset Ecology in 2009, which confirmed the presence of a brown long-eared bat night roost within Building B. The site was also found to be used by nesting swallows. As part of the development, a mitigation bat roost was created within Building J and ridge access points were created on Building B. Please refer to Dorset Ecology (2009) for full details.

Whilst no formal development plans have been viewed, I understand the current development proposals include conversion of two holiday lets and a modern barn into residential properties, and minor external and internal alterations to several other buildings at the site. A preliminary roost assessment was originally carried out to assess the buildings on site by Focus Environmental Consultants on 14 September 2021 (Focus Environmental Consultants, 2021).

Legislation:

Bats are a European Protected Species (EPS), and are listed in Annex IV of the EC Habitats Directive 1992, which affords strict protection to bats and their roosts. Actions and activities that are prohibited are:

- deliberate capture, injury or killing of a bat;
- deliberate disturbance of a bat and in particular disturbance which is likely to; impair their ability:
    - to survive, to breed or reproduce, or to rear or nurture their young, or
    - to hibernate or migrate; or
    - to affect significantly the local distribution of abundance of the species to which they belong.
- damage or destruction of a breeding site or resting place (even unoccupied); and
- possessing, controlling, transporting, selling or exchanging, or offering for sale or exchange, any bat or any part of a bat or anything derived from one.

Results:

Area / Feature	Observations
Building A	External Description: A single-storey wooden-clad building with a pitched slate tile roof. Slope tiles are tight fitting, but there are gaps *c.*20mm in size beneath ridge tiles providing opportunities for crevice-dwelling bats. Wooden cladding is tight.  **Plate 1:** typical view of Building A. Photograph looking south-west. Internal Description: In use as a farm office. The interior is open to the apex, with a vaulted ceiling and no potential access points for bats.

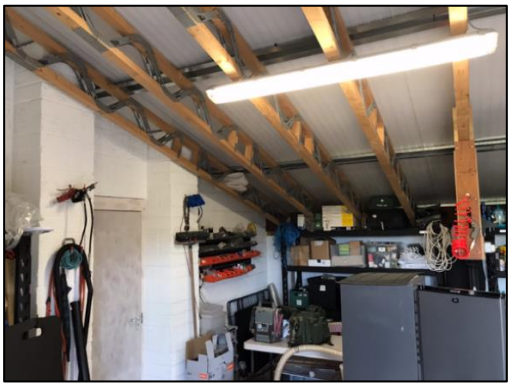
	 **Plate 2:** typical view of the farm office interior.
Building B	External Description: A brick building with a pitched slate tile roof. There are gaps in ridge mortar *c.*20mm in size that have been purposely created as a form of enhancement for bats following past renovation works. Slope tiles are tight, and brickwork is intact. No other potential roost features are present.  **Plate 3:** Building B. Photograph looking south. Internal Description: In use as a residential dwelling. The building has a vaulted ceiling with no enclosed loft space, and no potential access points for bats.
Building C	External Description: A brick and wooden clad building with a pitched slate tile roof. The building is in excellent condition with no potential roost features observed.

	 **Plate 4:** view of Building C. Photograph looking north-west. <u>Internal Description:</u> In use as a holiday let. The building has vaulted ceilings with no loft space, and there are no potential access points for bats.  **Plate 5:** interior of Building C.
Building D	<u>External Description:</u> A brick and wooden clad building with a pitched slate tile roof. The building is in excellent condition with no potential roost features noted.  **Plate 6:** typical view of Building D. Photograph looking north-west.

<table>
<tr><td></td><td><u>Internal Description:</u>
Formerly in use as a meat processing unit, but with facilities still in place. The building has an enclosed attic space c.2m in height, c.6m in width and c.16m in length. The void is light owing to the presence of windows and is boarded with no potential access points for bats. A walkway between Building D and Building B has unlined tiles. No evidence of roosting bats was observed anywhere.</td></tr>
<tr><td>Building E</td><td><u>External Description:</u>
A single storey wooden clad building with a pitched roof, the front of which is covered in clay tiles and the rear with corrugated metal. There are several gaps c.10-15mm in size beneath lifted clay tiles that provide opportunities for crevice-dwelling bats. No other potential roost features were observed.


Plate 7: typical view of Building E. Photograph looking south-west.

<u>Internal Description:</u>
In use as a garage / workshop. The tiled roof is lined with breathable membrane and the corrugated roof is unlined. There are no potential access points for bats, and no evidence of roosting bats was observed.


Plate 8: internal view of Building E.</td></tr>
</table>

Building F	External Description: A brick and stone building with tight wooden cladding. The building has a pitched clay tile roof in excellent condition with no crevices present. A brick and wooden clad extension with a corrugated metal roof on the rear and side elevations is also in excellent condition. There is a gap behind lifted flashing on the side (northern) elevation where the existing building and extension join, which provides an opportunity for crevice-dwelling bats. The tiled roof has three ridge vents that appear to be sealed.  **Plate 9:** the rear (eastern) and side (northern) elevations of Building F.  **Plate 10:** the front (western) and side (southern) elevations of Building F. Internal Description: In use as a holiday let. The building is open to the apex, with no loft void and vaulted ceilings with no potential access points for bats. A small void space within the extension's roof is completely sealed.

	 **Plate 11:** internal view of Building F.
Building G	External Description: A large metal-framed barn with a corrugated gable pitched roof, and a domed roof at the eastern end. The barn is open-fronted and open-sided at the eastern elevation. The western end of the barn is enclosed with a single skin breeze block wall, metal sliding doors, and corrugated walls.  **Plate 12:** showing open-fronted (southern) and open-sided (eastern) elevations of Building G.  **Plate 13:** showing enclosed western elevation of Building G.

<table>
<tr><td></td><td><u>Internal Description:</u>
Currently used for storage purposes. The eastern and central aspects are very light and exposed to the weather. The central aspect has a roof structure featuring wooden timber beams. A scattering of c.10 bat droppings of varying age was observed beneath the timber beam at the back of the building, closest to the enclosed northern elevation. A pair of moth wings were also observed with a pair of bat droppings beneath this beam at the corner of the barn, against the enclosed western end. No evidence of roosting bats was observed within the enclosed western end.


Plate 14: enclosed western area of the barn, with wooden roof beams that continue through to the open-fronted central area.</td></tr>
<tr><td>Building H</td><td><u>External Description:</u>
A large open-fronted metal-framed barn with metal panel walls and a pitched corrugated roof. No potential roost features were observed.


Plate 15: the front (southern) and side (western) elevations of Building H. Photograph looking north-east.</td></tr>
</table>

	Internal Description: Currently in use for the storage of farm equipment and as a living space for a flock of guineafowl. The interior is very light, cool, and draughty inside. The roof lacks the structural timber beams present within Building G.  **Plate 16:** interior of Building H, with metal framed roof.
Building I	External: An open-fronted, metal-framed lean-to structure with a corrugated metal panel roof, bound by a brick wall. No potential roost features are associated with the building's exterior.  **Plate 17:** typical view of Building I. Internal: Currently in use for storage and vehicle parking. The interior is exposed, light, and generally unsuitable for day roosting bats. The roof structure has exposed wooden timber beams that may provide opportunities for exploitation of the structure as a night roost / feeding perch by bats. Two scattered bat droppings were observed inside the structure, neither of which appeared to be fresh. Per client communication, a large hole in the rear brickwork regularly supports nesting kestrels, and wooden beams extending from the wall provide perching opportunities used by kestrels.

Building J	External: A breezeblock and wooden clad barn with a pitched clay tile roof. There are numerous gaps beneath lifted ridge tiles and slope tiles, including those associated with several bat access tiles installed on the front roof slope. These form part of bat enhancement works linked with a previous development.  **Plate 18:** the front (south-west) and side (south-east) of Building J.  **Plate 19:** specially fitted bat access tiles on the front roof slope. Internal: In use for storage purposes but designated as a wildlife enhancement building by the client. The barn has exposed wooden ridge board and rafters with a king-post roof truss and unlined roof tiles. There is an enclosed bat loft / hot box at one end, and a regularly used barn owl nest box at the other end.



Plate 20: bat 'hot box' constructed as part a previous planning application.



Plate 21: barn owl nest box inside Building J.

Foraging / Commuting Habitat Potential			
High quality semi-natural habitats	**Within immediate vicinity (<250m)**	**Within wider landscape (<2km)**	**Comments**
Broadleaved/mixed woodland Waterbodies Tree lines/stands Mature hedgerows	☒ ☒ ☒ ☒	☒ ☒ ☒ ☒	Buttle Farm is in a rural landscape dominated by agricultural land with mature hedgerows and treelines inside the immediate vicinity. Areas of broadleaved woodland, ponds, former gravel pits, and brooks with associated riparian habitats are present within the wider landscape.
General Landscape Character	Rural		
Negative Characters		**Positive Characters**	
Highly urbanised environment ☐ Night lighting (significant) ☐ Isolated from high-value habitat ☐ Modern building construction ☐ Human disturbance (significant) ☐ High exposure (altitude, prevailing winds) ☐		Rural environment ☒ Absence of night lighting ☒ Good connectivity to high-value habitat ☒ Building construction suitable for bats ☒ Absence/Minimal human disturbance ☒ Low exposure (altitude, prevailing winds) ☐	

Nearby buildings modern or isolated ☐		Cluster of suitable old buildings ☒	
Other ☐ specify		Other ☐ specify	
Conclusion: (Collins 2016)	High - Continuous, high-quality habitat that is well connected to wider landscape, that is likely to be used regularly by commuting/foraging bats.		

Conclusion:

Conclusion – Building Suitability for Bats (see Collins 2016)	
Building A	Low - A structure with one or more potential roost sites that could be used by individual bats opportunistically.
Building B	Moderate - A structure with one or more potential roost sites that could be used by bats on a regular basis.
Building C	Negligible - structure is unsuitable for bats.
Building D	Negligible - structure is unsuitable for bats.
Building E	Low - A structure with one or more potential roost sites that could be used by individual bats opportunistically.
Building F	Low - A structure with one or more potential roost sites that could be used by individual bats opportunistically.
Building G	Suspected Night Roost – A structure that may be used by bats as a night roost, but for which substantial evidence indicating a clear pattern of usage is not obvious at this juncture.
Building H	Negligible - structure is unsuitable for bats.
Building I	Moderate - A structure with one or more potential roost sites that could be used by bats on a regular basis.
Building J	High - A structure with one or more potential roost sites that are obviously suitable for use by larger numbers of bats on a regular basis.

Building G has been classified as a suspected night roost due to the presence of *c*.10 scattered bat droppings of various ages beneath wooden roof timbers. The roosting conditions in Building G are indicative of an opportunistic night roost / feeding perch, but the evidence collected to date does not constitute solid evidence of a pattern of usage by bats. Communication with the client indicates that current development proposals involve partial enclosure of Building G with *c*.10m of hit-and-miss boarding to reduce rain ingress, and replacement of the domed roof structure at the eastern end with the pitched roof structure associated with the rest of the barn. These proposals will not prevent access to Building G for bats, and are likely to increase the value of the structure for roosting bats by creating more sheltered roosting spaces and increasing the amount of internal roof structure usable by roosting bats (*i.e.* increasing wooden roof beams).

Building I has moderate potential to support roosting bats, given the structure's potential suitability for supporting a night roost / feeding perch and the presence of two bat droppings. Neither of the droppings appeared fresh, and the structure cannot be classified as a confirmed bat roost with confidence given the available evidence at this juncture, as the open-fronted structure is open to exploratory behaviour by bats. Communication with the client indicates that Building I will be predominantly if not completely retained in its current state, with the possibility of just minor partial enclosure at the southern end with hit and miss boarding to prevent rain ingress. As with Building G, these proposals will not prevent access to Building I for bats and may provide enhanced roosting habitat by creating a small section of more sheltered roost space for bats.

No external works are proposed that will remove or modify the Potential Roost Features (*i.e.* lifted roof tiles and led flashing) associated with Building E and Building F, or risk disturbance to any bats utilising such features. This is because proposals for these structures comprise internal works to buildings that have no internal roosting opportunities for bats, and minor external works including removal of tight wooden cladding for installation of doors / windows. No development works are intended for Building J, which has high potential to support roosting bats, or for Buildings A and B, which have moderate and low potential to support roosting bats (with reference to Collins, 2016). Buildings C, D and H all have negligible potential to support roosting bats.

The increase in residential units at the site may result in an increase in the level of artificial night-lighting over the current baseline. Therefore, strict control of artificial night-lighting should be implemented at the site, utilising low level lighting of the minimum wattage. Buildings G and I should not be subject to any increase in artificial night-lighting. Providing that lighting impacts are adequately mitigated it is considered that the current development proposals will have a negligible impact on bats. Accordingly, it would be unreasonable to undertake expensive and time-consuming nocturnal surveys for bats in line with government guidance (ODPM Circular 06/2005. Paragraph 99, below).

> "*… bearing in mind the delay and cost that may be involved, developers should not be required to undertake surveys for protected species unless there is a reasonable likelihood of the species being present and affected by the development*."

Recommendations:

The following recommendations are made to ensure compliance with wildlife legislation, government guidance and best practice.

1. No further presence/absence surveys are required to support the planning application for this site as the potential for bats to occur and licensable impacts to arise during works is negligible.

2. As a precautionary approach, it is recommended that a licensed bat worker remains 'on call' during the development works. In the unlikely event that roosting bats are discovered, work must cease immediately, and the on-call ecologist must be contacted. They will liaise with Natural England (as required) to advise on any licensing requirements to allow lawful completion of the work.

3. In line with Government policy on biodiversity, a single bat box should be installed within the landownership of Buttle Farm. The box should be integrated within an existing built structure (*e.g*. Ibstock enclosed bat box, Habitat bat box, Schwegler Wall-mounted Bat Shelter 2FE, Habi-Sabi Bat Box or Schwegler 2FR Bat Tube) or installed on a suitable mature tree (*e.g.* Schwegler 2F Bat Box). The box should be installed at least 4m above ground-level, and not placed above windows.

4. Strict control over the use of artificial night-lighting is required to prevent unnecessary illumination of bat roosts and habitats (*e.g*. hedgerows). Lighting must be low level (*e.g.* light bollards) and of the minimum wattage, as recommended by the Bat Conservation Trust & Institute of Lighting Professionals (2018).

5. Any development works occurring to Building G and Building I should be restricted to the hours of daylight to prevent disturbance of bats that may potentially use the structures as a night roost.

6. This report is deemed valid for 12 months. Should any development commence after this time has elapsed an update survey will be required to determine the status of the site during the intervening period.

I trust the above information is clear and satisfactory to requirements. Please do not hesitate to contact me should you require any additional information or clarification.

Kind regards,

Josh Toogood
Ecologist

Preliminary Roost Assessment Plan



0m 45m

KEY:

B# Building Number / Location

Building surveyed

NORTH

Client: Mr Robert Buttle
Site: Buttle Farm, Compton Bassett, Calne, SN11 8RE
Title: Preliminary Roost Assessment Plan
Contract: 2374
Date: November 2022

Please note: this plan is intended only to indicate the approximate location of features and should therefore, not be treated as an accurate scale plan.

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QUALIFICATIONS & EXPERIENCE

Focus Environmental Consultants® has the expertise to provide sure-fire environmental solutions to a wide range of projects. The company ethos forges the highest standards of professional scientific practice with a best value approach for our clients. Our core area of expertise is in the production of specialist environmental reports and advice to support planning applications. Our comprehensive services include Preliminary Ecological Appraisals (PEA), Ecological Impact Assessment (EcIA), Habitat Regulations Assessment (HRA) and fulfilling protected species surveys, licensing and mitigation requirements. Focus Environmental Consultants is a CIEEM Registered Practice, with all ecological staff being members of this professional body. Our flexible approach, range of skills and broad project experience from major infrastructure contracts to small private developments allows us to adapt to your individual requirements. As well as offering a full suite of ecological services, Focus Environmental Consultants can provide expert arboricultural advice and reports and is building an enviable reputation for innovative habitat creation and management solutions. Focus Environmental Consultants is situated in Worcestershire, providing a convenient and central UK location.

Josh Toogood BSc (Hons)
Josh is an Ecological Consultant who joined Focus Environmental Consultants in 2021. He holds a BSc (Hons) in Ecology and Environmental Science (1st Class) from the University of Worcester. Josh is a skilled ornithologist with expertise in conducting breeding and over-wintering bird surveys and assessments for barn owls. Additional ecological experience includes undertaking Preliminary Ecological Appraisals and surveying for notable and European Protected Species including bats and great crested newts. He holds a Natural England survey licence (Class 1) for bats and great crested newts. Josh is also a competent surveyor of reptiles and badgers. Josh is a Qualifying member of the Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (CIEEM).

This report has been checked for quality and content:

Graham Davison BSc (Hons) MSc MCIEEM MRSB
Graham is an ecologist with over twenty years of experience in the field of applied ecology. He holds a BSc (Hons) degree in Zoology and an MSc with distinction in Law and Environmental Science. Graham's Masters paper on legal and practical implications for mammal reintroductions was published by the IUCN. His ecological experience includes surveys to identify nationally and locally important sites for wildlife, ecological services to local planning authorities and provision of ecological reports to accompany major infrastructure projects, housing schemes, industrial developments and mineral extraction. Graham is a skilled botanical surveyor (FISC 4) specialising in Phase I and Phase II (NVC) Habitat Surveys. Graham has considerable expertise in protected species surveys and licensing, and is a Registered Consultant under the Bat Mitigation Class Licence scheme (BMCL). Graham has appeared and delivered evidence as an expert witness for Planning Appeals and Public Inquiry. Graham has been interviewed for BBC local radio and TV programmes to provide specialist expertise on ecological topics.