



The Cottage, Ashley Stud
Preliminary Roost Assessment (PRA) and Nesting Bird Survey
For Jenifer Jenkins

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Version

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1. Introduction

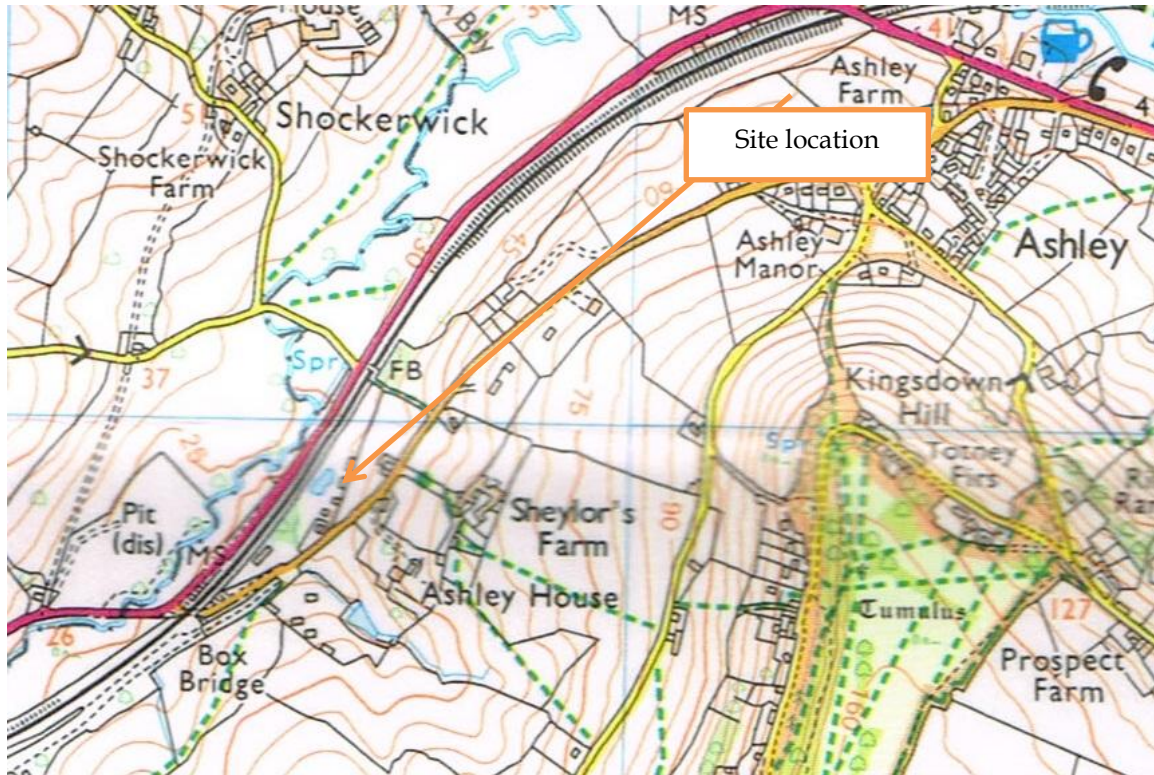
1.1 Commission

Ellendale Environmental Limited was commissioned by Jenifer Jenkins to undertake a Preliminary Roost Assessment (PRA) and a nesting bird survey for three buildings ('the target buildings') at The Cottage, Ashley Stud, Box, Wiltshire ('the site'). It is proposed to demolish the buildings and construct a replacement annexe structure adjacent to the main property on the site ('the proposed development').

1.2 Site Details

The site is located to the south-west of Ashley, a small village in the civil parish of Box in Wiltshire, approximately 3.5 miles east of the village of Box, at OS Grid Reference ST 80549 67900.

Figure 1: Site location



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1.3 Bat Conservation

British Bats

There are 17 species of bats resident in Britain. These are from two families, namely the Rhinolophidae (the two horseshoe bat species) and the 15 species of vesper/evening bats (the Vespertilionidae). All British bats are insectivorous and locate their prey using ultrasonic calls through a biological system known as echolocation.

During summer months, female bats form nursery colonies in trees and buildings, where they raise infants. In the winter, males and females hibernate in trees, buildings and underground structures.

Conservation Status of British Bats

The general consensus in Britain and Europe is that virtually all bat species are declining and are vulnerable. Our understanding of population status is poor, as there is very little historical data for most bat species. Certain species, such as the horseshoe bat, are better understood and have well documented contractions in range and population size.

Given this general picture of decline, the UK Government (within the UK Biodiversity Action Plan) has designated five species of bats as priority species (these being greater and lesser horseshoe bats, barbastelle, Bechstein's and pipistrelle). These plans provide an action pathway whereby the maintenance and restoration of former population levels are envisaged.

Legal Status of British Bats

All bats and their roosts in England were originally protected under the Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981. Subsequent amendments to the legislation for England (and Wales) has removed bats from most of the provisions of the Act; however, it remains an offence to:

- Intentionally or recklessly disturb a bat while it is occupying a structure or place which it uses for shelter or protection; and/or



- Intentionally or recklessly obstruct access to any structure or place that a bat uses for shelter or protection.

All British bat species are listed in Annex IV of the EC Habitats Directive and are fully protected through The Conservation (Natural Habitats, &c.) Regulations 1994. All bat species found in England are classed as European protected species. They receive full protection under the Conservation (Natural Habitats, &c.) Regulations 1994 (as amended).

These regulations make it an offence to:

- Deliberately capture, injure, or kill a bat;
- Harass a bat or group of bats;
- Disturb a bat in a roost (any structure or place it uses for shelter or protection);
- Disturb a bat while it is rearing or otherwise caring for its young
- Obstruct access to a bat roost or otherwise deny an animal use of a roost;
- Disturb a bat in a manner or in circumstances likely to significantly affect the local distribution or abundance of the species; and/or
- Disturb a bat while it is migrating or hibernating.

The legislation, although not strictly affording protection to foraging grounds, does protect bat roost sites. Bat roosts are protected at all times of the year, regardless of whether or not bats are present at the time.

It's also an offence to:

- Damage or destroy a breeding site or resting place of such an animal (whether or not deliberately or recklessly); and/or
- Keep, transport, sell or exchange, or offer for sale or exchange any wild bat (or any part or derivative of one) obtained after 10th June 1994.

Where development is proposed that would result in an offence under the Habitats and Species Regulations, a European Protected Species (EPS) licence needs to be granted by Natural England (NE) to permit an act that would otherwise be unlawful.



This provides for a specific derogation from the legislation, to prevent a legal infringement occurring.

To obtain an EPS licence for development it must be demonstrated that the purpose of the act to be licensed is for:

- *“Preserving public health or public safety or other imperative reasons of overriding public interest including those of social or economic nature and beneficial consequences of primary importance for the environment”* (Regulation 55(2)(e)).

In addition, NE will not grant an EPS licence unless they are satisfied that:

- *“There is no satisfactory alternative”* (Regulation 55(9)(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”* (Regulation 55(9)(b)).

1.4 Nesting Bird Legislation

The Wildlife and Countryside Act (WCA) 1981 (as amended) affords all wild breeding birds protection by making it an offence to intentionally or recklessly:

- Kill, injure or take a bird;
- Take, damage, destroy or interfere with a nest of any bird while it is in use
- or being built;
- Obstruct or prevent any bird from using its nest; and/or
- Take or destroy an egg of any bird.

Reckless acts would include disregard of mitigation aimed at protecting birds, resulting in the killing, injury and/or disturbance of any bird or bird resting place.

This legislation means that birds are fully protected in England, and that any planned activity, which may affect them, requires prior consultation with the appropriate statutory nature conservation organisation (in this case NE).



2. Methodology

Survey work undertaken in relation to a development needs to be conducted under a scientific/conservation licence issued by, in this case, NE. The work is normally conducted by an environmental consultant on the behalf of the developer and the consultant will advise on the necessary course of further action with respect to licences, mitigation and compensation measures. A number of recognised survey techniques are available to the consultant, such as:

- Natural England has published guidelines (A.J. Mitchell-Jones [2004], *Bat Mitigation Guidelines*, English Nature. ISBN 1 85716 781 3), which provide generic technical advice on bat mitigation; and
- Hundt L (2012). *Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines*, 3rd Edition, Bat Conservation Trust, London. ISBN-13: 978-1-872745-96-1.

For development proposals requiring planning permission the developer must:

- Demonstrate that adequate surveys have been undertaken to establish the presence or absence of bats, to predict the potential impact on them, their resting sites or breeding roosts;
- If bats or their roosts are discovered, bring proposals forward that will integrate provision for bats into any design that will compensate and mitigate for any impact during development; and
- Provide sufficient survey information that will support a licence application under the Habitats Directive should bats be discovered.

Where bat species are using a site, it will be necessary to mitigate the impacts of the development upon the population(s). These would include measures that remove or reduce any damaging effects on the animals or their roosts. In most cases a package of compensation measures will be required to accommodate any loss of breeding or resting-places, and the timing of works will need to be synchronised with the life-cycles of the effected species.



This collective package of mitigation and compensation measures should allow the conservation status of the animals to be at least maintained by the development. With careful thought, the conservation status may even be enhanced by development. This is usually most easily achieved by early ecological input into the design of the project.

In the case of sites where bats are present, a development licence from NE will be required to conduct works affecting bats.

2.1 Bat Survey Licence

The survey was undertaken by Christopher Parsons, Ecologist at Ellendale Environmental. Christopher holds a bat survey licence (Bat Survey Class Licence CL18 (Bat Survey Level 2), registration number CLS-2019-42561), with respect to the Conservation Regulations 1994. The licence is valid for all counties of England, valid until October 2025. Christopher has over 10 years' professional experience of undertaking ecological surveys and working with bat species across the UK.

2.2 Survey Objectives

On the basis of the brief provided by the client, Ellendale Environmental conducted survey work to fulfil the following needs:

- Obtain baseline information on the habitat features suitable for bat species;
- Determine the presence/likely absence of bat species; and
- Obtain any evidence of nesting birds.

In practice this has been achieved by a physical inspection of the target buildings, a search for live animals and/or other signs indicating their current or previous presence.

2.3 Survey Methodology

A daytime physical internal and external survey of the target buildings was undertaken on Friday 13th June 2025 which was at the start of the active period for bats (i.e., March to October).

Weather was not a limiting factor in the survey and the conditions are summarised in Table 1.



Table 1: Survey weather conditions

SURVEY DATE	TEMPERATURE (°C)	WIND SPEED (MPH)	CLOUD COVER/ PRECIPITATION
13/06/2025	18.4	Avg. 0.3 Max. 1.2	25% cloud cover, dry and still.

All suitable features were assessed externally and internally. A telescopic surveyor's ladder was used to gain access to various points and a CLU-10 searchlight was used to search dark areas. A Visual Optics VO36-10ww Endoscope was utilised to assist inspection of internal spaces.

The physical search included a search for live animals and a search for other signs that give an indication of past or present occupancy. In the case of bats, typical indicators include droppings (which are characteristic and can often be speciated), signs of staining, characteristic odours, and accumulations of prey items.

2.4 Constraints

The survey was not restricted and full access to the target buildings was possible.

Whilst no biological survey can guarantee that all cues and signs of protected or notable species will be recorded, Ellendale Environmental are confident that all key fauna present during the survey were noted.



3. Results

3.1 Desk Study

The following bat species were identified within 5km of the site boundaries by the data search undertaken from MAGIC and the NBN Atlas:

- Serotine bat *Eptesicus serotinus* (35 records, the closest of which is located 0.9km south-east of the site, the most recent recorded in 2022);
- Bechstein's bat *Myotis bechsteinii* (five records, the closest of which is located 3.9km north-east of the site, the most recent recorded in 2011);
- Brandt's bat *Myotis brandtii* (10 records, the closest of which is located 1km south-east of the site, the most recent recorded in 2019);
- Daubenton's bat *Myotis daubentonii* (26 records, the closest of which is located 1.1km south-east of the site, the most recent recorded in 2019);
- Whiskered bat *Myotis mystacinus* (22 records, the closest of which is located 1.1km south-east of the site, the most recent recorded in 2019);
- Natterer's bat *Myotis nattereri* (33 records, the closest of which is located 1.1km south-east of the site, the most recent recorded in 2000);
- Noctule bat *Nyctalus noctula* (25 records, the closest of which is located 1.1km south-east of the site, the most recent recorded in 2022);
- Common pipistrelle *Pipistrellus pipistrellus* (196 records, the closest of which is located 0.5km south-east of the site, the most recent recorded in 2022);
- Soprano pipistrelle *Pipistrellus pygmaeus* (77 records, the closest of which is located 1.1km south-east of the site, the most recent recorded in 2021);
- Brown long-eared bat *Plecotus auritus* (16 records, the closest of which is located 2.1km north-east of the site, the most recent recorded in 2021);
- Greater horseshoe bat *Rhinolophus ferrumequinum* (135 records, the closest of which is located 0.9km south-east of the site, the most recent recorded in 2021); and
- Lesser horseshoe bat *Rhinolophus hipposideros* (111 records, the closest of which is located 1km north-east of the site, the most recent recorded in 2022).



There are no records for protected species within the site boundaries, and species identified within 5km of the site are not considered to be at risk from the proposed development.

Bird Species

Approximately 149 bird species have been recorded within 2km of the site and are shown on the NBN Atlas; however, none of these records are within the site boundaries.

3.2 Site Description

The site is located on to the south-west of Ashley in Wiltshire and comprises a residential property and three small outbuildings, areas of hard standing and amenity grassland. The site is surrounded by residential properties to the north and south and a railway line to the west. To the east there is an unnamed road, beyond which is managed grassland and a residential property. It is proposed to demolish the three small buildings on the site and construct an annexe to the existing (main) property.

3.3 Physical Bat Survey

Building 1 – Chicken shed

‘Building 1’ is a former chicken shed, located to the north of the site. The building is approximately 4m wide by 15m long and has an arched roof covered with corrugated metal sheets over a wooden frame. The building has small concrete block wall along the length and width, on top of which is a wooden frame. At the end of the building there are old wooden panels that were found to be in a poor condition with algae and rotten timbers present.

Internally there is evidence of bitumen felt having been previously present; however, much of this has deteriorated and only small areas remain.



Photograph 1: showing a view of Building 1



Photograph 2: showing a view of inside of Building 1





The structure of the building provides no opportunities for roosting bats and no evidence of roosting bats was found in the internal space of the building during the survey. Bats are not considered to be present and no further surveys for bats are recommended.

Building 2 – Barn

‘Building 2’ is a barn located to the north of the site and is approximately 19m long by 6m wide. The building is constructed from a single row of concrete block walls that are approximately 2m high with a traditional wooded structure present on the top half of the building.

Photograph 3: showing a view of Building 2



The roof of the building is covered with timber slats that are covered externally with corrugated bitumen sheets. On the gable end of the building there are windows that were found to have broken and glass is missing on both ends.



This allows wind and rain to enter the internal structure making the conditions inside unsuitable for roosting bats.

The building was noted to be in a state of disrepair. The wooden slats on the roof are damp in at least 80% of the roof and dense cobwebs were noted over the roof structure, indicating that bats are not present.

Photograph 4: showing a view of the internal roof of Building 2



No evidence of roosting bats was found in the internal space of the building during the survey and bats are not considered to be present.

Building 3 – Log cabin

‘Building 3’ is a log cabin located to the north of the site and is approximately 6m wide by 8m long. The building is a traditional log cabin constructed from timber.



Photograph 5: showing a view of Building 3



No evidence of bat activity was found within Building 3 during the survey and no suitable roost spaces for bat species were identified. Bats are not considered to be present.



Overall, the target buildings are assessed as providing Negligible Roost Potential for bat species and no evidence of roosting bats was found. No further surveys for bats are recommended.

3.4 Nesting Bird Survey

No evidence of nesting birds was found during the survey.



4. Conclusions

4.1 Conclusion

The site is located to the south-west of Ashley in Wiltshire and comprises a residential property and three small outbuildings, areas of hard standing and amenity grassland.

The target buildings are small structures located within the curtilage of the main property and were all noted to be in a poor condition during the survey. Timbers within the building were noted to be damp and rotten in places making them unsuitable for roosting bats that require dry and stable conditions for roosting.

In addition, doors and windows on Building 1 and Building 2 were noted to be open and broken, allowing in wind and rain that make the internal structure unsuitable for roosting bats. No suitable roosting spaces, such as cracks or crevices, were found in the structure of the buildings, walls or roof, that would provide habitat for bat species.

During the survey of the buildings no evidence of bat activity was found on the external or internal surfaces such as droppings, staining or feeding remains and overall, the target buildings are assessed as providing Negligible Roost Potential for bat species. No evidence of bat activity was found during the survey and no further surveys are recommended.

Furthermore, no evidence of nesting birds was found during the survey.

4.2 Main Recommendations

General

Site personnel should be made aware of protected species and if any are recorded on site, all works should stop, and a suitably qualified ecologist contacted.



Bats

Given the findings of the survey, it is very unlikely that bats are roosting in the target building. Notwithstanding this, it is advised that precautionary working methods are undertaken during works to the building, including:

- Site personnel will be made aware of the potential presence of bats through a toolbox talk;
- If a bat is found, or the presence of bats is suspected, all work must stop immediately, and a licensed bat worker must be contacted for advice;
- Bats must not be handled under any circumstances; and
- An ecologist will assess a potential roost space (if identified/found) and inform Natural England of the proposed actions to be undertaken.

Birds

Works should be undertaken out with the breeding bird season (March – August, inclusive), as all nesting birds are protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended).

If works are undertaken within this period, a nesting bird survey would be required no more than 24 hours prior to the works. If nesting birds were found, these areas of the site would need to be protected from disturbance until the young have fledged naturally.

4.3 Suggested Biodiversity Enhancements

The following recommendations are made for modest post-construction ecological enhancements at the site which are proportionate with the low level of environmental impact from the proposed development:

- Bird nesting boxes (both small-hole and open-fronted) should be placed within the site, if possible, to create nesting opportunities for small bird species as part of the overall design; and
- Bat boxes should be placed on or around the site boundaries, if possible, to create roosting opportunities for bat species as part of the overall design.