



Gasper Farmhouse, Stourton with Gasper

Bat & Bird Scoping Report

Prepared for: Bella Hoare & John Gallop

Date: November 2025



This report has been prepared and provided in accordance with the Code of Professional Conduct of the Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management.

Limitations

Nash Ecology Ltd has prepared this Report for the sole use of Bella Hoare & John Gallop ("Client") in accordance with the Agreement under which our services were performed.

The conclusions and recommendations contained in this Report are based upon information provided by others and upon the assumption that all relevant information has been provided by those parties from whom it has been requested and that such information is accurate.

The methodology adopted and the sources of information used by Nash Ecology Ltd in providing its services are outlined in this Report. The work described in this Report was undertaken in July 2024 and is based on the conditions encountered and the information available during the said period of time.

Nash Ecology Ltd disclaim any undertaking or obligation to advise any person of any change in any matter affecting the Report, which may come or be brought to Nash Ecology attention after the date of the Report.

This report is considered 'valid' for up to two years from the date the walkover survey was conducted. If an application is made after this, then it is advisable to undertake an updated survey. In addition, any significant change to the project should result in consultation with an ecologist as reassessment of the ecological constraints may be required.

Nash Ecology Ltd
Halfway Farm
Draycott Road
Cheddar
BS27 3RR

Tel: 07950 146082
email: info@nashecology.com

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1	INTRODUCTION	2
1.1	Background and Scope	2
1.2	Legislation and Planning Policy Summary.....	3
1.2.1	<i>Summary of Legislation Pertinent to Bats</i>	<i>3</i>
1.2.2	<i>Summary of Legislation Pertinent to Birds</i>	<i>4</i>
1.2.3	<i>Planning Policy Summary</i>	<i>4</i>
2	METHODS.....	5
2.1	Desk-based Study.....	5
2.2	Field Survey.....	5
2.2.1	<i>Preliminary Bat Roost Appraisal.....</i>	<i>5</i>
2.2.2	<i>Birds.....</i>	<i>6</i>
2.3	Survey Limitations.....	6
3	RESULTS	7
3.1	Desk-based Study.....	7
3.2	Site Context.....	7
3.3	Preliminary Bat Roost Appraisal	7
3.4	Birds.....	9
4	DISCUSSION	10
4.1	Bats.....	10
4.2	Birds.....	10
4.3	Opportunities for Enhancement.....	10
5	REFERENCES	11

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background and Scope

Nash Ecology Ltd was instructed to carry out a bat and bird assessment of a residential property, namely 'Gasper Farmhouse, Gasper Street, Stourton-with-Gasper, BA12 6PY' (Figure 1). Planning permission has been awarded to the owners of the property in 2024 (PL/2025/02077 & LBC PL/2025/02464) to divide the property into two dwellings; at the time of reporting, no works relating to the extant permissions had been carried out. The current application applies solely to the 'new' southern property. The current proposals include internal alterations and the removal of a modern boiler room (Figure 2). No works to the property's roof is proposed.

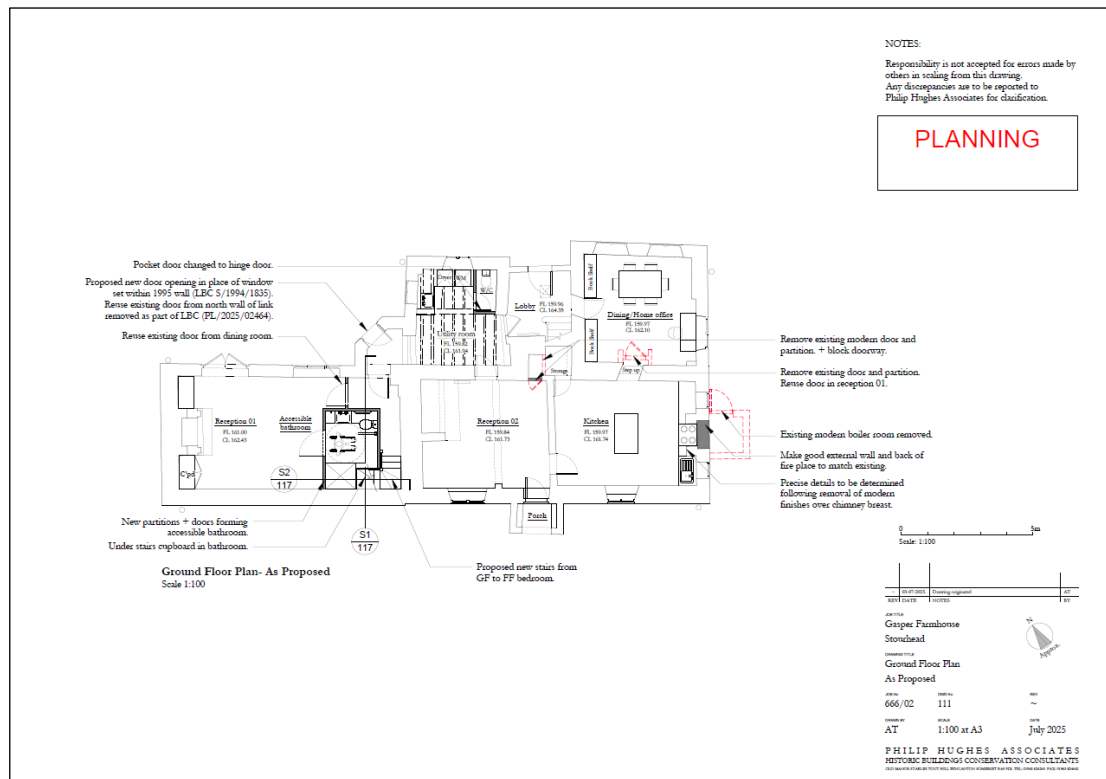
As the works will be restricted to the footprint of the existing building and its immediate surrounds, the ecological receptors most likely to be encountered are bats and birds. As the proposed works have the potential to adversely affect both taxa, a targeted assessment was commissioned to ascertain whether either were present.

The remainder of this report provides methods, results and a discussion of potential impacts including, where necessary, a suitable mitigation strategy.

Figure 1: Site Location (Google Earth, 2021)



Figure 2: Proposed Development



- Lesser horseshoe bat (*Rhinolophus hipposideros*).

Section 40 of the NERC Act 2006 places a duty of care on competent authorities to consider biodiversity as a material consideration when discharging their normal functions.

1.2.2 Summary of Legislation Pertinent to Birds

Nesting birds are protected through their inclusion on the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended). Under the Act, it is an offence to harm a bird, its eggs or young whilst occupying a nest. For those species listed on Schedule 1 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981, it is also an offence to intentionally or recklessly disturb a bird that is on or near an 'active' nest.

Forty-nine species of birds are listed on Section 41 of the NERC Act 2006 as 'Species of Principal Importance for Conservation in England'.

1.2.3 Planning Policy Summary

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 2024 was considered in the preparation of this report. The NPPF specifies the obligations that the Local Authorities and the UK Government have regarding statutory designated sites and protected species under UK and international legislation and how this is to be delivered in the planning system. Protected or notable habitats and species should be considered as a material consideration in planning decisions and may therefore make some sites unsuitable for particular types of development. If the development is permitted, mitigation measures may be required to avoid or minimise impacts on certain habitats and species, or where impact is unavoidable, compensation may be required.

2 METHODS

2.1 Desk-based Study

A desk-based study was carried out to identify designated sites and biological records relating to the site. The online Multi Agency Geographic Information for the Countryside (MAGIC) website was consulted to identify statutory sites designated for bats or birds within 2 km. The MAGIC website was also used to review granted bat mitigation licences (EPSML) within 1 km. The search was based on grid reference ST 762 330.

2.2 Field Survey

2.2.1 Preliminary Bat Roost Appraisal

A Natural England (Class 2) licensed bat ecologist undertook a full inspection (both external and internal) of Gasper Farmhouse on 16th July 2024 following published guidance (BCT, 2023). During the survey, the surveyor inspected the property for exterior roosting locations and possible access points to the building's interior. Such features were accessed and inspected for signs of use using an endoscope. An internal inspection for suitable roost locations and evidence of bat occupancy (such as droppings, urine spots, an absence of cobwebs and bats themselves) was then undertaken.

As bats are a cryptic group and often move between roosts, both within and between years, their presence is not always easy to detect. The property was assessed for its Bat Roost Potential (BRP), following published guidance (BCT, 2016). The BRP categories are provided in Table 1 below.

Table 1: Bat Roost Potential Categories (BCT, 2016 and Mitchell-Jones, 2004)

Roost Potential	Description
Known or Confirmed	Confirmed signs of bat presence/ occupation (droppings, oily staining around entry points, insect remains, odour, scratching) and actual bat presence.
High	A structure or tree 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.
Moderate	A structure or tree 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 (with respect to roost type only – the assessments in this table are made irrespective of species conservation status, which is established after presence is confirmed).
Low	A structure with one or more potential roost sites that could be used by individual bats opportunistically. 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 (i.e. unlikely to be suitable for maternity or hibernation). A tree of sufficient size and age to contain PRFs but with none seen from the ground or features seen with only very limited roosting potential.
Negligible	No features suitable for roosting bats. Includes structures constructed from unsuitable materials e.g. prefabricated with steel and sheet material. Structure is draughty, light and cool buildings with no roosting opportunities. High levels of regular disturbance including external lighting. Building is isolated for areas of foraging habitat. In the case of trees, no

Roost Potential	Description
	potential roosting features are present, or features have no potential to support roosting bats.

2.2.2 *Birds*

Concurrent with the bat inspection, Gasper Farmhouse was inspected for signs of nesting birds.

2.3 Survey Limitations

No constraints to the aims of the survey were noted.

3 RESULTS

3.1 Desk-based Study

A single statutory designated site was identified within 2 km, namely Heath Hill Farm Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI). This SSSI consists of Heath Hill Farm comprises a number of adjacent hay meadows and permanent pastures, which support floristically rich unimproved neutral to calcareous grassland, and rush pasture, in a mosaic with semi-improved and improved grassland. The SSSI was located c. 0.47 km to the northwest at its nearest point. Impacts arising from the proposed scheme are unlikely to extend beyond the Site boundaries; as such, there are no impact pathways between the proposed scheme and the SSSI.

No historical EPSML was identified within 1 km.

3.2 Site Context

The Site was located within the village of Stourton and Gaspar. The farmhouse was set within a residential garden to the north of Gaspar Street. Further residential properties were located to the east and west. Large blocks of woodland were located to the west and southwest. A large lake was located to the northeast.

3.3 Preliminary Bat Roost Appraisal

The Site layout is presented below in Figure 3. farmhouse comprised three sections: Section 1, Section 2 and the Linking Section (Figure 2).

Figure 3: Building Layout (Google Earth, 2021)



The Southern Section included two-stories with exposed stone walls (Plates 1 – 4). Intact doors and windows were present throughout. Climbing plants were affixed to the southern aspect. Intact wooden soffit boxes were flush with the wall tops. The roof included pitched and hipped sections both of which were clad in clay tiles. Dormer windows were present on the northern aspect. A small number of broken tiles were noted on the southern and northern aspects; however, these did not lead to any gaps beneath the tiles. Moreover, no works to the roof are proposed. A small (1.9 m tall), flat-roofed boiler room was present. The walls were constructed from exposed stone and were in a good condition.

Plate 1: Section 2 Northern Aspect



Plate 2: Section 2 Northern Aspect



Plate 3: Section 2 Southern Aspect



Plate 4: Section 2 Eastern Aspect



The property included a small (5 m x 2 m x 1 m) loft void (Plates 5 & 6). The roof was lined with bitumen felt and supported by a sealed wooden frame. The roof was coated in a dense layer of cobwebs. A water tank filled much of the loft void. No historical signs of bats were recorded.

Plate 5: Section 2 Loft Void



Plate 6: Section 2 Loft Void



Overall, Gasper Farmhouse was assessed as having Negligible BRP. The property lacked external potential roost features or access points to the property's interior. No historical signs of bats were recorded from the loft void.

3.4 Birds

No signs of birds were recorded; however, suitable habitat was present near to the building.

4 DISCUSSION

4.1 Bats

The Southern Section of Gasper Farmhouse was assessed as having Negligible Bat Roost Potential. The property lacked external roost locations and access to the property's interior. No historical signs of bat activity were recorded in the loft void. As such, the proposed works will not adversely affect roosting bats and, as the works will be restricted to the existing footprint and its immediate surrounds, there is no risk of habitat fragmentation. Bat roosts can be highly transient, moving location both within and between years. If no works have been undertaken within two years of this report, a resurvey is recommended. In the highly unlikely event that a bat is discovered, all works will stop and a bat ecologist will be contacted.

Many bat species are photophobic and actively avoid illuminated areas. To prevent impacts on foraging and commuting bats, a sensitive lighting strategy will be implemented. The sensitive lighting strategy will comprise the following broad elements (BCT, 2018):

- No excessive lighting - use only the minimum amount required for safety;
- Minimise light spill – use short columns and direct light downwards and in towards the Site;
- Use narrow spectrum bulbs that emit minimal ultra-violet light - avoid white and blue wavelengths of the spectrum, which can attract invertebrates;
- Lights should either peak higher than 550 nm or use glass lantern covers to filter UV light;
- Avoid using reflective surfaces under lights; and
- Minimise the amount of light spill by good design.

Assuming that the sensitive lighting strategy is implemented, no adverse impacts on the local bat assemblage are anticipated.

4.2 Birds

No signs of nesting birds were recorded. The proposed works are largely interior to the existing building and thus will not affect birds.

4.3 Opportunities for Enhancement

Two Beaumaris bat boxes will be erected on mature trees. Woodcrete boxes will be used as these are long-lasting and often come with a 25-year guarantee. The Beaumaris Midi (or equivalent) would be suitable for this purpose and are utilised by a wide range of bat species. The boxes will be oriented between southeast and southwest in a dark location i.e. not subject to artificial lighting. The boxes will be placed over 4 m in height (where safe installation is possible) and in an uncluttered location so that bats can easily fly in and out (www.bats.org.uk).

5 REFERENCES

- BCT (2023) Bat Surveys: Good Practice Guidelines 4th Edition. BCT, London
- BCT (2018) Bats and Lighting. Bat Conservation Trust, London
- Mitchell-Jones, A.J. (2004) Bat Mitigation Guidelines. English Nature, Peterborough