

**FERNLEA
THE COMMON
MINETY
MALMESBURY
WILTSHIRE
SN16 9RH**

ECOLOGICAL SURVEY REPORT (BATS)
(Preliminary Roost Assessment/DBW)



Prepared for:
Mr E. MUSSELWHITE.
Date: 10/11/25.
Ref: NWP/ESR-10/11/25-version 1.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

BatCraft was commissioned Mr E. MUSSELWHITE L to conduct a preliminary ecological appraisal (daytime bat walkover [DBW]) of FERNLEA, THE COMMON, MINETY, MALMESBURY, WILTSHIRE SN16 9RH. This is to support a forthcoming planning application.

The site visit was carried out on the 5TH NOVEMBER 2025, during daylight hours. An internal and external inspection of the property took place to look for signs of bats. The preliminary ecological appraisal consists of a desk top study prior to the survey to review existing information about the site and its surroundings and to inform the design of subsequent bat surveys, if required. The desk top study was conducted based upon a 2km search radius and it revealed 2 sites with 1 designation, these are:

DISTILLERY FARM MEADOWS and **RAVENSROOST WOOD** - SITES OF SPECIAL SCIENTIFIC INTEREST (SSSI).

There is 1 current European Protected Species Licences (EPSLs) for bats with an end date of 1/4/31 and there is 2 expired EPSL for bats within 2km of the proposed development site. The proposed development is in what could be described as a rural setting, the size of the garden and adjoining farmland allows direct ecological connectivity to the wider landscape. The DBW comprised a detailed search of the exterior and interior of the building for bats, signs of bats and features suitable for use by roosting bats. This includes droppings, scratch marks, rubbing and staining at exit holes, live or dead bats and other features such as missing tiles, this list is not exhaustive.

The buildings suitability to support roosting bats was assessed and no bats or evidence of bats was identified during the preliminary inspection.

The main dwelling building including the garage had negligible potential roost features that could support bats.

When the findings are combined the main dwelling/garage was characterised as having negligible potential¹ to support roosting bats, in line with best practice guidelines²; no further survey effort is required.

1-Table 4.1 Guidelines for assessing the potential suitability of proposed development sites for bats. Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists Good Practice Guidelines 4th Edition. Page 44.

2- Collins, J. (ed) (2023) Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists Good Practice Guidelines (4th Edition).

1.INTRODUCTION

1.1 Instruction

BatCraft was instructed by Mr E. MUSSELWHITE to conduct a DBW of FERNLEA, THE COMMON, MINETY, MALMESBURY, WILTSHIRE SN16 9RH to support a forthcoming planning application.

1.2 Aims and Objectives

The DBW is designed to:

- Identify the presence/likely absence of bats within the building.
- Provide information on previous bat ecological surveys/reports.
- Provide information on the status of bats using the buildings currently or previously.
- To add confidence where no bats are found, or to categorise the nature of a roost where evidence of bats are found.
- To establish whether further surveys, mitigation or an EPSL is required.

The preliminary ecological appraisal (bats) and report writing were carried out in accordance with Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists Good Practice Guidelines 4th edition.

1.3 Proposed Works

The survey was commissioned in connection with a forthcoming planning application, final plans were not available.

1.4 Surveyor Background and Experience

The preliminary ecological appraisal for bats was undertaken and the report written by Nicholas Powell. Nicholas holds a Class 2 Bat License (CLS-11742) and has received training in bat ecology and surveying, bat detector use, acoustic monitoring/sonogram analysis, architectural terms for bat workers, bats and development, H & S awareness for bat workers, legislation for bat workers, British bats their ecology and conservation, surveying trees for bats, Bat ID and handling, bat biology.

2. Legislation and Planning Policy

2.1 Legislative Background

All species of British bat are protected under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 and the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981, as amended. Under this legislation it is an offence to kill or injure a bat or interfere with any roosting or resting site. A bat roost is interpreted as “*any structure or place used for shelter or protection*” whether bats are present at the time. A summary of the main legislation and planning considerations are included at Appendix 1.

Seven species of bat are also Species of Principal Importance for nature conservation in England under Section 41 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006. This places a duty on all government departments to have regard for the conservation of these species and on the Secretary of State to further, or promote others to further, the conservation of these species.

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This report is valid for 12 months from the site inspection. The lifespan of this report may be subject to change if the site conditions change due to unspecified works that affect the site.

Site Location and Description

3.1 Site Location

The building is located at Grid Reference SU 0326 8992, see Figure 1 below. An overview of the immediate area is shown on Figure 2, both images courtesy of Bing Maps.

Figure 1.



Figure 2.



FERNLEA, THE COMMON, MINETY, MALMESBURY, WILTSHIRE SN16 9RH

3.2 Site Description

The application site comprises of detached single storey brick dwelling with an attached garage. Figure 1/2.

Immediately to the front of the dwelling is a gravelled area allowing access to the garage and parking, this is bordered by lawn.

The rear and side gardens are laid to lawn, bordered by farmland. Figure 3.

The site itself offers a small amount of foraging and commuting habitat for bats, there is excellent ecological connectivity to the wider landscape.

Figure 1. Main dwelling.



Figure 2. Main dwelling.



Figure 3. Garden



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4.1 Pre-Survey Data Search

The client has advised that to their knowledge, no previous bat surveys have been undertaken on the site. Google Earth and MAGIC maps (magic.defra.gov.uk) websites were used prior to the survey to determine the suitability of the surrounding habitat to support roosting bats and to identify any statutory designated sites or EPSLs within 2km of the site. No data was sought from the local records centre at this time.

The preliminary ecological appraisal consists of a desk top study prior to the survey to review existing information about the site and its surroundings and to inform the design of subsequent bat surveys, if required.

The desk top study was conducted based upon a 2km search radius and it revealed 2 sites with 1 designation, these are:

DISTILLERY FARM MEADOWS and **RAVENSROOST WOOD** - SITES OF SPECIAL SCIENTIFIC INTEREST (SSSI).

There is 1 current European Protected Species Licences (EPSLs) for bats with an end date of 1/4/31, table 1, and there is 2 expired EPSL for bats within 2km of the proposed development site. Table 2.

The site is situated along The Common, a through road on the south of Minety. Minety is a village in north Wiltshire, approximately 6 miles to the East of Malmesbury and 7 miles northwest of Swindon.

Directly to the north, south and east of the proposed development site is farmland.

Directly to the southwest is Distillery Farm Meadows SSSI which adjoins Old Copse, a block of woodland.

Ravensroost Wood SSSI is c1500 metres to the southwest.

The ecological connectivity to the wider landscape from the proposed development site is excellent due to the farmland, trees/hedges/gardens adjoining the site.

Figure 1 shows the proposed development site and its relation to the designated sites and EPSL's courtesy of Magic maps, the legend is Figure 1 in appendix.

Figure 1.

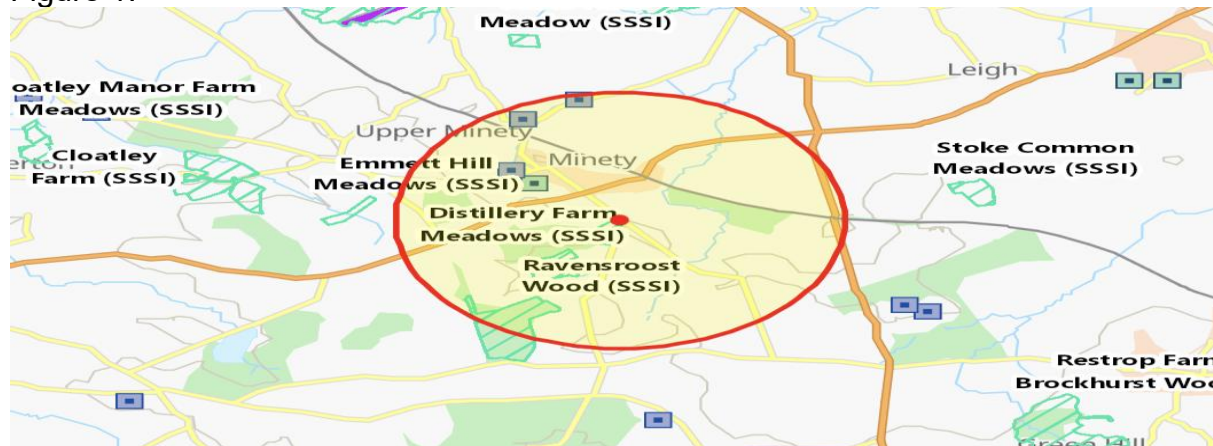


Table 1. Current Licence.

CASE REFERENCE OF GRANTED LICENCE	SPECIES ON THE LICENCE	LICENSABLE PERIOD	LICENSABLE WORKS
2019-40661-EPS-MIT-2	BLE,L-HORSE,NATT	LICENCE_ST 23/12/2020 LICENCE_EN 01/04/2031	DESTROY RESTING/BREEDING SITE

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Table 2. Expired Licences.

CASE REFERENCE OF GRANTED LICENCE	SPECIES ON THE LICENCE	LICENSABLE PERIOD	LICENSABLE WORKS
2018-37931-EPS-MIT	SER ,S-PIP	LICENCE_ST 12/12/2018 LICENCE_EN 12/12/2023	DAMAGE BREEDING/ RESTING SITE
2018-36926-EPS-MIT	C-PIP,NATT	LICENCE_ST 04/10/2018 LICENCE_EN 01/11/2024	DESTROY RESTING SITE

4.2 Daylight Survey

The DBW of FERNLEA, THE COMMON, MINETY, MALMESBURY, WILTSHIRE SN16 9RH was carried out by Nicholas Powell on 5th NOVEMBER 2025 at 10.00 am. The weather conditions for the survey were clear with no rain, occasional gusts of wind up to Beaufort 1 and a temperature of 12.4 degrees. Equipment used included a high-powered torch, a digital camera, a digital camera on a telescopic pole, an endoscope and a ladder. During the DBW an external inspection of the property was carried out to identify any signs of occupation by bats and features that could offer potential roosting sites following standard survey guidelines.

Features investigated included:

- Construction of the building– soffits, loft space, tiles/slates, lead flashings etc.
- Building condition – structure of roof and walls.
- Access points – potential entry and exit points for bats.
- Roosting points – cracks and crevices, between underlay and roofing tiles/slates.

Field signs that would indicate the presence of bats were searched for. These included:

- Bat droppings on the floor and walls of the building.
- Feeding remains (particularly butterfly and moth wings).
- Evidence of urine and/or oily staining around possible roost entrance
- Presence of areas cleared of cobwebs.
- Where a breathable roofing membrane has been fitted staining on the membrane may suggest use by bats.
- Odour can sometimes suggest the present of bats.
- Squeaking and chattering can reveal bats roosting between the tiles and roofing underlay.

4.3 Constraints

Full access to the site during the visit was made possible by the client.

There was nothing to be considered a significant constraint.

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5. Survey Findings

5.1 External inspection

The external features of the property were examined for signs described in section 4.2. Windowsills, exposed features around the windows, fascia and walls were inspected for any evidence of bat droppings or staining.

The property is a detached, single storey dwelling with an attached garage.

Main Dwelling.

The ridge tiles were in good condition with a no significant missing mortar. Figure 1.

The tiles covering the roof were in very good condition there were no visible missing/broken/slipped. Figure 2/3.

The eaves tiles were complete, there was no significant missing mortar. Figure 4.

The soffits and fascia were a mix of wood and U.P.V.C, they were in good condition with no significant splits/openings that bats could exploit. Figure 5/6.

There was 2 chimneys, the leadwork was complete and close fitting. Figure 7/8.

No bats or evidence of bats was recorded during the external inspection of the main dwelling.

Figure1. Example of ridge tiles.



Figure 2/3. General tiles

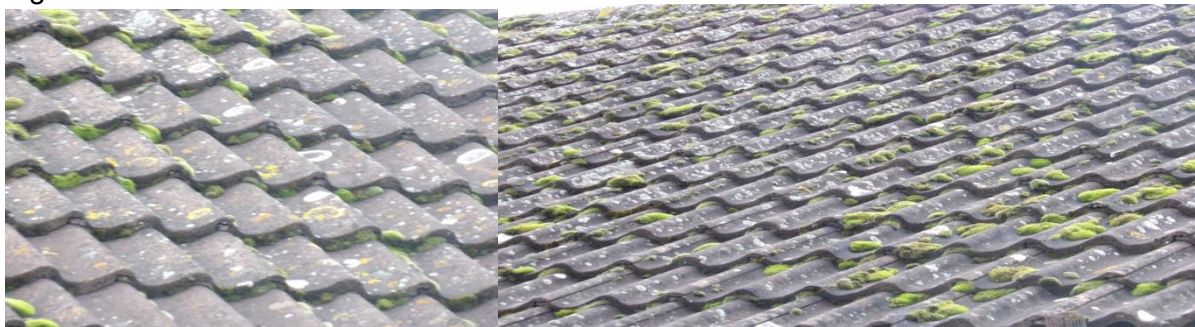


Figure 4. Eaves tiles



FERNLEA, THE COMMON, MINETY, MALMESBURY, WILTSHIRE SN16 9RH
Figure 5/6. Soffitts and Fascias.



Figure 7/8. Leadwork around chimneys.



Garage.

The garage was single skin brick construction.

The ridge tiles were in good condition with a no significant missing mortar.

The roof was covered with tiles, there were no visible slipped/broken/missing tiles.

The soffits and fascia were in good condition, close fitting with no significant gaps/splits.

No bats or evidence of bats was recorded during the external inspection of the garage.

Figure 10/11/12. show external condition/structure of the garage.

Figure 10/11/12.



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5.2 Internal Inspection

An internal inspection of the property was undertaken and was examined for any signs of bats, (described in section 4.2)

Main Dwelling

The loft was accessed using a ladder.

The void was insulated.

The underside of the tiles were lined with bitumen felt, it appeared in good condition.

The roof void was lit.

There was light ingress due to a large window.

Figure 1/2/3/4. Show general structure and condition of the roof void in the main dwelling.

No evidence of bats was recorded during the internal inspection of the main dwelling.

Figure 1/2/3/4.



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Garage

There was no roof void in the garage.

The roof was of timber construction, the tiles were lined with a bitumen membrane.

The garage was in use to store equipment.

Figure 5/6/7 shows internals and roof structure of the garage.

No evidence of bats was recorded during the internal inspection of the garage.

Figure 5/6/7.



5.3 Incidentals.

Incidentals such as wasp's nests, birds' nests, vermin nests, evidence such as rodent faeces are noted.

NONE NOTED/SEEN/RECORDED.

6. Evaluation

The bat roost potential of the features within the site have been assessed with reference to the following criteria and include seasonal variation where increased or decreased probability may arise. Where features are present, they are **highlighted in bold**.

The likelihood of bat roosts being present will be higher where structures:

- are of a pre-20th Century construction;
- **are in a lowland rural setting;**
- **have woodland, mature trees, species-rich grassland and/or water nearby.**
- have large dimension roof timbers with cracks, joints and holes,
- have an uneven roof covering with gaps, though not too draughty.
- have numerous crevices in stonework and structures;
- have hanging tiles or roof cladding, especially on south-facing walls;
- **have a roof warmed by the sun;**
- are disused or little used; largely undisturbed;
- provide appropriate hibernation conditions, such as abandoned mines, tunnels, kilns, or fortifications; or
- **Recent and historical records of bat roosts in the general area.**

The likelihood of bat roosts being present will be lower where structures:

- are in an urban setting with little green space;
- are subject to heavy disturbance (constant movement due to draughts and noise, also unstable microclimate);
- have a small, cluttered roof void (particularly for brown long-eared);
- **are of a modern construction with few gaps or crevices that bats can fly or crawl through (though pipistrelle bats may still be present);**
- are comprised of prefabricated steel or sheet materials; (some sections);
- are active industrial premises.

Please note that the above list provides generic screening criteria only and there are exceptions to consider.

FERNLEA, THE COMMON, MINETY, MALMESBURY, WILTSHIRE SN16 9RH

7. Conclusion

7.1 Interpretation

The combined evidence from the desktop study and the external/internal inspection of the property provides a high level of confidence in support of the opinions set out in this report.

Main dwelling- Informed by the results of the survey and the factors highlighted in Section 6, it is concluded that it is not being or been used by bats, there is no evidence either recent or historic to suggest that it has. There is negligible access opportunities or potential for roosting bats within the building, based on recommendations in the Bat Workers Manual and the Bat Surveys Good Practice Guidelines, no further survey effort is required.

Garage- Informed by the results of the survey and the factors highlighted in Section 6, it is concluded that it is not being or been used by bats, there is no evidence either recent or historic to suggest that it has. There is negligible access opportunities or potential for roosting bats within the building, based on recommendations in the Bat Workers Manual and the Bat Surveys Good Practice Guidelines, no further survey effort is required.

7.2 Contingency Plan.

In the unlikely event that bats are found during the works within the buildings, all work must stop, and advice sought from **BatCraft** or another licensed bat ecologist. If, for whatever reason, there is a time delay of greater than 12 months between this survey and the commencement of work, then the survey should be repeated as the condition of the buildings may change and bats may start roosting at the site.

8. References

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

HM Government (2017) Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations as (amended).

HM Government (1981) The Wildlife and Countryside Act (as amended). HM Government (2006) Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act.

Mitchell-Jones, A.J. & McLeish, A.P. (2004). Bat Workers' Manual (3rd Edition). Joint Nature Conservation Committee.

9. Queries

Any queries regarding this report should be addressed in the first instance to **BatCraft**.

Telephone; 07960 351558. Email: info@batcraft.co.uk

1 The Chestnuts, East Grimstead, Salisbury, Wiltshire SP5 3RU.

APPENDIX 1

In summary, the legislation combined makes it an offence to:

- Intentionally or recklessly damage, destroy or obstruct access to a structure or place used for shelter by a bat.
- Intentionally or recklessly disturb bats; in particular any disturbance which is likely to impair the ability of bats to survive, breed or reproduce or nurture their young; or in the case of hibernating or migrating bats, to hibernate or migrate.
- Intentionally or deliberately kill, injure or take any bat.

Planning Considerations:

Government guidance to Local Planning Authorities stipulates the need to consider biodiversity and protected species during the consideration of planning applications. The NPPF makes clear that the planning system should help minimise the impacts that development can have on biodiversity and provide net gains in biodiversity where possible. In addition, the ODPM Circular 04/2005 states “It is essential that the presence or otherwise of protected species, and the extent that they may be affected by the proposed development, is established before the planning permission is granted, otherwise all relevant material considerations may not have been addressed in making the decision”.

Developments that compromise the protection afforded to bats or roosts under the provisions of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 and the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 will require a European Protected Species (EPS) licence from Natural England (NE).

NE, the government’s statutory conservation advisory organisation, is responsible for issuing EPS licences that would permit activities that would otherwise lead to an infringement of the Habitat Regulations.

Three tests must be satisfied before this licence (to permit otherwise prohibited acts) can be issued:

- Reg 44(2)(e) – the derogation is “in the interests of public health and public safety, or for other imperative reasons of overriding public interest, including those of a social or economic nature and beneficial consequences of primary importance for the environment”.
- Reg 44(3)(a) – there is “no satisfactory alternative” to the derogation.
- Reg 44(3)(b) – the derogation is “not detrimental to the maintenance of the populations of the species concerned at a favourable conservation status in their natural range”.

Tests (a) and (e) can be met with the issue of planning permission for the proposed works. Test (b) is determined by NE’s ecology department that requires the development of a suitable mitigation strategy that would ensure that any bats present on site, are retained at the same population level or better.

FIGURE 1.

Magic

Designations

Land-Based Designations

Statutory

Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (England)



Limestone Pavement Orders (England)



Local Nature Reserves (England)

Local Nature Reserves (England)



National Nature Reserves (England)

National Nature Reserves (England)



National Parks (England)



Ramsar Sites (England)

Ramsar Sites (England)



Sites of Special Scientific Interest (England)

Sites of Special Scientific Interest (England)



Special Areas of Conservation (England)

Special Areas of Conservation (England)



Special Protection Areas (England)

Special Protection Areas (England)



Biosphere Reserves (England)

Biosphere Reserves (England)



Habitats and Species

Species

European Protected Species Licensing

Granted European Protected Species Applications (England)



Amphibian



Bat



Cetacean



Invertebrate



Other Mammal



Plant



Reptile

