



**Fenswood
Ecology**

**Middlecroft Farm, Shrewton
Preliminary Roost Assessment
March 2026**

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Middlecroft Farm, Shrewton Preliminary Roost Assessment

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Summary

Fenswood Ecology was commissioned by Mr. David Kemp, to undertake a Preliminary Roost Assessment (RPA) of a barn and associated buildings at Middlecroft Farm, Shrewton (centred around Ordnance Survey Grid Reference: SU 06233 44217). An assessment of the site was undertaken by Fenswood Ecology in February 2026.

An assessment was completed on the barn and two associated buildings. The buildings are proposed to be converted into a dwelling.

The buildings are constructed of material not suitable for bat roosting, with considerable drafts and high internal light levels. Therefore, the buildings are considered to have **negligible** suitability for roosting bats.

Due to the sites rural location and proximity to trees, it is possible that the area is used by commuting and foraging bats, therefore a sensitive lighting scheme is recommended for the projects design (See appendix 2).

The three buildings are all considered to have **high** suitability for nesting birds. The owl box should be checked prior to work commencing and closed if there is no occupancy. Work on the buildings should take place outside of the bird nesting season (March – August inclusive) to avoid potential disturbance. If this is not possible then a nesting bird check should be completed by an ecologist before work begins.

Introduction

Fenswood Ecology was commissioned by Mr. David Kemp, to undertake a Preliminary Roost Assessment (RPA) of a barn and associated buildings at Middlecroft Farm, Shrewton (centred around Ordnance Survey Grid Reference: SU 06233 44217). An assessment of the site was undertaken by Fenswood Ecology in February 2026.

Bats are protected and considered to be of primary importance under UK legislation, namely the Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981 (as amended), the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010 and the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006.

This report details the findings of the survey work, methodologies employed are described including site surveys and evaluation and the need for any further survey work and/or mitigation measures are included, where appropriate.

Site Location

Middlecroft Farm is situated to the northwest of the village of Shrewton. The site is surrounded by open countryside comprising mainly arable and pasture-land divided by a matrix of treelines and hedgerows.

Figure 1: MAGIC map showing surrounding landscape in relation to the survey site

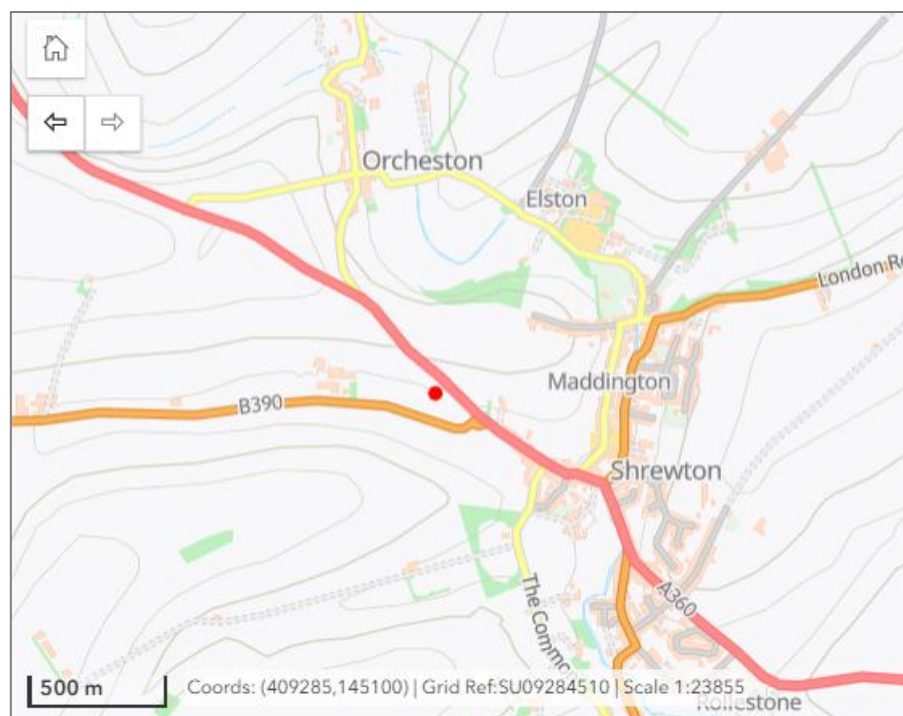


Figure 2: MAGIC map showing building locations



Project Overview

The proposal is for demolition of the Dutch barn (B1) and extension to building B2 in its place to form a single residential dwelling. Drawings were provided by Dolman Agricultural Designers (Ref: 4329-003, 2025).

Methodology

Desk Study

Records held on Magic.gov.uk on Designated Sites and Granted European Protected Species Licences were reviewed in February 2026.

Field Study

The survey was undertaken by Fenswood Ecology on 12th February 2026.

The site was inspected to assess its potential to support roosting bats, in accordance with current best practice guidelines (Collins, 2023).

An internal and external inspection of the building was undertaken during daylight to determine the suitability for bats and establish if bats are using the building or have been using the building in the past.

All accessible parts of the building were inspected, to look for bats and signs of the presence of bats, including:

- Droppings.
- Feeding remains including moth and butterfly wings.
- Staining from urine or oils near crevices or holes or on timber (such as roof beams), walls, chimney breasts etc.
- Scratch marks on walls and timber.
- Squeaking or chattering calls.

The systematic search inside the building included inspection of the ceiling, walls, floor and surfaces.

The assessment outside the building included inspection of all walls, including a search for any crevices under the metal frame or windows, and any other potential bat roost opportunities.

A building may have several features of potential interest to roosting bats. It is not always possible to confirm usage of a feature by bats as often the animals may be present on one day and no evidence of occupation may be found on the next. Consequently, it is normal practice when undertaking such surveys to assign each feature to a defined category of roosting potential as follows:

Negligible: Negligible habitat features onsite likely to be used by roosting bats

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.)

Moderate: A structure 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)

High: A structure 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

Confirmed: This category is used where positive evidence of bats usage has been recorded from a feature. For example, bats or bat droppings may be present, or existing bat records may be associated with the feature. A licence from Natural England is likely to be required if the bat roost is to be disturbed by the development.

Whilst completing the survey for bats the opportunity was taken to systematically search for birds' nests and other evidence of occupation such as:

- Droppings/ white washing
- Pellets
- Feathers
- Egg shells
- Feeding remains

Limitations to Survey

Access to the full application site was provided.

The survey was undertaken within the optimal survey season and it is considered that a robust evaluation of bat roosting potential within the site character has been made.

Findings and Evaluation

Designated Sites

Middlecroft Farm is situated 420m north west of the River Avon SAC and River Till SSSI (overlapping designation) at its closest point.

The Avon in southern England is a large, lowland river system that includes sections running through chalk and clay, with transitions between the two. Five aquatic *Ranunculus* species occur in the river system, but stream water-crowfoot *Ranunculus penicillatus* ssp. *pseudofluitans* and river water-crowfoot *R. fluitans* are the main dominants. Some winterbourne reaches, where *R. peltatus* is the dominant water-crowfoot species, are included in the SAC. Species of importance within the river system include; Desmoulin's whorl snail (*Vertigo moulinsiana*), Sea lamprey (*Petromyzon marinus*), Brook lamprey (*Lampetra planeri*), Atlantic salmon (*Salmo salar*) and bullhead (*Cottus gobio*) (JNCC, 2026).

See appendix for designated site locations.

European Protected Species Mitigation (EPSM) Licences

There are two records of granted European Protected Species Mitigation (EPSM) licences for bats shown on MAGIC within 2km of the site.

Case Reference	Species	Start of Licence	End of Licence	Distance from Site	Impact
2014-3564-EPS-MIT	Common pipistrelle	03/10/2014	30/10/2019	700m SE	Destruction of a resting place
2020-50365-EPS-MIT	Brown long eared	02/12/2020	02/12/2030	850m SE	Damage to a breeding site

Table 1. Granted EPSM Licences within 2km (See appendix for EPSM licence locations)

Field Survey

Preliminary Roost Appraisal

There are two buildings within the red line boundary and one immediately adjacent.

The largest building on the site is a Dutch barn (B1), it has a metal frame and corrugated metal roof. Three sides are open with the fourth side being enclosed by the adjoining building. There is an owl box within the barn, the box wasn't inspected but there were no signs of owls from ground level and evidence of material found under the box suggests the box is/was used by pigeons or stock doves.



Photo 1. Northern and western elevation of the barn (B1)



Photo 2. Roof structure of the barn (B1) with owl box

Immediately south of the Dutch barn (B1) is a block built agricultural building (B2) with four internal compartments. Each compartment is rendered on the lower walls. The roof is covered with fibrous cement sheets, supported by metal beams. The doors to each compartment are all half stable doors, made from plywood.



Photo 3. Southern and western elevations of the building (B2)



Photo 4. Internal compartment of building (B2)



Photo 5. Remanence of historic swallow nest within building (B2)

A small storage shed (B3) is to the southeast of the barn and building and is made from corrugated metal sheet with a half wooden door. This building is currently being used as a log store.



Photo 6. Metal storage shed (B3)

No evidence of bats was found in the buildings and it is considered unlikely they would be used as bat roosts due to the materials they are constructed from and the light and draft levels inside, therefore the buildings are considered to have negligible bat roost potential.

The nest box found in the barn (B1) provides nesting potential, with evidence of historic use and there is evidence of historic nesting in the agricultural building (B2). Therefore, B1 & B2 confirmed bird nesting potential. The storage shed (B3) had no evidence of nesting but has high potential to act as a nesting site.

Conclusion & Recommendations

Due to the very small scale of the proposed project, it is not foreseen that any impacts will jeopardise the designations of locally protected sites.

The buildings are constructed of material not suitable for bat roosting, with considerable drafts and high internal light levels. Therefore, the buildings are considered to have **negligible** suitability for roosting bats.

Due to the sites rural location and proximity to trees, it is possible that the area is used by commuting and foraging bats, therefore a sensitive lighting scheme is recommended for the projects design (See appendix 2).

The three buildings are all considered to have **high** suitability for nesting birds. The owl box should be checked prior to work commencing and closed if there is no occupancy and relocated elsewhere in the landownership. If the box is occupied then it will need to be left in situ and undisturbed until after nesting has finished and relocated once vacated. Work on the buildings should take place outside of the bird nesting season (March – August inclusive) to avoid potential disturbance. If this is not possible then a nesting bird check should be completed by an ecologist before work begins.

References

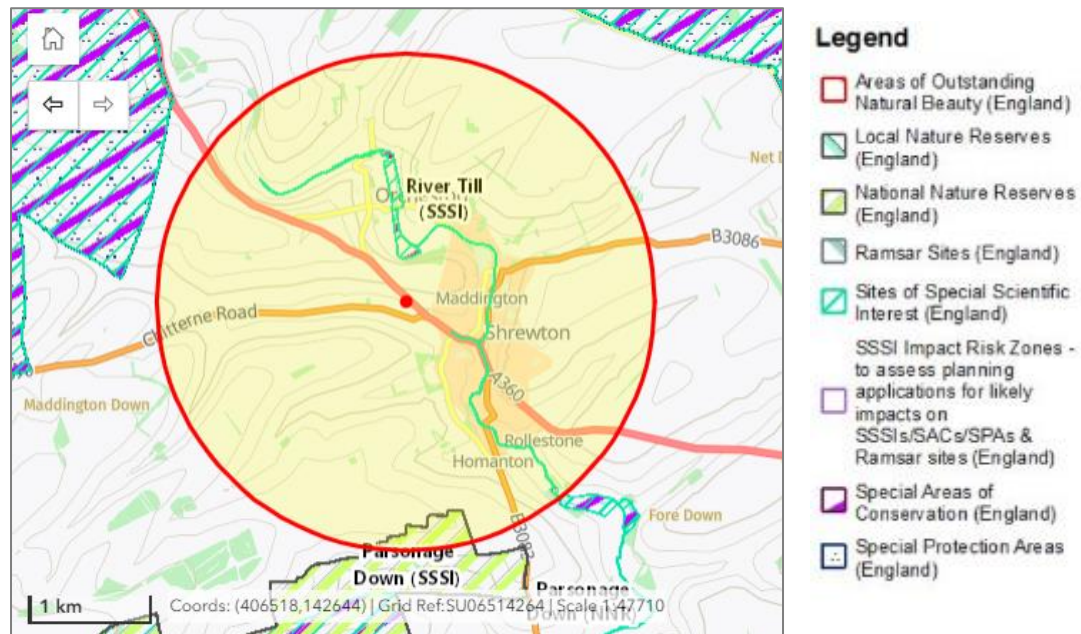
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JNCC (2026) <https://sac.jncc.gov.uk/site/UK0013016> Accessed February 2026

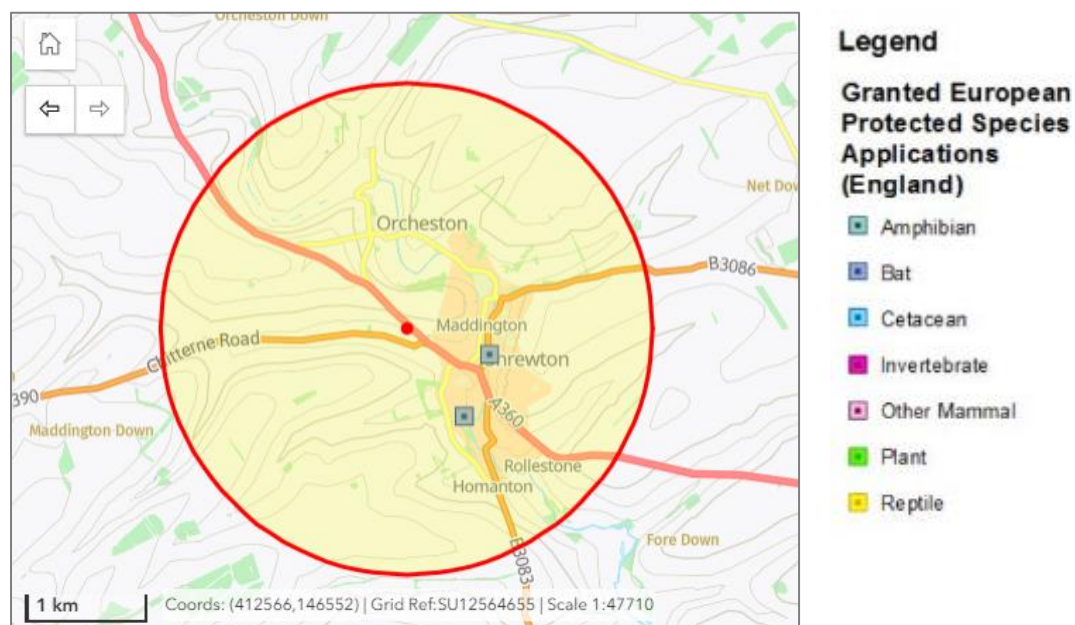
Multi-Agency Geographical Information for the Countryside (MAGIC),
<http://magic.defra.gov.uk>
accessed February 2026

Appendix 1. Desk Top Search Maps

Designated Site Map (2km buffer) – magic.gov.uk



Granted European Protected Species Licences (2km buffer) – magic.gov.uk



Appendix 2. Sensitive Lighting Guidance

Bats and lighting

Artificial lighting is known to have significant impacts for slower-flying, rarer species, and even for fast-flying species, potentially affecting reproductive, foraging and roosting opportunities. On a population and ecosystem level, impacts may affect the overall genetic pool of bat species and their prey species (BCT, 2018).

Studies have shown that continuous lighting in the landscape, such as along roads or waterways, creates barriers which many bat species cannot cross, especially the slower-flying species (Fure, A. 2012), even at very low light levels. Lesser horseshoe bats have been shown to move their flight paths which link their roosts and foraging grounds to avoid artificial light installed on their usual commuting route. Significant impacts have been recorded from as low as 3.6 lux (Stone et al 2012). Furthermore, the average light level on hedgerows most regularly used by this species has been recorded at 0.45 lux (Stone et al 2009).

Another group of studies have shown that noctule, Leisler's bat, serotine and pipistrelle bats can congregate around white mercury streetlights (Rydell J et al 1993, Blake et al 1994) and white metal halide lamps (Stone et al 2015b) feeding on the insects attracted to the light, but this behaviour is not true for all bat species. The slower flying broad winged species such as long-eared bats, Myotis species (which include Brandt's bat, whiskered, Daubenton's bat, Natterer's bat and Bechstein's bat), barbastelle, and greater and lesser horseshoe bats generally avoid all street lights (Stone et al 2009, 2012, 2015a). Consequently, bat species less tolerant of light are put at a competitive disadvantage and are less able to forage successfully and efficiently. This can have a significant impact upon fitness and breeding success (BCT, 2018)

Mitigation and lighting design

Bat friendly lighting plans should firstly look to avoid lighting where possible and minimise lighting impacts by adopting the following measures:

- **Lighting curfews or use of PIR sensors.** Lighting curfews can be an effective way of avoiding impacts on bats. These curfews may involve either turning off lighting or dimming light units at specific times of the night, dimming units at key times of the year, providing the luminaire allows for this option via a control unit. Lighting to be triggered by PIR sensors can be expected to be illuminated only when required and for a low proportion of the overall time.
- **Consider no lighting solutions where possible.** Options such as white lining, good signage and LED cat's eyes, should be considered as preferable, especially within Zones 1 and 2. Reflective fittings may

help make use of headlights to provide any necessary illumination in some areas.

- **Use only high pressure sodium or warm white LED lamps where possible.** High pressure sodium and warm white LED lamps emit lower proportions of insect attracting UV light than mercury, metal halide lamps and white LED lighting. Generally lamps should have a lower proportion of white or blue wavelengths, with a colour temperature <4200 kelvin recommended (BCT, 2014).
- **Minimise the spread of light.** Light spread should be kept at or near horizontal in order to ensure that only the task area is lit. Flat cut-off lanterns or accessories should be used to shield or direct light to where it is required. Baffles, hoods, louvres and shields should be used where necessary to reduce light spill.
- **Consider the height of lighting column.** Whilst downward facing bollard lighting is often preferable, it should be noted that a lower mounting height does not automatically reduce impacts to bats as bollard lighting can often be designed to provide uplighting. Where bollard lighting is considered to be the most appropriate system, bollard spacing, or unit density should be kept to a minimum and units should be fitted with the appropriate hoods/deflectors to reduce uplighting. Column height should be carefully considered to balance task and mitigation measures.
- **Avoid reflective surfaces below lights.** The polarisation of light by shiny surfaces attracts insects increasing bat activity (BCT, 2012). Consequently, surface materials around lighting require consideration.

References

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