

# **Bat Preliminary Roost Assessment and Bird Survey**

## **Harwood Field Farm**

Castle Hill Road, Birtle, Rochdale

December 2023

Prepared for: Mr and Mrs Robinson

Report prepared by: Verity Webster BSc (Hons) MSc CEcol MCIEEM



## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- On 11<sup>th</sup> December 2023 a Preliminary Roost Assessment for bats and a bird survey was undertaken on a stable block at Harwood Field Farm, Castle Hill Road, Birtle, Rochdale.

### Bats

- The stable block is considered to have negligible suitability for bats. No further survey work is considered necessary.
- The proposals provide the opportunity to enhance the site for bats and recommendations for this have been made.

### Birds

- No evidence of birds nesting within the house was found during the survey. However, there is suitability for nesting birds in the walls, in particular small, passerine birds, and for this reason avoidance mitigation to avoid harm to nesting birds is proposed.

*Verity Webster*

Ecology and Protected Species Consultancy



## 1. Introduction

### 1.1 Application Site

- 1.1.1. This report details bat and bird survey work on a stable block at Harwood Field Farm, Castle Hill Road, Birtle, Rochdale, BL9 5UL. National grid reference SD 8256 1298.
- 1.1.2. Mr and Mrs Robinson commissioned Verity Webster Ltd to undertake the bat survey work to inform the planning application.

### 1.2 Objectives

- 1.2.1 The objectives of the Preliminary Roost Assessment are to determine:
- The suitability of the buildings on site to support a bat roost.
  - Whether bats are currently using the buildings, or have done in the past.
  - The potential status of any roost present.
  - How bats might be using the site and the potential species present.
  - The potential impacts of the proposals on any potential roost present or on bats using the site.
  - The requirement for further survey work and/or mitigation.
  - How any impacts might be avoided, mitigated and/or ameliorated, including advice on European Protected Species Mitigation (EPSM) application if required.
  - The potential for biodiversity net gain on site.
- 1.2.2 The format and content of this report follow that required by the European Protected Species Mitigation (EPSM) licence application where appropriate.

### 1.3 Proposals

- 1.3.1 The proposals comprise the demolition of part of the existing stable block and conversion and extension of part to form a 4 bed dwelling.

### 1.4 Ecologist

- 1.4.1 The Preliminary Roost Assessment was undertaken by Verity Webster. Verity is a licensed bat surveyor (Bat Survey Class Licence WML CL18 (Class 2) Registration number: 2015-13858-CLS-CLS).
- 1.4.2 Verity has worked as an ecological consultant since 2007. She has undertaken preliminary bat assessments and further bat emergence/activity surveys for a large variety of projects and schemes, producing the required impact assessment and subsequent mitigation schemes/method statements when necessary.



## 2. Site Location

- 2.0.1 The survey site lies within a rural area of Birtle, approximately 900m east of the M66 and 1.3km north of Rochdale Old Road (B6222). Open countryside surrounds the site comprising pasture and arable land divided by tree lines and hedgerows. There are scattered waterbodies including a reservoir approximately 90m to the north and ponds. Woodland is sparse in the immediate surrounds, but extensive woodland follows the Ashworth Valley approximately 800m to the northeast.
- 2.0.2 The landscape has moderate suitability for bats, with the open countryside providing good foraging habitat.

Figure 1: Ordnance survey map showing the location of the proposed development site.

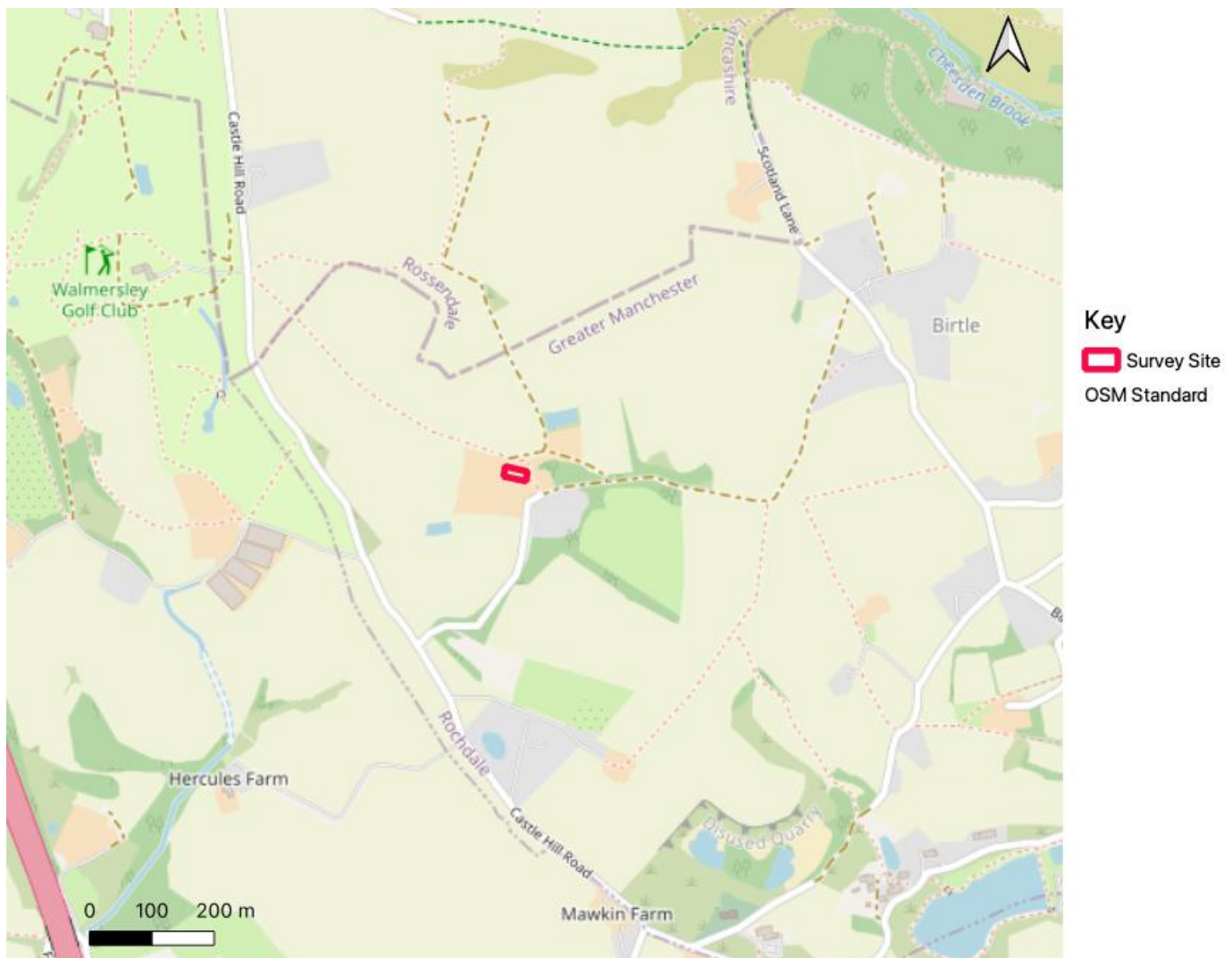




Figure 2: Aerial image showing the proposed development site and immediate surroundings





### 3. The Survey Site

- 3.0.1 The survey site comprises a stable block within a larger farm complex set within an area of hard standing. See Figure 3.

#### The Stable Block

- 3.0.2 The stable block is rectangular, oriented east to west. The eastern half is constructed of stone with wooden beams and a part-asbestos and part-corrugated metal roof which slopes gently down to the north. This eastern half is divided into two sections with breeze block. There are stables internally, constructed of breeze block. The space is open to the eaves. The western half is constructed of breeze block with metal clad upper walls and patches that are constructed from wooden slats. The space is open internally with integrated stables of brick and breeze block. The roof is corrugated metal.



*The south and west elevation of the stable block*



*The north elevation of the stable block*



Figure 3: The Survey Site within the larger farm complex





## 4. Legislation

Full details of relevant legislation and planning policy can be found in Appendix A.

### 4.1 UK and EU Legislation

#### 4.1.1 Key legislation regarding the protection of bats:

- Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended)
- The Countryside and Rights of Way Act (CROW), 2000
- The Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act (NERC, 2006)
- Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended)

#### 4.1.2 Under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 and the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2018, it is a criminal offence to:

- Deliberately capture, injure or kill a bat
- Intentionally or recklessly disturb a bat in its roost or deliberately disturb a group of bats
- Damage or destroy a bat roosting place (even if bats are not occupying the roost at the time)
- Possess or advertise/sell/exchange a bat (dead or alive) or any part of a bat
- Intentionally or recklessly obstruct access to a bat roost.

### 4.2 Planning Policy and Legislation

#### 4.2.1 Under the NERC Act 2006, planning authorities are obliged to make sure that they have all the information on the presence of protected species on site before they make a decision on the planning permission.

#### 4.2.2 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF, 2021) encourages Local Planning Authorities to conserve and enhance biodiversity.

Chapter 15, Para 174 of NPPF states: *"The planning system should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by:*

a) ***protecting and enhancing valued landscapes, sites of biodiversity or geological value and soils...***

d) ***minimising impacts on and providing net gains for biodiversity, including by establishing coherent ecological networks that are more resilient to current and future pressures"***.

#### 4.2.3 Para 179 states: *"Plans should: distinguish between the hierarchy of international, national and locally designated sites; allocate land with the least environmental or amenity value, where consistent with other policies in this Framework; take a strategic approach to maintaining and enhancing networks of habitats and green infrastructure; and plan for the enhancement of natural capital at a catchment or landscape scale across local authority boundaries."*

#### 4.2.4 Para 180 identifies that plans should do the following to protect and enhance biodiversity and geodiversity:



- a) ***“Identify, map and safeguard components of local wildlife-rich habitats and wider ecological networks, including the hierarchy of international, national and locally designated sites of importance for biodiversity; wildlife corridors and stepping stones that connect them; and areas identified by national and local partnerships for habitat management, enhancement, restoration or creation; and***
  - b) ***Promote the conservation, restoration and enhancement of priority habitats, ecological networks and the protection and recovery of priority species; and identify and peruse opportunities for securing measurable net gains for biodiversity.”***
- 4.2.5 Para 175 states that *“when determining planning applications, local authorities should apply the following principles:*
- a) ***if significant harm to biodiversity from a development cannot be avoided...,adequately mitigated, or, as a last resort compensated for, then planning permission should be refused”***
- 4.2.6 The local planning authority has a responsibility, therefore, to obtain all information regarding the potential for protected species on a site prior to making a decision about a proposal.



## 5. Survey Methodology

- 5.0.1 The Preliminary Roost Assessment was undertaken in accordance with currently accepted guidance: Collins, J. (ed.) (2023) Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines (4th Edn). The Bat Conservation Trust, London.

### 5.1 Desk Study

- 5.1.1 Data sources used to establish background information about bats and their likely presence in the locality:
- Magic Map, Natural England (2023)
  - Bing Maps (2023)
- 5.1.2 Satellite mapping, Ordnance survey, road map, habitat and designated site data from Magic Map (Natural England, 2014) was used to assess the value of the surrounding habitat for bats in the area at a landscape scale (5km), including any potentially important habitat corridors (linear habitat features), feeding grounds or potential roost opportunities, such as large expanses of woodland. The features and habitats immediately surrounding the site (local area) were also assessed at a finer scale as these influence the likely presence of bats within the survey site.

### 5.2 Preliminary Roost Assessment

- 5.2.1 As part of the daytime bat walkover a preliminary Roost Assessment, that is an internal and external inspection of the structure on site was undertaken during daylight to determine the suitability for bats and establish, if possible, whether bats are using the structures or have been in the past. This work was undertaken following the latest good practice guidance (Collins, 2023).
- 5.2.2 The stable block was 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.
- 5.2.3 As a result of the external preliminary roost assessment, the structure on site was characterised as having 'none', 'negligible', 'low', 'medium' or 'high' suitability for bats. It may also be possible to confirm the presence of a roost.
- 5.2.4 Buildings or structures typically characterised as having suitability at the following levels:
- **None:** No habitat features on site likely to be used by any roosting bats at any time of year.
  - **Negligible suitability:** No obvious habitat features likely to be used by roosting bats. Modern or newly-built well-sealed structures may fall into this category. Structures that are metal clad with metal internal beams might have negligible potential if there are no favourable roosting spaces. Structures may also be unfavourable due to the level of disrepair, being subject to poor weather conditions.



- **Low suitability:** Structures will have sub-optimal roost features with limited potential for roosting bats. Features may be used by single bats opportunistically, but do not provide enough space, shelter, protection, appropriate conditions and/or suitable surrounding habitat to be used on a regular basis by large numbers of bats.
- **Medium suitability:** Structures may have a few features with potential for bats, that provide enough space, shelter, protection and other suitable conditions, or several features with limited potential for bats. It may also be that a potentially suitable structure is situated in an area with habitat that has an only low potential for foraging and commuting bats.
- **High suitability:** Structures support at least one or more features that provide opportunities for roosting bats such that they might be used regularly, for longer periods by larger numbers of bats. These may be external features, such as lifted weatherboard or crevices in brick or stonework, or internal, such as large loft spaces with potential access. Barns, with open doorways and windows with wooden rafters and beams, may fall into this category. If a structure is close to good habitats, such as a waterway, marshland or woodland, this also increases the potential for roosting bats.
- **Confirmed roost presence:** It is evident as a result of signs from inspection, such as droppings, or sight of bats, that a roost exists within the building. It is not always possible to ascertain the presence or absence of a roost even if some signs, such as droppings or feeding remains are found.

### 5.3 Nesting Bird Assessment

- 5.3.1 An assessment of the suitability of the stable block to support nesting birds and to determine the presence/absence of nesting birds, including old bird nests was undertaken during the site visit.
- 5.3.2 Holes and crevices suitable for hole-nesting species were noted and inspected where possible. The structure and the surroundings were searched for evidence of nesting including nest material, feathers and old fragments of egg shells.

## 6. Survey Limitations

- 6.0.1 The survey was undertaken in daylight in December. At this time of year bats will be accommodating hibernation sites and the stable block does not provide a suitable hibernation site. Evidence of bats on the exterior of a building is unlikely to be present as it is likely to have been washed away by the weather. However, evidence of use of the interior of a building by bats over the previous seasons is likely to be present where signs (such as droppings and feeding remains) are protected from the elements.
- 6.0.2 Data from the local biological records centre of known bat roosts and bats recorded in the area was not obtained to inform this assessment. The inspection alone is considered sufficient to inform any necessary requirements for further survey work and/or mitigation.



## 7. Findings: Preliminary Roost Assessment

### 7.1 Suitability of the Locality for Bats

- 7.1.1 At a landscape level, the area surrounding the survey site is good for bats. Refer to Figure 2.
- 7.1.2 Open countryside surrounds the survey site. The habitat, including grassland, hedgerows, small plots of woodland and scattered waterbodies is likely to support a variety of bat species such as the widespread common and soprano pipistrelle bat (*Pipistrellus pipistrellus* and *Pipistrellus pygmaeus* respectively). Species that favour open habitats such as Leisler's (*Nyctalus leisleri*) and noctule bat (*Nyctalus noctula*) are also expected. Woodland is patchy so species that favour woodland, including Natterer's bat (*Myotis nattereri*), whiskered bat (*Myotis mystacinus*) and Brandt's bat (*Myotis brandtii*) are less likely to be present in abundance.

### 7.2 Bat Conservation Status

#### *The Conservation Status of Bats in the Area*

- 7.2.1 The conservation status of bats in the area is shown in Table 1.

**Table 1:** *The Conservation Status of Bats in the area at a Local, County and Regional Level*

| <b>Species</b>                 | <b>Local</b>                                                                                                           | <b>County</b>                                                                                                    | <b>Regional</b>                                                        |
|--------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <i>Common pipistrelle</i>      | <i>Likely to be common in the area. There are records of this species in the area (10km).</i>                          | <i>Common and widespread Frequently recorded.</i>                                                                | <i>Common and widespread Frequently recorded across the Northwest</i>  |
| <i>Soprano pipistrelle</i>     | <i>Likely to be present due to the presence of riparian habitat.</i>                                                   | <i>Widespread. Frequently recorded.</i>                                                                          | <i>Common and widespread Frequently recorded across the Northwest</i>  |
| <i>Nathusius's pipistrelle</i> | <i>Likely to be rare in the area.</i>                                                                                  | <i>Infrequently recorded, but this may be due to low survey effort. Not yet recorded breeding in the county.</i> | <i>Rare across the northwest. A migratory species.</i>                 |
| <i>Brown long-eared bat</i>    | <i>Likely to be in the area. There is a recent record of this species within 10km of the site.</i>                     | <i>Common and widespread Frequently recorded.</i>                                                                | <i>Common and widespread Frequently recorded across the Northwest.</i> |
| <i>Natterer's bat</i>          | <i>Likely to be in the area, although this species favours woodland habitat, which is infrequent in the landscape.</i> | <i>Scattered distribution in the county.</i>                                                                     | <i>Widespread and scattered across the Northwest.</i>                  |
| <i>Noctule</i>                 | <i>Present</i>                                                                                                         | <i>Widespread and frequently recorded.</i>                                                                       | <i>Common and widespread. Frequently recorded in the Northwest.</i>    |
| <i>Whiskered bat</i>           | <i>Present but likely rare</i>                                                                                         | <i>Present</i>                                                                                                   | <i>Widespread.</i>                                                     |
| <i>Brandt's bat</i>            | <i>Rare / absent</i>                                                                                                   | <i>Present</i>                                                                                                   | <i>Widespread.</i>                                                     |



|                       |                                                                                                                               |                                                    |                                                                                     |
|-----------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <i>Alcathoe's bat</i> | <i>Unknown</i>                                                                                                                | <i>Unknown</i>                                     | <i>Widespread. Likely under-recorded.</i>                                           |
| <i>Daubenton's</i>    | <i>Presence is likely due to the riparian habitat present.</i>                                                                | <i>Widespread, frequently recorded near water.</i> | <i>Widespread</i>                                                                   |
| <i>Serotine</i>       | <i>Rare / absent</i>                                                                                                          | <i>Unknown</i>                                     | <i>Restricted to south and southwest Britain, rarely recorded in the northwest.</i> |
| <i>Leislars</i>       | <i>Rare</i>                                                                                                                   | <i>Unknown</i>                                     | <i>Rare, but widespread in Britain. Present in the northwest.</i>                   |
| <i>Barbastelle</i>    | <i>Unlikely to be present in the area. This species is a woodland-specialist and there is a lack of this habitat present.</i> | <i>Unknown</i>                                     | <i>Present south of a line from North Wales to the Wash.</i>                        |

## 7.2 Preliminary Roost Assessment

7.2.1 The building inspection and bat roost assessment was undertaken in daylight on 11<sup>th</sup> December 2023.

### The Stables

7.2.2 **The stables are considered to have negligible suitability for bats.**

7.2.3 Externally, the walls of the stables do not provide suitable roosting space for bats. The breeze block walls are well-sealed as are the stone walls. The cladding does have some gaps beneath it, but these are large and would be sub-optimal for bats.

7.2.4 There is easy access for bats through gaps in the wooden slats and through the doors. Internally the space is large and adequate to provide flight space for species such as brown long-eared bats, which often favour roosting in voids. The presence of horses also provides a benefit as the animals will provide heat and the dung a source of insects.

7.2.5 There are few potential roost features internally. The roof is single-skin, providing crevices only between the metal and the timbers and walls. There are a small number of holes in the stone walls internally at the eastern end,, but these are shallow. No evidence of bats was found internally or externally.

7.2.6 Overall, the structure is considered to have negligible suitability for roosting bats.



*The south elevation of the western end of the stable block*



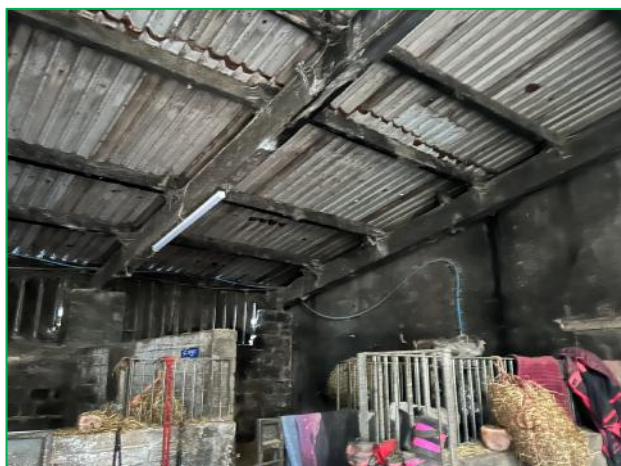
*The south elevation of the eastern end of the stable block*



*The internal space in the eastern half*



*One of a small number of holes in the internal wall in the eastern half*



*The internal space in the western half*



## 8. Findings: Bird Survey

- 8.0.1 There was no evidence of use of the stable block by nesting birds including owls and swallows. No disused bird nests were found.
- 8.0.2 However, due to the presence of crevices in the walls and ledges at the top of the walls and on beams, it is possible that small passerine birds may nest in external and internal features of the stable block in the spring or summer months. Avoidance mitigation is recommended to prevent potential harm and disturbance to nesting birds.

## 9. Appraisal

### Bats

- 8.0.1 The Preliminary Roost Assessment at Harwood Field Farm was undertaken to determine the suitability of the stable block for roosting bats and to determine the likely impact of the proposed works on bats.
- 8.0.2 No bats or signs of the presence of bats were found during the external and internal inspection of the stable block.
- 8.0.3 The stable block is considered to have negligible suitability for roosting bats due to the limited potential roost features of poor suitability.
- 8.0.4 The proposals are considered unlikely to have any impact upon bats or their roosts. No further survey work is considered necessary. However, because the risk of single itinerant bats cannot be entirely ruled out, precautionary methods of work are proposed during the demolition works.
- 9.0.1 The proposals provide the opportunity to enhance the site for bats long-term and recommendations for this have been made.

### Nesting Birds

- 9.0.2 The stable block has potential to support small nesting birds in the spring and summer months. For this reason, avoidance mitigation is recommended as a precaution.
- 9.0.3 The proposals provide the opportunity to maintain enhance the functionality site for nesting birds and recommendations for this have been made.



## 10. Mitigation and Enhancement Recommendations

### Bats

9.0.1 The stable block is considered to have negligible suitability for bats. However, due to the fact that the risk of single itinerant bats cannot be entirely ruled out, the following is recommended during demolition:

- Works to remove the cladding and roofing is undertaken by hand with care whilst checking the underside of materials where they cover beams and walls for bats.

9.0.2 If bats or evidence of bats (droppings) is found, an ecologist must be contacted for advice.

### Nesting Birds

10.0.1 To avoid harm to nesting birds, the following must be undertaken:

- Initial works to the stable block roof and walls should be undertaken outside the bird nesting season (nesting season March – September inclusive).
- If this is not possible a survey by a suitably experienced ecologist must be undertaken prior to the start of works to determine the presence or absence of nesting birds and to inform any necessary mitigation.

### Enhancement

9.0.3 The proposals provide the opportunity to enhance the site for bats and nesting birds.

9.0.4 It is recommended that:

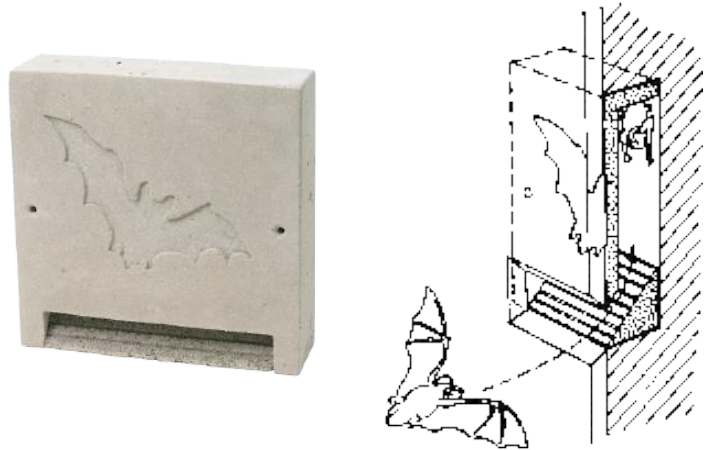
- At least three crevice-roost sites for roosting bats are integrated into the newly converted dwelling.
- These could be in the form of bat roost slates, to allow bats to enter a space in the roof, between the slates and the lining. See Appendix B. However, it is imperative that bitumen roofing felt (not breathable roofing membrane) is used beneath these spaces as bats get caught in the fibre of breathable roofing membrane.
- Alternatively, bat boxes could be attached externally to the building, or integrated into the stonework – see the examples below. There are many alternatives at NHBS.com.
- At least three bird boxes are integrated into the newly converted dwelling. The boxes shown below can be used, but alternatives are available at NHBS.com



## Bat Boxes

### *1FE Schwegler bat access panel*

This box is durable and does not require cleaning.



### *Ibstock Enclosed Bat Box 'C'*

This box is durable and does not require cleaning.

### *Beaumaris Woodstone Bat Box*

This box is durable and does not require cleaning.

All bat boxes are available from NHBS Ltd





## Bird Boxes



*Vivara Pro WoodStone  
House Sparrow Nest Box*



*Vivara Pro Seville  
WoodStone Nest Box with  
both 32mm holes and  
28mm holes, allowing for  
use by different species.*

## 11. References

- BING maps (2023) <http://www.bing.com/mapspreview>
- Collins, J. (ed.) (2023) Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines (4th edition). The Bat Conservation Trust, London. ISBN-978-1-7395126-0-6
- Google maps (Accessed 2023) <https://www.google.co.uk/maps>
- MAGIC Map (Accessed 2023) <http://www.magic.gov.uk/MagicMap.aspx>. DEFRA.



## • APPENDIX A: Wildlife Legislation and Planning Policy

### UK AND EU LEGISLATION

#### 11.1. KEY LEGISLATION

11.1.1. Key legislation regarding the protection of bats:

- Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended)
- The Countryside and Rights of Way Act (CROW), 2000
- The Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act (NERC, 2006)
- Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended)

#### 11.2. WILDLIFE AND COUNTRYSIDE ACT 1981 (AS AMENDED)

11.2.1. The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 is UK legislation.

11.2.2. Bats are listed on Schedule 5 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act (WCA) 1981. Under Section 9 of this legislation it is an offence to:

- Kill, injure or take a bat.
- Possess, a live or dead bat.
- Intentionally or recklessly damage or destroy any structure or place which any bat uses as shelter or protection.
- Intentionally or recklessly disturb a bat whilst it is occupying a structure or place which it uses for shelter or protection.
- Intentionally or recklessly obstruct access to any structure or place which a bat uses as shelter or protection.
- Sell, offer or expose for sale any live or dead bat.

#### 11.3. COUNTRYSIDE AND RIGHTS OF WAY ACT 2000

11.3.1. Schedule 12 of the Countryside and Rights of Way (CROW) Act 2000, amended by the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 by removing the need to prove intent to damage a roost / harm (etc) a bat or other species listed on Schedule 1 by adding the words 'or recklessly' after 'intentionally' into the wording in Section 9 of the WCA 1981. The CROW act also strengthened the penalties for offences to bats and other species listed on Schedule 5.

#### 11.4. CONSERVATION OF HABITATS AND SPECIES REGULATIONS 2017 (AS AMENDED)

11.4.1. The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended) consolidate all the various amendments made to the Conservation (Natural Habitats, &c.) Regulations 1994 in respect of England and Wales.

11.4.2. The 1994 Regulations transposed Council Directive 92/43/EEC on the conservation of natural habitats and of wild fauna and flora (EC Habitats Directive) into national law. The regulations came into force on 30 October 1994.

11.4.3. The Regulations provide for the designation and protection of European Sites and European Protected Species, including bats.



11.4.4. Under the Regulations, competent authorities (ie any government department or public body) have a general duty, in the exercise of any of their functions, to have regard to the EC Habitats Directive.

11.4.5. With regard to European Protected Species (including bats), the Regulations make it an offence to:

- Deliberately capture;
- Kill;
- Disturb or;
- Trade in animals listed in Schedule 2, which include all UK bat species.

### 11.5. European Protected Species (EPS) Licenses and the Three Tests

11.5.1. These actions can be made lawful through the granting of licenses by the appropriate authorities. Licenses may be granted for a number of purposes (such as science and education, conservation, preserve public health and safety). For such a licence to be granted the appropriate authority would have to be satisfied that an application has met the three tests, which are:

- 1)- The licence may be granted "to preserve public health or public safety or for reasons of overriding public interest, including those of a social or economic nature and beneficial consequences or primary importance for the environment"
- 2)- There must be "no satisfactory alternative"
- 3)- The proposal "will not be detrimental to the maintenance of the species at a favourable conservation status in its natural range"

### 11.6. NATURAL ENVIRONMENT AND RURAL COMMUNITIES (NERC) ACT 2006 (PLANNING SYSTEM)

#### Planning Authorities: A Duty to Conserve Biodiversity

11.6.1. Under this legislation, planning authorities are obliged to make sure that they have all the information on the presence of protected species on site *before* they make a decision on the planning permission.

11.6.2. Part 2, Section 40 confers on the planning authorities a duty to conserve biodiversity and states:

*"Every public authority must, in exercising its functions, have regard, so far as is consistent with the proper exercise of those functions, to the purpose of biodiversity"*

#### Species of Principal Importance

11.6.3. Part 3, Section 41 requires the Secretary of State to "*publish a list of the living organisms and types of habitat which in the Secretary of State's opinion are of **principle importance** for the purpose of conserving biodiversity*".

11.6.4. This requirement leads to production of a list of species and habitats of Principal Importance. This list includes all UK bats.



## PLANNING POLICY

### 11.7. NATIONAL PLANNING POLICY FRAMEWORK

11.7.1. Under the NERC Act 2006, planning authorities are obliged to make sure that they have all the information on the presence of protected species on site before they make a decision on the planning permission.

11.7.2. The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF, 2021) encourages Local Planning Authorities to conserve and enhance biodiversity.

Chapter 15, Para 174 of NPPF states: *"The planning system should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by:*

- b) **protecting and enhancing valued landscapes, sites of biodiversity or geological value and soils....***
- e) **minimising impacts on and providing net gains for biodiversity, including by establishing coherent ecological networks that are more resilient to current and future pressures"**.*

11.7.3. Para 179 states: *"Plans should: distinguish between the hierarchy of international, national and locally designated sites; allocate land with the least environmental or amenity value, where consistent with other policies in this Framework; take a strategic approach to maintaining and enhancing networks of habitats and green infrastructure; and plan for the enhancement of natural capital at a catchment or landscape scale across local authority boundaries."*

11.7.4. Para 180 identifies that plans should do the following to protect and enhance biodiversity and geodiversity:

- c) **"Identify, map and safeguard components of local wildlife-rich habitats and wider ecological networks, including the hierarchy of international, national and locally designated sites of importance for biodiversity; wildlife corridors and stepping stones that connect them; and areas identified by national and local partnerships for habitat management, enhancement, restoration or creation; and***
- d) **Promote the conservation, restoration and enhancement of priority habitats, ecological networks and the protection and recovery of priority species; and identify and peruse opportunities for securing measurable net gains for biodiversity."***

11.7.5. Para 175 states that *"when determining planning applications, local authorities should apply the following principles:*



***b) if significant harm to biodiversity from a development cannot be avoided...,adequately mitigated, or, as a last resort compensated for, then planning permission should be refused”***

11.7.6. The local planning authority has a responsibility, therefore, to obtain all information regarding the potential for protected species on a site prior to making a decision about a proposal.

#### **11.8. ODPM CIRCULAR 06/2005: BIODIVERSITY AND GEOLOGICAL CONSERVATION**

11.8.1. This document, to be read in conjunction with NPPF provides administrative guidance on the application of the law relating to planning and nature conservation as it applies in England. It makes it clear that it is the intention of the government that local authorities and developers consider protected species at the earliest possible stage in the planning process. Any planning application that is likely to affect protected species should come with details of the surveys which have been undertaken and should include, if necessary, recommendations for mitigation. Applications which do not include sufficient data should be rejected.



## • APPENDIX B: Bat Access Slate

