



Sheepy Parva Farm

Bat Report

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1.0 Introduction

Background / Site Context

- 1.1 Alca Ecology were commissioned to undertake a Preliminary Roost Assessment (PRA) at a site located at Sheepy Parva Farm (central grid ref: SK 33268 01481) hereafter referred to as 'the site'. As onsite buildings were assessed as being of low potential to support roosting bats, a single nocturnal emergence survey was undertaken.
- 1.2 The site consists of four former agricultural buildings currently being partially used as storage. The site is within a rural setting and surrounded by arable fields.
- 1.3 Proposals for the site include the renovation of the buildings into living accommodation.

Legislation / Context

- 1.4 All bats and their roosts are afforded legal protection under the Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) and the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended) which implements the EC Directive 92/43/EEC (the Habitats Directive). The purpose of the legislation is to maintain and restore protected species to a situation where their populations are favourable.
- 1.5 Under Regulation 43 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended) it is an offence to deliberately capture, injure or kill; deliberately disturb (including intentionally or recklessly) all UK bat species. This includes disturbance which impairs their ability to: breed and rear young; migrate; and hibernate; or affects their local distribution and abundance.
- 1.6 Four bat species: barbastelle *Barbastella barbastellus*, greater horseshoe bat *Rhinolophus ferrumequinum*, lesser horseshoe bat *Rhinolophus hipposideros*, and Bechstein's bat *Myotis bechsteinii* are additionally listed in Annex II of the Habitats Directive, which requires sites to be designated in member states for their protection.
- 1.7 Under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) it is illegal to:
 - Recklessly or intentionally kill, injure or take any wild animals included in Schedule 5;
 - Recklessly or intentionally damage or destroy, or obstruct access to any structure or place which any wild animal included in Schedule 5 uses for shelter or protection; and/or
 - Recklessly or intentionally disturb any such animal while it is occupying a structure or place which it uses for shelter or protection.
- 1.8 Foraging habitat and commuting routes used by bats are not protected as such, though impacts that could prevent bats from using a resource or commuting to or from a valued roosting site may

be considered as an indirect impact on a roost or a significant disturbance effect and would therefore also need to be avoided or prevented.

- 1.9 Seven bat species are listed as species of principal importance for the purpose of conserving biodiversity under the Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006: barbastelle, greater horseshoe bat, lesser horseshoe bat, Bechstein's bat, noctule *Nyctalus noctula*, soprano pipistrelle *Pipistrellus pygmaeus* and brown long-eared bat *Plecotus auritus*.
- 1.10 Bats are recognised in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)¹ which advises that when determining planning applications, Local Planning Authorities should aim to conserve and enhance biodiversity by applying a set of principles including:
 - “If significant harm resulting from a development cannot be avoided ... adequately mitigated, or, as a last resort, compensated for, then planning permission should be refused;
 - development whose primary objective is to conserve or enhance biodiversity should be supported; while opportunities to incorporate biodiversity improvements in and around developments should be encouraged, especially where this can secure measurable net gains for biodiversity.”

¹ Department for Communities and Local Government. 2019. National Planning Policy Framework. Available from: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-planning-policy-framework--2>

2.0 Methodology

Desk Study

- 2.1 A consultation exercise was undertaken whereby baseline ecological information from the last 20 years was collected and analysed. Details of granted European Protected Species (EPS) licences and nearby bat records were collected from the local ecological records centre (Leicestershire and Rutland Environmental Records Centre (LRERC)) and Natural England (via the Multi Agency Geographic Information for the Countryside (MAGIC) website²).
- 2.2 The search radius for designated sites was related to the type of site and any potential zones of influence. The following search areas were used:
- 10km from the application area for sites of International Importance (e.g. Special Areas of Conservation (SAC), Special Protection Areas (SPA), Ramsar sites);
 - 2km for sites of National or Regional Importance (e.g. Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) and National Nature Reserves (NNR)), EPS licences and bat species records; and
 - 1km for statutory sites of Local Importance (e.g. Local Nature Reserves (LNR)), non-statutory sites of County or Local Importance (e.g., Local Wildlife Sites (LWS)).

Preliminary Roost Assessment

- 2.3 An external and internal building assessment was carried out on all buildings on the 22nd July 2026, by a licenced ecologist (Level 2 bat survey licence CL18: 2025-85425-CL18-BAT). The assessment was completed considering the guidance provided in chapters 4 and 5 of the Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists, Good Practice Guidelines, 2023³.

External Building Assessment

- 2.4 The exterior of the building was visually assessed for potential access points and evidence of bat activity. Features such as small gaps under barge / soffit / fascia boards, raised or missing ridge tiles and gaps at gable ends were sought, as these have potential to be used as access points. In addition, structural features were noted that could provide suitable hibernation potential. Evidence that bats actively used potential access points includes staining within gaps and bat droppings or urine staining under gaps. A note was made wherever these were present. Where they could be safely accessed, crevices were inspected for the presence of bats or their signs using torches, mirrors and endoscopes.

² <https://magic.defra.gov.uk/>

³ Collins, J. (ed.) 2023. *Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines (4th edition)*. The Bat Conservation Trust.

Internal Assessment

- 2.5 The interior of the buildings, including all accessible roof voids, were also visually assessed with the aid of an endoscope, mirrors and torches to identify potential or actual bat access points and roosting places and for evidence of current or past bat roosts. Definitive evidence of a bat roost was determined by the presence of:
- Dead or live bat(s); and/or
 - Droppings.
- 2.6 Other less definitive signs were also sought as indicators of potential roosting bats, these included:
- Urine staining;
 - Fur-oil staining;
 - Feeding remains such as moth wing fragments;
 - Audible calls;
 - Bat-fly (Nycteribiid) pupal cases; or
 - Odour.
- 2.7 The absence of any of the above evidence was not considered to be definitive evidence that no roosts were present as bats may leave no visible sign of their presence particularly where they occupy inaccessible or hidden spaces within a building.
- 2.8 Subsequently, the buildings (or where relevant, sections of) were categorised according to their suitability to support roosting bats and whether they provide classic or non-classic hibernation potential or not. These were classified according to the features present within the buildings (see Table 1).

Potential Bat Roosting Suitability

- 2.9 Following the internal and external assessment, the building was assigned a category according to its roosting suitability which is based on Tables 4.1 and 7.1 of the BCT Guidelines. This potential suitability is used to indicate the likely requirements for any further surveys to determine the presence or absence of roosting bats.

Table 1: Building Bat Roost Habitat Classifications (Based on Tables 4.1 And 7.1 BCT Guidelines)

Roost Suitability	Description of Roosting Habitats	Further Survey Requirements to Provide Confidence in the Likely Absence of Roosting Bats Within a Structure
None	No habitat features on site that are likely to be used by bats at any time of the year.	No further surveys or consideration of roosting bats is required.
Negligible	No obvious habitat features are present that are likely to be used by roosting bats, but features may be present where a bat could theoretically roost but it is considered very unlikely.	No further surveys are required, but some vigilance may be required if the feature is impacted.
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 classic hibernation roost).	Up to one single dusk emergence survey undertaken between May and August. (requirement is based on professional judgment). Precautionary method statement if works are to be undertaken during the winter period (where non-classic hibernation potential exists).
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).	Two separate dusk emergence surveys undertaken between May and September and at least one between May and August and spread at least 3 weeks apart. Precautionary method statement if works are to be undertaken during the winter period (where non classic hibernation potential exists).
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. These structures have the potential to support High conservation status roosts such as those used for maternity or hibernation (classic site).	Three separate dusk emergence surveys undertaken between May and September and at least two between May and August and spread at least 3 weeks apart. Where classic hibernation potential is present hibernation surveys should be undertaken during the winter period.
A classic hibernation site is considered to provide stable climatic conditions including temperature humidity, and light level such as, but not exclusively limited to underground structures which are subject to low levels of disturbance or species-specific habitual requirements such as where brown long-eared bats often use the same roosts for maternity and hibernation purposes. A non-classic hibernation site is a location which does conform to the criteria above but could be used by individual hibernating bats. It usually not possible to identify non-classic hibernation sites through surveys work.		

Nocturnal Bat Emergence Surveys

- 2.10 As the buildings were found to have low and negligible BRP during the PRA survey, one nocturnal bat emergence survey was proposed in accordance with best practice guidelines. The single nocturnal emergence survey was conducted on the 3rd August 2026.

- 2.11 During the emergence survey, four surveyors were positioned so that all aspects of the building with the potential to support bats could be observed, as shown in Figure 1. An additional unmanned IR camera was also used.
- 2.12 All surveys commenced at least 15 minutes prior to sunset, lasting for 120 minutes following sunset. The number and species of any bats observed emerging or entering the buildings was recorded. Any notable activity patterns including commuting and/or foraging within the vicinity of the building was also recorded.
- 2.13 Echo Meter Touch® (Wildlife Acoustics, Inc.) bat detectors were utilised in conjunction with the Echo Meter Touch® app. Where necessary to confirm species identification, bat calls were analysed using the Kaleidoscope Viewer© (Wildlife Acoustics, Inc.) software package.
- 2.14 All surveyors were equipped with night vision aids (NVAs) to enhance visibility of the survey area throughout the survey. NVAs were set to record for the duration of the survey. Where roosting bats were observed or uncertain behaviours observed, footage was extracted, analysed and saved. A still shot of the darkest point of the survey was also extracted and saved and are included in Appendix 2. NVAs used were 3x Pixfra ARC A613 and 2x Nightfox Whisker.
- 2.15 The survey was led by a licenced bat ecologist (Licence Reference Number: 2025-85425-CL18-BAT).
- 2.16 The nocturnal survey was conducted in appropriate conditions, i.e. ambient temperature exceeding 10°C at the start and little wind and no rain, details are provided in Table 2 below.

Table 2: Summary of Emergence Survey Dates and Conditions

Date	Start / Finish	Sunset	Weather Conditions
03.08.26	20:40 – 22:55	20:55	Clear, 40-10% cloud, no rain, 23-20 °C

3.0 Results / Conclusion

Desk Study

- 3.1 During the desk study, no designated sites were recorded within the search area that were designated due to assemblages of bats. No EPS licences relating to bats were recorded within 2km of the site.
- 3.2 A total of 19 bat records were returned during the desk study. These mostly included species recorded using detectors while on transect surveys / nocturnal emergence surveys etc. Species records returned from within 2km include:
- Brown long-eared bat
 - Common pipistrelle *Pipistrellus pipistrellus*
 - Unidentified bat species
 - Unidentified *Pipistrellus* species
- 3.3 The nearest bat records were recorded onsite during previous nocturnal survey work on the adjacent farm building in 2009. Previous survey work was carried out on the main house adjacent to the site during previous survey work to support planning proposals. A single brown long-eared bat was recorded emerging from under the ridge tiles of the building.

Preliminary Roost Assessment (PRA)

- 3.4 The buildings at Sheepy Parva Farm were surveyed on 22nd July 2026 and were assessed individually as Buildings B1, B2, B3 and B4.
- 3.5 Building B1 comprised a traditional brick-built agricultural barn forming part of a larger range of agricultural buildings. The walls were predominantly constructed of solid brickwork, with several openings, including former doors and windows, boarded over with timber at the time of the survey. The building had a pitched clay-tiled roof and was in a state of disrepair, with several lifted and missing clay tiles creating gaps that provided access into the building.
- 3.6 Internally, the roof was unlined and no roof void was present. The roof structure comprised timber beams and purlins, with supporting posts arranged in a king-post configuration. Potential roosting features included lifted clay tiles, which could provide suitable crevice-roosting opportunities for bat species. However, as the roof was unlined, bats would have limited opportunities to move within the building should conditions beneath an occupied tile become unsuitable. Building B4 was of similar construction, with both buildings considered to have **low potential for roosting bats**, primarily due to the presence of lifted roof tiles providing potential roosting opportunities.

- 3.7 Building B2 comprised a brick-built structure of similar construction to Buildings B1 and B4; however, the roof had been removed by the time of the survey (pre-1999 based on aerial imagery). No crevices or other features considered suitable for roosting bats were identified. At the time of the survey, the building was substantially overgrown with vegetation, including established plants and trees. Building B2 was therefore assessed as having **negligible potential for roosting bats**.
- 3.8 Building B3 comprised a brick-built ancillary structure with a corrugated composite roof supported by timber beams arranged in a king-post configuration. The southeastern elevation was open, with no doors or walls present. As a result, the building did not provide suitable enclosed roosting features, with exposure to fluctuating weather conditions considered unsuitable for a bat roost. Building B3 was therefore assessed as having **negligible potential for roosting bats**.
- 3.9 No evidence of bats, including signs of roosting or feeding activity, was identified within any of the buildings during the internal survey.

Nocturnal Emergence Survey (03.08.26)

- 3.10 The survey commenced at 20:40 with the first bat recorded at 21:12 which was a foraging common pipistrelle. Other bat activity recorded included noctule and soprano pipistrelle foraging throughout the survey, as well as two brown long eared passes.
- 3.11 During the survey, no bats were observed emerging or entering the building, and therefore the proposed works can be carried out without any further mitigation.
- 3.12 If bats are found during any stage of works, works should cease immediately and a suitably experienced ecologist should be contacted.

Nesting Birds

- 3.13 No evidence of nesting birds was recorded during the surveys.
- 3.14 When nesting, all wild birds are protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended). This includes the intentional or reckless destruction of nests from the nest-building phase through to when all chicks have fully fledged the nest. This also includes any disturbance that leads to nest desertion. Bird breeding habitat is present in the form of the small trees.
- 3.15 If any active nests are found to be present, the nest will have to be buffered and left until all chicks have fledged.
- 3.16 Breeding birds are not considered a constraint to development.

Appendix 1: Building PRA Photographs



Plate 1: Building B1



Plate 2: Building B2



Plate 3: Building B2



Plate 4: Internal view of building B3



Plate 5: Building B4 and B3 gables



Plate 6: Building 4 internal



Plate 7: Building B1 internal



Plate 8: Building B1 internal

Appendix 2: Emergence Survey NVA Darkest Point Photographs



Surveyor Location 1



Surveyor Location 3



Surveyor Location 5



Surveyor Location 2



Surveyor Location 4



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Key

- Surveyor Locations
- Unmanned IR Camera

Buildings

- Low Potential
- Negligible Potential

client
Craig Miller

project name
Sheepy Parva Farm

title
Nocturnal Emergence Survey Plan

title
FIGURE 1



date
20/08/26

drawn by
BRJ

scale
1:250 @ A3

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