



Preliminary Roost Assessment

Report Release Sheet

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Executive Summary

- Midnorth Ecology Ltd was appointed to produce a Preliminary Roost Assessment (PRA) of a barn structure at Holly Lodge Farm, Sheepy Magna. The survey was conducted to ensure bats are safeguarded if the proposals to change the use of the structure from livery stables to commercial use are approved.
- A PRA was undertaken by William Parkinson BSc (Accredited Agent under bat licence 2019-43459-CLS-CLS) on 4th April 2025.
- The structure is a section of existing barn within the site which was previously used as a stable for livery. There are no alterations to the existing structure internally or externally proposed. The proposals may have negative impacts on bats if they are roosting within the structure due to increased lighting, human traffic and plant / vehicle movement.
- The section of structure is constructed of steel framework and corrugated tin sheeting panels which make up the walls. The roof is pitched and again constructed of tin metal sheets which are mostly tightly joint. There are areas where the building is half built with concrete blocks which extend internally which appeared to separate stock.
- There were features within the structure which offer potential to support roosting bats although this potential was limited to sub optimal features. Considering this the structure was considered to have low potential to support roosting bats.
- At least one nocturnal survey is therefore required to ascertain if bats are using the features for roosting and to ascertain the likely absence/presence of bats in accordance with the latest guidelines..

1. Introduction

- 1.1 Midnorth Ecology Ltd were commissioned by the client to undertake a Preliminary Roost Assessment (PRA) of a structure of land at Holly Lodge Farm, Sheepy Magna, Atherstone, Leicestershire (SK 32543 01857). This appraisal considers the baseline ecology conditions within the site boundary (hereafter referred to as 'the site') to support a planning application for the change of use of the structure from livery stable to commercial use..

Site Description

- 1.2 The site is located approximately 5km north of Atherstone town centre, in a rural setting, surrounded on all aspects by agricultural and semi natural habitats. Considering this, connectivity within the wider landscape is good for a range of notable and protected species.

Surrounding habitat

- 1.3 The site is located within a rural setting, with semi-natural and arable habitat dominating the surrounding area on all aspects. Habitats immediately adjacent to the site and within the wider landscape offer good potential foraging and commuting opportunities for bats.

Legislation

- 1.4 All bat species are legally protected under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations (Amendment) (EU Exit) 2019. All species of bat are also protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended). This legislation makes it an offence to:
- Deliberately kill, injure, or capture bats;
 - Deliberately disturb bats in such a way as to be likely to significantly affect: (i) the ability of any significant group of bats to survive, breed or rear or nurture their young; or (ii) the local distribution or abundance of bats;
 - Intentionally or recklessly disturb any bat whilst it is occupying a roost;
 - Damage or destroy bat roosts; and
 - Intentionally or recklessly obstruct access to a bat roost.
- 1.5 This legal protection means that where activities have the potential to impact on bats, the results of a bat survey and an appropriate mitigation strategy must be submitted to Natural England.

- 1.6 There are 17 breeding species of bat in the UK, seven of which are of Principal Importance for the conservation of biodiversity in England under Section 41 (S41) of the NERC Act 2006. There is a clear responsibility on local planning authorities to further their conservation.

Report Structure

- 1.7 Section 2 of the report provides details of the methodologies adopted and Section 3 provides an account of the survey results. Section 4 provides a discussion and recommendations regarding the results in relation to the proposed development and presents appropriate measures of best practice and mitigation where necessary.

2. Methodology

Desk Study

2.1 Data sources such as those in table 2.1 below were reviewed to provide information on the location of;

- Statutory designated sites such as - Special Areas of Conservation (SAC), Special Protection Areas (SPA), Ramsar sites, National Nature Reserves (NNR), Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) and Local Nature Reserves (LNR)
- Non-statutory designated sites – these are sites designated by local authorities such as - Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation (SNC) or Local Wildlife Sites (LWS).
- Legally protected species which include – species listed in the Wildlife and Countryside Act (WCA) 1981, Schedules 1, 5 and 8; Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations (Hab regs) 2017, particularly Schedule 2; or in the Protection of Badgers Act (PBA) 1992 (as amended).
- Species of Principal Importance (SPI) - are species which are defined in Section 41 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act, 2006.
- Habitats of Principal Importance are habitats which are defined in Section 41 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act, 2006..
- Other notable species such as Hedgehog and notable habitats such as Ancient Woodland Inventory sites and Important Hedgerows as defined by the Hedgerow Regulations 1997

Table 2.1 – desk study resources and reason

Resource	Reasoning
Google Earth	Google Earth was used to obtain aerial imagery of the site and to measure distances to surrounding ecological receptors.
Leicestershire County Council Local Plan 2021	The local plan was used to identify and inform descriptions on statutory designated sites.

Magic	MAGIC was used to locate non statutory designated sites and other information regarding important sites such as Ramsar, Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), Special Area of Conservation (SAC) and Special Protection Area (SPA), as well as Locations of European Protected Species Licenses.
OS mapping	OS mapping was used to distinguish any features such as woodlands, standing water, running water and surrounding landscape.

2.2

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2.3 An assessment was made of the potential of the building to support roosting bats based on professional judgement and the guidelines and scale presented in Table 1 below, adapted from the Good Practice Guidelines (Collins, 2023):

Table 1: Criteria for assessing bat roosting potential of structures

Suitability	Description
Confirmed Roost	Evidence of bat occupation found
High Roosting Potential	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 e.g. maternity or classic cool/stable hibernation site.
Moderate Roosting Potential	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
Low Roosting Potential	A structure with one or more potential roost sites that could be used by individual bats opportunistically at any time of the year. 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.

Negligible Roosting Potential	No obvious features on site likely to be used by roosting bats, however, a small element of uncertainty remains as bats can use small and apparently unsuitable features on occasion.
None	No habitat features on site likely to be used by any roosting bats at any time of year (i.e. a complete absence of crevices/suitable shelter at all ground/underground levels)

2.4 The aim of this PRA will be to ascertain the actual or potential presence of bats and/or potential entry and exit points. This will determine if further survey and/or mitigation is required.

2.5 A survey for the presence of potential access points and evidence of bats was conducted on the 04th of April 2025 by William Parkinson BSc (Accredited Agent under Natural England licence 2019-43459-CLS-CLS). This included viewing external and internal features of the structure with close-focusing binoculars and a high-powered torch.

2.6 The survey started with a systematic search of the external of the property, paying particular attention to any potential access points. Access points such as but not limited to could be gaps in fascia's, around lead flashing, hanging tiles, lifted roof tiles, window sills, doors and in brickwork/stonework.

2.7 Evidence which could suggest bats are using the structure for roosting include, urine splashes, droppings, fur-oil staining and live or dead specimens. However, although evidence is sometimes present, the lack of evidence present does not necessarily mean the absence of roosting bats as at times bats leave no trace of being there or the weather can wash away or deteriorate the evidence.

2.8 The survey methodology was undertaken following the Bat Conservation Trust's Good Practice Guidelines (Collins, 2023).

Limitations

2.9 As the structure was relatively tall (3m approximately) the top of the walls and roof could not be inspected thoroughly.

3. Results

Desk Study

3.1 There are two statutory designated sites (see table 3.1 below) within 5km of the application site, however none mention bats within their citation.

Table 3.1 – Designated sites within 5km of the application site

Site	Designation	Distance and location	Reason for designation
Sheepy Fields	SSSI	0.75 km NE	<i>Sheepy Fields comprise two hay meadows developed on soils derived from post-glacial river terrace deposits. It contains some of the best remaining examples of neutral grassland in Leicestershire. It is representative of hay meadow plant communities developed on neutral soils in the East Midlands.</i>
Birches Barn Meadows	SSSI	4.5 km W	<i>Birches Barn Meadows comprises two unimproved fields adjacent to the south bank of the River Anker. They have been managed as hay meadows since 1913. The meadows are on alluvium and overlie Keuper sandstone with ridge and furrow topography in part. Birches Barn Meadows are now the last remaining flood meadows in the Anker valley. The sward associated with the meadow foxtail-great burnet community characteristic of the site, is species-rich with a great diversity of herbs. Eighteen species of grass have been recorded. Two species of bird that breed in the meadows, the quail and curlew are restricted to few other localities in Warwickshire.</i>

- 3.2 The site is within one SSSI Impact Risk Zone; however, the application does not trigger the requirement to consult Natural England due to the nature of the proposed works.
- 3.3 There are no granted Natural England mitigation licences within 1km of the site shown on MAGIC. However, several are present within the wider landscape. These are generally of common species and the closest granted licence was over 3km from the site.
- 3.4 Habitats surrounding the site were considered to provide good potential for roosting, commuting and foraging. Habitats adjacent to the site and within the wider landscape comprised of various habitats such as wetlands, woodlands, scrub areas and grassland.
- 3.5 A description of the structure to be affected by the proposed works is provided below and a series of photographs of the property provided in Appendix 2.

Building description

- 3.6 The structure is a section of existing barn within the site which was previously used as a stable for livery. The site describes the section of the structure within the red line boundary only (see Appendix 1).
- 3.7 The structure is constructed of steel framework and corrugated tin sheeting panels which make up the walls. The roof is pitched and again constructed of tin metal sheets which are mostly tightly joint. There are areas where the building is half built with concrete blocks which extend internally which appeared to separate livestock.
- 3.8 Several access points were identified during the survey. These consisted of gaps at the top of the corrugated sheeting and where the sheets meet the blockwork. The doors were also not fitted tightly which created gaps. Access into the structure for bats therefore was deemed to be good.
- 3.9 Internally the structure was relatively open with good air flow. Potential roosting features were limited to timber framework which in places adjoined onto the corrugated metal sheets and provided gaps behind the corrugated sections. This

provided a potential roosting feature; however, the metal sheeting is not usually considered a suitable material as significant temperature fluctuations can occur within these features.

- 3.10 The blockwork which appeared to be used for separating livestock was approximately 1.5-2m in height and was in a fair state of repair. The brickwork offered limited potential for roosting bats and no significant features were recorded.

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- 3.11 There are several gaps around the timber framing where it has been secured onto the metal sheeting. These gaps potentially provide opportunistic bats day roosting opportunities and therefore the features have been considered as having low potential to support roosting bats.
- 3.12 The features present were also assessed for their suitability to support roosts of greater conservation value such as hibernation roosts and/or maternity roosts, but the features were deemed unsuitable to support these types of roosts.
- 3.13 The features have been considered to provide low potential to support bats with day or night roost opportunities and therefore further survey is required.

4. Discussion and Recommendations

- 4.1 If proposals proceed to completion the added human traffic, light and noise pollution and plant / vehicle movement could negatively impact on roosting bats (if present).
- 4.2 As there is the potential for bats to access the structure and opportunities available to roost within, further survey and/or mitigation is required to safeguard roosting bats.
- 4.3 The features present were not considered to have potential to support maternity or hibernation roosts as the materials can fluctuate in temperatures significantly whereas usually bats prefer constant temperatures particularly in hibernation and maternity roosts.
- 4.4 As the features are considered to have low potential for roosting bats one nocturnal survey is required which will consist of several experienced ecologists watching the structure during the bats active season to ascertain if bats are using the structure.
- 4.5 As per the latest guidelines each surveyor must complete the survey using an infra-red or thermal image camera and hand-held audio detectors. The survey must encompass all aspects of the structure and therefore will require at least three surveyors.
- 4.6 As the feature can be accessed easily it is also recommended that a camera is set up internally with an accompanying audio detector to gather further information about the potential roost features.
- 4.7 The results of the nocturnal survey will be used to ascertain if further survey is required and to inform an appropriate mitigation plan (if required).

5. References

Bat Conservation Trust and Institution of Lighting Professionals (2023) Guidance Note 08/23 Bats and Artificial Lighting at night.

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

Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (2023), National Planning Policy Framework.

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

Reason, P.F. and Wray, S. (2023). UK Bat Mitigation Guidelines: a guide to impact assessment, mitigation and compensation for developments affecting bats. Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management, Ampfield.

Appendix 1 – Site location

MNE_3476_Holly Lodge Farm_PRA_Red Line Boundary



25 0 25 50 75 100 m

A scale bar with alternating black and white segments, representing distances of 25, 0, 25, 50, 75, and 100 meters.

Legend

 MNE_3476_RLB

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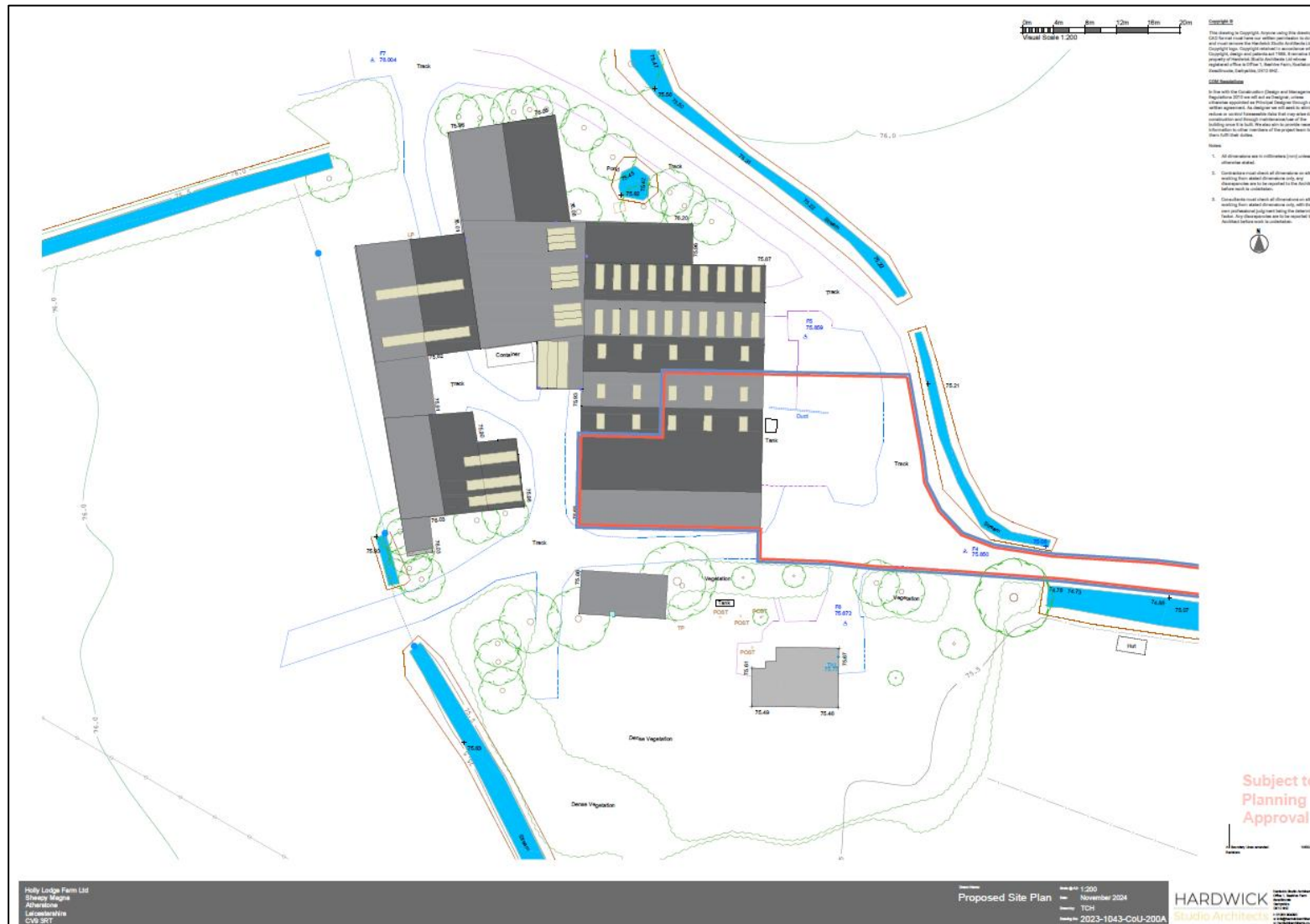
Date 15/04/2025

Description: Section of the structure to have change of use planning application applied. No internal or external alterations are being proposed.

Appendix 2 – Change of use proposals extent (Third-party site plans)



Appendix 3 – Change of use proposals extent (Third-party site plans) continued



Appendix 4 – Photographs

P1		P2		P3	
P4		P5		P6	

Appendix 5: Relevant Legislation

Important notice: The following information is only to be used as a guide and should not be used as a reference as a statement of legislation. The information is provided to give guidance on the legislation in the UK only and may not be applicable to certain areas outside of UK.

Bats

In the UK bats are fully protected by a number of laws and regulations which are defined in the following key legislative acts and regulations;

The Conservation of Species and Habitats Regulations 2017, protects all bat species in the UK as European protected species.

The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981, protects all bat species and their roosts in the UK.

The Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000, amends parts of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 for England and Wales.

Nature Conservation Act 2004, amends parts of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 for Scotland.

In the UK it is illegal to;

- *deliberately capture, injure or kill bats*
- *damage or destroy a breeding or resting place*
- *obstruct access to their resting or sheltering places*
- *possess, sell, control or transport live or dead bats, or parts of them*
- *intentionally or recklessly disturb a bat while it's in a structure or place of shelter or protection*

Nesting birds

In the UK birds are fully protected by 2 main laws and regulations which are defined in the following key legislative acts and regulations;

In the UK it is illegal to;

- *intentionally kill, injure or take wild birds*

- *intentionally take, damage or destroy a wild bird's nest while it's being used or built*
- *intentionally take or destroy a wild bird's egg*
- *possess, control or transport live or dead wild birds, or parts of them, or their eggs*
- *sell wild birds or put them on display for sale*
- *use prohibited methods to kill or take wild birds*

Some birds which have seen dramatic declines also have extra protection under Schedule 1 which makes it illegal to;

- *disturb them while they're nesting, building a nest, in or near a nest that contains their young*
- *disturb their dependent young*

Therefore, ecological surveys may be required to ascertain further information on what species are present on site and to provide data to give population estimates.

Ecological surveys can only be conducted in the target species optimal active periods, which vary between species and methodologies used.

If protected species are found throughout the survey's mitigation strategies and a licence from the statutory nature conservation body such as NE may be required.

