

Sensible Ecological Survey Solutions

The Ecology Consultancy that Makes Sense

Tel: 07759 534354

email: mail@sensibleecologicalsurveysolutions.co.uk

Web: www.sensibleecologicalsurveysolutions.co.uk

Address: SESS Ltd, 1 Red Gables, Pepper Street, Appleton Thorn, Warrington, WA4 4SB

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'SPRINGFIELD STABLES, GARNETTS LANE, TARBOCK GREEN, PRESCOT'

BUILDINGS PROTECTED SPECIES SURVEY & BUILDINGS APPRAISAL FOR BAT ROOST POTENTIAL REPORT 2024

[SURVEY REPEATED AND REPORT UPDATED 2025]

Introduction

Sensible Ecology Survey Solutions was first instructed in 2024 to complete a protected species survey of a stables building located at a site (Figure 1) referred to as: -

**"Springfields Stables, Garnetts Lane, Tarbock Green,
Prescot, L35 1 QN"**

The survey and assessment of risk to protected species was repeated in April 2025, the new breeding birds season having commenced.

This report presents the findings of standard 'External and Internal Protected Species Surveys' of the structure, supported by appraisals of the potential of the building to support roosting bats. The surveys also included an inspection and appraisal of any buildings, trees and other features present in close proximity to the target building.

The building is part occupied as an active stables concern. The other half of the structure (the half proposed for be demolished), is currently used for miscellaneous storage.

Demolition works could be harmful to protected species, if they be currently dependent on the structure. It is therefore normal for Local Planning Authorities to ask for a Buildings Protected Species Survey in these situations prior to granting planning approval.

General Description of Target Building

The structure to be subject to demolition works is a long detached single storey out building of timber frame construction, timber panel covered walls, and pitched corrugated fibre cement roofing (Photographs A, B & C). The northern gable end has a brick façade (Photograph A), all other frontages are timber clad (Photographs B & C).

The building measures approximately 55m long x 14m wide by 4.5m high to roof apex. Under current plans, only approximately 30m of the southern end of the building will be demolished (Figure 1); the remaining northern end of the building to continue to serve as a stables facility.

Internally the building is divided up into chambers by panel boarding (Photograph H). The roof voids remain open and linked above the panel boarding divides. The cement panel roofing is either exposed internally (Photograph I) or hidden behind panel boarding (Photograph J). There are no enclosed roof chambers. The southern end of the building currently serves as a storage facility for agricultural and miscellaneous items (Photograph H).

The building is in good overall repair and the roof and roof/top of walls interfaces generally well-sealed (Photograph E). A small number of potential openings for birds and bats via special roof features were recorded (Photograph F), and the southern gable end to the building has a slatted door with multiple openings to the outside (Photograph J).

The building is surrounded by hard standing to its northern end (Photograph A) and improved grassland pasture to its other frontages (Photographs C & L). There is a scattering of additional outbuildings within the wider farm site, the largest of which is an open fronted storage barn (Photograph M), however none are located in close proximity to the southern end to the building to be demolished.

Figure 1: Aerial view of Surveyed Building & Surrounds.

Note: Only the southern end of the current building (indicated by red boxing) is scheduled for demolition. The northern end of the building will be retained and continue to serve as a stables facility.



Photograph A: General view of main entrance front (north facing) to surveyed building.

Note: This end of the building will be retained.



Photograph B: General view of northern end to east facing frontage to surveyed building.

Note: The northern end of the building will be retained.



Photograph C: View of southern end of east facing frontage the surveyed building.

Note: The southern end of the building, from approximately the open doorway onwards, is scheduled for demolition.

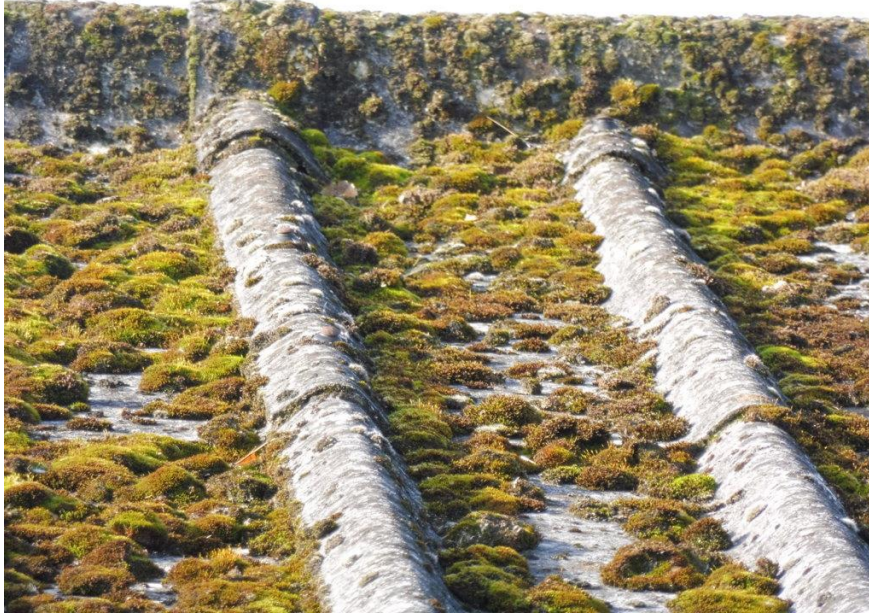


Photograph D: Sample view of the corrugated cement board panelling currently covering the entire building.



Photograph E: Close up sample view of cement board roofing.

Note: Although covered in moss, the roofing panels and associated ridge panelling is generally in good general repair and well-sealed, with no opportunities for external bat roosting identified.



Photograph F: View of corrugated plastic covering one of the roof lights.

Note: The gapping below the plastic constitutes one of the few direct openings through the roofing into the internal chambers below.



Photograph G: Close up sample view of roof overhang.

Note: The simple roof overhangs with timber barge boarding are in good repair with no significant gapping recorded.



Photograph H: General view looking along length of internal chambers to be lost.

Note: The multiple chambers are separated by boarding to top of wall level only.



Photograph I: Close up sample view of internally exposed cement panel roofing.

Note: The panels are in good repair and well-sealed.



Photograph J: View of the southern end to the building.

Note: At this end of the building the roofing is partially screened behind boarding. Day light penetration can be seen through the timber slated doorway to the rear of the image.



HISTORICAL RECORDS FOR BAT SPECIES RECORDED IN THE LOCAL AREA

The following bat species records are listed in the National Biodiversity Network Gateway web site database, for a 5 km radius around the site:

Common Pipistrelle	<i>Pipisterellus pipistrellus</i>	widespread
Soprano Pipistrelle	<i>Pipsitrelleus pygmaeus</i>	widespread
Brown Long-eared	<i>Plecotus auritus</i>	scattered
Noctule	<i>Nyctalus noctule</i>	scattered

Given the nature of the building the bat species most expected to be roosting in the structure (but only if they are they be able to gain access to suitable roosting locations) would be Common Pipistrelle, Soprano Pipistrelle and Brown long-eared.

Survey Details

Surveyor Experience

The survey was completed by Dr David Bell, Director, Sensible Ecological Survey Solutions Limited, Warrington. Dr Bell has forty years' experience as a professional ecologist, and has completed many similar buildings protected species surveys at sites across North West England and the wider United Kingdom.

He is a long-standing full member of the Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (MCIEEM).

Survey Procedures & Limitations

The initial survey of the target building was completed on 24th October 2024; the repeat survey was completed on 11th April 2025.

The building was surveyed externally, using binoculars as required to inspect high level features. The internal chambers were inspected for signs of former or current bat presence, such as dropping and staining using a torch. No invasive search for bats was undertaken as such would require a licence.

Survey Limitations: Views could be had of all building elevations externally. Internally there was full surveyor access to the multiple chambers.

The 2024 survey was completed outside the bird breeding season (1st March - 31st August inclusive); however, evidence of former internal nesting activity would still have been expected to be evident internally. The 2025 survey was completed within the bird breeding season.

The two surveys was completed outside the active bat survey period (late April to early September). However, evidence of former bat presence such as droppings and staining would still have been expected to be evident internally.

Survey Findings

BATS

Detection of Bats

No evidence of bats was recorded in association with the target outbuilding, either externally or internally.

Appraisal of Potential of Buildings to support Bats

The target building is assessed as having 'negligible' potential to support roosting bats.

The assessment of negligible potential is based on the following factors: -

- 1) The good overall external state of repair of the building's frontages, including, with no opportunities for external roosting identified.
- 2) The good overall state of the cement fibre roofing and associated ridge panelling with no opportunities for bats to gain access to external roosting identified.
- 3) The well-sealed roof overhangs with no viable access opportunities for external roosting identified.
- 4) A small number of opportunities for bats to gain internal access through roof features and doors were identified, however the building offers poor internal roosting due to an absence of enclosed roof chambers.

SPECIALLY PROTECTED BIRDS

No evidence of nesting or roosting by specially protected bird species, such as barn owl (*Tyto alba*) was recorded in association with the target building.

The building was assessed as potentially suitable as a roosting site for barn owl, but unsuitable as a breeding site due to the absence of enclosed chambers.

OTHER BREEDING BIRDS

No evidence of former external or internal breeding bird activity was recorded externally or internally for the southern length of building to be demolished. It is acknowledged however that with a building of this large size nest sites associated with the smaller common passerines species can easily go undetected.

A small number of abandoned swallow (*Hirundo rustica*) nest cups (Photograph N) were recorded against roof timber beams within the northern half of the building only.

THE WIDER SITE & IMMEDIATE SURROUNDS

The site is accessed directly off 'Garnets Lane' a surfaced country lane. The road and the hard standing found at the northern entrance to the building (Photograph A) represent a hostile environment to wildlife and will have negligible nature conservation interest.

The improved grassland pasture surrounding the building to three sides (Figure 1) is species poor, heavily managed or grazed to short sward and has overall low nature conservation value. A narrow strip of tall ruderal plants is found associated with the western margin of the southern end to the building (Photograph L). The tall ruderal plants will offer limited foraging and cover to birds and small mammals, however its very restricted area scored down its nature conservation value, and the habitat is widespread with the local area.

Further agricultural out buildings and caravans (offering temporary accommodation) are present within the wider site (Figure 1). A large open fronted barn (Photograph M) was assessed to have moderate potential to support breeding birds however it is located approximately 35m to the north of the length of target building to be demolished, and therefore the risk of harmful disturbance is assessed as negligible. The remaining buildings are all over 5m from the target building, and therefore the risk of harmful disturbance to bats or birds which may be dependent on the structures is assessed as negligible.

There are no mature trees or other natural features in close proximity to the building, assessed to have potential to support roosting bats

Photograph L: View of west facing frontage to building.

Note: The fencing standoff from the building has allowed tall ruderal plants to establish next to the building.



Photograph M: View of a large open fronted shed located to the north east of the target building.

Note: The shed can be expected to attract birds and bats, however it is located approximately 40m from the nearest point of the length of target shed to be demolished.



Photograph N: Close up view of one of several swallow nests recorded within the building.

Note: All recorded bird's nests were located within the length of building to be retained, none were recorded within the length to be demolished however with such a large structure nests could easily have gone undetected.



Summary, Conclusions & Recommendations

BATS

No evidence of bat roosting activity was recorded in association with the surveyed building during either of the two survey sessions. The building was assessed as having ‘negligible’ overall potential to support roosting bats. The assessment made in accordance with current national assessment guidance (Bat Conservation Trust, 2016), was primarily due to the building’s overall good state of repair in combination with the structure’s unsuitability internally due to hostile cement panel roofing materials and lack of any enclosed roof chambers (as reviewed in more detail earlier in the report).

Under normal bat survey effort guidance, a follow up Phase 2 bat survey would not be required for a structure assessed during Phase 1 to have negligible bat roost potential. However the ‘Merseyside Environmental Advisory Service’ (environmental advisors to the Local Planning Authority) have expressed some concerns as to the 2024 survey assessment findings, and to eliminate any doubt, a Phase 2 bat survey is recommended which will generate high confidence in the determination of presence or absence of bats.

There are no further buildings, structures or trees present in close proximity to the target building identified as having potential to support roosting bats.

No special bat mitigation measures are recommended unless the pending Phase 2 bat survey confirms bats to be present.

BIRDS

No evidence of roosting within the site by any specially protected bird species was recorded during either the 2024 or 2025 surveys. The building was appraised as having moderate potential as a roosting site for barn owl, if individuals were able to gain access, however the structure is unsuitable as a breeding site.

No evidence of former breeding bird activity was recorded within the southern end of the building to be demolished, either externally or internally. However, the confidence that can be placed in a negative survey finding is acknowledged as low due to the large size and internal complexity of the building.

A small number of swallow nest cups were recorded within the northern end of the building, however the future return to the established breeding site by the birds is not considered under threat.

Recommendation

It is recommended that demolition works on the building commence outside the official bird breeding season (1st March - 31st August in any year). If commencement of works during the bird breeding season cannot be avoided, then checks for bird nesting activity should be completed by a suitably qualified person immediately prior to commencement of works. If active nests are detected then demolition works should be delayed until nests are confirmed as abandoned.

OTHER PROTECTED OR BIODIVERSITY TARGET SPECIES

The risk to hedgehogs (*Erinaceus europaeus*) from the proposed demolition works is assessed as low to moderate. The species is common in the local rural area and the thin belts of tall ruderal plants and grassland found to the building margins (Photograph L) could currently offer foraging opportunities and attract the species to the building. Hedgehogs may also seek refuge and under the external building margins or even within the building itself if access can be achieved. The species is also known to be attracted to excavation works, within which individuals can become entrapped.

Recommendation

To reduce the risk to hedgehogs to near negligible levels, searches of the building margins should be completed by a suitably qualified person prior to commencement of demolition works. Recovered individuals to be translocated to an appropriate safe receptor area. Demolished materials should be quickly removed off site or stored in skips to minimise the risk of hedgehogs seek refuge with the arisings. To prevent the entrapment of hedgehog associated with excavation works, temporary escape ramps should be fitted leading out of excavations during nocturnal hours and when the site is abandoned for extended periods.

The risk to badgers (*Meles meles*) is assessed as low, however the measures to prevent entrapment of hedgehogs in excavations stated above are equally applicable for badgers.

The nearest field pond to the building is located approximately 180m to the east, however the pond is isolated in the middle of a field with no direct linkage to field boundary hedgerows or ditches. All other surrounding ponds are over 250m away. The risk to Great crested newt (*Triturus cristatus*) is assessed as negligible.

The following common amphibian species are widespread in the local area and can be expected to be present within the site and attracted to the building margins: frog (*Rana temporaria*), toad (*Bufo bufo*) and smooth newt (*Lissotriton vulgaris*).

Recommendation

The risks to amphibian species are similar to those reviewed above for hedgehogs. The same search and recovery procedures prior to the undertaking of any site clearance should apply.

References:

Bat Conservation Trust (2016) Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists. Good Practice Guidelines. Bat Conservation Trust, London

Prepared by:

**Dr David Bell
Director
Sensible Ecological Survey Solutions Limited**

Registered Office:

**Sensible Ecological Survey Solutions
1 Red Gables
Pepper Street
Appleton Thorn
Warrington
WA4 4SB**

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