

Preliminary Roost Assessment

Survey site:

Whitehouse Farm Cottage, Staplefield Lane, Staplefield, Haywards Heath, RH17 6AU

Client:

Jules Date

Survey date:

28th May 2024

Project:

This report is prepared to inform a planning application. The proposal is described as: Works to the roof, the conversion of the existing north facing outhouse into a utility roof and internal alterations to suit a new layout. The proposed project is described further in the foreseen impact section of this report.

PRA survey methodology and legislation can be found in the Arbtech Supplement: [PRA Methodology and Legislation - 2024](#).

The site survey was undertaken by Chantae Wells BSc (Hons) MSC, (Accredited Agent on Natural England Bat Licence Number: 2018-33540-CLS-CLS					
Date of survey	Temperature (°C)	Humidity (%)	Cloud Cover (%)	Wind (mph)	Rain
28/05/2024	16	91	100	14	Light
PRA Survey Factor		Detailed using desk study and site survey. Any specific limitations noted within relevant section. This table may include further work you will need to commission (if any) to obtain planning permission or comply with legislation for other consent. All clients are expected to read and understand this section, or to contact the lead surveyor for advice.			
See PRA plan in Appendix 1 and location plan in Appendix 2. A proposed plan was not available at the time of writing.					
Background and Site Location					
Summary of site and desk study		Site description The site is centred on National Grid Reference TQ 26965 26406 and has an area of approximately 1320sqm. It is formed of one building, hereby referred to as ‘B1’, surrounding garden, lines of trees, individual trees, and associated hardstanding. Adjacent to the site to the east is another residential site featuring a few dwellings. Otherwise, the site is immediately surrounded by arable land and patches of deciduous woodland with some ancient woodland, all connected by a network of hedgerows. Statutory Sites The site is located within High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB), a medieval landscape of wooded, rolling hills; studded with sandstone outcrops and a rich patchwork of small fields, scattered farmsteads and ancient routeways. High Weald contains 50 Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI). No other designated sites are located within 2km of the site boundary. There are no Special Areas of Conservation relating to bats within 10km of the site boundary.			

	EPSL data A review of the MAGIC database returned five granted bat EPSLs within 2km of the site boundary, listed in the table below. <table><tr><th>Reference</th><th>Distance from site</th><th>Species</th><th>Purpose</th></tr><tr><td>2017-28531-EPS-MIT & 2017-28531-EPS-MIT-1</td><td>~1350m northeast</td><td>Brown Long-Eared, Common Pipistrelle</td><td>Impact on, disturbance to and destruction of a breeding site</td></tr><tr><td>2018-33253-EPS-MIT</td><td>~954m northwest</td><td>Brown Long-Eared</td><td>Destruction of a resting place</td></tr><tr><td>2018-34194-EPS-MIT</td><td>~1625m northwest</td><td>Brown Long-Eared, Common Pipistrelle</td><td>Destruction of a resting place</td></tr><tr><td>2019-39669-EPS-MIT</td><td>~1985m northeast</td><td>Brown Long-Eared, Common Pipistrelle</td><td>Destruction of a resting place</td></tr></table>	Reference	Distance from site	Species	Purpose	2017-28531-EPS-MIT & 2017-28531-EPS-MIT-1	~1350m northeast	Brown Long-Eared, Common Pipistrelle	Impact on, disturbance to and destruction of a breeding site	2018-33253-EPS-MIT	~954m northwest	Brown Long-Eared	Destruction of a resting place	2018-34194-EPS-MIT	~1625m northwest	Brown Long-Eared, Common Pipistrelle	Destruction of a resting place	2019-39669-EPS-MIT	~1985m northeast	Brown Long-Eared, Common Pipistrelle	Destruction of a resting place
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Field survey results																					
<i>Summary of Survey Findings</i>	Roosting habitat – B1 <i>Exterior –</i> Building 1, which covers approximately 106sqm, is a mix of one- and two-stories consisting of a large main building and connected outbuilding. The main building is constructed of large sandstone or similar type bricks and slate roof tiles. The outbuilding is constructed of brick and clay roof tiles. The brickwork of both appears to be in moderate condition, with some areas of missing mortar. There are also several gaps underneath both the slate and clay roof tiles and gaps by the eaves, providing space for roosting bats. The windows and doors are tight-fitted with no suitable gaps for bats to roost or enter.																				

	<i>Interior –</i> The loft space measured approximately 10m length x 1.8m width and 1m height, with an internal humidity of 67% and temperature of 14°C. The loft space was viewed from the hatch, but entry was not possible and therefore, some evidence of bats (if present) may have been missed. The loft was lined with felt, with infrequent tears showing exposed roof tiles. The basement measured approximately 3m length x 2m width x 1.6m height and comprised a flat roof with plaster ceiling, with an internal humidity of 66% and a temperature of 13.37°C. There was a window which allowed an ingress of light. The basement is used for storage and is unsuitable for bats due to lack of suitable roosting features and lack of entry points. No evidence of bats was observed. <i>Attached outbuilding -</i> The interior of this room measured approximately 5m length x 2.5m width x 5m height. The roof was unlined, showing exposed clay roof tiles. This building has been assessed as moderate value to roosting bats, due to a small number of suitable roosting features and connectivity to suitable foraging habitat in the local area. These features are discussed in Appendix 4.
<i>Foreseen Impacts</i>	The proposed plans at the time of writing the report include the following: Ground floor • Internal reconfiguration to the ground floor by rearranging the existing kitchen • Turning the existing north facing store/outhouse into a utility room, with an add on extension to connect to the kitchen

	• Turning the ground floor bathroom into a sunroom • Reconfiguring the position of the staircase First Floor • Re-configuring the roof space in the south-eastern corner of the house • Turning the loft space within the catslide roof of the north-eastern side of the house into a habitable space • Thermally upgrading the roof throughout • Repair works to the roof Of these, works to the roof will cause disturbance and destruction to bat roosts, if present. Furthermore, the conversion of the outhouse into a utility room will disturb any bats (if present) roosting in the clay tiles.
<i>Recommendations</i>	B1 is assessed as moderate value to roosting bats. Two bat emergence surveys are required during the active bat season (optimal May to August, suboptimal September) to confirm the presence or likely-absence of a bat roost in the building. Infra-red cameras should be used as an aid. Four surveyors are required to provide full coverage of the building. Surveys should be a minimum of three weeks apart. If the absence of a bat roost cannot be determined during the first visit, then further surveys will be required. If bat roosts are confirmed in the building one additional surveys may be required to characterise the roost and to inform an EPSL application to Natural England. Surveys should be a minimum of two weeks apart. The EPSL application requires that surveys have been undertaken within the most recent active bat season and planning permission must have been granted and all relevant wildlife-related conditions have been discharged prior to submission.

Nesting Birds	
<i>Summary of Survey Findings</i>	No evidence of nesting birds was found on site during the surveys; however, the roof has suitability for nesting common birds.
<i>Foreseen Impacts</i>	The proposed development could result in the destruction or the disturbance and subsequent abandonment of active bird nests.
<i>Recommendations</i>	<u>Nesting bird check</u> The works should be undertaken outside the period 1st March to 31st August. If this timeframe cannot be avoided, a close inspection of the roof should be undertaken immediately, by a qualified ecologist, prior to the commencement of work. All active nests will need to be retained until the young have fledged. Precautions should be taken with machinery and noise levels when working close to any retained nests so as not to disturb any nearby nesting birds during construction works. At least a 3-5m buffer should be created between any machinery and active nests until the young have fledged.

Appendix 1: PRA plan



Appendix 2: Location map



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Appendix 3: Proposed plan

Not available at the time of writing

Appendix 4: Photos

Description	Photograph
Overview of the building exterior	A wide-angle photograph of the front elevation of Whitehouse Farm Cottage. The building is constructed from light-colored stone with a dark, tiled roof. Two prominent brick chimneys are visible. The facade features several windows, some of which are partially covered by climbing ivy. A green lawn and some shrubbery are in the foreground. A photograph showing a corner of the cottage. The stone wall is heavily covered in ivy. A white door is visible, and a small window is partially seen. A large tree stands to the right of the building. A photograph of a side elevation of the cottage. The stone wall is covered in ivy. A small, dark doorway is visible, and a wooden fence runs along the side of the building. A photograph of the rear elevation of the cottage. The building is partially obscured by a dense, green hedge in the foreground. A brick chimney and a window are visible above the hedge.

Suitable roosting features, such as gaps underneath roof tiles, gaps by the eaves and gaps where mortar has worn in brickwork.



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North-facing outhouse

Unlined clay roof tiles, currently used for storage. Gaps showing ingress of light.



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Overview of the basement



Overview of the loft space

Photographs show felt lining with frequent tears, showing exposed roof tiles.

The presence of dense, old cobwebs suggest a lack of recent flight.

This roof space was inaccessible due to small size of loft hatch. Therefore, some evidence of bats (if present) may have been missed.



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Limitations and Copyright

Limitations

Biological record data has not been requested for this site. Given that emergence surveys have been recommended, it is unlikely that the purchase of biological record data will alter the recommendations within this report. The roof space was inaccessible due to small size of loft hatch. Therefore, some evidence of bats (if present) may have been missed.

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Version control			
Status	Issue	Name	Date
Draft	0.1	Chantae Wells BSc (Hons) MSc - Consultant Ecologist	10/06/2024
Proof	0.2	Mel Reid BSc (Hons) MRes MRSB, Senior Consultant	17/06/2024
Final	1.0	Chantae Wells BSc (Hons) MSc - Consultant Ecologist	17/06/2024

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