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BAT SCOPING SURVEY

At

Commonside Farm
North Lane
Cawthorne
Barnsley
S75 4AQ

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	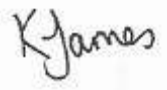
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

A bat scoping survey was undertaken by United Environmental Services (UES) Ltd. on 3rd February 2025 at Commonside Farm, Cawthorne. The objective of the survey was to establish the suitability of the buildings on site to support roosting bats, based on a site-specific survey and habitat assessment. The buildings were searched externally and internally (where accessible) for bat presence and features associated with bat activity, as detailed in Bat Conservation Trust (BCT) guidance (2023).

Commonside Farm is situated in a rural area that provides high quality foraging and commuting habitat for bats. The surrounding agricultural fields, hedgerows, woodland, tree lines, and watercourses will provide a source of invertebrate prey and commuting corridors. Additionally, high quality habitats located further afield within the Pye Flatts Meadows Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), including traditional hay-meadows, will provide foraging opportunities. The relative absence of artificial light at night coupled with the area's road and path network will provide commuting corridors locally.

The quality of roosting habitats within Building 1 itself is moderate, with a number of external potential roosting features (PRFs) such as gaps underneath raised roof and ridge tiles and cavities in the walls on all elevations where mortar between stones is missing. Access to the interior is provided by the building's open eaves. Internally, PRFs are present in the form of cracks in roofing beams, cavities above the beams themselves, and crevices on the north-east gable wall where mortar is missing. However, no bat droppings or other field signs were found.

The quality of roosting habitats within Building 2 is also moderate, with external PRFs in the form of raised roof and ridge tiles and extensive cavities in the walls where mortar between stones is missing. Internally, PRFs are present in the form of gaps in the breezeblock and tears in the bitumen felt roof lining. However, no bat droppings or other field signs were found.

Buildings 1 and 2 have been assessed as having moderate potential to support roosting bats, due to the aforementioned potential roosting features. As such, a bat presence/absence survey should be undertaken, comprising two emergence surveys, to determine whether bats are using the buildings for roosting purposes, and if so, to determine the species and number of bats. The surveys should be undertaken by an appropriately licenced bat ecologist during the bat survey season (May to September inclusive), with at least one of the surveys conducted within the peak bat survey season (May to August inclusive).

Historic evidence of breeding birds was recorded in Building 1. Therefore, it is recommended that construction works take place outside of the breeding bird season and should not be undertaken from March to August inclusive. If this is not possible, a breeding bird nest check should be undertaken prior to the commencement of works by a suitably experienced ecologist and an ecological clerk of works appointed if considered necessary.

The report should be read in conjunction with appendices 1 to 3, which give visual representations of the survey results.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Author, surveyors and qualifications

This report is compiled and written by Duncan Morrison BSc MSc, UES Graduate Ecologist. Other surveyors include:

- Daniel Smith BSc MScRes, UES Ecologist. Daniel is licensed by Natural England to disturb, take and handle all species of bats under licence number 2024-12117-CL18-BAT (level 2).

All surveyors have the knowledge, skills and experience identified within CIEEM's "Competencies for Species Survey: Bats" (2013), or were under the supervision of a surveyor with the required competencies.

1.2 Survey objectives

UES was commissioned in January 2025 to conduct site surveys which include the following activities:

- Conduct internal and external building inspections to look for field signs of bats
- Assess the suitability of the buildings for use by roosting bats
- Recommend further surveys, mitigation and compensation, where appropriate

1.3 Proposed development

The proposed development involves the conversion of the existing attached barn and detached stable block buildings into holiday homes.

1.4 Structure of the report

This report sets out the methodology, results, and recommendations in relation to a specific bat survey. Recommendations are in line with statutory legislation and planning policy objectives.

The report should be read in conjunction with appendices 1 to 3, which give visual representations of the survey results.

2 METHODOLOGY

2.1 General

All surveys were carried out to recognised guidelines, timings and weather conditions, with particular reference to Natural England and BCT publications (see references for further information).

The habitats on site and in the surrounding area were assessed during a walkover survey and by studying aerial photographs, in order to gauge their suitability to support roosting, foraging and commuting bats.

2.2 Building survey

The buildings on site were searched both externally and internally for bat presence and features associated with bat activity, as detailed in BCT guidance (Collins, 2023). This was conducted on 3rd February 2025 by Daniel Smith and Duncan Morrison.

2.2.1 External inspection

The external inspection was carried out from ground level using binoculars, and also using ladders and an endoscope to investigate suitable gaps. The objective of the survey was to find and record any signs of bat use, for example:

- Bat droppings
- Feeding remains
- Grease staining / urine marks
- Corpses or skeletons

The bat signs listed above are visible from the outside of a building. The following areas were searched, where present:

- Roof and ridge tiles
- Lead flashing
- Eaves
- Boxed soffits
- Fascia and barge boards
- Window sills and panes
- Walls
- Gaps under felt
- Cracks / holes in woodwork or behind cladding
- Gaps in brickwork and mortar
- Air bricks
- Grills
- Vents

2.2.2 Internal inspection

The internal inspection covered all of the accessible rooms and roof spaces within the buildings. Bats regularly utilise specific areas within roof spaces, which were searched for any field signs of bats using high-powered torches and an endoscope, where considered necessary by the licenced ecologist. The following features were searched, where present:

- Roof beams and junctions
- Gaps under felt
- Dividing walls
- Chimney breasts
- Gaps in brickwork and mortar

- Cracks / holes in woodwork
- Floor or other surfaces on which droppings could accumulate

2.3 Survey limitations

The survey was carried out in early February at a time when bats are within hibernation sites. For this reason, exposed droppings from summer roosts may not be evident as they are likely to have decomposed or have been washed away.

Internal field signs should still be evident at this time of year, as should droppings in sheltered locations.

3 RESULTS

3.1 Habitat assessment

Commonside Farm is located within the rural area of Cawthorne, Barnsley. The buildings affected by the proposed development, the attached barn and detached stable block, are currently used for storage. The habitats within the curtilage of site consist of hardstanding car parking to the south-east, buildings, and a small parcel of amenity grassland in the form of a lawn to the north-east.

The immediate surrounding area consists primarily of arable fields, with scattered areas of woodland and a small watercourse to the west in the form of Rons Cliff Dike. These habitats provide foraging and commuting opportunities for bats in the local area. The immediate area features low levels of disturbance from streetlights and traffic noise due to its rural character. The relative absence of artificial light at night coupled with the area's tree lined roads and paths will provide suitable commuting corridors for bats.

The wider surrounding area (within 2km) contains similar rural areas within Cawthorne, with Pye Flatts Meadows SSSI located approximately 1.9km to the south-east. The habitat within the SSSI is of a high quality for foraging and commuting bats, consisting primarily of high-quality neutral hay-meadow grassland.

3.2 Building survey

3.2.1 External inspection

There are two buildings at Commonside Farm which are due to be affected under the proposed development plan. These buildings have been numbered for the purposes of this report (see Appendix 1 – Aerial photographs).

Building 1 is a one storey stone built detached barn, with a pitched tiled roof and breeze block internal walls, and a plastic overhang with felt covering to the south-east. A significant number of the roof and ridge tiles on both elevations are lifted/raised. The eaves are open, providing access to the interior in the form of gaps within the wall plate.

There are multiple cavities in the walls on all elevations where mortar between stones is missing, and these gaps are potentially suitable for crevice dwelling bats. Although inspection with an endoscope did not reveal any signs of usage by bats, the complexity of the crevices meant a thorough inspection could not be undertaken.

There is a single storey stone built mono-pitched extension at the eastern elevation, with plastic barge boards and rendering, which is in good condition. No gaps are present between the barge boards and rendering, and no potential roosting features were observed on this part of the building.

Building 2 is a one storey stone built stable building attached to the dwelling at the site, with a pitched tiled roof and cavity walls. There is lifting in multiple places for both the roof and ridge tiles. The gable is tightly sealed to the roof verge, with no observable gaps.

There are multiple cavities on the southern elevation where mortar is missing, with these gaps also being potentially suitable for crevice dwelling bat species. An endoscope inspection was undertaken, and no signs of bat usage were observed, but the complexity of the crevices again

meant a full inspection could not be undertaken. The southern elevation is partially covered by ivy.

No bat droppings or other field signs of bats were found during the external building inspections.

3.2.2 Internal inspection

Internally, **Building 1** features a traditional roof structure which is open to the roof. Cracks are present in several of the beams, and there are numerous small open cavities above the beams themselves. Crevices were also present on the north-east gable wall where mortar is missing. These features potentially provide suitable areas for crevice dwelling bats. Access to the interior from the outside is provided by the open eaves, as evidenced by the presence of historic bird's nests.

Internally, **Building 2** is also open to the roof and is lined with bitumen felt. Tears are present in several places in the lining, providing PRFs suitable for crevice dwelling bat species. The internal walls are of breezeblock construction with timber lintels, and several crevices are present where mortar is missing and where the lintel and breezeblock meet.

No bat droppings or other field signs of bats were found during the internal building inspections.

4 EVALUATION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

4.1 Evaluation of results

4.1.1 Qualitative assessment of foraging habitats

In summary, Commonside Farm is situated in an area that provides high quality foraging and commuting habitat for bats. The surrounding agricultural fields, hedgerows, woodland, tree lines, and watercourses will provide a source of invertebrate prey and commuting corridors. Further afield, high quality hay-meadow habitats are present, which will provide foraging opportunities, and the relative absence of artificial light at night provides dark commuting corridors locally.

4.1.2 Qualitative assessment of roosting habitats

There is a high number of rural buildings in the local area surrounding Commonside Farm, which will provide alternative roosting opportunities for bats.

The quality of roosting habitats within Building 1 is moderate, with a number of external PRFs, such as gaps underneath raised roof and ridge tiles and complex crevices in walls where mortar is missing, all providing potentially suitable roosting habitat. The interior is easily accessed due to the open eaves, and cracks in the roofing beams, open spaces above the beams, and gaps in the mortar on the north-east gable provide potentially suitable habitats for crevice dwelling bat species. No field signs of bats such as droppings were found within the building.

The quality of roosting habitats within Building 2 is also moderate, with external PRFs in the form of gaps under the roof and ridge tiles and the complex crevices in walls where mortar is missing. These features provide potentially suitable habitat for crevice dwelling species. The interior features bitumen felt lining, with tears in the felt providing PRFs, as do gaps in the breezeblock where mortar is missing and around the side of the lintel. These features are potentially suitable for usage by crevice dwelling species. No field signs of bats such as droppings were found within the building.

4.2 Mitigation and compensation measures

4.2.1 Bats

Due to the aforementioned PRFs, the buildings have been assessed as having moderate potential to support roosting bats. As such, a further bat presence / absence survey should be undertaken, comprising two emergence surveys, to determine whether bats are using the buildings for roosting purposes, and if so, to determine the species and number of bats. The surveys should be undertaken by an appropriately licenced bat ecologist during the bat survey season (May to September inclusive), with at least one of the surveys conducted within the peak bat survey season (May to August inclusive).

4.2.2 Birds

Historic evidence of nesting birds was recorded in Building 1. As such, it is recommended that the construction works take place outside of the breeding bird season and should not be undertaken from March to August inclusive. If this is not possible, a breeding bird nest survey

should be undertaken prior to the commencement of works by a suitably experienced ecologist and an ecological clerk of works appointed if considered necessary.

5 CONCLUSION

Commonside Farm is situated in an area that provides high quality foraging and commuting habitat for bats. The surrounding agricultural fields, hedgerows, woodlands, tree lines, and watercourses all provide a source of invertebrate prey and commuting corridors. Further afield, high quality hay-meadow habitats are present, which will provide foraging opportunities, and the relative absence of artificial light at night provides dark commuting corridors locally.

The buildings have been assessed as having moderate potential to support roosting bats. As per the BCT survey guidelines, a further bat presence / absence survey should be undertaken during the bat survey season.

Works should also be mindful of breeding bird legislation, as per section 4.2.2 of this report.

6 REFERENCES

Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (2013). *Competencies for Species Survey: Bats*.

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

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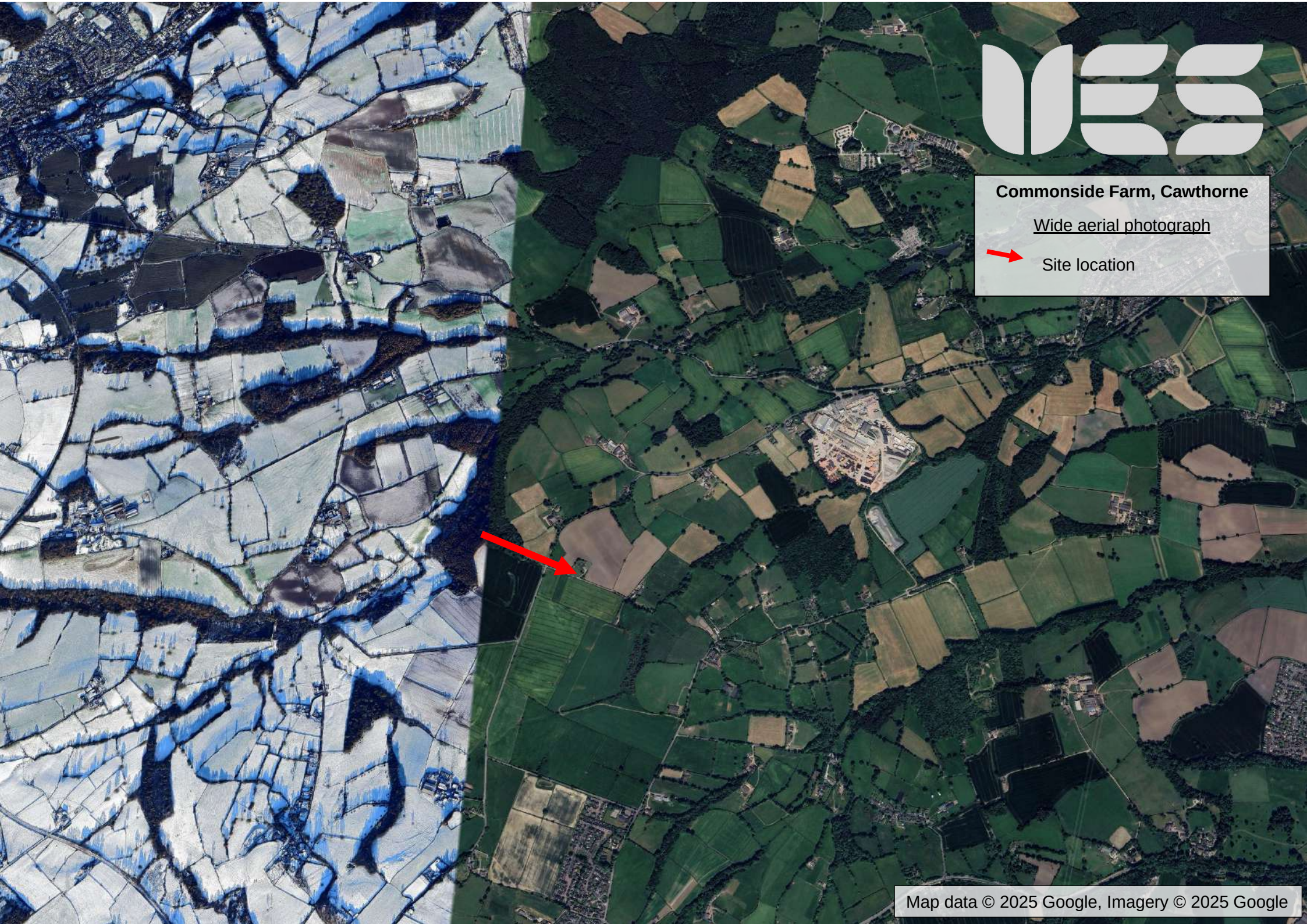
APPENDICES

Appendix 1 – Aerial photographs


Commonside Farm, Cawthorne
Close aerial photograph
Building 1
Building 2
Map data © 2025 Google, Imagery © 2025 Google


Commonside Farm, Cawthorne
Wide aerial photograph
Site location
Map data © 2025 Google, Imagery © 2025 Google

Appendix 2 – Photographs

Photograph 1: Building 1 at the south-eastern elevation.

Photograph 2: Building 1 at the eastern elevation, with extension.

Photograph 3: Building 1 at the western elevation.

Photograph 4: Building 1 at the north-western elevation.

Photograph 5: Building 1 at the north-western elevation, with cavities in the wall visible between bricks.

Photograph 6: Close up image of wall cavity in Building 1, illustrating complexity.

Photograph 7: Interior view of Building 1, with cracks in roofing beams visible.

Photograph 8: Interior view of Building 1, with gaps above roofing beam visible.

Photograph 9: Building 2 at the south-western elevation, showing partial ivy coverage.

Photograph 10: Building 2 at the southern elevation, with wall cavities visible.

Photograph 11: Building 2 at the eastern elevation.

Photograph 12: Lifted ridge tiles on the south-western elevation of Building 2.

Photograph 13: Interior view of Building 2, with gap between the breezeblock and lintel.

Photograph 14: Interior view of Building 2, with tear in bitumen lining.

Photograph 15: Interior view of Building 2, with cavities in the breezeblock.

Photograph 16: Interior view of Building 2, demonstrating the general roofing structure.

Appendix 3 – Statutory and planning context

Ecological assessments
Ecological assessments play an important part within the planning context; they include an initial assessment which highlights any specific interests of a site. From the initial site assessment, the surveyor assesses the suitability of habitats within the site to support protected species and makes recommendations for further survey works if required. The following paragraphs provide a brief interpretation of the legislative protection that is relevant to the findings of this report.

Bats
In the United Kingdom, all species of bat and their roosts are afforded full protection under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) and the Conservation of Habitats and Species Amendment (EU exit) Regulations 2019 (known as the "Habitats Regulations"). The Wildlife and Countryside Act is the domestic implementation of the Convention on the Conservation of European Wildlife and Natural Habitats (the Bern Convention) and was amended by the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000. This makes it an offence to:

- Deliberately, intentionally or recklessly kill, injure or capture a bat
- Deliberately, intentionally or recklessly disturb a bat while it is occupying a structure or place that it uses for shelter or protection
- Deliberately, intentionally or recklessly damage, destroy or obstruct access to any place that a bat uses for shelter or protection (even if the bat is not present at the time)
- Keep, transport, sell or exchange, or offer for sale or exchange any live or dead bat, any part of a bat or anything derived from a bat

Under UK law, a bat roost is *any structure or place which any wild [bat] … uses for shelter or protection*. As bats often reuse the same roosts, legal opinion is that a roost is protected whether or not the bats are present at the time of the activity taking place.

Penalties for offences include fines of up to £5000, plus up to six months imprisonment, for each offence committed.

If an activity is likely to result in any of the above offences, a licence can be applied for to derogate from the protection afforded. These licences must provide appropriate mitigation and are issued by Natural England.

A Natural England mitigation licence application requires a Mitigation Method Statement and, in many cases, a Reasoned Statement of Application. The Mitigation Method Statement contains details of the proposed mitigation works. The Reasoned Statement needs to provide a rational and reasoned justification as to why the proposed development meets the requirements of the Conservation (National Habitats & c.) regulations 1994, namely Regulations 44(2)(e), (f) or (g), and 44(3)(a).

The National Planning Policy Framework 2021 (NPPF) provides guidance on the interpretation of the law in relation to the natural environment and development.

The Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006 lists the following bat species as species of principle importance under Section 41:

- Barbastelle *Barbastella barbastellus*
- Bechstein's bat *Myotis bechsteinii*
- Noctule *Nyctalus noctula*
- Soprano pipistrelle *Pipistrellus pygmaeus*
- Brown long-eared bat *Plecotus auritus*
- Greater horseshoe *Rhinolophus ferrumequinum*
- Lesser horseshoe *Rhinolophus hipposideros*

Section 40 requires every public body in the exercising of its functions 'have regard, so far as is consistent with the proper exercise of those functions, to the purpose of conserving biodiversity' (all biodiversity and not just section 41 species and habitats); therefore making these bats a material consideration in the planning process and requiring a detailed ecological bat survey before planning permission can be granted.

Birds
All wild birds, their nests and young are protected throughout England and Wales by the Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981 (as amended). It is illegal to kill, injure or take any wild bird, or damage or destroy the nest or eggs of breeding birds. The legislation applies to all bird species, common and rare.

In addition to the protection afforded to all wild birds, more vulnerable species listed on Schedule 1 of the Act receive enhanced protection when breeding. Schedule 1 species, including their dependent young, are protected from intentional or reckless disturbance whilst at or near the nest, in addition to the protection afforded the more common species.

The NERC Act offers further protection to the nests of some species that regularly re-use their nests, even when the nests are not in use.

The leading governmental and non-governmental conservation organisations in the UK have reviewed the population status' of 244 UK bird species. "Birds of Conservation Concern 4: the Red List for Birds" is the most recent publication summarising their findings. Three lists, Red, Amber and Green, have been produced based on the most up-to-date evidence available and criteria include conservation status at global and European levels and, within the UK: historical decline, trends in population and range, rarity, localised distribution and international importance. These lists are a valuable resource when considering conservation priorities.

Planning policy

National Planning Guidance is issued in the form of the National Planning Policy Framework 2021 (NPPF). The most relevant section is 15: Conserving and enhancing the natural environment.

Key relevant principles stated in 15: Conserving and enhancing the natural environment are;

174. Planning policies and decisions 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 (in a manner commensurate with their statutory status or identified quality in the development plan);
- b) recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside, and the wider benefits from natural capital and ecosystem services – including the economic and other benefits of the best and most versatile agricultural land, and of trees and woodland;
- c) maintaining the character of the undeveloped coast, while improving public access to it where appropriate;
- 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;
- e) preventing new and existing development from contributing to, being put at unacceptable risk from, or being adversely affected by, unacceptable levels of soil, air, water or noise pollution or land instability. Development should, wherever possible, help to improve local environmental conditions such as air and water quality, taking into account relevant information such as river basin management plans; and
- f) remediating and mitigating despoiled, degraded, derelict, contaminated and unstable land, where appropriate.

179. To protect and enhance biodiversity and geodiversity, plans should:
- 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[61]; wildlife corridors and stepping stones that connect them; and areas identified by national and local partnerships for habitat management, enhancement, restoration or creation[62]; and
- b) promote the conservation, restoration and enhancement of priority habitats, ecological networks and the protection and recovery of priority species; and identify and pursue opportunities for securing measurable net gains for biodiversity

180. When determining planning applications, local planning authorities should apply the following principles:

a) if significant harm to biodiversity resulting from a development cannot be avoided (through locating on an alternative site with less harmful impacts), adequately mitigated, or, as a last resort, compensated for, then planning permission should be refused;
b) development on land within or outside a Site of Special Scientific Interest, and which is likely to have an adverse effect on it (either individually or in combination with other developments), should not normally be permitted. The only exception is where the benefits of the development in the location proposed clearly outweigh both its likely impact on the features of the site that make it of special scientific interest, and any broader impacts on the national network of Sites of Special Scientific Interest;
c) development resulting in the loss or deterioration of irreplaceable habitats (such as ancient woodland and ancient or veteran trees) should be refused, unless there are wholly exceptional reasons63 and a suitable compensation strategy exists; and
d) development whose primary objective is to conserve or enhance biodiversity should be supported; while opportunities to improve biodiversity in and around developments should be integrated as part of their design, especially where this can secure measurable net gains for biodiversity or enhance public access to nature where this is appropriate.