

## **Technical Note**

# - Preliminary Roost Assessment (PRA)

| Site Address: | Land at Engine Lane, Grimethorpe, Barnsley, South Yorkshire S72 7BN |
|---------------|---|
| Client Name:  | Enviromena Project Management Ltd                                   |
| Reference:    | Preliminary Roost Assessment  |
| Date:         | 02/06/2023  |

#### Background

Arbtech Consulting Limited was instructed by Enviromena Project Management Ltd to undertake Preliminary Roost Assessment (PRA) at stables present at Land at Engine Lane, Grimethorpe, Barnsley, South Yorkshire S72 7BN (hereafter referred to as "the site"). The survey was required to inform a planning application for the construction of a temporary solar farm providing 49.9MW (AC) output, to include the installation of ground-mounted solar panels together with associated works, equipment and necessary infrastructure (hereafter referred to as "the proposed development").

A plan showing the proposed development is provided in Appendix 1.

The aim of the PRA was to determine the presence or evaluate the likelihood of the presence of roosting bats, and to gain an understanding of how bats could use the site for roosting, foraging or commuting.

A Preliminary Ecological Assessment was undertaken by Arbtech Consulting Ltd in November 2023. Access was not granted to the stable buildings on the site therefore they were not assessed for their suitability for bats.

Boundary trees and hedgerows were assessed as having suitability for commuting and foraging bats. This report should be read in conjunction with other reports produced for the site.

#### Site Context

The site is located at its centre at National Grid Reference SE 40243 09215 and has an area totalling approximately 132ha split into four parcels of land comprising of worked arable fields, hedgerows, scattered trees, hard standing and scattered buildings. It is surrounded by agricultural and arable fields, scattered trees and residential developments located to the east and west. A site location plan is provided in Appendix 2.

#### Survey Methodology

Elen Griffin BSc (Hons), MRSB, Ecological Consultant (Natural England Level 1 Bat Licence Number: 2023-11211-CL17-BAT and Accredited Agent on Natural England Bat Licence Number: 2016-22843-CLS-CLS) on 30<sup>th</sup> May 2023. The PRA focussed on the built structure which will be affected by the proposed development as well as providing an overview of the wider site and the surrounding landscape for bat roosting, foraging and commuting habitat. For any surveyed buildings:

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A non-intrusive visual appraisal was undertaken from the ground, using binoculars to inspect the external features of the building(s) for features which bats could use for roosting, including access or egress points and for signs of bat use including droppings, scratch marks, insect remains and urine smear marks. An internal inspection of the building(s) was also made, including the living areas and any accessible roof spaces, using a torch and ladders. The surveyor paid particular attention to the floor and flat surfaces, window shutters and frames, lintels above doors and windows, and carried out a detailed search of numerous features within the roof space. An endoscope was used to complete a close-up inspection of any accessible features, where appropriate. The surveyor also made note of any other ecological constraints observed during the survey, notably the likelihood of presence or signs of breeding birds, and the suitability of the site for barn owls *Tyto alba*.

#### Limitations

It should be noted that whilst every effort has been made to describe the features on site in the context of their suitability for roosting bats, this does not provide a complete characterisation of the site. This survey provides a preliminary view of the likelihood of bats being present. This is based on suitability of the habitats on site and in the local area, the ecology and biology of bats as currently understood, and the known distribution of bats as recovered during the desk study. Bats are highly mobile creatures that switch roosts regularly and therefore the usage of a site by bats can change over a short period of time.

The buildings designated as B3 were not fully accessible due to a locked gate however the buildings were observed with the use of high powered binoculars.

### Historic records

Two EPSL's for the destruction of common pipistrelle bat roosts were noted within 2km of the proposed development with the closest being 554m northeast of the site. 13 records of noctule bats were noted with the closest record being present 2.2km northwest of the site.

9 records of common pipistrelle and 2 records of soprano pipistrelle were noted, the closest record being 1.8km southeast of the site in West Haigh Wood. 2 brown long-eared bat records are present 6.3km from the northeast boundary of the site.

#### Survey Results

A plan showing the survey results is provided in Appendix 3.

Building present within the site boundary consists of a number of stable buildings which have been constructed of a mix of wood, corrugated iron and box profile sheeting. The roofs are a mix of flat and pitched with mixed coverings including corrugated iron, box profile sheeting and bitumen felt.

The buildings are subject to regular disturbance due to their use as stables which can reduce their cutability for bats. In addition large sections of the buildings are open to provide ventilation which also results in high levels of light within the structures in addition to wind which will likely further reduce their suitability for bats.

There are no voids present within the structures and the roofs are constructed of wooden beams with no lining and mixed roof coverings to match the external walls.





B1 -Building located just outside the along the southern boundary of the site (pictured above).



B1 -Interior of located just outside the along the southern boundary of the site (pictured above).



B1 -Building located just outside the along the southern boundary of the site (pictured above).



B2 -Buildings located towards the centre of the site (pictured above).



B2 -Buildings located towards the centre of the site (pictured above).



B3 -Buildings located towards the centre of the site (pictured above).

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B3 - Buildings located towards the centre of the site (pictured above).

### **Conclusions and Recommendations**

The structures on site are considered to have negligible value for roosting bats due to a lack of potential roost features.

The buildings are constructed of a mix of wood, corrugated iron and box profile sheeting which are generally considered to be unsuitable for bats due to the lack of thermal properties. In addition the buildings are subject to regular disturbance by both humans and horses due to their use. Furthermore all buildings contain large openings which will likely allow in higher levels of light and weathering further reducing their suitability for bats. No evidence of bats was noted internally or externally.

As such it is considered very unlikely to be roosting within the building and as such, there are not anticipated to be any impacts on bats in this location as a result of the proposed development.

However in the unlikely event that a bat or evidence of bats is discovered during the development all work must stop and a bat licensed ecologist contacted for further advice.

The Local Planning Authority has a duty to ask for enhancements under the NPPF (2021) as such the following enhancement opportunities should be considered for the site;

The installation of a minimum of ten bat boxes on the new buildings will provide additional roosting habitat for bats e.g.

- 2F Schwegler Bat Box (trees)
- 1FF Schwegler Bat Box (trees)
- 2FN Schwegler Bat Box (trees)

Or a similar alternative brand.

Bat boxes should be positioned 3-5m above ground level facing in a south or south-westerly direction with a clear flight path to and from the entrance, away from artificial light.

### Author

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#### Appendix 1







Appendix 3



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