

# **Outbuildings at Decoy Cottage, Decoy Lane, Poling, W.Sussex. BN18 9QA.**

## **Phase 1 Daytime Bat Assessment**

**S.G. Dodd MSc MCIEEM MRES**

**[Class Licence Registration Number 2020-48628-CLS-CLS]**

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## Quality Control

The information and data which has been prepared and provided is true and has been prepared and provided in accordance with the *Code of Professional Conduct issued by the Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (CIEEM)*. We confirm that the opinions expressed are our true and professional bona fide opinions.

|                  |                                                                                              | Date                      |
|------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------|
| Survey Ecologist | Scotty Dodd MSc MCIEEM MRES<br><br>[Class Licence Registration Number<br>2020-48628-CLS-CLS] | Survey date/s: 13/01/2022 |
| Report Author    | Scotty Dodd MSc MCIEEM MRES<br><br>[Class Licence Registration Number<br>2020-48628-CLS-CLS] | Submitted: 14/01/2022     |

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## Summary

Consultant Ecologist S.G.Dodd MSc MCIEEM MRES [Class Licence Registration Number 2020-48628-CLS-CLS] was commissioned by the Client to undertake a Phase 1 Daytime Bat Assessment of four agricultural outbuildings (B1-B4) at Decoy Cottage, Decoy Lane, Poling, BN18 9QA. This is required to support a proposed planning application seeking to:

1. Convert B1 & B4 to habitable accommodation. Tying into:
2. Demolish B2 & B3 to facilitate improved layout of proposed new building.

The buildings (B1-B4) were previously surveyed for bats during 2017 by PJC Consultancy. Their Phase 1 assessment survey found B2-B4 to have negligible potential to support roosting bats and B1 to have low potential to support roosting bats: the potential roost features (PRFs) being cracks to the external walls at the northern end of the western and eastern elevations of B1. A Phase 2 dusk emergence survey, which monitored B1 & B4, was then undertaken by PRC Consultancy in early September 2017 and no bats were found to be using the PRFs identified. Subsequent to this survey the cracks were repaired by the owners and the PRF features no longer exist.

The 2022 updated Phase 1 Daytime Bat Assessment found no evidence of bats using the interior of the four buildings and no external features suitable for roosting bats. **It is the surveyors' opinion that the features surveyed have Negligible potential to support roosting bats.** No further surveys are required.

Evidence of nesting Swallows *Hirundo rustica* was noted within B1-B3. If works are to commence within the bird nesting season (typically 1<sup>st</sup> March – 31<sup>st</sup> August) the buildings should be checked by a suitably qualified ecologist to confirm the absence of any active nests associated with the buildings. As the outbuildings will be converted to habitable accommodation there will be a net loss of suitable nesting opportunities for Swallows and advice should be sought on appropriate mitigation / compensation.

Additionally, Bird boxes were noted on the southern elevation of B2. It is advised that when the bird boxes are removed for winter maintenance and cleaning (i.e. outside of the bird-nesting season), that they are suitably relocated away from the proposed works area to prevent any disturbance during works.

The wider area has high suitability for bats, with commuting / foraging potential along tree-lines, hedgerows, lake and nearby areas of woodland. However, these wider landscape features will not be affected by the proposed works provided that guidance on lighting is followed (see below).

### **Recommendations:**

As bats are present in the wider area and likely to be utilising onsite features for commuting and / or foraging purposes lighting should be conditioned. Any lighting scheme for the proposed development will need to take into consideration the presence of bats in the local area and the scheme should minimise potential impacts to any bats using nearby trees, hedgerows and buildings by avoiding unnecessary interior / exterior artificial light spill through the use of directional light sources and shielding. Bat Conservation Trust (BCT) and Institution of Lighting Professionals (ILP) guidance notes can be downloaded here (BCT & ILP, 2018): <https://www.theilp.org.uk/documents/guidance-note-8-bats-and-artificial-lighting/>

### **Enhancements:**

The existing corrugated concrete asbestos roof coverings will be replaced with reclaimed traditional clay tiles. Corrugated concrete asbestos roof coverings offer little to no opportunities for external crevice roosting species of bat. However, traditional clay tiles will offer multiple new roosting opportunities for external crevice roosting species of bat, such as *Pipistrellus* species. F1 Bitumen felt liner should be used in place of breathable roofing membranes, which can entangle bats claws causing death.

## 1.1 Background

Consultant Ecologist S.G.Dodd MSc MCIEEM MRES [Class Licence Registration Number 2020-48628-CLS-CLS] was commissioned by the Client to undertake a Phase 1 Daytime Bat Assessment of four agricultural outbuildings (B1-B4) at Decoy Cottage, Decoy Lane, Poling, BN18 9QA.

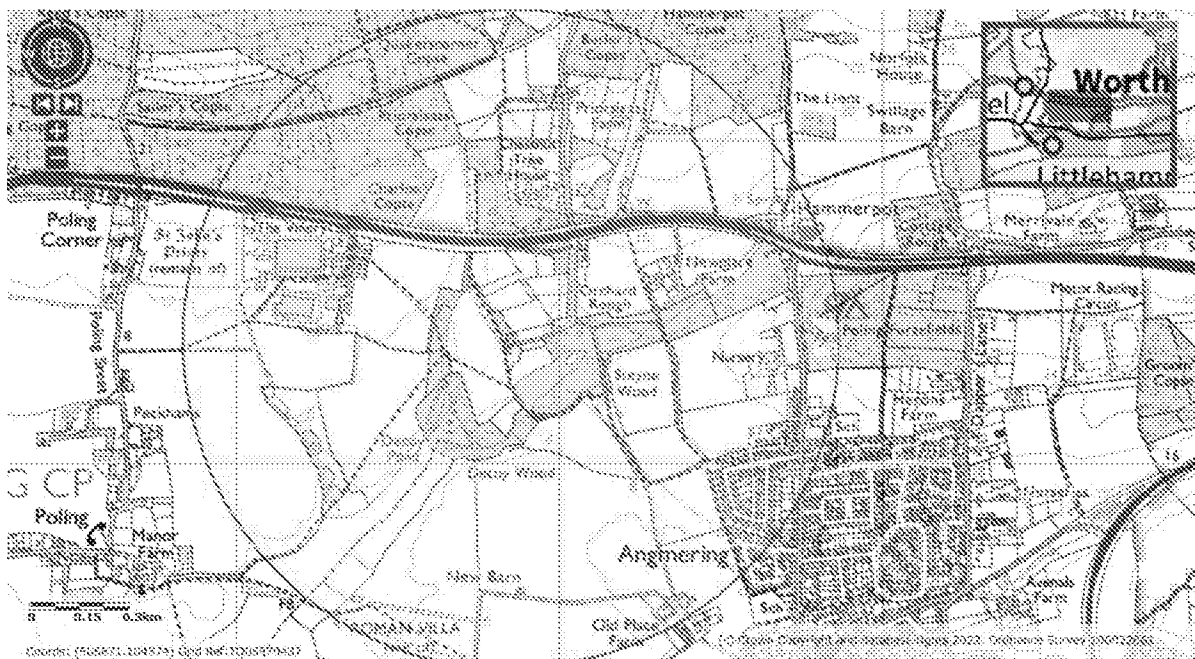
This report presents the findings of the Phase 1 daytime bat assessment survey undertaken on the 13<sup>th</sup> January 2022, which is aimed at assessing the suitability of the buildings and surrounding habitats to support bats.

## 1.2 Site Setting and Description

Decoy Cottage outbuildings are situated at OSGR TQ 0584 0538. The site is situated in a rural location between Poling village and Angerming, and to the east of Arundel in the Arun Valley, West Sussex.

Decoy Cottage is in a rural setting surrounded by arable and pasture with woodland, much of it ancient, to the south, west and east, and a large lake to the immediate south-east.

The site is not within the South Downs National Park. There are no designated sites within the 1km search area.



**Figure 1:** Site location (central red outline) within 1km search area. Image produced courtesy of Magic maps (<http://www.magic.gov.uk/>, contains public sector information licensed under the Open Government Licence v3.0)



**Figure 2:** Aerial imaging showing surrounding habitats in 1km search area. Areas of broadleaved woodland are overlain in green, those areas with hatching indicate ancient woodland. Image produced courtesy of Magic maps (<http://www.magic.gov.uk/>), contains public sector information licensed under the Open Government Licence v3.0)

## Site Proposals

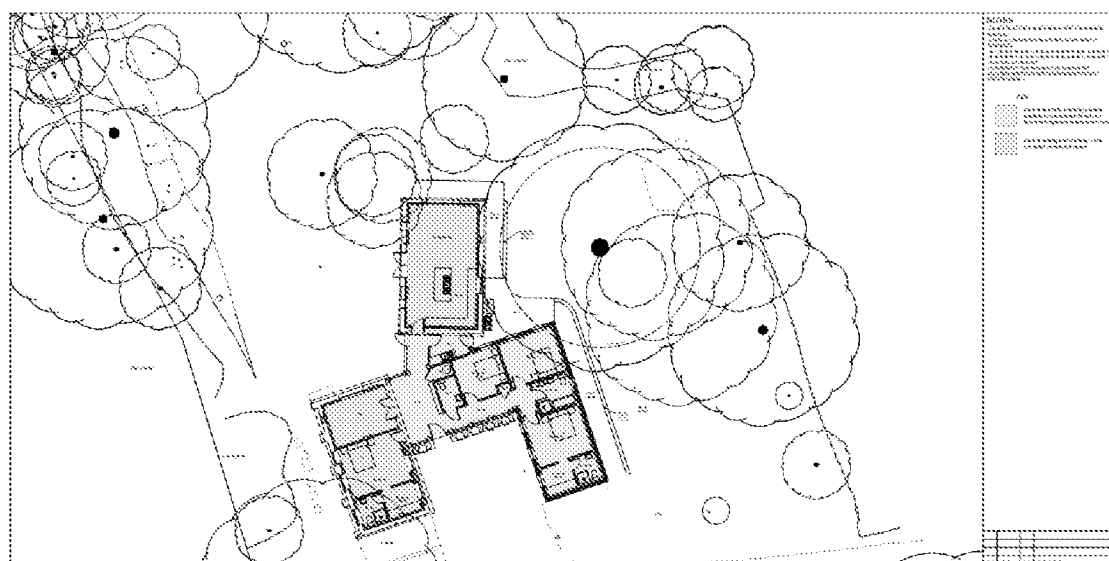
A proposed planning application seeking to:

1. Convert B1 & B4 to habitable accommodation. Tying into:
2. Demolish B2 & B3 to facilitate improved layout of proposed new building.

Plans were available at the time of survey.



**Figure 3:** Building locations. B1 is a brick and mortar barn, B2 is a wooden stable and tack-room, B3 is a wood and concrete stable storage unit and B4 is a brick and mortar garage / workshop.



**Figure 4:** Architects proposed site plan. The orange shaded areas indicate B1 & B4, existing heritage brick structures that will be retained and converted to habitable accommodation. The green shaded areas represent the position of the existing wooden stable buildings B2 & B3 that are earmarked for demolition and replacement.

## 2.0 METHODS

This section details the methods used during the survey.

### 2.1 Desk Study

A desk top study search for protected sites, habitats and species was completed using MAGiC, an internet-based mapping service ([www.magic.gov.uk](http://www.magic.gov.uk)) to identify:

- Current and past EPS mitigation licences for the property and surrounding area.
- Designated sites (e.g. SPAs, SACs, Ramsar, NNRs, SSSIs, LNRs) relevant to bats.

## **2.2 Timing and Weather Conditions**

The Phase 1 survey was carried out on the morning of the 13<sup>th</sup> January 2022, which was mild, dry and bright after a frost.

### **2.2.1 Phase 1 Habitat Survey Equipment**

Weather-writer, pencil, site maps and 10x42 close focus binoculars, torch, Canon XA20 IR camera with IR illumination, endoscope, camera, collection tubes, nitrile gloves and ladder.

### **2.2.2 Survey Limitations**

In winter bats are much less active as they have entered the hibernation period. Winter weather conditions mean that external signs of bats, such as droppings, may be less detectable.

## **2.3 Phase 1 Daytime Bat Assessment Methods**

See above for timing, weather conditions and any constraints.

The Phase 1 Bat Survey comprised of a daytime internal and external examination of the buildings to be affected by the proposed development, and surrounding habitat, to record evidence of any protected bat species having the potential to be present. The survey was undertaken in accordance with the Bat Conservation Trust Guidelines (Collins, 2016).

The parts of the building to be affected by the proposed works were investigated externally to identify potential bat access/egress locations and roosting areas such as slipped/broken tiles/slates, gaps under flashing, gaps or holes in any fascias and soffits and to record direct evidence of bat presence such as droppings and urine staining. This was followed by a detailed investigation of all accessible internal spaces to record evidence of bat roosting activity such as droppings, feeding remains, live animals, corpses, urine staining and fur staining. The buildings were assessed as to their suitability to support roosting bats.

The details of the assessment criteria used to determine the ecological value of on-site attributes is outlined below. During the Phase 1 bat survey the assessment criteria are based on the potential for the site to support the species considered. However, in many cases Phase 2 surveys will be required to confirm presence /absence of any bat species and hence the importance of a population at the site, therefore the assessment of value should be considered as provisional. Where

possible, a provisional assessment of potential will be made although this may well require Phase 2 surveys to confirm status.

**Confirmed roost-** Confirmed roosts are those where bats are present or, in the absence of actual bats, there is strong evidence to suggest that bats have roosted in the building, such as droppings. Further Phase 2 surveys will be required to characterise the roost, identify access points, species present and numbers present.

**High Potential-** High potential buildings are those that have features highly suitable for use by roosting bats, including gaps around soffits, hanging tiles, extensive roof spaces etc. High potential buildings are often, but not always, buildings of more historic construction. Further Phase 2 surveys will be required to confirm the presence/absence of bats.

**Medium Potential-** Medium potential buildings have a moderate number of features that may be utilised by bats for roosting, these may include loose fascias, roof spaces etc. Further Phase 2 surveys are likely to be required to confirm the presence/absence of bats.

**Low Potential-** Low potential buildings are those that provide limited bat roosting potential although some features that may be utilised by bats may be present. Further Phase 2 surveys are likely to be required to confirm the presence/absence of bats.

**No/Negligible Potential** – These are buildings that are extremely unlikely to support roosting bats due to the absence of suitable features. Further Phase 2 surveys are unlikely to be required for buildings with negligible potential.

## 3.0 RESULTS

### 3.1 Phase 1 Bat Survey Results

#### 3.1.1 Bats – Desk Study

There are no EPS licences pertaining to bats within the 1km search area.

Bat species recorded in the general area around Arundel include:

- Common Pipistrelle – *Pipistrellus pipistrellus*
- Soprano Pipistrelle – *Pipistrellus pygmaeus*
- Brown Long-eared Bat – *Plecotus auritus*
- Serotine - *Eptesicus serotinus*
- Noctule *Nyctalus noctula*

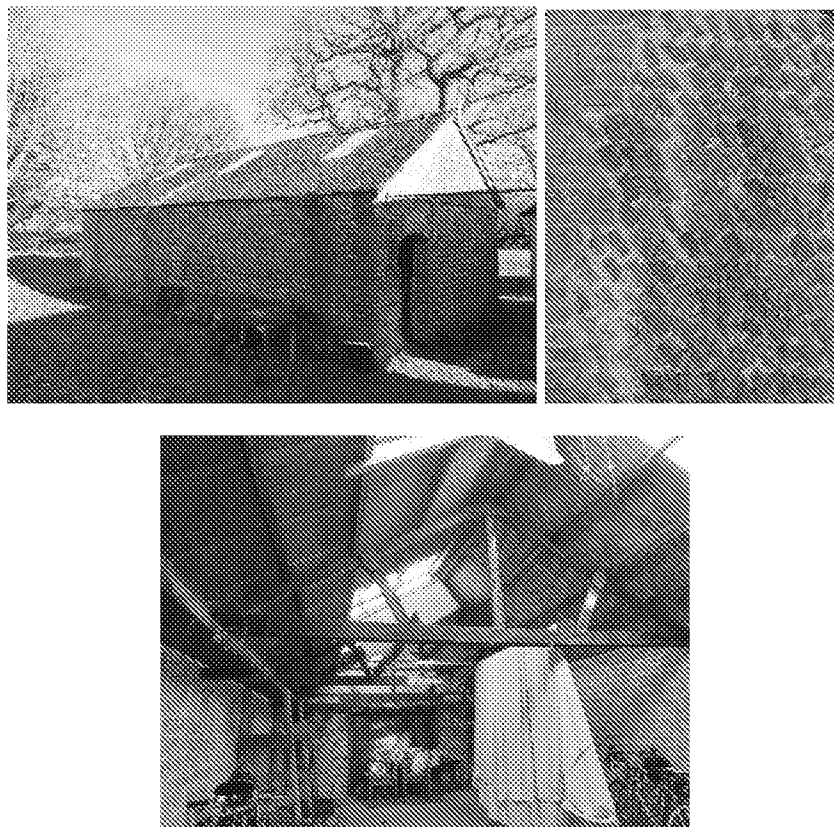
- Barbastelle *Barbastella barbastellus*
- Daubenton's Bat *Myotis daubentonii*

Sussex Bat Group may hold further records.

The site is situated just south of the South Downs National Park boundary. The site is not adjacent to, or within 50 meters of, any statutory sites. There are no statutory sites within the 1km search area. There are areas of ancient semi-natural woodland <100m to the east and ~200m to the south. A large lake is situated ~ 150m to the south-east.

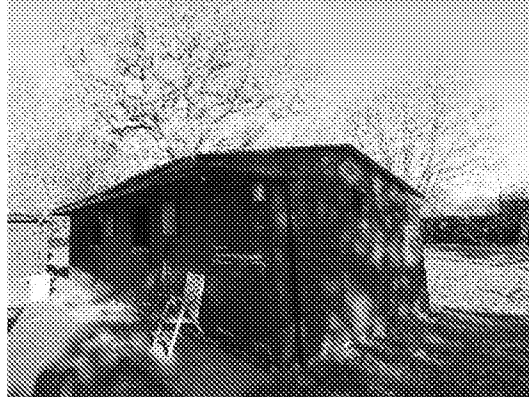
### **3.1.2 Bats – Building Assessment**

**Building 1:** Single storey brick and lime mortar barn. Note that the external wall cracks noted in the 2017 survey have since been repaired. These were the only potential roost features identified for bats during the previous survey. The roof covering is corrugated concrete asbestos sheets with a dual pitch. Corrugated concrete asbestos also at each gable end. The roof covering incorporates corrugated Perspex skylight panels and the building is well lit internally. Bat access via eaves and a small hole cut out of a corrugated concrete asbestos panel on the southern elevation. No internal evidence of bats having accessed the building.



**Figures 5-7.** Showing Building 1 external, repairs to wall cracks and barn interior with sky lights illuminating.

**Building 2:** Single storey, wooden shiplap clad stables and tack room in constant use to house horses. Roof covering is of corrugated concrete asbestos sheets. No internal evidence of bats having accessed the building and no external roosting opportunities detected.



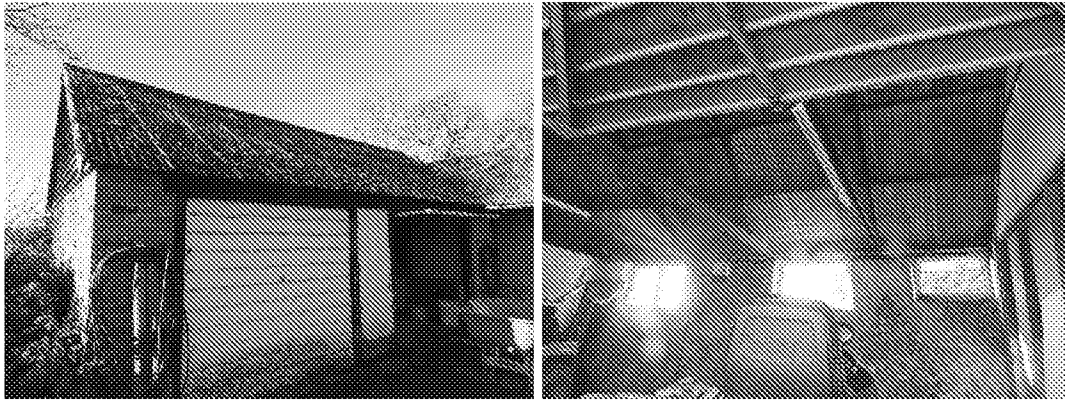
**Figure 8.** Showing Building 2, an active horse stable and tack room. Note the bird boxes to southern elevation. These should be removed and relocated during the winter months.

**Building 3:** Single storey, concrete and wooden shiplap clad ancillary storage area for stables (e.g. hay & feed etc). Roof covering is of corrugated concrete asbestos sheets. No internal evidence of bats having accessed the building and no external roosting opportunities detected. Links to B4.



**Figure 9.** Showing shiplap clad front of Building 3.

**Building 4:** A single storey brick and lime mortar garage / workshop with double garage doors to the eastern elevation and multiple broken windows to the western elevation. The roof covering is corrugated concrete asbestos sheets with a dual pitch. Bat access to the building would be possible via the broken windows and a gap at the apex of the southern elevation gable. No internal evidence of bats having accessed the building and no external roosting opportunities detected.



**Figures 10 & 11.** Showing Building 4 exterior and interior.

## **4.0 EVALUATION, IMPACTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **4.1 Phase 1 Bat Survey**

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