

Recommendation Report for

REF NO: BN/22/18/PD

LOCATION: Land North of Sunnyside Cottages
Yapton Road
Barnham
PO22 0AZ

PROPOSAL: Notification for Prior Approval under Class Q for a Proposed Change of Use of Agricultural Building to 2No. Dwellinghouses (Class C3) and associated works

SITE AND SURROUNDINGS

DESCRIPTION OF APPLICATION Conversion of the existing building into two single storey dwellings, one of two double bedrooms and one of five double bedrooms. The resultant building will retain the existing foundations and steel frame. New external cladding will be added to the exterior plus new windows, doors and a new roof covering. Insulation will be added to the structure between internal and external walls. The submitted plans do not clearly indicate garden areas but there is space to the front of the dwellings which would serve such a purpose. The larger dwelling is shown to have three parking spaces whilst the smaller, two.

SITE AREA 863 square metres.

RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT 23 dwellings per hectare.

DENSITY (NET)

TOPOGRAPHY Predominantly flat. The land to the east banks up slightly.

TREES None affected by the proposed development.

BOUNDARY TREATMENT Open to all boundaries except to the east where there is the remains of a post & wire fence atop a small bank with a ditch beyond. The boundary to Sunnyside Cottages to the south is a 4m high hedge although the western end house (Sunnyside) has an open boundary.

SITE CHARACTERISTICS Existing long rectangular greenhouse structure with a grassed area roughly half as wide as the greenhouse to the southern side. The structure has a concrete base and a steel frame. It was occupied by plants and gardening tools/equipment.

CHARACTER OF LOCALITY Rural. Countryside location with a small number of dwellings, barns and storage land. The site is overlooked by the rear windows of Sunnyside.

RELEVANT SITE HISTORY

BN/13/17/PL 3 No. dwellings & retention of small B8 storage area. Refused
REPORT(ODB)

This application is a Departure from the Development Plan.

08-06-17

Appeal: Dismissed
18-10-17

BN/22/16/CLE	Lawful development certificate for use as existing storage (B8 Storage or Distribution) & use of adjacent land as additional campsite (sui generis)	Approve 07-02-17
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Planning permission was refused and an appeal dismissed for a development of three dwellings on land including this site under ref BN/13/17/PL (APP/C3810/W/17/3178447). The Inspector concluded that:

"15. On the other hand, the proposal before me would harm the character and appearance of the area arising from its poor layout, contrived design, and relationship with the surrounding area. It would encroach into the open countryside and fail to integrate satisfactorily with existing and approved development. This harm to the environment is a matter to which I attach significant weight.

16. I therefore conclude that the adverse environmental impacts of the proposal would significantly and demonstrably outweigh its limited social and economic benefits. Consequently, the scheme would not be a sustainable development."

REPRESENTATIONS

None from local residents.

The Parish Council commented that:

"The greenhouses are close to the site where previously an application was made to erect 3 dwellings this was refused by ADC and dismissed at Appeal for several reasons which we would hope would be considered relevant to this application.

As they intend to infill between the existing greenhouse frames the Council is concerned about the safety of any building that would be erected and would wish to be assured that are the derelict greenhouse frames are in good enough condition to be used in a residential building and are the footings sufficient, secondly fire regulations are a concern the Insulation suggested is celotex which we understand is flammable and the building will be finished in wooden cladding.

In addition the concerns raised previously about foul water drainage and connection to a sewer remain as does the fact that there are no footpaths or street lighting leading to the proposed dwellings.

As the proposed dwellings are one of 5 bedrooms and the other 2 bedrooms is the amount of car parking space sufficient as only space for 5 cars. There does not appear to be any garden space for either dwelling.

Finally the appearance is unattractive and not in character with the semi rural surroundings as the building will be wooden clad it resembles army barracks."

COMMENTS ON REPRESENTATIONS RECEIVED:

The following comments are made in respect of the Parish objection:

The Local Planning Authority is only able to consider the following issues in the determination of this application:

- (a) transport and highways impacts of the development;
- (b) noise impacts of the development;
- (c) contamination risks on the site;
- (d) flooding risks on the site;
- (e) whether the location or siting of the building makes it otherwise impractical or undesirable for the building to change from agricultural use to a use falling within Class C3 (dwellinghouses) of the Schedule to the Use Classes Order; and
- (f) the design or external appearance of the building,

It is not possible to consider any other matters such as building safety, fire risks, foul water drainage or lack of footpaths/street lighting. Parking and design will however be considered within the report's conclusions. On the subject of location, the Government's online Planning Practice Guidance makes it clear that the fact that a site is not sustainable is not a sufficient reason for refusing prior approval.

CONSULTATIONS

WSCC Strategic Planning

Environmental Health

Engineering Services Manager

Engineers (Drainage)

CONSULTATION RESPONSES RECEIVED:

WSCC HIGHWAYS - Note that the GPDO is quite clear as to what highway matters can be considered, namely whether the proposal is likely to result in a material increase or a material change in the character of traffic in the vicinity of the site. WSCC consider that the proposal is not anticipated to result in a material increase or change in the character of traffic. WSCC see no in principle issues with the proposal. They note that a number of uses are already served from the access road (several dwellings, caravan site, storage uses and the previous equine use) and as such, a material increase in vehicular movements would not be anticipated. Note that parking spaces have not been demonstrated but that it appears there is sufficient space within the site to facilitate parking and that any overflow parking would not affect the publicly maintained highway. Weight is given to the fact that associated delivery and agricultural vehicles have used this access for the nursery use and have done so safely with no known highways safety concerns. Residential uses are considered to be less intensive than agricultural, therefore the prior approval is considered acceptable in highway terms.

ADC DRAINAGE ENGINEERS - "The application is within the Lidsey catchment and will also require the need for new roof/guttering details. We would therefore like to apply condition ENGD2B. Soakaways must be investigated for surface water disposal. It should be noted that the site is near to an area of historic flooding along Yapton lane. And an area of high surface water flood risk is present within the site boundary to the east, where it is unclear if a drainage ditch network existed. Any proposals to increase hard standing or encroach in this area will need careful discussions with us."

ADC ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH - No response.

COMMENTS ON CONSULTATION RESPONSES:

Comments noted. The drainage condition is necessary. However, ENGD2B is for major applications

and ENGD2A would therefore be the appropriate condition.

POLICY CONTEXT

Designations applicable to site:

Outside Built Up Area Boundary;
Flood Zone 1 (low risk);
Class C Road;
Special Control of Adverts;
No Public Sewer; and
Lidsey Treatment Catchment Area.

DEVELOPMENT PLAN POLICES

PLANNING POLICY GUIDANCE:

NPPF	National Planning Policy Framework
NPPG	National Planning Practice Guidance

DEVELOPMENT PLAN AND/OR LEGISLATIVE BACKGROUND

PERMITTED DEVELOPMENT BACKGROUND:

This application falls to be determined under the provisions of Class Q of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 (as amended) in respect of:

(a) A change of use of a building and any land within its curtilage from use as an agricultural building to a use falling within Class C3 (dwelling houses) of the Schedule to the Use Classes Order; or

(b) Development referred to in paragraph (a) together with building operations reasonably necessary to convert the building referred to in paragraph (a) to a use falling within Class C3 (dwellinghouses) of that Schedule.

The principle of the development is not in dispute. Class Q allows for the change of use (and the associated limited building operations) except where (as set out in Q.1):

(A) the site was not used solely for an agricultural use as part of an established agricultural unit:

- (i) on 20th March 2013, or
- (ii) in the case of a building which was in use before that date but was not in use on that date, when it was last in use, or
- (iii) in the case of a site which was brought into use after 20th March 2013, for a period of at least 10 years before the date development under Class Q begins;

(B) in the case of -

- (i) a larger dwellinghouse (100m²-465m²), within an established agricultural unit
- (aa) the cumulative number of separate larger dwellinghouses developed under Class Q exceeds 3; or
- (bb) the cumulative floor space of the existing building or buildings changing use to a larger dwellinghouse or dwellinghouses under Class Q exceeds 465 square metres;

(C) in the case of -

- (i) a smaller dwellinghouse (less than 100m²), within an established agricultural unit

(aa) the cumulative number of separate smaller dwellinghouses developed under Class Q exceeds 5; or
(bb) the floor space of any one separate smaller dwellinghouse having a use falling within Class C3 (dwellinghouses) of the Schedule to the Use Classes Order exceeds 100 square metres;

(D) the development under Class Q (together with any previous development under Class Q) within an established agricultural unit would result in either or both of the following -

- (i) a larger dwellinghouse or larger dwellinghouses having more than 465 square metres of floor space having a use falling within Class C3 (dwellinghouses) of the Schedule to the Use Classes Order;
- (ii) the cumulative number of separate dwellinghouses having a use falling within Class C3 (dwellinghouses) of the Schedule to the Use Classes Order exceeding 5;

(E) the site is occupied under an agricultural tenancy, unless the express consent of both the landlord and the tenant has been obtained;

(F) less than 1 year before the date development begins -

- (i) an agricultural tenancy over the site has been terminated, and
- (ii) the termination was for the purpose of carrying out development under Class Q, unless both the landlord and the tenant have agreed in writing that the site is no longer required for agricultural use;

(G) development under Class A(a) or Class B(a) of Part 6 of this Schedule (agricultural buildings and operations) has been carried out on the established agricultural unit -

- (i) since 20th March 2013; or
- (ii) where development under Class Q begins after 20th March 2023, during the period which is 10 years before the date development under Class Q begins;

(H) the development would result in the external dimensions of the building extending beyond the external dimensions of the existing building at any given point;

(I) the development under Class Q(b) would consist of building operations other than:

- (i) the installation or replacement of:
 - (aa) windows, doors, roofs, or exterior walls, or
 - (bb) water, drainage, electricity, gas or other services, to the extent reasonably necessary for the building to function as a dwelling house; and
- (ii) partial demolition to the extent reasonably necessary to carry out building operations allowed by paragraph Q.1(I)(i);

(J) the site is on article 2(3) land;

(K) the site is, or forms part of:

- (i) a site of special scientific interest;
- (ii) a safety hazard area;
- (iii) a military explosives storage area;

(L) the site is, or contains, a scheduled monument; or

(M) the building is a listed building.

In addition, the curtilage must comply with the interpretation provided at Part 3, Paragraph X of the GPDO 2015 which states that: "curtilage means, for the purposes of Class Q, R or S only-

- (i) the piece of land, whether enclosed or unenclosed, immediately beside or around the agricultural

building, closely associated with and serving the purposes of the agricultural building, or
(ii) an area of land immediately beside or around the agricultural building no larger than the land area occupied by the agricultural building,

.... whichever is the lesser";

Where a proposal is permitted development in accordance with the above, Class Q (paragraph Q.2 (1)) states that an application must be made to determine whether or not the prior approval of the Council will be required. The Council can only have regard to the following impacts:

- (a) Transport and highways impacts of the development;
- (b) Noise impacts of the development;
- (c) Contamination risks on the site;
- (d) Flooding risks on the site;
- (e) Whether the location or siting of the building makes it otherwise impractical or undesirable for the building to change from agricultural use to a use falling within Class C3 (dwelling houses) of the Schedule to the Use Classes Order, and
- (f) The design or external appearance of the building,

The Order also states that the provisions of Paragraph W shall apply in relation to any application. Part (10) of paragraph W includes the following: "The local planning authority must, when determining an application-

- (a) take into account any representations made to them as a result of any consultation under sub-paragraphs (5) or (6) and any notice given under sub-paragraph (8); and,
- (b) have regard to the National Planning Policy Framework issued by the Department for Communities and Local Government in March 2012(a), so far as relevant to the subject matter of the prior approval, as if the application were a planning application;"

It is considered that this allows the local planning authority to have regard to any of the representations received and also to the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG) but only in respect of the 6 issues set out above. Advice has previously been received from the DCLG which confirmed that it is not possible to refuse prior approval on the basis of an issue/impact not listed within the Order. The Local Planning Authority has 56 days to provide its comments to the applicant's agent or it is deemed that they have no objection. This period expired on 18 July 2018.

NOTE ON BUILDING WORKS:

As noted above, Q.1 (I) allows for the installation or replacement of walls and roofs. Q.1 (I) (ii) also allows for partial demolition in order to facilitate the building operations allowed by Q.1 (I) (i). It is also noted that section 55(2)(a) of the Town and Country Planning 1990 Act provides that the carrying out, for the maintenance, improvement or other alteration of any building, of works which affect only the interior of the building, or do not materially affect the external appearance of the building, are not to be taken for the purposes of the Act to involve development of the land.

It is also noted that paragraph 105 (Reference ID: 13-105-20180615) of the Government's online Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) states that:

"Building works are allowed under the right permitting agricultural buildings to change to residential use. However, the right assumes that the agricultural building is capable of functioning as a dwelling. The right permits building operations which are reasonably necessary to convert the building, which may include

those which would affect the external appearance of the building and would otherwise require planning permission. This includes the installation or replacement of windows, doors, roofs, exterior walls, water, drainage, electricity, gas or other services to the extent reasonably necessary for the building to function as a dwelling house; and partial demolition to the extent reasonably necessary to carry out these building operations. It is not the intention of the permitted development right to allow rebuilding work which would go beyond what is reasonably necessary for the conversion of the building to residential use. Therefore it is only where the existing building is already suitable for conversion to residential use that the building would be considered to have the permitted development right."

And that:

"Internal works are not generally development. For the building to function as a dwelling it may be appropriate to undertake internal structural works, including to allow for a floor, the insertion of a mezzanine or upper floors within the overall residential floor space permitted, or internal walls, which are not prohibited by Class Q."

Therefore, new walls & roofs, windows and doors can be added to the structure and this would still be considered a conversion. It is also possible to carry out purely internal works and these would not amount to development under the Act provided that the completion of those works does not in itself constitute a material change of use. This being the case, it is considered that the structure of the building could be strengthened to better facilitate conversion and that this would be outside the scope of development control.

ANALYSIS OF PERMITTED DEVELOPMENT RESTRICTIONS:

(A): The land is known to have previously been in use as a horticultural nursery with the application site the only remaining glasshouse. It was last used some time after 2010/11 and so was not in use on 20/03/13.

Section 336 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 defines agriculture as including "horticulture, fruit growing, seed growing, dairy farming, the breeding and keeping of livestock (including any creature kept for the production of food, wool, skins or fur, or for the purpose of its use in the farming of land), the use of land as grazing land, meadow land, osier land, market gardens and nursery grounds, and the use of land for woodlands where that use is ancillary to the farming of land for other agricultural purposes, and "agricultural" shall be construed accordingly".

The applicant has also supplied references to applications approved by Chichester DC where it was accepted that glasshouses used for horticulture fall within the definition of an agricultural building.

(B) - (D): The development proposed consists of both a "smaller dwellinghouse" and a "larger dwellinghouse". Neither part of the proposal exceeds the maximum number of dwellings and neither exceeds the maximum floorspace.

(E) - (F): The site is not occupied under any agricultural tenancy and has not had a tenancy on it within the last year.

(G): No development under class A or B of the GPDO has taken place on the site

(H): The proposed works to the exterior do not exceed the existing external dimensions. Whilst the section drawing does show that the cladding will be affixed to the outside of the existing steel structure, the cladding does not go beyond the extent of the existing block plinth.

(I): The proposal includes new doors, windows, exterior walls and roofs. The structure is a substantial

steel frame and the applicant has confirmed that it is capable of being converted and of taking loadings from the new materials without modification. However, it is considered that strengthening could occur having regard to section 55(2)(a) of the Town and Country Planning 1990 Act, as discussed above. The applicant has supplied references to applications approved by Chichester DC where it was accepted that new doors, windows, exterior walls and roofs do not take the proposal outside of the permitted development regime.

The application proposes the connection of drainage and gas to the building but has stated that the building already benefits from water and electricity. The applicant also confirms that no demolition of the building is proposed and there is no reason to dispute this.

(J): The site is not on article 2(3) land.

(K): The site is outside of any of these areas.

(L): There are no scheduled monuments on site.

(M): The building is not listed.

CURTILAGE: The building sits alongside a long rectangular piece of grass which is clearly associated with the structure and not larger than the land area occupied by the agricultural building.

OTHER MATERIAL CONSIDERATIONS

It is considered that there are no other material considerations to warrant a decision otherwise than in accordance with the Development Plan and/or legislative background.

CONCLUSIONS

TRANSPORT & HIGHWAY IMPACTS:

The Highway Authority do not consider that the change to a C3 dwelling would have a material increase or a material change on the character of traffic in the vicinity of the site. Therefore, it would not be possible to sustain a refusal on highway grounds.

It is noted that the Parish Council have concerns with the amount of parking. The Highway Authority do note that the proposal does not demonstrate actual parking spaces but that it appears there is sufficient space within the site to facilitate parking and that any overflow parking would not affect the publicly maintained highway. The proposed block plan indicates 2 spaces for the smaller dwelling and 3 for the larger dwelling. The West Sussex Parking Demand Calculator indicates a demand for this proposal of 6 spaces. Although only 5 are shown, it is considered that space could be made available for a 6th and therefore, there is no objection on these grounds.

CONTAMINATION & NOISE:

ADC Environmental Health Officers have not responded to the consultation therefore it is not possible to comment on contamination issues. In respect of noise, there are existing dwellings nearby and therefore, the typical noise associated with a dwelling would not be harmful to the character of the area and is unlikely also to adversely affect any of the existing dwelling.

FLOOD RISK:

The site lies in Flood Zone 1 and therefore there are not considered to be any flood risk issues to consider.

SUITABILITY OF THE SITE:

Class Q (paragraph Q.2 (1)) advises that these applications can be determined with regard to whether the location or siting of the building makes it otherwise impractical or undesirable for the building to change from agricultural use to a residential use.

Guidance within the Governments online Planning Practice Guidance is as follows:

Paragraph 108 (Reference ID: 13-108-20150305): "The permitted development right does not apply a test in relation to sustainability of location. This is deliberate as the right recognises that many agricultural buildings will not be in village settlements and may not be able to rely on public transport for their daily needs. Instead, the local planning authority can consider whether the location and siting of the building would make it impractical or undesirable to change use to a house."

Paragraph 109 (Reference ID: 13-109-20150305):

"Impractical or undesirable are not defined in the regulations, and the local planning authority should apply a reasonable ordinary dictionary meaning in making any judgment. Impractical reflects that the location and siting would "not be sensible or realistic", and undesirable reflects that it would be "harmful or objectionable".

When considering whether it is appropriate for the change of use to take place in a particular location, a local planning authority should start from the premise that the permitted development right grants planning permission, subject to the prior approval requirements. That an agricultural building is in a location where the local planning authority would not normally grant planning permission for a new dwelling is not a sufficient reason for refusing prior approval.

There may, however, be circumstances where the impact cannot be mitigated. Therefore, when looking at location, local planning authorities may, for example, consider that because an agricultural building on the top of a hill with no road access, power source or other services its conversion is impractical. Additionally the location of the building whose use would change may be undesirable if it is adjacent to other uses such as intensive poultry farming buildings, silage storage or buildings with dangerous machines or chemicals.

When a local authority considers location and siting it should not therefore be applying tests from the National Planning Policy Framework except to the extent these are relevant to the subject matter of the prior approval. So, for example, factors such as whether the property is for a rural worker, or whether the design is of exceptional quality or innovative, are unlikely to be relevant."

The site lies on the edge of a small cluster of residential dwellings. Although there is a caravan site to the north, it is not considered that the proposed residential use would conflict with this commercial use or vice versa. There are also two accesses to the site such that residents can drive/walk/cycle to their dwelling without using the western most access which is the main access for caravan related traffic. It is not considered that the location is impractical or undesirable.

DESIGN & EXTERNAL APPEARANCE:

It is considered that the external appearance is constrained by the shape & size of the existing glasshouse and that therefore it is difficult to propose a building that is of high design quality or would be

in character with existing buildings. This may therefore explain the Parish Council's comment about the building having the appearance of an army barracks. However, the proposed materials are considered to be appropriate for this rural location and therefore no objection is raised.

ECOLOGY:

The applicant has not supplied any surveys relating to bats or say barn owls but it is not possible to consider ecology under the remit of Class Q of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 (as amended). However, the building is not a traditional barn and is completely enclosed by glass with the only openings being a couple of roof windows and the doors. Although wildlife could enter the building, it is not considered that it would be an ideal location for a roost due to the exposed nature of the interior. It is therefore considered that the building would have negligible potential for bats or owls. Informatives will be included to alert the applicant to their obligations under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981.

SUMMARY:

It is therefore considered that this conversion is acceptable with regard to the provisions of Class Q of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 (as amended) in that there are no highway issues, no noise or contamination issues, no flood risk issues, no design issues and that the location is not considered to be impractical or undesirable.

HUMAN RIGHTS ACT

The Council in making a decision should be aware of and take into account any implications that may arise from the Human Rights Act 1998. Under the Act, it is unlawful for a public authority such as Arun District Council to act in a manner, which is incompatible with the European Convention on Human Rights.

Consideration has been specifically given to Article 8 (right to respect private and family life) and Article 1 of the First Protocol (protection of property). It is not considered that the recommendation for approval of the grant of permission in this case interferes unreasonably with any local residents' right to respect for their private and family life and home, except insofar as it is necessary to protect the rights and freedoms of others (in this case, the rights of the applicant). The Council is also permitted to control the use of property in accordance with the general interest and the recommendation for approval is considered to be a proportionate response to the submitted application based on the considerations set out in this report.

DUTY UNDER THE EQUALITIES ACT 2010

Duty under the Equalities Act 2010

In assessing this proposal the following impacts have been identified upon those people with the following protected characteristics (age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation).

The proposal would have a neutral impact on the protected characteristics.

RECOMMENDATION

1 For the avoidance of doubt the approved details are the (1) Dwg 000 "Location plan"; (2) Dwg

001 "Block Plan"; (3) Dwg 100 "Existing Elevations"; (4) Dwg 101 "Existing Floorplan"; (5) Dwg 200 "Proposed Elevations"; (6) 201 "Proposed Floorplan"; and (7) Dwg 300 "Proposed Sections" all as submitted on the 18th April 2018.

- 2 Development shall not commence until full details of the proposed surface water drainage scheme have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

The design should follow the hierarchy of preference for different types of surface water drainage disposal systems as set out in Approved Document H of the Building Regulations, the recommendations of the SUDS Manual produced by CIRIA.

Winter groundwater monitoring to establish highest annual ground water levels and Percolation testing to BRE 365, or similar approved, will be required to support the design of any Infiltration drainage.

No building shall be occupied until the complete surface water drainage system serving the property has been implemented in accordance with the agreed details and the details so agreed shall be maintained in good working order in perpetuity.

Reason: To ensure that the proposed development is satisfactorily drained in accordance with policies GEN7 and GEN9 of the Arun District Council Local Plan. This is required to be a pre-commencement condition because it is necessary to implement the surface water drainage system prior to commencing any building works.

- 3 INFORMATIVE: Drainage Engineers advise that Infiltration rates for soakage structures are to be based on percolation tests undertaken in the winter period and at the location and depth of the proposed structures. The percolation tests must be carried out in accordance with BRE 365, CIRIA R156 or a similar approved method and cater for the 1 in 10 year storm between the invert of the entry pipe to the soakaway, and the base of the structure. It must also have provision to ensure that there is capacity in the system to contain below ground level the 1 in 100 year event plus 30% on stored volumes, as an allowance for climate change. Adequate freeboard must be provided between the base of the soakaway structure and the highest recorded annual groundwater level identified in that location. Any SuDS or soakaway design must include adequate groundwater monitoring data to determine the highest winter groundwater table in support of the design. The applicant is advised to discuss the extent of groundwater monitoring with the Council's Engineers. Supplementary guidance notes are also available on request.
- 4 INFORMATIVE: The applicant should note that under Part 1 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981, with only a few exceptions, it is an offence for any person to intentionally take, damage or destroy the nest of any wild birds while the nest is in use or being built. Birds nest between March and September and therefore removal of dense bushes, ivy or trees or parts of trees etc. during this period could lead to an offence under the act.
- 5 INFORMATIVE: This notice does not give authority to destroy or damage a bat roost or disturb a bat. Bat species are protected under Section 39 of the 1994 Conservation (Natural Habitats etc) Regulations (as amended), the 1981 Wildlife and Countryside Act (as amended) and the 2000 Countryside and Rights of Way Act. It is illegal to damage or destroy any bat roost, whether occupied or not, or disturb or harm a bat. If you are aware that bats roost in a tree(s) for which work is planned, you should take further advice from Natural England (via the Bat Conservation Trust on 0845 1300228) or an ecological consultant before you start. If bats are discovered during the work, you must stop immediately and contact Natural England before continuing.