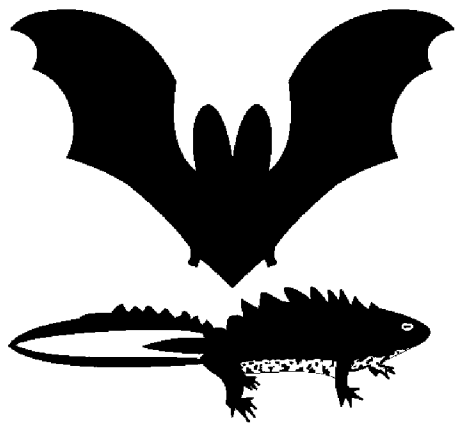




AEWC Ltd

Animal Ecology & Wildlife Consultants

Bat Assessment Report

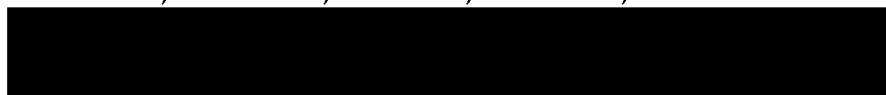
Peckhams

**Poling Street
Poling
Arundel
BN18 9PT**

Annika Binet

**21-008
April 2021**

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Summary

- AEWCLtd were commissioned by Giles Dixon to undertake a daytime bat assessment of a barn at Peckhams, Poling Street, Poling, Arundel, BN18 9PT at grid reference TQ 04739 05103 to help inform the proposed development of the site.
- This report details the results of the survey, which was carried out on 29th April 2021 by Annika Binet, a Natural England licensed bat ecologist.
- The site subject to survey was a brick and stone-built barn with unlined hipped slate roof and wooden single skin weather boarding forming the southern elevation, situated within an area of amenity grassland.
- The proposals are for the conversion of the barn into a home office, which will include full reroofing to allow the installation of a roof lining and insulation.
- The roof was well-sealed with just one area of missing mortar at the ridge towards the eastern end opening into the ridge crevice. This could largely be viewed from within the barn and was observed to be filled with cobwebs.
- Internally the building was light and airy due to the presence of glass tiles within both aspects of the roof as well as numerous gaps in the wooden wall. The ridge was observed to be highly cobwebbed indicating no likely recent use by bats.
- Due to the level of cobwebbing identified within the gaps and the light and draughty nature of the internal conditions it is considered that the presence of bats roosting is unlikely.
- A lack of any mitigation could result in a negative impact on bats if present, through potential death, disturbance or loss of roost space, a mitigation plan is therefore required for works to proceed.

This report has been prepared by AEWCLimited, with all reasonable skill, care and diligence within the terms of the Contract with the client. We disclaim any responsibility to the client and others in respect of any matters outside the scope of the above. This report is confidential to the client and we accept no responsibility of whatsoever nature to third parties to whom this report, or any part thereof, is made known. Any such party relies on the report at their own risk.

The information and data which has been prepared and provided is true and has been prepared and provided in accordance with the Professional Guidance and '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.

1 Introduction

- 1.1 AEWC Ltd were commissioned by Giles Dixon to undertake a daytime bat assessment of a barn at Peckhams, Poling Street, Poling, Arundel, BN18 9PT at grid reference TQ 04739 05103 to help inform the proposed development of the site.
- 1.2 The bat surveys and report writing were carried out in accordance with Bat Surveys: Good Practice Guidelines (Bat Conservation Trust, 2016).
- 1.3 No previous surveys are known to have been carried out on the site.
- 1.4 Bat assessment was therefore required to ascertain whether bats are present at the site and represent a constraint to the proposed development.
- 1.5 This report details the results of the bat assessment and outlines recommendations in relation to bats and the proposed development of the site.

Aims and objectives

- 1.6 The objectives of the survey were to:
 - Identify the potential of the building on the site to support roosting bats;
 - Identify whether bats are present using the building on site;
 - Determine the potential impacts on any bat roost from the proposed development schedule; and
 - Provide information for use in the design and development of ecological mitigation and enhancement measures where appropriate.

Site Location

- 1.7 The proposed development site is located at Peckhams, Poling Street, Poling, Arundel, BN18 9PT at central grid reference TQ 04739 05103. The site is located in a rural area of West Sussex close to the towns of Arundel, Littlehampton and East and West Preston in the South Downs National Park. The surrounding landscape comprises agricultural land, with a large block of woodland to the north and residential development to the south. See Figure 1.



FIGURE 1: SHOWING THE LOCATION OF THE SITE

1.8 The site contains a single-storey barn situated within a plot of amenity grassland.



FIGURE 2: SHOWING THE BUILDING SUBJECT TO SURVEY.

Legislation

- 1.9 All species of bats are listed on *Schedule 5* of the *Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended)* which affords them protection under *Section 9*, as amended. They are also protected under the *Conservation of Habitats and Species (Amendment) (EU Exit) Regulations 2019*. In combination, this makes it an offence to:
- intentionally kill, injure or take (capture etc.);
 - possess;
 - intentionally or recklessly damage, destroy, obstruct access to any structure or place used by a scheduled animal for shelter or protection, or disturb any animal occupying such a structure or place; and
 - sell, offer for sale, possess or transport for the purpose of sale (live or dead animal, part or derivative) or advertise for buying or selling such things.
- 1.10 A roost is defined as ‘any structure or place which a bat uses for shelter or protection’. As bats tend to reuse the same roosts, legal opinion is that a roost is protected whether or not bats are present.
- 1.11 Any disturbance of a bat occupying a roost can lead to prosecution. Disturbance can be caused by noise, vibration and artificial lighting. Penalties for breaking the law can include fines of £5,000 per bat, imprisonment and the seizure of equipment.
- 1.12 Furthermore, seven bat species (barbastelle, Bechstein’s, noctule, soprano pipistrelle, brown long-eared, lesser horseshoe and greater horseshoe) are also Species of Principal Importance in England under *Section 41* of the *Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006*.

Development proposals

- 1.13 The proposal is for the conversion of the barn to a home office unit. This will require the roof and southern wall to be removed as part of the works.

2 Methods

Daytime Assessment

- 2.1 A detailed bat building inspection was undertaken on the 29th April 2021 by Annika Binet, a Natural England licensed bat ecologist.
- 2.2 A systematic internal inspection of the building was conducted using a high-powered torch to illuminate all areas thought to be suitable for roosting bats. Additionally, an external search around the perimeter of the building was conducted and any possible access points i.e. gaps and crevices were noted and surveyed with a high-powered torch and ladder as appropriate.
- 2.3 The buildings suitability for bat roosting was assessed by examining structural features that may influence the suitability of a building to support roosting bats; these

include the presence of a roof void, the presence of access points into the building (including gaps beneath barge boards, weatherboarding, soffits and fascias, gaps under lead flashing, gaps within masonry and under loose tiles, gaps between tenon and mortise joints), the complexity and size of any roof void and daytime light levels in the roof void.

- 2.4 The buildings suitability for roosting bats was also assessed by examining the surrounding habitat. Important habitat features surrounding the structure which may influence roost potential include whether the structure is in a semi-rural or parkland location, its proximity to a significant linear habitat features such as a watercourse, mature hedgerow, wooded lanes or an area of woodland.
- 2.5 All surfaces were also surveyed for signs of bat presence. Features of potential value to bats were surveyed not only for the presence of bats but also for signs that could indicate use by bats, such as:
 - bat droppings that are dry and do not putrefy, but can crumble away to dust;
 - staining of access points used by bats to enter the structure; and
 - feeding remains such as moth and butterfly wings.
- 2.6 Taking account of these architectural, habitat features and signs of presence, the building was then assigned a level of roost suitability based the criteria given in the Bat Conservation Trust's Bat Surveys: Good Practice Guidelines (Collins, 2016) and professional judgement. The primary objective of this exercise was to identify the need for further detailed bat survey later in the year, or alternatively to obtain sufficient information that would dismiss the need for further assessment.

3 Constraints/Limitations

- 3.1 Bats are difficult to locate in large structures, with so many potential roosting areas, particularly in inaccessible areas such as large buildings, finding the exact roosting site can be difficult, especially male/single bat roosting sites. It should be noted that it is not always possible to identify bat presence by examining externally around buildings as poor weather conditions may have washed away droppings which were deposited on exposed surfaces.
- 3.2 Bats can have seasonal use of buildings and being so mobile may arrive and start using a site after it has been surveyed, or roost somewhere else during the period it was surveyed. For this reason, bats may potentially be present but remain undetected, particularly during daytime assessment.

4 Results

Daytime Assessment

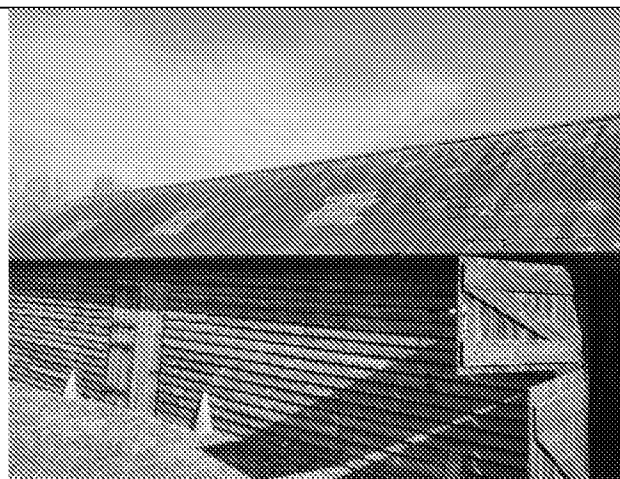
- 4.1 The barn is a single storey structure constructed from a mixture of materials. The north, east and west walls are constructed of brick and stone whilst the southern

elevation is single-skin wooden weatherboarding. The building has an unlined, hipped slate roof with glass tiles present on the northern and southern pitches.

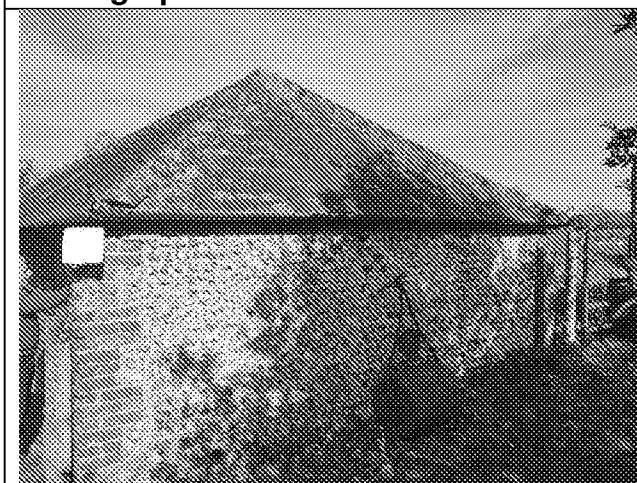
- 4.2 The roof was well-sealed with only one section of missing mortar below a ridge tile towards the eastern end of the building.
- 4.3 The eaves were open allowing access into the building, and the southern wall had numerous gaps leading into the building.
- 4.4 Internally the building was very light and draughty and in use for storage. There was extensive cobwebbing noted at the ridge.
- 4.5 Where the mortar was missing the underside of the ridge tile was visible from inside the building and noted to be highly cobwebbed and filled with debris.
- 4.6 No evidence of bats was identified anywhere internally or externally around the building.



Photograph 1: Northern elevation



Photograph 2: Southern elevation



Photograph 3: Eastern elevation



Photograph 4: Internal view

5 Conclusions & Recommendations

- 5.1 The barn was considered to have low potential to support roosting bats due to the small crevice formed where the mortar is missing below a ridge tile, and the open access internally.
- 5.2 Due to the level of cobwebbing identified, and the light and draughty nature internally, it is considered that the building has not been used by bats in some time, if ever and therefore it would be disproportionate to the level of potential to postpone works until an emergence survey has been carried out, as it is unlikely to alter the proposed mitigation.
- 5.3 A lack of any mitigation could result in a negative impact on bats if present, through potential death, disturbance or loss of roost space, a mitigation plan is therefore required for works to proceed.

6 Mitigation

Stage 1

- 6.1 Prior to works commencing the store must be fully inspected by a licensed bat ecologist to check for presence of bats.

Stage 2

- 6.2 When works commence, a licensed bat worker will provide a toolbox talk for all workers on site, detailing the mitigation to be followed during this stage of the development and the procedure to follow in the unlikely event a bat is found during works (detailed below).
- 6.3 In the unlikely event a bat is found present, works must stop and be assessed by a licensed Natural England bat worker and a Natural England licence may be required for works to continue.
- 6.4 All areas with potential for bats will be soft-stripped under direct supervision of the licensed ecologist, able to handle and check any bats found and move them to a safe place.
- 6.5 Stripping must only be conducted when the air temperature is sufficiently high (at least 8°C) and in the absence of strong wind and rain, so as to not risk harming bats which may be found.
- 6.6 Once all areas with suitability for bats have been soft-stripped, the remaining works can be undertaken without an ecologist present.

Stage 3

- 6.7 The roof of the barn should not be lined with a modern breathable roofing membrane, it must have a traditional Bitumen Type 1F (with a hessian Matrix) roofing felt. Polypropylene filaments used in the manufacture of modern breathable underlays are

known to entangle and kill bats and warranty can be invalidated; therefore, they must not be used in known or potential bat roosts.

7 Procedure to follow in the event a bat is found on site at unsupervised times.

- 7.1 Bats are present within the vicinity of the site and may be found at any location on, in or around the buildings. Bats are protected species, and these procedures must be followed to avoid committing an offence.
- 7.2 If a bat is found at any location around the site DO NOT TOUCH unless necessary for the safety of the bat.
- 7.3 If the bat was uncovered in a roosting location carefully replace covering ensuring the bat is not crushed or harmed. If this is not possible cover the animal with a loose covering.
- 7.4 Stop all work at that area and the immediate vicinity. Work may continue at other areas around the site.

7.5



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