Parsonage Farm, Church Street, Ribchester PR3 3ZR

DAYLIGHT LICENSED BAT SURVEY AND ECOLOGICAL ASSESSMENT

November 2023

ERAP (Consultant Ecologists) Ltd Reference: 2023-250

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[1] *Licence reference numbers*
Bats
Victoria Burrows, Natural England Class Survey Licence (bats, Level 2) Registration Number 2015-10390-CLS-CLS
Barn owl
Victoria Burrows Natural England Class Survey Licence Registration Number CL29/0006

SUMMARY

Introduction and Scope

i. ERAP (Consultant Ecologists) Ltd was commissioned to carry out a licensed bat survey and ecological assessment of the farmhouse and garage at Parsonage Farm, Church Street, Ribchester. The assessment was requested to inform a planning application proposing the extension and alteration of the farmhouse to meet the needs of the owner.

ii. This report presents the results of a desktop study and data search, a daylight licensed bat survey and assessment, and a general ecological assessment carried out in October 2023. The survey was carried out by a licensed, qualified and experienced ecologist and in accordance with standard recognised survey guidelines.

Results of Survey and Assessment

iii. The site comprises the farmhouse and a detached garage bordered by hard-standing. To the south and east of the farmhouse is a garden of mown amenity grassland bordered by low stone walls and brick elevation walls.

iv. The site and adjacent land have no statutory or non-statutory designation for nature conservation. Adverse direct and indirect effects of the extension proposals on designated sites for nature conservation are reasonably scoped out.

v. The daylight bat survey detected the presence of two roosts, identified by the presence of bat droppings. Roost 1 is a common pipistrelle maternity roost located at the north-eastern elevation of the western section of the farmhouse and accessed by bats at the eaves. Roost 2 is a common pipistrelle day roost; bat droppings were detected beneath the ridge copings of the farmhouse. Bat droppings have been identified to species via DNA analysis.

vi. In the absence of mitigation, the extension and alteration works will disturb bats and destroy the location of the access to Roost 1 (a maternity roost). In accordance with current Natural England guidelines this is a 'high' scale of impact.

vii. Owing to the relevant wildlife legislation and the protection afforded to bats and their roosts works at the farmhouse must only be carried out under a relevant Natural England European Protected Species Mitigation licence. **Section 5.3** of this report presents a Bat Mitigation Strategy as, based on the information obtained to date and the extent of the proposed works, it is considered possible to outline a mitigation strategy to demonstrate how the proposals can be achieved whilst protecting roosting bats and ensuring there is no net loss of roosting opportunity at the site in the long-term.

viii. The farmhouse is used by nesting birds; mandatory actions and best practice guidance to be adhered to in relation to nesting birds is outlined at **Section 5.4**.

ix. Three invasive plant species listed under Schedule 9 of the *Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981* (as amended) were detected in the garden habitats, namely Wall Cotoneaster, Virginia Creeper and Montbretia. It is considered that, provided the best practice guidance described in **Section 5.5** is implemented, there is minimal risk of an offence under relevant wildlife legislation.

x. Appropriate and proportionate survey effort and / or assessment, in accordance with standard survey guidelines has been applied to discount adverse effects on other relevant protected species. No further surveys for other protected species are necessary to inform a planning application.

Conclusion

xi. This ecological assessment has demonstrated that the extension and alteration proposals at Parsonage Farm are feasible and acceptable in accordance with ecological considerations and the National Planning Policy Framework.

xii. The comprehensive bat mitigation strategy outlined in **Section 5.3** demonstrates that mitigation for roosting bats and conservation of roosting and foraging opportunities at the site in the long-term is entirely feasible. The 'three tests' of *The Conservation of Habitats and Species (Amendment) (EU Exit) Regulations 2019* can be met and, once the further surveys in the bat activity season have been carried out, the appropriate Natural England licence can be obtained to facilitate the works.

xiii. Other actions for the protection of wildlife, namely nesting birds, will be achieved by the works in accordance with wildlife legislation and best practice.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background and Rationale

1.1.1 ERAP (Consultant Ecologists) Ltd was commissioned to carry out a daylight licensed bat survey and ecological assessment of the farmhouse and garage at Parsonage Farm, Church Street, Ribchester PR3 3ZR (hereafter referred to as the 'site'). The Ordnance Survey (OS) grid reference at the centre of the site is SD 64284 35086. An aerial image of the site and its surrounding habitats is appended at **Figure 1** (source image: ESRI World Imagery).

1.1.2 The assessment was required to inform a planning application proposing the extension and alteration of the farmhouse.

1.2 Scope of Works

1.2.1 The scope of ecological works undertaken in October 2023 comprised:

a. A desktop study and data search for known ecological information at the site and the local area;

b. A licensed daylight bat survey of the farmhouse and garage and an assessment of their suitability to support roosting bat species at any time of year;

c. Survey and assessment of the habitats for use by nesting birds including species listed on Schedule 1 of the *Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981* (as amended) and Priority Species;

d. Survey and assessment of all habitats for other relevant statutorily protected species[1] and other wildlife including badger (*Meles meles*) and great crested newt (*Triturus cristatus*);

e. Provision of guidance in accordance with wildlife legislation, *Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines (3rd edn)* (Collins, J. (ed), 2016), and best practice in relation to the proposed works;

f. The identification of any further surveys or precautionary actions that may be required to inform the commencement of works; and

g. Identification of any potential ecological constraints on the proposals and the specification of the scope of mitigation and ecological enhancement required in accordance with wildlife legislation, planning policy guidance and other relevant guidance.

2.0 METHOD OF SURVEY

2.1 Desktop Study and Data Search

2.1.1 The following sources of information and ecological records were consulted:

a. MAGiC Maps: A web-based interactive map which brings together geographic information on key environmental schemes and designations, including details of statutory nature conservation sites;

b. Lancashire Environment Record Network (LERN); and

c. Lancashire Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP).

[1] In accordance with *Government Circular: Biodiversity and Geological Conservation – Statutory Obligations and Their Impact on the Planning System* (Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government, 2005) developers should not be required to undertake surveys for protected species unless there is reasonable likelihood of the species being present and affected by the development. In this instance (for example) there are no water bodies or water courses within or adjacent to the site; there has been no requirement to consider water vole (*Arvicola amphibius*) or otter (*Lutra lutra*) as part of this assessment.

2.2 Survey Area

2.2.1 The proposed works will affect the roof of the farmhouse and its immediate surroundings only. The planning application proposes a minor extension to the farmhouse. The survey area therefore focussed on the farmhouse, although the detached garage (as shown on **Figures 1** and **2**) was examined for completeness.

2.3 Daylight Licensed Bat Survey and Assessment

Surveyor and Survey Date

2.3.1 The daylight licensed bat survey and assessment was carried out by Victoria Burrows, Natural England Class Survey Licence WML CL18 (Bat Survey Level 2), Registration Number 2015-10390-CLS-CLS, on 2nd October 2023. The weather conditions were overcast and dry with a light air (Beaufort scale 1) and an air temperature of 15ºC. Victoria's qualifications and experience meet the criteria as defined in the *Technical Guidance Series Competencies for Species Survey: Bats* (CIEEM, 2013).

Survey Guidelines

2.3.2 The survey was carried out in accordance with standard methodology including the *Bat Mitigation Guidelines* (Mitchell-Jones, 2004), the *Bat Workers' Manual 3rd Edition* (Mitchell-Jones & Mcleish, 2004) and *Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines (3rd edn)* (Collins, J. (ed), 2016).

Habitat Assessment for Commuting / Foraging Bats

2.3.3 Habitats within and adjacent to the site were assessed for their value and suitability for commuting and foraging bats in accordance with Table 4.1 of *Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines (3rd edn),* (Collins, J. (ed), 2016). Reference has been made to the categories and descriptions / examples presented below.

Table 2.1: Consideration of Suitability of Foraging and Commuting Habitat for Bats

Suitability	Commuting Habitat	Foraging Habitat
Negligible	Negligible habitat features on site likely to be used by commuting bats.	Negligible habitat features on site likely to be used by foraging bats.
Low	Habitat that could be used by small numbers of commuting bats such as a gappy hedgerow or unvegetated stream, but isolated i.e. not very well connected to the surrounding landscape by other habitat.	Suitable, but isolated habitat that could be used by small numbers of foraging bats such as a lone tree or patch of scrub.
Moderate	Continuous habitat connected to the wider landscape that could be used by bats for commuting such as lines of trees and scrub or linked back gardens.	Habitat that is linked to the wider landscape that could be used by bats for foraging such as trees, scrub, grassland or water.
High	Continuous, high-quality habitat that is well connected to the wider landscape and is likely to be used regularly by commuting bats such as river valleys, streams, hedgerows, lines of trees and woodland edge. Habitats close to and connected to known roosts.	High-quality habitat that is well-connected to the wider landscape and is likely to be used regularly by foraging bats such as broadleaved woodland, tree-lined watercourses and grazed parkland. Habitats close to and connected to known roosts.

Daylight Survey: Buildings

2.3.4 An inspection and assessment of the external surfaces, walls and roofs of the buildings was carried out to find potential bat roosting habitat or accesses into crevices / internal areas where roosts may be present. Searches for evidence of bat presence in the form of droppings, urine stains, feeding signs, grease marks and other evidence were also carried out.

2.3.5 The internal survey involved an examination of the accessible internal areas (including the roof voids) to find roosting bats or evidence of previous use of the buildings by bats such as droppings and prey remains.

2.3.6 The suitability of the buildings for use by roosting bats has been assessed in accordance with Table 4.1 of *Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines (3rd edn),* (Collins, J. (ed), 2016), taking into account any presence of gaps suitable for access by bats, features suitable for use by roosting bats within the buildings (including crevice dwelling species and species which can roost in the open in roof voids), and the suitability of the surrounding habitats for use by foraging and commuting bats.

Daylight Survey: Trees and Shrubs

2.3.7 No trees or shrubs will be affected by the works.

Equipment

2.3.8 A list of equipment used is provided below.

Table 2.2: Survey Equipment Used / Available for Use During Daylight Bat Survey

Ladders
LED Lenser P14 torch
Canon Ixus digital camera
8x20 binoculars
Ridgid Micro Inspection Camera Borescope CA-300

2.4 Bird Species

2.4.1 The farmhouse was searched for pellets, faecal splashes and feathers which may indicate use by roosting or nesting barn owl. The survey was carried out in accordance with methods described in *The Barn Owl Conservation Handbook* (Barn Owl Trust, 2012) and *Barn Owl Tyto alba Survey Methodology and Techniques for use in Ecological Assessment. Developing Best Practice in Survey and Reporting* (Shawyer, 2011).

2.4.2 The farmhouse was searched for evidence of the current and previous use by other nesting / roosting birds including species typically associated with buildings such as house sparrow (*Passer domesticus*), house martin (*Delichon urbicum*), swallow (*Hirundo rustica*) and swift (*Apus apus*).

2.5 Other Relevant Protected Species and Animal Life

2.5.1 For completeness, a survey and assessment of the garden habitats bordering the farmhouse for the following species was carried out.

Badger

2.5.2 The survey area for badger covered the land immediately bordering the farmhouse and the wider garden curtilage (as annotated on **Figure 1**).

2.5.3 The survey was conducted in accordance with guidance presented within *Badgers and Development* (Natural England, 2007) and *Badgers: advice for making planning decisions* (Natural England, 2022).

2.5.4 The following signs of badger activity were searched for:

a. Sett entrances, e.g. entrances that are normally 25 to 35cm in diameter and shaped like a ‘D’ on its side;
b. Large spoil heaps outside sett entrances;
c. Bedding outside sett entrances;
d. Badger footprints;
e. Badger paths;
f. Latrines;
g. Badger hairs on fences or bushes;

h. Scratching posts; and

i. Signs of digging for food.

Great Crested Newt and Amphibians

2.5.5 There are no ponds within the garden curtilage of the farmhouse.

2.5.6 In accordance with *Great crested newts: advice for making planning decisions* (Natural England, 2022) all ponds within an unobstructed 500 metres of a site should be considered for their suitability to support breeding great crested newts. For small scale proposals with a footprint of less than 5 hectares[2], such as this, it is generally considered (subject to each site's individual assessment) that development activities over 250 metres from a pond are highly unlikely any offence would be committed should the development proceed.

2.5.7 The search of habitats in the wider area up to a distance of 250 metres from the site boundary revealed the presence of two ponds, as detailed below.

Table 2.3: Ponds within 250 metres of the Site

Pond Reference	OS Grid Reference	Distance from Site Boundary	Location (refer to Figure 1)
1	SD64103515	169 metres	Within land to the north-west of the site
2	SD64073499	199 metres	West of the site

Consideration of Requirement for Further Survey

2.5.8 The requirement for further survey at each pond was then assessed using the following criteria:

a. Presence of dispersal barriers to great crested newt movements between ponds and the site, as detected during the walkover survey;

b. The suitability of the terrestrial habitats at the site for use by sheltering / feeding / hibernating amphibians; and

c. Distance of ponds from the site, and the potential influence of the proposed development of the site on any populations of great crested newt (if present at ponds), using the Natural England rapid risk assessment tool.

2.5.9 There are no significant dispersal barriers between Ponds 1 and 2 and the site. To inform the requirement for further surveys, the Natural England Rapid Risk Assessment tool from *GCN Method Statement WML-A14-2 (Version April 2020* (Natural England, 2020) has been completed and is presented in **Table 2.4**. The tool has been completed based on the distances of the ponds from the site, and the size of the development site (0.05 hectares, or 'ha'). The rapid risk assessment tool assumes that great crested newt are present.

Table 2.4: Rapid Risk Assessment Result

Component	Likely Effect	Notional Offence Probability Score
Great crested newt breeding pond(s)	No effect	0
Land within 100m of any breeding pond(s)	No effect	0
Land 100-250m from any breeding pond(s)	0.01 - 0.1 ha lost or damaged	0.01
Land >250m from any breeding pond(s)	0.01 - 0.1 ha lost or damaged	0.001
Individual great crested newts	No effect	0
	Maximum:	0.01
Rapid risk assessment result:	**GREEN: OFFENCE HIGHLY UNLIKELY**	

[2] As confirmed by the Natural England Rapid Risk Assessment tool from *GCN Method Statement WML-A14-2 (Version April 2020* (Natural England, 2020)

2.5.10 The Natural England Rapid Risk Assessment indicates that the development activities are sufficiently small and distant from Ponds 1 and 2 that it is highly unlikely any offence would be committed should the development proceed. In addition, the habitats to be affected by the proposals comprise the hard-standing around the curtilage of the farmhouse only. The requirement for a great crested newt survey to inform this planning application is reasonably discounted.

2.6 Survey and Reporting Limitations

2.6.1 The survey was carried out in October when maternity roosts have typically dispersed and the weather may have washed away droppings left over the summer around the external elevations / perimeter of a building.

2.6.2 No other survey limitations on the intended and scope of survey outlined in **Section 1.2** were experienced.

2.6.3 All measurements within this report are approximate only, and have been estimated whilst on site or calculated using mapping software (QGIS) or internet-based mapping services such as MAGiC Maps and Google Earth.

2.7 Evaluation Methods

2.7.1 The habitats, vegetation and animal life were evaluated with reference to standard nature conservation criteria as described in *A Nature Conservation Review* (Ratcliffe, 1977). These are size (extent), diversity, naturalness, rarity, fragility, typicality, recorded history, position in an ecological or geographical unit, potential value and intrinsic appeal.

2.7.2 Habitats have been assessed to determine whether they meet those described in *UK Biodiversity Action Plan: Priority Habitat Descriptions* (Maddock, A (ed), 2008); these lists are used to help draw up the statutory lists of Priority Habitats, as required under Section 41 of the *Natural Environment and Rural Communities* (NERC) *Act 2006*. Where suitable, the ecological value of the habitats present has been assessed using the terms outlined in *Guidelines for Ecological Impact Assessment in the UK and Ireland: Terrestrial, Freshwater, Coastal and Marine* (CIEEM, 2018).

2.7.3 Government advice on wildlife, as set out in the *National Planning Policy Framework* (Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, 2021) and associated government circulars has been taken into consideration. Legislation relating to protected species, such as those listed under Schedules 1, 5, 6 and 8 of the *Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981* (as amended) and *The Conservation of Habitats and Species (Amendment) (EU Exit) Regulations 2019*, is referenced where applicable, and any impacts to protected species are evaluated in accordance with current guidance.

2.7.4 The presence of any Priority Species, as listed under Section 41 of the *Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006* is noted, and habitats are assessed in terms of their suitability and value for these species. The presence of habitats and / or species listed by the Lancashire BAP Provisional Long List has been taken into account in the evaluation of the site.

3.0 SURVEY RESULTS

3.1 Desktop Study and Data Search

Statutory Designated Sites for Nature Conservation and SSSI Impact Risk Zones

3.1.1 The site and adjacent land have no statutory designation for nature conservation.

3.1.2 The site lies within a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) Impact Risk Zone for Red Scar Tun Brook Woods SSSI and Darwen Riven Section SSSI.

3.1.3 Red Scar Tun Brook Woods SSSI is located 5.1 kilometres to the west of the site and is designated for being one of the largest areas of deciduous woodland in Lancashire, and for providing a valuable refuge for wildlife close to urban areas of Preston. Darwen Riven Section SSSI is located 6.1 kilometres to the south-

west of the site and is designated for its geological interest; it provides one of the finest sections in Britain of Middle Namurian rocks of Carboniferous age.

3.1.4 The SSSI Impact Risk Zone requires the Local Planning Authority to consult with Natural England on likely risks from the following development category (Ordnance Survey, 2023):

a. Any discharge of water or liquid waste of more than 20m³/day to ground (i.e. to seep away) or to surface water, such as a beck or stream.

3.1.5 It is considered that the small scale proposals do not meet this development category. The presence of the SSSI present in the wider area is considered further in **Section 4.2**.

Non-statutory Designated Sites for Nature Conservation

3.1.6 The site and adjacent land have no non-statutory designation for nature conservation, called 'Biological Heritage Sites' or 'BHS' in Lancashire.

3.1.7 Fifteen BHS are located within a 2 kilometres radius from the centre of the site and are summarised at **Table 3.1**.

Table 3.1: BHS Within a 2 Kilometres Radius from the Centre of the Site

BHS Name	Distance and Direction from the Site	Reasons for Designation
River Ribble from London Road Bridge Preston, in West, to County Boundary, in East	0.49 kilometres north-east	River Ribble and associated semi-natural habitats from the county boundary at Paythorne (SD856836) downstream to London Road Bridge, Walton-le-Dale, Preston (SD553287). The Ribble is one of the largest rivers in North West England and support a rich assemblage of plants and animals. The river is important for salmon, sea trout, otter and water vole. Along the riverbanks sandy cliffs provide nesting habitat for sand martin and kingfisher.
Red Bank Grassland	0.71 kilometres west	An area of species rich grassland situated on steep south facing ground above the north bank of the River Ribble. A number of butterflies have been recorded on the site including orange tip, common blue and small heath.
Old Park Wood	0.78 kilometres south-east	A large area of semi-natural woodland adjoining the south bank of the River Ribble approximately 1.5 km south of Ribchester. It includes Old Park Wood and Mire Wood. A British Red Data Book (category 1, endangered) cranefly, *Lipsothrix nigristigma*, occurs here.
Slaterfield Wood	0.79 kilometres south	An ancient, semi-natural clough woodland situated on the south side of the valley of the River Ribble between Ribchester and Osbaldeston Green figwort (*Scrophularia umbrosa*), a species listed in the Provisional Lancashire Red Data List of Vascular Plants, also occurs here.
Flashers Wood and Long Dingle	0.82 kilometres south	Semi-natural woodland on the valley slopes above the River Ribble flood plain. It supports a UK BAP Species of invertebrate *Lipsothrix nigristigma* Scarce Yellow Splinter.
Eatoughs Wood	0.87 kilometres north-west	Semi-natural woodland.
Buckley Wood and Dale Hey Wood	1.14 kilometres north	Semi-natural woodland adjoining both sides of Boyce's Brook.
Hothersall Wood	1.19 kilometres west	Semi-natural woodland.
Broken Brows Pastures and Woodland and Madgell Bank	1.32 kilometres east	Three parcels of semi-natural grassland, woodland and wood pasture on the south bank of the River Ribble, approximately 1km south east of Ribchester.
Dobridding Wood (North)	1.43 kilometres south-west	Semi-natural woodland.
Leece's Wood	1.5 kilometres west	Semi-natural woodland.
Little Stydd Wood	1.56 kilometres north-east	Semi-natural woodland adjoining Duddle Brook.

Dobridding Wood (South)	1.66 kilometres south-west	Semi-natural woodland.
Mercyfield Wood, Sandiford Wood and Green Rid Wood	1.72 kilometres south-west	Semi-natural woodland situated to the south of the River Ribble that supports a UK BAP Species of invertebrate *Lipsothrix nigristigma* Scarce Yellow Splinter.
Stydd Wood	1.75 kilometres north-east	Semi-natural woodland on either side of Stydd Brook.

3.1.8 The presence of the BHS is considered further in **Section 4.2**.

Priority Habitats Inventory

3.1.9 The Priority Habitats Inventory[3] was checked via MAGiC Maps. No Priority Habitats are identified within or immediately adjacent to the site.

Protected and Notable Species

3.1.10 LERN hold no records of protected and notable species for the site. Reported records of protected and notable species for a 2 kilometres radius from the centre of the site are summarised in **Table 3.2**.

Table 3.2: Reported records of Protected Species Within a 2 Kilometres Radius from the Centre of the Site

Taxon Group	Species Name and Designations[1] and Notes
Amphibians	Common frog (*Rana temporaria*): WCAs5 (sale only) & LBAP. 4 records, dated between 1970 and 2014. The closest record is 525 metres to the north-east, and from 2014.
	Great crested newt (*Triturus cristatus*): EPS, WCAs5, PS & LBAP. 1 record from 2018, located 1320 metres to the south-west.
	Palmate newt (*Lissotriton helveticus*): WCAs5 (sale only). 2 records, both from 1833. An accurate estimation of distance and direction of the record to the site cannot be made due to the locational data being less than a six figure grid reference
Birds – WCAs1	Barn owl (*Tyto alba*): WCAs1. 2 records, dated 1999 and 2013. An accurate estimation of distance and direction of the record to the site cannot be made due to the locational data being less than a six figure grid reference
	Kingfisher (*Alcedo atthis*): WCAs1 1 record from 1999. An accurate estimation of distance of the record to the site cannot be made due to the locational data being less than a six figure grid reference
	Peregrine (*Falco peregrinus*): WCAs1 & LBAP. 2 records, both from 2019. An accurate estimation of distance and direction of the record to the site cannot be made due to the locational data being less than a six figure grid reference
Birds – PS and LBAP	**PS & LBAP:** Cuckoo (*Cuculus canorus*), lesser spotted woodpecker (*Dendrocopos minor*), curlew (*Numenius arquata*), house sparrow (*Passer domesticus*), tree sparrow (*Passer montanus*), grey partridge (*Perdix perdix*), willow tit (*Poecile montana*), dunnock (*Prunella modularis*), bullfinch *(Pyrrhula pyrrhula*), starling (*Sturnus vulgaris*), song thrush (*Turdus philomelos*) and lapwing (*Vanellus vanellus*) **PS Only:** Linnet (*Linaria cannabina*) **LBAP Only:** Common sandpiper (*Actitis hypoleucos*), grey heron (*Ardea cinerea*), black-headed gull (*Chroicocephalus ridibundus*), kestrel (*Falco tinnunculus*), oystercatcher (*Haematopus ostralegus*), willow warbler (*Phylloscopus trochilus*) and redshank (*Tringa totanus*)
Bony Fish	Atlantic salmon (*Salmo salar*): PS & LBAP. 3 records, dated between 1967 and 2011. The closest record is 605 metres to the south, and from 2000.
	Brown trout (*Salmo trutta* subsp*. fario*): LBAP. 5 records, dated between 1967 and 2000. The closest record is 415 metres to the north-west, and from 1998.
	Brown/sea trout (*Salmo trutta*): PS & LBAP. 24 records, dated between 1998 and 2014. The closest record is 415 metres to the north-west, and from 1998.
	Bullhead (*Cottus gobio*): LBAP. 25 records, dated between 1963 and 2014. The closest record is 415 metres to the north-west, and from 1998.

[3] A spatial dataset that describes the geographic extent and location of Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act (2006) Section 41 habitats of principal importance.

Taxon Group	Species Name and Designations[1] and Notes
	European eel (*Anguilla anguilla*): PS & LBAP. 22 records, dated between 1965 and 2014. The closest record is 415 metres to the north-west, and from 1998.
	Grayling (*Thymallus thymallus*): LBAP. 2 records, dated 1967 and 1972. An accurate estimation of distance and direction of the record to the site cannot be made due to the locational data being less than a six figure grid reference
	Sea trout (*Salmo trutta* subsp. *trutta*): LBAP. 4 records, dated between 1965 and 2000. The closest record is 605 metres to the south, and from 2000.
Flowering Plants	**PS & LBAP:** Marsh Stitchwort (*Stellaria palustris*) **LBAP Only:** Narrow-leaved Water-plantain (*Alisma lanceolatum*), Barberry (*Berberis vulgaris*), Musk Thistle (*Carduus nutans*), Slender Tufted-sedge (*Carex acuta*), Lily-of-the-valley (*Convallaria majalis*), Opposite-leaved Pondweed (*Groenlandia densa*), Frogbit (*Hydrocharis morsus-ranae*), Henbane (*Hyoscyamus niger*), Common Broomrape (*Orobanche minor*), Tasteless Water-pepper (*Persicaria mitis*), Buckthorn (*Rhamnus cathartica*), Northern Dock (*Rumex longifolius*) and Globeflower (*Trollius europaeus*)
Insects-Butterflies	Small heath (*Coenonympha pamphilus*): PS & LBAP. 1 record from 2010, located 755 metres to the west.
Insects - Moths	**PS & LBAP:** Brown-spot pinion (*Agrochola litura*), garden tiger (*Arctia caja*), sprawler (*Asteroscopus sphinx*), double dart (*Graphiphora augur*) and hedge rustic (*Tholera cespitis*) **PS Only:** Beaded chestnut (*Agrochola lychnidis*), green-brindled crescent (*Allophyes oxyacanthae*), ear moth (*Amphipoea oculea*), mouse moth (*Amphipyra tragopoginis*), dusky brocade (*Apamea remissa*), centre-barred sallow (*Atethmia centrago*), mottled rustic (*Caradrina morpheus*), latticed heath (*Chiasmia clathrata*), small square-spot (*Diarsia rubi*), small phoenix (*Ecliptopera silaceata*), september thorn (*Ennomos erosaria*), dusky thorn (*Ennomos fuscantaria*), grey mountain carpet (*Entephria caesiata*), autumnal rustic (*Eugnorisma glareosa*), ghost moth (*Hepialus humuli*), rosy rustic (*Hydraecia micacea*), oblique carpet (*Orthonama vittata*), powdered quaker (*Orthosia gracilis*), white ermine (*Spilosoma lubricipeda*), anomalous (*Stilbia anomala*), feathered gothic (*Tholera decimalis*), cinnabar (*Tyria jacobaeae*), oak hook-tip (*Watsonalla binaria*) and dark-barred twin-spot carpet (*Xanthorhoe ferrugata*) **LBAP Only:** Gold spangle (*Autographa bractea*), dusky-lemon sallow (*Cirrhia gilvago*), plain pug (*Eupithecia simpliciata*), chimney sweeper (*Odezia atrata*), lead-coloured drab (*Orthosia populeti*), wood tiger (*Parasemia plantaginis*) and brown rustic (*Rusina ferruginea*)
Insects – True flies	Northern yellow splinter (*Lipsothrix errans*): PS. 1 record from 2003, located 1960 metres to the south-west.
Jawless Fish	Brook lamprey (*Lampetra planeri*): LBAP. 2 records, both from 2010. The closest record is 1465 metres to the north-east.
Reptiles	Adder (*Vipera berus*): WCAs5, PS & LBAP 1 record from 1967. An accurate estimation of distance of the record to the site cannot be made due to the locational data being less than a six figure grid reference
	Grass snake (*Natrix helvetica*): WCAs5, PS & LBAP. 2 records, dated 1936 and 1967. An accurate estimation of distance and direction of the record to the site cannot be made due to the locational data being less than a six figure grid reference
Spiders	*Halorates distinctus*: LBAP 1 record from 1958. An accurate estimation of distance of the record to the site cannot be made due to the locational data being less than a six figure grid reference
	Moebelia penicillata: LBAP 1 record from 1958. An accurate estimation of distance of the record to the site cannot be made due to the locational data being less than a six figure grid reference
Terrestrial Mammals	Bats (Order *Chiroptera*): EPS, WCAs5 & LBAP. 3 records, dated between 1989 and 2018. The closest record is 1055 metres to the south-east, and from 2018.
	Brown hare (*Lepus europaeus*): PS & LBAP. 4 records, dated between 1972 and 2015. The closest record is to the east of the site; an accurate estimation of distance and direction of the record to the site cannot be made due to the locational data being less than a six figure grid reference
	Brown long-eared bat (*Plecotus auritus*): EPS, WCAs5, PS & LBAP. 4 records, dated between 2008 and 2017. The closest record is 1830 metres to the south-east, and from 2017.
	Common pipistrelle (*Pipistrellus pipistrellus*): EPS, WCAs5 & LBAP. 17 records, dated between 1991 and 2019. The closest record is 865 metres to the east, and from 1991.

Taxon Group	Species Name and Designations[1] and Notes
	Eurasian badger (*Meles meles*): PBA. 5 records, dated between 1964 and 2005. The closest record is to the east of the site.
	Eurasian red squirrel (*Sciurus vulgaris*): WCAs5, PS & LBAP. 5 records, dated between 1938 and 1970. The closest record is to the east of the site; an accurate estimation of distance and direction of the record to the site cannot be made due to the locational data being less than a six figure grid reference
	European otter (*Lutra lutra*): EPS, WCAs5, PS & LBAP. 4 records, dated between 1953 and 2017. The closest record is 605 metres to the south, and from 1953.
	Noctule bat (*Nyctalus noctula*): EPS, WCAs5, PS & LBAP. 3 records, all from 2018. The closest record is 1055 metres to the south-east.
	Unidentified Pipistrelle bat species (*Pipistrellus* sp.): EPS, WCAs5 & LBAP. 4 records, dated between 2015 and 2018. The closest record is 1055 metres to the south-east, and from 2018.
	Soprano pipistrelle (*Pipistrellus pygmaeus*): EPS, WCAs5, PS & LBAP. 2 records, dated 2017 and 2018. The closest record is 1055 metres to the south-east, and from 2018.
	Unidentified Myotis bat (*Myotis* sp.): EPS, WCAs5 & LBAP. 3 records, dated between 2014 and 2018. The closest record is 1055 metres to the south-east, and from 2018.
	West European hedgehog (*Erinaceus europaeus*): PS & LBAP. 3 records, dated between 2014 and 2020. The closest record is 455 metres to the east, and from 2020.

[1]Key to Designation Codes:
EPS = European Protected Species under *The Conservation of Habitats and Species (Amendment) (EU Exit) Regulations 2019*.
WCAs1 = Species receives full protection under Schedule 1 of the *Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981* (as amended).
WCAs5 = Species receives full protection under Schedule 5 of the *Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981* (as amended).
PBA = Protection of Badger Act 1992.
PS = Priority Species listed under Section 41 of the NERC Act 2006.
LBAP = Species listed on the Lancashire Biodiversity Action Plan Provisional Long List.

3.1.11 The presence of these protected and notable species within the wider area has been taken into account throughout this report.

3.2 Daylight Licensed Bat Survey and Assessment

General Description

3.2.1 Parsonage Farm is accessed via a long narrow lane leading from the west of Church Street in Ribchester. The site comprises the farmhouse and a detached garage bordered by hard-standing.

3.2.2 Refer to **Figure 1**. Land bordering the farmhouse comprises large fields of improved and semi-improved pasture bordered by sparse hedgerows with scattered trees. Approximately 550 metres to the south of the site is the River Ribble corridor and a tree-lined tributary of the Ribble meanders 142 metres to the east of the site.

3.2.3 The farmhouse and detached garage are described in detail in relation to their suitability for use by roosting bats below. To the south and east of the farmhouse is a garden of mown amenity grassland characterised by abundant Perennial Rye-grass (*Lolium perenne*) and frequent Creeping Buttercup (*Ranunculus repens*) and White Clover (*Trifolium repens*) and occasional Cuckooflower (*Cardamine pratensis*) with borders of non-native shrubs and ornamental plants. The garden is bordered by low stone walls and brick elevation walls.

3.2.4 Refer to **Photos 2** and **3.** The garden area supports Wall Cotoneaster (*Cotoneaster horizontalis*), Virginia Creeper (*Parthenocissus quinquefolia*) and Montbretia (*Crocosmia crocosmiiflora*), all of which are invasive plant species listed on Schedule 9 of the *Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981* (as amended). It is an offence to spread or to cause the spread of these species in the wild; further guidance in relation to the extension and alteration proposals is provided in **Section 4.4**.

Habitat Assessment for Commuting / Foraging Bats

3.2.5 The land within the site comprises buildings and hard-standing assessed to be of 'low' suitability for use by commuting and foraging bats.

3.2.6 The site lies within a rural area and is surrounded by a variety of grasslands with hedgerows and wooded copses with proximity to the River Ribble corridor and its tributaries. The habitats in the wider area surrounding the site are assessed to be of 'moderate' suitability for use by foraging and commuting bat species.

Farmhouse

3.2.7 Refer to **Photos 4** to **22**. The main farmhouse was built in 1888 and has since had alterations and extensions added. The farmhouse is a two-storey building with a single storey utility extension at its north-western corner and a PVC framed conservatory attached to the south-western elevation. The farmhouse has roughcast render covered walls with pitched slate covered roofs. Two chimney stacks are present with lead flashing at the base. Timber soffits and fascia are present around the roofline and the windows are PVC framed.

3.2.8 The farmhouse appears to be well-maintained and the roof is intact. Gaps / opportunities for bat access were detected in the following positions:

a. Behind the fascia boards, particularly behind the decorative fascia over the window lintels on the south-eastern elevation of the eastern extension area (refer to **Photo 12**);

b. At lifted sections of lead flashing at the base of the chimney stacks and also at the point where the single storey conservation meets the south-western elevation of the main house (refer to **Photo 11**); and

c. At sections of missing bedding mortar at the ridge copings, both on the main house and the single storey utility extension (refer to **Photo 8**).

3.2.9 Inspection of the exterior detected scattered bat droppings (approximately 10) on garden chairs positioned where the two storey extension meets the north-eastern elevation of the main house (refer to **Figure 2**).

3.2.10 The internal inspection confirmed an absence of a cellar. There is no roof void at the single storey utility extension; the room has a vaulted and board-leaved and plastered ceiling.

3.2.11 Two roof voids cover the two-storey section of the building; both were accessed and inspected. The roof void over the main / older section of the farmhouse, at its western end, is split into two sections with a brick partition wall and a crawl-through between. The voids have no undertile felt and have fibreglass insulation over the floor. No bats were found in the western void, however bat droppings were detected in the following locations:

a. 50+ droppings were found scattered over the surface of a hot water tank in the roof void (refer to **Photo 18**); the location of these droppings coincides the location of the droppings found on the garden chairs outside. DNA analysis of a dropping sample (Sample 1) has confirmed the species is common pipistrelle (the results of the DNA analysis are presented at **Appendix 2**); and

b. Two piles of approximately 30 bat droppings were found beneath the ridgeboard (which is clear of cobwebs). DNA analysis of a dropping sample (Sample 2) has confirmed common pipistrelle (*Pipistrellus pipistrellus*).

3.2.12 Inspection of the 1.4 metres high roof void over the two-storey extension at the eastern end of the building confirmed a more modern fabrication which concrete blocks (rather than bricks) and the presence of bitumastic hessian backed felt under the slates and fibreglass insulation over the floor of the void. No bats were found in the eastern void, and droppings were found in the following location:

a. One pile of 20 bat droppings was found beneath the ridgeboard roughly in the centre of the roof void.

3.2.13 Based on the evidence and field signs found in October 2023, the farmhouse supports confirmed common pipistrelle roosts at the ridge copings of the eastern and western sections of roof void, with an access point to a roost at the wall top of the western roof void at the north-east facing elevation.

3.2.14 No evidence of use of the roof voids by species such as brown long-eared bat (that may free-hang in the roof void) was detected. The assessment in **Section 4.3** and the guidance in **Section 5.3** is based on the

presence of the common pipistrelle roosts, as has been confirmed by DNA analysis of the droppings detected. The roosts are characterised based on the field evidence found during the daylight inspection at **Section 4.3**.

Detached Garage

3.2.15 Refer to **Photos 23** to **25**. The detached garage lies to the north-west of the farmhouse and is a single storey concrete block structure with a pitched roof of slate with terracotta ridge copings and timber fascia boards at all roof lines.

3.2.16 No bats or bat droppings were found around the external elevations of the garage. The render is in good condition; no opportunities for bat access are present at the elevation walls.

3.2.17 The slates appear to be well-fitted although gaps suitable for bat access were found at the roof verges at the gable ends where the bedding mortar is missing and also behind the timber fascia boards.

3.2.18 The detached garage is assessed to be of 'moderate' suitability for use by roosting bats.

3.3 Other Relevant Protected Species and Animal Life

Badger

3.3.1 The hard-standing and building habitats at the site are unsuitable for use by badger. No signs of badger such as setts, snuffle holes, tracks, hairs or burrows were detected at the wider garden and survey area. The presence of badger / adverse impacts of the extension and alteration proposals on badger is reasonably discounted.

Bird Species and Barn Owl

3.3.2 No evidence of the use of the farmhouse or garage by nesting or roosting barn owl was detected.

3.3.3 One old bird nest was found beneath the canopy attached to the south-western elevation of the farmhouse (refer to **Photo 26**). No other evidence of previous use of the farmhouse and garage by nesting birds was found.

4.0 EVALUATION AND ASSESSMENT

4.1 Introduction and Description of Proposals

4.1.1 The proposals at the farmhouse, as illustrated on *Proposed Extensions and Alterations to Parsonage Farm, Ribchester Drawing 6908-P02* (Sunderland Peacock Architects, 2023), comprise:

a. Removal of the PVC framed conservatory and the canopy attached to the south-western elevation;

b. Installation of skylights in the roof of the western section of the roof void only;

c. Re-rendering of the external elevation walls;

d. Removal of the bay window and the first floor windows at the south-eastern elevation of the extension and alteration; and

e. Extension to the rear / north-western elevation and alterations of the façade such as window placement and wall coverings.

4.1.2 The proposals will not increase the ridge height of the farmhouse, and will have no direct impact upon the detached garage.

4.1.3 **Section 4.2** provides an assessment of any impacts of the proposed development on the designated sites for nature conservation present in the wider area. The presence of the confirmed bat roosts is discussed in **Section 4.3**, and other relevant protected and notable species and ecological considerations of the proposals are discussed in **Section 4.4**.

4.2 Designated Sites for Nature Conservation

4.2.1 It is considered that the site is sufficiently small and distant from the known statutory and non-statutory designated sites for nature conservation that the proposed development will have no direct or indirect impact on the designated sites in the local area and their features of special interest.

4.3 Bat Species

4.3.1 The farmhouse supports at least two common pipistrelle roosts which are summarised below, based on the evidence available to date:

a. Roost 1: Common pipistrelle maternity roost at the eaves of the north-eastern elevation of western elevation of the farmhouse; and

b. Roost 2: Common pipistrelle day roost located across at least two positions beneath the ridge copings.

4.3.2 In relation to Roost 1 the number and location of droppings is strongly indicative of a maternity roost. The location of the droppings both internally and externally has allowed the identification of the roost entrance.

4.3.3 In relation to Roost 2, in accordance with Natural England guidance, "*To be considered the same roost, the locations need to have the same functional and qualitative (e.g. physical) characteristics, be used by the same species for the same purpose (e.g. day roosting) and be within the same building / structure*". This is considered to be relevant to the common pipistrelle droppings beneath the ridge copings and have therefore been classed as one roost. The number of droppings has been used at this roost to characterise the roost type.

4.3.4 No further signs of roosting bats were detected. It is not considered that the farmhouse supports any features typically associated with hibernating bats; the heated and occupied building is unlikely to provide the low temperatures and thermal stability typically required by hibernating bats.

4.3.5 In the absence of mitigation, the extension and alteration works will disturb bats and will destroy and obstruct access to Roost 1 and may disturb Roost 2.

4.3.6 Works at the farmhouse must only be carried out under a relevant Natural England European Protected Species Mitigation licence issued under Regulation 55 of *The Conservation of Habitats and Species (Amendment) (EU Exit) Regulations 2019*). In accordance with the *Bat Mitigation Guidelines* (Mitchell-Jones, 2004) the destruction of a maternity roost used by a common and widespread[4] species of bat is a 'high' scale impact.

4.3.7 The proposals will not sever or fragment habitats suitable for use by foraging / commuting bats nor cause the isolation of a roost.

4.3.8 It is advised that appropriate mitigation in accordance with relevant Natural England guidance and licensing requirements is feasible within the remit of the proposals. A comprehensive Bat Mitigation Strategy is presented in **Section 5.3**; the strategy details the measures to be applied to ensure bats are protected during the proposed works and also to ensure there is no net loss of roosting opportunity at the site in the long-term as a consequence of the proposed development.

4.3.9 In consideration of post-development interference impacts, the site will continue to be occupied by one family at the post-development stage. Subject to the avoidance lighting and / or implementation of an appropriate lighting strategy as recommended at **Section 5.2**, there is minimal risk of an increase in disturbance to roosting / foraging bats associated with human activity at the property.

[4] The conservation status of common pipistrelle species is reported to be favourable in the *European Community Directive on the Conservation of Natural Habitats and of Wild Fauna and Flora (92/43/EEC) Fourth Report by the United Kingdom under Article 17 on the implementation of the Directive from January 2013 to December 2018* ***Invalid source specified.***.

4.4 Protected Species and Other Ecological Considerations

4.4.1 Use of the farmhouse by nesting birds (i.e. the old nest at the canopy on the south-western elevation) is a consideration. The current position used by nesting birds will be removed by the proposals. **Section 5.4** describes the mandatory actions for the protection of nesting birds during the construction period describes how the proposals will ensure there is no net loss of opportunities for use by nesting birds as a result of the proposals.

4.4.2 Appropriate and proportionate survey effort and / or assessment, in accordance with standard survey guidelines has been applied to discount adverse effects on other relevant protected species. No further surveys for other protected species are necessary to support a planning application.

4.4.3 The presence of Wall Cotoneaster, Virginia Creeper and Montbretia in the garden habitats is a consideration of the works; each of these species list an invasive plant species listed under Schedule 9 of the *Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981* (as amended). It is considered that, provided the best practice guidance in relation to the works described in **Section 5.5** is implemented, there is minimal risk of an offence under relevant wildlife legislation.

5.0 RECOMMENDATIONS AND ECOLOGICAL ENHANCEMENT

5.1 Introduction

5.1.1 The recommendations described below are appropriate and proportionate to the scale of the extension and alteration proposals and aim to ensure that the proposals are implemented in accordance with the mitigation hierarchy, relevant wildlife legislation, Natural England guidance, the principles of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, 2021), local planning policy and best practice.

5.1.2 The recommendations aim to ensure compliance with Chapter 15, paragraph 180(d) of the NPPF which states:

"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".

5.2 Site Design

Appropriate Use of Lighting

5.2.1 Paragraph 185(c) in Chapter 15 (conserving and enhancing the natural environment) of the NPPF states that development should:

"*limit the impact of light pollution from artificial light on local amenity, intrinsically dark landscapes and nature conservation*"

5.2.2 It is advised that any external lighting to be installed at the site must involve the use of appropriate products and screening, where necessary, to ensure no excessive artificial lighting shines over the retained garden habitats and habitats outside the curtilage of the residential property and areas of planting / habitat creation, as lighting overspill may deter use by wildlife such as foraging bats.

5.2.3 The lighting scheme will be designed with reference to current guidance, namely:

a. *Guidance Note 08/23: Bats and Artificial Lighting at Night* (Institution of Lighting Professionals & Bat Conservation Trust, 2023); and

b. Bats and lighting: Overview of current evidence and mitigation guidance (Stone, 2014).

5.3 Bat Mitigation Strategy

Further Survey

5.3.1 It is considered that, based on the evidence and field signs present, appropriate information is available to progress the determination of a planning application and the detailed Bat Mitigation Strategy outlined below aims to facilitate this.

5.3.2 Bat activity surveys (a minimum of two dusk emergence and / or dawn re-entry surveys) in the optimum survey season (May to August inclusive) will be required to inform the Natural England EPSM licence application. Following receipt of planning permission, works must not be progressed until the Natural England licence has been obtained. Works must be carried out in accordance with the timing considerations as outlined below.

Natural England Licence

5.3.3 Once planning permission is obtained works that will affect the roosts must only be carried out in the presence of an appropriate European Protected Species Mitigation (EPSM) licence issued by Natural England.

5.3.4 To achieve the licence / registration of the site the applicant must be able to demonstrate to Natural England that the following three tests of Regulation 55 of *The Conservation of Habitats and Species (Amendment) (EU Exit) Regulations 2019* will be satisfied.

Test 1: That the action authorised will not be detrimental to the maintenance of the population of the species concerned at a favourable conservation status in their natural range [Regulation 55 (9)(b)];

Test 2: Demonstration that the proposals for which a licence is sought are for the purposes of 'preserving public health or public safety or other imperative reasons of overriding public interest including those of a social or economic nature and beneficial consequences of primary importance for the environment' [Regulation 55(2)(e)]; and

Test 3: Consideration of '*There is no satisfactory alternative*' including the implications of the '*do-nothing*' option [Regulation 55(9)(a)].

5.3.5 The Bat Mitigation Strategy outlined below aims to demonstrate that compliance with Test 1 and demonstrates how bats will be accommodated at the site and is considered to be appropriate to inform the planning decision. Tests 2 and 3 are also considered.

Resources

5.3.6 This mitigation strategy draws on the following resources:

a. Current Natural England guidance;

b. Information presented in the *BCT Mitigation Conference Proceedings* (Bat Conservation Trust, 2017) and the *Mitigation Case Studies Forum* (Bat Conservation Trust, 2017);

c. Implemented and monitored activities / specifications carried out by ERAP (Consultant Ecologists) Ltd at other sites / properties;

d. *UK Bat Mitigation Guidelines 2023* (Reason, P.F. and Wray, S., 2023); and

e. Information presented on the 'Roost' website provided by the Bat Conservation Trust.

Licensed Works

5.3.7 The licensed works comprise actions that will directly affect (or have the risk of impacting) the detected roosts only. Where there is no risk of an offence under wildlife legislation other works can be carried out outside the licence, as required, subject to consideration of nesting birds, planning guidelines and restrictions imposed by the planning consent.

Overview of the Mitigation Approach

5.3.8 The mitigation approach is as follows:

a. Roost 1 will be recreated on a like-for-like basis at the farmhouse;

b. Roost 2 (a day roost) will be retained at the farmhouse;

c. Works will be timed to avoid critical periods of the bat lifecycle (i.e. the maternity season will be avoided) and will be completed under the supervision of a licensed bat works;

d. Measures will be put in place to ensure any bats found during works are adequately cared for and protected;

e. Compensation will be provided for the temporary loss of Roost 1 via the installation of a bat box on the detached garage (note this will be installed prior to the commencement of works); and

f. Suitable monitoring of the roosts will be completed following the works.

5.3.9 These measures are described in detail below.

Provisions for Use by Roosting Bats

Compensatory Provision to be Provided Prior to Works

5.3.10 Prior to the commencement of licensed actions to ensure there is no net loss of roost opportunity at the site, and to ensure a suitable feature is present at the site to receive any bats found during the works, one bat box will be installed on the southern elevation of the detached garage (or on a suitable tree within the site).

5.3.11 Suitable box specifications are detailed below:

Insert 1: Schwegler 1FF and Greenwood Ecohabitat's single cavity bat boxes

Timing of Works

5.3.12 Based on the assumed presence of a maternity roost, works at the farmhouse must not be commenced between 1st May and 31st August inclusive (unless bats have been excluded from the Roost 1 under licence).

Toolbox Talk

5.3.13 Prior to the commencement of works the licensed ecologist will inform all contractors of the following:

a. The wildlife legislation and protection afforded to bats and their roosts;

b. The presence of the licence and the associated method statement and the need to abide by the content;

c. The licensable actions;

d. Good working practices (i.e. lifting (rather than sliding) of ridge copings and roof tiles and turning to check for the presence of bats before discard or stacking);

e. The presence of any provisions for roosting bats installed in advance of the works and the need for them to remain undisturbed;

f. The protocol to be followed if a bat is discovered when the licensed ecologist is not on site; and

g. An outline of the proposals, including specific measures to be accommodated for roosting bats including accessed for bats at the farmhouse in the long-term and timescales.

Capture and Exclusion During Works

5.3.14 Under the Natural England licence the fascia boards, roof coverings and lead flashing will be removed carefully by hand and under the supervision of the licensed ecologist. The underside of the boards, slates and ridge copings will be checked for bats prior to discard or stacking.

5.3.15 If at any time during the works a bat is discovered or suspected when the licensed bat surveyor is not on site all contractors must withdraw from the area and ERAP (Consultant Ecologists) Ltd (01772 750502) or the Bat Conservation Trust must be contacted for further guidance.

Recreation / Replacement of the Roost Feature

5.3.16 In accordance with the *Bat Mitigation Guidelines* (Mitchell-Jones, 2004) for works that will affect a maternity roost of a common species it is a requirement that there is a like for like replacement of roost provision. During the works it is essential that the gaps beneath the ridge copings are retained / re-created. It is also essential that a 15mm wide gap behind the fascia boards (either near the boiler / hot water tank) or at the south-facing elevation of the farmhouse (including full access for bats to the cavity wall) is recreated. This will ensure that provisions for use by a common pipistrelle maternity roost are retained at the site.

Post-development Monitoring

5.3.17 Under the Natural England EPSM there is likely to be a two-year post-works monitoring programme.

Mechanism for Ensuring Implementation / Success

5.3.18 If the licensed ecologist has any concerns regarding the quality of workmanship or there is non-compliance with the Natural England licence, the Mitigation Strategy and / or guidance provided by the licensed ecologist then this will result in additional site visits to make inspections.

5.3.19 It is always the intention to ensure all parties are aware of the importance of the Natural England licence and compliance with the Mitigation Strategy and this is achieved through good communication. However, in extreme / significant cases of non-compliance the licensed bat surveyor will report the issue to Natural England and further action may be taken.

Post-development Interference Impacts and Mitigation

5.3.20 The risk of post-development interference impacts has been minimised by designing in the provisions for roosting bats in liaison with the property owners and by providing guidance to the property owners on the protection afforded to bats and their roosts.

Consideration of Tests 2 and 3

5.3.21 In consideration of the demonstration that the proposals are for imperative reasons of overriding public interest including those of a social or economic nature and beneficial consequences of primary importance for the environment [Regulation 55(2)(e)] the following information is of relevance:

a. The works will ensure that the property is brought up to modern day regulations to enhance its insulative qualities and sustainability;

b. The extension and alterations address all of the current issues with the property as identified by the owner and will meet the current needs of the owner;

c. The alterations will not significantly affect the footprint of the property and does not therefore increase the area of built development in the greenbelt; and

d. In addition, it is proposed to use local professional and construction resources during the works which will be of benefit to the local economy.

5.3.22 The extension of the existing property (rather than demolition and re-build) is considered to be the most appropriate and environmentally-friendly approach that will also minimise the duration of impacts on bats and their habitats.

5.3.23 The 'do-nothing option' is not feasible as this would not enable the applicant and their family to meet their identified needs and to bring the property to current modern day standards and living requirements which contribute to the longevity pf the property.

5.4 Nesting Birds

Protection

5.4.1 All wild birds are protected under the *Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981* (as amended) while they are nesting. All contractors must be advised on the possible future use of the farmhouse by nesting birds and the protection afforded to nesting birds. The bird breeding season typically extends between March to August inclusive.

5.4.2 If breeding birds are detected / present it is recommended that the area is left undisturbed until it is confirmed that the young birds have fledged / the nest is no longer active. Guidance from an ecologist should be sought, as needed.

Conservation of Opportunities for Use by Nesting Birds

5.4.3 It is advised that the established garden habitats bordering the farmhouse provide a number of alternative opportunities for use by nesting passerine birds, although in accordance with best practice it is advised that one open-fronted bird box is installed amongst the Virginia Creeper / other climbing plants / dense vegetation on the brick wall in the rear garden. A suitable box is recommended in **Insert 2**.

Insert 2: Open-fronted Bird Box Example (available from www.NHBS.com)[5]

5.5 Invasive Plant Species

5.5.1 It is an offence under the *Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981* (as amended) to cause the spread of Wall Cotoneaster, Virginia Creeper and Montbretia in the wild. It is concluded that the preparation of an Invasive Species Management Plan is not necessary in this case, rather, it is proportionate and appropriate to advise all contractors of the presence of the invasive plants and the need to avoid the removal of plant material and materials that may contain invasive species from the site.

[5] This type of box must not be hung on a conspicuous tree or bush. Small predators can enter through the unprotected opening. By hanging on a wall, predators will not be able to reach the box. Alternatively the box can be hidden in Ivy, Honeysuckle or other climbing plants.

6.0 CONCLUSION

6.1 This ecological assessment has demonstrated that the extension and alteration proposals at Parsonage Farm are feasible and acceptable in accordance with ecological considerations and the National Planning Policy Framework.

6.2 The comprehensive bat mitigation strategy outlined in **Section 5.3** demonstrates that mitigation for roosting bats and conservation of roosting and foraging opportunities at the site in the long-term is entirely feasible. The 'three tests' of *The Conservation of Habitats and Species (Amendment) (EU Exit) Regulations 2019* can be met and, once the further surveys in the bat activity season have been carried out, the appropriate Natural England licence can be obtained to facilitate the works.

6.3 Other actions for the protection of wildlife, namely nesting birds, can be achieved by the works in accordance with wildlife legislation and best practice.

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8.0 APPENDIX 1: PHOTOGRAPHS AND FIGURES

8.1 Photographs

Table 8.1: Photographs

Photo 1: South-eastern elevation of the farmhouse

Photo 2: Wall Cotoneaster at the south-western elevation of the farmhouse

Photo 3: Virginia Creeper and Montbretia in the wider garden

Photo 4: South-western and south-eastern elevations of the farmhouse

Photo 5: South-eastern and north-eastern elevations of the farmhouse

Photo 6: North-eastern and north-western elevations of the farmhouse

Photo 7: North-western elevation of the farmhouse showing single storey utility section

Photo 8: Slate roof over utility area with sections of missing bedding mortar beneath the ridge copings

Photo 9: South-western elevation of the farmhouse

Photo 10: PVC framed conservation at south-western elevation of the farmhouse

Photo 11: Gap at lead flashing at PVC conservatory

Photo 12: Gaps behind timber fascia at eastern section of farmhouse

Photo 13: Scattered bat droppings over chairs below access to Roost 1

Photo 14: Scattered bat droppings over chairs beneath the north-eastern elevation of the western section of the farmhouse and assumed roost access to Roost 1

Photo 15: Roof void at north-eastern end of the western section of the farmhouse

Photo 15: Roof void at north-eastern end of the western section of the farmhouse

Photo 17: Roof void at the south-western end of the western section of the farmhouse

Photo 18: Bat droppings over hot water tank on internal side of fascia and wall at Roost 1

Photo 19: Bat droppings (common pipistrelle) on fibreglass insulation on floor of roof void at western section of farmhouse

Photo 20: Roof void at eastern section of farmhouse

Photo 21: Internal side of north-east facing gable elevation wall of the farmhouse

Photo 22: Bat droppings (common pipistrelle) on fibreglass insulation on floor of eastern election of roof void

Photo 23: Eastern elevation of garage

Photo 24: Northern and western elevations of garage

Photo 25: Gaps at roof verge on western elevation of garage

Photo 26: Old bird's nest beneath canopy at farmhouse

8.2 Figures

Figure 1: Aerial Image of the Site and its Surroundings

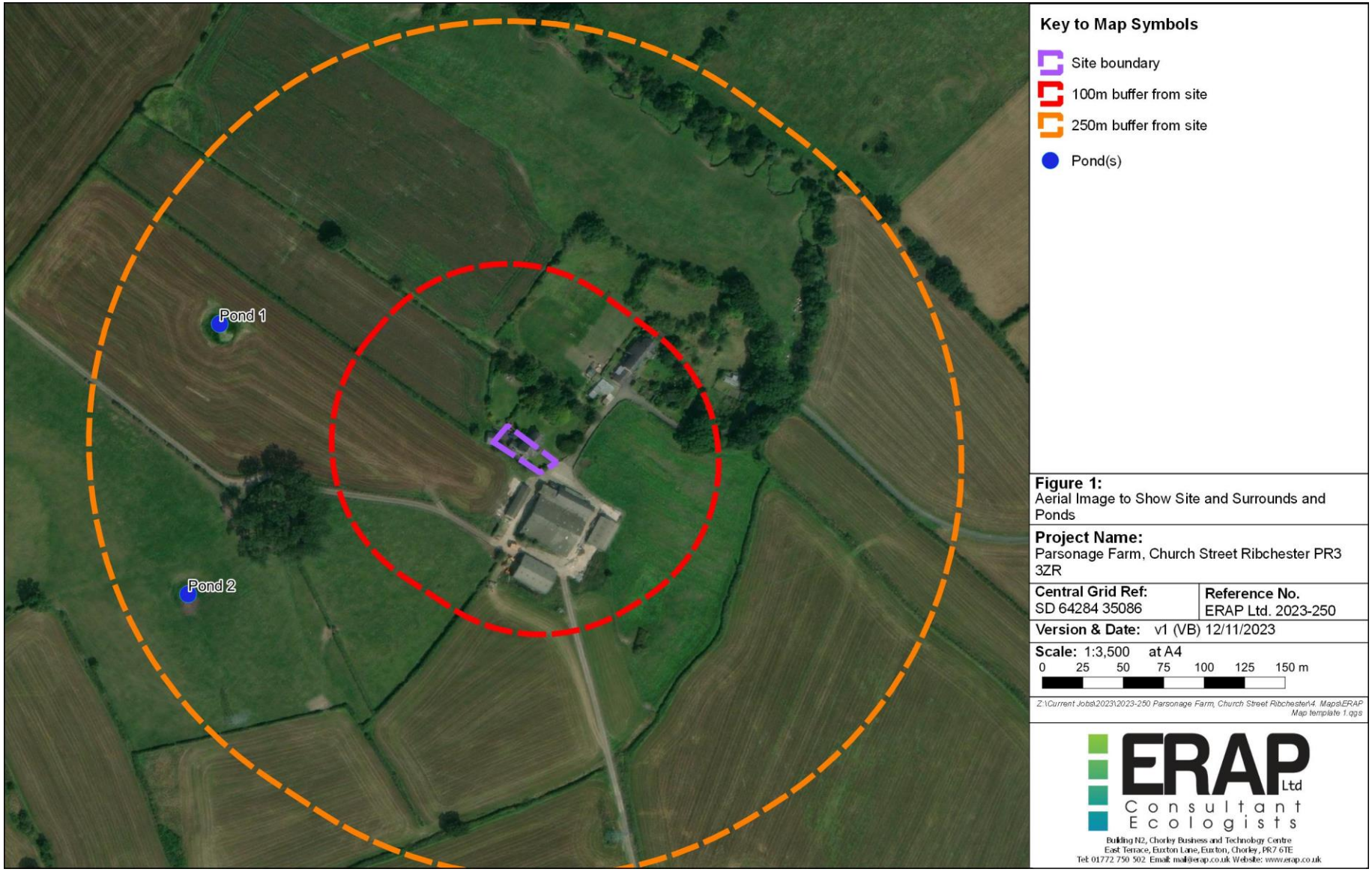
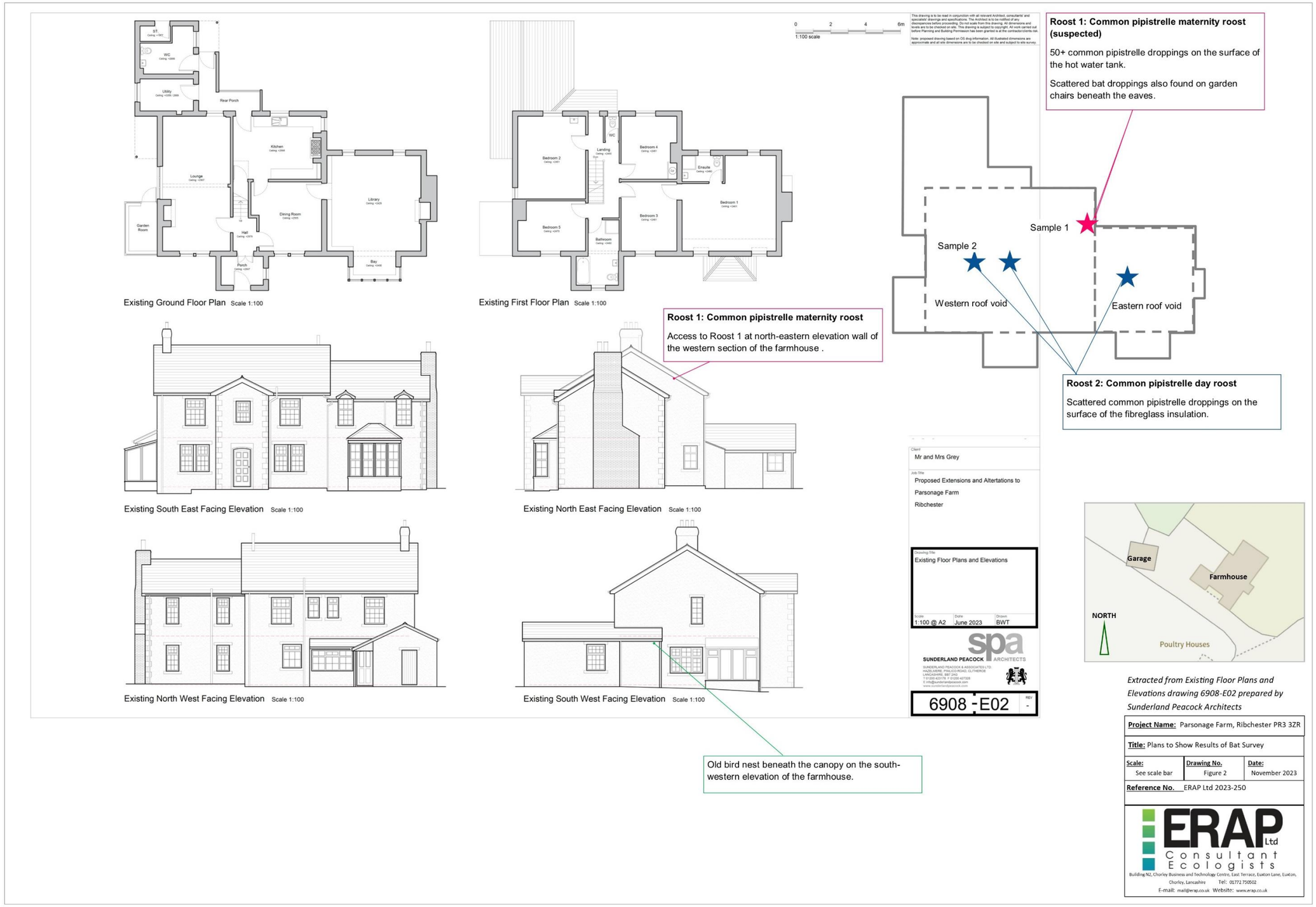


Figure 2: Plan to Show Results of Bat Survey



9.0 APPENDIX 2: RESULTS OF DNA ANALYSIS

9.1 Sample 1: Common pipistrelle (*Pipistrellus pipistrellus*)

WARWICK
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EcoWarwicker
Ecological Forensics

30 October 23

Re: Identification Results for Victoria Burrows, ERAP Ltd

Job number 20354, received 16 October 2023
Sample labelled: 2023-250 Parsonage Farm Sample 1
PCR amplification successful. DNA sequence:
CCAAACAGATGCCTAATACGGGACCCAAAATTTCATCATGCTGAATGTTTGATGGAG
CTGGTAGATCAATGAATGAGTTATTGATGATTTTGATCAGGGGGTGGGACTTTCGAA
TGTTTGTCAT

Phylogenetic analysis identification: *Pipistrellus pipistrellus*

Confirmed by maximum likelihood, maximum parsimony, bootstrap 100%.

Best regards,

Professor Robin Allaby

The results and conclusions in this report are based on an investigation of mtDNA sequence analysis. The results obtained have been reported with accuracy. The interpretation represents the most probable conclusion for the DNA sequence obtained rather than the sample provided given current levels of species data. It should be borne in mind that different circumstances might produce different results. Therefore, care must be taken with interpretation of the results especially if they are used as the basis for commercial recommendations.

Professor Robin Allaby

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9.2 Sample 2: Common pipistrelle (*Pipistrellus pipistrellus*)

WARWICK
THE UNIVERSITY OF WARWICK

EcoWarwicker
Ecological Forensics

30 October 23

Re: Identification Results for Victoria Burrows, ERAP Ltd

Job number 20355, received 16 October 2023
Sample labelled: 2023-250 Parsonage Farm Sample 2
PCR amplification successful. DNA sequence:
CCAAACAGATGCCTAATAGGGACCCAAAATTTCATCATGCTGAAATGTTTGATGGAG
CTGGTAGATCAATGAATGAGTTATGATGATTTGATCAGGGGGTGGGACTTTCGAATG
TTTGTCAT

Phylogenetic analysis identification: *Pipistrellus pipistrellus*

Confirmed by maximum likelihood, maximum parsimony, bootstrap 100%.

Best regards,

Professor Robin Allaby

The results and conclusions in this report are based on an investigation of mtDNA sequence analysis. The results obtained have been reported with accuracy. The interpretation represents the most probable conclusion for the DNA sequence obtained rather than the sample provided given current levels of species data. It should be borne in mind that different circumstances might produce different results. Therefore, care must be taken with interpretation of the results especially if they are used as the basis for commercial recommendations.

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