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lizard landscape design

Landscape Architecture

WESTBROOKE DEVELOPMENTS LTD

The Bell Memorial Care Home, South Street, Lancing, West Sussex



Environmental Design

– ***Preliminary Ecological Appraisal Report***



Landscape Planning

Approved By: Joe Jackson
Signed: .....
Position: Principal
Date: 20th September 2016

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Lizard Landscape Design and Ecology



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SUMMARY

Westbrooke Developments Ltd has commissioned Lizard Landscape Design and Ecology to undertake a preliminary ecological appraisal and protected species assessment of the land proposed for development at The Bell Memorial Care Home, Lancing *(Grid Reference: TQ 181 038– hereafter referred to as 'the site')*. Due to the presence of existing buildings within the site area, a day-time bat roost assessment has been undertaken to appraise the potential for bats within the existing structures and adjacent trees. A preliminary ecological appraisal survey *(PEA)* was undertaken of the site on 15th September 2016 to appraise the existing ecological resource within the site and the surrounding area.

No habitats of note were recorded on site, while the building is considered to offer '*negligible*' bat roost potential. A thorough internal and external assessment of the building found no evidence of bats, with very limited potential for bats to be present.

The roof void of the main house is large and uncluttered and therefore suitable for bats however the fabric of the house was in good condition with very few potential access points noted. Those which were identified were examined more closely and discounted through presence of cobweb covering or lack of evidence. Further confidence in the negative result is gained from the painted cream exterior of the building which would clearly show droppings or urine marks to external walls below access points. In addition, the surrounding habitat is considered to be suboptimal for the majority of bat species due to its urban nature and lack of mature trees / good quality grassland.

A small bird nest was located within the roof void to the centre of the property while seagulls were noted loafing around the lift shaft, an area which they could possibly nest in. All active bird nests, eggs and chicks are protected against damage or destruction under *The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (As amended)*. It is recommended that any demolition of the building take place outside the nesting season (*nesting season: 1st March-31st July inclusive*) or following inspection by a suitably qualified ecologist.

The site lacks structural and species diversity, being largely formed of hardstanding with some amenity grassland. Biodiversity was low on site, likely due to the uniform nature of the area. No further surveys for any protected species are recommended for this site.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Westbrooke Developments Ltd has commissioned Lizard Landscape Design and Ecology to undertake a preliminary ecological appraisal and protected species assessment of the land proposed for development at The Bell Memorial Care Home, Lancing *(Grid Reference: TQ 181 038 – hereafter referred to as 'the site').* Due to the presence of existing buildings within the site area, a day-time bat roost assessment has been undertaken to appraise the potential for bats within the existing structures and adjacent trees.

1.2 A preliminary ecological appraisal survey *(PEA)* was undertaken of the site on 15th September 2016 to appraise the existing ecological resource within the site and the surrounding area. The *PEA* was comprised of a baseline survey conforming broadly to the *JNCC Ecology Phase 1 Habitat Survey* protocol to identify the existing habitats. In addition a *protected species assessment* was undertaken to identify the potential for European and nationally protected species within and adjacent to the site.

1.3 The field survey data and analysis contained within this report were undertaken and prepared by Catherine O'Reilly (*BSc; NE Class 2 Bat Licence; Project Ecologist; Lizard Landscape Design and Ecology*). The report has been reviewed by Joe Jackson; (*Principal; Landscape Architect BA (Hons) LA DipLA CMLI; Lizard Landscape Design and Ecology).*

Site Information

1.4 The development site is located due west of South Street, on a site currently housing a disused care home, located towards the southern edge of Lancing, West Sussex. The site is approximately 6.00 metres above sea level and measures approximately 0.3 hectares. The site is comprised in the majority by existing building with amenity grassland and outbuildings, as would be expected on a site of this nature. Borders of the site are composed of fencing with hedging and scattered mature trees. The site boundaries are edged by residential areas to all aspects.

1.5 Soils on site are described as freely draining slightly acid loamy soil. There are no areas of *ancient woodland* or woodland highlighted on the *National Forest Inventory* within the development area or immediately adjacent to the site area. There are no public footpaths running through the site and permission has been sought to access the area.

Surrounding Landscape

1.6 The surrounding landscape is urban, dominated by residential properties for at least 500.00 metres to the north, east and west, while land opens to the coast approximately 200.00 metres to the south of the site. Beyond this to the north and west the land extends to a mix of arable and pastoral farmland. The nearest area of woodland listed on the *National Forest Inventory* is a small 0.57 hectare area located 1.2 kilometres east. There are no waterbodies within 500.0 metres of the development zone.

Development Proposals

1.7 The development proposals consist of the construction of new residential buildings on the site following the demolition of the existing property. This survey has been undertaken on the assumption that development proposals would incorporate a large percentage of the available site area, to include associated residential properties, hard standing and amenity / garden areas.

2.0 SCOPE OF THE SURVEY

2.1 The aim of the preliminary ecological appraisal has been to:

- *identify and display the main habitat types and plant communities;*
- *provide a species list for the major habitats;*
- *identify habitats with potential for protected species;*
- *provide recommendations for surveys of protected species and / or ecological enhancement / compensation.*

2.2 The aims of the day-time bat roost assessment survey and protected species assessments were to:

- *identify the potential for roosting bats;*
- *identify areas where future detailed survey effort would be required and should be focused;*
- *establish whether other habitat features for different species groups exist to warrant further investigation.*

2.3 This report establishes the potential ecological resource within the site and outlines where any ecological constraints may occur.

3.0 METHODOLGY

3.1 A preliminary ecological appraisal was undertaken on 15th September 2016 and the site subjected to an ecology phase 1 habitat survey using guidelines set out in the *Handbook for Phase 1 Habitat Survey – A Technique for Environmental Audit (JNCC, 2003)*. This has resulted in a Site Habitat Plan *(Figure No. 01)*, Species Lists for Habitat Parcels (*Table No. 01)* and Target Notes (*Table No. 02*).

3.2 Habitats within the site were classified and the presence, or potential presence, of certain protected and / or notable species of flora and fauna were identified. A summary description of the habitat within the site following the ecology phase 1 habitat survey methodology is presented in *Section 4.0*.

3.3 Due to the field survey consisting of only one site visit, certain species particularly some of the flowering plants may not have been visible or may have been otherwise inconspicuous at the time of survey and hence overlooked. These are accepted constraints associated with the standard ecology phase 1 habitat survey methodology.

3.4 Habitats within and immediately adjacent to the site were assessed for their potential for uncommon and protected fauna including mammals, birds, reptiles and amphibians. This involved identifying features which may be used by protected species, potential foraging areas and other signs of use. Stones, dead wood and rubble were turned over and any dug holes studied for recent activity by mammals.

3.5 The results are summarised and accompanied in large part by photographic evidence contained in *Appendix No. 01 – Site Photographs*. Recommendations for further investigation and survey are made in the following report.

Day-Time Bat Roost Assessment Survey

3.6 An internal day-time bat roost assessment survey was undertaken on 15th September 2016 by a licensed, experienced bat surveyor. The bat surveyor undertook an internal and external examination of the existing building including all the roof voids. The bat surveyor assessed the existing building visually and searched for evidence such as;

- *Staining beneath or around a hole caused by natural oils in bat fur;*
- *Bat droppings beneath a hole, roost or resting area;*
- *Bat droppings and / or insect remains beneath a feeding area;*
- *Audible squeaking from within a hole;*
- *Insects (especially flies) around a hole;*
- *Dead bats.*

3.7 An external investigation assessed the fascia, soffit boards, and tiles of the buildings; including any areas of weatherboarding and hanging tiles, in order to see if there were access points readily available for bats to utilise externally.

4.0 RESULTS

4.1 Desk Study – Background information

Designated Sites and Habitats

4.1.1 The following section outlines the ecological context of the development site, describing any designated nature conservation sites in the vicinity of the development site. The following designated sites and habitats are not necessarily representative of the existing site's ecology, but are indicative of the ecological context of the surrounding area; a factor that may be important when assessing the presence / absence potential of certain species groups.

Statutory Protected Sites

4.1.2 The site is not located within any statutory designated area; however, there are such areas within a 2.0 kilometre radius of the site. *The South Downs National Park* is located 1.9 kilometres north of the site, and is the newest National Park, having been officially designated in April 2010. The area designated measures approximately 1600km^2 and has been classified because of the uniquely biodiverse landscape it represents, as evidenced by the 86 no. *Sites of Special Scientific Interest* which lie within its boundary. The purpose of National Parks is to conserve and enhance natural beauty, wildlife and cultural heritage in addition to promoting understanding and enjoyment of the special qualities of National Parks by the public.

4.1.3 *Wide Water Lagoon LNR* is a shallow tidal lagoon which supports many species of wildfowl. This *LNR i*s located 1.2 kilometres south-east of the development site. *Lancing Ring Local Nature Reserve (LNR)* is located approximately 2.1 kilometres north of the site boundary. This 29.41 hectare site is important for its calcareous grassland and its matrix of woodland, dewpond and grassland habitats support numerous herptile species.

4.1.4 The small scale of the development and highly residential quality of the intervening habitat suggest the development proposals are unlikely to impact upon these statutory protected areas.

Non-Statutory Protected Sites

4.1.5 *Sites of Nature Conservation Importance (SNCI)* are non-statutory designations given to areas of high conservation value locally. Despite being non-statutory, *SNCIs* are still recognised by local planning authorities in their policies and plans. *Cokeham Brooks SNCI* is an area of watercourses and reedbeds located 1.4km north-west of the development site. The small scale of the development, discrepancy between habitats and intervening distances suggest the development proposals are unlikely to impact these non-statutory protected areas.

UK Priority Habitat

4.1.6 Within 2.0 kilometres of the site there are *UK Priority Habitats* of *vegetated shingle, coastal and floodplain grazing marsh, saline lagoons* and *deciduous woodland.* The small scale of the residential development; the intervening distance; and the discrepancy between the ecology habitats strongly suggest the development proposals would not impact on these *UK Priority Habitats.*

UK Priority Species

4.1.7 UK Priority and other protected species relevant within Sussex include terrestrial mammals such as brown long eared bats (*Plecotus auritus*) and common pipistrelle bats *(Pipistrellus pipistrellus).* Both of these species have previously been recorded within 5.0 kilometres of the site.

4.1.8 All species of bat and their roosts are protected under *Regulation 41* of the *Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010* and *Section 9* of the *Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981.* It is an offence for anyone intentionally to kill, injure or handle a bat, to possess a bat *(whether live or dead),* disturb a roosting bat, or sell or offer a bat for sale without a licence. It is also an offence to damage, destroy or obstruct access to any place used by bats for shelter, whether they are present or not.

4.1.9 Common pipistrelles bats are the most common bat species in the UK and have the ability to survive in a range of habitats. These crevice dwellers are often found roosting in cracks in buildings and mature trees. The buildings on site were examined and found to offer '*moderate'* bat roost potential.

4.2 Field Survey

4.2.1 The following habitats and features were recorded within the development site and the extended survey area. The general site character has been described, along with a brief description of the habitat's physical characteristics. These are shown on the Site Habitat Plan - *Figure No. 1;* Target Notes are listed in *Table No. 1* and a Species List for site habitats parcels is found in *Table No. 2.*

4.2.2 Habitats within the development site area include;

- *Hard standing;*
- *Existing buildings;*
- *Amenity grassland;*
- *Tall ruderal vegetation;*
- *Coniferous hedge line;*
- *Scattered trees;*

Site Description (Refer to Appendix No. 1 – Site Photographs)

4.2.3 The site currently houses a large disused care home which sits to the centre of the plot. Land to the rear is dominated by amenity grassland while the site frontage is formed of hardstanding parking areas with a small number of scattered trees including Cherry (*prunus sp.)* and Apple (*malus sp.*).

4.2.4 Land to the rear of the property includes areas of hardstanding, amenity grassland, tall ruderal and hedge lines. Large areas of the garden are being used for storage of materials. The sward at the time of the survey was typical of this habitat type being dominated by grasses including (*Festuca sp.)* and perennial rye-grass (*Lolium perenne).* Forbs present include abundant yarrow (*Achillea millefolium)* and creeping cinquefoil (*Potentilla reptans)* with frequent black medick (*Medicago lupulina)*, cats-ear (*Hypochaeris radicata)* and dandelion (*Taraxacum officinale).* Areas of taller vegetation including bristly ox-tongue (*Helminthotheca echioides)*, mallow (*Malva sylvestris)*, sun spurge (*Euphorbia helioscopia),* Canadian goldenrod (*Solidago Canadensis)* and purple dead-nettle (*Lamium purpureum)* form clumps around the edge of the lawn.

4.2.5 Boundaries of the site are largely formed of closed-board fencing with hoarding to the site frontage. A small section of cypress hedge lies to the west of the site with an adjacent silver birch (*Betula pendula)* tree.

Day-Time Bat Roost Assessment – Main House – External

4.2.6 The existing building on site is orientated roughly along a north-south axis. The building is of a three-storey construction with a slate tile roof. The roof was in good condition at the time of the survey with no missing or slipped tiles noted.

4.2.7 Double glazed window units were in good condition with no gaps to the lintels or brickwork noted. All window ledges were checked for bat droppings; none were found. PVC soffit and fascia boarding is intact and in good condition. All masonry and pointing appears to be in good condition. The building is rendered and painted cream; no grease marks or urine stains which would indicate bat access points were noted during the inspection.

Day-Time Bat Roost Assessment – Main House – Internal

4.2.8 An internal assessment of the property was carried out on 15th September 2016 by an experienced, licenced bat surveyor.

4.2.9 The roof void is formed of 5 no. distinct areas: the void above the original building, voids above the central and southern sections and a large void which is split into 2 no. compartments over the two-storey extension to the south.

Void No. 01 – Original Building

4.2.10 The void above the original building to the north is of traditional rafter and purlin construction with an area of roughly 195.0m^2 and height to the ridge of c. 3.5 metres. Roof tiles are backed by bitumen lining placed over wooden sarking. The roof appears to have been recently replaced as evidenced by old water marks to the sarking and tile fragments in the base of the void. Chimney stacks have been capped with slate and removed at roof level. Eves have been bricked up and are tightly sealed.

4.2.11 The void was entirely sealed with no potential bat access points noted. No evidence of bats was noted within the void. The potential for bats to be present is considered to be '*negligible*'.

Void No. 02 – Central Section

4.2.12 This section is of modern construction with a trussed roof backed by bitumen roofing membrane. The void measures approximately 55.0m^2 with a height to the ridge of c. 2.0m. No evidence of bats such as droppings, urine or grease marks was noted within the void. A single bird nest was located to the eastern section of the void. The potential for bats to be present is considered to be '*negligible*'.

Void No. 03 – Main Central Section

4.2.13 No access was possible into this void due to the presence of asbestos.

Void No. 04 – Southern Section

4.2.14 This roof void forms the main part of the two-storey extension to the southern section of the building. The multi-pitched roof is of a trussed design resulting in a cluttered environment with limited flight space. The floor of the void is part boarded with fiberglass insulation throughout. The void has open eves with insect mesh present resulting in a reasonably light environment. No evidence of bats such as droppings, urine or grease marks was noted within the void. The potential for bats to be present is considered to be '*negligible*'.

Void No. 05 – South-Western Section

4.2.15 A small roof void formed of the eves measuring approximately 9m^2 with a maximum height of c. 1.5m. and is similar in construction to *Void No. 04*. No bird or bat evidence was found.

Day-Time Bat Roost Assessment – Outbuildings

4.2.16 A small annex building and shed are located to the western side of the site. Internal access was not possible to either of these buildings.

4.2.17 The annex building is of single-storey construction with PVC weatherboarding and tile roof. The roof, fascia and soffits were in good condition. 2 no. potential access points were noted; a small hole in the weatherboarding above the door to the north and a small hole approximately 1.0m from the floor to the western side of the building. Both were examined with an endoscope with no evidence of bats located.

4.2.18 The shed is of a typical wooden construction with small cavity to the walls. The weatherboarding was noted to have lifted to the southern aspect possibly allowing access behind. This area was examined with an endoscope with no evidence of bats located. Both buildings are considered to offer '*negligible*' bat roost potential.

5.0 EVALUATION

5.1 This survey has identified habitats of existing buildings; hardstanding; amenity grassland; tall ruderal vegetation, scattered trees; and introduced shrub. Botanical interest on the site at the time of survey was limited with the vast majority of the site area comprised of amenity grassland. Although some areas of garden has been left to grow, the potential for reptile species to be present within the red line boundary is considered to be '*negligible*' due to the youth of habitat, its small size, and isolation from other areas of suitable habitat.

5.2 The building on site is considered to offer '*negligible*' bat roost potential. A thorough internal and external assessment of the building found no evidence of bats with very limited potential for bats to be present.

5.3 The roof void of the main house is large and uncluttered and therefore suitable for bats however the fabric of the house was in good condition with very few potential access points noted. Those which were identified were examined more closely and discounted through presence of cobweb covering or lack of evidence. Further confidence in the negative result is gained from the painted cream exterior of the building which would clearly show droppings or urine marks to external walls below access points. In addition, the surrounding habitat is considered to be suboptimal for the majority of bat species due to its urban nature and lack of mature trees / good quality grassland.

5.4 A small bird nest was located within the roof void to the centre of the property while seagulls were noted loafing around the lift shaft, an area which they could possibly nest in. All birds, their active nests, eggs and chicks are protected against damage or destruction under *The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (As amended)*. It is recommended that any demolition of the building take place outside the nesting season (*nesting season: 1st March-31st July inclusive*) or following inspection by a suitably qualified ecologist.

5.5 Habitat types on site are common and widespread with no rare or unusual plant species noted on site. A small stand of Canadian goldenrod (*Solidago canadensis)* was noted within the garden area. This species is listed as a non-native invasive; therefore care must be taken during any site clearance to reduce the spread of this species into the wild.

5.6 The site lacks structural and species diversity being largely formed of hardstanding with some amenity grassland. Biodiversity was low on site, likely due to the uniform nature of the area. No further surveys for any protected species are recommended for this site.

6.0 ECOLOGICAL ENHANCEMENTS

6.1 The design of the proposed development should consider ecological enhancements for the benefit of wildlife in line with the *National Planning Policy Framework* and *Local Planning Policy*. Recommendations for ecological enhancements that could be considered as part of development proposals include:

- *The use of native berry and seed-producing shrubs / trees within the planting scheme to provide a foraging resource for birds, such as: hawthorn (Crataegus monogyna); whitebeam (Sorbus aria); guelder rose (Viburnum opulus); rowan (Sorbus aucuparia); wayfaring tree (Viburnum lantana); alder (Alnus glutinosa); beech (Fagus sylvatica);and hazel (Corylus avellana);*
- *The use of flowering shrubs as listed within the RHS 'Perfect for Pollinators' plant list to provide year-round interest for invertebrates;*
- *Planting of a new species rich hedge to the site boundaries. Species could include hazel, hawthorn, blackthorn, spindle, holly, guelder rose, crab apple and wayfaring tree.*
- *The provision of nesting boxes for a variety of bird species; in particular house sparrows eg. Sparrow terrace nest box: http://www.nhbs.com/title/162118/sparrow-terrace-nest-box*
- *The provision of bat bricks / bat access tiles into the new buildings. Any area made accessible to bats must use type 1F bitumen roofing felt NOT breathable roofing membrane (BRM);*

7.0 REFERENCES

JNCC: Handbook for Phase 1 Habitat Survey – A Technique for Environmental Audit; (2003)

Collins J (ed): Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines (3rd ed.) The Bat Conservation Trust (2016)

Mitchell-Jones and McLeish: Bat Workers Manual; JNCC, 3rd Edition (2004)

Streeter, D.: The Most Complete Guide to the Flowers of Britain and Ireland; Harper Collins, London (2010)

Freshwater Habitats: Pond Design (2013) Accessed via: http://freshwaterhabitats.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2013/09/pond-design.pdf

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The Bell Memorial Home, South Street, Lancing

Table No. 01 – Target Notes (TN) for Ecology Phase 1 Habitat Survey and Protected Species Assessment

TN	Feature	Description	Protected Species	Potential	Photo No.
TN 01	Bird Nest	Location of small bird nest found within the roof void. There is a possibility of birds using the roof space for nesting, therefore demolition should be timed to avoid the nesting season or after inspection by a SQE.	***Nesting Birds***	***'High'***	14
TN 02	Grassland	Small area of longer glassland and tall ruderal which could be suitable for reptile species. Potential is reduced by the small size and isolation of the habitat.	***Reptiles***	***'Negligible'***	12
TN 03	Annex Building	2 no. potential access points to the north and west which were discounted after inspection with an endoscope.	***Bats***	***'Negligible'***	08
TN 04	Shed Outbuilding	2 no. potential access points to the south which were discounted after inspection with an endoscope.	***Bats***	***'Negligible'***	09
TN 05	Lift Shaft	Herring gull seen loafing throughout the survey, possibility of seagull nesting during the nesting season.	***Nesting Birds***	***'Moderate'***	13

The Bell Memorial Care Home, South Street, Lancing

Table No. 02 – Species List - Preliminary Ecological Appraisal Survey

Amenity Grassland

Common Name	***Scientific Name***	***DAFOR***
Black Medick	*Medicago lupulina*	***F***
Cats-ear	*Hypochaeris radicata*	***F***
Clover	*Trifolium repens*	***O***
Common Daisy	*Bellis perennis*	***O***
Creeping Cinquefoil	*Potentilla reptans*	***A***
Dandelion	*Taraxacum officinale*	***O***
Fescue sp.	*Festuca spp*	***LD***
Groundsel	Senecio vulgaris	***R***
Perennial rye-grass	*Lolium perenne*	***LD***
Ribwort Plantain	*Plantago lanceolata*	***F***
Yarrow	*Achillea millefolium*	***A***

Scattered Trees

Common Name	***Scientific Name***	***DAFOR***
Apple	*Malus sp.*	***O***
Cherry	*Prunus sp.*	***O***
Silver Birch	*Betula pendula*	***O***

Tall Ruderal

Common Name	***Scientific Name***	***DAFOR***
Bristly Oxtongue	*Helminthotheca echioides*	***LD***
Canadian Goldenrod	*Solidago canadensis*	***LD***
Common Nettle	*Urtica dioica*	***LD***
Mallow	*Malva slyvestis*	***LA***
Purple Dead-nettle	*Lamium purpureum*	***LF***
Sun Spurge	*Euphorbia helioscopia*	***LD***

DAFOR SCALE:
D – Dominant; A – Abundant; F – Frequent; O – Occasional; R – Rare; L – Locally

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Appendix No. 1 – Preliminary Ecological Appraisal – Site Photographs

APPENDIX NO. 1 - SITE PHOTOGRAPHS



Photograph No. 01 - View of the eastern aspect of the existing building.



Photograph No. 02 - View of the north-eastern aspect of the existing building.

APPENDIX NO. 1 - SITE PHOTOGRAPHS



Photograph No. 03 - View of the southern section and western aspect of the existing building.



Photograph No. 04 - Internal view of roof void no. 01.

APPENDIX NO. 1 - SITE PHOTOGRAPHS



Photograph No. 05 - Internal view of roof void no. 02.

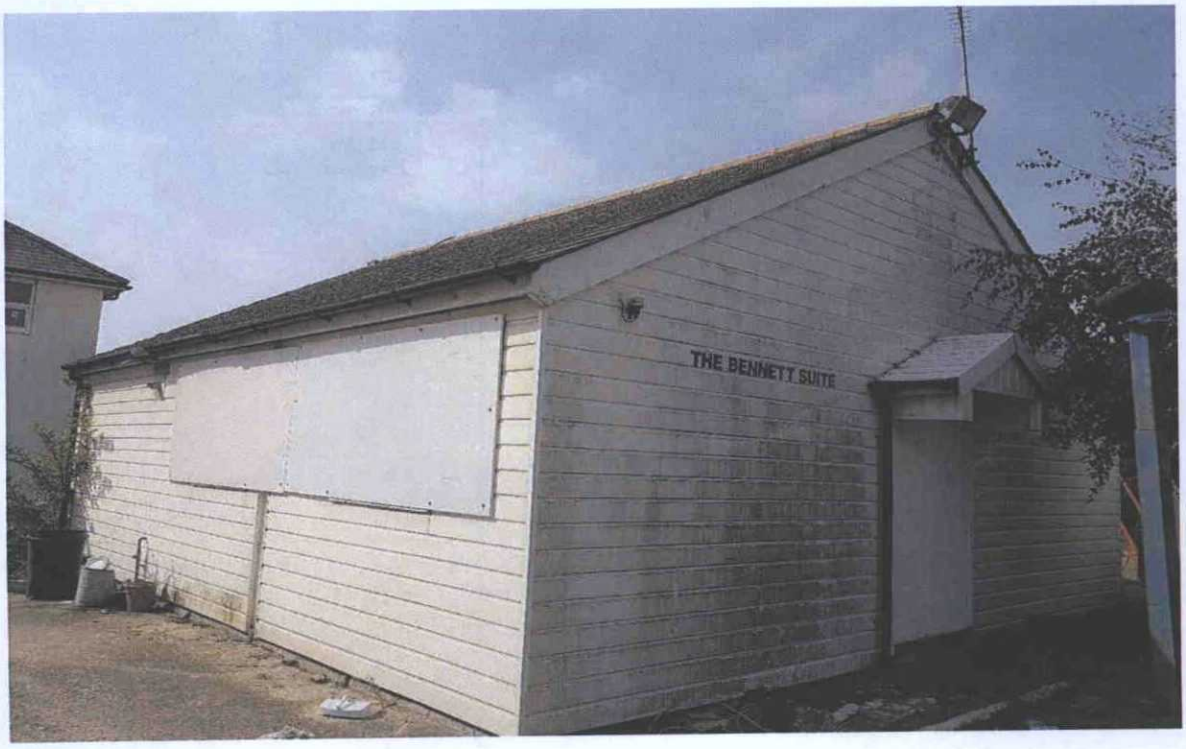


Photograph No. 06 - Internal view of roof void no. 04.

APPENDIX NO. 1 - SITE PHOTOGRAPHS

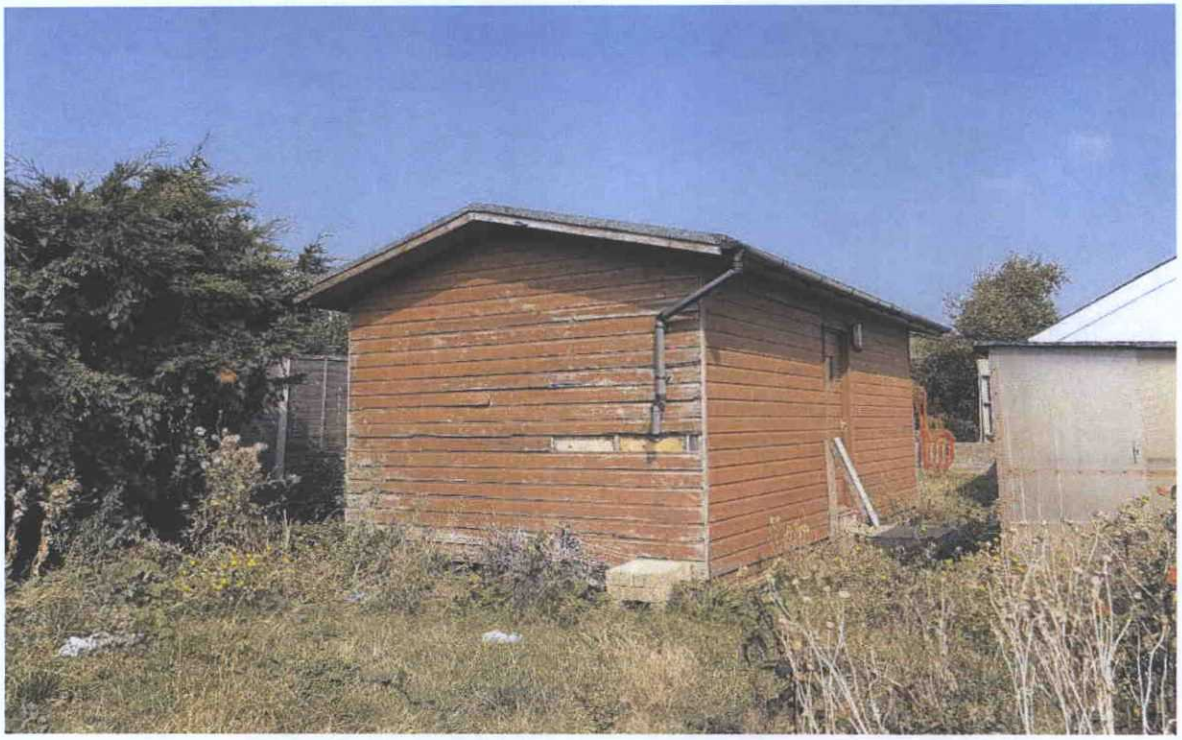


Photograph No. 07 - Internal view of roof void no. 05.



Photograph No. 08 - Small annex building. The building was assessed as providing *'negligible'* bat roost potential.

APPENDIX NO. 1 - SITE PHOTOGRAPHS



Photograph No. 09 - Small shed building. The building was assessed as providing '*negligible*' bat roost potential.



Photograph No. 10 - View of the site frontage which is dominated by defunct parking areas and scattered trees.

APPENDIX NO. 1 - SITE PHOTOGRAPHS



Photograph No. 11 - Storage of materials within the garden area to the west of the site.



Photograph No. 12 - Small area of amenity grassland which forms a section of the garden area to the western section of the site area.

APPENDIX NO. 1 - SITE PHOTOGRAPHS



Photograph No. 13 - Seagull noted loafing during the survey. Possibility for this area to support seagull nests.



Photograph No. 14 - Small nest located within roof void no. 02.