



Barn Owl Assessment

Land at New Salts Barn
New Salts Farm Road

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LIABILITIES:

Whilst every effort has been made to guarantee the accuracy of this report, it should be noted that living animals and plants are capable of migration/establishing. Whilst such species may not have been located during the survey duration, their presence may be found on a site at a later date. This report provides a snap shot of the species that were present at the time of the survey only and does not consider seasonal variation. Furthermore, where access is limited or the site supports habitats which are densely vegetated, only dominant species may be recorded.

The recommendations contained within this document are based on a reasonable timeframe between the completion of the survey and the commencement of any works. If there is any delay between the commencement of works that may conflict with timeframes laid out within this document, or have the potential to allow the ingress of protected species, a suitably qualified ecologist should be consulted.

It is the duty of care of the landowner/developer to act responsibly and comply with current environmental legislation if protected species are suspected or found prior to or during works.

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 The Ecology Partnership was commissioned by NSF Barns Ltd to undertake update barn assessments for barn owls at New Salts Farm Barns, Shoreham-by-Sea. An ecological assessment was conducted on the 4th September 2025. The buildings were not considered to be suitable for nesting barn owls due to the lack of features within the barns and no evidence present where access was possible, although it should be noted that this was after the typical nesting season had already concluded. Subsequently planning was submitted under reference AWD/0810/26.
- 1.2 Subsequently several objections have been made with regards to the presence of barn owls utilising the site. As such, an update survey was recommended.
- 1.3 This report presents the findings of the surveys on site, which aim specifically to assess the sites potential to support nesting barn owls. Potential mitigation measures and recommendations for the site will be included within this report.
- 1.4 This report comprises:
- The legislative context (Section 1);
 - Assessment methodologies (Section 2);
 - Results (Section 3);
 - Implications for development (Section 4);
 - Conclusions (Section 5).

Site Context

- 1.5 The site (TQ 20361 04682) is located in Shoreham-by-sea, south of New Salts Farm Road. It covers an area of approximately 0.57ha and consists of hardstanding and buildings with areas of grassland and scrub. The surrounding area features agricultural fields to the north, south and west, as well as some residential properties to the east. The red line boundary is shown overleaf in Figure 1.



Figure 1: Location of the barns on site

Description of Proposed Development

- 1.6 Proposed works involve the demolition of the barns and the redevelopment of the site.

Legislation

- 1.7 Barn owls (*Tyto alba*) are fully protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) and the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000. They are also listed on Schedule 1, which gives them additional protection during the breeding season. This means it is an offence to:

- Intentionally kill, injure, or capture a barn owl.
- Take, damage, or destroy an active nest.
- Take or destroy eggs.
- Disturb a barn owl while it is nesting or near a nest containing eggs or chicks.
- Disturb dependent young.

2.0 Methodology

- 2.1 The barns were internally and externally assessed for their suitability for nesting barn owls. The survey was undertaken on 30th July 2026 by barn owl licence holder Alexia Tamblyn.
- 2.2 The surveyor undertook an internal and external examination of the buildings for signs of barn owl activity. The surveyors visually inspected the buildings for potential barn owl nesting sites and searched for evidence of use by barn owls such as:
- Presence of adult feathers and downy juvenile feathers
 - Regurgitated undigested pellets below nest site locations. These are usually darker, larger and more compact than other owl pellets and contain most of the prey's skeleton
 - White splashing, which arises from squirted faeces

Limitations

- 2.3 It should be noted that whilst every effort has been made to provide a comprehensive description of the site, no single investigation could ensure the complete characterisation and prediction of the natural environment.

3.0 Results

- 3.1 The barns are labelled with ease below in Figure 2. The barns are all of similar construction. All of these buildings are metal framed with single skin corrugated (likely concrete/asbestos and metal) panel sheeting on the walls and roof. The barns are open fronted, allowing light and the elements to enter.
- 3.2 Barn B1 was in use for storage of hay bails. Barn B2 supported cows at the time of the survey and B3 was being used for storage of some farm machinery and additional hay bales.



Figure 2: Barns present on site

- 3.3 None of the buildings supported ledges or sheltered cavities or enclosed roof spaces. The metal beams that are present are too narrow to support a nesting site. However, several exposed metal beams could well support roosting sites.
- 3.4 B1 supported hay bales at the time of the survey in July 2026. It is understood that these have been present for a number of weeks. However, these are temporary within the building, but can be stored for several months.
- 3.5 During the July 2026 survey, evidence of barn owl use was recorded in Barn B1. White splashing was recorded on the southern aspect, where a panel was missing in the barn. Clear ledges for perching were present.
- 3.6 Pellets were reordered in the south and south western corner of the barn. These appeared to be reasonably fresh, likely produced within the last month. Feathers were also recorded attached to bramble and cobwebs located within the barn, along the south western corner of the barn, located on the beams and on the hay bales. The location of the evidence is shown in Figure 3 below.



Figure 3: Location of barn owl evidence

- 3.7 A full inspection was not possible due to the hay bales present. Where the ladder could reach in the south western corner, additional feathers and pellets were recorded. No other evidence of barns owls in B1 was identified, albeit extensive surveys were not possible due to the dense packing of the bales.
- 3.8 Barn B2 supported cows at the time of the survey. Whilst the barn supported the thin metal ledges, no possible nesting locations were identified. No evidence of use of this building by barns owls was recorded. B3 supports some hay bales at the time of the survey. However, no evidence of barn owl use was recorded in this barn.

4.0 Discussion

- 4.1 Barns B2 and B3 did not support any evidence of barn owl use. Barn B2 supported cows at the time of the survey and the metal beams around the edges of the barn did not support any signs of barn owl use. However, it must be noted that both barns were in active management and subject to disturbance. Barn B3 did support some sotred hay bales, but no evidence was recorded around the hay bales.

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- 4.2 Barn B1 supported evidence of barn owl use. Pellets and feathers were recorded. Feathers, including white feathers which appear to have been the nesting fluff due to the lack of a quill, were also located. Whilst a nest could not be identified due to the extent of the bales, it should be assumed that barn owl nesting is likely.
- 4.3 It must be noted that the hay bales are not permanent as hay bales are moved to feed cattle. However, they have been within the barn for several months providing a nesting resource in 2026. Due to the likely nesting of barn owls mitigation measures and compensation would be required to ensure barn owls are protected.
- 4.4 Barn owls, their nests and eggs are protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) from killing, injuring or taking. As a Schedule 1 species of the same Act, they are also afforded protection against disturbance when nesting. This species has severely declined in the UK since the 1930s, which is partly due to barn conversions and the loss of roost/nest sites. Site availability is major factor limiting population recovery and studies have shown that the loss of a main roost can lead to the individual(s) abandoning the area entirely. Therefore it is important to maintain the existing roosting provision on site and provide a nest box in one of the new buildings post construction.
- 4.5 Evidence of barn owl activity was identified in the southern barn (B1). Evidence consisted of owl pellets and feathers, including potentially downy feathers, within the buildings identified reasonably high activity and recent activity. Given the presence of evidence of recent usage and foraging habitats within the surrounding landscape, it was considered necessary that a mitigation strategy is implemented as part of the proposals.

Precautionary measures

- 4.6 Prior to any works on site, an internal check of all buildings to be demolished will be undertaken by a qualified ecologist to check for any further evidence of barn owls within. The works will also be conducted outside of the main barn owl breeding season, from end of February / beginning of March to August. If a nest or evidence of barn owl occupation becomes apparent during the works, all works will be ceased within 30metres of the evidence until survey-based evidence has been provided to the Local Planning Authority that no birds are nesting (at the development to which the consent applies) within 3 days of work commencing.

Compensation measures

- 4.7 An external barn owl nest box will be established on one of the buildings. A barn owl box specifically designed for use on buildings should be used (Figure 4). It should be installed as high as possible on the side of the building in a location not illuminated by artificial light.



Figure 4: Eco Barn Owl Nest Box ([NHBS](#))

- 4.8 As there are no suitable mature trees on site, an additional barn owl box will be erected on a suitably robust and tall pole (at least 4m) on the edge of the site. See Figure 5 below, which shows the approximate location of the new box in relation to the buildings. This box will be erected at least 30 days prior to any works starting on the site. The box will be established as high up on the pole as possible on the tree, over 3m high.
- 4.9 The box should face open countryside to the south with no obstructions. It should be overlook open countryside to maximise its visibility to barn owls. The recommended pole mounted barn owl box is shown in figure 6 and 7. Instruction for creation and installation can be found here on the [Barn Owl Trust website](#).



Figure 5: Approximate location of barn owl box on building (red square) & on pole (red circle)



Figure 6: Example of Pole mounted barn owl box from the Barn Owl Trust

Lighting scheme

- 4.10 A sensitive lighting scheme will also be implemented as part of the proposals. This will involve focussing lights away from any nest boxes. Lights will also be baffled and lowered.

Post-development monitoring

- 4.11 The nest boxes on site are to be monitored for 2 years post development. The boxes will be monitored through the use of access by ladder and investigation of the box, or through the use of binoculars and looking for signs, such as faeces and pellets. This information will then be submitted to the Barn Owl Trust for their reference and research. This monitoring can be incorporated into the Habitat Management and Monitoring Plan (HMMP) required for the relevant biodiversity net-gain obligations.

5.0 Conclusions

- 5.1 Internal and external building assessments of the barns were conducted in July to assessing potential suitability for barn owls.
- 5.2 Barns 2 was in active use and did not support any features which would be suitable to support nesting barn owls and no evidence of barn owl use was recorded. Barn B3 did not support any evidence of barn owl use, but did support some hay bales.
- 5.3 Barn B1 supported evidence of barn owl use , including pellets, white splashing and feathers, including white nesting fluff. It was assumed that this barn therefore supports nesting barn owls.
- 5.4 To protect barn owls, it is recommended that works are undertaken outside of the bird breeding season (end February until the end of August inclusive) or immediately after a nesting bird check by a suitably qualified ecologist.
- 5.5 The redevelopment will ensure roosting provision is maintained on one of the buildings (an external box) and a pole-mounted box on the edge of the site to provide alternative roosting throughout the build project.
- 5.6 It is considered that if these measures are followed, then barn owl nesting sites will be retained within the landscape.

6.0 References

Taylor, I. (1994). *Barn Owls: Predator-Prey relationships and Conservation*. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.

The Barn Owl Trust., (2012). *Barn Owl Conservation Handbook*. Pelagic Publishing, Exeter.

Internet resources:

Google Maps: www.google.co.uk/maps

Magic Interactive Map: www.magic.gov.uk

Appendix 1: Photos

Photo 1: Open panel on barn B1 where white splashing and pellets were located



Photo 2: Internal view of B1 with the bales. Lack of barn structure for nesting owls



Photo 3: Pellets located in B1 in the southwestern corner



Photo 4: barn owl feather



Photo 5: Section of Barn B1 where feathers and pellets found and considered likely access to nest on top of bales.



Photo 6: Barn owl nest fluff



Photo 7: barn B1
nesting fluff
caught high on
back wall



Photo 8: barn B2



Photo 9: barn B3



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