

Granby Farm, Netherton, Huddersfield

BAT SURVEY REPORT

October 2023



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CONTENTS

1	INTRODUCTION.....	1
1.1	Instruction and Report Aims	1
1.2	Site Description	1
2	METHODS	2
2.1	Overarching Guidance	2
2.2	Desk Study	2
2.3	Survey Personnel	2
2.4	Preliminary Roost Assessment	2
2.5	Presence / Absence Survey	3
2.6	Nesting Birds	4
2.7	Survey Comments	4
3	RESULTS	5
3.1	Desk Study	5
3.2	Preliminary Roost Assessment	5
3.3	Presence / Absence Survey	7
3.4	Nesting Birds	8
4	EVALUATION AND CONCLUSIONS.....	9
4.1	Bats.....	9
4.2	Nesting Birds	9
5	RECOMMENDATIONS	10
5.1	Bats.....	10
5.2	Nesting Birds	10
	APPENDIX A. LEGISLATION FOR BATS.....	1
	APPENDIX B. WYBG DATA.....	1
	APPENDIX C. PHOTOS AND IMAGES	1

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Instruction and Report Aims

Knight Sky Ecology was commissioned to undertake a bat survey of buildings located at Granby Farm, 20 Woodbottom Road, Netherton, Huddersfield, HD4 7DJ. The bat survey was undertaken in relation to the proposed conversion of three buildings at the site.

Bat survey methods employed for the property included a desk study, a preliminary roost assessment and a dusk emergence survey. Evidence of nesting birds was also documented where found.

The primary aim of the bat survey was to gather evidence of the presence or absence of a bat roost at the property. This report presents the results of the bat survey and provides all the necessary data, evaluation and guidance to satisfy the relevant planning and conservation policy obligations and legislative framework. Details of the legislation afforded to bats is presented within Appendix A.

1.2 Site Description

The buildings subject to survey comprise a stable, a small outbuilding and the main barn (with extension). The farmhouse was not included in the survey. These buildings are centred on grid reference SE 12153 12144.

The property is on the south-eastern side Honley Old Bottom and overlooks the valley. To the direct south of the property is Honley Old Wood which is a notably extensive area of ancient woodland. The urban areas of Honley, Netherton and Meltham are located in the wider landscape. Figure 1.1 provides an image of the site location.

Figure 1.1. Aerial view of site (dated 24/04/2021) and buildings subject to survey



2 METHODS

2.1 Overarching Guidance

The bat survey was primarily based on the methods described in '*Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines. 3rd edition. Bat Conservation Trust, London*' (Collins, J., 2016). Any deviation from standard practice is justified where required. The surveys were completed prior to the publication of the 4th edition of the guidelines in September 2023.

2.2 Desk Study

West Yorkshire Bat Group (WYBG) was commissioned to supply bat records within a 2km radius of the property. In addition, the 'Granted European Protected Species Applications' dataset in respect of bats was searched with use of the Multi-Agency Geographic Information for the Countryside (MAGiC) website (<https://magic.defra.gov.uk>) to gather further information of bat roosts and bat species within a 1km radius of the property.

2.3 Survey Personnel

All site-based surveys were led by Ryan Knight MCIEEM who holds a Level 2 Natural England Class Licence for bats (ref. 2015-12611-CLS-CLS) and has held this licence for over 10 years. Ryan has also acted as the named ecologist on numerous European Protected Species (EPS) mitigation licences issued by Natural England which covered several bat species and roost types. All other personnel who were involved in the surveys have been trained by Ryan or hold Natural England licenses and / or have several years of experience in bat surveys. Table 2.1 provides a list of surveyors that were involved in the surveys.

2.4 Preliminary Roost Assessment

A preliminary roost assessment of the property was undertaken on 8th September 2023. The assessment involved a visual search of the property for bats and evidence of bats (e.g., droppings) and an appraisal of the extent and suitability of any potential roost features present. The assessment included the use of a torch, a digital endoscope and ladders. The interior and exterior of each building was fully inspected.

Other considerations which would influence the suitability of the property for use by bats were also taken into account. This included the site location, expected night time lighting levels and the suitability of the surrounding habitats. This information was gathered from the site survey and web-based mapping sources (i.e., Google Earth).

Following the assessment, the property was assigned a bat roost suitability category of 'low', 'moderate', 'high' or 'confirmed' roost based on the collated information.

2.5 Presence / Absence Survey

Dusk Emergence Survey

A dusk emergence survey of the stables and main barn were undertaken on 20th September 2023.

A total of three different survey positions were required to complete one survey of the buildings. These survey positions enabled clear sightlines of all suitable bat roost egress features identified during the preliminary roost assessment and the recording of the species and numbers of bats emerging from the property if present. All other non-emergence bat activity was also recorded including flight direction, type of activity, time of activity and species.

The survey was started at least 15mins before sunset and continued for at least 1hr and 30mins after sunset. Table 2.1 details the survey times, weather conditions, equipment used and survey locations. Two survey positions comprised a surveyor with a bat detector supported by a night vision aid (NVA). These positions covered the north elevations of the barn and stables. Due to the relatively limited field of view of one of the NVAs (Nightfox Whisker) on the north side of the barn, a second NVA was used to add a wider field of view.

An unmanned NVA and bat detector was used to cover a very small area of the barn on the south elevation. All NVA footage was fully reviewed via a desktop media player following the completion of each survey

Table 2.1. Presence / absence surveys – weather conditions and equipment

Date	20 th September 2023
Sunset / Sunrise	19:11
Survey duration	18:55 to 20:45
Weather conditions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dry throughout • 15°C at survey start • 13°C at survey end • 10% cloud cover • Wind 1 (Beaufort scale) • No significant weather changes were encountered throughout the survey.
Equipment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ryan Knight (RK) - Echometer Touch 2 Pro with tablet (full spectrum) and 1no. Canon XA15 IR camera with 2no. Nightfox XC5 torches. • Catherine Wood (CW) - Natural England Class 2 licence ref 2016-24176-CLS-CLS); – Peersonic RPA3 (full spectrum) and 2no. Nightfox whisker with x1 Nightfox XC5 torch on each unit. • Unmanned Camera (UnC) - Echometer Touch 2 Pro with tablet (full spectrum) and 1no. Canon XA15 IR camera with 2no. Nightfox XC5 torches.

2.6 Nesting Birds

Any evidence of nesting birds was also recorded during the site surveys.

2.7 Survey Comments

The surveys were undertaken within the main bat activity period during weather conditions deemed suitable to conduct bat surveys in accordance with the guidance (Collins, 2016). It is acknowledged that the survey was undertaken slightly outside the optimal survey period (May to August inclusive). It should be noted that two earlier attempts to conduct surveys had to be postponed due to rain. However, overall, the surveys conducted on the property were considered sufficient and proportionate to fully inform the development proposals. The slightly later survey was not considered a significant constraint to achieving the aims of the survey.

It is acknowledged that there is a move towards the use of NVAs as a standard protocol within the next year and the survey methods employed for the site were designed with an intention to implement this new protocol (Bat Conservation Trust, 2022¹).

This report will remain valid for a period of 18 months from the date of issue. An ecologist should be contacted for advice on the revalidation requirements of the report if planning permission is not obtained or works do not commence within this time period. Further recommendations regarding the validity of the survey information are provided in Section 5.

¹ Bat Conservation Trust (2022). Interim Guidance Note: Use of night vision aids for bat emergence surveys and further comment on dawn surveys.

3 RESULTS

3.1 Desk Study

West Yorkshire Bat Group Records

WYBG provided 16 bat records within the search radius. The records were dated between 1995 and 2007. The records included pipistrelle species, common and soprano pipistrelle and records of bats which were not identified to species level (Vesper bat species). The number of records and species diversity are not likely to be an accurate reflection of bat activity in the locality.

The records included 11 roosts including maternity roosts and day roosts. No records were under a 500m distance from the site. Table B.1 in Appendix B provides the full details of the records.

European Protected Species Mitigation Licenses

The following granted EPS mitigation licenses were identified within a 1km radius:

- 2014-4125-EPS-MIT: Common pipistrelle. Destruction of a resting place (600m west).

3.2 Preliminary Roost Assessment

3.2.1 Building Descriptions and Potential Roost Features

A description of each building is provided below and photos of each building are provided in Appendix C.

Main Barn & Extension

The main barn comprised a stone building which has had a large extension on the west elevation. There was also an open car port / atrium on the east elevation which connected to the farmhouse. Both the main barn and the extension were used as a mechanical workshop at the time of the assessment. The workshop was used occasionally in the evenings (pers comm. with the landowner) and there was extensive lighting in the extension. The main barn appeared to have been renovated some years previously as the stone walls appear to have been heightened with brick and concrete block. The roof had been replaced with a steel framed roof structure and had corrugated cement roof sheets. There were several skylights in the roof which made the internal space very light. There were no loft spaces. There was an upper mezzanine floor which was used for storage. Internally, the stone work appeared solid. There was one gap in the stonework above the east door; however, upon further inspection, this was filled with cobwebs. There was also a gap on the outer north corner of the barn inside the extension. This was immediately adjacent to the lights.

Externally, the stonework appeared solid overall. There were several shallow gaps in the stonework that were unsuitable for potential use by bats. On the north gable, there were sizeable gaps under three stone lintels. Upon further inspection, these gaps were open and fairly exposed with no small crevices present; therefore, slightly reducing the overall suitability for use by bats. All gaps were fully inspected.

A potential roost feature was also observed under most of the roof capping on the north elevation of the main barn. This feature around the ridge was too high to inspect with ladders. Similarly, there was a gap under the roof capping on the south elevation. Most of the gap was filled with detritus and cobwebs. The barn extension comprised a concrete block base with a timber frame and corrugated sheet walls and roof. No potential roost features were identified in this extension. The car port extension which connects the barn to the house was stone built with a stone slate roof. The only potential roost features which were observed in this section comprised gaps in the sagging roof underlining. This area was used to wash vehicles and this use along with the lighting would decrease the potential suitability of the roost features.

Stable

The stable comprised a stone built, single storey structure which had been partially built into the hillside. Much of the internal walls appeared to have been rebuilt with concrete blocks. As the building is set within the hillside, the south elevation walls were around 1.2m high. The stonework appeared solid overall. However, there was a subsidence crack in the wall on the north-east corner. This had created a potential roost feature. The stables had a corrugated sheet roof. The roof edge capping on the north-east elevation was fairly tightfitting to the wall and filled with cobwebs and detritus. There were a couple of gaps under the curvature of the roof sheets. However, these gaps went through to the internal space and no crevices were present. No other potential roost features within the roof or stonework were identified.

Outbuilding

The outbuilding adjacent to the access track was a notably small structure which may have been a small cottage. This building had also been built into the hillside and the south elevation was below 1m from the ground. The building had stone roof tiles on the north aspect and concrete roof tiles on the south aspect. The stonework and mortar pointing on the roof verge and ridge appeared very solid. No potential roost features were observed in the outbuilding.

Habitat description

The property is within a rural location on the south-east side of Honley Wood Bottom. The property overlooks the valley which contains the tree lined Hall Dike. There are also treelines and woodlands across the valley. The most notable habitat within the area is the combined woodlands of Honley, Honley Old Wood and Clitheroe Wood. All these woodlands are listed as 'Ancient and Semi-natural Woodlands'. The wider area is a mix of urban areas, agricultural land and woodlands.

Overall, there are habitats of high value to bats in proximity to the property which are expected to support several bat species known to be present in West Yorkshire.

Evidence of bats and confirmation of Bat Roost Suitability

No bats or evidence of a bat roost was identified. A comprehensive search was completed. One bat dropping, (likely pipistrelle species) was identified on a machine in the stables. This was not associated with a roost. The stables did not have doors and therefore, bats are likely to use the stables as part of a wider foraging territory. The bat roost suitability of each building was categorised as follows:

- Main Barn – Low Suitability

- Main Barn Extension – Negligible Suitability
- Stables – Low Suitability
- Outbuilding – Negligible Suitability

Based on the results, the main barn and stables were deemed to require a further dusk emergence survey.

3.3 Presence / Absence Survey

Dusk emergence survey

No bat roosts were recorded within any of the buildings subject to survey. Activity was low within the first hour of the survey. However, in the second hour of the survey, moderate activity levels of species including noctule bat, common pipistrelle and Myotis species were recorded. Based on the call structure, the Myotis species was mostly likely to be Natterer’s bats. However, the presence of other Myotis species (e.g., whiskered bats) was not discounted. A possible sighting of a brown long-eared bat was also made. Bats were observed foraging and occasionally passing along the north boundary of the property and 1-3 common pipistrelle bats frequently foraged around the yard. A Natterer’s bat entered the stables at 19:51 to briefly fly inside before exiting. This was associated with general foraging activity. A summary of bat activity for each survey position is provided in Table 3.1

Table 3.1. Bat activity summary

20/09/2023. RK: Stables (frontage – north and east elevation) (sunset 19:11)			
Time	Species	No. of bats	Activity notes
19:24 to 19:25	Noctule bat	1	Commuting overhead not seen.
19:49	Common pipistrelle	1	Brief, faint call not seen.
19:51	Natterer’s bat	1	Flew from east and entered through doorway. Flew out of same doorway around 1min 30secs to 2 mins later.
19:55 to 20:15	Common pipistrelle	1-2	Several passes along frontage.
20:23	Possible brown long - eared bat	1	Pass along frontage. No call on detector. Flight characteristic of species.
20:25 to 20:45	Common pipistrelle	1-2	Frequent foraging passes.
20/09/2023. Main barn (frontage – north and east elevation)			
Time	Species	No. of bats	Activity notes
19:25	Noctule bat	1	Heard briefly
19:47 to 19:55	Common pipistrelle	1-3	Pass south to north over car port. Constant activity in yard thereafter.
19:55	Myotis bat	1	Heard not seen.

20:05 to 20:45	Common pipistrelle	1-3	Frequent activity in courtyard including social calling. Several loops under car port.
20/09/2023. Unmanned Camera & detector – North and west elevation of barn			
Time	Species	No. of bats	Activity notes
18:55 to 20:45	Noctule, common pipistrelle and Myotis species.	N/A	On bat detector: Noctule recorded at 19:24-25. Approximately 55 passes of common pipistrelle Two passes of Myotis species (possibly Natterer's bat) at 19:48 and 19:56. Small number of common pipistrelle passes recorded on camera.

3.4 Nesting Birds

The site visit occurred outside the main nesting season (generally accepted as March to August inclusive). Two disused swallows' nests were identified in the barn. It is not known if these were in use this year (2023). There was a further swallows' nest under the car port connecting the main barn to the house. The landowner mentioned that they had not seen this nest in use this year. There also was an old nest (unknown species) on top of a timber beam in the barn extension. The buildings (stables and barn in particular) present several suitable locations for nesting birds. No evidence of barn owl was observed.

4 EVALUATION AND CONCLUSIONS

4.1 Bats

Of the three buildings subject to assessment, both the stables and the main barn were considered to offer low roost suitability. This was due to the low number and condition of potential roost features. The outbuilding offered negligible roost suitability.

No evidence of a bat roost was observed on any building within the site during the preliminary assessment or dusk emergence survey. Bat activity was generally moderate with the vast majority of bat activity comprising foraging passes of common pipistrelle. Myotis species appeared also to use the site frequently for foraging. Most calls recorded were attributed to Natterer's bats. Very low numbers of noctule bats were also recorded along with a potential brown long-eared bat.

This bat activity and species diversity was as expected given the location of the site and the close proximity of habitats of high value for foraging. The woodlands to the direct south are also likely to contain numerous roost sites within trees.

It can be concluded with a reasonable confidence level that **bat roosts are absent from the property**. Therefore, bats do not present a potential ecological constraint to the development proposal as the works will remain legally compliant (see Appendix A).

Bats can use a number of different roosts throughout the year, and due to the nature of bats and this roost switching behaviour, it is considered good practice to mitigate the very low residual risk that a bat roost may be discovered during the works. Therefore, standard mitigation precautions are provided in Section 5.

4.2 Nesting Birds

Disused birds' nests were present in the barn and stables. Therefore, the proposed development should be aware of the legislation afforded to nesting birds:

- All wild birds in the UK are protected under Section 1 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) which makes it an offence to intentionally kill, injure or take any wild bird or take, damage or destroy the nest (whilst being built or in use) or its eggs.

Swallows do require covered structures in order to build nests. The conversion of the buildings would limit the potential for swallows to continue nesting within the site. Swallows are a green listed bird species of conservation concern (Stanbury. *et al.*, 2021) which means that they are of least concern in the UK as compared to amber and red listed birds. However, locally, swallows are listed as a priority species on the West Yorkshire Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) and Kirklees BAP. Impacts to the swallow population from the potential loss of the nesting sites are not expected to be significant (at a local level or above).

Standard measures to avoid potential risks to nesting birds are described in Section 5.

5 RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Bats

Precautionary Mitigation

It is recommended that the proposed development adopts the following precautionary mitigation procedures:

- There is likely to be a prolonged period between planning consent and the commencement of the development. Therefore, it is recommended that before commencement, an update assessment is undertaken by a suitably qualified ecologist. The extent of the assessment would depend on how long it has been after the dusk emergence survey was completed. A further dusk emergence survey may be required.
- The contact details of a bat licensed surveyor should be retained by the appointed contractor throughout the duration of the development works. In the unexpected event that a bat is discovered, contractors will be advised to contact the licensed ecologist who will travel to site to collect. Contractors will be specifically forbidden to handle bats. Contractors will be advised that if it is necessary to remove a bat to avoid it being harmed, gloves **MUST** be worn. It should be carefully placed in a cardboard box and kept in the dark in a quiet place until the licensed ecologist arrives on site.
- If the continuing works are, on balance, likely to result in contravention of the legislation afforded to bats (see Appendix A), the works should stop and a Natural England mitigation licence should be sought.

Enhancements

At this stage it is not known whether the stables or outbuilding are to be heightened. Currently, both buildings are not considered sufficiently high enough to install bat boxes.

However, the proposed development of the barn presents a good opportunity to provide roosting provision for bats via the placement of three bat boxes on the building. The boxes should comprise 3no. PRO UK Build-in WoodStone Bat Boxes (available from <https://www.nhbs.com/>); or, 3no. Vivara Pro Build-in Woodstone Bat Tubes (available from <https://www.nhbs.com/>).

Boxes can be placed within the walls, close to the roof ridge or directly under the roof verge (away from any windows) so as to achieve a height in excess of 3m from the ground.

Confirmation of the box types to be used, the locations and further siting advice can be provided in a Biodiversity Enhancement Plan (or similar document).

5.2 Nesting Birds

Precautionary Mitigation

Any works which will potentially impact bird's nests should be undertaken outside of the main nesting bird season of March to August (inclusive). If this timing constraint is not deemed feasible due to the complexity and scale of the site, any works potentially affecting bird's nests must be preceded by a nesting bird check, undertaken by a suitably qualified ecologist. If an

active nest is found, it must be left in-situ until no longer in use. This may cause a delay to the works.

As an ecological enhancement to the proposals, bird boxes can be integrated into or mounted onto the buildings at the site to provide nesting opportunities. Three boxes are recommended:

- 1no. WoodStone Starling Nest Box
- 1no. Vivara Pro Seville 28mm WoodStone Nest Box
- 1no. Vivara Pro Barcelona WoodStone Open Nest Box

All boxes can be sourced from <https://www.nhbs.com/>

The locations of the boxes along with siting advice and box models can be included within a Biodiversity Enhancement Plan (or similar document).

APPENDIX A. LEGISLATION FOR BATS

The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981

All bat species in England are listed in Schedule 5 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended). Section 9 of the Act make it an offence to intentionally or recklessly kill, injure or take any wild animal included in Schedule 5. In addition, it is an offence to (intentionally or recklessly):

- Damage or destroy any structure or place which any wild animal specified in Schedule 5 uses for shelter or protection;
- Disturb any such animal while it is occupying a structure or place which it uses for shelter or protection; or
- Obstruct access to any structure or place which any such animal uses for shelter or protection.

In addition, under this legislation there are offences relating to sale, possession and control of bats.

The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017

Bats are listed within Schedule 2 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended) (the Habitats Regulations) as European Protected Species of animals. Part 3 (Protection of animals); Regulation 43 (1) of the Habitats Regulations make it an offence to:

- Deliberately capture, injure or kill any wild animal of a European protected species;
- Deliberately disturb wild animals of any such species;
- Deliberately take or destroys the eggs of such an animal; or
- Damages or destroy a breeding site or resting place of such an animal.

For the purposes of the legislation, the disturbance of wild animals includes any disturbance which is likely to impair their ability to survive, to breed or to reproduce, or to rear or nurture their young; or in the case of hibernating or migratory species, to hibernate or migrate; or to affect significantly the local distribution or abundance of the species to which they belong.

In addition, under this legislation there are offences relating to possession, control sale and exchange of European Protected Species.

European Protected Species Mitigation Licensing

Where it is likely that a proposed scheme would result in contravention of this legislation, a bat mitigation licence would be required to allow the works to proceed. As part of this process, the application must meet 'three tests' for licensing under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended). Planning guidance and case law also confirm that local authorities have a statutory duty under the Regulations to have regard to these three tests when deciding whether to grant planning permission. The three tests are as follows:

- Regulation 55 (2) (e) states that a derogation licence can only be issued for 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 (9) (a): that there is no satisfactory alternative; and
- Regulation 55 (9) (b): 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.



APPENDIX B. WYBG DATA

Table C.1. List of bat records provided by West Yorkshire Bat Group

Grid Ref	Location Name	Date	Common Name	Abundance	Record Type
SE1221113205	29 Deyne Rd, Netherton, HD4 7EP	11/07/1995	Pipistrellus	unknown Count of Adult	Roost (possible)
SE1220913201	31 Deyne Rd, Netherton, HD4 7EP	11/07/1995	Pipistrellus	Not Recorded Range	Roost (possible)
SE1249012925	29 Pine Court, Netherton , Huddersfield, Kirklees	25/07/2005	Pipistrellus	70 Count of Adult	Roost
SE130133	Marten Drive	07/03/2000	Common Pipistrelle	1 Count of Adult	Roost (possible)
SE130134	Martin Grove, Netherton	08/03/2000	Common Pipistrelle	1 Count of Adult	Roost (possible)
SE123127	Lea Lane	26/06/2001	Common Pipistrelle	21-50 Count of Adult	Roost (maternity)
SE132115	Honley SE132115	24/07/2004	Common Pipistrelle		aural bat detector
SE1261213772	19 Butterwood Cl, Beaumont Pk, HD	07/07/1997	Soprano Pipistrelle	101-200 Count of Adult	Roost (maternity)
SE132115	Honley SE132115	24/07/2004	Soprano Pipistrelle		aural bat detector
SE1248912924	29 Pine Court, Netherton, Huddersfield	12/07/2006	Pipistrelle Bat species	170 Count of Adult	Roost
SE1143812368	Crosland Hall, Factory Lane, Crosland, Netherton	28/02/2007	Pipistrelle Bat species		Roost
SE1248912924	29 Pine Court, Netherton, Huddersfield	09/07/2007	Pipistrelle Bat species	not recorded Range	Roost (maternity)
SE13681129	42 Long Lane, Honley, Kirklees	24/09/2003	Vesper Bat species		field record
SE1259513847	58 Butternab Road, Beaumont Park, Huddersfield, Kirklees	23/06/2005	Vesper Bat species		Roost
SE11761276	Holy Trinity Church, Church Lane, South Crosland, Kirklees	28/06/2005	Vesper Bat species	1 Count of Adult	field record
SE13851194	9 Concord Street, Honley, Kirklees	22/07/2005	Vesper Bat species	3 Count of Adult	field record

APPENDIX C. PHOTOS AND IMAGES

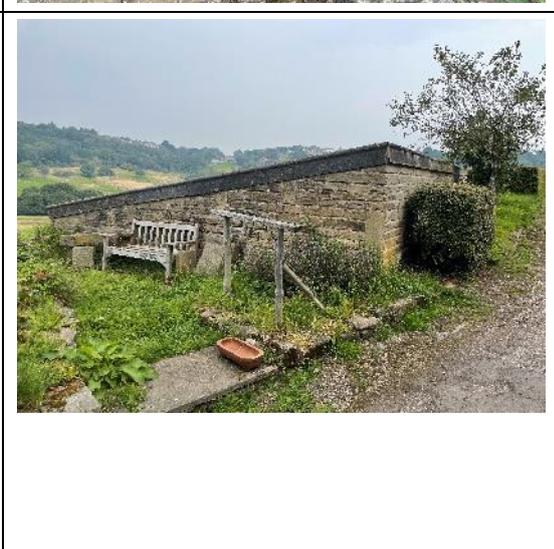
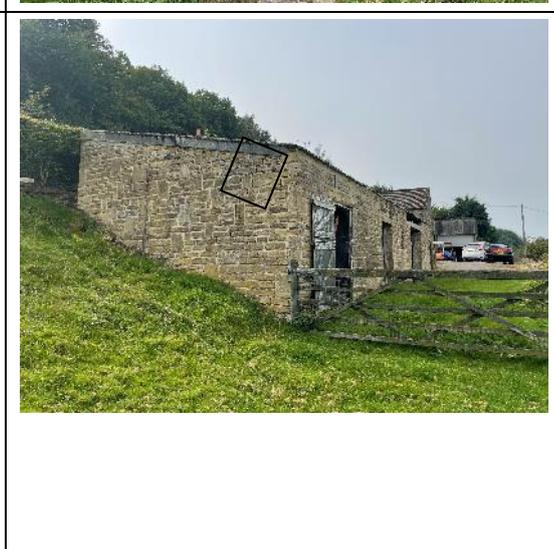
<p>Photo 1. View of Outbuilding from roadside.</p> <p>Photo 2. View of north-west elevations of Outbuilding.</p>		
<p>Photo 3. Outbuilding roof</p> <p>Photo 4. View of north-east elevation from roadside.</p>		
<p>Photo 5. Rear of stables.</p> <p>Photo 6. North-west and north- east elevations of stables. Box shows area of subsidence crack.</p>		

Photo 7.
Internal view
of stables.



Photo 8.
Bat dropping
in stable.



Photo 9.
Swallow
nest in
stables.



Photo 10.
Swallow
nest in
carport /
atrium.



Photo 11.
North-west /
north-east
elevations of
main barn.



Photo 12.
Large gap under lintel on barn.



Photo 13.
Stonework of barn on north-east side.



Photo 14.
Barn roof.

Photo 15.
Gap under roof capping

Photo 16.
Internal view of main barn.

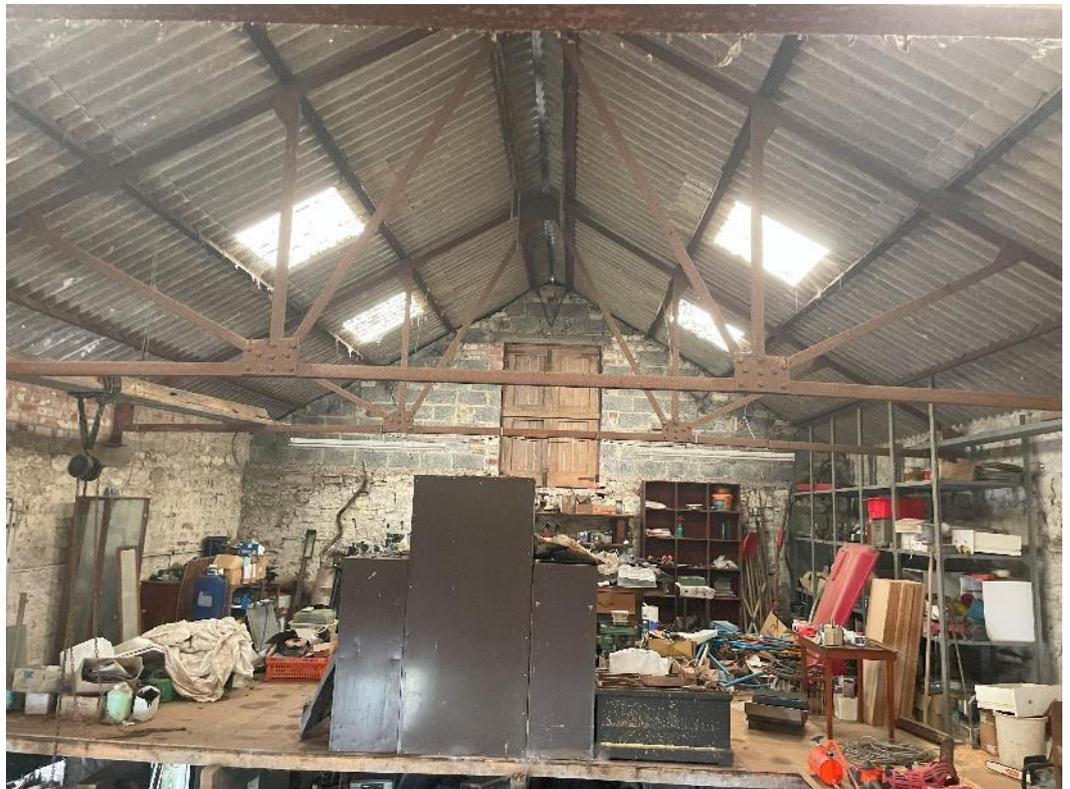


Photo 17.
Main barn
extension.



Photo 18.
Roadside
view of main
barn with
extension.



NVA images

