

ECOLOGY PRA TECHNICAL NOTE

<i>HCCET reference</i>	24.0148	<i>Client reference</i>	P13926
<i>Site</i>	Staunton Farm – Gothic Library, Middle Park Way, Havant, PO9 5HB	<i>Client</i>	Hampshire County Council – Property Services
<i>Survey dates</i>	PRA: 13 March 2024	<i>Report date</i>	20 November 2024
<i>Surveyor</i>	Camilla Mitchell	<i>Report status</i>	FINAL
<i>Written by</i>	Camilla Mitchell		
<i>Authorised by</i>	Adam Egglesfield	<i>Client approved by</i>	Simon Alford

1. Introduction

This Ecology Technical Note report sets out the methods, findings and conclusions of the ecological assessment work carried out at Staunton Farm Gothic Library to support structural repair works to the building. This report is in support of a retrospective Listed Building Consent application for works completed in November 2024 comprising:

- Roof structure:
 - Designed timber propping to the high-level octagonal plate.
 - Steel brackets to the main roof beam.
- Masonry:
 - Structural repairs to a crack to Face 2 parapet wall.
- Chimney:
 - Adapt chimney capping to prevent water ingress and promote water run-off.
- Fabric:
 - Like for like localised conservation and repairs of loose render to reduce the risk of falling masonry, and to reduce water ingress which may lead to further decay to the fabric.
 - Secure loose glass windows using lime mortar putty.
 - Light touch cleaning to remove moss and algae to the façade render and window glazing.

Staunton Farm is an ornamental Victorian farm with historic buildings, gardens and parkland located to the north of Havant. The Gothic Library, built in 1832, is an octagonal single storey brick and render structure with a lead-covered pitched roof located to the centre of the site at grid reference SU 7209 0859. The main elevations of the building are shown in Photos 1 and 2 in the appendix.

2. *Methods*

2.1. *Desk-based assessment*

The development proposals and the site were reviewed to establish the likely extent of impacts from the scheme at which potential ecological receptors might be affected (the Zone of Influence (ZoI)). The initial review considered the likelihood of particular ecological receptors being present at the site or nearby (within relevant ZoI). Where this confidently concluded that a particular receptor is likely absent, these were not considered further.

Geographical Information Systems (GIS) mapping was used in order to identify all records of bats and other protected species, and habitats within a 1km radius of the site. Given the localised nature of the proposals this search radius was considered sufficient for assessing risk to all ecological features. In addition, records were obtained of all statutory and non-statutory designated nature conservation sites within the search radius.

2.2. *Field survey*

Field survey work was carried out on 13 March 2024 by Camilla Mitchell, who holds a current license to survey bat roosts. The aims of the survey were to assess the presence or likely absence of bats and assess the value of any habitats and vegetation at the site, and to identify the presence of, or habitat considered suitable for supporting other legally protected species. Species considered during the survey work included bats and nesting birds.

The weather was partly sunny, wind force B3, with 50% cloud and temperature 12°C.

Survey methodology used during the work is guided by and consistent with that set out in the Bat Conservation Trust's 'Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines' 4th edition, (Collins, J. (ed) 2023).

Limitations

Access to the roof of the structure was not obtained at the time of the survey, however detailed photos and drone imagery of the top of the structure have been examined and the lack of access is not considered to be a limitation to the assessment.

3. Results

3.1. Desk-based assessment findings

Figures 1 and 2, below, show the location of the site and its wider ecological context. Staunton Farm is located to the north of Havant surrounded by suburban areas to the east, south and west and Staunton Country Park to the north. The wider area is generally characterised by extensive areas of parkland, grassland, woodland blocks and open agricultural areas to the north and east and urban areas to the south and west. Designated sites and priority habitats in the wider areas are largely associated with the semi-natural woodlands and parklands of the site and Staunton Country Park to the north.

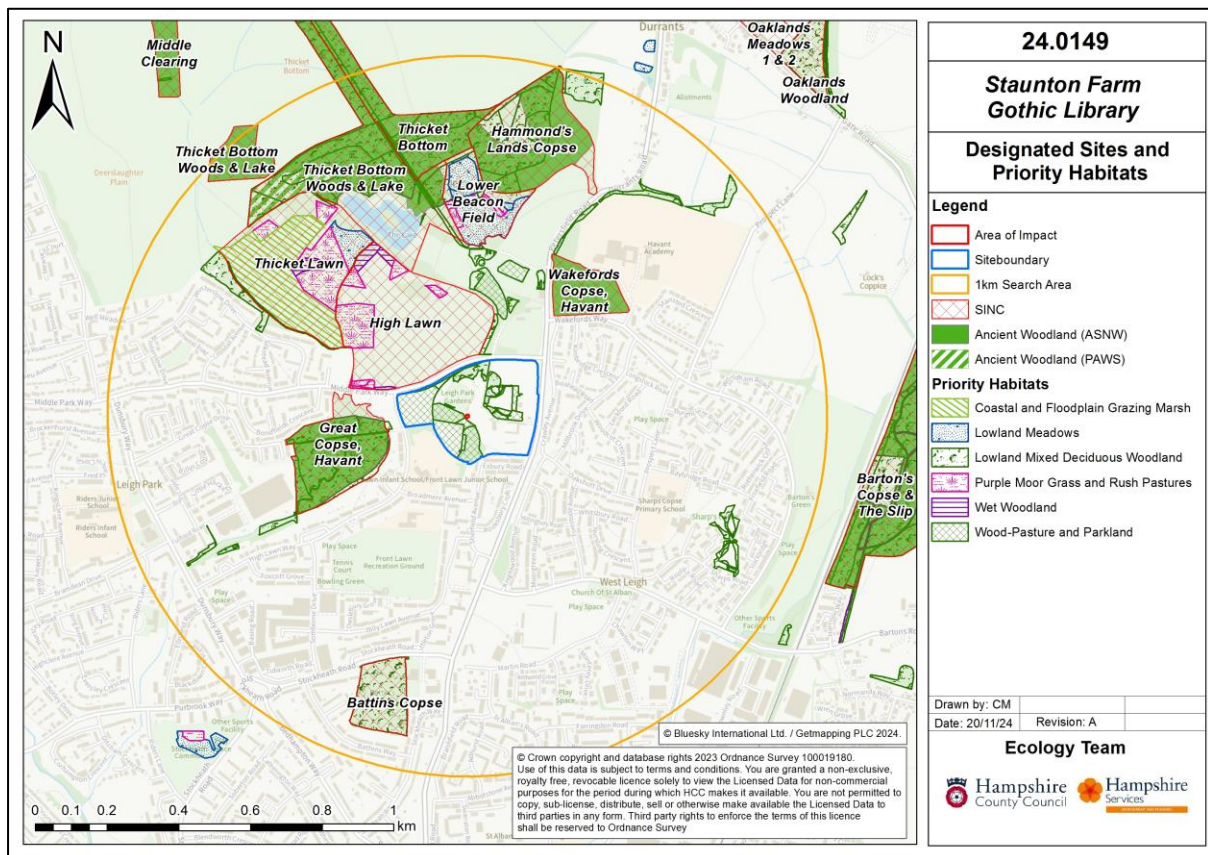


Figure 1 – Site Location showing Designated Sites and Priority Habitats 1km search area

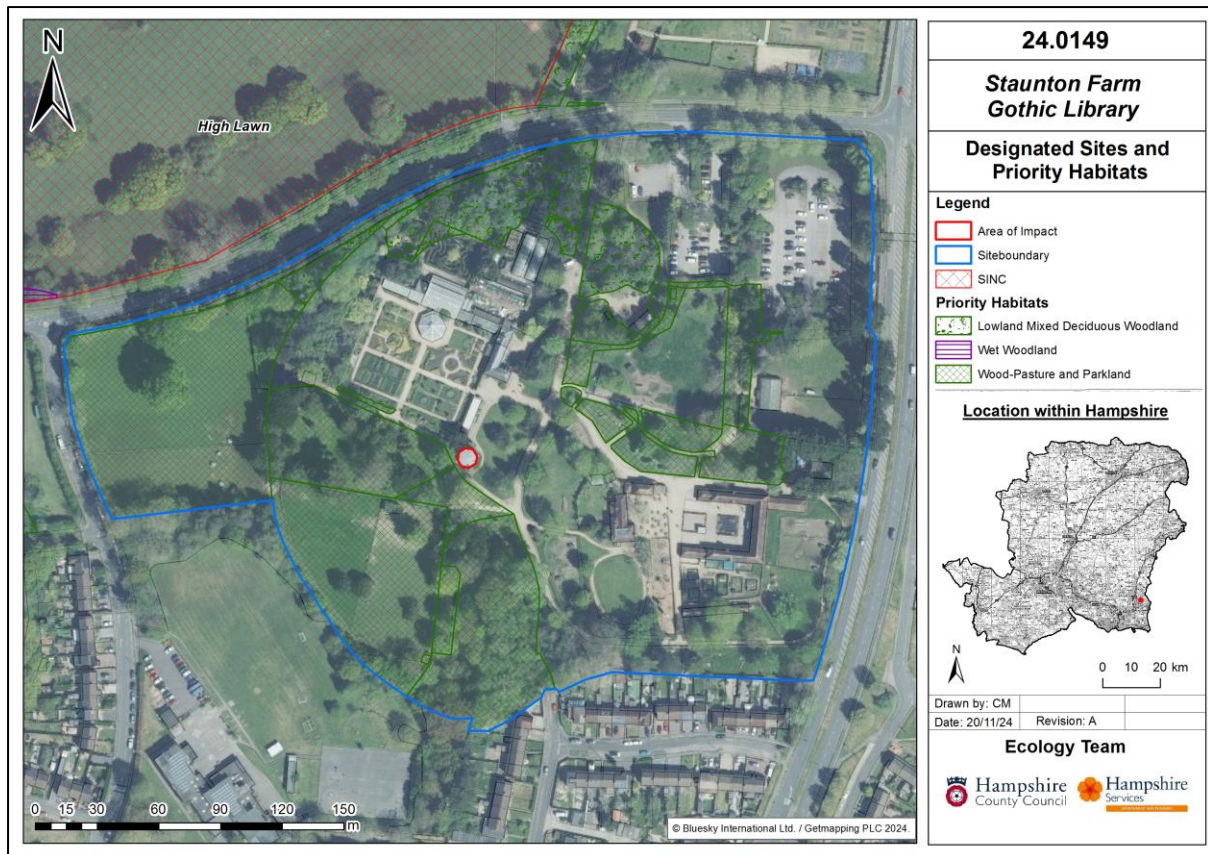


Figure 2 – Site Location showing Designated Sites and Priority Habitats – Staunton Farm Site

Within the search area are a large number of records of bats and bat roosts, mostly associated with the higher quality bat habitat to the north and east of the site. Records include a diverse assemblage of at least 11 species and includes capture records of rarer species such as Barbastelle and various Myotis species including Bechstein's Bat which is known to be roosting in trees within Staunton Country Park. The nearest bat roost records to the site are of pipistrelle species approximately 300m to the north-east of the site and Bechstein's Bats in tree roosts approximately 500m to the north.

3.2. Preliminary Roost Assessment

Photos are shown in Appendix 1.

Internal

There is no internal void to the roof. The interior of the structure is a single room, open to the apex of the roof with bare brickwork with patches of plasterwork, stonework window frames with leaded windows (Photos 3 and 4). The ceiling is timber lined with exposed beams and a central octagonal roof plate (Photo 7). The roof plate had a displaced section of wood, but no suitable gaps for bats. The main beams tie into the

brickwork (Photos 5 and 6). There are gaps in the brickwork with missing bricks and/or missing sections of mortar (Photos 10 – 12). Some of these are openings to cavities within the wall, and were accessible these were examined with torch and endoscope. No bats or evidence of bats were found within, although the cavities are suitable for crevice dwelling bats and may be suitable for hibernation.

Access points into the interior of the structure are the door which did not appear to have significant gapping around the frame or between the door and the frame. The door is open during the daytime and closed at night. The windows are closed and do not open, and all but one was well-sealed with leadwork around the frames. One of the windows has a gap at the bottom of the frame (Photos 13 and 14). There are no curtains on the windows and the interior is well lit with natural light.

The walls, floors and surfaces within the structure were examined for evidence of bats such as droppings, urine staining, fur rubbing and feeding signs. There were none at the time of the survey.

External

The building is brick with render on some of the sections (Photos 1, 2 and 15). The brickwork is generally in good condition and there are some cracks in the render (Photos 15 and 16), although this appears too small to support roosting bats. There is a crenelated masonry parapet feature around the top of the building and single brick and render chimney. The leadwork around the windows is well sealed apart from one with gapping at the bottom (Photo 14).

The photographs and drone imagery show that the roof of the octagonal structure is covered with lead which is rolled and folded with no gaps for ventilation (Photos 17 to 19). There is a gutter around the edges between the end bottom of the lead and the parapet walls. The chimney was uncapped, and the interior brickwork appeared to be filled with moss and vegetation (Photos 20 and 21).

PRA Summary

The building is located in an area with high quality bat habitat with high levels of bat activity and a diverse assemblage of bats.

The exterior of the structure appears to have little in the way of suitable crevices with well-sealed bricks and stonework and cracks in the render that are too small to support roosting bats. The chimney – prior to capping, was exposed to the elements with a damp and vegetated interior not suitable for roosting bats. The leaded roof has no suitable features for roosting bats.

The gap in the window frame is unlikely to be suitable access/egress into the interior for bats due to the low location and position over a flat surface.

The exterior appears unsuitable for supporting roosting bats. The apparent lack of access points into the interior of the structure may reduce the likelihood of bats roosting inside. However, overall, it is considered that the building has high suitability for supporting roosting bats within the crevices of the brickwork of the interior and may have particular suitability for supporting hibernating bats as these features could provide a cool, damp and stable temperature during the winter.

Other species – Nesting Birds

The building and adjacent vegetation has suitability for supporting nesting birds.

4. Discussion

4.1. Planning policy and legislation

Paragraph 175 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)¹ requires that when determining planning applications, if significant harm to biodiversity resulting from a development cannot be avoided (through locating on an alternative site with less harmful impacts), adequately mitigated, or, as a last resort, compensated for, then planning permission should be refused.

Many species of animal are legally protected under both domestic or international law (the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended)² and the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017³ respectively).

¹ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-planning-policy-framework--2>

² <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1981/69>

³ <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2017/1012/contents/made>

With reference to bats, hazel dormice, and great crested newts, these are European Protected Species (EPS). This legislation makes it an offence to kill, injure or disturb them, or to destroy or damage their breeding sites and resting places (even when the animals are not present). For such work to legally proceed, Natural England (the Government's statutory nature conservation agency) will issue a licence for the work to be able to proceed legally, subject to the proposals meeting certain criteria.

4.2. *Impact assessment and recommendations*

Bats

It is considered that the works have had negligible impacts to bats. Comments on each of the works carried out are indicated in *italics*.

- Roof structure:
 - Designed timber propping to the high-level octagonal plate. – *No gaps suitable for bats.*
 - Steel brackets to the main roof beam. – *The roof beam is still in the same location, the timber has not been altered and gaps in brickwork have not been filled in.*
- Masonry:
 - Structural repairs to a crack to Face 2 parapet wall. – *The crack was small and unsuitable for bats*
- Chimney:
 - Adapt chimney capping to prevent water ingress and promote water run-off. – *The chimney was not suitable for roosting bats due to exposure, damp and vegetation. Capping has vents which may allow access/egress to bats (see Photos 22 and 23).*
- Fabric:
 - Like for like localised conservation and repairs of loose render to reduce the risk of falling masonry, and to reduce water ingress which may lead to further decay to the fabric. – *Cracks in render and masonry on exterior unsuitable for roosting bats.*
 - Secure loose glass windows using lime mortar putty. – *Gap not suitable for bat access.*

- Light touch cleaning to remove moss and algae to the façade render and window glazing. – *Does not impact features suitable for bats.*

Nesting birds

The nesting bird season is generally considered to be March to end of August. Works were carried out outside of this time and therefore there would be no impacts to nesting birds.

4.3. Conclusions and recommendations

Although the structure is considered to have high suitability for bats, the works that have been carried out are not considered to have had negative impacts to bats as they have not impacted features that have suitability to support bat roosts. Existing gaps in brickwork of the interior have been maintained. It is confidently concluded that the work was unlikely to have adversely affected bats or bat roosts and that a breach of the legislation protecting bats is unlikely.

Nesting birds will not have been impacted as the works were carried out outside of nesting bird season.

No further survey work is recommended at this time.

Unless otherwise advised, the findings and recommendations in this report are solely based on the plans and brief provided to HCCET. The results and findings are valid for two years from the date of the initial field survey. HCCET should be contacted if this report is to be used after this period to check if any updating work need to be undertaken.

Appendix 1 – Photos



Photo 1 View from SW – entrance



Photo 2 View from NE – showing chimney



Photo 3 Interior showing door



Photo 4 Interior



Photo 5 Main beam as it ties into wall



Photo 6 Main beam as it ties into wall



Photo 7 Bricks removed to inspect beam decay



Photo 8 Bracket in place, wrapping around beam end and bolted into timber wallplate



Photo 9 Split timber at central octagonal roof plate



Photo 10 Brickwork above window



Photo 11 Missing and crumbled brickwork in interior



Photo 12 Missing bricks in interior wall



Photo 13 Interior image of gap to bottom of window



Photo 14 Exterior image of gap to bottom of window.



Photo 15 Exterior showing brickwork and render sections and crack at upper level



Photo 16 Crack in high level masonry for repair – Face 2



Photo 17 Drone image of roof

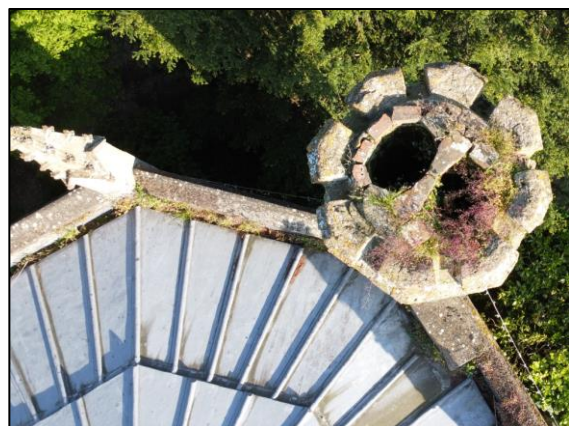


Photo 18 Drone image of Chimney

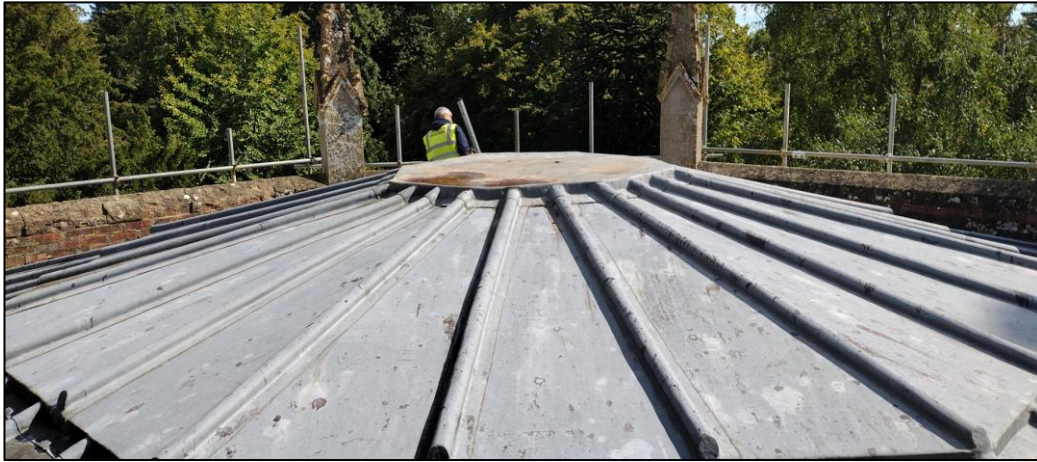


Photo 19 *Lead roof covering, rolled and folded with no ventilation*



Photo 20 *View of uncapped chimney*



Photo 21 *Interior of chimney*



Photo 22 *Chimney capping*



Photo 23 *Ventilation feature in capping – approximately 200 x 20mm*