

492/21

PRELIMINARY ECOLOGICAL APPRAISAL

BARNES AT MANOR FARM, LITTLE CARLTON, LINCOLNSHIRE



FEBRUARY 2021



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Report title: Preliminary Ecological Appraisal,
Barns at Manor Farm, Little Carlton, Lincolnshire

Revision: Final

Original issue date: February 2021



Amended: N/A

Issued by: Celia Commowick

Date: 26th February 2021

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1 INTRODUCTION

CGC Ecology Ltd has been commissioned by Gavin Farrand of GF Design Services Ltd to undertake a preliminary ecological appraisal of two barns at Manor Farm, Little Carlton in Lincolnshire. The survey is required in connection with proposals to convert the barns into holiday lets.

The purpose of a preliminary ecological appraisal is to identify the likely ecological constraints associated with any development that might take place on the site, to make recommendations for mitigation and/or further survey work, and to identify any opportunities to deliver ecological enhancement.

The site was surveyed on 18th February 2021, in cool and wet conditions by Celia Commowick (registered to use Natural England Class Licence WML-CL18 to survey bats, registration number 2018-37729-CLS-CLS).

During the initial appraisal of the site the protected species considered likely to occur on site were identified. These were:



- Bats
- Common bird species
- Schedule 1 bird species

Certain protected species were scoped out of the survey; in particular it was considered that white-clawed crayfish *Austropotamobius pallipes*, water vole *Arvicola amphibius*, otter *Lutra lutra* and common dormouse *Muscardinus avellanarius* were highly unlikely to occur on the survey site due to lack of suitable habitat. The habitats on site are not considered suitable to support a significant population of common reptiles.

Although there are seven ponds within 500m of the survey area, the proposed conversion works are unlikely to impact any areas other than the immediate surroundings of the barns, which comprise amenity grassland and paving, and are unsuitable for great crested newt *Triturus cristatus*. This species has therefore been scoped out of the survey.

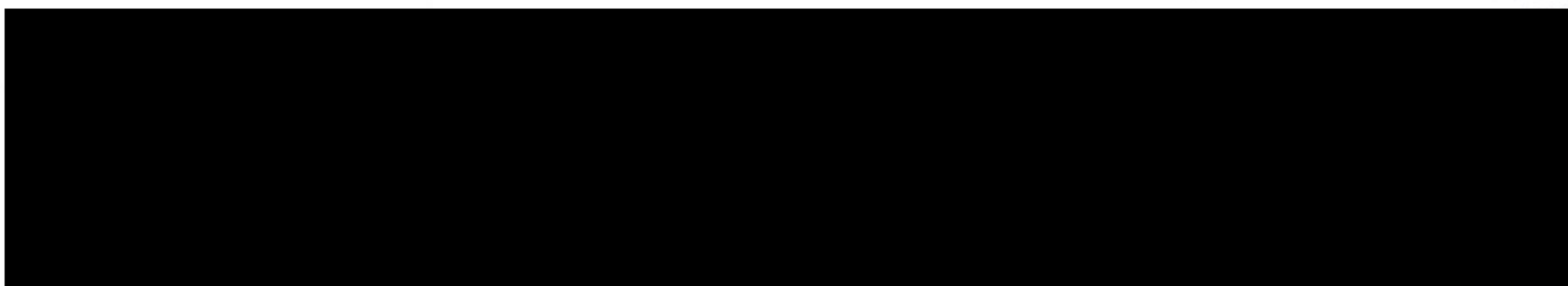
Any species of principal importance (as set out in the Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act, 2006) seen on site were recorded.

This report details the methods used, describes the species found on the site, discusses the results and makes recommendations for further work.

2 METHODS

2.1 Data search

Lincolnshire Environmental Records Centre (LERC) was consulted on 17th February 2021 and commissioned to search for sites with statutory and non-statutory designation and records of protected species within 2km of the survey site. Records of protected species more than 20 years old are not referred to in this report but are included within the relevant appendix.



2.3 Bats

2.3.1 Preliminary roost assessment

In accordance with Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines 3rd Edition (Collins J, 2016), a preliminary roost assessment was carried out on each of the barns to determine whether any features were present that bats could use for entry/exit points and roosting, and to search for signs of bat presence. High-powered torches, an endoscope and binoculars were used to search for internal and external features including but not limited to;

- Gaps around windowsills, door frames and lintels
- Lifted rendering, paintwork, shiplap boarding
- Soffit boxes, weatherboarding and fascias
- Lead flashing, hanging tiles and lifted or missing tiles/slate
- Gaps >15mm in brickwork and stonework
- Bat specimens (live or dead)
- Bat droppings and urine staining
- Feeding remains (e.g. moth wings)
- Cobweb-free sections of ridge beam

The barns were then assigned a measure of potential suitability to determine the extent of future survey work needed. The categories of potential suitability and further survey effort required are as follows;

- Negligible – Negligible features on site likely to be used by roosting bats – no further survey work
- Low – A structure with one or more potential roost sites that could be used by individual bats opportunistically – one survey visit (dusk or dawn)
- Moderate – A structure with one or more potential roost sites that could be used by bats on a regular basis – two separate survey visits (one dusk and one dawn)
- High – A structure with one or more potential roost sites that are obviously suitable for use by larger numbers of bats on a regular basis and for longer periods of time – three separate survey visits (one dusk, one dawn and one dusk or dawn).

The following should be noted: 'The guidelines do not aim to either override or replace knowledge and experience. It is accepted that departures from the guidelines (e.g. either decreasing or increasing the number of surveys carried out or using alternative methods) are often appropriate. However, in this scenario an ecologist should provide documentary evidence of (a) their expertise in making this judgement and (b) the ecological rationale behind the judgement.' (Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines 3rd Edition (Collins J, 2016)).

2.4 Birds

2.4.1 Common bird species

All bird species noted on site were recorded. The survey site was searched for signs of use by nesting birds, typically old nests and concentrations of faecal deposits associated with a breeding site.

2.4.2 Schedule 1 species

The barns were inspected for the presence of barn owl *Tyto alba* and the signs indicative of their past or present use including regurgitated pellets, concentrated accumulations of flattened pellets indicative of a nest site, faecal encrustation, eggs or eggshell remains, surplus prey items, bodily remains of chicks or infant down feathers. The site was not considered to provide suitable breeding opportunities for other Schedule 1 species.

2.5 Survey constraints and limitations

The information contained in this report was accurate at the time of the survey; however, it should be noted that the status of mobile species such as badger, birds and bats can alter in a

short period of time and any survey only represents a 'snapshot' of the site at one point in the season. Advice released by CIEEM (Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management) in April 2019 states that an ecological report remains valid for between 12-18 months, depending on the presence of mobile species, after which an update survey should be carried out.

3 SITE ASSESSMENT

3.1 Location and grid reference

The survey site comprises two barns at Manor Farm in Little Carlton, Lincolnshire - central grid reference TF402853.

The habitats on site are described below and representative photographs are included in the text. An aerial view of the site location is provided as Figure 1. And a plan of the barns as Figure 2.

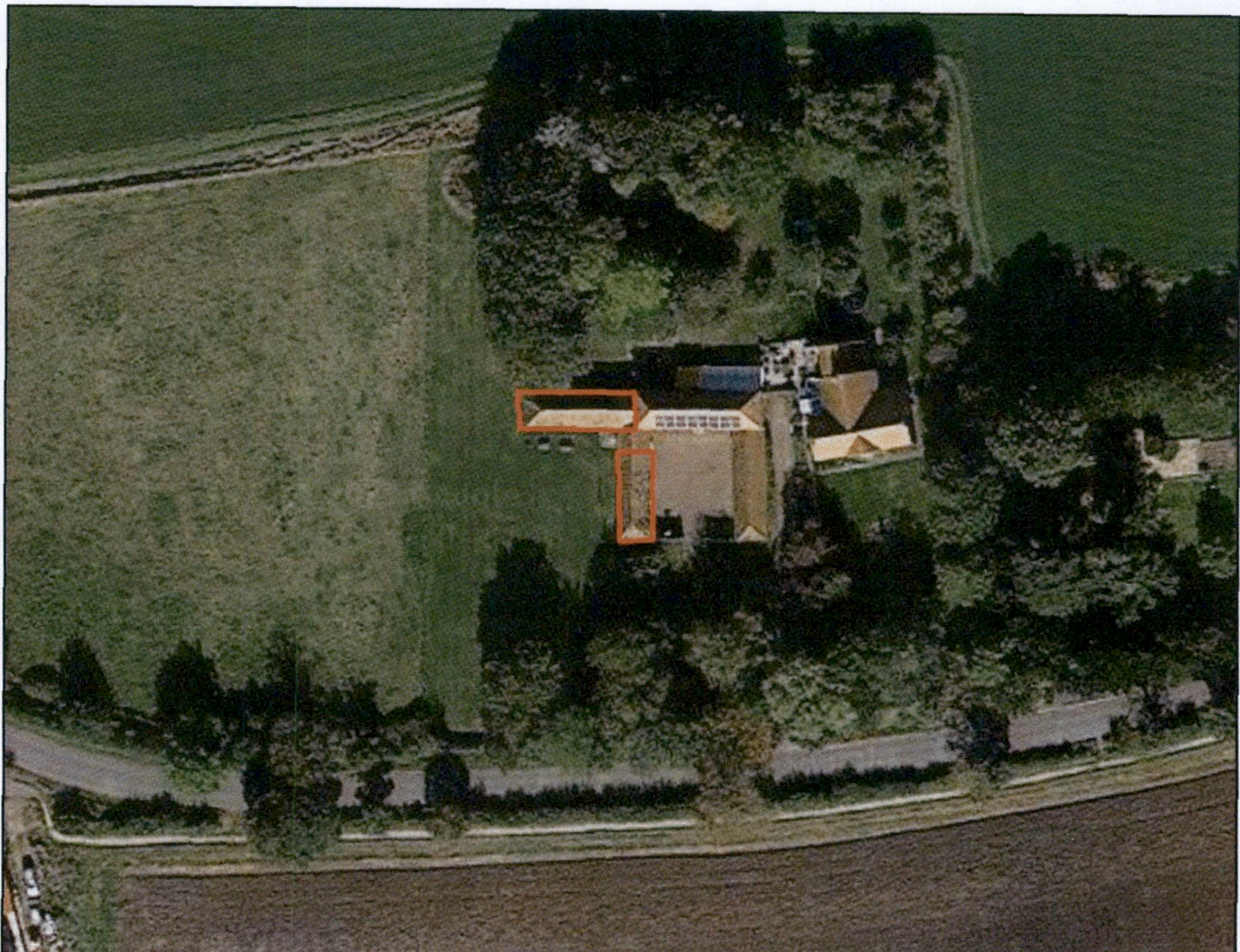


Figure 1: Aerial view of the survey site outlined in red (Google Maps, 2021)