14 July 2020

Ronald Cheape
Perrymill Farm
Lower Bentley
Lane Lower Bentley
Bromsgrove
B60 4JB

Dear Ronald,

Preliminary Roost Assessment – Common Barn Farm, Woodgate Road, Lower Bentley, Bromsgrove, B60 4HZ.

I am writing to provide you with a short written report of my survey findings at the above site on 10 July 2020. The site is centred on Ordnance Survey grid reference SO 97924 65379. I am a licensed bat surveyor (Natural England licence: 2015-13354-CLS-CLS). I used the following equipment during the survey: telescopic ladder, high-powered torch with red filter, flexible endoscope, binoculars and collecting pots for droppings.

Access to the entire site was made available and no significant survey limitations were encountered. Weather conditions on the date of survey were cloudy with a light breeze and a maximum daytime temperature of 18°C.

I understand the development proposals are to convert the barn to a residential dwelling. At the time of the preliminary roost assessment the development plans had not been prepared yet.

Legislation:
Bats are a European Protected Species (EPS), and are listed in Annex IV of the Habitats Directive, which affords strict protection to bats and their roosts. Actions and activities that are prohibited are:

- deliberate capture, injury or killing of a bat;

- deliberate disturbance of a bat and in particular disturbance which is likely to; impair their ability:
    - to survive, to breed or reproduce, or to rear or nurture their young, or
    - to hibernate or migrate; or
    - to affect significantly the local distribution of abundance of the species to which they belong.
- damage or destruction of a breeding site or resting place (even unoccupied); and
- possessing, controlling, transporting, selling or exchanging, or offering for sale or exchange, any bat or any part of a bat or anything derived from one.

Results:

Area / Feature	Observations
Barn at Common Barn Farm	External Description: The barn is a double-storey building with a pitched roof. The barn is attached to the two-storey farmhouse located to the south-east and single-storey stables located to the north-west of the barn. The walls of the building are constructed from red bricks and the pitched roof is covered with clay tiles. The roof has been recently renovated and the roof cover is in fairly good state of repair. The south-western elevation consists of large wooden sliding barn doors that provide access to the building interior. A narrow crevice around the oak door lintel were noted as being suitable for roosting bats. The red brick wall comprises diamond pattern with missing brick air vents. The vents are not open to the barn interior and potentially provide access for bats to the cavity between the wall layers. The northern gable is attached to the stables. Multiple missing and diamond shape vents are located within the gable wall for bats to exploit. A large opening is located between the stable interior and the barn allowing bats to fly between the two structures. The eastern elevation consists of multiple missing bricks and is partially overgrown with climbing plants.

Plate 1: Showing a typical view of the barn. Photograph looking at the south western elevation.

Plate 2: Showing a typical view of the barn. Photograph looking at the northern gable.

Plate 3: Photograph showing narrow crevices around the wooden door frame.

Plate 4: Photograph showing large gap in the wall between the barn and the stables.

Internal Description:

There are no enclosed areas within the roof of the barn and the building is open from floor to the ridge. The roof structure is a traditional oak framed structure with mortise and tenon joint beams and the roof is covered with breathable membrane. Several gaps suitable for roosting bats were located within the interior of the building. The crevices are mainly associated with the timber roof frame and brick work.

The gable adjoining the farmhouse has wire mesh around the roof frame. However, bats could potentially access the crevices between the frame and top of the gable wall.

A small number of bat droppings (approximately 2-5) were located at the top of the oak frame lintel and within wall crevices. The droppings were fresh and approximately 8-10mm long and characteristic in shape/size of brown long-eared bat droppings.

Droppings (of a similar shape and size) were noted scattered throughout the barn and small accumulation of droppings (approximately 50- 100) was located under the ridge of the barn. Bat urine stains were also noted in various locations within the barn.

Plate 5: Showing a typical view of the barn interior. Photograph looking north-east.

Plate 6: Photograph showing bat droppings located above the barn door lintel.

Plate 7: Photograph showing southern gable. Red arrows indicating gaps between roof beams and gable wall suitable for roosting bats.

Plate 7: Photograph showing the small concentration of bat droppings within the barn.

Foraging / Commuting Habitat Potential			
High quality semi-natural habitats	**Within immediate vicinity (<250m)**	**Within wider landscape (<2km)**	**Comments**
Broadleaved/mixed woodland Waterbodies Tree lines/stands Mature hedgerows	☐ ☐ ☒ ☒	☒ ☒ ☒ ☒	Foster's Green Meadows National Nature Reserve is located approximately 500m south of the site. The reserve provides suitable habitat for foraging bats.
General Landscape Character	Rural		

Negative Characters	**Positive Characters**
Highly urbanised environment ☐	Rural environment ☒
Night lighting (significant) ☐	Absence of night lighting ☒
Isolated from high-value habitat ☐	Good connectivity to high-value habitat ☒
Modern building construction ☐	Building construction suitable for bats ☒

Human disturbance (significant) ☐ High exposure (altitude, prevailing winds *etc*.) ☐ Nearby buildings modern or isolated ☐		Absence/Minimal human disturbance ☒ Low exposure (altitude, prevailing winds *etc*.) ☒ Cluster of suitable old buildings ☒	
Other ☐ specify		Other ☐ specify	
Conclusion: (Collins 2016)	High - Continuous, high-quality habitat that is well connected to wider landscape, that is likely to be used regularly by commuting/foraging bats.		

Conclusion:

Conclusion – Building Suitability for Bats (see Collins 2016)	
Barn at Common Barn Farm	Confirmed Roost.

After a detailed internal and external inspection of the barn at Common Barn Farm, the survey evidence to date suggests that the site supports roosting bats. There were a moderate number of scattered bat droppings (approximately 100 – 200) noted in various locations throughout the barn and the crevices identified within the fabric of the building provide opportunities for roosting bats.

Further roost-characterisation surveys of the barn at Common Barn Farm will be required in line with current best practice survey guidelines (Collins, 2016) to confirm the species of bat(s), roost type(s) and to direct an appropriate scheme of mitigation and compensation for the proposed works under Natural England bat mitigation licence as required.

Recommendations:

The following recommendations are made to ensure compliance with wildlife legislation, government guidance and best practice.

1. The survey evidence to date suggests that the barn at Common Barn Farm supports a bat roost. Bats and their roosts are afforded strict protection under UK and European law and the proposed works will require the prior acquisition of a bat mitigation (development) licence from Natural England due to the potential for disturbance of bats and demolition of a bat roost.

   No works should be undertaken which damage, block or otherwise alter the building or risk disturbing, killing or injuring bats until additional survey work has been completed and licensing requirements confirmed.

2. Roost characterisation surveys will be required to allow confirmation of the type of roost, access points and bat species utilising the building to inform future mitigation requirements. Surveys should include a minimum of two dusk emergence or pre-dawn return surveys completed by at least two experienced bat surveyors. The surveys should be completed during the optimal bat survey season (May – August).

3. To allow accurate confirmation of bat species and direct appropriate mitigation measures, a sample of bat droppings collected from barn at Common Barn Farm should be sent away for DNA analysis.

4. This report is valid for 12 months. Should any development commence after this time has elapsed an update survey will be required to determine the status of the site during the intervening period.

I trust the above information is clear and satisfactory to requirements. Please do not hesitate to contact me should you require any additional information or clarification.

Kind regards

Robert Pelc
Ecologist

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QUALIFICATIONS & EXPERIENCE

Focus Environmental Consultants® has the expertise to provide sure-fire environmental solutions to a wide range of projects. The company ethos forges the highest standards of professional scientific practice with a best value approach for our clients. Our core area of expertise is in the production of specialist ecological and arboricultural reports and advice to support planning applications. We are also building an enviable reputation for innovative habitat creation and management solutions. Our flexible approach, range of skills and broad project experience from major infrastructure contracts to smaller projects allows us to adapt to your individual requirements. Focus Environmental Consultants is situated in Worcestershire, providing a convenient and central UK location.

Robert Pelc MSc GradCIEEM

Robert is an Ecologist who joined Focus Environmental Consultants in 2019 and has over four years' of professional experience in the field of ecology. His ecological experience includes Preliminary Ecological Appraisals and surveying for European Protected Species including bats, great crested newts and hazel dormice. Robert is highly experienced in a range of bat survey techniques, from detailed building and tree inspections to more advanced trapping techniques and radio tracking. Robert is also a competent surveyor of reptiles and barn owls. He holds a Natural England survey licence (Class 2) and Natural Resources Wales licence for bats. He also holds a Natural England survey licence (Class 1) for great crested newts. Robert is a Graduate member of the Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (CIEEM).

This report has been checked for quality and content by:

Fern Fellowes-Day BSc (Hons) MSc MCIEEM MRSB

Fern has over fifteen years of professional experience in the ecological consultancy field. She holds BSc (Hons) in Zoology from the University of Wales, Aberystwyth and MSc in Habitat Creation and Management from Staffordshire University. Fern has considerable experience in conducting Preliminary Ecological Appraisals and Ecological Impact Assessments (EcIA). Fern's particular expertise is with protected species surveys, she has extensive knowledge in dealing with the badgers, with practical experience in artificial sett design and creation and has held numerous Natural England licences to close or disturb badger setts. In addition Fern holds survey licences for great crested newts, bats and white-clawed crayfish. Fern has held Natural England Mitigation (development) licences for great crested newts (including being a Registered Consultant for the new Great Crested Newt Low Impact Class Licence) and Conservation licences for white-clawed crayfish. She is particularly experienced in dealing with newt issues affecting the quarrying, mineral extraction and landfill industry.