

BAT SURVEY 2020
FARM BUILDINGS AT MARGERY LANE
CLEARWELL, GLOUCESTERSHIRE

CTM WILDLIFE

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<u>Version</u>	<u>Purpose</u>	<u>Date</u>
V1.0	Update to bat survey in 2016	4 th October 2020

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This report assesses the ecological impact of the proposal based on wildlife legislation and planning policy. It is an independent assessment and not a statement of support or otherwise to the proposal for the site.

Disclaimer: While all reasonable effort has been made to ensure that the following information is correct and up to date it should not be relied upon as a definitive guide to wildlife and wildlife law. The exact requirements and habits of wildlife can vary and not be fully understood. Surveys and assessments can be restricted snap shots in time and space. Any conclusions and recommendations are made here in good faith. Also, the implementation of law can vary. Those needing to limit impacts and their risk should consult the original legislation and/or a lawyer conversant with wildlife law.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

A full suite of surveys in 2016 identified that the hayloft in one of the buildings was used as an occasional day roost by an individual lesser horseshoe bat.

A daytime and evening emergence survey in August 2020 has shown that there has been no substantial change to the bat-usage of the site. A lesser horseshoe bat hunted through the site and buildings. The hayloft is still present and a lack of any build-up of droppings indicates that its use as a roost is only very occasional.

The bat mitigation agreed in 2016 is still applicable for the conversion of the site for residential use. Refer to Section 6.2 of this report.

1. INTRODUCTION

The site is a set of farm buildings at Margery Lane on the edge of the village of Clearwell.

Class Q Permission (P0640/16/PQ3PA) was agreed with the Local Planning Authority (LPA) in 2016. This included an agreed bat mitigation strategy based on a full bat survey (daytime, two dusk and one dawn survey) by Brooks Ecological in June – August 2016¹.

The survey in 2016 identified one of the buildings being used as an occasional day roost by a lesser horseshoe bat.

It is understood that the Class Q permission has expired and that the LPA has requested a brief updated bat survey. This document reports on this update survey in 2020.

Refer to the original report by Brook Ecology for detail on the site and previous survey work.

2. OBJECTIVES/SCOPE

- *To update the existing bat survey information*
- *To determine any implications to the previously agreed bat mitigation.*

Figure 1. Location – grid reference SO 5675 0826



¹ Bat Emergence Surveys. Margery Lane, Clearwell, Gloucestershire. 9th September 2016. Report by Brooks Ecological.

3. SITE

*Figure 3 The buildings
Labelling in 2020 - the buildings were labelled differently in 2016*



Photo 1 View from bank on southern side, Aug 2020



Photo 2 View from yard on northern side, Aug 2020



4. METHODOLOGY

4.1 Personnel

The survey was carried out by Colin Menendez BSc (Hons) MCIEEM CEnv who has 30+ years' experience as a professional ecologist, 20+ years' experience carrying out development-related surveys, his Natural England survey licences include a Class 2 licence for bats and he is a Registered Consultant with a Bat Low Impact Class Licence & Bats in Churches Class Licence.

4.2 Day survey

A standard day-time survey was undertaken on 19th August 2020. This was a systematic search of the interior and exterior of all the buildings, for bats and for any sign of bats. Such as the presence of bat droppings, urine drops and feeding remains. Equipment: high-powered torch, close-focusing binoculars and ladder. Conditions: dry, full cloud, calm and warm 20°C.

4.3 Night surveys

This was a standard dusk emergence survey following the daytime survey on 19th August 2020. The surveyor was positioned on the southern bank overlooking Barns A, B & C (current labelling – see Figure 2 above) including the doorway used by the bat in 2016. Equipment: BatBox Duet, BatBox IIID set at 108 KHz, Anabat SD1 (in Barn B) and x2 Anabat Express (one on the first floor of Barn C – the bat roost). Conditions: dry and calm with a gusty breeze and light drizzle at the end, full cloud and warm 20-18°C.

4.4 Constraints

The survey of structures as bat roosts can be problematic. Roosting places can be unseen and bats can roost in crevices *etc.* with no or few outward signs of their presence. The buildings had been cleared and swept in Spring 2020.

There are inherent constraints in night-time bat surveys due to the varied behaviour of bats between roosts and nights, and the difficulties in locating the source of bats in flight in the dark.

5. RESULTS

5.1 Day survey – August 2020

It is understood that the work to convert the buildings had started and then stopped in 2019. Since then the site and buildings were tidied-up around March 2020. They were disused at the time of the survey.

The buildings in August 2020 looked similar to that described in the 2016 bat report except (1) the wall footings had been dug open, (2) ivy removed from walls and (3) scaffolding was fitted partly on Barn B.

Building A – no signs of bats were found. There was a new timber bat box on an external wall – with nothing in it.



Barn A

Building B – a couple of random lesser horseshoe bat droppings were found on the floor. The droppings were more-likely-than-not from a bat flying around inside the building. There was a new timber bat box on an external wall – with nothing in it.



Barn B

Building C – the first floor hayloft where a roosting bat had been found in 2016 was still intact including flying access via an open hatch from the ground floor room and a hole in the wall to Barn A. It is understood that boards in the hayloft window blew out in winter 2019/20, so the hayloft is probably a bit lighter and airy than before. No bats were present during the daytime survey and a single fragment of a bat dropping was found on the floor of the hayloft. By mistake no photograph was taken inside Barn C – the hayloft roof is similar to Barn A (tin sheets on old roof timbers – see above).

Building D – no signs of bats was found.



Barn D

5.2 Dusk emergence survey – August 2020

Common pipistrelle – one bat flew from a westerly direction feeding over the lane alongside the plot four minutes after dusk. Thereafter for the duration of the survey there was regular feeding by one bat and once two bats over the tree and shrub-lined lane and occasionally over the grassy bank on the southern side of the plot.

Noctule – a bat was heard in the background 12 minutes after dusk, first seen high to the north-west beyond the lane eight minutes later and the occasional distant calls later on.

Soprano – individual bats flew feeding over the site 20, 24 and 26 minutes after dusk.

Myotis – there was a single pass on the south bank 22 minutes after dusk.

Serotine – a bat flew feeding along and around the canopy of the line of mature trees at the top of the south bank/paddock behind the plot for a while 34 minutes after dusk.

Lesser horseshoe bat – the recorder in Barn C picked-up a bat 42 minutes after dusk, again a minute later and a bat was then present outside on the south bank. The bat was then observed in Barns A and C flying around on and off for about 10 minutes. It looked to be hunting for insects and not light-sensing (*i.e.* not emerging from a roost). It was briefly present again 12 minutes later.

6. CONCLUSIONS

6.1 Use of site by bats

6.1.1 Roosts

In 2016 it was concluded that Barn C (called Building A then) was used as an occasional day roost by a single non-breeding lesser horseshoe bat.

This update survey in 2020 has found that the site is still used by a lesser horseshoe bat (or individual bats). The bat observed looked as if hunting for insects. The hayloft is probably lighter and airy than before due to the missing window boards, but there has been no substantial change and it is still usable as an occasional day roost by lesser horseshoe bats.

6.1.2 Non-roosting bats

In 2016 there were foraging and commuting common pipistrelle, soprano pipistrelle, noctule and a Myotis species of bat at the site.

The bat activity seen in 2020 was very similar with regular foraging by common pipistrelle, foraging by a noctule high in the background and a pass by a Myotis bat. In addition a serotine foraged along the trees at the top of the south bank/paddock. The tree and shrub-lined lane and the rough sloped paddock and trees along the top are evidently good habitat for bats.

6.2 Mitigation

- There has been no substantial change to the use of the site by bats and the Method Statement agreed by Brooks Ecology and the LPA is still applicable.
- Refer for the bat mitigation to (1) pages 9 to 11 of the Brooks Ecology bat survey report dated 8th September 2016 and (2) the Proposed plans and elevations Barn A + C drawing ref 1606 201C.
- If the prescribed Schwegler 1FQ Bat Boxes are not available (there is a shortage) then Beaumaris Midi Bat Boxes are a suitable replacement. The exact positions of the boxes best are agreed on site with the licence ecologist. The timber boxes recently fitted are not suitable.
- The work affecting bats and the bat roost will need to be carried out under licence from Natural England. The current bat usage qualifies for an Annex D Low Impact Bat Mitigation Class Licence (providing the bat mitigation is in place within 6 months of the licence starting). Otherwise a standard individual site licence will be required. Any bat-related LPA conditions will need to be discharged before the licence can be applied for.

Appendix 1.

- Brief summary of relevant legislation in the UK -

Bats

There is considerable evidence that all species of bat in Britain have declined significantly this century, particularly since the 1960s. The reasons for the decline include: loss of suitable roost sites, loss of feeding habitat, reduced availability of insect prey through pesticide use and mortality resulting from the use of highly toxic timber treatment chemicals in house roosts.

All species of British bat are listed in Schedule 5 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) and the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017. As well as giving full protection from intentional and deliberate killing, injuring, disturbing and taking of bats, the cited legislation protects bat breeding and resting places (roosts) from damage, destruction and preventing access to such places. The legislation regarding roosts applies irrespective of whether the bats are present or not. The Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 added the word “reckless” to existing protection against “intentional and deliberate” actions.

The law requires that reasonable effort be made to ensure that any actions, plans or projects do not detrimentally affect bats or their roosts. Proposed developments that affect bats or bat roosts may require a licence from Natural England. Allow at least 30 days for a licence application to be determined.