

14 September 2021

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Dear Peter,

Preliminary Roost Assessment - Barn at Lodge Farm, Chaddesley Corbett, Kidderminster, DY10 4QB

I am writing to provide you with a short-written report of my survey findings at the above site on 13 September 2021. The site was previously surveyed by a Senior Ecologist from Focus Ecology (now Focus Environmental Consultants) in April 2019. The site is centred on Ordnance Survey grid reference SO 8908 7356. I am a licensed bat surveyor (Natural England licence: 2015-13346-CLS-CLS). I had the following equipment available to me during the survey: telescopic ladder, high-powered torch with red filter and flexible endoscope.

Access to the entire site was made available. However, there is some limited access to the northern elevation due to the attached corrugated lean-to. Weather conditions on the date of survey were dry, warm and still, with a maximum temperature of 17°C.

I understand the development proposals are for the demolition of the barn, and construction of a replacement, L-shaped residential dwelling.

Legislation:

Bats are a European Protected Species (EPS), and are listed in Annex IV of the EC Habitats Directive 1992, 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 Lodge Farm	<p><u>External Description:</u></p> <p>The external aspect of the building was found to be in a very similar state to that found in 2019.</p> <p>The building comprises a detached barn with a pitched corrugated fibreglass roof, which is covered in moss. The northern, southern and western elevations of the structure are constructed with wooden cladding, and the eastern elevation is brick-built. The brickwork pattern indicates no wall cavity is present. Large double doors are present on the front (west) aspect.</p> <p>The vast majority of the wooden cladding is fitted tightly with no suitable gaps for bats to exploit. Very occasional small, lifted gaps were noted, which were largely filled with cobwebs and/or debris on the day of the survey (as also noted in 2019). There are a couple of squirrel holes present on the southern elevation of the property. However, these have been filled in.</p> <p>The brickwork on the rear elevation is in excellent condition with no missing mortar or other crevices noted. Metal capping is present at the eaves which is fitted tightly to the walls.</p>



Plate 1: Showing a typical view of the barn. Photograph looking east.

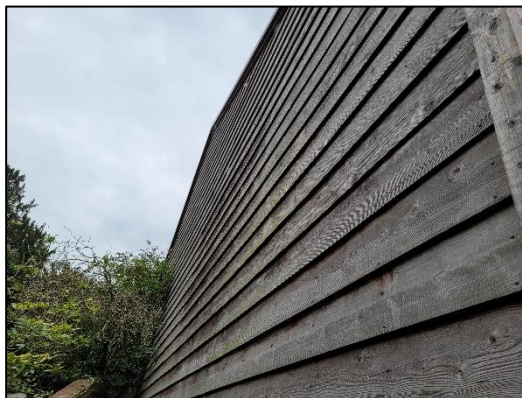


Plate 2: showing a typical view of the tight-fitting wooden cladding that covers three sides of the building.



Plate 2: showing the brick wall that forms the rear (east) wall of the building.

Internal Description:

The internal aspect of the building was found to be in a similar condition to that found in 2019, although it is now more heavily cobwebbed.

There are several skylights present within the roof of the barn, permitting light into the area. Electric lighting strips are also present. The roof is supported by metal beams. The wooden cladding is overlain with sarking felt and wooden batons in the internal area of the barn. The flooring of the barn comprises concrete. There is a wooden mezzanine present within the southern section of the barn. Numerous dead woodlice were noted over the mezzanine floor and stored objects, and items are covered in a layer of dust. Thick, old cobwebs cover much of the walls and hang from the metal ceiling beams. Several, old inactive bird nests were observed on the walls

No evidence and/or signs of bats was observed during the survey, and internal area is considered unsuitable for roosting bats.



Plate 3: Showing a typical internal view of the barn. Photograph looking west.



Plate 4: Showing a view of the roof structure inside the barn.

Foraging / Commuting Habitat Potential			
High quality semi-natural habitats	Within immediate vicinity (<250m)	Within wider landscape (<2km)	Comments
Broadleaved/mixed woodland	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Situated within a rural area to the west of Chaddesley Corbett. The tree-lined Hockley Brook is within 200m of the barn.
Waterbodies	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Tree lines/stands	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Mature hedgerows	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
General Landscape Character	Rural		
Negative Characters		Positive Characters	
Highly urbanised environment <input type="checkbox"/> Night lighting (significant) <input type="checkbox"/> Isolated from high-value habitat <input type="checkbox"/> Modern building construction <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Human disturbance (significant) <input type="checkbox"/> High exposure (altitude, prevailing winds) <input type="checkbox"/> Nearby buildings modern or isolated <input type="checkbox"/>		Rural environment <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Absence of night lighting <input type="checkbox"/> Good connectivity to high-value habitat <input type="checkbox"/> Building construction suitable for bats <input type="checkbox"/> Absence/Minimal human disturbance <input type="checkbox"/> Low exposure (altitude, prevailing winds) <input type="checkbox"/> Cluster of suitable old buildings <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Other <input type="checkbox"/> specify		Other <input type="checkbox"/> specify	
Conclusion: (Collins 2016)	Moderate - Continuous habitat connected to wider landscape that could be used by commuting/foraging bats.		

Conclusion:

Conclusion – Building Suitability for Bats (see Collins 2016)	
Building 1	Negligible - structure is unsuitable for bats.

After a detailed internal and external inspection of the barn at Lodge Farm in both 2019 and 2021, there is no evidence to suggest that the structure is used by roosting bats. No signs of bat related activity (bat droppings, feeding remains, urine stains etc.) were observed during either the 2019 or 2021 survey visits. Due to the lack of potential roosting locations and complete absence of signs of bats within the barn, potential roosting opportunities for bats are limited to very occasional crevices between the boarding on the external area of the barn. The vast majority of the lifted gaps were considered too small (<10mm) to be exploited by bats, and those large enough were inspected and found to be blocked with cobwebs and/or other debris so do not provide suitable roosting opportunities for bats (this was the same as the 2019 survey visit). Therefore, the structure is classified as having ‘negligible’ roosting potential, as per Collins, 2016.

Recommendations:

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

1. No further presence/absence surveys are required to support the planning application for this site as the potential for bats to occur and significant impacts to arise during works is considered to be negligible.
2. As a precautionary approach, it is recommended that a licensed bat worker remains 'on-call' during the demolition works. In the event that roosting bats are discovered, work must cease immediately, and the on-call ecologist contacted, they will liaise with Natural England (as required) to advise on any licensing requirements to allow lawful completion of the work.
3. In line with Government policy on biodiversity, two bat boxes should be installed within the landownership of Lodge Farm. The boxes should provide crevice-type roosting opportunities and be installed on suitable mature trees (e.g. Improved Crevice Bat Box, 1FF Schwegler Bat Box or 2F Schwegler Bat Box with Double Front Panel). The boxes should be installed at least 4m above ground-level.
3. This report is deemed 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

Fern Fellowes-Day
Director

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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 environmental reports and advice to support planning applications. Our comprehensive services include Preliminary Ecological Appraisals (PEA), Ecological Impact Assessment (EclA), Habitat Regulations Assessment (HRA) and fulfilling protected species surveys, licensing and mitigation requirements. Focus Environmental Consultants is a CIEEM Registered Practice, with all ecological staff being members of this professional body. Our flexible approach, range of skills and broad project experience from major infrastructure contracts to small private developments allows us to adapt to your individual requirements. As well as offering a full suite of ecological services, Focus Environmental Consultants can provide expert arboricultural advice and reports and is building an enviable reputation for innovative habitat creation and management solutions. Focus Environmental Consultants is situated in Worcestershire, providing a convenient and central UK location.

Fern Fellowes-Day BSc (Hons) MSc MCIEEM MRSB

Fern has over seventeen 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, Ecological Impact Assessments (EclA) and Habitat Regulations Assessments (HRA). Fern's particular expertise is with protected species surveys. As a Registered User of the CL35 Badger Class Licence 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 (LICL)) and Conservation licences for white-clawed crayfish. She is particularly experienced in dealing with newt issues affecting the quarrying, mineral extraction and landfill industry.