

**Preliminary Bat Roost Assessment and Bird  
Survey for,  
Ms. H. Jones.  
Building at rear of,  
Oak Farm,  
Drayton Bassett,  
TAMWORTH,  
B78 3EF.**

**Map Ref SK 1776 0021  
25<sup>th</sup> November 2021.**

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## **Summary.**

- **There is no evidence of bats using the buildings as a place of shelter.**
- **There was evidence of birds nesting in the building.**
- **There are no bat roosting opportunities in the building.**
- **The conversion of the building, if approved by the Local Authority must not occur if birds are nesting in the building until the young have fledged. Robins were nesting in the building and no conversion work can proceed until the young have fledged.**
- **A new bat roosting opportunity can be created by installing a bat box on one of the adjacent trees, to meet the requirements of the National Planning Policy Framework (2018).**
- **Two new bird nesting boxes are to be installed on the adjacent trees to provide replacement nesting lost when the building is converted to a dwelling.**
- **A method of working must be put in place with contractors to ensure that in the event of bats being found they will not be injured.**

## Introduction.

An inspection and building survey for bats was requested by Ms. Helen Jones. The survey was to be undertaken in relation to the submission of a planning application to Lichfield District Council to convert the existing agricultural building to two dwellings. The property was visited on the 6<sup>th</sup> May 2021 and the surveyor spent 0.66 hour on site.

Temperature; 10°C      Wind; 0-1 Beaufort Scale      Cloud Cover; 1/8<sup>th</sup>.



## Legislation concerning bats.

The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (WCA) protects bats and their roosts in England, Scotland and Wales. Some parts have been amended by the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 (CRoW) which applies only in England and Wales, and by the Nature Conservation (Scotland) Act 2004 which applies in Scotland.

The Conservation and Habitats Regulations 2010 (better known as the Habitats Regulations) implements the Council Directive on the Conservation of Natural Habitats and of Wild Fauna and Flora. All bats are listed as 'European protected species of animals'

Under Regulation 41 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010 it is illegal to:

- Deliberately capture, injure or kill any wild animal of a European Protected Species (EPS),
- Deliberately disturb wild animals of an EPS (affecting ability to survive, breed or rear young) – disturbance of animals includes in particular any disturbance which is likely to impair their ability to survive, to breed or reproduce, or to rear or nurture their young,

- Deliberately disturb wild animals of an EPS (impairing ability to migrate or hibernate) – disturbance of animals includes in particular any disturbance which is likely to impair their ability in the case of hibernating or migratory species to hibernate or migrate,
- Deliberately disturb wild animals of an EPS (affecting local distribution and abundance) – disturbance of animals includes in particular any disturbance which is likely to affect significantly the local distribution or abundance of the species to which they belong,
- Deliberately disturb wild animals of an EPS (whilst occupying a structure of place used for shelter or protection) – intentionally or recklessly disturb any wild animal while it is occupying a structure or place which it uses for shelter or protection,
- Damage or destroy a breeding site or resting place of a wild animal an EPS.

Under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) it is illegal to:

- Recklessly or intentionally kill, injures or take any wild animals included in Schedule 5.
- Recklessly or intentionally damage or destroy, or obstruct access to any structure or place which any wild animal included in Schedule 5 uses for shelter or protection,
- Recklessly or intentionally disturb any such animal while it is occupying a structure or place which it uses for shelter or protection.

<https://www.theguardian.com/business/2020/11/housebuilder-fined-600000-destroying-bat-roost-south-london-bellway>

#### **Legislation concerning birds.**

All common wild birds are protected under The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (and as amended). Under this legislation it is an offence to:

- kill, injure or take any wild bird
- take, damage or destroy the nest of any wild bird while it is in use or being built
- take or destroy the egg of any wild bird

Certain rare breeding birds are listed on Schedule 1 of The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (and as amended). Under this legislation they are afforded the same protection as common wild birds and are also protected against disturbance whilst building a nest or on or near a nest containing eggs/unfledged young.

#### **Methodology for bats.**

The building surveys have been undertaken in accordance with Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists- Good Practice Guidelines, 2016, the Bat Conservation Trust. Surveys of the buildings were undertaken during the daytime to look for evidence of bats using the buildings, or likely roosting sites. The evidence of bats using a building as a place of shelter can include bat droppings, grease marks, urine stains or actual bats. This evidence is then considered when planning evening emergence counts and activity surveys, using bat detectors. These surveys provide evidence of where bats are roosting and activity across the site by foraging or commuting bats.

The Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists- Good Practice Guidelines, 2016, specify that emergence surveys are undertaken dependent upon the roost potential of the buildings on the survey site, as set out below;

Roost potential.	Number of surveys.
High.	3
Low to moderate.	2
Low.	1

The surveys are started at sunset, with bats emerging from roosts at different times, dependent upon the species, and continued for two hours. Emergence surveys can only be undertaken from the beginning of April to the end of September when bats are active. The optimum period of undertaking surveys is the beginning of May to the end of August. Their emergence is dependent upon the weather, the bats only leaving their roost on warm nights when there will be sufficient insect prey around to make flight worthwhile. While bats will emerge in light rain and moderate winds, the surveys would not be undertaken when there is heavy rain and/or strong winds as this would not provide reliable data upon which to base the conclusions of the surveys. Mild weather in April and September will produce bat activity, particularly providing information on forage areas, commuting routes and pre-maternity group roosting.

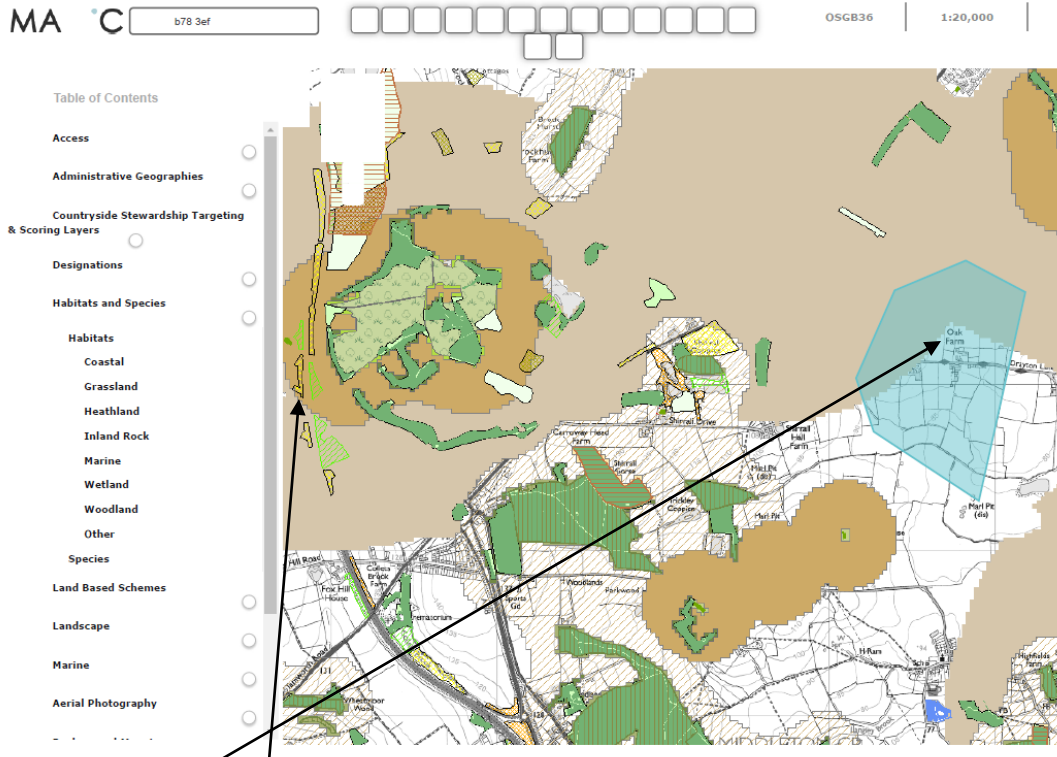
Any trees on site are surveyed following the methodology set out in the Bat Tree Habitat Key, Henry L Andrews et al 2013, which produces a key for identifying Potential Roost Features in trees and their likelihood of being used by bats. Trees on any site being surveyed will have Potential Roost Features identified from ground level surveys and highlighted in the report.

#### **Bat records and habitats.**

A search of public records has revealed the presence of the following bats within 3km of the site;

Myotis daubentonii.  
Nyctalus noctula.  
Pipistrellus pipistrellus.  
Pipistrellus pygmaeus.  
Plecotus auritus.

A search of the DEFRA MAGIC Dataset shows that there are no habitats adjacent to the site which of a special nature conservation status or significance. There are areas of Deciduous Woodland on the Priority Habitat Inventory to the northeast and southwest of the site. There is agricultural land surrounding the site. The areas of deciduous woodland on the Priority Habitat Inventory in the landscape will provide forage opportunities for bats and there is moderate connectivity between the woodlands, the hedgerows being a mixture of hedgerows with some mature trees and some being post and wire fences. There is an area of Woodpasture and Parkland Grazing with Deciduous Woodland to the west of the site on the Priority Habitat Inventory. The forage opportunities around the site are moderate. The site is adjacent to a Network Expansion Zone.



**Oak Farm.**

A search of the DEFRA MAGIC Dataset shows that the site falls inside of a Farm Wildlife Package area where there is support for Lapwings through Countryside Stewardship targeting. The site does not fall into the buffer zones around the Deciduous Woodland to the northeast and southwest of the site. There are no other biodiversity enhancement areas adjacent to the site.

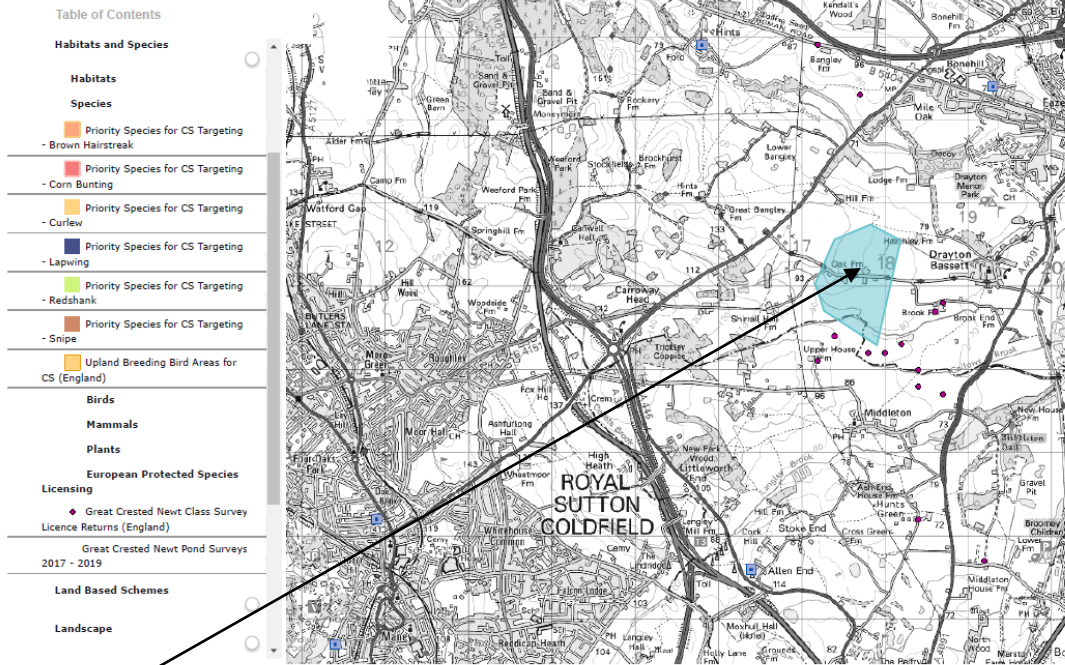




Oak Farm.

A search of the DEFRA MAGIC Dataset shows that there have been a number of European Protected Species licenses granted locally. None of the sites is adjacent to the property being surveyed. Those highlighted yellow were obtained by the Bat Consultant.

Species.	Destruction of or damage to a breeding site for bats.	Destruction of or damage to a resting place for bats.
Common pipistrelle, Soprano pipistrelle, Brown long eared bats.	Yes	Yes
Soprano pipistrelle, Brown long eared bats.	Yes	Yes
Common pipistrelle, Natterer's bats.	No	Yes
Soprano pipistrelle bats.	No	Yes



**Oak Farm.**

### **Constraints.**

The building survey was undertaken in the spring when evidence of bats internally can still be seen but external evidence may be unavailable after heavy rain. The surveyor does not believe that the weather masked any evidence or access points for bats. There were no constraints to the surveyor for access in the building survey for bats. The survey was undertaken during the Covid-19 period of social distancing but there were no constraints to the surveyor for access in the building survey for bats.



## Building Survey.

The buildings to be surveyed consisted of a concrete portal framed agricultural building with fibre cement roof sheets.



The site for conversion of the property has low value to biodiversity and comprises exclusively building with areas of hard standing adjacent. Proposed plans include the retention of gardens with amenity grassland, trees and ornamental shrubs which will result in no net decrease in biodiversity for the site.



The results of the building survey are presented as the likelihood of bats using an area/feature;

- None.** Bats are unlikely to use the feature/area in any way.
- Poor.** Bats may use the feature/area but it is not thought to be likely.

- Possible.** The feature/area provides an area that may be used by bats but no direct evidence of occupation was found.
- Definite.** Clear evidence of the use of a feature/area as a place of shelter, such as droppings.

The building is a concrete frame with concrete sheeting rails supporting fibre cement roof sheets.





There is a gap between the rear of the fibre cement roof sheets and the concrete sheeting rail but the likelihood of this being used by bats is exceptionally small and highly unlikely.

There are profile steel cladding sheets supported on timber sheeting rails on the vertical surfaces. There is a small likelihood of bats using the space between the rear of the profile steel cladding sheets and the timber sheeting rail but the rapid heating and cooling of the metal makes this highly unlikely.



Where the vertical cladding meets the blockwork there is a gap that could be used by individual bats but the rapid heating and cooling of the metal sheets make such use highly unlikely.



There are no bat roosting opportunities in the building.

**Bat roosting opportunities; None.**

**Birds.**

There are birds nesting in the building and there are nesting opportunities on the structural elements of the building.



If planning permission for the change of use to a dwelling is granted no work can commence until the young have fledged.

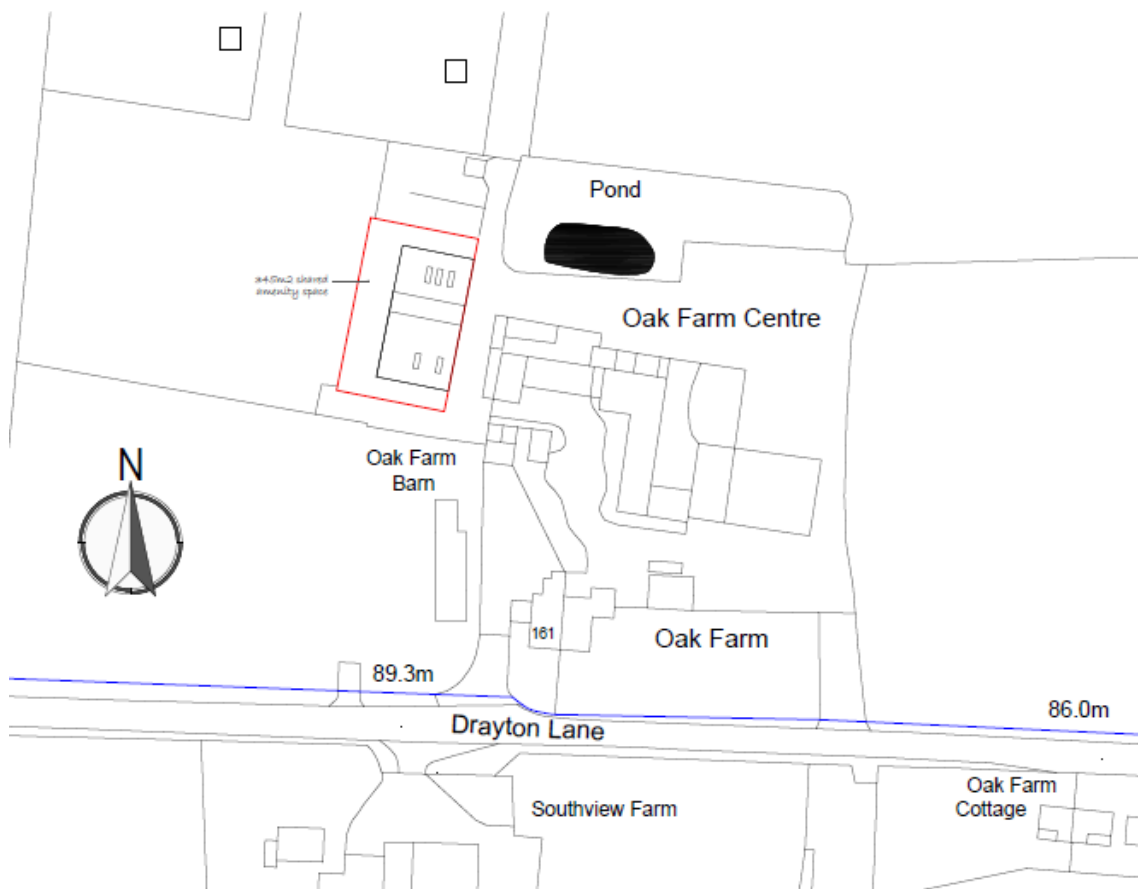
## Conclusion.

There was no evidence of bats using the building as a place of shelter.

The bat roosting opportunities in the building are exceptionally poor and the likelihood of their use is exceptionally small. This likelihood can be managed by contractors following the method of working set out below.

There are robins nesting in the building. Replacement nesting opportunities can be created by installing two nest boxes in the trees adjacent to the site.

The site for the conversion has no value to biodiversity and comprises entirely building and hard standing. There will be no net loss of biodiversity for the site if the extension is built.







### Impacts on bats.

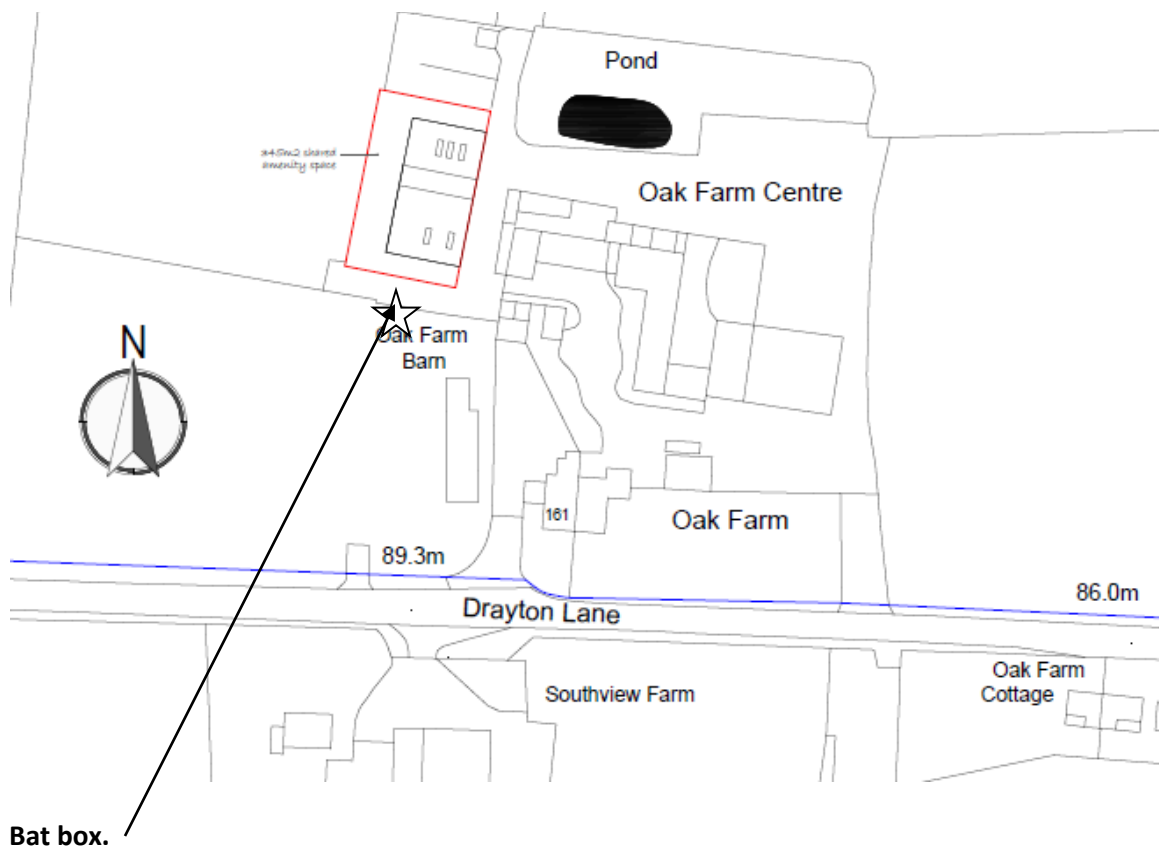
The conversion of the property will have a negligible impact on bats due to the loss of the potential roosting under roof sheets or the vertical cladding sheets. The method of working below must be followed to ensure that the potential for disturbing or harming bats, however small, is minimized and avoided.

There is no loss of habitat from the proposed development and there will be no impact on habitat, forage or commuting routes from the proposed development.

### Enhancements for bats.

Records show that there are populations of crevice dwelling bats locally. New roosting opportunities for these species of bats can be created when the new dwelling is built if planning permission is granted, to meet the requirements of the National Planning Policy Framework (2018).

A bat box can be installed on one of the trees to the south of the site where bats would be able to emerge into the cover of the trees.



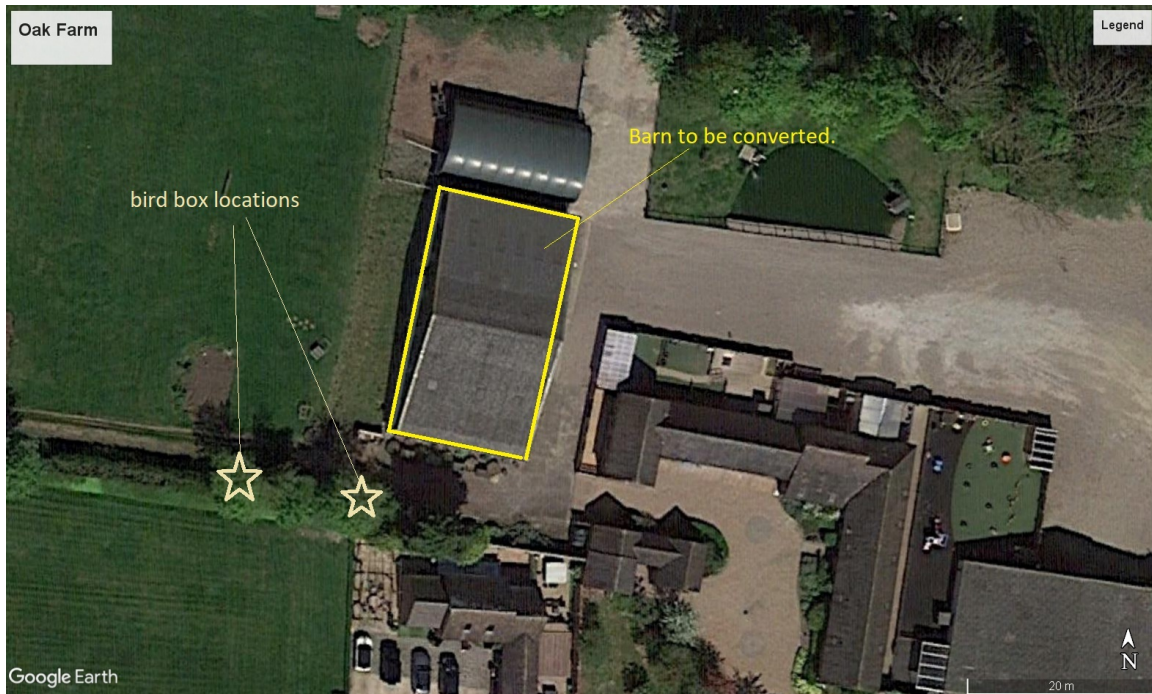


There should be no direct illumination of the new bat roosting opportunity. Lighting around the site will be by low wattage down lights at low level to provide security and safety lighting for the dwelling and service area. This lighting will be set no higher than the head height of the ground floor windows and will minimise the possible disturbance to bats in this area. Any security lighting will use PIR's to ensure they turn off automatically once the movement has ceased.

#### **Enhancements for birds.**

Replacement bird nesting opportunities are to be created by installing two bird boxes on the trees to the south of the building.





The method of working has been set out so that it can be printed and handed to contractors on site.

#### **Method of working.**

There is no evidence of bats using the buildings as a place of shelter but it is possible that individual bats may use the possible roosting sites between the rear of the fibre cement roof sheets and the vertical metal cladding sheets. Because of this possibility a method of working should be put in place when there are contractors on site. This would cover work to the roof or demolition where there was access for bats.

The common species of bats that are likely to roost in buildings of this nature and are evidenced from the regional records, are crevice dwelling bats, such as the Common Pipistrelle. These bats are small and can use accesses as little as 50mm x 20mm. When found in buildings they appear no bigger than a thumb and have dark brown fur.





It is common to find bat droppings in places used by bats. These are small and often confused with mouse droppings. It is possible to distinguish between them as mouse droppings are hard whereas bat droppings, being only insect remains, crumble when rubbed between the fingers.



The other species of bat that may possibly be found on site is the Brown Long Eared bat. These are a medium sized bat, larger than a Pipistrelle with very long ears that meet in the centre of the head. These bats may be found in crevices in the brickwork, behind ridge boards or in splits in the larger roof timbers.





- When roof or vertical sheets are removed they should be lifted away from the roof and not slid or twisted to avoid injuring any bats roosting beneath the tiles.
- If a bat is found under a roof or vertical sheet, the sheet should be carefully replaced and work in that area stopped until such time as a licensed bat worker can attend the site.
- The bat can then be removed to a place of safety until such time that it can be released at night.
- The demolition of any part of the building where bats could potentially roost should be by hand. This includes the removal of roof tiles, ridge tiles, soffits, gutter fascia boards and hanging tiles. If a bat is found the work should be stopped immediately and a bat worker called to come and deal with the bat. The bat should not be handled except by a licensed bat worker. Any bats found will be taken into care for release on site later dependent upon the time and weather.
- Bats discovered during the winter period will be taken into care, feed and kept healthy until they can be released on site in the Spring.
- Bats will not be released on site until evening temperatures are consistently above 6°C, at least three nights, the wind is light, and there is no rain.
- Bats taken into care over the winter will be released to the new roost opportunities in Spring if they are available using the same release criteria as above.

#### **Legislation concerning bats.**

**The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (WCA) protects bats and their roosts in England, Scotland and Wales. Some parts have been amended by the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 (CROW) which applies only in England and Wales, and by the Nature Conservation (Scotland) Act 2004 which applies in Scotland.**

The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010 (better known as the Habitats Regulations) implements the Council Directive on the Conservation of Natural Habitats and of Wild Fauna and Flora. All bats are listed as 'European protected species of animals'.

It is an offence for any person to:

- Deliberately capture, injure or kill a bat.
- Intentionally or recklessly disturb bats, where that disturbance may significantly affect the ability of those bats to survive, breed, rear or nurture their young, or is likely to significantly affect the local distribution or abundance of any bat species, whether in a roost or not.
- Damage or destroy a place of shelter (roost) of a bat, be that a resting or breeding place.
- Possess a bat, whole or in part, alive or dead.
- Intentionally or recklessly obstruct access to a roost.
- Sell or offer for sale or exchange whole or parts of bats, alive or dead.

The fine for committing an offence is £5,000 per bat.

If a bat is found on site, work should stop in the area where the bat was found and the contractor should call the Bat Consultant; S. Christopher Smith 07967636115.

### **Breathable Roofing Membranes-Info Sheet**

#### **What are they?**

- ✦ Traditional roofing felt was bitumen based
- ✦ Modern membranes are made from very fine and long plastic fibres that are spun into thin sheets. They be single ply or have various layers to provide a more complex membrane.
- ✦ They are known as Breathable roofing membranes or Vapour permeable underlay's (BRMs/VPUs)

#### **Who Makes them?**

- ✦ When most people talk about BRMs, they will call it Tyvek as this is the most famous brand name
- ✦ There are over 70 products in the UK alone, made by 20+ companies – never assume the product is Tyvek unless there is proof.



#### **Why are they used?**

- ✦ Modern houses are designed to be more energy efficient, meaning they tend to be warmer.
- ✦ Along with human activities this means increased levels of water vapour in the air
- ✦ When this passes up into the cold roof space, it forms condensation, which can lead to problems
- ✦ In the past gaps would have been left near the ridge and eaves to allow ventilation, but increased insulation often means this isn't possible. A breathable membrane aids this as it allows water vapour to pass out of the loft into the external air

#### **Potential Problems**

- ✦ There have been reports of bats becoming entangled in fibres pulled from the membranes
- ✦ Possibility of Temperature and humidity change
- ✦ A lot of membranes are white or brightly coloured

#### **Advice**

- ✦ **At present we cannot recommend specific brands that are considered safe for use in bat roosts, as such it is recommended that bitumen felt be used where possible**
- ✦ It is not against the law not to install a BRM
- ✦ If the planner insists on a BRM, suggest a dark coloured and reinforced membrane

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S.Christopher Smith MRICS MSc CEnv.

## Appendix 1.

### Roost Types as designated by Natural England and the Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists, Good Practice Guidelines.

- A. Day roost: a place where individual bats, or small groups of males, rest or shelter in the day but are rarely found by night in the summer.
- B. Night roost: a place where bats rest or shelter in the night but are rarely found in the day. May be used by a single individual on occasion or it could be used regularly by the whole colony.
- C. Feeding roost: a place where individual bats or a few individuals rest or feed during the night but are rarely present by day.
- D. Transitional / occasional roost: used by a few individuals or occasionally small groups for generally short periods of time on waking from hibernation or in the period prior to hibernation.
- E. Swarming site: where large numbers of males and females gather during late summer to autumn. Appear to be important mating sites
- F. Mating sites: sites where mating takes place from later summer and can continue through winter.
- G. Maternity roost: where female bats give birth and raise their young to independence.
- H. Hibernation roost: where bats may be found individually or together during winter. They have a constant cool temperature and high humidity.
- I. Satellite roost: an alternative roost found in close proximity to the main nursery colony used by a few individual breeding females to small groups of breeding females throughout the breeding season.
- J. Other – Explain what the roost type is if not one of the above (it is recognised that roost types are interchangeable and not always easy to classify according to the nuances of certain species).