Arc Ecology

BUILDINGS AT HOLLY TREE FARM, OXTON - UPDATE PROTECTED SPECIES APPRAISAL

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REPORT PREPARED BY:

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INTRODUCTION

Arc Ecology were commissioned to undertake an update Protected Species Appraisal (PSA) of buildings at Holly Tree Farm, Main Street, Oxton, Nottinghamshire to attempt to determine any change to the status of any such species within the site prior to a planning application being submitted for the its development after a previous PSA (report reference ARC/HTF0818/AMA) became out-dated.

Given the habitats present within the site, particular emphasis was given to the potential for the site to support roosting bats and nesting birds.

Where there has been no discernible change within the structure of the buildings, then the descriptions and photographs from the previous report are considered to still be valid and are replicated in this report.

Similarly, if there has been no assessed change to the buildings regarding the status of protected and notable species, then the findings of the previous report are again considered valid and are replicated.

Where there has been any notable change, then this is highlighted within this document by a bold preface.

SITE DESCRIPTION

The site lies in the south-west of the village of Oxton at OSGR SK 62802 51046 and consists of two outbuildings within a complex of farm buildings (see Plate 1).

Building 1

This is a 'U' shaped single storey building, attached at its western end to another section of building which is not part of the planning application.

The building is of brick construction, with pitched roof sections with a clay pantile covering. There is an additional section on the eastern end of the building which has a sloped corrugate asbestos roof (see Photographs 1 and 2).

Internally the building has three separate sections on its northern and southern aspect (see Photographs 3 - 8).

There are no roof voids internally and there is no lining present, with the exception of the eastern room on the northern aspect which has a makeshift lining of what appears to be plastic sacking material. This lining is coming away from the beams in many places, or has gaps large enough to insert an endoscope, and it was possible to investigate the majority of it during the survey.

UPDATE - Since the previous survey this building has fallen further into disrepair with additional tiles missing in the areas noted previously.

The building has been subject to considerable water ingress throughout since the previous survey, with the main beams being soaked through and showing signs of collapse and water running down the internal walls, notably in the northern sections of the building, but also to a lesser extent in the southern sections.

Further areas of the sack lining in the northern sections have become detached and are hanging loose from the roof beams.

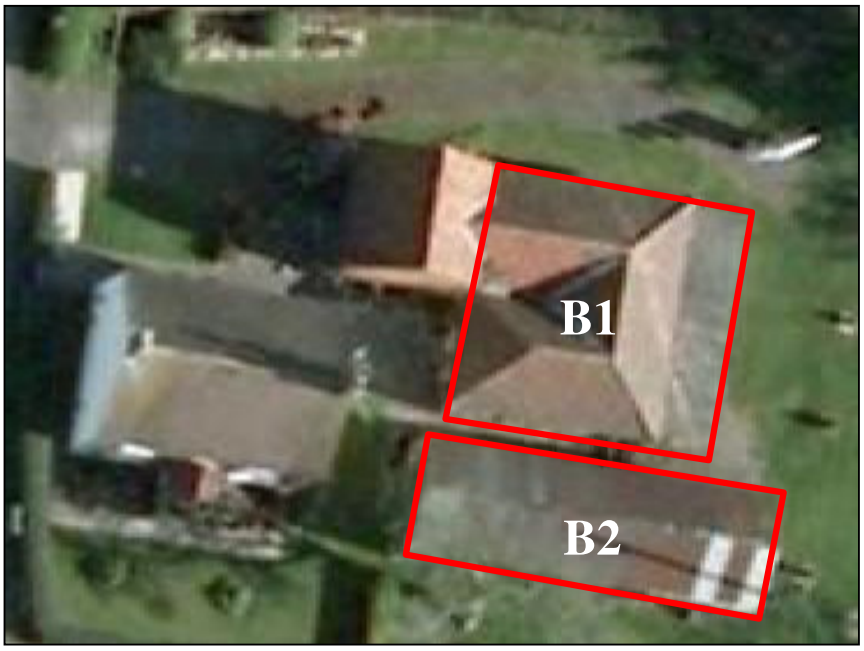
Otherwise, the building remains as surveyed previously.

Building 2

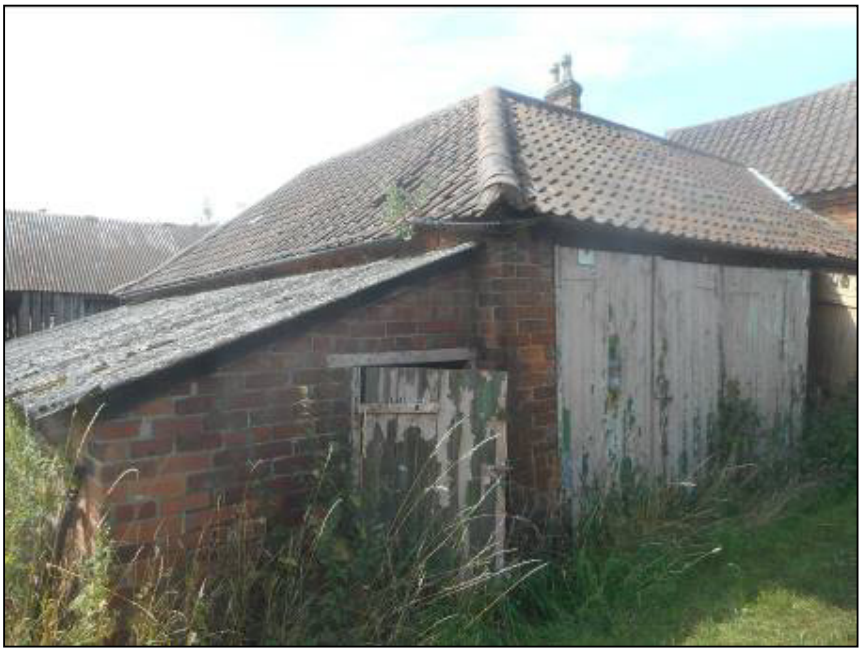
This is a barn of stone and wood construction to the south of the main building. The building has a corrugate asbestos roof which is unlined and there is no roof void present (see Photograph 9).

UPDATE.- Since the previous survey, due to unusually inclement weather conditions, this building has collapsed and is now only supported by its own framework resting on the ground and the fact that it is leaning against Building 1 at its eastern end. Photograph 9 has been updated to demonstrate this.

Plate 1 - Aerial view of building with sections surveyed in red



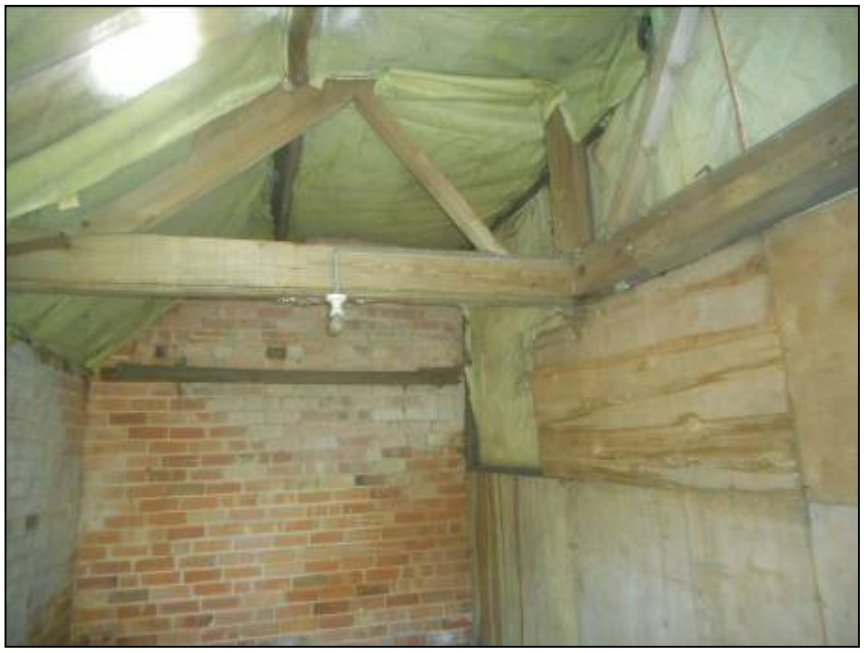
Photograph 1 - Northern aspect of Building 1



Photograph 2 - Southern aspect of Building 1

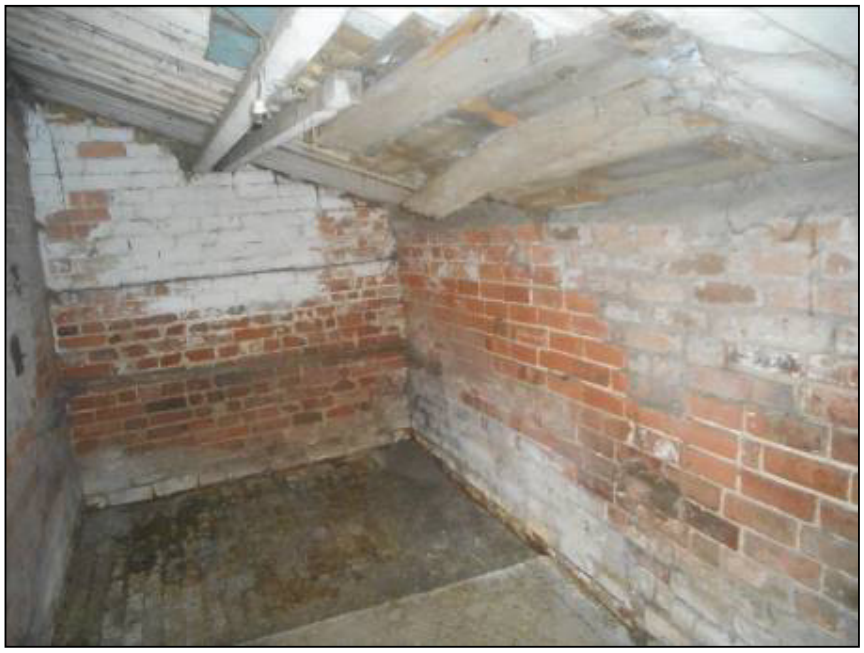
Photograph 3 - North-eastern internal section of Building 1

Photograph 4 - Central internal section on northern side of Building 1

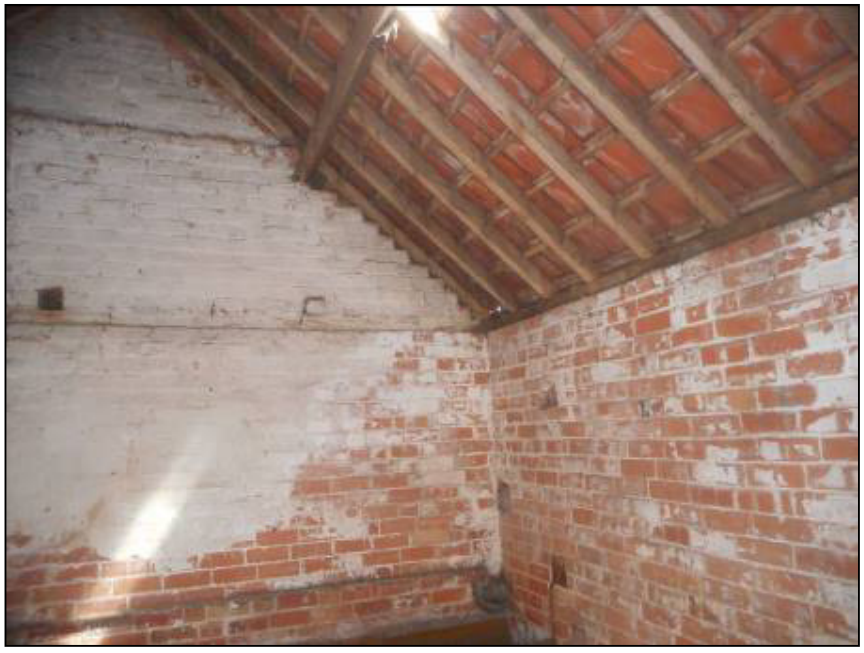


Photograph 5 - North-western internal section of Building 2

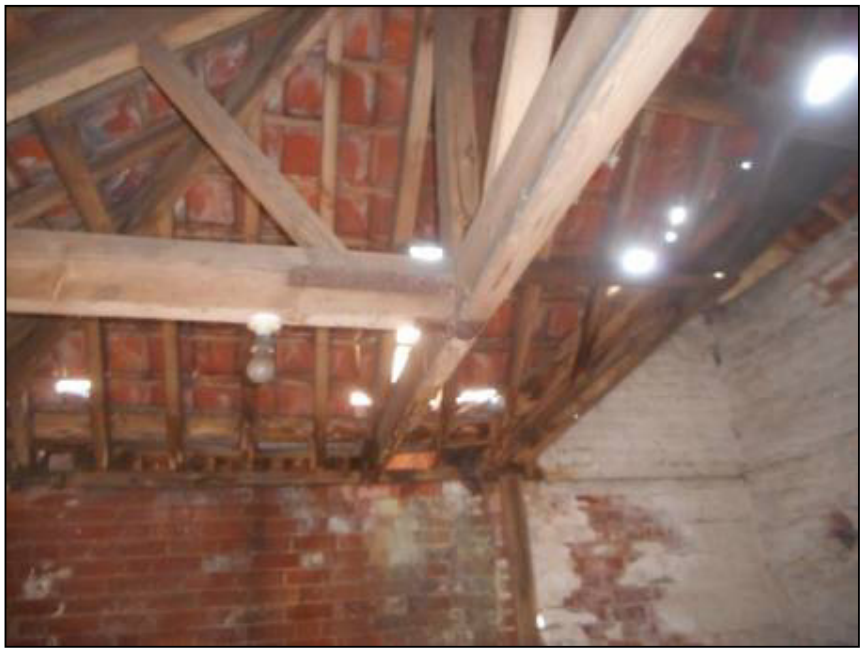
Photograph 6 - South-eastern internal section of Building 1



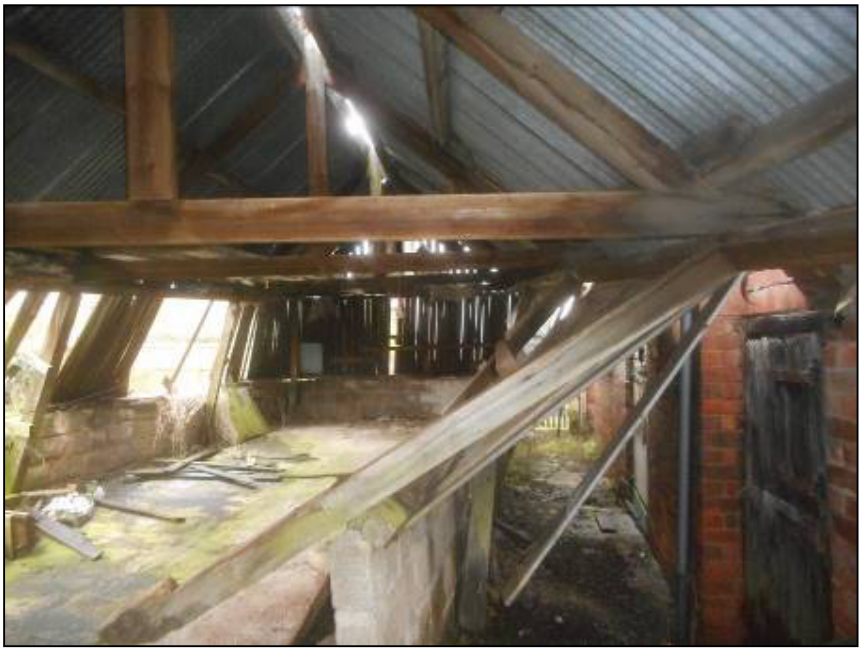
Photograph 7 - Central internal section on southern side of Building 1



Photograph 8 - South-western internal section of Building 1



Photograph 9 - Building 2



METHODOLOGY

The update appraisal of the buildings was undertaken on the 19th February 2020 by a suitably qualified ecologist and current holder of a Level II Class Licence to survey for bats (license number 2017-27501-CLS-CLS).

The appraisal of habitats and features within the buildings for their suitability to support bats was undertaken following guidelines published by the Bat Conservation Trust (2016) and Mitchell-Jones (2004).

Appraisal of habitats suitable for nesting birds followed guidance given by Bibby et al. (2000).

CONSTRAINTS

There were no constraints to the survey and all areas of the site were accessible.

SURVEY RESULTS

BATS

Building 1

There were potential access points for bats into this building present under raised, missing and slipped tiles on the roof and through gaps around doorways.

No evidence of the current or historic presence of bats was found in the building during the survey.

The walls and floors within the building were relatively clean and it is expected that if any evidence such as droppings were present they would have been located.

Bats are not currently considered to pose a constraint to the proposed development of the building and no further survey for bats is necessary.

UPDATE.- Since the last survey, due to further deterioration and extensive water ingress, this building is assessed to have less suitability for bats than previously determined.

Building 2

This building was assessed to have no potential for bats. The building is bright, draughty and open to the elements due to its derelict condition.

Bats are not considered to pose a constraint to the proposed development of this building.

NESTING BIRDS

Building 1

A single disused house martin (*Delichon urbicum*) nest and a single disused wren (*Troglodytes troglodytes*) nest were located in the north-western section of the northern side of the building.

No other current or historic evidence of nesting was found in this building.

Building 2

There was no current or historic evidence of nesting birds found within this building, although suitable access points and features for such species were present.

OTHER PROTECTED AND NOTABLE FLORA AND FAUNA SPECIES

There was no evidence of the presence of any other notable flora and fauna species noted during the survey and there are no habitats present within the site considered suitable to support such species.

CONSTRAINTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

UPDATE.- As there has been no notable change in the status of the buildings in the interim period between the previous survey and the update survey, the following recommendations are considered to still be valid.

BATS

Bats and their habitats are protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended by the CRoW Act 2000), and by the Habitats Regulations 1994 (as amended 2007). In summary, these make it an offence to damage, destroy or obstruct any place used by bats for breeding and shelter, disturb a bat, or kill, injure or take any bat.

In addition, seven bat species are on the UK Biodiversity Action Plan and are listed as Species of Principal Importance under the provisions of the NERC Act 2006. The National Planning Policy Network document 'ODPM Circular 06/2005' gives guidance on the treatment of Species of Principal Importance and states that local authorities should ensure that they are protected from the adverse effects of development, where appropriate, by using planning conditions or obligations.

Although bats are not currently considered to pose a constraint to the development of Building 1, there were features suitable to allow access for bats.

Bats are highly mobile species and can inhabit buildings at any time.

As such, contractors should be made aware of the possibility, albeit slight, that individual bats may be present, particularly during work on the roof if works are carried out during the active season for bats (March to October inclusive).

In the unlikely event that a bat is found, an appropriately licenced ecologist and/or Natural England should be contacted for advice as additional survey to determine numbers and species present will be required and it is possible a European Protected Species (EPS) licence may be required for works to continue.

NESTING BIRDS

All nesting birds are protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981, which makes it an offence to kill, injure or take any wild bird or take, damage or destroy its nest whilst in use or being built, or take or destroy its eggs. In addition to this, for some rarer species (listed on Schedule 1 of the Act), it is an offence to disturb them while they are nest building or at or near a nest with eggs or young, or to disturb the dependent young of such a bird.

A number of bird species are also listed as Species of Principal Importance under the provisions of the NERC Act 2006. The National Planning Policy Network document 'ODPM Circular 06/2005' gives guidance on the treatment of Species of Principal Importance and states that local authorities should ensure that they are protected from the adverse effects of development, where appropriate, by using planning conditions or obligations.

There was evidence of historic nesting within Building 1 and suitable access points and features for nesting birds were present on both buildings and it is possible that birds could use this building at any time in subsequent nesting seasons.

Due to this, if possible, any works on the buildings should ideally avoid the nesting season for birds (March to September inclusive).

If this is not possible, then an appropriately experienced ecologist should conduct an investigation of the building to determine whether it is in use by nesting birds immediately prior to work commencing. If nesting birds are found to be present at this time, all work likely to cause disturbance should cease until the young have fledged and the nest is no longer in use.

SUMMARY

- An update Protected Species Appraisal was carried out on two buildings at Holly Tree Farm., Oxton, Nottinghamshire by Arc Ecology on the 17th February 2020.
- There were features suitable to allow access to bats on Building 1, but no current or historic evidence of roosting bats was located during the survey. Building 2 was assessed to have no suitability for roosting or resting bats.
- Bats are not currently considered to pose a constraint to the proposed development of the buildings and no further survey for bats is required.
- However, bats are highly mobile species and can inhabit buildings with suitable features at any time.
- As such, contractors should be made aware of the possibility, albeit slight, that individual bats may be present if works are carried out during the active season for bats.
- In the unlikely event that bats are found to be present at this time, then further survey to determine numbers and exact use of the building will be required and it is possible that a European Protected Species licence will be required before works can continue.
- There was evidence of historic bird nesting in Building 1 and features suitable to allow access for such species in subsequent nesting seasons on both buildings.
- As such, if possible, works on the buildings should ideally avoid the nesting season for birds.
- If this is not possible, then a suitably qualified ecologist should check the building prior to work commencing to see if it is in use by nesting birds.
- If nesting birds are found to be present at this time, all works likely to cause disturbance should cease until the young have fledged and the nest is no longer in use.
- There are not considered to be any ecological constraints to the development of the site with regard to any other protected or notable flora and fauna species.

REFERENCES

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Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists - Good Practice Guidelines (3rd Edition). Bat Conservation Trust, London.

Bibby, C.J., Burgess, N.D., Hill, D.A. & Mustoe, S.H. (2000).
Bird Census Techniques: (2nd Edition). Academic Press, London.

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