



29<sup>th</sup> September 2023

To whom it may concern,

### **Brief Letter Report for the Enhancement Measures at Pad End Barn**

Ecology Services Limited was commissioned by Mr. Daniel Marsden in September 2023 to undertake a site visit to assess an area of land and 'new' building, the findings of which would inform recommendations for biodiversity enhancements at the site. The site visit was required to support a retrospective planning application for the 'new' building which was built on the site of a previous barn located at Pad End Barn, Pinfold Lane, Inskip, Preston, PR4 0UA; National Grid Reference (NGR) 346183, 438755. This brief letter report details the findings of the site visit and makes recommendations for biodiversity gains and enhancements. See Map 1 showing the location of the site and enhancement measures.

The site visit and assessment were undertaken on 13<sup>th</sup> of September 2023 by Senior Consultant Ecologist Mr. Simon Booth, who has 18 years consultancy experience, holds a Schedule 1 Class Licence (Registration number CL29/00099) in relation to barn owl and Bat Class Licence Level 2 (Registration number 2016-27296-CLS-CLS).

Weather conditions during the site visit were good with no wind or rain prior to or during the site visit.

#### **Site Description and Context**

The site comprises a cluster of former farm buildings (now dwellings) with associated small gardens, outgrown scrub and small patches of semi-improved grassland. The focus of the survey was on the newly constructed building which has replaced an old barn that had to be demolished circa 2020. The newly constructed building sits on the footprint of the original barn.

#### **Habitats of Principal Importance**

No habitats of principal importance were found on site, although hedgerows are located along Pinfold Lane. There has been no impact on these arising from the demolition of the old barn or construction of the 'new' building.

Certain bat and bird species commonly use agricultural buildings, i.e roosting and foraging (bats), nesting and foraging (birds), of which some are listed as priority species. Those commonly found in buildings in Lancashire comprise bats: soprano pipistrelle (*Pipistrellus pygmaeus*) and brown long-eared bat (*Plecotus auritus*). Bird species comprise house sparrow (*Passer domesticus*) and starling (*Sturnus vulgaris*).

Habitats and species of Principal Importance in England are listed under Section 41 (S41) of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006 (as amended). Section 40 of the NERC Act 2006, places a duty to conserve and enhance biodiversity on every public body. The S41 list is used to guide decision-makers such as public bodies, including local and regional authorities, in implementing their duty under Section 40 of the NERC Act 2006, to have regard to the conservation and enhancement of biodiversity in England, when carrying out their normal (e.g. planning) functions. Habitats of Principal Importance are capable of being material consideration in planning.

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### Statutory Protected Species


The former barn was potentially suitable to support statutory protected species, which include all bat species and barn owl (*Tyto alba*).

All British bats, and the habitat they use for protection and shelter are protected under Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended) and the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (WCA, as amended). All wild birds are protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended). Under the WCA, it is an offence to kill, injure or take any wild bird, to take damage or destroy the nest of any wild bird or to take or destroy the egg of any wild bird. Birds listed on Schedule 1 of the WCA are afforded additional protection and it is also an offence to disturb any Schedule 1 listed bird while it is building a nest, is on or near a nest containing young or disturb dependent young of such a bird.

It was not possible to ascertain the value of the former barn for the aforementioned species other than it was potentially suitable to support them. For the purpose of this report, it is assumed that the former barn was suitable, and therefore the enhancement measures proposed, seek to provide continued ecological functionality for bats and birds at the site long term.

It was noted during the site visit, that a number of bat and bird boxes, including two owl boxes were already in situ on the 'new' building. These were not inspected further owing to the height of the boxes but were observed from ground level. A barn owl was also heard in one of the boxes and fresh barn owl pellets were found on the ground. In addition to this, sparrow terrace boxes were also noted on the building. Bat droppings indicative of pipistrelle species were also found on a parked car beneath the north facing canopy and indicate possible use of the bat boxes or foraging activity in that area.

If in use, the bat boxes would be afforded full protection under the relevant legislation and a licence obtainable from Natural England would be needed should they need to be removed or if they are to be disturbed for any reason. Similarly, barn owls receive full protection whilst at or near to an active nest. See below photographs showing the bat and bird box locations.

	
'New' building as noted during the site visit 13.09.2023	Front canopy with bat and bird boxes

	
<p>Owl boxes within the canopy of the 'new' building.</p>	<p>Barn owl pellet on the floor beneath the canopy of the 'new' building.</p>
	
<p>Owl box and bat boxes beneath the canopy of the 'new' building.</p>	<p>Bat droppings on the bonnet of car parked beneath the canopy of the 'new' building.</p>

Following the site visit, it is considered that there are a number of enhancement opportunities that are suitable for the site and these are outlined in brief below. However, the 'new' building already provides some compensation for bats and birds and because of this, alternative enhancement around the building have also been proposed.

### ***Enhancement Measures***

#### **Bat hibernation and maternity boxes.**

Two Schwegler 1WQ bat boxes (or similar) to be erected. One to be located on the north east facing elevation of the 'new' building for hibernation use and one to be located on south east facing gable of the adjacent house to the north west of the building.

In addition to the above, one of the pre-existing timber bat boxes shall be relocated to a less cluttered location on the 'new' building, currently on the west elevation. Prior to relocation, the box shall be inspected by a bat licenced ecologist for bats or any signs of bat presence that would indicate that this is a roost. In the unlikely event that it is found to be in use then the bat box will be protected under relevant legislation and must remain in situ to ensure that legislation protecting bats and their roosts is adhered to.

On the north western side of the building is a single storey former stable block. This building is brick built with a pitched Welsh slate covered roof. In the central part of this building there is a passageway with external doors at either side and internally the space is vaulted and open to the roof. The roof



space shall be converted into a bat loft with a height of no less than 1.5m at centre<sup>1</sup>. To facilitate this, rough sawn sarking boards shall be fitted beneath the rafters to allow bats to grip. A bat access point in the form of a bat tile will be installed in the roof to allow full access to the loft for species such as brown-long eared bats and also crevice dwelling bats. Gaps will also be made available at the eaves above the wall plate to allow access above the sarking boards and beneath the roof slates. Lighting shall be removed from the roof space and skylights will be covered to ensure no light spill enters the space. The breathable roofing membrane currently installed shall be removed entirely along with the wisteria over the door way. At present, the area is highly unsuitable for roosting bats being light filled, draughty and containing a non-bitumen coated roofing membrane, the latter of which poses a high degree of risk to bat species over time due to the spun bond filaments becoming loose and causing entanglement issues. A thorough search of this area was undertaken for signs of bat presence and no evidence of bats was found in this area. See photographs of loft below.



New area of bat loft shaded in red

Internal view of area to be converted into a bat loft

In addition to the creation of the new bat loft area further enhancements are proposed that will increase flora species diversity with a view to increase species diversity at the site. This will provide more enhanced foraging opportunities for both bat and bird species.

On the south eastern side of the building is a strip of shady grassland which lies between the new building and an area of outgrown scrub. It is proposed that this grassland be plug planted with shade tolerant species which are commonly found along woodland edge or hedgerows. See below list. Currently chickens have access to forage in this area but they will be excluded post planting.

Primrose	<i>Primula vulgaris</i>
Bluebell	<i>Hyacinthoides non-scripta</i>
Garlic mustard	<i>Alliaria petiolata</i>
Wavy bitter-cress	<i>Cardamine flexuosa</i>
Betony	<i>Stachys officinalis</i>
Hedge bedstraw	<i>Galium mollugo</i>
Ramson	<i>Allium ursinum</i>
Hedge woundwort	<i>Stachys sylvatica</i>
Wood aven	<i>Geum rivale</i>
Nettle-leaved bellflower	<i>Campanula trachelium</i>
Ragged Robin	<i>Lychnis flos-cuculi</i>
Red campion	<i>Silene dioica</i>

<sup>1</sup> Lintott and Mathews (2018) found that providing a bat loft as mitigation was usually more effective than using bat boxes to provide compensation for bats. Collins et al. (2020) found similar results, with 33% of bat lofts occupied compared to 20% of all bat boxes combined.

Selfheal	<i>Prunella vulgaris</i>
Sweet cicely	<i>Myrrhis odorata</i>
Foxglove	<i>Digitalis purpurea</i>



On the south eastern side of the 'new' building, beyond the strip of grassland is an area of outgrown scrub. Part of the scrub will be managed by pruning the back canopy to open up the small pathway that runs through it to the entrance to the site on Pinfold Lane to provide a small ride. Scrub along the edges of the path will be cut back with some species locally coppiced to allow for a thicker growth and provide improved breeding bird habitat. The side of the path will be plug planted using the species listed above. This area will also provide a sheltered space in which insect species will cluster thereby providing increased foraging potential for birds and bats.



Pathway towards the site entrance on Pinfold Lane

Also within the area of outgrown scrub are a number stacked of brick piles which appear to have been in situ for a number of years. Ideally these could be utilised in a more effective way and it is proposed that these will be re-used to construct a number of hedgehog houses. Hedgehogs are



likely to be present in the area and would benefit hugely by the addition of well-constructed refuge/hibernation habitat.



Stacked brick piles to be re-used to construct hedgehog houses

This concludes the enhancement measures that are proposed at Pad End Barn site. All of the aforementioned proposals have been recommended following assessment of the current site conditions and aim to provide enhancement measures that will benefit not only the bat and bird species considered present at the site but also overall biodiversity at the site long-term. Furthermore, proposals are considered suitable to compensate for the loss of the old barn.

The report has been produced by Senior Consultant Ecologist Simon Booth on behalf of Ecology Services Ltd. If you require any further information or have any questions please do not hesitate to get in touch.



Map 1 showing the location of the site and enhancement measures

