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[REDACTED]  
Bank Top Farm  
Mill Lane  
Aspull  
WN2 1Q6

1<sup>st</sup> December 2022

[REDACTED]  
**Re: Proposed development at Agricultural barn building at Bank Top Farm, Mill Lane WN2 1QG**

Thank you for your request for a bat survey.

We understand that the proposal is for the refurbishment of an existing agricultural barn and stables.

### **1.0 Background and Qualifications**

The survey was carried out by [REDACTED]

Pat is a licensed bat worker, a registered consultant of the Bat Mitigation Class licence in England, a Chartered Environmentalist and a full member of the Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management, with a Bachelor of Science degree in Biology.

Pat has been working as an ecological consultant for over twenty-four years, including over 17 years as Director of Ecology Services UK Limited. This work includes provision of expert advice and guidance to bodies such as Statutory Nature Conservation Organisations, Local Planning Authorities, including Lancashire Planning Authorities and Police Authorities, as well as the delivery of professional training courses about bats at a national level.

Pat has recognised and extensive knowledge of bat ecology relating to buildings and trees, including the requirements and conditions necessary for bat roosting. He also has recognised skills relating to bat surveys and assessments.

Janette is a full member of Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management, with a Bachelor of Science degree in Environmental Management.

Janette has over eighteen years' experience working in ecology and nature conservation, including roles as a Senior Ecologist for a large multidisciplinary company and as a lead adviser for Natural England throughout the North West of England. She has a range of demonstrable skills relating to professional bat work throughout England and Wales, including building and tree surveys, assessments and judgements of value in relation to bats, as well as selection and monitoring of mitigation features.

[www.ecologyservice.co.uk](http://www.ecologyservice.co.uk)

Ecology Services UK Limited

Chipping | Lancashire | PR3 2GH

T 01995 61492 E [info@ecologyservice.co.uk](mailto:info@ecologyservice.co.uk)

Registered in England and Wales no. 5329675

Pat and Janette meet the requirements for knowledge, skills and practical experience as outlined in the CIEEM technical guidance (Chartered Institute for Ecology and Environmental Management (2013) Competencies for Species Survey: Bats. CIEEM, Winchester, Hants).

## 1.1 Advisory Note

The information in this letter represents the professional opinion of an ecological consultancy and does not constitute professional legal advice. You may wish to seek professional legal interpretation of the wildlife legislation associated with this area of work.

The information, opinion and advice that Ecology Services UK Ltd has prepared are true, and have been prepared in accordance with the CIEEM Code of Professional Conduct. Ecology Services UK Ltd confirms that the opinions expressed are our true professional bone fide opinions.

Ecology surveys are time-limited; as a rule survey findings can generally be relied on for the season in which surveys took place. However, mobile species such as bats and birds may increase or decrease in numbers and change behaviours over time. Statutory agencies will often accept survey results for 12-18 months, but this varies around the country.

Ecology Services UK Ltd personnel make a professional judgement as to how long the results of our surveys will remain current. Advice and recommendations as regards currency and its impacts on decision making are included in relevant sections below.

## 2.0 Methodology

In order to assess the likelihood of bats being present at the building, a daytime inspection of the building and its surroundings was carried out on 16<sup>th</sup> November 2022.

Observations were made from ground level, as well as from telescopic ladders, to examine potential roost features. A Ridgid CA300 endoscope was available but not required during the survey. A Coast HP 10R 1000 lumens torch and close-focussing Zeiss Victory FL 8x42 binoculars were also used as aids to visibility.

The survey was compliant with the current best practice guidance, as detailed in Collins, J. (ed.) (2016) Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines (3rd edn). The Bat Conservation Trust, London.

## 2.1 Limitations

It is recognised that limiting the survey to a single visit in November does not take account of bat activity on the site through the active season (April to October) or at other times of the year.

The presence and behaviour of species, especially mobile species such as bats and birds, can change over time. Ecology surveys are therefore always time-limited in their currency.

Not all of the roof could be examined in detail due to the height of the building and the associated measures required for a safe inspection. However, all of the internal and external roof coverings were visible through binoculars at ground level, and this enabled an assessment to be made in relation to potential roosting areas for bats.

## 3.0 Results of the Survey

The barn building is used for vehicle and machinery storage, a workshop area and for stabling horses.

The building comprises a steel and timber framed agricultural barn with adjoining stables on the north and south elevations. The roof is corrugated asbestos sheeting with plastic sheet roof lights. The lower walls are block and the upper walls are a mix of plastic and asbestos sheets. There are no roof voids, the roof is unlined and there are no suitable dark sheltered spaces for use by roosting bats. The only potential roost feature found is a cavity feature associated with the overlapping sheet coverings on the upper walls, located on the west elevation. This cavity was fully inspected during the survey.

Two unoccupied pigeon nests and 1 unoccupied swallow nest were found inside the main barn, Numerous swallow droppings and an old bird nest were found inside the stable block to the north.

All parts of the building are accessible for use by birds at any time of the year and particularly for nesting birds during the main breeding period (February to September).

### Habitats and surroundings

The proposed development site is within an agricultural landscape on the edge of the village of Aspull. There are residential dwellings, other farm buildings and open fields, managed predominately for pasture with connecting hedgerows. Borsdane Woods, a Local Nature Reserve and substantial block of broadleaved woodland, lies immediately to the west. These landscape features provide potential shelter and foraging resources for use by bat and bird populations in the immediate and wider surroundings.

## Bats

No bats or evidence of bats was found during the daytime inspection.

Potential roosting features for bats are:

### Night roosting

Low potential – parts of the building are accessible for use by night roosting bats

### Day roosting

Low potential – cavity feature associated with overlapping sheet walls

### Hibernation roosting

Negligible potential – there are no suitable hibernation features

The assessment above reflects the condition of the features and their environment. It is the professional judgement of Ecology Services UK Ltd that no further surveys are warranted at this time.

## Nesting birds

An unidentified bird nest, two pigeon nests and an old swallow nest were found during the survey.

Swallow droppings were frequent throughout, particularly within the stables on the north elevation

There is high potential for nesting birds to utilise the building during the nesting season (February to September).

#### 4.0 Advice and Recommendations

##### 4.1 Bats

Protected Species	Impacts, Issues & Rationale	Action Required
Bats	<p>There are no known impacts to bat roosts as a result of the proposed works.</p> <p>It is advised that there are potential roost features suitable for bats associated with external gaps between overlapping sheet walls. In this location and landscape setting, these features have low potential for bats to use throughout the bat active season (April to October).</p> <p>All bat species and bat roosts are afforded full protection under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) and the Conservation of Habitats and Species (Amendment) (EU Exit) Regulations 2019</p>	<p>Advice (mitigation): All personnel involved in proposed works should be carefully by an advised about bats, by a suitably experienced Ecologist, so that all works are undertaken with a clear understanding about legal aspects, precautions to be adopted and what to do if a bat is found. Prior to development.</p> <p>Advice (mitigation): As a precaution, a pre-commencement inspection by a suitably qualified Ecologist should be carried out immediately prior any work affecting the sheet wall coverings. Any removal of wall covering with overlapping features should be done carefully by hand. Prior to and During work.</p> <p>Advice (mitigation): If bats are found at any time during the development, work must stop until advice has been sought from an appropriately experienced Ecologist. If the work affects bats, a licence may be required and suitable mitigation put in place. At all times.</p>

Table 1 Bats

## 4.2 Nesting birds

Protected species	Impacts, Issues & Rationale	Action Required
<p>Nesting birds</p>	<p>There are predicted impacts (disturbance, damage and destruction) to nesting birds, nests and eggs as a result of the proposed works.</p> <p>It is advised that there is high potential for birds to be nesting within the barn during the bird nesting season (February to September).</p> <p>Under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended), wild birds are protected from being killed, injured or captured, while their nests and eggs are protected from being damaged, destroyed or taken.</p> <p>There is no provision under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) for licensing the disturbance of nesting birds or the destruction of nests which are in use for the purpose of development.</p> <p>If enforcement action were taken the developer would need to rely on the 'incidental result of an otherwise lawful operation' defence if it were not possible to avoid an offence being committed. This defence can only be tested in court and it is therefore important to ensure all possible mechanisms for avoiding an offence are considered.</p>	<p>Advice (mitigation): It is advised that the most appropriate way to address the risk to nesting birds is:</p> <p>Avoid disturbance to the building during the nesting season.</p> <p>Or</p> <p>If works cannot be delayed, the proposed work area should be carefully checked, immediately prior to works commencing. Checks should be carried out by a suitably experienced ecologist. If the risk of nesting birds remains, then monitoring for nesting bird activity should continue for the duration of works. Prior to any work commencing (checks) and throughout works in nesting season (monitoring).</p> <p>Advice (mitigation):</p> <p>If works are to be undertaken during the nesting season, all people working at the proposed development site should attend a toolbox talk delivered by an appropriately experienced person, to be made aware of the likelihood of encountering nesting birds and how to identify them, the legal protection of nesting birds and their own responsibilities as regards implementation of precautionary measures. Prior to any work commencing.</p> <p>Advice (mitigation):</p> <p>If birds are found to be nesting within or in close proximity to the work area during proposed works, it will be necessary to stop and establish an exclusion area. The extent of the exclusion area, which should be determined by a suitably experienced ecologist, will depend on the bird species and the nature of the proposed works.</p> <p>At all times.</p>

Protected species	Impacts, Issues & Rationale	Action Required
Nesting birds continued		<b>Protection and Enhancement:</b> Swallow nest cups will be installed within an adjacent farm building. This will help to maintain and offset nesting provision for swallows following barn refurbishment. A minimum of 4 nesting cups are recommended. <b>At all times</b>

**Table 2 Nesting Birds**

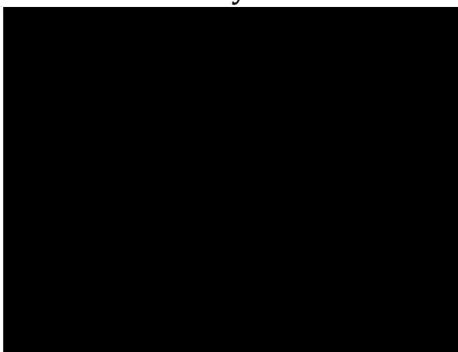
Compliance with the actions outlined in the Tables above will help to avoid committing offences in relation to protected species (bats and nesting birds).

Precautionary measures such as those listed above are generally regarded by Statutory Bodies, Local Planning Authorities and Professional Ecologists as being appropriate where there is a risk of protected species (i.e. bats and nesting birds) being present but further investigative surveys are not required prior to development works.

For this site, it is recommended that if proposed works are not undertaken before May 2023, advice should be sought as to the need for further surveys at that time.

If you require any further ecological advice or guidance in relation to the proposed works, please do not hesitate to contact me

Yours sincerely





View of the barn building showing west and south elevation



View of overlapping external sheet walls. The overlap creates a small dark cavity with low potential for use by bats





Internal view of main barn showing steel frame, open light conditions and lack of dark sheltered spaces suitable for use by roosting bats



Unoccupied swallow nest



View of stable units to the north showing extensive natural light spillage and lack of potential bat roost features



Old bird nest inside wall vent ledge inside stable block



Pigeon nest found in main barn



View of surroundings showing farm fields with Borsdane Wood in background