

Barn Owl Assessment Bat Roost Assessment

Gods House Farm
Ardleigh
Colchester
Essex

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Ref 0213/23

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Report Approved
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Patrick K McKenna BSc (Hons), M.C.I.E.E.M
Company Director

25 Nayland Road, Bures, Suffolk CO8 5BX

Company no: 5553720 VAT Reg. No: 980 8484 75

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Appendix 1 – Hybrid Ecology Bat Roost Assessment

1. Summary

- 1.1 Eco-Planning UK Ltd received instruction to complete a Bat Roost Assessment and Barn Owl Assessment of 2 x farm buildings at Gods House Farm, Ardleigh in Colchester, Essex.
- 1.2 The Assessments and this associated report will be part of a planning application that will be submitted to the Local Planning Authority, seeking planning consent for development of the 2 x survey buildings.
- 1.3 The Assessments were completed on the 19th May 2023. Access was available to all parts of the relevant 2 x buildings.
- 1.4 From the on-site Barn Owl Assessment it was determined that: -
 - There is no roosting Barn Owl presence or roosting use of either of the 2 x survey buildings.
 - There is no existing or past Barn Owl nesting site in either of the 2 x survey buildings.
 - There is no recent or historic Barn Owl field signs in either of the 2 x survey buildings.
 - No further Barn Owl survey efforts are required – there are no Barn Owl constraints to the development of the two buildings.
- 1.5 From the on-site Bat Assessments it was determined that: -
 - The 2 x buildings had no existing bat presence or indicative field sign of past bat use.
 - The 2 buildings have negligible bat roost suitability, no further bat assessments or survey efforts are required.
- 1.7 The local authority will have been provided with all relevant Bat and Barn Owl Assessment information in relation to this proposed development.

2. Introduction

- 2.1 The National Planning Policy Framework continues to require that on-site biodiversity/conservation is given full consideration at the time of a planning development application submission.
- 2.2 For any planning application for this site the Local Planning Authority would be acting in a reasonable and responsible manner under the legislation by requesting that the planning applicant completes a suitable ecological assessment and prepares/submits a subsequent report, if the Authority believes a habitat or species could be threatened by the proposed development.
- 2.3 The Barn Owl Assessment and this report address all relevant Barn Owl concerns the local planning authority may have in relation to this proposed development of the relevant 2 x buildings.
- 2.4 The Bat Assessment confirmed that the 2 x buildings had no bat presence and no bat potential – they do not require any further bat survey efforts.
- 2.5 The local authority has been provided with all relevant Bat Assessment information in relation to this proposed development.

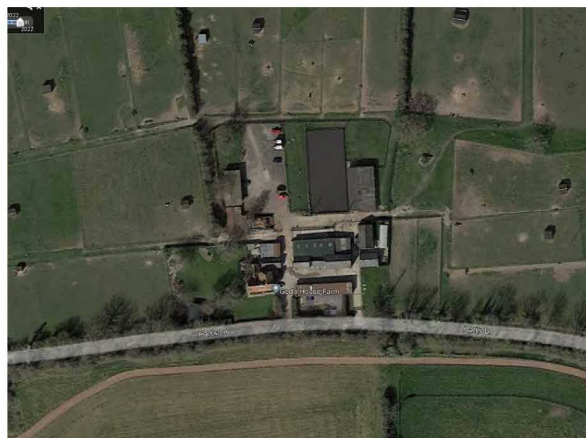
3. Site Assessment

3.1. The proposed development is for 2 x agricultural buildings at Gods House Farm - Ardleigh, shown as buildings numbered 2 and 3 on the Photograph 1 – below. Originally the proposed development was for the 3 x buildings but has since been changed for just buildings 2 and 3.



Photograph 1

3.2 The 2 x now relevant buildings are part of the wider Gods House Farm yard, to the north, east, and west are equine grazing paddocks, to the south over the carriage way are further paddocks and orchard area (Photograph 2).



Photograph 2

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- 3.3 Building 3 is a former calving barn now used for machinery and material storage (Photograph 3). It is open to the southern end and receives daylight through the windows to the right flank.
- 3.4 Barn Owl roosting cross beams and potential nesting sites are limited and of low suitability.



Photograph 3

- 3.5 Building 2 (Photograph 4) the former milking parlour is again well illuminated with daylight and electrical lights for night time use. The building is again open to the roofing corrugated sheets. There are several perching beams and possible roof apex nest sites. The building is in constant equine use



Photograph 4

- 3.6 Building 1 is used for storage and occasional equine stabling. This building is not part of the planning application.

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4. Barn Owl Assessment

- 4.1 The Barn Owl is protected under Schedule 1 and Schedule 9 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981. It is therefore an offence to injure, kill or capture the bird, to disturb nesting birds, to take eggs, and to release captive owls into the wild without a licence. The Barn Owl is also recognised by the UK Biodiversity Group as a “Species of Conservation Concern”.
- 4.2 Any Barn Owl roost or nest site would require a relevant mitigation strategy/provision as part of the planning application.

Survey Methodology

- 4.3 For each building careful access was made with minimal noise so not to disturb any Barn Owl presence – roosting or at nest.
- 4.4 When it had been determined that no actual owl was present in any part of each building all the buildings floor area, access points and roof spaces were carefully searched/assessed for any Barn Owl field sign see below and Photographs 1 and 2).



Photograph 1



Photograph 1

- Characteristic Barn Owl feathers
- Nest debris – including egg-shell and dead chicks/remains.
- Regurgitated pellets

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- Any prey items/remains.
 - Splashing of excreta on beams and floors - “white washing”
- 4.5 For any potential nest site - the survey efforts were to be suspended and our colleague from Stuart Elsom Ecology – a suitably licensed (Natural England CL29) Barn Owl Ecologist would continue the survey efforts.

Survey Results

- 4.6 Following the survey efforts of the 2 x relevant buildings it can be confirmed that:
- There is no roosting Barn Owl presence or roosting use of either of the 2 x survey buildings.
 - There is no existing or past Barn Owl nesting site in either of the 2 x survey buildings.
 - There is no recent or historic Barn Owl field signs in the 2 x buildings.
 - No further Barn Owl survey efforts are required – there are no Barn Owl constraints to the development of the 2 x buildings.

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5. Bat Roost Assessment

- 5.1 All bat species in Britain are protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 through inclusion on Schedule 5. They are also protected under the Conservation (Natural Habitats &c.) Regulations 1994 (which were issued under the European Communities Act 1972), through inclusion on Schedule 2. On 1st November 2017, these Regulations, together with subsequent amendments, were consolidated into the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017.
- 5.2 European protected animal species and their breeding sites or resting places are protected under Regulation 39. It is an offence for anyone to deliberately capture, injure or kill any such animal or to deliberately take or destroy their eggs. It is an offence to damage or destroy a breeding or resting place of such an animal. It is also an offence to have in one's possession or control any live or dead European protected species.
- 5.3 The threshold above which a person will commit the offence of deliberately disturbing a wild animal of a European protected species has been raised. Now, a person will commit an offence only if he deliberately disturbs such animals in a way as to be likely significantly to affect (a) the ability of any significant groups of animals of that species to survive, breed, or rear or nurture their young, or (b) the local distribution of abundance of that species. However, please note that the existing offences under the Wildlife and Countryside Act (1981) as amended which cover obstruction of places used for shelter or protection (for example, a bat roost), disturbance and sale still apply to European protected species.
- 5.4 This legislation provides defences so that necessary operations may be carried out in places used by bats, provided the appropriate Statutory Nature Conservation Organisation (in England this is Natural England) is notified and allowed a reasonable time to advise on whether the proposed operation should be carried out and, if so, the approach to be used. The UK is a signatory to the Agreement on the Conservation of Bats in Europe, set up under the Bonn Convention. The Fundamental Obligations of Article III of this Agreement require the protection of all bats and their habitats, including the identification and protection from damage or disturbance of important feeding areas for bats.
- 5.5 Paragraph 98 of Circular 06/2005 states that *'the presence of a protected species is a material consideration when a planning authority is considering a*

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development proposal that, if carried out, would be likely to result in harm to the species or its habitat’.

- 5.6 The revised National Planning Policy Framework 2019 (NPPF) continues to require that the planning system should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by minimising impacts on and providing net gains for biodiversity....’
- 5.7 Since August 2007, building development that affects bats or their roosts needs a Protected Species License under The Conservation (Natural Habitats &c.) (Amendment) Regulations 2007 administered in England by Natural England.
- 5.7 With such legislative value and conservation value a bat roost assessment is required of the 2 x relevant buildings on the survey site.
- 5.8 Bat Assessment support was provided by our colleagues at Hybrid Ecology during our site visit surveys. Their full report is provided in Appendix 1.
- 5.9 We have extracted and summarized the survey results below for the 2 x relevant buildings : -

Building 2: Old Milking Parlour

“This is a disused building with timber frame, blockwork walls and a pitched asbestos roof. Fascias are timber and all appear to be well-sealed. There are no gaps around the block work and no ingress opportunities around the asbestos roof”.

“Bat roost suitability: Negligible. Further surveys are not required”.

Building 3: Old Calving Building

“This is a large storage building with blockwork walls and asymmetric asbestos roof. Cavity walls are present to the north and west. It is open to the south and there are open windows to the east, therefore internal conditions are cold and draughty. There is a modern stable block adjoining the western aspect”.

“Bat roost suitability: Negligible. Further surveys are not required”.

6. Conclusion

6.1 Eco-Planning UK Ltd received instruction to complete a Bat Roost Assessment and Barn Owl Assessment of 2 x farm buildings at Gods House Farm, Ardleigh in Colchester, Essex

6.2 From the on-site Barn Owl Assessment it was determined that: -

- There is no roosting Barn Owl presence or roosting use of either of the 2 x survey buildings.
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- No further Barn Owl survey efforts are required – there are no Barn Owl constraints to the development of the two buildings.

6.2 From the on-site Bat Assessments it was determined that: -

- The 2 x buildings had no existing bat presence or indicative field sign of past bat use.
- The 2 x buildings have negligible bat roost suitability, no further bat assessments or survey efforts are required.

6.3 The local authority will have been provided with all relevant Bat and Barn Owl Assessment information in relation to this proposed development.