

BAT SURVEY REPORT

Preliminary Bat Roost Assessment & Owl Survey
The Barn, Warlands Farm, Shalfleet, Isle of Wight

Mr E. Turney, and Ms E Healy

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1 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1.1 E3S Consulting Ltd (E3S) conducted a Preliminary Roost Assessment (PRA) and barn owl survey on a barn at Warlands Farm, Shalfleet, Isle of Wight, in advance of conversion works.
- 1.1.2 A full exterior and interior inspection of the building was undertaken and found no evidence of bats having used the building.
- 1.1.3 The building is constructed of a tin roof, stone, brick, and timber with few voids. The PRA concludes that no further surveys are required due to the building having **negligible** roost suitability.

2 INTRODUCTION

2.1 Project Background

- 2.1.1 E3S Consulting Ltd (E3S) have been engaged by Mr E. Turney, and Ms E. Healy (the client) to conduct a PRA prior to conversion works at The Barn at Warlands Farm, Shalfleet, Isle of Wight (The Site).
- 2.1.2 A site location plan is provided as **Figure 1** of this report.

2.2 Limitations and Disclaimers

- 2.2.1 This report takes no account of seasonal variation or fluctuations in the presence of any protected species that might take up residence following this report. Lack of signs of a particular species does not confirm absence, merely that there was no indication of its presence at the time of survey. This survey does not constitute a full site assessment for Protected Species (only bats) or invasive species such as Japanese Knotweed. A search for the presence of Tree Preservation Orders (TPOs) on site has not been undertaken. Should the proposed development not be underway within 24 months of the date of issue of this report, it is strongly recommended that the assessment be repeated.
- 2.2.2 E3S accept no responsibility of whatever nature to third parties to whom this report, or any part thereof, is made known. Any such party relies on the report wholly at its own risk.
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3 LEGISLATION

- 3.1.1 All British bat species receive legal protection in the United Kingdom. The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (WCA) (as amended) transposes into UK law the Convention on the Conservation of European Wildlife and Natural Habitats (Bern Convention). The 1981 Act was recently amended by the Countryside and Rights of Way (CROW) Act 2000 and the more recent Habitats Regulations amendments (2017). All British bat species are listed under Schedule 5 of the 1981 Act, and is therefore subject to the provisions of Section 9, which makes it an offence to:
 - Intentionally kill, injure or take a bat [Section 9(1)];
 - Possess or control any live or dead specimen or anything derived from a bat [Section 9(2)];
 - Intentionally or recklessly disturb a bat while it is occupying a structure or place which it uses for shelter or protection [Section 9(4)(b)];
 - Intentionally or recklessly obstruct access to any structure or place which a bat uses for shelter or protection [Section 9(4)(c)]; and
 - Sell, offer for sale, possess or transport for the purpose of sale or publish advertisements to buy or sell a bat [section 9(5)].

3.1.2 Bats are also included on Annex IV of Council Directive 92/43/EEC of 21 May 1992 on the Conservation of Natural Habitats and of Wild Fauna and Flora (known as the Habitats Directive). As a result of the UK ratifying this directive, all British bats are protected under The Conservation Regulations 1994 (the Habitat Regulations) (as amended 2007). Annex IV of the Habitats Directive requires member states to construct a system of protection as outlined in Article 12, this is done through Schedule 2 of the Regulations whereby Regulation 39 makes it an offence to:

- Deliberately capture or kill a bat [Regulation 39(1)(a)];
- Deliberately disturb a bat in such a way as to be likely to significantly affect i) the ability of any significant group of that species to survive, breed, rear, or nurture their young OR ii) the local distribution of that species [Regulation 39(1)(b)]; and
- Damage or destroy a breeding site or resting place of a bat [Regulation 39(1)(d)].

3.1.3 Under the law, a roost is any structure or place used for shelter or protection. This could be any structure e.g., any building or mature tree. Bats use many roost sites and feeding areas throughout the year. These vary according to bat age, condition, sex, and species as well as seasonality and weather. Since bats tend to reuse the same roosts for generations, the roost is protected whether the bats are present or not.

3.2 BARN OWLS

3.2.1 Barn Owls are listed on Schedule 1 of the Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981 (as amended), and therefore offences involving their nests, eggs or dependent young are subject to special penalties.

3.2.2 Barn Owl ranges can be up to 5,000ha in winter, but are smaller in summer (around 350ha) when food is more plentiful. Within that range a pair will use one or two nest sites and one to three roost sites, and potentially several other occasional roosts where limited signs of occupation will be present. Barn Owl ranges overlap, and so different pairs may use the same occasional roosts.

3.2.3 Barn Owls generally hunt at dusk and dawn, and prefer open rough grassland where prey such as voles, mice and shrews are abundant

4 PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

4.1.1 It is understood that the proposed works are for the conversion of the existing barn into an accommodation unit.

5 SCOPE OF WORKS

5.1.1 The scope of works relating to bats consisted of the following;

- Undertake a PRA as detailed in Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines (Collins 2016) with a full external and where possible, internal inspection of the building associated with the proposals regarding bats;
- Identify any physical evidence of bat activity;
- Determine the building's potential to support bats; and
- Undertake emergence surveys as/if required to determine likely presence/absence.

6 METHODOLOGY

6.1.1 The assessment work summarised in this report was undertaken by John Owen of E3S (NE Class license number 2021-55580-CLS-CLS), an experienced and trained bat surveyor with over 10 years' experience.

6.1.2 The PRA was undertaken on site as detailed in section 7.

7 PRELIMINARY BAT ROOST ASSESSMENT

- 7.1.1 The PRA was undertaken on the barn building on 13 October 2023 between 10am and 11am.
- 7.1.2 The entire building including its roof were accessible to the surveyor for the inspection.
- 7.1.3 The assessment was undertaken to identify any bats and/or their signs to determine the likelihood of the building supporting them. This information was used to assess the degree to which bats use the building, if it all, and subsequently whether emergence/re-entry survey(s) would be required.
- 7.1.4 The building's exterior was examined from ground level using binoculars and a high-powered torch to look for gaps or other suitable features that bats may use, as well as bats themselves and evidence of use such as droppings and/or feeding remains (e.g., moth wings). Presence of cobwebs often indicates lack of use.
- 7.1.5 There was no roof void in the barn, and no evidence of recent bat activity was found.
- 7.1.6 Any gaps were inspected by the surveyor with an endoscope.
- 7.1.7 The building was subsequently classified by its potential to support bats using the categories developed by the Bat Conservation Trust. The survey was carried out in accordance with Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines (Collins 2016).

7.2 OWL SURVEY

- 7.2.1 The interior of the barn was also surveyed for evidence of use by Barn Owls, such as pellets, feathers and guano, as well as to the potential presence of the owls themselves.

7.3 ASSESSMENT SUMMARY (BATS)

- 7.3.1 The building is a large barn with a lean-to garage on the west end. The building is constructed of Concrete blocks stone and brick, with a sheet tin roof. The building has multiple openings where there are gaps in the structure, and there is no loft void. The roof is not constructed with a membrane or internal skin. All gaps in the tin and wood observed were further inspected, with none leading to a suitable void. The surveyor considered the interior of the building would be too light for favorable roosting of bats, and the lack of a roof void also made the structure sub optimal.
- 7.3.2 The interior was fully accessible to the surveyor who found no evidence of bat use such as recent droppings, feeding remains, or urine splashes indicating no current bat habitation. Furthermore, the roof had no internal structure suitable for a bat roost. (**Figure 3 – photo 2, and 3**).
- 7.3.3 Based on the surveyor's inspection, the building was classified as having **negligible** roost suitability using the methodology developed by Collins (2016). As such, no emergence or re-entry surveys have been recommended.

7.4 ASSESSMENT SUMMARY (OWLS)

- 7.4.1 There was evidence of Barn Owl in the form of pellets and potentially guano. Evidence of Feral Pigeon *Columba livia* was also present. No birds were seen during the internal survey, though a sighting of a single Barn Owl was reported to the project ecologist.

8 CONCLUSIONS

- 8.1.1 A PRA and owl survey has been completed on the building known as the Barn, at Warlands Farm, Shallfleet, Isle of Wight. The assessment was undertaken in accordance with guidance from Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines (Collins 2016).
- 8.1.2 There was no evidence to suggest that bats use the building; the building's bat roost potential has been deemed **negligible** and no further surveys have been recommended.

8.1.3 Barn Owl was seen to be using the building, though there was no evidence of breeding. On this basis the building is considered to be an occasional roost.

9 RECOMMENDATIONS

9.1.1 No further bat surveys will be required on the building prior to works starting.

9.1.2 Work should cease immediately, and the advice of a licensed bat worker should be sought if any bats are discovered unexpectedly during construction works.

9.1.3 A single barn owl box should be installed on a suitable nearby tree with a nesting area and an external exercise ledge included in the design.

9.1.4 The location design and installation can be advised by E3S consulting Ltd or a suitable ecologist..

10 REFERENCES

BCT (2016) Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines Ed; Collins, J (3rd edition);

BS 42020:2013 Biodiversity. Code of practice for planning and development;

HMSO The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010;

HMSO The Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000;

HMSO Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981;

Mitchell-Jones A.J (2004) Bat Mitigation Guidelines. English Nature;

Mitchell-Jones A.J. and McLeish A.P. (2004) The Bat Workers Manual 3rd Edition. Joint Nature Conservation Committee.

Appendix 1 Site Location plan



Appendix 2 The site



Appendix 3 Site photographs
Photo 1 The exterior of the barn



Photo 2 The exterior/ interior of the garage on the right hand side of the barn



Photo 3 the floor of the barn showing evidence of barn owl roosting



Photo 4 The interior of the roof of the barn

