# BAT & BIRD SURVEY

Stable Building at Trapp Lane, Read

By

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On the Instructions of

**Craven Design Partnership**

# BAT & BIRD SURVEY

## Instructions

Investigate for the presence or absence of bat and bird species with reference to a planning application for the demolition and rebuilding of existing stable buildings.

## Professional responsibility

This report reflects my objective opinion of the facts found in relation to the instruction received and information available based upon the methodology, assumptions and constraints detailed within this report.

## Accuracy of report

This report has been compiled based on the methodology as detailed and the professional experience of the surveyor. Whilst the report reflects the situation found as accurately as possible, bats and birds are wild and can move freely from site to site. Their presence or absence detailed in this report does not entirely preclude the possibility of a different past, current or future use of the site surveyed.

I would ask all clients acting upon the contents of this report to show due diligence when undertaking work on their site and/or in their interaction with bat species and birds. If bats or Barn owls are found during a work programme and continuing the work programme could result in their disturbance, injury or death either directly or indirectly then an offence may be committed.

Bats may only be disturbed, captured or killed or their roosts destroyed under license. This report does not convey the authority to undertake work which may disturb, capture or kill bats of any species or destroy their roosts.

**If in doubt, stop work and seek further professional advice.**

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# 1 Introduction

## 1.1 Site Description

The building surveyed consists of a single storey block built stable building with block partition walls and profile sheet metal roof panels set on a timber frame. The external walls are smooth rendered, the building is in reasonable condition and set in a rural location to the North-west of Padiham.

***Plan View of the Site***


## 1.2 Proposed Works

It is proposed to demolish the existing building and rebuild a new stable block on the same site.

## 1.3 Aims of Study

To ensure that the proposed work does not affect any bat species which is listed under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010 which implements the EC Directive 92/43/EEC in the United Kingdom, the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) and the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000.

The survey will:-

- ⇒ Identify the past and/or current use of the site by bat species
- ⇒ Assess the potential of the building with regard to bat species
- ⇒ Assess the likely impact of the proposed development on these species

⇒ Provide a basis upon which to propose mitigation (if required) for bat species affected by the development

To ensure the proposed development does not affect Barn owls or other birds as it is an offence under Schedule 1 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) to

⇒ Kill or injure a Barn owl

⇒ Disturbing the dependent young of a Barn owl

⇒ Intentionally or recklessly disturb any Barn owl whilst building a nest or is in, on or near an active nest site.

⇒ Damaging or destroy any active nest site with eggs or young or before eggs are laid

# 2 Methodology

## 2.1 Desk Study

⇒ Likely bat roosting and feeding sites adjacent to the site were identified from aerial photography at 1:5000 scale. This allows us to determine likely commuting routes into and off the site.

⇒ A search was made of the records of the records of the National Biodiversity Network (NBN), in order to establish the species of bat that may be found in the local area.

⇒ A records search was made of the National Biodiversity Network (NBN) for Barn Owl records in the area around the site.

## 2.2 Field Survey

### 2.2.1 Methodology

⇒ Field assessment of adjacent bat feeding and roosting sites made following a review of aerial photography. This allows us to cross check our interpretation of aerial photography with actual habitat on the ground.

⇒ Inspection of the walls and eaves using a torch and binoculars to locate potential bat roosts

⇒ Inspection of the roof panels, using a torch and binoculars to locate potential bat roosts.

⇒ Search of walls, sills, doors and items stored close to and inside the building for the presence of bat droppings deposited as bats fly inside the building or as they exit and enter their roosts to forage.

⇒ Search of building interior for bats or signs of bats such as droppings, insect remains, staining, grease or scratch marks on beams.

⇒ Search for detritus associated with bat feeding perches and roosts: - These roosts are usually associated with Brown Long-eared *(Plecotus auritus)* bats inside buildings, in roof voids and under eaves.

⇒ Search for debris associated with use of the building by Barn owls including pellets, "white wash" on beams, feathers, down and chick remains which would be indicative of nesting activity.

⇒ Search for the nests or roosts of other bird species.

### 2.2.2 *Timing*

A thorough site inspection was carried out during the hours of daylight on 29th October 2014.

### 2.2.3 *Weather conditions*

Weather conditions can have a big impact on the results of a bat activity survey but they are less relevant for a site inspection. At this site, the weather at the time of the survey was clear and cold.

### 2.2.4 *Personnel*

The survey was carried out by:-

1. Gail Armstrong, Natural England Class Licence CL16 and CL18 (CLS02751) Natural England

## 3 *Results*

### 3.1 *Desk Study/Prior information*

There are historic records (<1984) for Barn owls in the area around the site on the NBN. The habitat at the site appears suitable for hunting barn owls at some times of year.

There are records for up to five bat species (*Myotis daubentonii, Myotis mystacinus/brandtii, Pipistrellus pipistrellus, Plecotus auritus*) in the 10km square that contains the site on the NBN.

### 3.2 *Field Survey*

#### 3.2.1 *Habitat Description*

The building is situated in a rural location at an elevation of 180m approximately 1km to the North-west of Padiham. It is a long, block built stable with a metal roof. To the immediate South of the building is an area of hard standing.

Surrounding the building are grazed pasture fields; some boundaries are high hedgerows and/or tree lines. There are several small woodland areas close to the site and connectivity between them and the site is good.

A satellite image of the surrounding habitat is shown overleaf.

## Satellite Image of site and surrounding area

### *3.2.2 Bat Roost Survey*

The walls of the building are constructed from blocks in a single layer and there are no gaps or crevices formed that bats could use for roosting. All the internal stable partition walls are also single block and do not reach to the roof.

The roof was inspected externally and internally using a combination of close focus binoculars and a high powered torch. The thin roof panels sit lightly on the walls and seem not to provide shelter along the wall tops. The panels themselves do not overlap or form any crevices that would be suitable for bats. The timber frame is modern and exposed internally and does not form any sheltered crevices.

An external inspection of all areas of the building was made to look for signs of bats such as droppings, grease or scratch marks. No bat droppings or other signs of bats were found on the walls, sills or on the ground close to the building.

The interior of the building was accessed to search for bats or evidence of bats such as droppings, insect remains, grease or scratch marks on beams etc. The interior walls are in good condition except for isolated areas low down where there was damage, presumably due to horse's hooves.

### *3.2.3 Barn owls & Other Birds*

There is some "white wash" on the walls of the building which were thought to have been deposited by jackdaws or magpies. No bird nests were found inside the building.

No owl pellets were found inside the building, there were no signs of a nest and no downy feathers which would suggest that a nest had been present.

It is judged that the building has not been used by barn owls and there was nothing to

suggest nesting had occurred at the site.

# 4 Assessment

## 4.1 Constraints

The survey was carried out in October when bats have started to move to their hibernation sites and as such, it is carried out as a scoping survey ore risk assessment only.

Some parts of the stable were not accessible due to locked doors but could be viewed under and/or over partition walls and doors.

## 4.2 Interpretation

### 4.2.1 Presence/ absence

There was no evidence of intensive, longstanding or regular use of the site by roosting bats. There was no evidence inside the building of void dwelling bats such as long-eared bats.

No secure and sheltered roost sites could be found inside or outside the building due to the lack of suitable crevices and dark voids. There is thought to be negligible potential for bat species to roost at the site.

When assessed in context with the surrounding habitat, abundance of other buildings in the locality and local bat populations, it is concluded that the barn is likely to be of very low significance for bats.

### 4.2.2 Population size class assessment

The building is unlikely to be used by bats as a regular roost.

### 4.2.3 Site status assessment

Bats of several species are likely to use the surrounding landscape for foraging. However, bats are unlikely to use the building for roosting and it is likely that the site has a very low significance for bat species.

## 4.3 Potential Impacts

### 4.3.1 Bat Roosts

#### *4.3.1.1Pre and mid-activity impacts*

There is negligible potential for bats to roost in the building and so little potential for the loss or alteration of roost sites during the demolition. There is negligible potential for a disturbance to roosting bats when work begins.

#### *4.3.1.2Long term impacts*

There is little chance of any long term impact on bat species from the proposal to demolish the building.

#### *4.3.1.3Post activity interference impacts*

No post activity interference impacts are predicted at the site.

#### *4.3.1.4Other impacts*

It is our opinion that there will be no significant other negative impacts relating to the proposed work which may affect bat species.

### 4.3.2 *Bat Foraging and Commuting Habitat*

There is unlikely to be a disruption to commuting routes at the site. The potential commuting routes that were noted at the site will not be affected by the development.

There is unlikely to be disturbance to feeding bats as it is judged that foraging areas close to the site will be unaffected by the proposed work.

### 4.3.3 *Barn Owls and Other Birds*

There is unlikely to be any loss of roost sites for Barn owls resulting from the development.

There is unlikely to be any impact on other nesting birds from the proposals.

## 4.4 *Legislation and Policy Guidance*

### 4.4.1 *Legislative context*

All bat species are protected under Section 39 of Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010, the 1981 Wildlife and Countryside Act (as amended) and the 2000 Countryside and Rights of Way Act.

Annex IV of the *Council Directive 92/43/EEC 1992 on the Conservation of Natural Habitats and of Wild Fauna and Flora* (EC Habitats Directive) lists animal and plant species of Community interest in need of strict protection; this includes all bat species.

In the UK, the EC Habitats Directive has been transposed into national laws by means of Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010. These are commonly and collectively known as the 'Habitats Regulations' and they give bats, their breeding sites and resting places a high level of strict protection.

In summary, it is a **criminal offence** to:

- ⇒ capture or kill a bat;
- ⇒ disturb a bat whilst in a place of shelter or rest; or
- ⇒ damage or destroy a bat's breeding site or resting place.

The breeding sites and resting places of bats are usually known as **'roosts'** and resting places also include, for example, feeding perches where a bat consumes its prey. **Bat roosts are protected even when bats are not present.**

Prosecution could result in imprisonment, fines of £5,000 per animal affected and confiscation of vehicles and equipment used.

There is negligible potential for use of the building by bats but nevertheless all contractors should be instructed to work with care and should be aware of the procedures to be followed if bats are found during works. Project Managers must commission surveys and expert advice as required to minimise the risk of reckless harm to bats.

Natural England advises that, if possible, any works at bat roosts should be undertaken so as not to affect the bats and/or their roosts. Bats close to this site are unlikely to roost in the building scheduled for demolition.

#### 4.4.2 *Planning policy context*

Planning permission is to be sought to demolish and rebuild a stable in a rural location near Padiham. Government planning policy guidance throughout the UK requires local planning authorities to take account of the conservation of protected species when determining planning applications.

When considering an application which may affect a European protected species on or near the site in question, local planning authorities must consider whether the development will result in a breach of the protection afforded to the species.

**If a breach in the protection afforded by the Habitat Regulations will occur, planning permission may only be granted where the three tests specified in Article 16 of the Directive have first been satisfied.**

No evidence of use by bat species was found at the building during the site survey and it is unlikely that bats use the site for regular roosting.

Planning conditions may be used to ensure that the recommendations of this report (Paragraphs 5.1 and 5.2) are enforced, as recommended in Paragraph 98 of Government Circular 06/2005 (Biodiversity and Geological Conservation - Statutory obligations and their impact within the planning system).

#### 4.4.3 *Biodiversity policy context*

Bats were given legal protection in the UK because of evidence that bat populations have declined significantly in the last century. Local Biodiversity Action Plans (LBAPs) give details of species of local importance. Details of SAPs and LBAPs are available from www.ukbap.org.uk.

In England and Wales, the Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act, 2006 imposes a duty on all public bodies, including local authorities and statutory bodies, in exercising their functions, *"to have due regard, so far as is consistent with the proper exercise of those functions, to the purpose of conserving biodiversity"*.

## 5 *Recommendations and Mitigation*

### 5.1 *Further Survey*

The surveyor has considerable experience of bat surveys at buildings in the area and is confident that the evidence present and survey results obtained enable a robust assessment of this site to be made.

If the recommendations in Paragraph 5.1 and 5.2 are implemented in full, then roosting potential at the site is likely to be enhanced following the development.

It is therefore judged that further surveys at the site will provide no additional information and are not thought to be necessary to support the planning application.

If development has not started at the site within 2 years, then we would suggest a further survey to update these results prior to the commencement of work.

### 5.2 *Mitigation Measures*

#### 5.2.1 *Precautionary Mitigation*

The site survey results indicate there is negligible potential for the occurrence of roosting bats at the site. **Precautionary mitigation** is therefore proposed which will enhance the

status of the site for bats during the redevelopment.

1. All contractors on the site must be made aware of the possible presence of bats prior to the commencement of work. A copy of these recommendations must be available to contractors working on the site.

2. **If bats or bat roosts are found during work, all work must cease.** The site will need to be re-assessed in regard to its use by bats. A Natural England license may be required if continuing work is, on balance, likely to result in the disturbance, killing or injury of bats or the alteration, destruction or obstruction of roost site.

3. If it is necessary to remove a bat to avoid it being harmed, gloves should be worn. It should be carefully caught in a cardboard box and kept in the dark in a quiet place until it can be released at dusk near to where it was found, or moved to an undisturbed part of the building, with outside access, and placed in a location safe from predators.

4. New build provides the opportunity to enhance the status of a site for bats. It is therefore recommended that **four bat boxes** are erected on the exterior walls or, alternatively, on interior walls in open areas of the building that can be accessed by bats. It is also recommended that bat roosts are incorporated into the ridge line of the building. Designs and examples are included at **Appendix 2.** The provision of new roosting potential may benefit bats in the medium to long term.

5. There is no need to restrict the timing of work. Use of the structure by bats is unlikely to occur.

6. If Barn owls are seen nesting in the barn, **all work should cease.** The site will need to be re-assessed in regard to its use by Barn owls. A Natural England license may be required if continuing work is, on balance, likely to result in the disturbance of nesting Barn owls or their killing or injury.

### *5.2.2 Mitigation for Foraging and Commuting Habitat*

No specific mitigation for the foraging and commuting habitat is necessary as the habitat around the site does not change.

## *5.3 Requirement for Habitats Regulations (EPS) Licence*

Following English Nature (Natural England) guidance Mitchell-Jones (2004), if these guidelines are followed we consider that on balance, a disturbance to bat species which could be contrary to the Habitat Regulations 2010 and Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) is unlikely.

At this stage, we judge that the work can be carried out without destroying or altering bat roosts or significantly disturbing bats so long as the recommendations at paragraphs 5.1 and 5.2 of this report are followed. A Natural England license will therefore not be required to cover work on the building.

If bats are disturbed, or evidence of bats is found as a result of work, **all work must cease** as per point 2 above and the site will need to be re-assessed by a suitably qualified person with regard to its use by bats. A **Natural England license** may be required if continuing work is, on balance, likely to result in the disturbance, killing or injury of bats or the alteration,

destruction or obstruction of a roost site.

## 6 *Summary*

Planning permission is sought in order to demolish and rebuild equestrian stables. A bat survey was requested following guidance under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010, the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) and the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000.

A survey has been carried out by a licensed surveyor following a methodology which would determine the likely potential for roosting bats in the building and/or would be likely to find evidence of past or current use of the site by bat species.

The site survey found no evidence of bats in the building during the site survey and negligible potential for bats to roost in the building.

There was no evidence of Barn owls or other birds having nested at the site although there was evidence of roosting by Corvid species (jackdaw or magpie).

Precautionary mitigation and site enhancement has been proposed in order to ensure the welfare and continued presence of bats at the site.

I certify that this report reflects my objective opinion of the facts found in relation to the instruction received and information available based upon the methodology, assumptions and constraints detailed within this report.

Signed

Gail Armstrong

Gail Armstrong
Bat Surveyor
Monday, 03 November 2014

## 7 *References*

Information from the following sources has been used in preparing the survey report.


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## *Appendix 1 Photographs*

Eastern gable and Southern elevation

Western gable

Internal wall

Interior roof panels

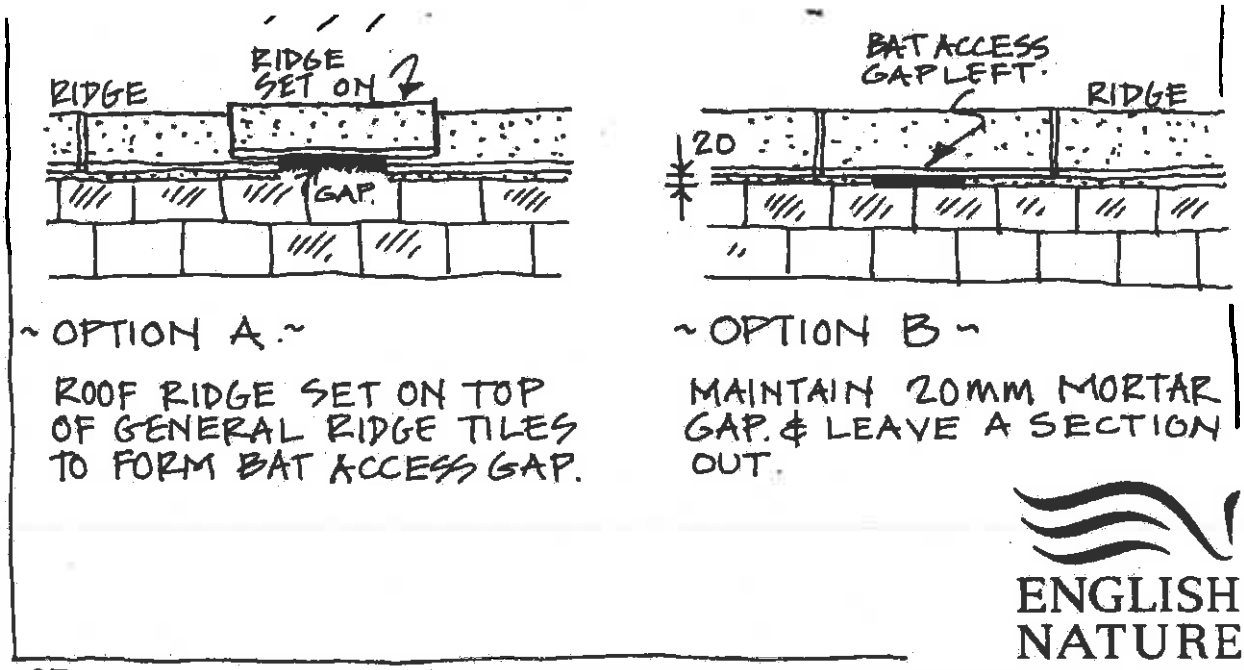
Close up view of exterior door and wall top adjoining roof panels

## *Appendix 2 Roost plans*

Proprietary bat boxes available mail order from WWW.NHBS.COM or most garden centres.

| | |
|---|---|
|  | Box with attractive and obvious design. Built into or onto a wall. |
|  | Attractive custom made bat box to be erected onto a wall |
|  | Crevice bat bix |
|  | "Kent" bat box |

## Roost in Ridge of Building





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