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Harry Roper
Lyme House Farm
Chipping Road
Thornley
Longridge
PR3 2TE

24 May 2017
1815

Job ref: B

Dear Mr Roper

Re: European Protected Species: Barns at Lyme House Farm, Thornley, Longridge, Preston, PR3 2TE.

You have requested a scoping survey (European Protected Species) as a condition of a planning application to Ribble Valley Borough Council (RVBC) for conversion of two existing stone barns into two dwellings.

The Local Planning Authority is required to take account of the impact of a development on protected species in accordance with current planning policy (National Planning Policy Framework). RVBC requires an appraisal of the likely impact of the proposed development on bats and other protected species that are present or likely to be present at the site, in addition to any mitigation and enhancement works that may be necessary.

As a consequence of the historical declines in bat populations during the second half of the twentieth century, all bats and their roosts are protected by UK law. The depletion of natural habitats throughout the UK means that some bat species are now more than ever dependent on houses and other structures as roosting sites. It is this dependence that makes them vulnerable to redevelopments that can result in damage or destruction of a roost, particularly maternity roosts, resulting in negative impacts on a local bat population.

The survey has found no evidence of roosting and perching activity bats at this property. The overall conservation significance of building to protected species is considered relatively low and therefore the impact of the proposed building alterations is unlikely to cause significant disturbance to protected species or result in the loss of a significant bat roost or nesting place for barn owls.

Swallows are likely to roost or nest at the property during the summer and therefore reasonable mitigation measures are required to ensure that nesting birds and their young are fully protected during the nesting season and the loss of nest locations is compensated for by provision of new sites or artificial nest platforms.

The proposed conversion of the barn is unlikely to result in a breach of the Habitats Regulations; building alterations should proceed without a requirement to obtain a mitigation licence (EPSL) or require further surveys.

Please find a copy of the report now attached.

Yours sincerely

David Fisher

European Protected Species - SURVEY REPORT

Barns at Lyme House Farm, Chipping Road, Thornley, Longridge

Date of survey: 19/05/17

Introduction

Since 2008 bats have been included in the list of UK Biodiversity Indicators which aim to show the response of species to the pressures, changes and threats to our natural and built environment. The Local Planning Authority is required to take account of the impact of a development on protected species in accordance with current planning policy (National Planning Policy Framework).

A preliminary roost assessment (daylight scoping survey) was carried on Friday 19 May 2017 by David Fisher, EED Surveys (Licenced surveyor).

Preliminary roost assessments may be undertaken during daylight hours at any time of year and are not dependent on whether bats or wild birds are active at the time of the site visit. The assessment includes a detailed inspection of external and internal features to look for evidence of flight, feeding, perching or other indicative signs of activity associated with roosting bats and other protected species.

Ribble Valley Borough Council requires an appraisal of the likely impact of the proposed development on all bat species and other protected species that are present or likely to be present at the site. The principle aim of the survey is to determine the presence of European Protected Species and to establish whether bats, barn owls and other nesting birds such as barn swallows, swifts and house martins have been active within any part of the building that is likely to be affected by the proposed development.

Where bat roosts are likely to be impacted by the proposed building activities it will be necessary to carry out an impact assessment and design an appropriate mitigation and monitoring strategy with habitat enhancements for bats where appropriate. This information is essential for to inform a planning application or EPS licence application (EPSL) to allow the proposed activities to proceed legally.

Timing of survey / weather conditions

The scoping survey was carried out on Tuesday 19 May 2017 between 11.00 and 12.30.

The weather at the time of the roost assessment was cool, dry and overcast (min. temperature: 12°C, cloud: 100%, wind: light F2, rain: nil) providing satisfactory conditions for this level of survey.

Personnel

The inspection was carried out by David Fisher (EED Surveys) - an ecological consultant with extensive field survey experience of European Protected Species and development issues for 30 years.

The surveyor has held a Natural England licence since 1989 and continues to work as a voluntary bat worker via the Bat Conservation Trust / Natural England.

Current licences held:

Natural England Class Licence WML - A34 - Level 1 (Registration Number: 2015 – 17599-CLS-CLS)

Natural England Class Licence WML - A34 – Level 2 (Registration Number: 2015 – 12106-CLS-CLS)

Aims* of the survey

Collect robust data to provide an assessment of the potential impacts of the proposed development on bat populations and other protected species at the property.

Facilitate the design of mitigation, enhancement and monitoring strategies for bats and all protected species.

Provide a clear assessment of risk to bats and other protected species enabling the Local Planning Authority to reach an informed planning decision.

Assist clients in meeting their statutory obligations.

Facilitate the conservation of bat populations and other protected species.

*Adapted from: 'Defining aims and objectives', p15 BCT Bat Surveys - Good Practice Guidelines,

Survey methodology

The survey methodology is designed to determine the likely presence of bats within the property and does not necessarily prove absence.

The survey protocol requires that a full visual inspection of the property is carried out. The survey aims to cover all internal and external features of the building including any accessible roof voids and out-buildings that are likely to be affected by the proposed works.

The survey methodology follows the recommended guidelines published by the Bat Conservation Trust - *Bat Surveys: Good Practice Guidelines, 2nd Edition, Hundt, L (2012)*, Natural England (*Survey Objectives, Methods and Standards as outlined in the Bat Mitigation Guidelines, 2004*) and Chapter 3 - Survey and Monitoring Methods, (*Bat Worker's Manual, JNCC, Mitchell-Jones AJ and McLeish, AP, 3rd Edition 2004*).

The search was made using a high-powered lamp (*Clu-lite CB2 - 1,000,000 candle power*), close-focussing binoculars (*Leica Trinovid 10 x 32 BN*) and digital camera (*Sony Cyber-shot HX300*) were used to view all likely areas of the building for the presence of bats - ie. droppings and urine spots, bat corpses, bat fly larvae, roost staining or evidence of feeding remains such as discarded moth and butterfly wings or other insects fragments typically found in a perching and feeding area.

Non-invasive survey methods were used to assess the use of the property by protected species.

Survey limitations

Crevice-roosting bat species are able to roost within very narrow gaps, frequently less than 20mm wide; solitary roosting bats are sometimes overlooked during daylight inspections, particularly in situations where bats have gained access within rubble infill walls or beneath roof materials and other structural features.

Evidence of bat activity such as bat droppings, feeding signs and other indicative evidence such as staining on external walls and surfaces is frequently removed by the action of wind and rain; as a cautionary principle it should be assumed that the absence of evidence of bats is not necessarily evidence that bats are not present.

National Biodiversity Network (NBN) and other data sources, whilst indicative of the bat species likely to occur within a 10km-grid square, do not confirm presence or absence of a species or habitat. Local bat records are compiled from a number of reliable sources but may also include unverified public data.

Pre-existing information about the site

There are no local records of bat / wild bird species at this particular location.

EED surveys have been carried out at a number of neighbouring properties in the area in recent years:

(1) House at Arbour Farm (SD 621 409), (2) Wheatley Farm (SD 620 398), (3) Bradley's Farm (SD 623 394). There are no significant records of breeding bats within 1km of the property.

Pre-survey data search (Site location: NGR: SD 623 405)

The pre-survey data search includes the following sources:

- (1) European Protected Species (EPS) - ie. species records of local, regional or national significance.
- (2) National Biodiversity Network (NBN*) terrestrial mammal records (chiroptera).
- (3) Bat records from local sources include:
 - (i) North Yorkshire Bat Group (ii) West Yorkshire Bat Group (iii) East Lancashire Bat Group (iv) EED Surveys (iv) other ecological consultants.
- (4) Interactive maps: *Natureonthemap* (Natural England) and *Magic.gov.uk*.

*National Biodiversity Network (NBN) and other data sources whilst indicative of the bat species likely to occur within a 10km-grid square, do not confirm presence or absence of a species or habitat.

The following bat species are likely to be present within the 10km national grid square: SD 64:

Common name	Scientific name	Local population status
<u>Myotis species</u>	(<i>Myotis sp.</i>)	
Natterer's bat	(<i>Myotis nattereri</i>)*	widespread / common
Whiskered bat / Brandt's bat	(<i>M. mystacinus</i> / <i>M. brandtii</i>) ^{1 *}	under-recorded / common
Whiskered bat	(<i>M. mystacinus</i>)	under-recorded
Brandt's bat	(<i>M. brandtii</i>)	under-recorded
Daubenton's bat	(<i>M. daubentonii</i>) ²	widespread near open water
Brown long-eared bat	(<i>Plecotus auritus</i>)* ²	widespread / locally common
<u>Pipistrelle species</u>	(<i>Pipistrellus sp.</i>) ¹	widespread / common
Common pipistrelle	(<i>Pipistrellus pipistrellus</i>)* ^{1 2}	widespread / common
Soprano pipistrelle	(<i>P. pygmaeus</i>)* ²	widespread / common
Noctule bat	(<i>Nyctalus noctula</i>) ²	widespread / locally common

*NBN data ¹North Yorkshire Bat Group EED surveys²

Location of the property

The property is situated in the Loud valley at an elevation of approximately 100 metres. The site is rural in character and surrounded by agricultural land. Nearby Longridge Fell lies 0.4km east of the farm with ground rising to 350 metres at Spire Hill approximately 3km ENE of the property.

Lyme House Farm is located in Thornley-with-Wheatley mid-way between Longridge and Chipping. The area is located within the boundary of the Forest of Bowland AONB and the administrative district of Ribbles Valley.

There are no significant rivers adjacent to the property, the nearest prominent water channel is the River Loud, a relatively small river watercourse 0.6km west of the farm; there are no large areas of standing open water within 2 km of the site.

The district is not particularly well-wooded. There is no extensive broadleaved woodland, conifer crop or shelter woodland close to the property; the nearest wooded habitat is a small mixed plantation approximately 350 m south-east of the farm. The site location is sub-optimal in terms of connectivity to feeding, foraging and commuting habitat for bats.

There are no specific nature conservation designations immediately adjacent to the property – ie. Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), Biological Heritage Sites (BHS), National Nature Reserves (NNR's), Local Nature reserves (LNR's) or Regionally Important Geological and Geo-morphological Sites (RIGS).

Description of the property

The scope of the survey includes two stone agricultural barns and a single storey garage / workshop as shown in figures 1 to 12:

Garage and workshop 'A' (figures 1 and 2) is a single storey building with natural stone and block construction and duo-pitched slate roof. There are two distinct area separated by a block partition wall. The garage (left) and feed-store (right) are well-sealed and generally secure. External walls are mortar pointed and roof areas well-sealed. The building has been re-roofed with breathable membrane and all roof slates are very secure.

A rear door leads into barn 'B' (figures 2 and 3)

Barn 'B' is a two storey agricultural barn with traditional stone wall construction and a large first floor loft and ground floor animal cubicles. The front elevation has open portal access to the hayloft (figure 3). The building has a 5-bay unlined slate-with-batten roof (figure 7); the loft is currently used for storage of materials, the area is cool, dry and well-ventilated with some natural light. The loft has timber rafters with steel joists.

A ground floor under-croft (figure 8) has concrete floors with 17 no. cubicles and a steel side door (figure 4); the area is dry, cool and well-ventilated; this area has a rear door leading into dilapidated lean-to sheds and an access into the adjoining building (barn 'C') at the rear.

Barn 'C' is an old stone barn (figures 5 and 6) which clearly pre-dates barn 'B'. The two storey building has traditional rubble-infill wall construction with first floor hayloft (figures 10 and 11) and a ground floor shippon area with cubicles (figure 9). There are several glazed and unglazed windows on the front elevation, with two semi-circular hay-forking windows in the loft. The duo-pitched barn roof has rafter-with-purlin construction and is clad with corrugated cement-asbestos sheeting (figure 12).

The building is generally cool, dry and well-ventilated with ample natural light. To the rear of both barns is a dilapidated lean-to shippon and ancillary sheds; the main roof is lined with tongue and groove boarding which has 12 no. glass slip roof lights. This redundant building has suffered considerable ingress of rainwater rendering the building and roof very insecure.

Images: 19/05/17



Figure 1: single storey garage / workshop 'A'



Figure 2: workshop 'A' and barn 'B'



Figure 3: Barn 'B' front elevation



Figure 4:



Figure 5: barn 'C'



Figure 6: Barn 'C'



Figure 7:



Figure 8:



Figure 9:



Figure 10:



Figure 11:



Figure 12:

Proposed works

Conversion of barns 'B' and 'C' to create two separate dwellings. Building 'A' will be converted to an office.

Survey results

Bats

No evidence

There is no evidence of bat droppings, discarded insect prey or other indicative signs of access by roosting bats within any of the buildings.

Barn owls

No evidence

Barn swallows

Some evidence of roosting and nesting activity in both barns and within the dilapidated lean-to structure.

	Bats	Barn owls	Barn swallows
Building 'A'			
Barn 'B'			
Barn 'C'			
Lean-to buildings at rear of barns			

No evidence	Low use	Moderate use	High use
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Evaluation of the results

The barns at Lyme House Farm currently have relatively low conservation value and therefore significant disturbance to roosting bats is unlikely. The proposed works will not result in the loss of a significant bat roost, consequently the building alterations are unlikely to result in breach of the Habitats Regulation and therefore do not require an EPS development licence.

Barn swallows are likely to be present during the spring and summer months in some parts of the property.

Risk of disturbance to bats: **Low risk**

***Minimal:** it is highly unlikely any bat species have been active within any part of these structures.

***Low risk:** there is only low risk of disturbance to solitary bats or small numbers of common and widespread bat species.

Low / moderate risk: caution required; activity of common / rarer species is possible, including the presence of occasional / regular night perching and feeding activity or the presence of small numbers of rarer species (but not a maternity or hibernation site).

Moderate risk: caution required; there is moderate risk of disturbance to common bat species; activity may include the presence of regular / significant feeding perches and signs of feeding, a regularly used day / night roost or a maternity site of a common and widespread species or the likely presence of low numbers of rarer species ('rarer' as defined within the local context).

Moderate / high risk: considerable caution is required; this category may include a maternity site of rarer species.

High risk: considerable / extreme caution is required; there is a significant risk of causing disturbance to roosting bats at this site including large numbers of common species, a maternity site of locally rare or rarest UK species or a significant hibernation site for rare or rarest species; this is likely to be a site meeting the SSSI guidelines.

Table 2: *Based on Guidelines for proportionate mitigation - Bat Mitigation Guidelines (2004) fig. 4, page 39

Risk of disturbance to barn owls:

No risk - There is no risk of disturbing roosting / nesting barn owls at the property.

Risk of disturbance to swallows:

Low / moderate risk - swallows particularly are faithful to the traditional nest sites and will return each spring to the same location. The barns (shown as barns 'A' and 'B') have accessible hay lofts and ground floor under crofts; these are likely to attract roosting swallows as long as the windows and doors remain open.

Summary and recommendations

The proposed development is **unlikely to cause significant disturbance to bats** or result in the loss of a bat roost or cause injury or death of a European Protected Species – (Bats) or result in any significant impact on a local bat population.

The scale of impact of the development at site level on local bat populations is likely to be **minimal / low**.

The proposed building alterations should proceed with reasonable caution and vigilance for the unexpected presence of solitary roosting bats (see Mitigation guidance – Annex 1)

The works should proceed **without a requirement to obtain a development licence (EPSL)** as the proposed development are unlikely to result in a breach of the Habitats Regulations.

The impact on nesting barn owls at this property will be **minimal**.

The impact on barn swallows is likely to be **low / moderate**; if exclusion of roosting and nesting birds is required before building works are carried out, then closure of the building should take place before the end of March to avoid disturbance to nesting birds during the breeding season (April to September).

ANNEX 1**Mitigation guidance – minimising the risks to roosting bats and wild birds**

Mitigation refers to the practices adopted to reduce or remove the risk of disturbance, injury or death of a protected species or damage to a roost. The Bat Mitigation Guidelines (Natural England, 2004) define mitigation as “...measures to protect the bat population from damaging activities and reduce or remove the impact of development”.

Action	Advice / comments
1. Further survey effort at this site	Not required
2. Detailed method statement	Not required
3. Licence requirement (EPSL)	Not required
4. Removal of roofing materials	<p>General recommendation:</p> <p>In the unlikely event of any bats being exposed during the removal of the roof spars, roof slates, ridge slates and timber battens, any operations in those areas should stop until the site has been fully inspected by a qualified person / ecologist.</p> <p>(For further advice - see note 7 below)</p>
5. Accidental exposure of bats	<p>Seek advice immediately.</p> <p>Cover any exposed bats to reduce any further risk of harm. Place the bats in a small dark and very secure box and leave in a cool and quiet place.</p> <p>Wherever possible, building / roofing contractors should try to prevent any bats from flying away in daylight.</p> <p>Call the surveyor for further advice before continuing work in this area, otherwise contact the Bat Conservation Trust's emergency help line.</p>
6. Legal responsibility	The onus lies with the applicant to ensure that no offence will be committed if the development goes ahead, regardless of whether planning permission has been granted.
7. Emergency advice on bats	<p>EED Surveys (David Fisher): 01200 425113 (office) or 07709 225783 (mobile)</p> <p>email: earthworksuk@yahoo.co.uk</p> <p>The Bat Conservation Trust (BCT) provides a bat helpline: 0345 1300 228; in an emergency, BCT will call the nearest volunteer bat worker in your area to arrange a free site visit.</p> <p>www.bats.org.uk email: enquiries@bats.org.uk</p>
8. Barn swallows	All wild birds, their nests and eggs are protected by law; avoid disturbance to nesting birds during the spring / summer breeding season. If exclusion of birds is necessary, the work must be completed before any birds return in spring; not later than the end of March. [Refer to: Mitigation guidance – ANNEX 2]

ANNEX 2

NESTING SWALLOWS – Mitigation guidance

Encouraging barn swallows to nest



Example: artificial nest platform

SCHWEGLER No 10 Swallow nest

New build and barn conversions should aim to accommodate swallows. Design adaptations may include provision of open - portal structures to encourage further nest building activity, particularly in rural or semi-rural locations.

This property is likely to be attractive to roosting and nesting barn swallows.

Barn swallows (*Hirundo rustica*) are likely to be present during the spring and summer at this site. Swallows particularly are faithful to the same sites and will return each spring to the same site. Long-term monitoring of population trends has shown significant declines in parts of the UK.

It is increasingly difficult for barn swallows to find suitable nesting opportunities in buildings. Using artificial nest platforms can encourage swallows and martins to nest under eaves and inside open portal structures such as stables and garages.

The design of the proposed development should aim to provide nesting opportunities for swallows to compensate for the loss of traditional nest sites.

All birds, their nests and eggs are protected by law and it is an offence (with certain exceptions) to intentionally kill, injure or take any wild bird or to intentionally take, damage or destroy the nest of any wild bird while it is in use or being built.

If exclusion of nesting / roosting swallows is required before building works are carried out, the closure of the buildings **must take place during before the end of March.**

ANNEX 3 - Wildlife legislation – Bats and the law

All bat species in the UK receive full protection under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (amended by the Environment Protection Act 1990). The Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 amends the Wildlife and Countryside Act to also make it an offence to intentionally or recklessly damage, destroy or obstruct a place that bats use for shelter or protection. All species of bats are listed on Schedule 5 of the 1981 Act, which makes it an offence to:

- *intentionally kill, injure or take any wild bat.*
- *intentionally or recklessly damage, destroy or obstruct access to any place that a wild bat uses for shelter or protection. This is taken to mean all bat roosts whether bats are present or not.*
- *intentionally or recklessly disturb any wild bat while it is occupying a structure or place which it uses for shelter or protection.*

The protected status afforded to bats means planning authorities may require extra information (in the form of surveys, impact assessments and mitigation proposals) before determining planning applications for sites used by bats. Planning authorities may refuse planning permission solely on grounds of the predicted impact on protected species such as bats. Recent case law has underlined the importance of obtaining survey information prior to the determination of planning consent¹.

“It is essential that the presence or otherwise of protected species, and the extent that they may be affected by a development proposal, is established before the planning permission is granted, otherwise all relevant material considerations may not have been addressed in making the decision.”²

All British bat species are included in Schedule 2 of the Conservation (Natural Habitats, &c.) (Amendment) Regulations 2007, (also known as Habitats Regulations) which defines ‘European Protected Species’ (EPS).

¹ Bat Mitigation Guidelines, AJ Mitchell Jones. Joint Nature Conservation Committee, (2004) (ISBN 1 86107 558 8)

² Planning Policy Statement (PPS9) (2005) , Biodiversity and Geological Conservation. ODPM.

Protected species (Bats) and the planning process

Our built environment has the potential to have major negative impacts on biodiversity. However, if done sensitively, the development and refurbishment of buildings can, in fact, increase the ecological value of the site.*

For development proposals requiring planning permission, the presence of bats, and therefore the need for a bat survey, is an important ‘material planning consideration’. Adequate surveys are therefore required to establish the presence or absence of bats, to enable a prediction of the likely impact of the proposed development on them and their breeding sites or resting places and, if necessary, to design mitigation and compensation. Similarly, adequate survey information must accompany an application for a Habitats Regulations licence (also known as a Mitigation Licence) required to ensure that a proposed development is able to proceed lawfully¹.

The term ‘development’ [used in these guidelines] includes all activities requiring consent under relevant planning legislation and / or demolition operations requiring building control approval under the Building Act 1984.

Natural England (Formerly English Nature) states that development in relation to bats “covers a wide range of operations that have the potential to impact negatively on bats and bat populations. Typical examples would be the construction, modification, restoration or conversion of buildings and structures, as well as infrastructure, landfill or mineral extraction projects and demolition operations”.²

* Designing for Biodiversity, RiBA (second Edition - 2013) ¹ Bat Surveys, Good Practice Guidelines, BCT (2007). ²Tony Mitchell-Jones. (BMG. 2004)

Other references:

Bats, development and planning in England, (Specialist support series) - Bat Conservation Trust, 5th Floor, Quadrant House, 250 Kennington Lane, London, SE11 5RD, 0845 1300 228

Defra Circular 01/2005 (to accompany PPS 9) - Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs. www.defra.gov.uk

Natural England – North of England offices are located at:

Sheffield: Natural England, 1 East Parade, City Centre, S1 2ET, Sheffield.

Crewe: Natural England, Electra Way, Crewe business park, Crewe, Cheshire, CW1 6GJ 0300 060 2922

Kendal: Natural England, Juniper House, Murley Moss, Oxenholme Rd, Kendal, Cumbria, LA9 7RL 0300 060 2122

Manchester: Natural England, 3rd Floor, Bridgewater House, Whitworth Street, Manchester, M1 6LT 0300 060 1062

Information sources

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