Providing ecology support for *everyone*

Mr N Fielding
C/o School House Farm
Osbaldeston Lane
Osbaldeston
BB2 7HL

19th January 2021

Dear Mr Fielding

Re: Proposed development at School House Farm, Osbaldeston Lane, Osbaldeston, BB2 7HL (Central grid reference: SD 64804 32098)

Thank you for your request for a bat survey at the above site. I understand that the proposed development is for a two-storey extension and refurbishment to the existing dwelling house.

I understand that the adjoining outbuilding to the west is under a separate ownership and is not included in this planning submission. This building was not, therefore, included in the survey.

1.0 Background and Qualifications

The survey was carried out by Pat Waring and Janette Gazzard.

Pat is a licensed bat worker (Class 2 licence), registered consultant of the Bat Low Impact Class Licence, 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-three years, including over 16 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 and Lancashire and Yorkshire 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 condition necessary for bats roosting. He also has recognised skills relating to bat surveys and assessment.

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 seventeen 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.

Janette has a range of demonstrable skills relating to professional bat work, including building and tree surveys, assessments and judgements of value in relation to bats, as well as selection and monitoring of mitigation features.

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 School House Farm, a daytime inspection of the building and its surroundings was carried out on 12th January 2021.

Observations were made from ground level, as well as from telescopic ladders to examine potential roost features. An endoscope, although available, was not required on this occasion. A 1000 lumens Led Lenser x21 torch and close-focussing Zeiss Victory FL 8x42 binoculars were also used as aids to visibility.

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

Not all roof coverings, gutters and roof edges could be examined in detail due to the height of the building. However, fascia boards and guttering were being replaced on the rear elevation at the time of the survey and access was therefore available to closely view the south roof pitch and roof edge. Other parts of the 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

School House Farm comprises an unoccupied, two storey dwelling house with a small front porch and adjoining single garage. There is also an adjoining outbuilding to the west which was not included in the survey.

The walls are constructed of stone, with render on the gable wall (east) and rear (south) elevation. All windows and doors are timber framed. All external walls, windows and doors are well sealed with no visible gaps or cracks.

The roof above the dwelling house is dual pitched and the roof above the garage is hipped; both are covered with slate. There is a single chimney at the east gable which is part rendered with lead flashing at the base. There are occasional gaps associated with the slate covering and lead flashing on the main house but the garage roof is tightly sealed with no visible gaps.

The roof edges appear tightly sealed and new tightly fitted fascia boards were being installed along the rear elevation (south) at the time of the survey. No signs of bats were found behind the fascia boards being replaced.

Most of the roof space inside the main house has been converted into living space. There are 2 internal rooms at second floor level with plastered walls and ceilings. There is access from the southern room into a narrow, enclosed roof void containing hot water pipes and cabling. Timber roof supports, bitumastic roof liner and rock wool insulation are present within this void. No potential access points for use by bats were found within this void.

Internal ceiling panels were removed to access the roof void above the garage. Timber roof supports were heavily cobwebbed, bitumastic liner was intact and rock wool insulation was present along the roof edges and on the floor. Not potential access for bats into the roof void was found.

A single, old bird nest was found on a ledge inside the garage.

Habitats and surroundings

School House Farm is situated in a rural location. The rear garden is small, predominantly mown lawn with a mature yew tree, early mature ash trees and planted shrubs. There is a tall privet hedge along the boundaries and dense ivy growing on the adjoining outbuilding property on the south elevation.

There are large detached properties with established gardens in close proximity. Mature connecting trees and small woodland blocks in the immediate and close surroundings. The levels of artificial lighting are expected to be low based on the density of the housing and lack of street lighting. The immediate and close surroundings provide at least moderate potential shelter and foraging resources to local bat populations and high potential shelter and foraging resources for birds.

Bats
No bats or signs of bats were found during the site inspection.

Potential roosting features for bats are:

Night roosting

- Negligible potential – there are no suitable night roosting features (providing the garage doors and windows remain secure)

Day roosting

- Low potential – gaps associated with roof coverings

Hibernation roosting

- Low potential – gaps associated with roof coverings

Low potential in the above examples reflects the condition of the features and their environment. It is our professional judgement that further surveys for bats at this time are not warranted.

Nesting birds

A single old nest was found in the garage.

No nesting birds or recent signs of nesting birds (including barn owls) were found during the survey. If the garage building remains secure, birds will not be able to enter and therefore make use of this building for nesting.

There is high potential for nesting birds to be present within the garden vegetation, including the dense ivy on the adjoining outbuilding, during the nesting season (February to September).

4.0 Advice and Recommendations

4.1 Bats

Protected Species	Impacts /Predicted Impacts	Action Required
Bats	It is advised that there is no evidence to suggest that bats pose a constraint to the proposed development. It is advised that there are potential roost features suitable for bats associated with roof coverings on the dwelling house. In this location and landscape setting, these features have low potential for bats to use throughout the year. All bat species are afforded full protection under and The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations (Amendment) (EU Exit) Regulations 2019. It is our professional judgement that there ***is*** a reasonable likelihood of bats roosting at another time.	**Advice (mitigation):** As a precaution, a suitably qualified Ecologist should be present during works involving disturbance of roof coverings e.g. to tie in the existing roof to the new extension. **At any time.** **Advice (mitigation):** All personnel involved in proposed development works should be carefully advised about bats by a professional 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**. **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 development will affect bats, a licence may be required and suitable mitigation put in place. **At all times.** **Recommendation (mitigation and enhancement):** Any new lighting associated with the proposed development should be designed to reduce light spill upwards to maintain the current lack of artificial lighting conditions within the area. This will help to avoid any impacts on bat activity, including foraging and commuting. **During and post development.**

Table 1 Bats

4.2 Nesting birds

Protected species	Impacts /Predicted Impacts	Action Required
Nesting birds	It is advised that there is high potential for birds to be nesting within the garden vegetation and ivy on the adjacent property during the bird nesting season (February to September). 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. 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. It is our professional judgement that there ***is*** a reasonable likelihood of bird nesting during the nesting season (February -September)	**Advice (mitigation):** All people working at School House Farm should be made aware of the likelihood of encountering nesting birds and should be made aware of the legal protection of nesting birds and their own responsibilities as regards implementation of precautionary measures. **Prior to any work commencing** **Advice (mitigation):** It is advised that the most appropriate way to address the risk to nesting birds is: Avoid disturbance to vegetation, buildings and during the nesting season. Or 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).** **Advice (mitigation):** 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

Protected species	Impacts /Predicted Impacts	Action Required
Nesting birds Continued		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.** **Advice (mitigation):** 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. **At all times.**

Table 2 Nesting Birds

Compliance with the actions outlined in the Tables 1 and 2 will help to avoid committing offences in relation to 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 a planning application.

4.4 Other Protected Species

There are no constraints in relation to other protected species.

For this site, it is also recommended, if proposed works are not undertaken by May 2021, 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

Janette Gazzard MCIEEM
Senior Ecologist
Ecology Services UK Ltd

View of School House Farm, front (north) elevation (lhs) and rear (south) elevation(rhs)

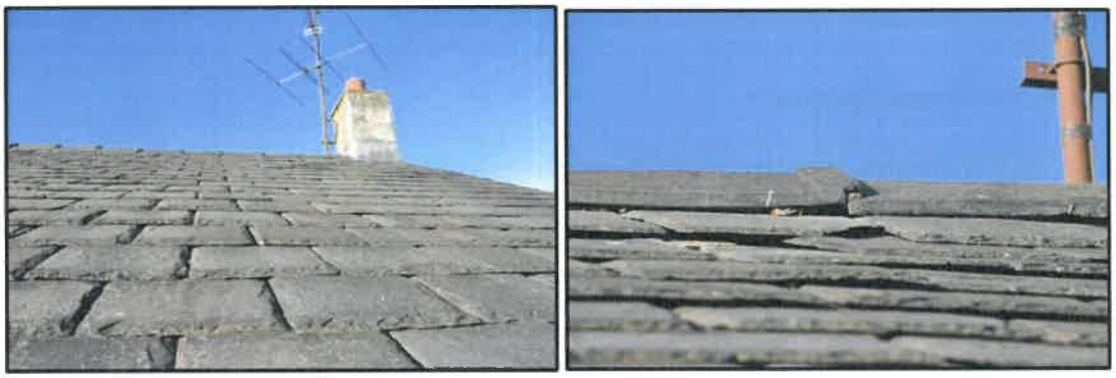

Image slate roof coverings (lhs) and image showing example gaps between slate at the ridge (rhs)

Image of living space in the roof (lhs) and view of enclosed roof void (rhs)

View of gable end (sealed with no gaps) with mature yew tree in background (lhs) and view of open fields immediately adjacent to the rear garden (rhs)

View of garage roof coverings (lhs) and roof void above garage (rhs)