

Julia Pye

Hill Crest Farm
Startifants Lane
Chipping
Preston
Lancashire
PR3 2NP

7 July 2011

Ref: B 982

Dear Julia

Protected Species Survey: Barn at Higher Flass, Settle Road, Bolton-by-Bowland, Lancashire, BB7 4NY

You have requested a protected species survey on behalf of your client Andy Rigby, as a condition of a planning application to Ribble Valley Borough Council for a barn conversion and building alterations. The existing building is shown in figures 1 to 6 of this report.

The local authority requires an appraisal of the impact of the proposed development on all protected species in accordance with PPS9, in addition to mitigation procedures designed to protect bats and their roosts and ensure there are *'no adverse effects on the favourable conservation status of a bat population'*.

A scoping survey and daylight inspection was undertaken on Tuesday 28 June 2011 between 09.00 and 10.30. The weather at the time of the visit was warm, dry and bright (max temperature: 20°C; cloud cover: 10%; wind: light north-westerly) providing optimal conditions for a daylight survey.

The inspection has found no evidence of roosting bats or barn owls within any part of the building, consequently it is very unlikely that roosting bats will be disturbed during the proposed development.

Survey methodology

The scoping survey provides a daylight assessment of the property during the optimal survey period for bats.

The aim of a bat inspection is to make an assessment of the potential value of the site for European Protected Species (EPS) and to establish whether bats have ever been active within any part of the property that will be affected by the building operations.

The survey methodology follows the recommended monitoring guidelines published by the Bat Conservation Trust (*BCT – Bat Surveys, Good Practice Guidelines, 2007*), Natural England (*Survey Objectives, Methods and Standards as outlined in the Bat Mitigation Guidelines, 2004*) and Survey and Monitoring Methods, (*Bat Worker's Manual, JNCC, 2004*).

Recommended survey methods (Natural England / Barn Owl Trust) were used to assess the use of the building by barn owls and other wild birds; normal search procedure includes inspecting the site for evidence of droppings, pellets, discarded prey items, feathers and nest debris. Guidelines are those recommended by Natural England, *Barn Owls on Site – A guide for developers and planners, March 2002*.

Non-intrusive survey methods were used to assess the use of the property by bats. The search was made using a high-powered lamp (Clu-lite 1,000,000 candle power), close-focussing binoculars (Leica Trinovid), a digital camera (Kodak MD41) and 900mm endoscope (ProVision 300) to view all likely areas of the building for the presence of bats, ie. droppings and urine and grease staining, feeding remains such as discarded moth and butterfly wings and other insects fragments typically found in a feeding and resting area.

Personnel

The survey was carried out by David Fisher (Earthworks Environmental Design) - an experienced ecological consultant with more than 25 years experience of bat ecology and field survey work and a Natural England licence holder since 1990; current NE licence No: 20103384, (Conservation, Science and Education).

Constraints

The inspection was carried out using 'non-intrusive' survey techniques to determine bat activity. (*reference: Bat Surveys, BCT, 2007, p23*).

Activity loggers and / or ultrasonic bat detectors were not used during the scoping survey.

Evening emergence and / or dawn re-entry surveys at the property have not been undertaken.

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

National Biodiversity Network (NBN Gateway) database records do not confirm presence or absence of a species or habitat.

Absence of records does not imply that a particular bat species is not present within the recording area.

Data search

A local data search was carried to identify records of bat activity within 1km of the site. The following bat species are present within the wider district (ie. NBN 10km square SD75)

- | | |
|--------------------------------|---|
| • Natterer's bat | (<i>Myotis nattereri</i>) |
| • Whiskered bat / Brandt's bat | (<i>M. mystacinus</i> / <i>M. brandtii</i>) |
| • Daubenton's bat | (<i>M. daubentonii</i>) |
| • Common long-eared bat | (<i>Plecotus auritus</i>) |
| • Common pipistrelle | (<i>Pipistrellus pipistrellus</i>) |
| • Soprano pipistrelle | (<i>P. pygmaeus</i>) |
| • Noctule bat | (<i>Nyctalus noctula</i>) |

There are no records of roosting bats or barn owls at this property. The nearest known bat roost within a building is at Monubent, near Forest Becks at NGR: SD 794518 (common long-eared bat)

The following websites and datasets were consulted during the preparation of this report:

1. National Biodiversity Network (NBN) database, (terrestrial mammals - chiroptera)
2. Bat Conservation Trust (BCT)
3. East Lancashire Bat Group
4. North Lancashire Bat Group
5. Lancashire and Cheshire Fauna Society
6. Lancashire Biodiversity Partnership
7. East Lancashire Ornithologist's Club
8. Biological Heritage Sites Partnership (LCC, NE and LWT)
9. EED dataset (Lancashire bat records 2000 - 2011)
10. Magicmap interactive map
11. Natureonthemap (Natural England)
12. Multimap
13. Google Maps
14. MARIO - Maps and related information online (Lancashire County Council).

Description of the property

This is a detached agricultural stone barn; the main barn has two timber lofts with under crofts beneath (figure 6). The wagon doors (figure 1) lead into the main barn, this leads into a lean-to shed at the rear of the building (figure. 2).

The main barn has a traditional timber post and truss roof construction (figure 5); the roof is un-lined and clad with stone slates and is open to the eaves. The barn has an owl window located close to each gable apex; the building is dry, cool and well-ventilated and the buildings are in regular / constant use.

The lean-to building has block work side walls with cement fibre upper walls and the mono-pitch roof has corrugated cement fibre roof panels with two clear roof lights; the structure remains well-lit with natural light and is dry and cool and adequately ventilated.

Additionally, there is a smaller lean-to shed to the north gable apex wall (figure 3); this structure has a mono-pitch cement fibre roof and block work walls. There is also a small single storey lean-to workshop attached to the south gable wall (figure 4); the building has block work lower walls, corrugated upper walls and corrugated cement fibre mono-pitch roof.

The barn, under crofts and lean-to sheds are all in daily use.

Existing property (images)



Fig 1:



Fig 2:



Fig 3:



Fig 4:



Fig 5:



Fig 6:

Location of the property (NGR: SD 792532. Elevation: approximately 170 metre).

The property is located at Higher Flass beside the Settle Road, 4km north of Bolton-by-Bowland and 1.5km north of Forest Becks. The site is surrounded by open countryside with extensive permanent grassland and pasture. There is no adjacent woodland and there are no water courses within 0.5km; the nearest broadleaved woodlands is located near Lower Flass at Monubent Beck. This deeply wooded water course provides extensive riparian habitat for feeding and foraging bats.

There are no designated nature conservation sites 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).

Survey results

There is no evidence of bat activity or barn owl roosting / nesting activity at this property.

There are no signs of bat droppings, discarded feeding remains or other indicative signs of bat perching, feeding or roosting activity within any part of the building.

All external features of the buildings including stonework, roofing materials and roof verges were inspected for evidence of bat (and owl) activity; none was found. All lean-to buildings, under crofts and hay lofts were also inspected for evidence of protected species, none was found.

Birds are currently active within the building; a brood of recently fledged house sparrows was present within the lean-to building on the north gable apex wall, also there are several roosting and nesting barn swallows inside the main barn.

Survey evaluation

- The scale of impact of the proposed development at site level on local bat populations is likely to be negligible / low.
- The potential of the existing building to support roosting bats is moderate / low, although solitary roosting bats may very occasionally be active within some wall cavities or beneath roof slates.
- The potential of the property to support a maternity roost, hibernation roost or transitory / mating roost is relatively low; the overall conservation significance of the building is also low.
- The surrounding land / habitats provide moderate feeding, foraging and commuting habitat for bats; however, the site is not adjacent to high-value feeding and foraging habitat and there are no extensive areas of broadleaved woodland, plantation, riparian habitat, open water or river channel adjacent to the site.

The location of the property is likely to be sub-optimal in terms of bat feeding and foraging habitat.

Summary and recommendations

There is no evidence of roosting bats or nesting barn owls at this property.

The proposed building alterations at this property are **unlikely to cause 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 this development at site level on local bat populations is likely to be negligible or low.

Barn swallows and other wild birds are nesting within parts of the building during the summer (April to August / September). All wild birds, their nests and eggs are protected by law and should not be disturbed during the nesting season.

Further survey effort including evening emergence or dawn re-entry monitoring is not recommended.

Impacts and Mitigation

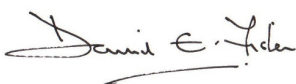
MITIGATION NOTES:

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 define mitigation as “...measures to protect the bat population from damaging activities and reduce or remove the impact of development”.

ACTION:	METHOD:
1. Timing constraints	None.
2. Removal of roofing materials	There is a low risk of accidentally exposing roosting bats at this property; you should be aware that isolated bats are ‘occasionally’ found roosting beneath roofing materials and within rubble infill stone walls at any time of year, although most typically between May and November. Protected species legislation applies even following the granting of planning consent. If the presence of protected species (eg. nesting birds, bats, etc) is suspected at any time during construction then work should cease and Natural England should be contacted for advice.
3. Accidental exposure of bats	In the unlikely event of bats being exposed or vulnerable to harm, all work in that area must stop immediately. Cover the exposed bats to reduce further risk of harm and seek further advice by calling the Bat Conservation Trust (BCT) helpline on 0845 1300 228. Stop work immediately if bats are exposed or likely to be disturbed. All contractors should be aware of their responsibilities to protected species. If accumulations of droppings are found during the removal of the roofing materials, stop work and seek advice before continuing work in this area.
4. Avoid handling bats	Contractors should avoid handling bats but where there is no alternative, use gloves or a small container to move them to a dark and quiet area, preferably without causing them to fly in daylight.
5. Legal protection	Site contractors and project managers should be fully aware of the legal protection afforded all species of bat in the UK and procedures should be in place to mitigate for the potential impact on bats - see notes on ‘Bats and the Law’ in this report.
6. Further advice	If you require further advice on bats during the proposed building operations or if you find an injured or resting bat, call BCT immediately; they will normally contact a qualified bat worker in the local area who will visit the site and provide further advice free of charge.
7. Post-development monitoring	None.
8. Additional survey effort	Not required.

Please note: I do not provide a copy of this report to the local planning authority, therefore it is your responsibility to forward the report to Ribble Valley Borough Council.

Yours sincerely



David Fisher

APPENDIX A

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.*
-

Protected species (Bats) and the planning process¹

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 lawfully.

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*".

(Mitchell-Jones, 2004)

Protected species legislation applies even following the granting of planning consent. If the presence of protected species (eg. nesting birds, bats, etc) is suspected at any time during construction then work should cease and Natural England should be contacted for advice.

¹ 2.2.3 - Planning for development, p10, Bat Surveys, Good Practice Guidelines, BCT (2007).

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

Clarification of the legal duty of Local planning Authorities' to European Protected species: High Court Judgment June 2009: (Wooley v Cheshire east Borough Council) - Bat Conservation Trust.

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

Natural England, 1 East Parade, Sheffield, S1 2ET, Enquiry Service: 0845 600 3078 enquiries@naturalengland.org.uk

Natural England, Cheshire to Lancashire Team, Electra Way, Crewe, Cheshire, CW1 6GJ Tel: 01270 754227