BAT SURVEY REPORT

NEW HALL FARM,
RUSHTON SPENCER

FEBRUARY 2017

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1. NON-TECHNICAL SUMMARY

Eyebright Ecology was commissioned by MJ Barrett on behalf of Harrison Partners, to undertake a bat survey of an agricultural building at New Hall Farm, Dingle Lane, Rushton Spencer, Macclesfield, Staffordshire, SK11 0QT.

The survey was required to inform a planning application for demolition of the building and replacement with a new building.

A preliminary roost assessment of the building was undertaken on 13 February 2017.

No evidence of roosting bats was found either internally or externally using the building.

Due to the lack of suitable roosting crevices, and the damp, draughty and light nature of the building, it is considered to be of negligible value to roosting bats.

Further bat survey is not necessary as it is considered unlikely that roosting bats would be present.

In the unlikely event that bats were observed during any work to the building, work would need to stop immediately. In this case further survey would be required to inform a licence application prior to demolition.

2. INTRODUCTION

2.1 Background & Objectives

Eyebright Ecology was commissioned by MJ Barrett on behalf of Harrison Partners, to undertake a bat survey of an agricultural building at New Hall Farm, Dingle Lane, Rushton Spencer, Macclesfield, Staffordshire, SK11 0QT. (SJ930613). The survey was required to inform a planning application for demolition of the building and replacement with a new building.

A preliminary roost assessment of the building was undertaken on 13 February 2017.

The survey was undertaken by an experienced and licensed ecologist who is a full member of the Chartered Institute of Ecology & Environmental Management (CIEEM) and holds a current Natural England bat licence.

Unless the client indicates to the contrary, information on any species found to be present on the site will be passed to the county biological records centre to update records held for the area.

2.2 Site Description

The building was a large modern agricultural building used for cattle and storage, which was situated in a farmyard with a range of other barns and farmhouses. The farm was located in a rural location, approximately 1.3 km south-west of the village of Rushton Spencer. The surrounding countryside is largely permanent pasture, with a network of hedgerows and scattered patches of woodland.

2.3 Relevant Legislation

All 18 British bat species and their roost sites are protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act (WCA) 1981 as amended and are included in Schedule 2 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species (Amendment) Regulations 2012. Combined, this legislation means that it is illegal to:

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

3. METHODOLOGY

3.1 Preliminary Roost Assessment

An internal and external building inspection was undertaken on 13 February 2017.

A powerful torch and binoculars were used during the search for evidence of bats which includes droppings, urine stains, feeding remains, staining and individual bats. Potential roost sites and access points were also recorded.

An assessment of the building for potential to support a bat roost was also undertaken.

Weather during the survey was dry, partly sunny, with a strong breeze and temperature of 7°C.

3.2 Personnel

The survey was carried out by Eleanor Weir, an experienced ecologist who has held a Natural England bat licence for 12 years (Bat licence Level 2: 2015-12689-CLS-CLS) and is a full member of CIEEM.

3.3 Constraints

One end of the building was fenced off as it contained young cattle, this area was not entered but an inspection was undertaken using binoculars and torch.

4. RESULTS

4.1 Preliminary Roost Assessment

The building was a large modern agricultural barn which was partially open on three sides (Plates 1 -3). The walls were corrugated metal with a concrete or brick base. The roof was single pitch with a slight slope, and comprised corrugated asbestos sheets with some plastic panels to allow light in.

Inside the building was largely open except for a small hay storage area which was separated by a block and metal wall.

The west end of the building was separated with a timber and metal wall and fencing to keep young cattle in (Plate 4). The wooden roof beams in this end of the building appeared damp. The remainder of the building was used to store farm machinery and equipment.

There were open sides at the east and south sides of the building which allowed wind and light into the building (Plate 5). It was noticeably draughty and light inside.

The roof was supported by timber beams and pillars which were tightly fitting, with few crevices noted (Plate 6).

No bat droppings were found inside the building. There were very few potential roosting crevices noted; there were some gaps between the corrugated metal wall and roof timbers (Plate 7) but these were very dusty, draughty and cobwebbed and were considered unlikely to be used by bats.

Due to the lack of suitable roosting crevices, and damp, draughty and light conditions inside the barn, it is considered to be of negligible potential for roosting bats.

4.2 Photographs

Plate 1: East end of building



Plate 2: South side of building largely open



Plate 3: North and east sides of building



Plate 4: Looking towards west end of building where cattle are penned in. Roof beams this end of the building appeared damp.



Plate 5: Looking towards east end of building, which is largely open allowing in light and wind.



Plate 6: Timber roof beams and pillars were inspected and were tightly fitting with few crevices noted in the woodwork.



Plate 7: Gaps between the roof beam and corrugated metal wall were considered to be of low roosting value and appeared draughty, and largely filled with dust and cobwebs.



5. DISCUSSION & RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Summary of Findings

The preliminary roost assessment found no evidence of roosting bats either internally or externally using the building.

Due to the lack of suitable roosting crevices, and the damp, draughty and light nature of the building, it is considered to be of negligible value to roosting bats.

5.2 Recommendations

Further bat survey is not considered necessary as it is unlikely that roosting bats would be present in the building.

In the unlikely event that bats were observed during any work to the building, work would need to stop immediately. In this case further survey would be required to inform a licence application prior to demolition.

6. REFERENCES

Collins, J. (ed.) 2016. *Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines (3rd Edn).* The Bat Conservation Trust, London.

Mitchell-Jones, A.J. (2004). *Bat Mitigation Guidelines*. English Nature, Peterborough.

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