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Gatehouse Cottage,
Kingsley Road,
Cellarwood,
ST9 0DJ,

On behalf of Mr. Gimbert.

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Approved: J. Leigh

Bat Scoping and Nesting Bird Survey Report

IMPORTANT INFORMATION TO READERS

This report has been prepared for Mr Gimbert in accordance with the terms and conditions of appointment for a bat scoping and nesting bird survey. Leigh Ecology Ltd cannot accept any responsibility for the use of or reliance on the content of this report by any third party.

The advice contained in this report is based on the information available and/or collected during the period of study. We cannot completely eliminate the possibility of important ecological features being found through further investigation and/or by survey at different times of the year or in different years.

Surveys and assessments are undertaken on the understanding that nothing in our reports will be omitted, amended or misrepresented by the client or any other interested party.

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1 SUMMARY

- 1.1 The target building is a brick and tile two-storey stable/ storage building set in a farm environment.
- 1.2 The barn building is of a brick and slate construction; the building has been very well maintained and reasonable in condition. It is currently being used as a storage area.
- 1.3 In order to facilitate the conversion of the stable building to a dwelling, a survey for protected species was required, namely bats species Chiroptera, and nesting birds, in order to inform the planning application.
- 1.4 Under both European and UK legislation, bats and their places of rest (normally roosting sites) are strictly protected; it is an offence to kill/injure bats or damage or destroy bats or their roosting sites. For a development to proceed lawfully at a site where bats are present, a European Protected species licence is required, this is issued by Natural England under the European Conservation (Natural Habitats) Regulations 1994 is required.
- 1.5 Leigh Ecology Ltd was therefore commissioned by Mr Gimbert to perform a scoping survey for bat presence. An internal and external building survey was undertaken by suitably licenced and experienced ecologists on 26th January 2017.
- 1.6 The results suggested that the barn and storage buildings provide low bat roost potential, as the buildings are of an open configuration without much in the way of small crawl spaces or sheltered habitat that bats prefer.
- 1.7 No signs of roosting bats were found during the surveys.
- 1.8 Therefore, it is concluded that the proposed conversion works could progress without constraints.

2 INTRODUCTION

- 2.1 A single two story barn and storage building located at Gatehouse Cottage, Cellarwood, has been identified for conversion to a dwelling, garage and storage area. A protected species survey was required, namely bat species *Chiroptera* and nesting birds in order to inform the planning application.
- 2.2 For development proposals requiring planning permission, the presence of protected species, and therefore the need of a survey, is a material planning consideration under the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). Adequate surveys are therefore required to establish the presence or absence of protected species, to enable a prediction of the likely impact of the proposed development on them and their breeding site or resting places and, if necessary, to design mitigation and compensation methods.
- 2.3 For any development to proceed lawfully at a site where protected species are present, a licence issued by Natural England under the Conservation (Natural Habitats & c.) Regulations 2010 (as amended) may be required. Information gathered during the surveys is used to inform such a licence application.
- 2.4 The objectives of the study were to identify the presence or potential presence of protected species within the buildings identified for conversion and adaptation.
- 2.5 A preliminary roost survey consisting of an internal and external survey of the target buildings was conducted on 26th January 2017.

3 LEGISLATIVE FRAMEWORK

Bats

- 3.1 There are 17 species of bats in the UK, all of which suffered a decline in population size and distribution during the 20th century; even those species regarded to be the most common suffered a 70% decline between 1978 and 1993 (Mitchel-Jones and McLeish, 2004).
- 3.2 All species of bats are listed under Section 9 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended), and Regulation 41 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010 and are therefore afforded special protection. It is an offence to:
 - Intentionally kill, injure or take any wild bat;
 - Intentionally damage, destroy or obstruct access to any place that a wild bat uses for shelter or protection; and
 - Intentionally or recklessly disturb any wild bat while it is occupying a structure or place that it uses for shelter or protection.

- 3.3 Bats are further protected under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010 which make it an offence to:
- Capture or kill a bat;
 - Significantly disturb a bat (in any location); and
 - Damage or destroy a breeding site or resting place of any bat.
- 3.4 If bats are present on a development site and, as a result of the development there is a likelihood that a roost may be damaged or destroyed, or where there is considered to be a reasonable possibility that bats occupying a roost may be significantly disturbed, or where there would be a requirement to significantly disturb a bat irrespective of its location, the development can only proceed if an European Protected Species (EPS) license is issued by Natural England.
- 3.5 In England and Wales the Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006 imposes a duty on all public bodies, including local authorities to make material consideration to biodiversity conservation in the determination of all types of planning applications. The UK Biodiversity Strategy was produced in response to the convention. The strategy contains action plans for species considered to be of conservation priority at a national (under Species Action Plans (SAP) and local scale (under Local Biodiversity Action Plans (LBAPs).
- 3.6 The UKBAP lists seven bat species considered as priorities, the relevant LBAP (Staffordshire) lists five bat species.
- 3.7 Nesting birds are protected under The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (and amendments) and it would be an offence to damage or destroy a nest or otherwise disturb a nesting bird.

4 SITE DESCRIPTION

- 4.1 The barn is located to the north of Kingsley Road, Cellarwood; the site is surrounded by agricultural habitat.
- 4.2 The site grid reference is SJ961475 .
- 4.3 The barn/store building is currently used for general storage.
- 4.4 The proposed development will see the building turned into a dwelling.
- 4.5 The barn is a detached two storey building constructed from double thickness brick walls, pitched fabricated tiled roof; the building was reasonably well maintained with limited gaps or crawl holes.
- 4.6 The building did not contain a roof space area, the roof support furniture was exposed, and the beams, rafters and roof tile batons were all visible for inspection.

- 4.7 The external habitat offered limited habitat for protected species.
- 4.8 The wider area is intensively farmed land, with both pasture and arable land occurring.
- 4.9 Two fishing ponds occur at the rear of the farm complex.



Fig 1. *The target building is a two-storey barn, the walls are constructed in double thickness brick with a pitched tile roof, the barn is in excellent condition with little in the way of deep cracks or crawl spaces. The building is used as a storage area.*



Fig 2. The gable end of the building is well pointed, and sealed with no potential crawl holes or gaps to be used as a bat roost point.



Fig 3. The roof is in very good condition with no slipped or missing tiles, the ridge is in good condition and well sealed.



Fig 4. The building has no soffits or bargeboards; the roof/wall join is well sealed with no gaps.

5 METHODOLOGY

5.1 BATS

- 5.1.1 The internal and external roost survey was undertaken by a Natural England licensed surveyor: Mr Roy Leigh NE license 2015/15883-CLS.
- 5.1.2 Survey methods were based-upon the standard and specification detailed in the BCTs *Bat Surveys- Good Practise Guidelines* (Hundt, 2016). The building was inspected internally and externally on 26th January 2017.

External Inspection

- 5.1.3. The objective of the survey was to locate any signs of bat activity, for example:
- Bat droppings;
 - Feeding remains;
 - Grease staining/ urine marks;
 - Corpses or skeletons;
 - Potential access points to internal roosts.

5.1.4. The bat signs listed above are visible from the outside of the building. The following areas were searched using binoculars:

- Ground floor casing;
- Rendering;
- Any cracks/ holes in brickwork/ woodwork;
- Between wall cavities at window points;
- On external brickwork.

Internal Inspection

5.1.5. Bats regularly utilise specific areas within roof spaces/open roof configurations (see below), which were searched as a priority for any bat field signs:

- Dividing walls;
- Beneath hip joints and junctions;
- Staining above/ around gaps;
- Within cobwebs;
- Staining around tile gaps;
- In cavities of walls within the roof wall joints;
- Timber / wall joints.

5.1.6 The internal building survey of the barn/storage building covered all rooms and anti-room compartments inside the building.

5.1.7. The surveys were undertaken using a 2million candle watt flashlight, endoscope and 10x40 Swarovski binoculars.

5.1.8 Ladders were used to access elevated areas with potential for bat signs.

5.1.9. Any signs of bird usage including a current live nest and old nests, droppings, pellets etc. were noted during the bat survey.

Survey limitations

5.2.0 All areas of the buildings were fully accessible with care and therefore the survey was considered comprehensive.



Fig 5. The underside of the pitched roof of the barn building, the roof is open and supported via a wooden A frame and roof truss configuration; this leaves little potential for bats to roost.



Fig 6. The underside of the tiled roof is lined with a felt membrane, which is in good condition with no tears or holes.



Fig 7. Wooden beams, which are supported by the external walls, support the roof; the joins are well sealed with no gaps or cracks.



Fig 8. Some mammal droppings were found on the upper floor of the barn, these were closely examined and concluded that they emanated from brown rats *Rattus norvegicus*.



Fig 9. All flat surfaces were checked for bat droppings, including the cobwebs



Fig 10. The ground floor is segregated into a smaller stable sections, no signs of bats or nesting birds was recorded during the survey.

6 RESULTS

Internal and external inspection

- 6.1 The building is very well maintained offering little opportunities for roosting bats.
- 6.2 The building has low bat roost potential.
- 6.3 The internal survey covered all rooms; no signs of bats were detected during the survey.
- 6.4 The building contained no roof space, the tiles and supporting structure were all open and exposed giving little roost potential.
- 6.5 No signs of bat presence or usage were recorded during the survey. Some rodent droppings were found on the upper floor of the building.
- 6.6 The immediate surrounding area comprises a farmyard type habitat with further outbuildings containing floodlighting.
- 6.7 Beyond this is mainly open agricultural habitat.

7. Recommendations

- The building inspection surveys recorded no signs of bat usage or presence within the target building.
- Therefore, it is recommended that the building conversions can proceed.
- Given that the building has felt roof lining fitted, it is suggested that the new build has bat friendly roof membrane installed.

8. References

Bat Conservation Trust (2016). *Bat Surveys – Good Practice Guidelines*. Bat Conservation Trust, London.

Mitchell-Jones, A. J. and McLeish, A.P. (2004) *Bat Workers Manual*. 3rd ed. JNCC, Peterborough.

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