

# ***Preliminary Bat Roost Appraisal Report***

## ***Underwood Hall Farm, Biddulph***

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***March 2017***



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## **1. INTRODUCTION**

### **1.1 Background**

This report presents the methods and results following a preliminary bat roost appraisal of a building located at Underwood Hall Farm, off Mow Lane, Biddulph, (Ordnance Survey Grid Reference: SJ 878 588).

The building is currently used for storage purposes and is adjoined to a residential property to the south and a building used for storage to the north. The two adjoining buildings to the north and south will not be subject to any works; however the middle building will be renovated and used for residential purposes.

### **1.2 Legislation**

All species of bats are fully protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) and the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010 (as amended). Under this legislation it is illegal to:

- intentionally or recklessly kill, injure or capture a bat;
- intentionally or recklessly disturb a bat when it is occupying a roost; and
- intentionally or recklessly damage, destroy or obstruct access to a bat roost.

A bat roost is defined as being 'any structure or place that is used for shelter or protection', and since bats regularly move roost site throughout the year, a roost retains such designation whether or not bats are present at the time.

It is illegal to carry out work affecting bats or their roosts. Licences to permit illegal activities relating to bats and their roost sites can be issued for specific purposes and by specific licensing authorities in each country. These are called European Protected Species (EPS) or 'mitigation' licences and are issued under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010 (as amended). It is an offence not to comply with the terms and conditions of an EPS licence.

## **2. METHODOLOGY**

### **2.1 Preliminary Roost Appraisal Survey**

The preliminary bat roost appraisal survey was undertaken on 19<sup>th</sup> February 2017 by a Natural England licensed bat ecologist. The survey was undertaken in accordance with the standard guidance for bat surveys<sup>1</sup>.

The building was assessed by the bat ecologist using binoculars and a high powered torch in order to determine features with suitability to support bats in accordance with criteria within the standard guidance for bat surveys<sup>2</sup>. The building was externally and internally examined.

All external features that may have suitability to be used by roosting bats, including the roof tiles, cracks and crevices within the stone work and missing mortar, were examined externally during the survey.

The internal inspection involved searching key areas of the building for evidence indicating the presence of bats. Evidence searched for includes droppings, urine spots, fur oil staining, dead bats, an absence of cobwebs and the animals themselves.

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<sup>1</sup> Collins (2016) Bat Surveys: Good Practice Guidelines, 2nd edition, Bat Conservation Trust. [http://www.bats.org.uk/download\\_info.php](http://www.bats.org.uk/download_info.php)

<sup>2</sup> Collins (2016) Bat Surveys: Good Practice Guidelines, 2nd edition, Bat Conservation Trust. [http://www.bats.org.uk/download\\_info.php](http://www.bats.org.uk/download_info.php)

The building was assigned a bat roost suitability of negligible, low, moderate, high or as a confirmed roost.

## 2.2 Limitations

There were no limitations to the survey.

## 3. RESULTS


### 3.1 Preliminary Roost Appraisal Survey

The preliminary bat roost appraisal survey considered the context of the building, specifically its geographic location, surrounding habitat and connectivity to the wider landscape.

Biddulph is situated to the east of Underwood Hall Farm, farmland is located to the north, west and there are occasionally pockets of woodland and hedgerows. These may provide links to larger blocks of woodland in the wider area.

The building was assessed for its suitability to support roosting bats and is described below within **Table 1**. Photographs of the building are provided below. During the internal and external inspection no bats or evidence of bats was recorded.

**Table 1: Summary of bat roost suitability survey of building**

Description/ Potential Roost Features	Level of BRP
Single storey stone walled building with pitched slate roof. The roof has been re-roofed within the last fifteen years and is in good condition there are no obvious gaps, slipped/missing/broken tiles. The ridge tiles are also in good condition with no obvious access points. The stone work is in good condition with no cracks or crevices. There are several slits, however these have chicken mesh over then preventing access internally.	Negligible to Low
	Photograph 1: building to be renovated, looking south-east.



Photograph 2: building to be renovated, looking east.



Photograph 3: building to be renovated, looking west.



Photograph 4: Internal loft space of the building to be renovated.

#### **4. RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS**

During the survey no bats or evidence of bats was found. The internal loft space was searched thoroughly for signs of bats (i.e. droppings) and none were found. The wooden beams in the apex of the loft space were dusty and cobwebs were present, indicating that bats have not been using the apex of loft space. It is therefore concluded that bats are not roosting within the internal structure of the building.

The external stone work of the building is generally in good condition and there are no roosting opportunities for bats. In addition access points have been blocked i.e. slits to prevent squirrels and birds entering the building and also prevents bats.

The roof structure is sound and no obvious external features were identified that could be used for roosting bats.

The renovation work will involve extensive internal work. At present there is no requirement to remove and replace the roofing tiles or undertake any external work to the building. As such no further bat survey work or supervision is required with regards to this identified building provided that all of the renovation works are undertaken internally.

It is thought highly unlikely that roosting bats are present externally due to the lack of suitable roosting features; however their presence cannot be completely ruled out. Should external works be required, i.e. to the roof, then it may be necessary to re-address the recommendations within this report and depending on the scale and nature of the proposed works it may be necessary to carry out a single dusk emergence survey prior to the works to ensure that roosting bats are not present. Dusk emergence surveys should be carried out between May and August.

These recommendations are made based on the commencement of renovation works within a period of 24 months from the date of this report. Should the commencement of works be delayed in any way, it will be necessary to update the preliminary bat roost appraisal survey of the building presented in this report.

##### **4.1 Requirement for Habitat Regulations (EPS) Licences**

If it is subsequently determined that bats are roosting in any the above identified building, it will be necessary to obtain an EPS licence from Natural England. Mitigation is likely to be necessary, and will form part of the detailed application process. The licensing process typically takes around two months (including Natural England's standard thirty working day determination period).