

# ***Bat and Bird Appraisal Report***

## ***Sneyd Arms Farm, Basford Green***

***Prepared by Anna Davies, licensed bat ecologist and full member of the Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management***

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## **1. INTRODUCTION**

### **1.1 Background**

This report presents the methods and results following a bat and bird appraisal of a building located at Sneyd Arms Farm, Basford Green, Staffordshire (Ordnance Survey Grid Reference: SJ 990 516).

The building is currently used for storage purposes and was formally used as a garage. It is proposed that the building is converted into a residential dwelling to be used as a holiday let.

This report details the findings of a preliminary bat roost appraisal, dusk emergence survey and an assessment of the building to support nesting birds.

### **1.2 Legislation**

#### *Bats*

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.

#### *Breeding Birds*

All species of bird are protected under Section 2 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended). This legislation makes it an offence to intentionally:

- kill, injure or take any wild bird;
- take, damage or destroy the nest of any wild bird while that nest is in use or being built; or
- take, destroy an egg of any wild bird.

## **2. METHODOLOGY**

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

The preliminary bat roost appraisal survey was undertaken on 16<sup>th</sup> September 2017 by Anna Davies who is registered to use the Natural England level 2 bat survey class licence.

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 the criteria within the standard guidance for bat surveys<sup>1</sup>. The building was externally and internally examined as part of the preliminary bat roost appraisal.

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 included droppings, urine spots, fur oil staining, dead bats, an absence of cobwebs and the animals themselves.

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

### **2.2 Dusk Emergence Survey**

Following the preliminary bat roost appraisal survey, the building was categorised as being of low bat roost potential and in order to comply with the bat survey guidelines<sup>2</sup>, a single dusk emergence survey was undertaken on 24<sup>th</sup> September 2017. The survey was undertaken by Anna Davies who is registered to use the Natural England level 2 bat survey class licence.

The time, location, number, species (where possible) and direction of flight were recorded for each bat pass (either echolocation heard or activity seen) encountered during the survey.

The survey was carried out using a frequency division bat detector (Batbox Duet) and recorded in WAV format using a digital recorder (Edirol R05), to allow sonogram analysis (via BatSound Version 4.2). Notes were made on the weather conditions and observations of bat activity during the survey period.

The dusk emergence survey was undertaken in the evening commencing approximately 15 minutes before sunset and continuing for a further ninety minutes after sunset.

### **2.3 Breeding Bird Assessment**

An assessment of the building to support breeding birds was undertaken on 16<sup>th</sup> September 2017. This involved an internal and external inspection of the building for evidence of old nests, access points into the building and features which could be used by nesting birds.

### **2.4 Limitations**

There were no limitations to the surveys.

## **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.

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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 is located within Basford Green, a small village in Staffordshire, located to the south of Leek. Immediately surrounding the building and in the wider area is arable land with field boundaries and pockets of woodland. Further to the east is the Coombes and Churnet Valleys Nature Reserve, which comprises a large woodland valley with a watercourse.

The building was assessed for its suitability to support roosting bats and is described below within Table 1. Photographs of the building are also provided below in Table 1. 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
<p>Single storey stone walled building with a pitched slate roof. The roof has been re-roofed within the last thirty years and is in fairly good condition. There are a few raised tiles but the ridge tiles are sound and there are no obvious gaps. The stone work is in good condition with no obvious cracks or crevices, although the western side is obscured in part by ivy (<i>Hedera helix</i>) cover.</p> <p>There is no loft space present, the roof is open to the apex and is lined with bitumen felt. The apex was dusty and covered in cobwebs.</p> <p>No bats or evidence of bats was found internally or externally.</p>	<p>Low (due to location of good foraging and commuting habitat, and some external features which may be suitable for individual or small numbers of bats).</p>
	

Photograph 1: building to be renovated, looking north-east.



Photograph 2: building to be renovated, looking north.



Photographs 3 and 4: internal roof structure of the building.

### 3.2 Dusk Emergence Survey

Following the preliminary bat roost appraisal survey the building was assessed as having low bat roost potential, therefore to comply with the published survey guidelines<sup>3</sup>, one dusk emergence survey of the building was undertaken.

A summary of the weather conditions for the dusk emergence survey undertaken are shown in **Table 2** below.

<sup>3</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)

**Table 2: Weather Conditions – Dusk Emergence Survey**

<b>Date</b>	<b>Weather Conditions</b>	<b>Sunset Time and Start/End Time</b>
24 <sup>th</sup> September 2017	17°C, no wind (0), 6/8 cloud cover, dry.	Sunset: 19.02 hrs Start: 18.49 hrs End: 20.30 hrs

No bats were observed emerging from the building during the dusk emergence survey on 24<sup>th</sup> July 2017. This survey was undertaken during ideal weather conditions, and there were no constraints to the survey. Bat activity was recorded and observed during the survey, a common pipistrelle (*Pipistrellus pipistrellus*) was observed and recorded foraging to the west of the building between 19.32 and 19.43 hrs.

### 3.3 Breeding Bird Assessment

No evidence of nesting birds was found within or outside of the building. The building has no potential entry points which could be used by birds and no suitable features internally that could be used by nesting birds.

Ivy (*Hedera helix*) is present on the western stone wall of the building and this may provide habitat for nesting birds.

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

##### **4.1 Bats**

During the internal inspection of the building no bats or evidence of bats was found. The building was searched internally for signs of bats (i.e. droppings, feeding remains) and none were found. The wooden beams in the apex of the roof were dusty and cobwebs were present, indicating that bats have not been using the apex of roof. In addition the building is used for storage purposes and is regularly entered and lighting switched on. It is therefore concluded that bats are not roosting within the internal structure of the building.

The building was also searched externally for potential roosting features which may support roosting bats. The stone work and roof structure is generally sound within limited roosting opportunities. A dusk emergence survey was undertaken in September 2017 and no bats were observed emerging from the building.

Based on the surveys undertaken in 2017, it is reasonable to conclude that roosting bats are absent from the building. No further survey work or supervision in relation to bats is required prior to the renovation works.

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 (September 2019).

##### **4.2 Breeding Birds**

During the survey work no evidence of old bird nests were recorded internally or externally, in addition the building is well sealed and birds are not able to access the building internally.

The ivy cover on the stone wall could provide nesting habitat for birds. It is recommended that this is left undisturbed during any external works to the building.