AB WILDLIFE SURVEYS

Principal: Ken Wainman. Class 2 licence.

Bat Survey Report

Client: **Mrs Carney**

Location: **BRADLEY ELMS FARM, ALTON ROAD, THREAPWOOD, Cheadle, Stoke-on-Trent, ST10 4RB**

Grid Reference: SK044424

Date of Surveys: **14th July 2018**

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1 INTRODUCTION.

1.1. Bats are a protected species under the Wildlife and Countryside act 1981 (as amended); the Countryside and Rights of Way act, 2000; the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act (NERC, 2006); and the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations (2017). Under this legislation it is an offence to intentionally or recklessly kill, injure or capture bats, disturb or damage, destroy or prevent access to bat roosts.

1.2 All bat roosts are protected whether or not bats are present at the time of survey. A "bat roost" is generally described as any structure or place which a wild bat uses for protection or shelter. This can include buildings, other structures and trees. If bats are present or use the building at any time protection/mitigation measures would need to be provided as an integral part of any development and if planning permission is granted a European Protected Species Licence from Natural England may be need to be obtained before works can begin.

1.3 Under the Habitat Regulations 2017 it is an offence to kill or injure a bat intentionally or recklessly damage, destroy or obstruct access to any place that a wild bat uses for shelter or protection, or intentionally or recklessly disturb any wild bat whilst it is occupying a structure or place that it uses for shelter or protection. Bats and breeding birds are also protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended).

1.4 The survey was carried out and this report written by Ken Wainman who holds a Class 2 bat survey licence and has had a Natural England bat survey licence for over ten years. The possibility of the presence of any other protected species, such as barn owls, was also investigated. Two surveys were carried out - a building inspection and a dusk activity survey using bat detectors – on Saturday 14th July.

2. PURPOSE OF SURVEY.

2.1. The main objective of this report is to provide initial advice at the pre-planning application stage regarding any potential ecological impacts and to ensure that bats, a European protected species, and their roosts are not adversely affected. The survey also assessed whether the site was used by protected birds, such as barn owls.

2.2. To recommend any further actions/mitigation measures required as a result of the survey findings.

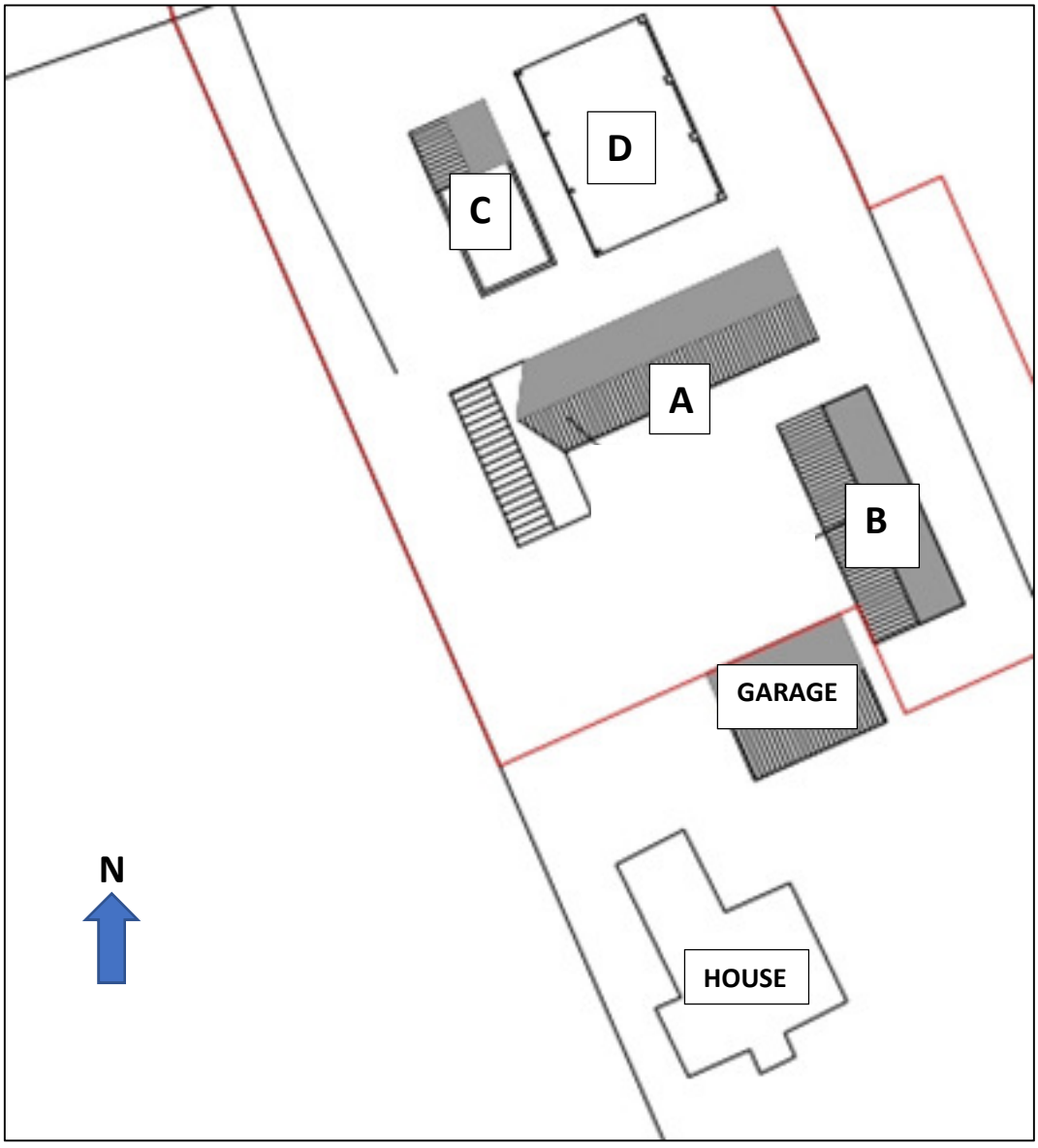
3. THE SITE AND BUILDINGS SURVEYED

3.1. Bradley Elms Farm lies at the end of a long drive off Alton Road, Threapwood close to the small settlement of Threapwood. The location is open countryside, pasture fields with trees and hedges. Although the owners own some adjoining land the Farm is no longer a functioning farm and has not been for some years. Four of the several buildings at the Farm were surveyed as they would form part of a proposed planning application. The four buildings surveyed are named "A", "B", "C", and "D" in the following text and on the plan below.

3.2. There are several buildings at the Farm: –

- the house;
- three brick buildings to the north of the house forming a courtyard open to the west. The northern building (Building A) and eastern building (Building B) are former farm buildings which were converted to bed and breakfast use in 1988 and were used for that purpose from then until 2003 when the bed and breakfast use ceased. Since then the two buildings have remained vacant. The southern building is a garage for the house.
- two buildings to the north of the courtyard: and a small two-storey, brick building (Building C) which was in the past used for bed and breakfast but is no longer used and a portal frame agricultural building (Building D).

3.3. The various buildings are shown on the plan below and the buildings surveyed are marked A, B, C, and D.



3.4. The photographs below show the four buildings surveyed: -

1. Building A

2. Building B

3. Building C

4. Building D

4. PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

4.1. The proposal is to change the use of the Buildings A and B from bed and breakfast use to residential. Two dwellings would be created in Building A: one in the two-storey part and one in the single storey part. Two rooms would be formed in the roof-space of the single-storey part of the building. Building B would be converted to one dwelling. Buildings C and D would be demolished to create gardens for the two proposed dwellings to be formed in Building A.

5. DESK-TOP STUDY

5.1. About 800 metres to the north-east is the Dimmings Dale and the Ranger Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) (source: Magic Maps) which is a lowland broadleaved, mixed and yew woodland. The survey site is within the SSSI Impact Risk Zone. There are no other statutory nature designations nearby.

5.2. The landscape consists of pasture/grassland with hedges with trees set amongst large areas of woodland. There are individual grassland and woodland site nearby which are identified in the Priority Habitat Inventory (source: Magic Maps). There are three ponds about 1km to the north-east. Overall, it is a landscape where bats are highly likely to be found; both foraging and roosting. There is a wood (0.86 ha. in area) immediately adjoining the site to the north-east.

6. METHODOLOGY.

6.1. On 14th July 2018 Buildings A, B, C, and D building were inspected internally and externally for evidence of bats and suitable potential roost sites.

6.2. Externally, as is evident from the photographs, Buildings A, B and C appear to be in good condition; the mortar appears sound and in place and the roof tiles are tight. There were no visible entry points apart from two possible small gaps beneath the ridge tiles on the southern elevation of Building A. Building D is a portal frame building with long axis from north to south and open at the southern end and with a wide entry opening at the northern end. No evidence of bats was found on the outside of any of the buildings.

6.3. Internally, the buildings were inspected for droppings and other signs of bats such as feeding remains. None of the rooms In Buildings A, B and C were considered suitable for bats and no evidence of bat use was found in them. There are two roof-spaces in Building A; one in the two-storey part of the building and one at the western end of the single-storey part. Both were inspected using a torch. There are no accessible roof-spaces in Buildings B and C. Building D is open to the roof.

6.4. The floor of the roof-space in the two-storey part of Building A is lined with glass fibre and no droppings could be found. The roof is felted with plastic-coated BRM (breathable roof-membrane) which is unsuitable for bats. Height of space about 2.5 to 3 metres. The roof space stretches from across the full width and the full length of the building. With the torch switched off no light penetrated the space indicating that they were no visible entry points into the space. No shredding of the BRM could be seen which would most likely occur if bats used the roof-space and hung on to the roof felt which is where bats regularly hang.

6.5. The roof-space in the single-storey part of Building A has glass-fibre insulation on the floor and plastic-coated BRM (breathable roof-membrane) on the roof. The latter is unsuitable for bats. The roof-space is about 2 metres wide and extends the full width of the building and is there is a partial sub-dividing brick wall the top of which is missing which would allow bats to fly between the two parts of the space. No bat droppings were found and no evidence of shredding of the BRM could be seen.

6.6. No sign of bats was found in Buildings C and D.

6.7. To provide additional verification of the situation an emergence survey was carried out on the evening of the 14th July. The conditions were good for bats, a warm evening about 21 degrees Centigrade, light breeze with two heterodyne detectors used. Sunset was 21:36 hours. From sunset until too dark to observe at around 22.30hrs, no bats were detected emerging from any of the buildings. However, four Pipistrelle bats were seen flying past the western side of the courtyard and building approximately 20 minutes after sunset. These bats were travelling at speed in a direct line from south to north and probably had just left a roost to the south and were going to the north to forage. The speed at which they were travelling made precise identification impossible. However, it

was considered that they were most probably Pipistrelle bats but the precise species could not be identified.

6.8. From 22:10 hours a Common Pipistrelle bats started feeding beneath the sycamore tree to the north of buildings C and D; occasionally leaving but returning throughout the survey.

7. **CONCLUSION**.

7.1. Based on the facts that no evidence of bats was found in any of the four buildings, the lack of entry-points in the three brick buildings and that no bats were seen leaving or exiting the buildings I consider that none of the four existing buildings have potential for bat use.

7.2. From my survey I can also confirm that no other protected species would be affected by the proposals for this barn, in particular barn owls.