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Principal: Ken Wainman. Class 2 licence.

Bat Survey Report 2021

Building Inspection Report

Client: **Mrs Carney**

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

Grid Reference: **SK044424**

Date of inspection: **20th May 2021**



1 INTRODUCTION.

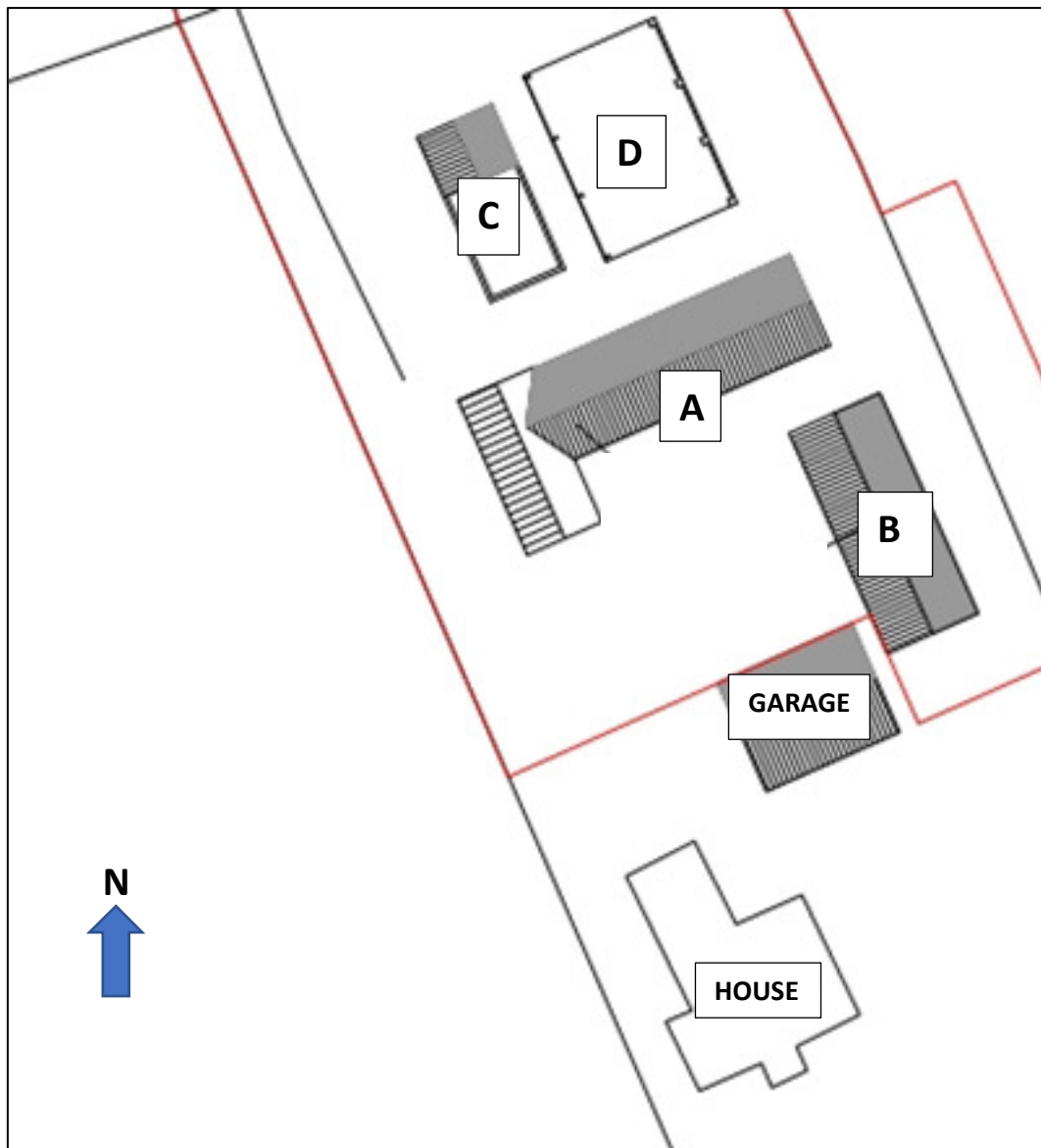
- 1.1. Bats are a protected species under the Wildlife and Countryside act 1981 (as amended); and the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations (2017). This latter legislation still applies in the UK post-Brexit. Under this legislation, it is an offence to intentionally or recklessly kill, injure or capture bats, disturb or damage, destroy or prevent access to bat roosts.
- 1.2. This means you may be committing a criminal offence if you:
 - Deliberately take, injure or kill a wild bat
 - Intentionally or recklessly disturb a bat in its roost or deliberately disturb a group of bats.
 - Damage or destroy a place used by bats for breeding or resting (roosts) (even if bats are not occupying the roost at the time)
 - Possess or advertise/sell/exchange a bat of a species found in the wild in the EU (dead or alive) or any part of a bat.
 - Intentionally or recklessly obstruct access to a bat roost.
- 1.3. For more detail please see the legislation.
- 1.4. All bat roosts are protected whether or not bats are present at the time of the 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 Protected Species Licence from Natural England may need to be obtained before works can begin.
- 1.5. Four buildings were inspected; the two buildings it is proposed to develop and two other buildings - a brick building and an agricultural shed - which are to be demolished. The inspection was carried out on the 21st of May 2021 by Ken Wainman who holds a Class 2 bat survey licence. The possibility of the presence of any other protected species, such as barn owls, and birds generally was also investigated.
- 1.6. All four buildings were inspected for bats in 2018 and a dusk emergence survey was also carried out then as part of an earlier planning application.

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, close to the small settlement of Threapwood. The location is open countryside containing pasture fields with trees and hedges. 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. Buildings A and B are to be converted to form a single house. Buildings C and D are to be removed. It is the owner’s intention, subject to planning permission, to rebuild or replace the agricultural building elsewhere on the site.



3.2. There are several buildings at the Farm: –

- the house;
- Buildings A & B - brick buildings with clay tile roofs. Both are former farm buildings that 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. Building A is part 2-Storey and part single-storey. Building B is single-storey;

- a single-storey brick-built garage on the south side of the courtyard;
- Building C – a small two-storey, brick building which was in the past used for bed and breakfast but is no longer used;
- Building D - a portal frame agricultural building.

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

	
1. Building A	2. Building B
	
3. Building C	4. Building D

4. DESK-TOP STUDY

- 4.1. About 800 metres to the northeast 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.
- 4.2. The landscape consists of pasture/grassland with hedges with trees set amongst large areas of woodland. There are individual grassland and woodland sites nearby which are identified in the Priority Habitat Inventory (source: Magic Maps). There are three ponds about 1km to the northeast. Overall, it is a landscape where bats are highly likely to be found; both foraging and roosting.

- 4.3. There are close grown mature birch and willow trees to the east of Building B and numerous mature native trees growing in the lawn to the north of Buildings C & D and a wood (0.86ha) on adjoining land to the northeast. See the aerial photograph below (source: Google Earth). Details of the trees are contained in the submitted tree survey report.

Fig 1- Aerial Photo



5. METHODOLOGY.

- 5.1. On 20th May 2021 Buildings A, B, C, and D were inspected internally and externally for evidence of bats and suitable potential roost sites. The building inspection was carried out by Ken Wainman who holds a Class 2 bat licence.
- 5.2. Externally, as is evident from the photographs no's 1-4, 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 a long axis from north to south, 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.
- 5.3. 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.
- 5.4. 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. Both have glass fibre laid between the floor joists and a breathable roof membrane beneath the tiles. The latter is unsuitable for bats because their feet can get easily tangled in the membrane. No light could be seen penetrating the darkness. No sign of bats – dropping or stains - was found in either roof space.

- 5.5. No sign of bats was found in the loft in Building B which has clean glass fibre between the floor joists and breathable roof membrane (BRM) beneath the tiles. The ridge height is about 2.5 to 3 metres and no light percolation was detected. The floor of the roof space 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. 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 there were no visible entry points into the space. No shredding of the BRM could be seen which is something that often happens when bats hang from breathable roof membranes.
- 5.6. There is no accessible roof space in Building C. The external inspection of the building revealed no potential access points into the roof space.
- 5.7. Building D is open to the roof and but bats can access through the doorways on the north and south of the barn. No bat droppings or other sign of bats was found in the building.

6. CONCLUSION.

- 6.1. The 2018 survey did not find any sign of bat use of the buildings. In 2021 the situation is very much the same as in 2018; namely, no sign of bats was found in the roof spaces in Buildings A and B or Building D and there are no suitable entry points in buildings A, B, and C. I conclude, based on the fact that the roof spaces and buildings are unchanged from 2018 and that no evidence of bats was found in the buildings, that:
- they are not used by bats;
 - that the proposed development would not cause any harm to bats in the locality;
 - No emergence survey was needed.
- 6.2. From my inspection, I can also confirm that no other protected species would be affected by the proposals for this barn, in particular barn owls.
- 6.3. However, bats can be unpredictable and are dynamic. In the event (unlikely) that bats are found when demolishing the buildings all work should cease immediately and a licenced bat person called for advice.