Bat Survey

TEANFORD MILL

ARDEA ECOLOGY LTD |18/05/2022



Ardea Ecology Ltd

Teanford Mill – Bat Survey

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This report has been produced based on current guidance and methodology and where necessary adapted using the professional experience and knowledge of the surveyor. The report reflects the situation found on site during surveys as accurately as possible, however species such as bats and birds are highly mobile and will freely move between sites. Their presence or absence as detailed in this report does not entirely preclude the possibility of a different outcome.

Even if protected species have been declared not present within a site it would be beneficial for clients to show necessary due diligence when clearing or demolition works are undertaken, in accordance with their legal duty.

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Executive summary

Purpose

This survey and report have been produced to determine the likelihood of roosting bats to be present/absent within a detached building at Teanford Mill, Cheadle, Staffordshire.

Background

Previous bat surveys of the building were undertaken in 2020 and found no evidence of roosting within the building.

In accordance with CIEEM guidance on ecological reporting, where 18 months to 3 years have elapsed since the initial surveys were undertaken it is recommended that the ecological surveys be updated to reflect changes in site conditions and where mobile species such as bats are encountered.

This report details the results of bat surveys carried out in 2022 and should be read in conjunction with the previous survey report by Ardea Ecology from 2020.

Proposal

The owners intend to submit a planning application for the conversion of the mill building into a residential dwelling.

Survey

A daytime inspection of the building was undertaken on the 11/05/2022, the survey was undertaken by Jonathan Ayres (NE Licence CL20 Level 4 2015-11635-CLS) an experienced and licensed bat and barn owl ecologist.

No evidence of bat usage of the building was recorded during the inspection.

Following the inspection of the building an evening emergence survey was undertaken. Two surveyors were used to ensure coverage of the front and rear elevations of the building, in addition thermal and infra-red cameras were used to record any bats emerging from the building in darkness.

During the survey no bats were observed emerging from the building, the first bat observed was a single common pipistrelle bat commuting across the front of the building at 21:28 heading towards mature trees off site to the north where bats were observed feeding for the duration of the survey.

Only a small number of bat passes were recorded over the site these were largely all common pipistrelle bats commuting over the site and noctule bats which were heard but not seen, overall, as per the previous surveys only low numbers of bats were present over the site.

Common pipistrelle are the most common species of bat encountered in this area and are a common and widespread species in England. Development of the building on site is unlikely to impact any habitats or roosts used by this species, no habitat is present within or immediately adjacent to the building as the ground is composed of concrete/gravel hardstanding.

Recommendations

As no bats were recorded roosting within the building works can proceed without a development licence. In order to achieve a measurable net gain in biodiversity for the development it is recommended that an external bat box be fitted onto the rear elevation of the building away from artificial light.

1. Introduction

1.1 Ecologist Details

This report has been produced by Jonathan Ayres CEnv MCIEEM FLS, an experienced ecologist with over 17 year's professional experience of ecological consultancy and as a local planning authority ecologist. Jonathan holds mitigation and survey licences for bats (level 4 CL20), great crested newts and barn owls and has carried out numerous ecological supervisory works for demolition and development, where there is potential for bats to be encountered and is registered with Natural England as part of the BMCL (CL21) low impact licence scheme.

1.2 Commissioned by

This report has been commissioned by the owner in support of proposed works to modify a detached mill building.

1.3 Purpose of the Report

To provide an update to the bat surveys undertaken in 2020 in order to determine the current bat roost potential of the building to be redeveloped and to provide advice on further survey and licensing if needed.

1.3.1 Site Name

The survey was undertaken at Teanford Mill, Breach Lane, Upper Tean, Staffordshire, ST10 4EW - within the boundary of Staffordshire Moorlands District Council Local Planning Authority. Central Grid Reference: SK 00623 40612.

1.3.2 Site Description

The survey site consisted of a former mill building, two-storey in height of brick construction with a flat corrugated roof.

The immediate surrounding land consists of made ground, largely of concrete hardstanding and gravel driveways.

1.3.3 Proposed Works

The owner intends to seek planning permission for the refurbishment and alterations to the existing building to form a single dwelling. Works will entail extensive internal and external modifications.

1.3.4 Location Plan



Figure 1 – Building location plan.

1.4 Aims of this Report

To provide an update to the bat survey report undertaken in 2020 in accordance with CIEEM guidance on the age of ecological reporting; in order to provide an up-to-date survey of the building in order to assess the potential for roosting bats and to provide recommendations for further survey and/or licensing and provide the LPA with sufficient information with which to make an informed decision on the planning application.

1.4.1 Planning Policy and Legislation

Full details on the latest relevant planning and legislation, consulted in relation to ecological issues are provided in Appendix B.

2. Methods

2.1 Scope of the assessment

The zone of influence is the development site and its immediate surroundings. The development site is reasonably isolated from the surrounding land by hardstanding and contains no vegetated areas.

Types of features to be considered during the survey are protected and priority habitats and species, those listed as species of principal importance and those listed on the local biodiversity action plan in particular bats and barn owls.

2.2 Pre-survey data search

A search of freely accessible public databases and web-based searches have were undertaken, these included:

- MAGIC (Multi-Agency Geographical Information for the Countryside) website;
- Ordnance Survey mapping (to identify potentially notable habitats and constraints);
- Aerial photography (e.g., Google aerial, Bing mapping);
- Staffordshire Moorlands District Council Local Plan;
- Staffordshire Local Biodiversity Action Plan; and
- UK Biodiversity Action Plan (UKBAP).

2.2.1 Surveyor information

Jonathan Ayres CEnv MCIEEM FLS an experienced ecologist undertook the survey. Jonathan has considerable experience in ecological consultancy and local government ecological/planning work, having worked as an ecologist for the Peak District National Park Authority and as a local council ecologist for several years in Staffordshire and holds Natural England survey licences for bats, great crested newts and barn owls.

2.3 Previous surveys

Previous bat surveys undertaken in 2020 recorded no bats emerging from the building during evening emergence surveys.

2.4 Field Survey

A survey of the building was undertaken on the 16/05/2022 weather conditions were dry and cloudy.

The survey was undertaken by Jonathan Ayres who holds a Level 4 (CL20) survey licence for bats. The survey involved detailed inspections of the internal and external sections of the buildings, where access was possible. These were assessed using a roost checklist and were then subject to detailed internal and external examination in accordance with the BCT 2016 survey guidelines; looking for any evidence of historic use by bats such as droppings, feeding remains and staining. In addition, droppings (whitewash), pellets and feathers of barn owl were also searched for.

The internal conditions were also assessed in order to determine the suitability for bat roosting and the likelihood of bat roosting potential, based on the construction, lighting, temperature, humidity and other factors such as the use of the building and levels of human disturbance.

Table 1 below adapted from the BCT 2016 bat survey provides guidance on the level of suitability based on the findings of the PRA survey.

Suitability	Description of Roosting Features
Negligible	Negligible roosting features likely to be used by roosting bats i.e. lack of cavities or crevices, building open to the elements and lacking sufficient cover during daylight hours, building with no obvious roosting features.
Low	A structure with one or more potential roost features that could be used by individual bats opportunistically. However, these potential roost sites do not provide enough space, shelter, protection, appropriate conditions and/or suitable surrounding habitat to be used on a regular basis or by larger numbers of bats (i.e. unlikely to be suitable for maternity or hibernation).
Medium	A structure with one or more potential roost features that could be used by bats due to their size, shelter, protection, conditions and surrounding habitat but unlikely to support a roost of high conservation status (with respect to roost type only – the assessments in this table are made irrespective of species conservation status, which is established after presence is confirmed).
High	A structure or tree with one or more potential roost sites that are obviously suitable for use by larger numbers of bats on a more regular basis and potentially for longer periods of time due to their size, shelter, protection, conditions and surrounding habitat.

Table 1 – Bat roost suitability based on potential roost features

3. Results

3.1 Desk based records search

Bat species known to occur within the site based on previous surveys undertaken in 2020 include noctule, common pipistrelle and brown long-eared bats.

Within 2km of the site one development licence has been issued for bats by Natural England in the last few years, for common pipistrelle bats:

- 2017-30264-EPS-MIT located 1.3km metres to the northwest of the site for common pipistrelle in 2017.

The site is located within a SSSI impact risk zone however the proposed works are not considered to trigger the requirement to consult Natural England.

3.2 Building survey

The building is largely unchanged since the previous inspection in 2020, the main change is that window openings that previously were uncovered have now been sealed with wooden boards to keep out wind and rain and reduce any issues with nesting birds such as feral pigeons which can present a potential health risk through the accumulation of droppings and associated airborne dust particles.

No evidence of bat usage of the building was observed internally or externally during the survey. Previously feeding remains and droppings were observed in the first-floor section of the building however no such evidence was present during this updated survey.



Figure 2 – External elevations of the building.

4. Activity Survey

4.1 Evening Emergence Survey 11/05/2022

Previous surveys undertaken in 2020 found no evidence of bat roosting within the building, bats were seen occupying an adjacent building which will be unaffected by the proposed refurbishment of the mill building.

In order to provide an update on the previous surveys at the site a single evening emergence survey was undertaken on the 11/05/2022 in optimal weather conditions during the most optimal survey window as per BCT guidance.

Sunset on the 11/05/2022 was at 20:54, temperature at the start of the survey was 13C. Two surveyors were used to cover the front and rear elevations of the building. A Pulsar thermal imaging camera and Sony AX700 infra-red camera were set at the rear of the building to cover the roofline and rear elevation. A single Sony AX100 infra-red camera was used to cover the front elevation of the building.

Bat detectors used during the survey included a combination of full spectrum EchoMeter Touch and Batlogger M devices.

Surveyors were in position 15 minutes prior to sunset and the survey was undertaken for 1.5 hours after sunset as per BCT guidance. Observations of bats within the site and where possible off-site were noted.

The first bat to be observed was a single common pipistrelle heading south to north across the front of the building at 21:28, this bat was commuting to foraging habitat off-site to the north and was observed continually feeding around mature trees off-site. Single common pipistrelle bats were also observed over the site at the rear of the building at 21:35 onwards mainly on commuting passes over the site.

Noctule bats were first recorded at 21:51 high over the site and then on a sporadic basis for the remainder of the survey.

No other bat species were recorded during the survey and no bats were observed emerging from or entering the building.

Overall the levels of bat activity were low with only a small number of passes recorded during the survey, the majority of bats were seen commuting over the site to foraging habitat such as grassland and mature trees off-site to the north.

4.1.1 Bat or Barn Owl presence/absence

At the current time it is considered that roosting bats are absent from the building to be re-developed and bats and their roosts are not considered to be impacted by the proposed works and may proceed without the need for a development licence issued by Natural England, as with all mobile species bats can change roost sites on a regular basis and it is the responsibility of the developer to ensure buildings are free from nesting birds or bats prior to works development works being undertaken.

No evidence of barn owl usage of the building was recorded during the survey and this species is considered to be absent from the site.

5. Recommendations

5.1.1 Recommendations

At the current time bats and their roosts are unlikely to be impacted by the proposed works as no evidence to indicate current roosting within the building was recorded during these updated surveys in 2022; therefore, works may proceed without the need for a development licence issued by Natural England.

As with all mobile species bats can move roosts on a regular basis and it is recommended that the developer ensures no bats or nesting birds are present when works commence.

5.1.2 Biodiversity Enhancement

The building is located within an area of hard standing with no vegetation or habitat present, the development will consist of external and internal alterations to the building therefore the works will have no impact outside of the current developed area.

In order to make a measurable net gain in biodiversity for the development it is recommended that a single cavity bat box is installed as close to the roof line as possible on the rear elevation of the building away from any windows or artificial light to provide new roosting for bat species on site.



Figure 3 – A typical crevice style bat box typically used by species such as common pipistrelle.

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Appendix A. Survey Results



Key to Figure

- Pipipip flightline
- Thermal camera
- Surveyor location
- IR camera
- boundary

Figure 1 - Bat activity survey

Teanford Mill 11/05/2022

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Appendix B. Planning Policy and Legislation

B.1 National Planning Policy Framework, 2019

Chapter 15 Section 170 of the NPPF states the following:

Planning policies and decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by:

a) protecting and enhancing valued landscapes, sites of biodiversity or geological value and soils (in a manner commensurate with their statutory status or identified quality in the development plan);

b) recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside, and the wider benefits from natural capital and ecosystem services – including the economic and other benefits of the best and most versatile agricultural land, and of trees and woodland;

c) maintaining the character of the undeveloped coast, while improving public access to it where appropriate;

d) minimising impacts on and providing net gains for biodiversity, including by establishing coherent ecological networks that are more resilient to current and future pressures;

e) preventing new and existing development from contributing to, being put at unacceptable risk from, or being adversely affected by, unacceptable levels of soil, air, water or noise pollution or land instability. Development should, wherever possible, help to improve local environmental conditions such as air and water quality, taking into account relevant information such as river basin management plans; and

f) remediating and mitigating despoiled, degraded, derelict, contaminated and unstable land, where appropriate.

Section 174 states

To protect and enhance biodiversity and geodiversity, plans should:

a) Identify, map and safeguard components of local wildlife-rich habitats and wider ecological networks, including the hierarchy of international, national and locally designated sites of importance for biodiversity; wildlife corridors and stepping stones that connect them; and areas identified by national and local partnerships for habitat management, enhancement, restoration or creation; and

b) promote the conservation, restoration and enhancement of priority habitats, ecological networks and the protection and recovery of priority species; and identify and pursue opportunities for securing measurable net gains for biodiversity.

Section 175 states

When determining planning applications, local planning authorities should apply the following principles:

a) if significant harm to biodiversity resulting from a development cannot be avoided (through locating on an alternative site with less harmful impacts), adequately mitigated, or, as a last resort, compensated for, then planning permission should be refused;

b) development on land within or outside a Site of Special Scientific Interest, and which is likely to have an adverse effect on it (either individually or in combination with other developments), should not normally be permitted. The only exception is where the benefits of the development in the location proposed clearly outweigh both its likely impact on the features of the site that make it of special scientific interest, and any broader impacts on the national network of Sites of Special Scientific Interest;

c) development resulting in the loss or deterioration of irreplaceable habitats (such as ancient woodland and ancient or veteran trees) should be refused, unless there are wholly exceptional reasons and a suitable compensation strategy exists; and

d) development whose primary objective is to conserve or enhance biodiversity should be supported; while opportunities to incorporate biodiversity improvements in and around developments should be encouraged, especially where this can secure measurable net gains for biodiversity.

Section 177 states

The presumption in favour of sustainable development does not apply where the plan or project is likely to have a significant effect on a habitats site (either alone or in combination with other plans or projects), unless an appropriate assessment has concluded that the plan or project will not adversely affect the integrity of the habitats site.

B.2 Local Planning Policy

Stafford Borough Council Adopted Local Plan Polices in relation to ecology state the following:

Policy E2 Sustainable Rural Development

For those rural areas outside the settlements identified in Spatial Principle SP3, and outside the Green Belt (within which development is controlled in accordance with national guidance, and Policy E5), support will be given to the achievement of rural sustainability by encouraging:

i. development on Recognised Industrial Estates consistent with Policy E3;

ii. provision for the essential operational needs of agriculture, forestry or rural businesses;

iii. provision of infrastructure needed to support a sustainable rural economy;

iv. proposals which meet the essential, local development needs of a community, to be evidenced by the developer, and which cannot demonstrably be met within the Settlements identified by Spatial Principle SP3 and in the context of criteria in Spatial Principle SP7;

v. diversification of the agricultural economy;

vi. proposals which help to conserve or improve the rural environment;

vii. facilities for tourism, consistent with Policy E6;

viii. recreation uses appropriate to a rural location;

ix. provision for renewable energy generation, in accordance with Policy N3;

x. residential development in accordance with Policy C5;

xi. protection of the best and most versatile agricultural land by using areas of poorer quality land in preference to higher quality land for new development.

All development in these areas should, where appropriate and feasible:

a. make use of suitable existing buildings or previously developed land before proposing new buildings or development of Greenfield land;

b. be well related to an existing farmstead or group of buildings, or be located close to an established settlement, except where there is an agricultural or other justification for a use in a specific location;

c. be complementary to, and not prejudice, any viable agricultural operations on a farm and other existing viable uses;

d. respect and protect the natural landscape, the built vernacular character of the area, and any designated or undesignated heritage asset;

e. be of a high quality of design, consistent with the requirements of Policy N1;

f. be appropriately designed for its purposes;

g. not be detrimental to the amenity of the area, or it is demonstrated that alternative uses are preferable for reasons of heritage interest;

h. provide appropriate crime prevention measures, including for safety and security.

Provision should be made for any necessary mitigating or compensatory measures to address any harmful implications.

Within rural areas, developments that provide for the sustainable use and re-use of rural buildings for appropriate uses will be permitted where:

a. it gives priority to economic uses before residential uses and it has been demonstrated that every attempt has been made to secure a suitable commercial re-use;

b. in the case of alterations and replacements of residential properties, it accords with Policy C5. Permitted development rights may be removed from dwellings;

c. it is complementary to and does not prejudice any viable agricultural operations on a farm and other existing viable uses;

d. the building is structurally sound and is capable of conversion without the need for extension, or significant alteration or rebuilding;

e. the form, bulk and general design of the building is in keeping with its surroundings, and the proposal and any associated development will not harm the character of the countryside and the landscape setting. This should be assessed through an appraisal of character and significance of the building including, its context, its sensitivity in terms of landscape setting, and its potential for change. Proposals should have regard to the West Midlands Farmsteads and Landscapes Project or successor documents when making such assessments;

f. the building is well related to an existing settlement and has access to local services and / or is close to a regular public transport service to settlements identified in Spatial Policy SP3 or those outside the Borough;

g. it will not harm the historic fabric or character of any traditional building or historic farmstead and, in the case of a Listed Building, the proposal will not harm the significance of the building and is supported by an understanding of the significance of the farmstead and its landscape setting;

h. the building is large enough to be converted without the need for additional buildings, new extensions or significant alteration;

i. development does not harm any protected species or habitats on site and provide habitat mitigation and enhancement.

Policy N4 The Natural Environment & Green Infrastructure

The Borough's natural environment will be protected, enhanced and improved by:

a. Implementation of the Staffordshire Biodiversity Action Plan, the Stafford Borough Green Infrastructure Strategy and guidance including 'Biodiversity by Design' or any other successor documents to increase and enhance biodiversity, in terms of habitats and species as well as geological conservation or geodiversity through appropriate management for a network of:

i. Designated Sites (international, national, regional and local);

ii. Biodiversity Action Plan habitats and species populations;

iii. Wildlife Corridors and Ecological Networks;

b. Conservation and enhancement of water courses and their settings for their landscape character, biodiversity and recreational value, particularly for the Borough's extensive rivers and extensive canal system;

c. Protecting, conserving and enhancing the natural and historic environment and irreplaceable semi-natural habitats, such as ancient woodlands, and ancient or veteran trees;

d. Increasing the ability of landscapes and ecosystems to adapt to different weather patterns and climate change, by increasing the range and extent of habitats, informed by Biodiversity Opportunity mapping;

e. Ensuring that no new development takes place in areas where environmental risks, particularly flooding, cannot be properly managed;

f. Any new development where damage to the natural environment is unavoidable must include measures to mitigate and / or compensate such impacts, through the establishment of replacement habitats or features, including appropriate site management regimes.

B.3 Protected and Priority Species

For the purposes of this report, protected species are taken to be those which are protected under European and UK legislation, the following list of relevant legislation that have been consulted are detailed below:

- Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended);
- The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017;
- The Conservation of Habitats and Species (Amendment) (EU Exit) Regulations 2019;
- The Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000;
- Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006;
- The Protection of Badgers Act 1992;
- The Hedgerow Regulations 1997;
- UK Post-2010 Biodiversity Framework.

The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (the “Habitats Regulations”) is the principle means of transposing the Habitats Directive and the Birds Directive, and updates the Conservation (Natural Habitats, &c.) Regulations 1994 (“the 1994 regulations”) in England and Wales.

The Birds Directive (79/409/EEC) and the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended), which states that all birds, their nests and eggs are protected by law. Special considerations of Schedule 1 Birds and European Protected Species should be made.

The EC Council Directive on the Conservation of Natural Habitats of Wild Flora and Fauna, 1992 (The 'Habitats Directive') requires the UK to maintain and/or restore naturally occurring habitats, especially those which are deemed to be vulnerable and declining in Europe. It also requires the protection of many species of plants and animals which are similarly threatened and declining throughout their European range, therefore giving effect to both site and species protection objectives. Appendix One lists habitats, and Appendix Two, lists species some of which UK has responsibility to maintain in favourable conservation status.

The Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act came into force on 1st Oct 2006. Section 41 (S41) of the Act requires the Secretary of State to publish a list of habitats and species which are of principal importance for the conservation of biodiversity in England. The list has been drawn up in consultation with Natural England, as required by the Act. The S41 list is used to guide decision-makers such as public bodies, including local and regional authorities, in implementing their duty under section 40 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006, to have regard to the conservation of biodiversity in England, when carrying out their normal functions.

The Secretary of State has published a list of species and habitats considered to be of principal importance for conserving biodiversity in England under the UK Post-2010 Biodiversity Framework. This is known as the England Biodiversity Priority (EBP) list, previously referred to as Local Biodiversity Action Plan (LBAP), of which there are 56 habitats and 943 species (Natural England, 2015). The EBP list is used to guide planning authorities in implementing their duty under the NERC Act.