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**SURVEY RELATING TO BUNGALOW AND
FARM BUILDINGS AT
ASHLEA FARM, THREAPWOOD.**

DATE OF SURVEY: 27th March 2012

PURPOSE OF SURVEY

It is intended to demolish the existing bungalow (with the exception of the attached brick garage/workshop) and farm buildings and replace with a new dwelling. The bungalow has been unoccupied for at least two years, whilst the farm buildings are partly in use for the storage of farm equipment and as stables. This survey and appraisal is to ensure that no protected species are affected by the works proposed which will involve removal of all buildings at Ashlea farm as shown on the site plan. In this particular case the creatures most likely to be affected would be bats, a European protected species, and their roost. It was also possible to determine whether any barn owls were present in the outbuildings, as signs of this creature are normally far more obvious.

DESCRIPTION:

The bungalow, currently unoccupied, comprises walls of red brick with small clay tile roof, essentially single storey with part first floor accommodation within the roof space, although the greater part of the roof space forms a separate unused loft section. The farm buildings are fairly extensive but apart from the garage and workshop which are of brick construction, are not traditional buildings and comprise a combination of concrete block and corrugated sheet walls with plastic sheet roofing. At the time of the survey the bungalow was considered to be in a reasonable condition, whilst the farm buildings were in need of some repair, but generally sound in terms of providing protection from wind and rain.

Photographs of the building are attached as an Appendix to this survey.

APPRAISAL:

The bungalow was inspected internally and externally for its suitability for bats, including an inspection of the loft space. The roof was considered to be in a very sound condition with all clay tiles and ridge tiles complete, affording no opportunities for bats to secrete themselves behind the tiles. The soffit boards were also a tight fit to the brickwork with no gaps evident which would enable bats to access the loft space. An inspection of the loft space confirmed no evidence of occupation by bats. However, it was not possible to check the chimneys of the bungalow and there is a possibility that bats would be able to gain access despite the cowls (which prevent birds entering), and taking into account the fact the chimneys have not been in use for two years.

In respect of the farm buildings these, not being of traditional construction, held little potential for bats. The level of natural light was very good in most sections of the buildings and there would also be disturbance at fairly regular times. The interior was checked for droppings or other indications but no evidence of current or historic use by bats was discernible, probably because there was a significant degree of natural light and the open aspect of the sheds which are not particularly attractive to crevice seeking bats.

CONCLUSION

There was no evidence from the inspection of the bungalow or farm buildings to suggest current use by bats, but this must be qualified with some caution in respect of the chimneys to the bungalow. I consider it unlikely that a bat roost or roosts could be present as occupation (and use of the chimneys) was only two years ago, but suggest that care would need to be exercised in demolishing these parts of the building and if any signs of bats encountered, that a licensed person is contacted. Taking into account the environment around, this would be considered to provide a good habitat for bats with many mature trees suitable as roosting areas. Other than the slight possibility of the use of the chimneys, the bungalow could not be considered to have any potential in its present condition. However, I consider that in the interests of biodiversity, some measures as part of the scheme for a new dwelling, being a substantial property, should be included by providing a small roost area, possibly in the roof space, for crevice seeking bats. Details of such measures could be agreed at a later stage and be reinforced by a planning condition.

It was also possible as part of this survey to establish that no barn owls were using the outbuilding as evidence of their use in the form of pellets and feathers is very clear.