TOUCH PROPERTIES LIMITED

BAT SURVEY REPORT

Smithfield Public House, Blythe Bridge

October 2007

fpcr

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fpcr Lockington Hall, Lockington,
Derby DE74 2RH. Tel 01509 672772
Fax 01509 674565 mail@fpcr.co.uk

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 FPCR were commissioned by Touch Properties limited, to conduct an initial visual inspection and nocturnal bat survey at The Smithfield pub, in Blythe Bridge, (Figure 1). The surveys were commissioned to assess whether there are any statutory constraints to proposed improvement works from the presence of a bat roost or nesting barn owls.

1.2 The site is located just off Uttoxeter Road, in the Village of Blythe Bridge, approximately 3km south east of Stoke on Trent (Grid reference SJ 956 412). The site comprises a disused public house and coach house to the rear, with associated hardstanding. No other major habitats are present within the site boundary. Surrounding land use comprises woodland to the west and north with built environment to the east and south.

2.0 METHODOLOGY

Bats

External / Internal visual assessments

2.1 The exterior of the buildings were visually assessed for potential access points and evidence of bat activity. Features such as small gaps under barge/soffit/fascia boards, raised or missing roof/ridge tiles and gaps at gable ends, which have potential as access points, were sought. Evidence that bats actively used these potential access points would include staining within gaps and bat droppings or urine staining under gaps; a note being made wherever these were present. Indicators that potential access points had not been recently used would include the presence of cobwebs and general detritus within the access. The visual assessment was carried out following periods of dry weather to maximize recording of visible evidence.

2.2 The interior of the buildings, including any present roof voids, were also visually assessed for evidence of bat activity and/or for the potential to be used by bats. Evidence of a roost would be determined by the presence of a dead or live bat, concentrated piles or scattered droppings, food remains such as insect wing fragments as well as scratch marks and/or staining.

2.3 These surveys were conducted by a licensed bat worker and a trainee bat worker.

Nocturnal Surveys

2.4 The emergence survey was undertaken at viewpoints where all aspects of the buildings, could be monitored. The emergence survey was carried from 30 minutes prior to and 45 minutes following sunset. The number and species of bats observed emerging, roosting or swarming was recorded during the survey. All surveys were undertaken by bat ecologists during appropriate weather conditions (i.e temperatures over 10 degrees Celsius, little wind and no rain).

Desktop study

2.5 In addition, consultations were made with Staffordshire Ecological records office for any data pertaining to bat roosts/sightings within the local area.

3.0 RESULTS

Bats (Figure 2)

External / Internal visual assessments

3.1 Building 1 is two-storey, brick built public house, with a hipped/pitched slate tile roof and some two storey, flat felted roof sections. Gables, soffits, fascias, flashing and roof voids were all present. Barge boards were absent. Other external features of note include semi-derelict sections and boarded windows. Potential bat access points comprised gaps under roof/ridge tiles, gaps in brickwork which could potentially lead to cavities, gaps under fascias, gaps under soffits and open ventilation shafts. (During the survey one suspected common pipistrelle bat dropping was observed on the ground storey window sill on the western hipped end. No other evidence was recorded.)

3.2 Internally a number roof voids were present. The main void was approximately 3.5m in height and smaller roof void to the north was approximately 1.5m in height. The roof void was partially underfelted, partially underboarded with modern timber truss construction. During the survey, no previous/current evidence of bat occupation was recorded.

3.3 Building 2 is a two storey, brick built coach house with a pitched clay tile roof. Gables with barge boards and corbelled brickwork were present, but soffits, fascias and flashing absent. This building was semi-derelict with collapsed flooring. Potential bat access points comprised gaps under roof/ridge tiles and gaps in corbelled brick work. No internal access was possible as the building was securely sealed for health and safety reasons. No evidence of any current/previous bat occupation was observed at the time of survey.

Nocturnal Surveys

3.4 The emergence (dusk) survey was conducted on 19th September 2007. During the emergence survey one common pipistrelle bat was observed in transit over the site in a westerly direction. No bats were seen emerging or entering any of the buildings on site during the survey. No other bat activity was recorded despite suitable weather conditions.

Desktop study

3.5 Staffordshire Ecological Records Centre had data for bat species within the local area (see Figure 1). None of these records fell with the curtilage of the site. A number of common pipistrelle roosts/sightings were reported to the south and west of the site. A large, suspected common pipistrelle maternity colony was reported approximately 100m to the south of the site.

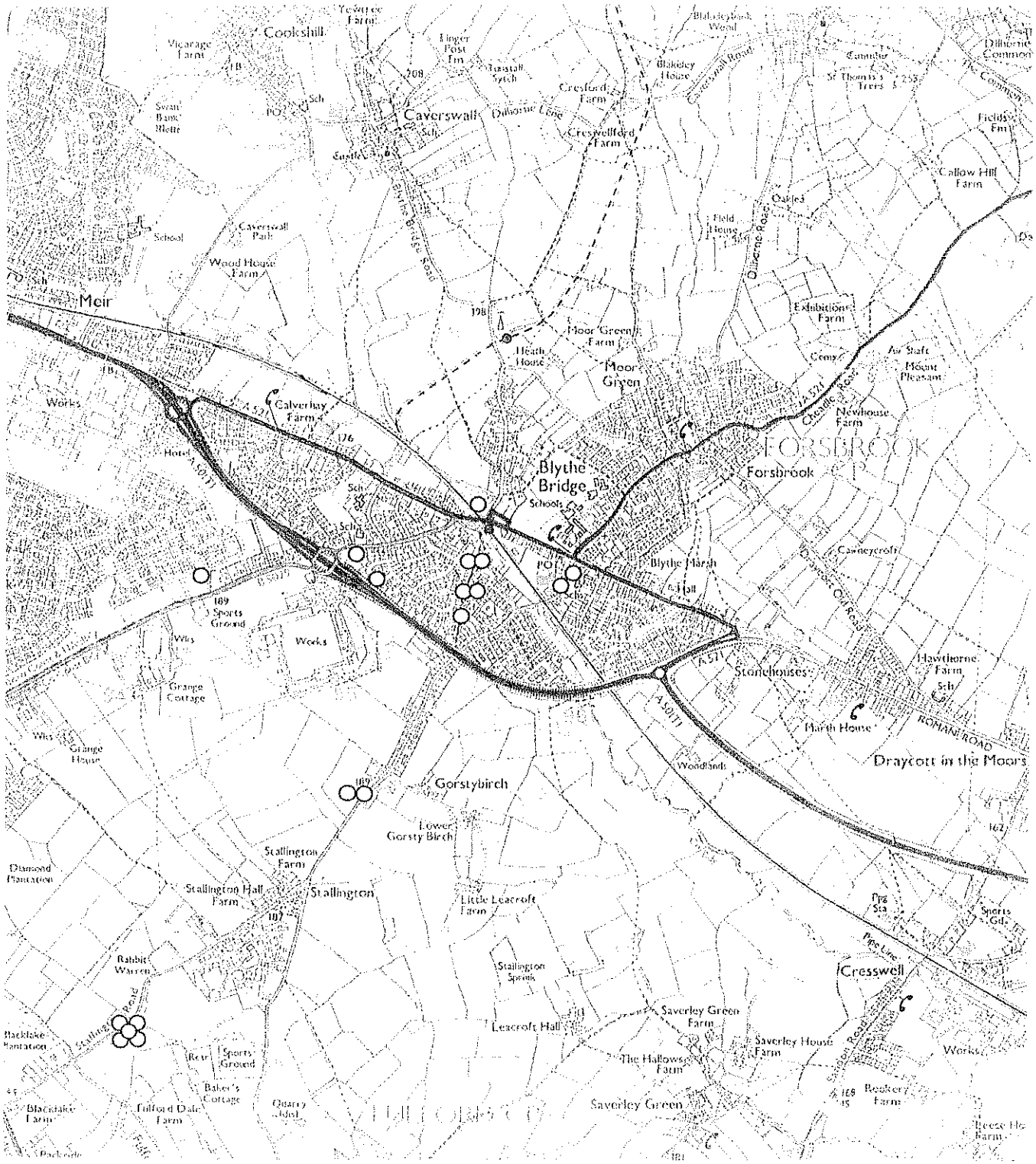
4.0 DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Bats

4.1 During the visual inspections, one common pipistrelle bat dropping was recorded on a ground floor window at the western-hipped end of the building. However, during the emergence survey no bats were observed emerging from the building, but a common pipistrelle bat was identified in transit through the site. No further evidence of bat occupation was recorded in association with the buildings. It is considered that if a roost was present within the building, more physical evidence would be observed. Therefore, it has been determined that the dropping is likely to be from a bat in flight around the building on its way from/to foraging areas or roosting sites. The abundance of local records and observations made during the emergence survey supports this conclusion.

4.2 From the completed surveys, it has been concluded that a bat roost is not in the on site buildings. Therefore, the presence of a bat roost in the on site building has been determined to be reasonably unlikely and is not considered to pose a statutory constraint to redevelopment. Furthermore, the completion of these surveys is considered to meet the requirement of PPS9.

4.3 As potential access points were observed it is possible that an occasionally used roost, used by a small number of bats maybe situated in the building. Roosts used on an occasional basis are extremely difficult to identify. The loss of such a roost if present, would not have an impact on a significant group of animals or effect their ability to reproduce or rear young and be below the level at which a license would be necessary. Therefore, it is recommended that best practice is employed during demolition. This should comprise careful removal, by hand, of the ridge tiles and roof tiles within 1m of the ridge. In the unlikely event any bats are found during this operation, works should be stopped immediately and further advice sought from FPCR. In the unlikely event that bats are discovered during the redevelopment works, operations should cease immediately and further advice should be sought from an appropriately licensed consultant.



Site Boundary

Common pipistrelle *Pipistrellus pipistrellus* record

Touch Proprties Limited

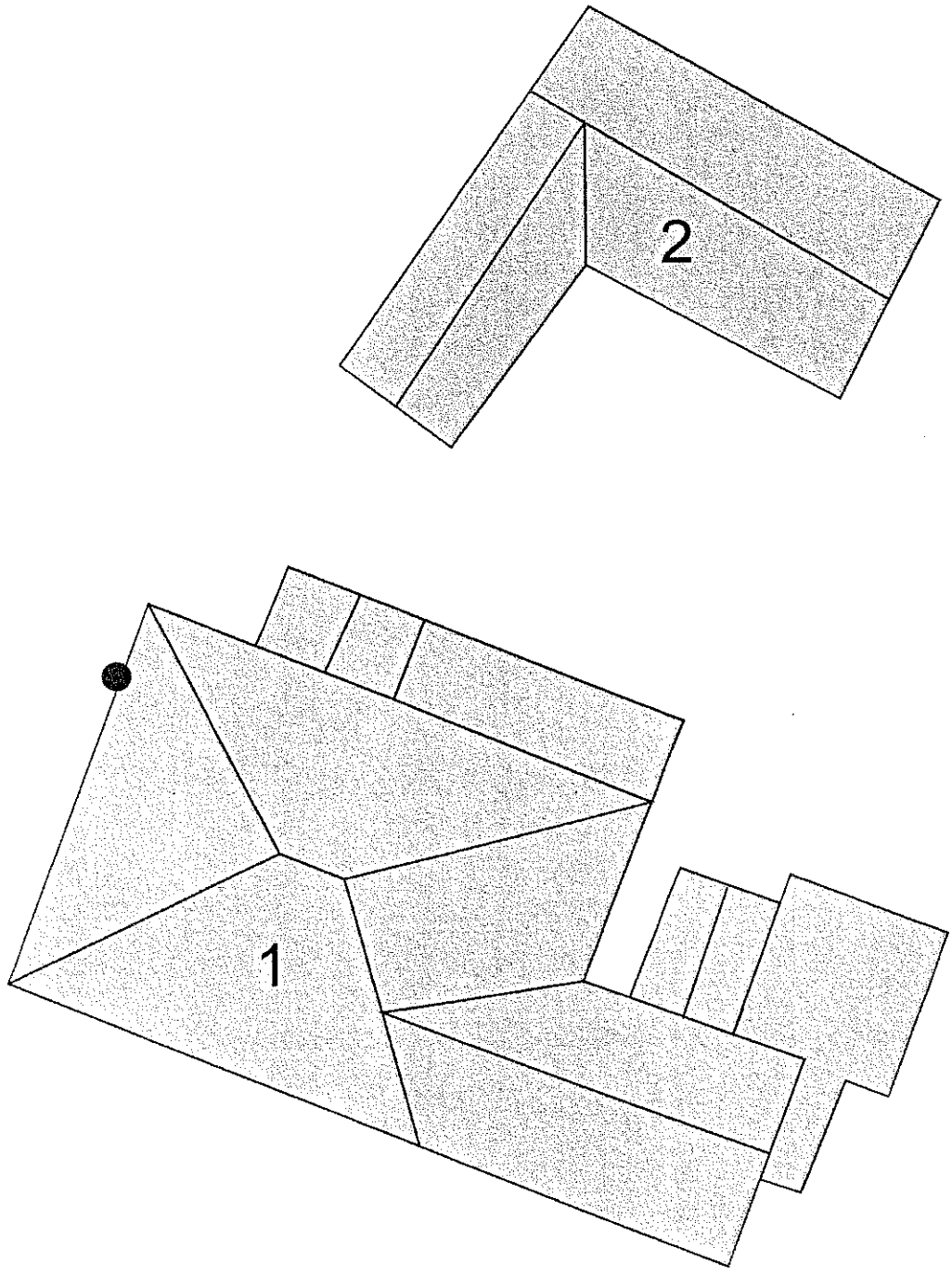
The Smithfield, Uttoxeter Road, Blythe Bridge

Location Plan with Consultation Data

Figure 1

Not to Scale @ A4 October 2007

Lockington Hall, Lockington
Derby DE74 2RH Tel 01509 672772
Fax 01509 674565 mail@tep.co.uk



1 Building with

● Comr on pipistrelle *Pipistrellus pipistrellus* dropping

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The Smithfield, Uttoxeter Road, Blythe Bridge

Building Reference Plan

Figure 2

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