

Outbuildings at Annat Royd Farm Ingbirchworth

Bat and Nesting Bird Survey Report

5th August 2020



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Document ref: MBE/BAT/2020/63/01				
Purpose and Description	Originated	Checked	Reviewed	Date
For Planning	R Bell MCIEEM <i>R Bell</i>	P Middleton MCIEEM <i>P Middleton</i>	R Bell MCIEEM <i>R Bell</i>	05/08/2020

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1. Summary

- 1.1.1 A bat survey of two outbuildings at Annat Royd Farm, Ingbirchworth was commissioned by architect Peter Brown of Marsden Brown Associates, on behalf of the client Mr Alan Dickinson of A. Dickinson & Sons on 21st July 2020.
- 1.1.2 The survey was undertaken to support a planning application to construct a new manager's house at Annat Royd Farm. Construction of this new dwelling will involve either incorporating or demolishing an existing small single-storey kennels and part demolished dairy.
- 1.1.3 This report details the results of a desk study, together with an internal and external inspection of the building, undertaken by Robert Bell of Middleton Bell Ecology on 29th July 2020.
- 1.1.4 No historic bat records relating to the site were received during the data consultation with no evidence of current bat roosting or bat presence of any kind recorded during the building inspection. In addition, no signs of barn owl presence were recorded from the surveyed buildings.
- 1.1.5 A number of potential bat roost locations were recorded from both surveyed buildings, however, these could all be fully inspected from a ladder, with their potential for current or recent bat roosting ruled out. Taking into account the site's elevation and situation, together with the building's construction and size, it is considered that in this instance no further bat survey is necessary to confirm the probable absence of roosting bats.
- 1.1.6 Demolition of B1 will either need to be undertaken outside the bird nesting period (March to September inclusive) or the works will need to be preceded by a nesting bird check undertaken by an experienced ecologist.
- 1.1.7 Bat roosting and bird nesting enhancements have been recommended. This survey is considered to be valid for a period of 24 months.

2. Introduction

- 2.1.1 A bat survey of two outbuildings at Annat Royd Farm, Ingbirchworth was commissioned by architect Peter Brown of Marsden Brown Associates, on behalf of the client Mr Alan Dickinson of A. Dickinson & Sons on 21st July 2020.
- 2.1.2 The survey was undertaken to support a planning application to construct a new manager's house at Annat Royd Farm. Construction of this new dwelling will involve either incorporating or demolishing an existing small single-storey kennels and part demolished dairy.
- 2.1.3 This report details the results of a desk study, together with an internal and external inspection of the building, undertaken by Robert Bell of Middleton Bell Ecology on 29th July 2020.

3. Habitat Assessment

- 3.1.1 The surveyed buildings are located within Annat Royd farmstead, which is located on ground which slopes northeast towards the village of Ingbirchworth and three reservoirs (Royd Moor, Ingbirchworth and Scout Dyke).
- 3.1.2 A treeline along part of Annat Royd Beck partially connects the farmstead to Royd Moor Reservoir (440m east of site), however, the start of the treeline is more than 100m from the surveyed buildings. The farmstead is surrounded by pasture which supports only very occasional woodland copses. Royd Moor Windfarm is located c.450m southwest of the site.
- 3.1.3 The surveyed buildings are located in an exposed position at a relatively high elevation (295m), adjacent to other traditional farm buildings which offer a higher level of bat roost potential. The wider area supports three reservoirs surrounded by some woodland which comprise high quality bat foraging areas, however, connectivity to the nearest reservoir is somewhat limited through the lack of fully connecting treelines or hedgerows.
- 3.1.4 It is anticipated that a varied range of bat species may use the local area during periods of warmer weather and low winds, however, the typical density of bats using habitat in the immediate vicinity of the buildings is expected to be quite low.
- 3.1.5 Habitats surrounding the site have reasonable potential for use by foraging barn owl *Tyto alba*.

Table 1. Location and habitat table

Name and address: Annat Royd Farm, Spicer House Lane, Ingbirchworth, S36 7GG			
OS Grid Ref. SE 21343 04954		Altitude. 295m	
Local Planning Authority: Barnsley Metropolitan Borough Council			
Features on site and adjacent to site			
Feature	On site	Adjacent	Comments
Buildings	✓	✓	Adjacent to other traditional farm buildings

Name and address: Annat Royd Farm, Spicer House Lane, Ingbirchworth, S36 7GG			
River			Annat Royd Beck c.125m to south
Standing water			Royd Moor Reservoir c.440m east
Bridges tunnels and culverts			
Trees			Few scattered trees around farmstead
Woodland			Treeline which connects to reservoir, c120m east
Grassland	✓	✓	Farmstead surrounded by pasture

Figure 1. Site location, as indicated by red circle



3.2 Aims

3.2.1 The survey was conducted to help determine the following:

- The presence/absence of roosting bats.
- Bat roosting areas and access/egress points into the structures.
- The level of bat roost potential associated with the structures.
- The number and species of bat roosting within the structures.
- Identify any barn owl nest sites or roosts in structures
- Identify further survey work or mitigation requirements.

4. Methodology

4.1 Data Consultation

4.1.1 Bat records for locations within 2km of the site were obtained from South Yorkshire Bat Group (SYBG).

4.1.2 A search of the Multi-Agency Geographical Information for the Countryside (MAGIC) website was also undertaken to identify historic European Protected Species (EPS) licences obtained for locations within 2km of the site.

4.2 Field Survey

Preliminary Roost Assessment

4.2.1 The following personnel conducted the preliminary roost assessment on 29th July 2020:

- Robert Bell (MCIEEM; Bat Survey Class license WML-A34-Level 4, 2016-25236-CLS-CLS; Barn Owl Survey Class Licence WML – CL29, 00070)

4.2.2 The following activities were carried out during the surveys in compliance with relevant Bat Survey Guidelines (Collins 2016):

- A brief inspection and assessment of the site and habitats present to within 300m.
- An extensive examination of all parts of the buildings both inside and out to record structural features and condition and to record features that may be suitable for roosting bats. Particular attention was paid to any crevices or gaps in walls, lintels, gaps between beams and joists and to the possibility of finding droppings stuck to walls, floors or other surfaces, or insect remains below beams, among a number of other factors. All signs indicative of a bat roost presence including live or dead bats, droppings, feeding remains, scratch marks and staining were recorded.
- An assessment of the buildings' bat roost potential (negligible, low, moderate, high or confirmed roost).
- If barn owl signs are present, determination of whether the building provides an occupied breeding site, active roost site or temporary roost site.

4.2.3 The following equipment was used or at hand during the survey:

- Clulight
- Binoculars
- Endoscope
- Ladders
- Camera

4.3 Survey Limitations

4.3.1 No significant limitations to an effective preliminary roost assessment were encountered.

5. Results

5.1 Data Consultation

5.1.1 South Yorkshire Bat Group provided 18 bat records for locations within 2km of the site, however, no bat records related to the site itself. Records were identified to bat species or species group comprising either common pipistrelle *Pipistrellus pipistrellus*, noctule *Nyctalus noctula*, Leisler's bat *Nyctalus leisleri*, Daubenton's bat *Myotis daubentonii* or an unidentified pipistrelle species. The closest records to site comprised a Daubenton's bat, recorded in 1983 from Ingbirchworth Reservoir treatment works approximately 1km northeast of the site.

5.1.2 No bat EPS mitigation licences have been issued for locations within 2km of the site.

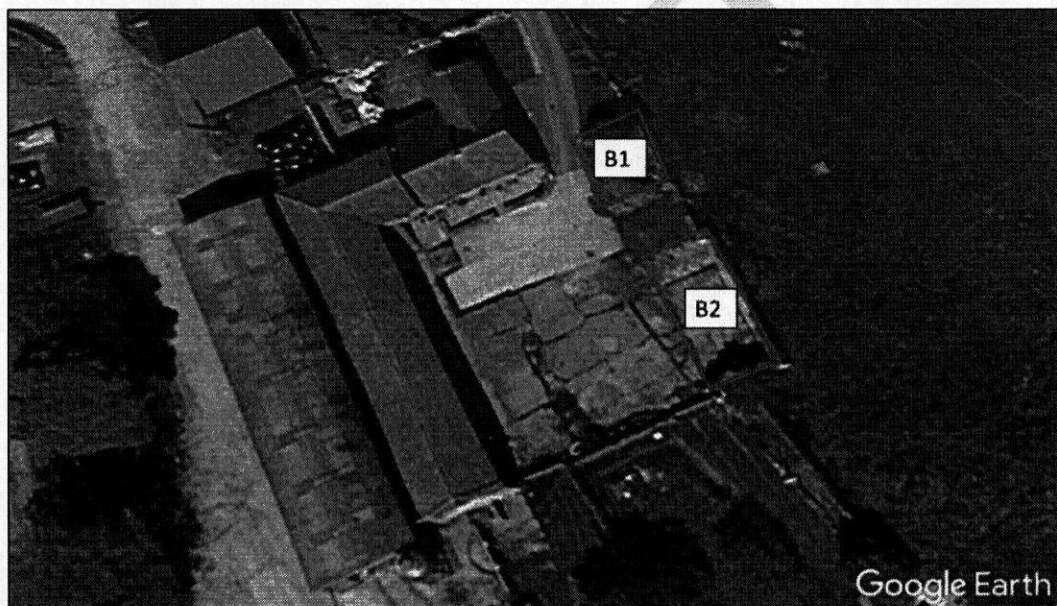
5.2 Field Survey

Preliminary Roost Assessment

5.2.1 For ease of description, the two buildings have been numbered and are shown in Figure 2.

5.2.2 No signs of bats or barn owl were recorded from any area of either building. The two buildings supported a narrow range of potential roost locations, although they could all be thoroughly inspected during the visual inspection.

Figure 2. Building plan



Building 1

5.2.3 Building 1 comprises a c.5m x 5m 19th Century stone-built single-storey outbuilding with a pitched corrugated asbestos sheet covered roof (Plates 1 & 2). The building's walls are solid stone and the roof has wooden barge boards. An open door and two open window frames are present in the southeast gable, with a part-boarded window opening in the northwest gable. The building has extensive ivy *Hedera helix* cover on the southeast gable with extensive Russian vine *Fallopia baldschuanica* cover on the northwest gable.

5.2.4 Potential bat roost features on the exterior of B1 comprise occasional and mainly shallow open joints (Plate 3) and access to the wall tops. No suitable crevices between ivy stems and masonry were noted during the inspection.

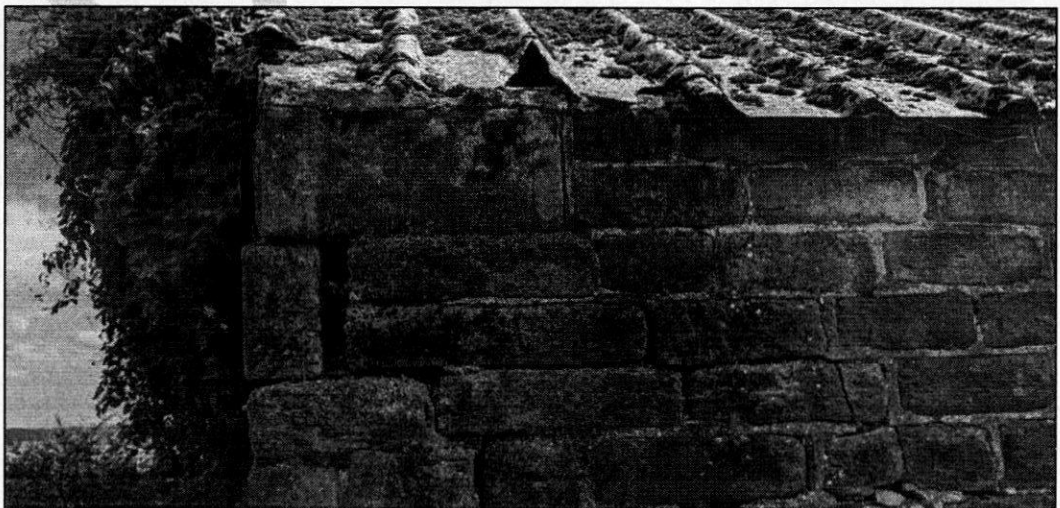
Plate 1. South corner of B1



Plate 2. North corner of B1 with B2 in left of image



Plate 3. Example of open joints and access to wall top on B1



- 5.2.5 Internally, the unlined roof of B1 is suspended on one central king-post roof truss and wood purlins. The building is used as kennels with two metal dog cages and other small areas for storage. Single broad diameter horizontal timbers are built into both gables with the internal walls largely white-washed.
- 5.2.6 A low number of crevices associated with masonry joints are present on the interior of the building, with a crevice above the timber within the southeast gable. A single disused swallow *Hirundo rustica* nest was also recorded on the roof truss. It was notable that numerous swallows were actively nesting in a section of the main barn (outside survey area) at Annat Royd Farm, at the time of survey.

Plate 4. Interior of B1



Building 2

- 5.2.7 Building 2 comprises a part demolished stone dairy that now comprises two remnant solid-stone walls, with an average height of c.2m. The wall tops are exposed allowing weather ingress to the wall's core which is likely to result in unfavourable conditions for roosting bats. There are numerous open joints between masonry however these were found to mainly quite sandy and lacking significant bat roost potential.

Plate 5. East corner of B2



Plate 6. West corner of B2



6. Assessment

6.1 Summary and Evaluation of Findings

- 6.1.1 No historic bat records relating to the site were received during the data consultation with no evidence of current bat roosting or bat presence of any kind recorded during the building inspection. In addition, no signs of barn owl presence were recorded from the surveyed buildings.
- 6.1.2 A number of potential bat roost locations were recorded from both surveyed buildings, however, these could all be fully inspected from a ladder, with their potential for current or recent bat roosting ruled out. Taking into account the site's high elevation and exposure, together with the building's construction and size, it is considered that in this instance, no further bat survey is necessary to confirm the probable absence of roosting bats.

6.2 Legislation and Policy Guidance

Bats

- 6.2.1 Bats receive protection under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 and the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended).
- 6.2.2 It is an offence to:
- Deliberately capture (or take), injure or kill a bat.
 - Intentionally or recklessly disturb bats whilst they are occupying a structure or place used for shelter or protection or obstruct access to any such place.
 - Damage or destroy the breeding or resting place (roost) of a bat.
 - Possess a bat (live or dead), or any part of a bat.
 - Intentionally or recklessly obstruct access to a bat roost.
 - Sell (or offer for sale) or exchange bats (dead or alive), or parts of parts.
- 6.2.3 The Convention on Biological Diversity, signed in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil in 1992, requires member states to develop national strategies and to undertake a range of

actions aimed at maintaining or restoring biodiversity. The UK Biodiversity Strategy was produced in response to the Convention.

- 6.2.4 In England & Wales, the Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act, 2006 imposes a duty on all public bodies, including local authorities and statutory bodies, in exercising their functions, "to have due regard, as far as is consistent with the proper exercise of those functions, to the purpose of conserving biodiversity". It notes that "conserving biodiversity includes restoring or enhancing a population or habitat". Barbastelle *Barbastella barbastellus*, Bechstein's *Myotis bechsteinii*, brown long-eared, greater horseshoe *Rhinolophus ferrumequinum*, lesser horseshoe *Rhinolophus hipposideros*, noctule and soprano pipistrelle *Pipistrellus pygmaeus* bats are included as priority species within Section 41 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006. At a more local level there are Local Biodiversity Action Plans for smaller geographical areas which may cover a greater or lesser range of bat species.
- 6.2.5 Where it is proposed to carry out works which will have an adverse impact on roosting bats, the site must either be registered on the Bat Mitigation Class Licence (BMCL) or a European Protected Species (EPS) license must first be obtained from Natural England. This requirement applies even if no bats are expected to be present when the work is carried out.
- 6.2.6 The National Planning Policy Framework for England was revised in 2019. This document states that plans should 'promote the conservation, restoration and re-creation 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'.

Birds

- 6.2.7 Special penalties relate to offences concerning birds listed on Schedule 1 (i.e. barn owl) of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended). In addition to the offences detailed below relating to all wild birds, it is illegal to intentionally or recklessly disturb any Schedule 1 bird or their dependent young while nesting.
- 6.2.8 All wild birds are protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended by the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000), which makes it illegal (subject to exceptions) to:
- Intentionally kill, injure or take any wild bird.
 - Take, damage or destroy the nest (whilst being built or in use) or eggs of any wild bird.

6.3 Further Survey, Recommendations and Enhancements

- 6.3.1 No further bat survey is recommended provided that works commence within 24 months of the building inspection. If works commence after this time, then Middleton Bell Ecology should be contacted to determine the requirement for an update survey to be undertaken.
- 6.3.2 No bats were recorded roosting on site during the survey works and consequently there is no compulsory requirement for mitigation. However, in order to enhance the ecological value of the site and in accordance with the aims of the National Planning Policy Framework (2019), it is suggested that single bat roosting and bird nesting

features are integrated into the walls of the new building.

- 6.3.3 It is recommended that one integrated bat box, of a design such as the Build-In Woodstone Bat Box (Plates 7, 8 & 9), is included at wall top height in a south or west facing elevation of the new building. In addition, house sparrow *Passer domesticus* were noted on site during the survey and it is recommended that an integrated nest box, such as the Vivara Pro WoodStone House Sparrow Nest Box (Plate 10), is installed in a north or east facing elevation of the new building.

Plates 7, 8 & 9. Build-in WoodStone Bat Box

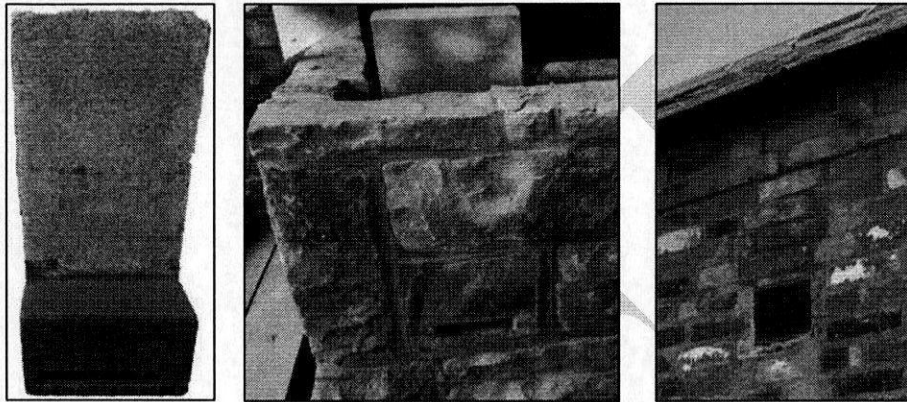
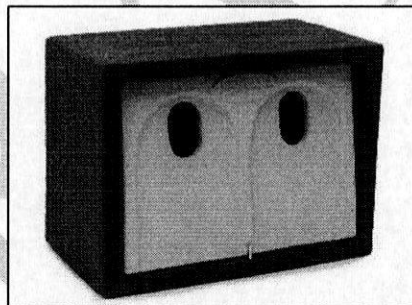


Plate 10. Vivara Pro WoodStone House Sparrow Nest Box



- 6.3.4 Demolition of B1 will either need to be undertaken outside the bird nesting period (March to September inclusive) or the works will need to be preceded by a nesting bird check undertaken by an experienced ecologist.

6.4 Conclusions

- 6.4.1 The surveyed buildings display several features offering low bat roost potential, however, these could all be inspected during the survey. In this instance no further bat survey work is recommended.
- 6.4.2 This survey is considered to be valid for 24 months. If works commence after this time, then Middleton Bell Ecology should be contacted to determine the requirement for an update survey.
- 6.4.3 Works should proceed with caution and vigilance for unexpected bat presence, as single bats can roost almost anywhere. If bats are subsequently discovered, work should be stopped, and further advice sought without delay.

6.4.4 Works should either commence outside the bird nesting period or they should be preceded by a nesting bird check.

7. References

Collins, J. (ed.) (2016) Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines. The Bat Conservation Trust.

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