Land off Cooper Lane, Hoylandswaine

Bat and Bird Survey Report

11th August 2022

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1. Summary

1.1.1 A bat survey of a building on land off Cooper Lane, Hoylandswaine was commissioned by the clients Stephen and Theresa Rymer on 17th June 2022.

1.1.2 The survey was undertaken to inform proposals to demolish the existing stables building in order to construct a new dwelling.

1.1.3 A previous bat survey report was produced for the site by Whitcher Wildlife in 2014 which concluded that whilst the stables displayed a low level of bat roosting potential, roosting bats appeared to be absent from the surveyed building.

1.1.4 Bat survey works detailed in this report include a desk-based study and an internal and external visual inspection, undertaken on 4th July 2022. This was followed by two dusk emergence surveys, undertaken on 13th July and 1st August 2022

1.1.5 Evidence of a single bat roost was recorded in the south elevation of the former stables. This roost appears to comprise a pipistrelle day roost. The stables were considered to display a low level of bat roost suitability.

1.1.6 Proposed works will entail destruction of the known bat roost location. Consequently, the site will either need to be registered on the Bat Mitigation Class Licence (BMCL) (if possible), or a European Protected Species (EPS) mitigation licence will need to be obtained for the scheme. Neither option is possible until planning permission has been determined.

1.1.7 A bat mitigation plan has been proposed to include the installation of two integrated bat boxes.

1.1.8 Re-development works should either be undertaken outside the bird nesting period (March to September inclusive) or the works should be preceded by a nesting bird check. If works are to commence during the bird nesting season (March- August), then they should be preceded by a nesting bird check.

1.1.9 A swift nesting enhancement recommendation is provided.

2. Introduction

2.1.1 A bat survey of a building on land off Cooper Lane, Hoylandswaine was commissioned by the clients Stephen and Theresa Rymer on 17th June 2022.

2.1.2 The survey was undertaken to inform proposals to demolish the existing stables building in order to construct a new dwelling.

2.1.3 Bat survey works detailed in this report include a desk-based study and an internal and external visual inspection.

2.1.4 A previous bat survey report was produced for the site by Whitcher Wildlife in 2014 (Whitcher Wildlife, 2014). This survey included a desk study, an internal and external inspection of the stables undertaken in October 2013 and a single dusk emergence survey carried out in late April 2014. At this time the stables were considered to display a low level of bat roosting potential, nevertheless, no signs of bat presence were noted, and roosting bats were considered to be absent from the surveyed building.

2.1.5 The site is located off Cooper Lane between the villages of Silkstone and Hoylandswaine, c.7.5km west of Barnsley town centre.

3. Habitat Assessment

3.1.1 The site comprises a former stable block accessed via a surfaced access track from Cooper Lane. The building is located in a plot with unmanaged neutral grassland and scrub. An intact native hedge borders the building to the west and a linear woodland which has a minor stream, forms the northern site boundary.

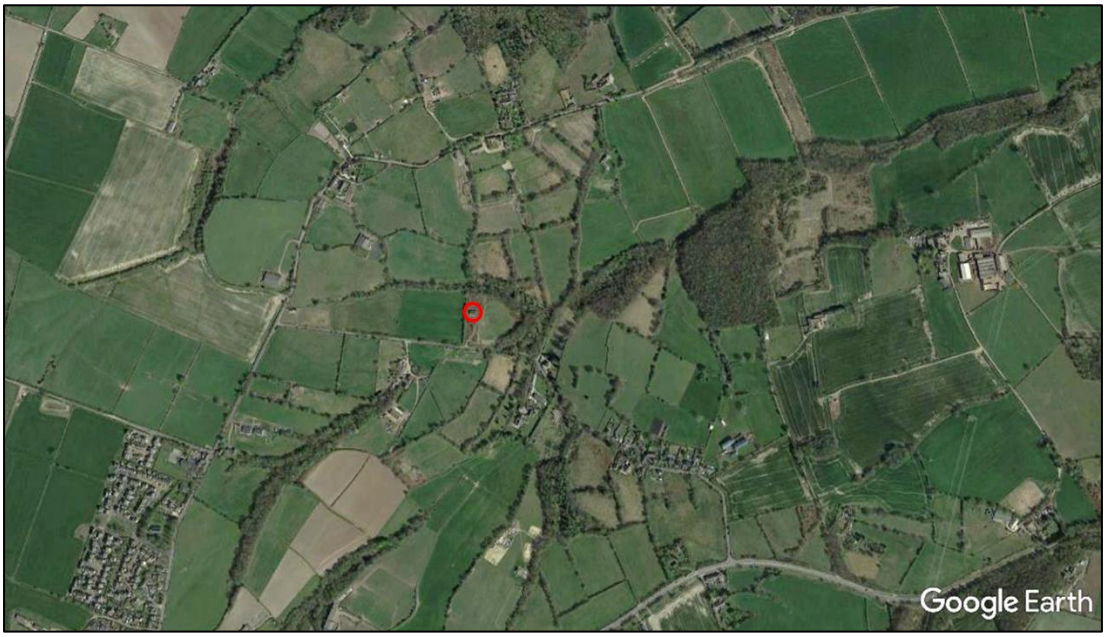
3.1.2 The linear woodland to the north connects to other larger woodland blocks, including the ancient woodlands of Whin Moor Plantation and Bullhaw Carrs.

3.1.3 It is anticipated that a moderate density of bats, belonging to a varied range of species, is likely to use habitats within the local area.

Table 1. Location and habitat table

Name and address: Land off Cooper Lane, Hoylandswaine, S36 7JE			
OS Grid Ref. SE 26697 05730		Altitude. 154m	
Local Planning Authority: Barnsley Metropolitan Borough Council			
Features on site and adjacent to site			
Feature	On site	Adjacent	Comments
Buildings			The surveyed stables are in quite isolated location 190m from nearest dwelling
River		✔	Minor stream in adjacent woodland
Standing water			
Bridges tunnels and culverts			
Trees Woodland		✔	Linear woodland 40m north of stables building
Grassland		✔	Permanent grassland field adjacent to stables

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 building.
- The level of bat roost potential associated with the building.
- The number and species of bat roosting within the buildings if present.
- Identify further survey work or mitigation requirements.

4. Methodology

4.1 Data Consultation

4.1.1 A desk study with both Barnsley Biological Records Centre (BBRC) and South Yorkshire Bat Group (SYBG) was undertaken in 2014, with no records received for the site itself.

4.1.2 It was decided not to repeat this data search, given that the former stables are small, isolated, lack a roof and cannot be surveyed from publicly accessible areas. Consequently, the chance of any relevant records having been obtained since the 2014 data search is considered to be very low.

4.2 Field Survey

Internal and External Visual Inspection

4.2.1 The following personnel conducted preliminary roost assessment on 4th July 2022:

- Robert Bell (MCIEEM; Class license WML-A34-Level 4, 2016-25236-CLS-CLS)

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 building 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 and 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 building's bat roost potential (negligible, low, moderate, high or confirmed roost).

4.2.3 In addition:

- Recording of any signs of nesting bird usage of the buildings.

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

- Clulight
- Binoculars
- Endoscope
- Ladders
- Camera

Nocturnal Surveys

4.2.5 The following personnel conducted the nocturnal survey and were equipped with Wildlife Acoustics EM Touch bat detectors and iPad/iPod recorders:

- Amanda Murphy (QualCIEEM; Bat Survey Class license WML-A34-Level 2, 2020-47913-CLS-CLS)
- Ian Wright

4.2.6 The following activities were carried out in compliance with relevant Bat Survey Guidelines (Collins 2016).

- Dusk emergence survey on 13th July 2022
- Dusk emergence survey on 1st August 2022

4.2.7 The dusk emergence surveys continued from 15 minutes prior to sunset until 1.5 hours after this time. Surveyors were positioned at opposite corners of the building.

4.2.8 A single Canon XA10 infra-red lit camera was used to accompany surveyors during the first nocturnal survey with two such cameras used during the second survey visit.

4.3 Survey Limitations

4.3.1 Only dusk emergence surveys were conducted rather than a combination of dusk emergence and dawn return survey visits. This approach is in line with guidance on the use of night vision aids for bat emergence surveys (BCT, 2022), which proposes a move away from dawn surveys as a standard approach. This recommendation is made due to the increased ability to detect roosts at dusk where cameras are deployed, combined with the propensity of bats to return to roost before dawn surveys commence.

5. Results

5.1 Data Consultation

5.1.1 One European Protected Species (EPS) mitigation licence has been issued for a location within 2km of the site. This licence was issued in 2018 to permit the destruction of a Natterer's bat *Myotis nattereri* resting place. The licence was issued for a location c.1.2km north of the site.

5.2 Field Survey

Preliminary Roost Assessment

5.2.1 Evidence of a single bat roost was recorded in the south elevation of the former stables. This roost is expected to comprise a pipistrelle day roost. The stables were considered to display a low level of bat roost suitability.

Description and external bat roost potential

5.2.2 The site building comprises a relatively modern detached stone and concrete block built former stables with stone copings on the gables (Plates 1 & 2). The former pitched roof was stripped in 2014, following the previous bat survey, exposing the prefabricated roof trusses. Three wooden stable doors, one set of double doors and three single-paned wood-framed window are present in the south elevation with three stable doors and four single-paned wood-framed windows in the north elevation. Wooden soffits, which are open at the top, are present along both the north and south elevations.

5.2.3 The exterior of the former stables is mainly well sealed. One open joint, 15mm in width and at a height of 1.9m on the south elevation, leads to crevices between stone blocks in the outer skin of the wall and also possibly into the crevice between the inner and outer skin of the wall (Plate 3). A cluster of four fairly recently deposited bat droppings was present at the base of this open joint, within the wall, indicating the presence of a roost in the wall. On the basis of morphology and roost location, the droppings are considered likely to originate from a pipistrelle *Pipistrellus* species, with the roost likely to comprise a day roost. A sample of these droppings has been sent for DNA analysis to species, but the results have yet to be received. A low number of mainly superficial additional open joints were present across the external walls, but all were thoroughly inspected from a ladder and no further signs of bats were found.

Internal inspection

5.2.4 The roof covering is missing with the prefabricated roof trusses remaining. The walls of the stable comprise the exposed inner face of the concrete blockwork.

5.2.5 There are numerous openings into the cavity between the concrete blockwork inner skin and the stone outer skin of the walls, including openings along wall tops and around doors. Several cracks are also present in the inner face of the block walls, with these cracks up to 15mm in width. However, no signs of bats were recorded from the interior of the former stable block.

5.2.6 The former stable block is considered to display a low level of bat roost suitability.

Plate 1. Southeast corner of former stables

Plate 2. Northeast corner of former stables

Plate 3. Evidence of bat roost recorded from south elevation of former stables

Plate 4. Prefabricated trusses in roof of former stables

Nocturnal Surveys

13th July 2022 – dusk emergence survey

5.2.7 The temperature at the beginning of monitoring was 15^{0}C, with a very light air (Beaufort Scale Force 1) and 10% cloud. The temperature dropped to 13^{o}C by the end of the survey with the cloud clearing and what little air ceasing. The weather was dry throughout. Sunset was at 21:30.

5.2.8 No bat roosting activity was recorded during the survey.

5.2.9 The first bat recorded comprised a common pipistrelle *Pipistrellus pipistrellus* commuting north past the west gable at 21:50 (20 minutes after sunset). This was followed by intermittent recording of common pipistrelle thereafter. Noctule *Nyctalus noctula* passes were recorded at 21:51 and 22:07, with a brown long-eared *Plecotus*

auritus bat seen flying past the building at 22:37. A single pass by a bat of an unidentified *Myotis* species was recorded at 22:40.

1st August 2022 – dusk emergence survey

5.2.10 The temperature at the beginning of monitoring was 20^0C, with a very light air (Beaufort Scale Force 1) and full cloud cover. The temperature dropped to 17^oC by the end of the survey with the wind increasing to a moderate breeze (Force 3). The cloud cover remaining the same and it was dry throughout. Sunset was at 21:02.

5.2.11 No bat roosting activity was recorded during the survey.

5.2.12 The first bat recorded comprised a common pipistrelle commuting north past the west gable at 21:05 (three minutes after sunset). Intermittent common pipistrelle bat activity was recorded thereafter, with noctule passes noted at 21:32 & 22:12.

6. Assessment

6.1 Summary and Evaluation of Findings

6.1.1 The former stables support a single bat roost, expected to comprise a common pipistrelle day roost. The building displays a low level of suitability to support further bat roosts.

6.1.2 This roost is considered to be of low conservation importance (Mitchell-Jones, 2004). No evidence of bat maternity roosting was noted. Pipistrelle bats will roost in a wide range of locations over the winter; however, the building is not considered to display particular suitability for use by hibernating bats.

6.1.3 No evidence of bird nesting was recorded in the building.

6.2 Legislation and Policy Guidance

Bats

6.2.1 Bats receive protection under the Conservation of Habitats and Species (Amendment) (EU Exit) Regulations 2019 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 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 2021. 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 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

Bats

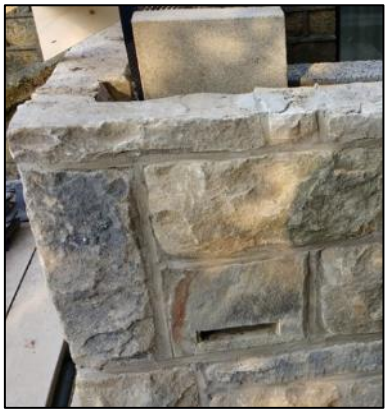
6.3.1 The site will either need to be registered on the BMCL or an EPS mitigation licence will need to be obtained. Neither process can be undertaken until planning permission has been determined. Both of the mitigation licensing options would need to be informed by a bat mitigation plan.

6.3.2 It is considered that the bat survey information gathered so far provides a robust understanding of bat usage of the site, however, if works are to proceed after May 2023, then at least one update nocturnal survey would be required.

6.3.3 It is recommended that mitigation/compensation measures detailed below are adopted in order to form the basis for any bat licence application:

- The optimal times for the licensable works would be either spring (March-May) or autumn (September-November). The supervised strip and bat exclusion works should certainly avoid the peak hibernation period (December-February) to reduce the likelihood of encountering bats at this sensitive time of year.
- Any bats present to be excluded from the building prior to demolition works commencing. This work should be undertaken by a licensed bat surveyor following the delivery of a Toolbox Talk to contractors. If capture of bats is not possible then exclusion with a one-way exclusion device would be required.
- It is recommended that two integrated bat boxes, such as the Vivara Pro Build-in Woodstone Bat Box, be incorporated into the new dwelling. These boxes should be fitted towards apex height, away from external lighting.
- No post development monitoring survey is considered necessary as roosts are of low conservation value.

Plates 5 & 6. Build-in WoodStone Bat Box



6.3.4 The linear woodland and to a lesser extent the western boundary are expected to comprise important landscape elements for bats, forming commuting and foraging linkages in the landscape. As a result, new external scheme lighting should be avoided wherever possible, with any new external lighting designed to avoid light spill across the woodland and hedgerow. Where new external lighting is required, it would be desirable if this could be PIR sensor operated, with lighting units to be low height, directional, of a warm colour temperature and low output.

Birds

6.3.5 Building renovation works should commence either outside the bird nesting period (March to August inclusive), or the works will need to be preceded by a nesting bird check.

6.3.6 In accordance with the aims of the National Planning Policy Framework, it is recommended that a new integrated swift *Apus apus* box (i.e. Manthorpe Swift Brick) should be installed within the new dwelling. This box should be fitted at wall top height and may be installed across any elevation. Studies have shown that swift boxes are used by other bird species that utilise buildings and consequently this measure will provide potential nesting space for house sparrows *Passer domesticus* and starlings *Sturnus vulgaris*, in addition to potentially providing future nest space for swift.

6.4 Conclusions

6.4.1 One bat roost location, expected to be used by a single common pipistrelle bat, was recorded from the former stables.

6.4.2 The proposed works will entail destruction of the known bat roost location and consequently the site will either need to be registered on the BMCL, or an EPS mitigation licence will need to be obtained for the scheme.

6.4.3 A bat and bird mitigation plan has been specified.

7. References

BCT (2022) Interim Guidance Note: Use of Night Vision Aids for Bat Emergence Surveys And Further Comment On Dawn Surveys. The Bat Conservation Trust.

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

Mitchell – Jones, A.J (2004) Bat Mitigation Guidelines, English Nature.

Whitcher Wildlife (2014) Stable at Cooper Lane, Hoylandswaine – Bat Survey Report. Whitcher Wildlife Ltd, Barnsley.

Appendix 1. Bat Records

In accordance with best practice and the requirements of bat licensing, bat records collected during surveys are supplied to the relevant biological record centres and bat groups. The records to be supplied in accordance with this survey are shown below. House names/numbers are not given out by record holding organisations except under very particular circumstances. Please let us know if you object to the distribution of these records.

Date	Species	Site Address	OS Grid Reference	Notes
13/07/2022	Unidentified bat species	Land off Cooper Lane, Hoylandswaine, S36 7JE	SE 26697 05730	Day roost – identified by small dropping accumulation
13/07/2022	Noctule	Land off Cooper Lane, Hoylandswaine, S36 7JE	SE 26697 05730	Pass
13/07/2022	Brown long-eared bat	Land off Cooper Lane, Hoylandswaine, S36 7JE	SE 26697 05730	Pass
13/07/2022	Unidentified *Myotis* species	Land off Cooper Lane, Hoylandswaine, S36 7JE	SE 26697 05730	Pass