

Bat Survey to
Roger Royd Farm
Whin Moor Lane
Silkstone
Barnsley
S75 4NL

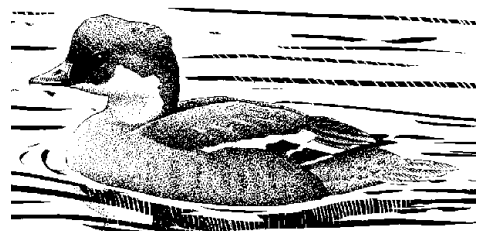
22nd September 2022

Amended 22/06/23 to include emergence survey



John Gardner

Wildlife Photographer | Bat Ecologist
32 Nostell Lane, Ryhill, Wakefield,
West Yorkshire WF4 2DJ.
01924 229800 mobile 07887 627005
www.wildscenes.com
e: john@wildscenes.com



1. Summary

- 1.1 A bat scoping survey has been carried out on an agricultural building at Roger Royd Farm, Silkstone to determine if the building is being used by roosting bats. The survey is required as part of a planning application. The survey was undertaken at the end of the optimal period for bat surveys and so aimed to establish the likelihood of bats in the building. The application seeks to convert the building to residential under ClassQ.
- 1.2 The building is a large agricultural unit made of single skin blockwork with a stone frontage and has a corrugated asbestos roof over a steel portal frame. The single thickness blockwork walls do not offer the required features that allow bats to roost as all British bats are crevice dwelling animals. The stone feature wall to the south side of the building has no structural cracks, though there are some gaps at the top of the wall where it meets the deep wooden overhanging eaves. These gaps are, however, large and also allow birds and rodents to enter and close inspection shows that they open into the large under drawing of the eaves and are not likely to be used by bats. The single thickness sheeting to the roof offers no roost potential and the wide ridge section with asbestos ridge tiles is unsuitable for ridge dwellings species. The east wall is comprised of wooden slats, again single thickness and therefore not providing the required potential roosting features (PRFs). The building is in an excellent location for bats and bats of a local provenance are observed at the site, but there are other buildings on site that offer a much greater diversity and number of PRFs required by bats. The building has been assessed as being of 'negligible' bat roosting potential.
- 1.3 An assessment of 'negligible' roosting potential requires no activity surveys to be carried out, and the scoping survey along with surveyor experience is robust enough to confirm that bats are not present in the building. The style and construction of the building makes it unlikely that bats would use the building and there is little chance of a nursery roost being present. The building is not considered essential to species survival and the proposed works will not affect bats or their habitat. There were no nesting birds using the building and the proposed works will have a low ecological impact overall. Features and enhancements suggested are likely to improve the buildings appeal to bats.
- 1.4 There are no statutory constraints to the development of this building with regards to bats and no further survey work is required.

Addendum

Following a request from the LPA ecologist, a single summer activity survey was carried out on 20th June 2023 and confirmed the original report conclusion that bats are not present in the building. No bats were seen to emerge and bats were not recorded around the building, though they were recorded within 300mm foraging around trees. Conditions were ideal for the survey and the results are considered robust. No further surveys are required.

2. Introduction

2.1 A bat scoping survey was carried out to an agricultural barn at Roger Royd Farm, Whin Moor Lane, Silkstone S75 4NL (NGR SE222221) to determine whether bats have or are using the building as a roost site. The site was also checked for the presence of nesting birds.

2.2 The current proposal seeks planning permission under ClassQ for change of use to residential.

2.3 The survey took place at a time considered to be towards the end of the optimal period for bat occupancy but still aimed to establish the following:

- The likelihood of bats using the building by undertaking a scoping survey.
- Identify any potential roosting features (PRFs).
- Determine if activity surveys are required.
- Provide an impact assessment of the development on bats.
- Define mitigation proposals where required.
- Assess the requirement for a protected species licence.
- Assess the building for use by nesting birds.

3. Methodology

3.1 The site was surveyed in accordance with BCT best practice guidelines and surveyor experience by John Gardner, a surveyor with 41yrs field experience in searching for bats and is registered to use the Class Survey Licence WML CL20 (Level 4). The licence number is 2015-15656-CLS-CLS.

3.2 The interior and exterior of the building was inspected during daylight using torches and binoculars. All normal signs of bats were looked for including bats, dead baby bats, bat droppings, prey remains, scratching and staining of entry and exit holes.

3.3 The building was assessed for its degree of potential to support roosting bats including assessing the building design, construction, materials, and condition. This combined with an assessment of the location of the site and the surrounding habitat in terms of bat suitability allows an assessment to be made as to the potential of the building to support bats. Factors such as the proximity of good foraging areas (woodland, water bodies) and features that link the site to the wider surrounds such as linear features (hedgerows etc) were also considered.

3.4 This report sets out the findings of a daytime scoping and evening emergence survey carried out to the above site on Thursday 22nd September 2022. This report highlights the ecological constraints and opportunities associated with the proposed works and appraises the potential impacts. Appropriate actions to ensure the protection of bats are identified and mitigation measures detailed where appropriate.

4. Survey constraints

4.1 There were no constraints to the survey.

5. Site Description

5.1 The site consists of a double height agricultural building located in a rural area. The building is in a rural location to the west of Silkstone and is surrounded by a mix of woodland, pasture and arable land. The surrounding habitat is regarded as excellent foraging habitat and there are other dwellings close by which offer greater roosting potential. The site is connected to the wider landscape by a series of linear features.

Figure 1. Site location plan



Figure 2 Aerial view of the site, surrounds and specific buildings surveyed

6. Desk Study

No bat records exist relating directly to this site and there are no roosts currently known within 500m. The zone of impact does not extend beyond the site footprint and the building is not considered suitable for use by bats and therefore, there will be no impact to bat roosts within this area.

7. Activity surveys

- 7.1 The building was assessed as being of 'negligible' bat roost potential and therefore no activity surveys were required. Further to a request from the LPA, an activity survey was undertaken on 22nd June 2023.

8. Survey results

Daytime survey

The building is a large, double height agricultural building constructed from a mixture of materials. The roof is covered by single sheet corrugated asbestos which does not offer potential for bats. The ridge section is wide and has no central ridge beam and is unsuitable to ridge dwelling species. The west and north walls are built from single thickness blockwork which lacks any kind of potential roost feature as there is no wall cavity and the walls are sealed where they meet the roof. The east elevation is half height blockwork topped with a wooden slatted feature wall reaching to the gable apex. The wooden slats are single thickness and do not offer any potential roosting features.

The south elevation is built of stone with a blockwork inner skin. The stonework is sound and has no cracks, structural gaps or failed mortar. There is a deep wooden overhanging eaves section to this elevation which is hollow when viewed from the inside of the building. Where the wooden eaves meet with the stone walls, there are several gaps though most are considered too large to be of interest to bats as they are large enough to allow birds and rodents to also enter. When viewed with a torch, it is clear these gaps simply open up into the void of the eaves and do not provide the tight roosting features required by bats. The south elevation also has two very large wooden coach doors that offer no roost potential, and the tops of the stone piers that support the doors do have gaps but were noted to have cobwebs between the stones and the eaves.

The deep overhanging eaves provide a great deal of shelter, especially at the wall tops and this would allow some evidence of use by bats to remain regardless of weather conditions. There were no droppings adhered to the walls at the edges of the eaves and wall tops and no bat droppings stuck to windows or on pathways.

The building offers a very limited number and diversity of potential roosting features and is assessed as being of 'negligible' roosting potential.

Barn owls are not using the building though they are present very close to the site in both natural holes in trees and within a purpose-built owl box 300m west of the site. These birds can be observed hunting between Whin Moor Lane and Cooper Lane on a summer evening.

Activity Survey

Despite the building being assessed as being of negligible interest to bats, the LPA requested that a single activity survey be carried out. This was undertaken on 22nd June 2023 by two experienced surveyors using both heterodyne and RTE detectors. Conditions were ideal with no

breeze and a temperature of 16.5°C and after a period of prolonged high daytime temperatures. The survey was conducted from 60 mins prior to sunset until 90mins after sunset.

No bats were recorded emerging from the building and, surprisingly, no bats were recorded within the site footprint though bat are known to use the site for foraging from time to time. Bats were recorded just outside the site hunting woodland at the boundary of the site and Whin Moor Lane and therefore, bats were on the wing and the nil records is not an anomaly caused by weather conditions etc.

The activity survey confirmed the results of the initial survey which determined the building is not suitable for roosting bats due to its construction and the materials used. The building lacks any suitable potential roosting features (PRFs) that are typically of interest to bats. The PRFs noted by the LPA are considered to be rather unsuited to bats and unlikely to be used and the activity survey confirmed this.



Figure 3. Main areas of bat activity in relation to survey site

9. Interpretation and analysis

The survey results established that building is not currently being used by roosting bats and it is unlikely that bats would use the building, particularly as a maternity site. All British bats are crevice dwelling animals, and the building does not offer the usual potential roost features due to the style and construction materials of the building: the ridge sections are too wide and have no ridge beam and the single thickness blockwork walls have no potential; the gaps between the eaves and the stone walls on to the front of the building are large and would allow birds and rodents to enter and this makes them a great deal less appealing to bats. All British bats are crevice dwelling animals and generally prefer to be squeezed into gaps where both their fronts and backs are touching their surrounds, so large, open voids tend to be less used.

There were heavy cobwebs at the gable apex on the west elevation and also cobwebs to some of the gaps along the south elevation. There were no droppings adhered to the walls at eaves level along the south elevation and this would be expected had bats used the gaps given the depth of the overhang which provides a good deal of shelter from the weather.

The site is in an area that offers good habitat for bats and there are other residential dwellings on the site by that offer much greater roost potential and bats are known to be present at this site. The other buildings on site are stone dwellings with stone roof tiles and are more likely to be favoured by bats. Bats are not thought to be using the building and it is highly unlikely that there is a nursery roost present, and the building is considered to not be essential to species survival.

The subsequent activity survey carried out on June 22nd, 2023 confirmed this to be the case.

10. Impact assessment

The building is unlikely to be used by large numbers of bats and there is no evidence of a nursery roost being present, therefore, this project is unlikely to result in any impact on bats. It will not harm or destroy roosts or roosting features and will not result in fragmentation or loss of habitat.

11. Mitigation measures

Bats are not considered to be using the building and the building is regarded as being of negligible interest to bats, consequently, there is no requirement for a European Protected Species Mitigation Licence (EPSML) and no compulsory requirement for mitigation or enhancement features. Bats are present locally, most likely in the adjoining stone dwellings, and inclusion of roosting features could be beneficial. An integral or surface mounted bat roosting feature should be included in the apex of the west gable; a Schwegler bat access panel 1FE or a surface mounted Schwegler 1FTH should be included in the final scheme.

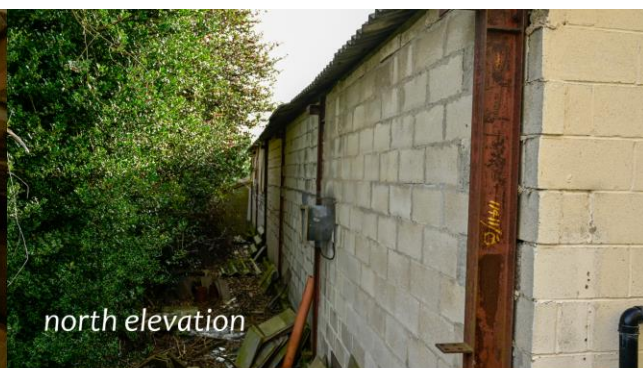
12. Conclusion

The survey concluded that the building offers very limited potential bat roosting features and there was no evidence to suggest the building has been used by bats and it is considered unlikely to be used by bats. There will be no direct harm to bats from this project and the project is considered to have a very low ecological impact. No further survey work is required.

Appendix 1. Photographs of the site



roof interior



north elevation



large gaps at eaves



west elevation



south and west elevation



east gable wall



deep overhanging eaves south elevation



coach doors south elevation



ridge detail



ridge detail



south elevation

