Whitcher Wildlife Ltd.
Ecological Consultants.

THE BUNGALOW, SHEFFIELD ROAD, OXSPRING.

OS REF: SE 26582 02501

BAT SURVEY REPORT.

Ref No: **230815/1**

Date: **1st September 2023.**

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1. INTRODUCTION.

1.1. There are plans to demolish the existing bungalow at Sheffield Road, Oxspring and to replace with a new dwelling.

1.2. Whitcher Wildlife Ltd were therefore commissioned to carry out an initial Preliminary Roost Assessment to establish whether there is a roost present prior to the works commencing.

1.3. The initial Preliminary Roost Assessment was carried out on 8th August 2023. That report assessed the site to have negligible potential for roosting bats.

1.4. Barnsley Council planning ecologists disagreed and assessed the building to have low potential for roosting bats. As we are right at the end of the bat survey season there was no time to argue this point so a dusk emergence survey was carried out on 31st August 2023.

1.5. This report outlines the findings of both surveys and makes appropriate recommendations.

1.6. Appendices I and II of this report provide background information with respect to protected species and the legal protection afforded to them.

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2. SURVEY METHODOLOGY.

2.1. The structure was checked for potential bat roosting sites in line by looking for the following signs: -

* Holes, cracks or crevices.
* Bat droppings.
* Prey remains.

2.2. A thorough external inspection was carried out from ground level for any gaps or openings of the structure which may provide suitable roost access points and field signs to indicate possible use by bats.

2.3. All walls and the ground around the structure were checked for signs of bat droppings or staining to indicate possible use by bats. Where necessary, ladders were utilised to gain access within the limits of health and safety. Any access constraints encountered are outlined within the following report.

2.4. All survey work was carried out in line with Collins, J. (ed.) (2016) *Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines (3rd edition)*, with an assessment of the structures suitability for roosting bats made in accordance with these guidelines.

2.4. The subsequent dusk emergence survey was also conducted in accordance with Collins, J. (ed.) (2016) *Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines (3rd edition).* It was conducted by a sufficient number of surveyors to cover all areas of roosting potential, in suitable weather conditions from fifteen minutes before sunset to at least an hour and half after.

2.5. All surveyors were equipped with Batbox Duet bat detectors, or similar. The use of static recording devices such as Anabat SD2's and video cameras with infrared lights were also utilised were appropriate.

2.6. The survey was carried out by Derek Whitcher who has over twenty years' experience of surveying for wildlife and has run his own wildlife consultancy since 1998. He has extensive experience of a wide variety of survey techniques for a variety of species of protected wildlife supplemented by attendance on a wide range of training courses through CIEEM, FSC and BCT. As a member of CIEEM he is committed to continuous professional development, a continual process of learning

and career development, a condition of CIEEM membership. He holds current Natural England, CCW and NRW survey licences for, bat, great crested newt and white clawed crayfish.

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3. SURVEY RESULTS.

3.1. Data Search Results.

3.1.1. A data search request has been submitted to Barnsley Biological Records Centre for existing records of bat roosts within 2km of the site.

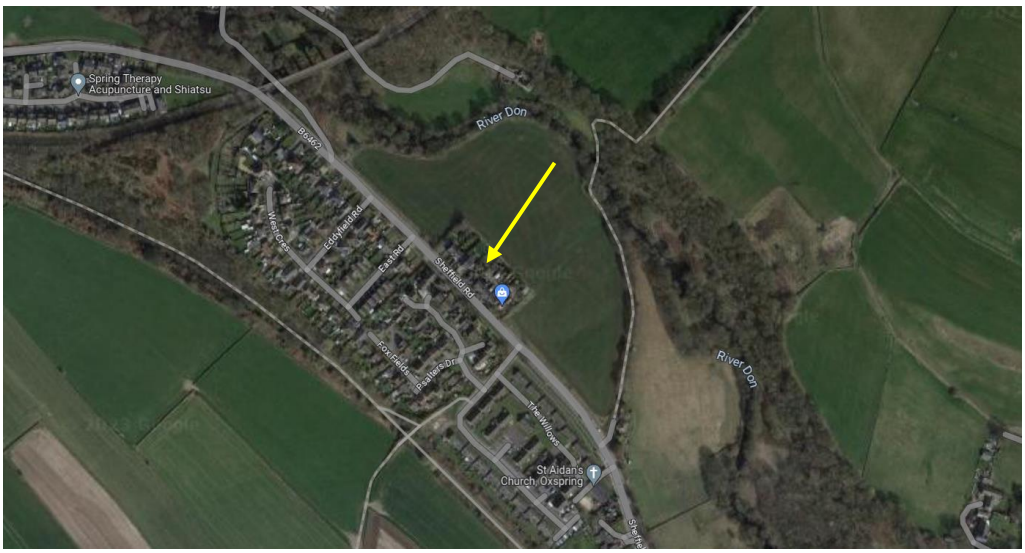
3.1.2. The results of the data search request include Pipistrelle roosts on Bower Hill, Oxspring and at Roughbirchworth Lodge, Oxspring, both in excess of 500m from the survey area.

3.1.3. A data search request has been submitted to South Yorkshire Bat Group for existing records within 2km of the site.

3.1.4. The results of the data search include a Pipistrelle roost in Oxspring Primary School with forty bats emerging in 2019, 0.48km from the site. In addition, thirty to forty unidentified bats emerged from a house on Tollbar Close in 2003, 0.73km from the site.

3.2. Site Description.

3.2.1. The bungalow is located on Sheffield Road, as shown by the yellow arrow in the aerial photograph below.



3.2.2. The survey area is a derelict bungalow in a row of adjacent dwellings with further residential areas to the southwest and open countryside sloping down to the River Don to the northeast.

3.2.3. The two photographs below show the bungalow as seen from the main road.

3.2.4. The two photographs below show the rear of the bungalow facing the garden.

3.3. Preliminary Roost Assessment.

3.3.1. The external walls of the bungalow are all covered with a pebble dashed, rendered finish. This is clearly a hard finish with no cracks or crevices suitable for roosting bats.

3.3.2. The roof of the bungalow is in a very poor condition with missing slates and torn underfelt. This has allowed water penetration throughout the internal of the bungalow resulting in patches of ceiling fallen in, a shown below. Everything internal is running in water.

3.3.3. Because the property is so badly exposed to the weather, the roof has gone but the walls are remarkably sound, the building is assessed to have negligible potential for roosting bats in line with the Bat Conservation Trust Good Practice Guidelines.

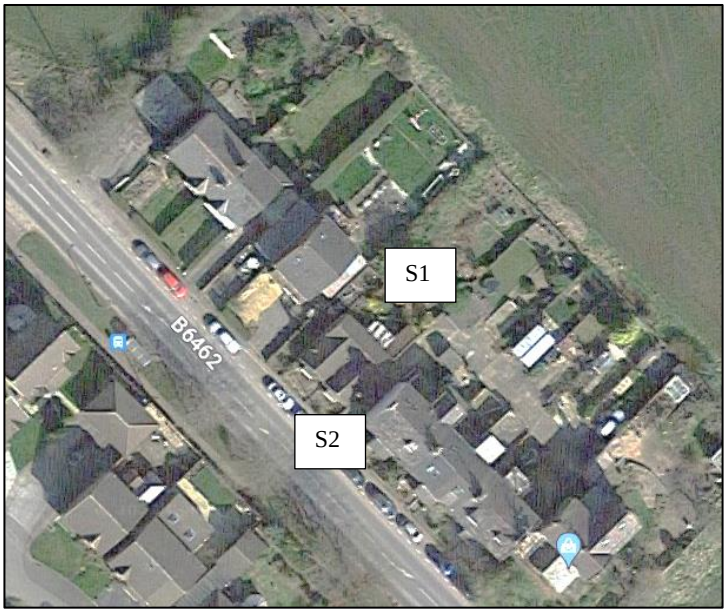
3.3.4. During the survey, there was no bird activity around the properties and no evidence of nesting birds.

3.4. Dusk Emergence Survey Results, 31st August 2023.

3.4.1. A dusk emergence survey of the building was carried out by two surveyors on the evening of 31st August 2023. One surveyor holds a current Natural England licence for surveying bats and the other is an experienced assistant.

3.4.2. Each surveyor was equipped with a Batbox Duet detector and a two-way radio for communication. In addition, two static Anabat recorders were deployed close to each surveyor to record bat activity for subsequent analysis using Analook software.

3.4.3. The position of the surveyors and the static Anabats are shown on the aerial photograph below where S is a surveyor.



3.4.4. The evening was overcast with a light breeze, 5mph from the southeast, 0 on the BWS. The temperature was 14ºC at 19:40 and sunset was at 19:55. The survey started at 19:40 and ended at 21:30.

3.4.5. The following are the observations of the surveyors.

3.4.5.1. Surveyor 1.

20:25. Common Pipistrelle passed northeast to southwest foraging.
20:26. Noctule passed over the site heard not seen.
20:27. Myotis foraging over back gardens.
20:31. Common Pipistrelle heard not seen foraging.
20:38. Noctule passed over the site.

Anabat 22 with Surveyor 1 recorded four Common Pipistrelle calls between 20:24 and 21:30, two Noctule calls at 20:26 and 20:38 and one Myotis call at 20:27.

3.4.5.2. Surveyor 2.

20:14. Distant Common Pipistrelle heard not seen.
20:15. Noctule hear not seen.
20:24. Common Pipistrelle heard not seen.
20:31. Soprano Pipistrelle heard not seen foraging.
20:33. Common Pipistrelle heard foraging, not seen.
20:38. Noctule passed over the site.
20:44. Common Pipistrelle heard not seen.

Anabat 12 with Surveyor 1 recorded six Common Pipistrelle calls between 20:14 and 20:44 and three Noctule calls between 20:15 and 20:38.

3.4.6. No bats emerged from the derelict bungalow.

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4. EVALUATION OF FINDINGS.

4.1. The existing bungalow is in a very neglected condition. The external walls are remarkably sound, probably held up by the strong pebble dashed external coating but the roof covering has all gone and therefore the building is dripping with water. The existing bungalow is therefore assessed to have negligible potential for roosting bats in line with the Bat Conservation Trust Good Practice Guidelines.

4.2. During the dusk emergence survey bats were seen and heard foraging around the site but nothing emerged from the bungalow and attached outbuilding.

4.3. Therefore, the proposed demolition of the bungalow will have no impact on roosting bats.

4.4. No evidence of nesting birds was identified in the existing bungalow on the site and therefore, demolition of the existing bungalow will have no impact on nesting birds.

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5. RECOMMENDATIONS.

5.1. The existing bungalow is in a very poor condition and is assessed to have negligible potential for roosting bats. Therefore, no further surveys are recommended and there is no requirement for a mitigation strategy or for a Natural England licence in connection with the proposed demolition.

5.2. Nevertheless, individual bats can seek temporary shelter almost anywhere. It is therefore recommended that all personnel employed on the works are briefed to be vigilant and, in the unlikely event of a bat being found, work should temporarily cease at that location and further advice should be sought from the undersigned.

5.3. Likewise, due care is recommended and in the unlikely event that an active bird's nest is found, the nest must be left undisturbed until the young have fledged the nest.

5.4. It is recommended that an integrated bat brick is installed high in the gable end wall of the new dwelling in order to provide Biodiversity Enhancements as required by the NPPF.

5.5. It is further recommended that two integrated swift nest boxes be installed high in the walls of the new dwelling in order to provide Biodiversity Enhancements as required by the NPPF.

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Checked by:	
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Appendix I. BAT INFORMATION.

Ecology

There are currently 18 species of bat residing in Britain, 17 of which of which are known to breed here. They are extremely difficult to identify in the hand and even more so in flight.

All appear to be diminishing in numbers, probably due to habitat change and shortage of food, caused by pesticides, as insects are their sole diet.

As their diet consists solely of insects, bats hibernate during the winter when their food source is at its most scarce. They will spend the winter in hollow trees, caves, mines and the roofs of buildings.

Certain species, particularly the pipistrelle (the commonest and most widespread British bat) can quickly adapt to man-made structures and will readily use these to roost and to rear their young.

Surveys

During walkover surveys, bat roosts can be identified by looking for:

- Suitable holes, cracks and crevices within any building, tree or other structure.
- Bat droppings along walls, window cills, or on the ground.
- Prey remains, such as insect wings.

Further investigations can be made using endoscopes, by carrying out aerial inspections of trees or by conducting bat activity surveys during dusk and dawn over summer months.

Legislation

Bats are protected under Appendix II and III of the Bern Convention (1982), Schedule 5 and 6 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act (1981), Annex IV of the Habitats Directive (some species under Annex II), Annex II of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations (2010) and EUROBATS agreement. Numerous species are

also listed under section 41 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act (2006) making them species of principal importance.

All bats and their roosts are therefore protected in the UK. This makes it an offence to kill, injure or take any bat, to interfere with any place used for shelter or protection, or to intentionally disturb any animal occupying such a place.

The UK has designated maternity and hibernacula areas as Special Areas of Conservation (SAC's) under the Habitats Directive. Implementation of the UK Biodiversity Action Plan also includes action for a number of bat species and the habitats which support them.

Where development proposals are likely to affect a bat roost site, a licence is required from Natural England.

Appendix II. NESTING BIRD INFORMATION.

Ecology

The nesting season will vary according to the weather each year but generally commences in March, peaks during May and June and continues until September. It is also worth remembering that some birds nest in trees and scrub but others are ground nesting or prefer man- made structures or buildings.

Surveys

Nesting bird surveys search for potential nest sites in vegetation, buildings etc. Potential nesting sites are observed over a suitable period of time for bird movements or calling male birds that would indicate the presence of a nest. The presence of a nest can be identified from the field signs without the necessity to see the nest itself, thereby avoiding any disturbance of the nests. The best way to avoid this issue is to plan for vegetation clearance to be carried out outside the bird-nesting season.

Legislation

Nesting birds are protected under The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981.

Part 1. -(1) Of the Act states that: - If any person intentionally: - kills, injures or takes any wild bird; takes, damages or destroys the nest of any wild bird while that nest is in use or being built; or takes or destroys an egg of any wild bird, he shall be guilty of an offence.

Part 1. -(5) of the Act states that: - If any person intentionally: - disturbs any wild bird included in Schedule 1 while it is building a nest or is in, on, or near a nest containing eggs or young; or disturbs young of such a bird, he shall be guilty of an offence and liable to a special penalty.

The Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 amends the above by inserting after “intentionally” the words “or recklessly”.

Toolbox Talk: Bats

Whitcher Wildlife Ltd

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18 species of bat have been recorded in Britain, 17 of which are known to breed here.

Identification.

Some species can be extremely difficult to identify in the hand and even more so in flight.

Species such as the Brown Long Eared bat pictured above can be more easily identified in the hand. Whereas, the Common Pipistrelle and Soprano Pipistrelle are more difficult to identify.

Bats are more easily identified by field signs such as droppings or feeding remains.

Habitat.

Bats are highly specialised creatures and require a relatively narrow range of suitable conditions in order to sustain a viable population. Bats require an abundant supply of flying insect food in places where they can easily be caught and they need safe and reliable roosting sites, particularly during breeding and hibernation.

Bats are heavily dependent on buildings and trees for their roost sites and therefore extremely susceptible to disturbance from human activities. Development schemes can also isolate bat populations and sever roost sites from favoured feeding areas by removing hedgerows or other features used as commuting routes.

Bats are susceptible to disturbance and have been known to abandon roost sites after instances of disturbance. The effects of disturbance are more pronounced at different times of year. Serious disturbance during breeding can result in the breeding females being killed or the abandonment and subsequent starvation of dependant young. Repeated disturbance during winter hibernation can result in the death of adult animals from starvation.

The level of protection afforded to bats in the UK and European legislation reflects the fact that it is now generally accepted that bats have declined substantially, maybe by as much as 60%, over recent years. Most species are declining and vulnerable with all species being protected.

As their diet consists solely of insects, bats hibernate during the winter when their food source is at its most scarce. They will spend the winter in hollow trees, caves, mines and occasionally the roofs of buildings.

Certain species, particularly Pipistrelle, can quickly adapt to manmade structures and will readily use these to roost and to rear their young.

Legislation.

Bats and their roosts are fully protected at all times (whether the bats are currently present or not). This protection comes from the Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981 (updated by the Countryside Rights of Way Act 2000) and the Habitats Regulations 1994. Under this legislation it is an offence to intentionally or recklessly kill, injure, capture or disturb bats or to damage, destroy or obstruct access to any place used by bats for shelter or protection.

Under the Habitats Regulations, where bats may be affected by development proposals, a licence is required from Natural England. Natural England's published guidelines on the licence procedure indicate that if, on the basis of survey information and specialist knowledge of the species concerned, the proposed activity is reasonably likely to result in an offence then a licence is required. If, on the other hand the proposed activity is reasonably unlikely to result in an offence, then a licence is not required.

If bats or bat field signs are identified during works, stop all works and contact Whitcher Wildlife Ltd directly on 01226 753271 or at info@whitcher-wildlife.co.uk