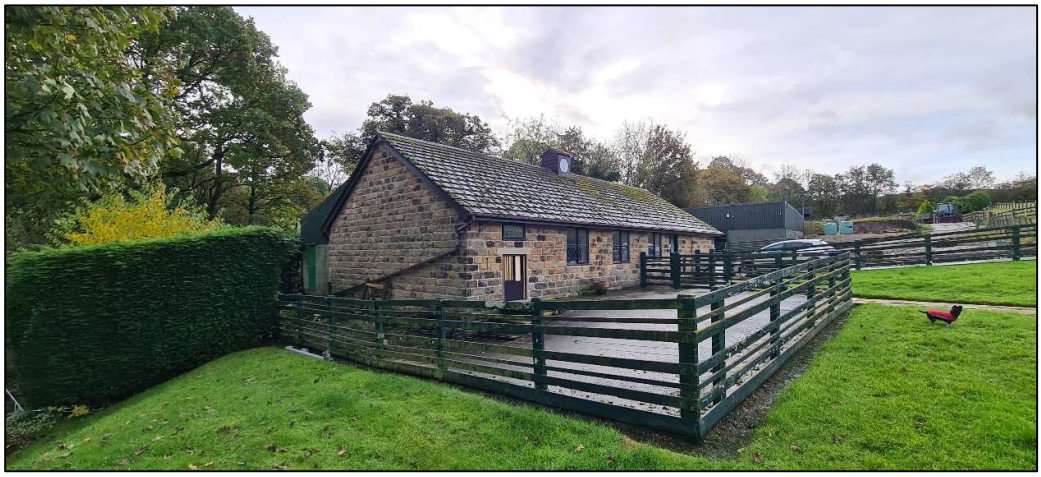
# Lakeside View, Silkstone Common

# Bat Survey Report

# 20th November 2023



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## 1. Summary

1.1.1 A bat survey of Lakeside View, Blacker Green Lane, Silkstone Common was commissioned by Paul Briggs of Northern Design Partnership on 17th October 2023. The survey was undertaken to inform the conversion of an outbuilding (currently used as a stables and tack room) into a bungalow. The site was located approximately 350 m to the west of Silkstone Common.

1.1.2 The building appeared to date from around the 1990s. It was assessed as having moderate suitability to support roosting bats (having been classed as having low suitability during the 2020 inspection undertaken by Whitcher Wildlife Ltd). No evidence of roosting bats was recorded during either inspection of the building.

1.1.3 Potential bat roost features on the wall top and in the wall cavity were present. The use of the internal space within the building by bats was ruled out during the survey.

1.1.4 Works affecting the external walls would comprise the cutting out of two windows at the northern gable end, and one on the front (west) elevation, plus amendments to change a window into a door at the southern end of the building. The proposals would also require the removal of some roof tiles and the installation of three skylights.

1.1.5 The standard approach would be to complete two nocturnal surveys between May and August with at least three weeks between surveys. Nocturnal surveys would require two surveyor positions.

1.1.6 It is considered possible that the work could be completed without significant impacts to bats and without any impact to the potential bat roosts present. All potential bat roost features identified could be retained, and the work could be completed under a precautionary working method statement without the need for further survey. Alternatively, two nocturnal surveys could be completed between May and August to inform the need for the precautionary working method statement.

1.1.7 It is recommended that three new swallow nest cups are installed within a different building within the site. As an enhancement it is recommended that two Greenwoods Echohabitat single crevice bat boxes are installed on buildings or trees within the site.

1.1.8 The recommendations included in this report are considered valid for 24months from the survey date.

## 2. Introduction

2.1.1 A bat survey of Lakeside View, Blacker Green Lane, Silkstone Common was commissioned by Paul Briggs of Northern Design Partnership on 17th October 2023. The survey was undertaken to inform the conversion of an outbuilding (currently used as a stables and tack room) into a bungalow. The site was located approximately 350 m to the west of the edge of Silkstone Common.

2.1.2 The preliminary roost assessment was conducted on 1st November 2023. The survey aimed to determine the presence or likely absence of roosting bats and, if present, the roost locations. Potential access points, species present, and the level of use were also determined where possible.

2.1.3 A previous survey of the building had been conducted by Whitcher Wildlife Ltd in June 2020 to support Planning Application 2020/0427. The planning permission was granted but expired on 24th August 2023. The previous survey comprised an inspection of the building identifying it as having low suitability to support roosting bats and suggesting that the work could proceed as long as the potential roost features were retained, no new lighting would affect the northern end of the building, and provision was made to allow the nesting swallows to remain within the site. The survey report is available on the Barnsley Council planning portal (https://planningexplorer.barnsley.gov.uk/Home/FileDownload/01GEE4NB6WSSAVAYSQQNHKGE6TUFJ37HU2?ApplicationNumber=2020%2F0427) and is referred to as required within this report.

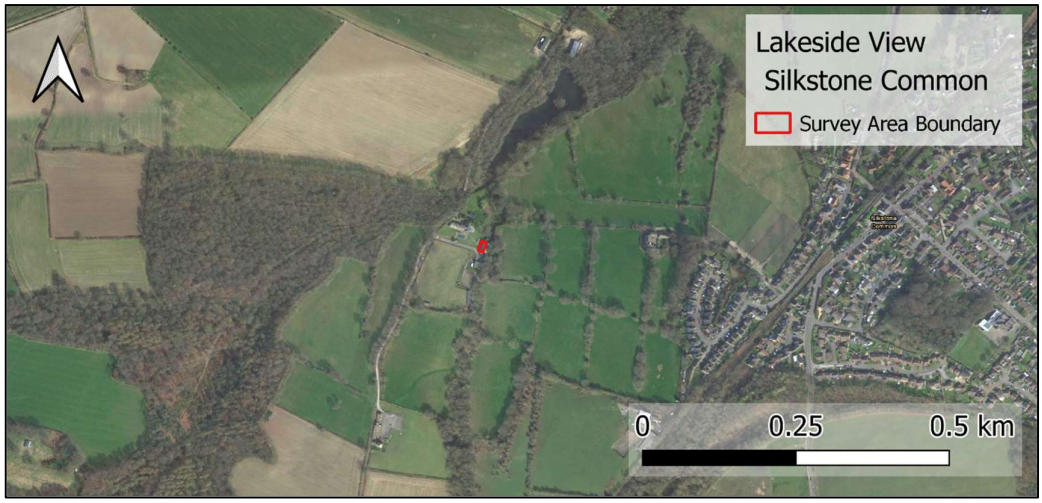
2.1.4 The legislative context to the survey and assessment reported here is included in Appendix 1.

## 3. Habitat Assessment

3.1.1 A storage barn adjoined the western elevation of the stables. The surrounding area comprised a house and garden to the north and west, and pasture to the south and east. Woodland, and Blacker Dam were present within the wider landscape (Figure 1).

3.1.2 A small tributary of Lindley Dike passed to the east of the adjacent stables. The habitat was considered to be highly suitable for use by bats. The abundance and variety of bat species was considered likely to be high.

**Figure 1. Site location, outlined red**




3.1.3 Table 1 summarises the habitats present within, and adjacent to Lakeside View.

**Table 1. Location and habitat table**

| **Name and address: Lakeside View, Blacker Green Lane, Silkstone, S75 4NF** | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| OS Grid Ref. SE 28454 04348 | | Altitude. 125 m | |
| Local Planning Authority: Barnsley Council | | | |
| Features on site and adjacent to site | | | |
| Feature | On site | Adjacent | Comments |
| Buildings | ✔ | ✔ | The stables, storage barns, a dwelling and associated buildings. |
| Watercourse bordered by trees | ✔ | ✔ | Lindley Dike was present to the east of the property and a tributary was located just to the east of the surveyed building |
| Standing water | | ✔ | A pond was present within the garden and Blacker Dam was present further north |
| Bridges tunnels and culverts | ✔ | ✔ | The culvert associated with the drain in the garden (approximately 10 cm high) |
| Trees | | ✔ | Mature trees were present in the adjacent garden. |
| Woodland | | ✔ | Small copse to the east |
| Grassland | ✔ | ✔ | Lawned gardens and pasture. |

## 3.2 Aims

3.2.1 The survey was conducted to help determine the following:

- Presence/absence of roosting bats.
- Potential roosting areas and roost access/egress points.
- Level of bat roost suitability associated with the buildings.
- Further survey work or mitigation requirements.

## 4. Methodology

### 4.1 Data Consultation

4.1.1 South Yorkshire Bat Group were contacted to request bat records for locations within 2 km of the site.

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

### 4.2 Field Survey

Internal and External Visual Inspection

4.2.1 The survey of the buildings was conducted on 1st November 2023 by Greg Slack (MCIEEM; Class licence WML-A34-Level 4, 2017-28068-CLS-CLS).

4.2.2 The following activities were carried out during the survey:

- An extensive examination of all parts of the building to record structural features and condition, and features that may be suitable for use by roosting bats. Particular attention was paid to any holes, crevices or gaps in walls, lintels, gaps/holes in cladding and soffits and to the possibility of finding droppings stuck to walls, floors or other surfaces, or insect remains below features.
- Any 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 suitability (negligible, low, moderate, high or confirmed roost).

4.2.3 The following equipment was used during the survey:

- a clulight;
- binoculars;
- an endoscope;
- ladders; and
- a camera.

### 4.3 Survey Limitations

4.3.1 Relatively heavy rain had been recorded for the previous few nights meaning that any bat droppings that had been deposited in external exposed locations would likely have been washed away by the time of survey. Any droppings inside or within the building itself are expected to have remained in place though.

# 5. Results

## 5.1 Data Consultation

5.1.1 South Yorkshire Bat Group provided 79 bat records for locations within a 2 km radius of the site. Species positively identified in the data consultation comprised common pipistrelle *Pipistrellus pipistrellus* soprano pipistrelle *Pipistrellus pygmaeus*, brown long-eared bat *Plecotus auritus*, Natterer's bat *Myotis nattereri*, Daubenton's bat *Myotis daubentonii*, noctule *Nyctalus noctula*, and Leisler's bat *Nyctalus leisleri*. Additional records of species identified to Pipistrellus, Myotis, and Nyctalus/Eptesicus genera, as well as unidentified bat species were also provided.

5.1.2 The nearest records to site related to records of common pipistrelle, soprano pipistrelle, Daubenton's bat, and noctule foraging on Blacker Dam approximately 250 m northeast of the site in 2011.

5.1.3 One bat EPS mitigation licence had been issued within 2 km of the site. The details of the licence are given in Table 2 below.

**Table 2. Bat EPS mitigation licences within 2 km**

| Species listed on the licence | Licence start date | Licence end date | What does the licence cover? | Approximate distance (m) | Direction |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Brown long-eared bat, common pipistrelle, Natterer's bat | 01/09/2016 | 01/09/2026 | Destruction of a breeding site and a resting place | 1100 | Northeast |

## 5.2 Field Survey

Internal and External Visual Inspection

5.2.1 The building appeared to date from around the 1990s. It was assessed as having moderate suitability to support roosting bats (having been classed as having low suitability during the 2020 inspection undertaken by Whitcher Wildlife Ltd). No evidence of roosting bats was recorded during either inspection of the building.

*Building description*

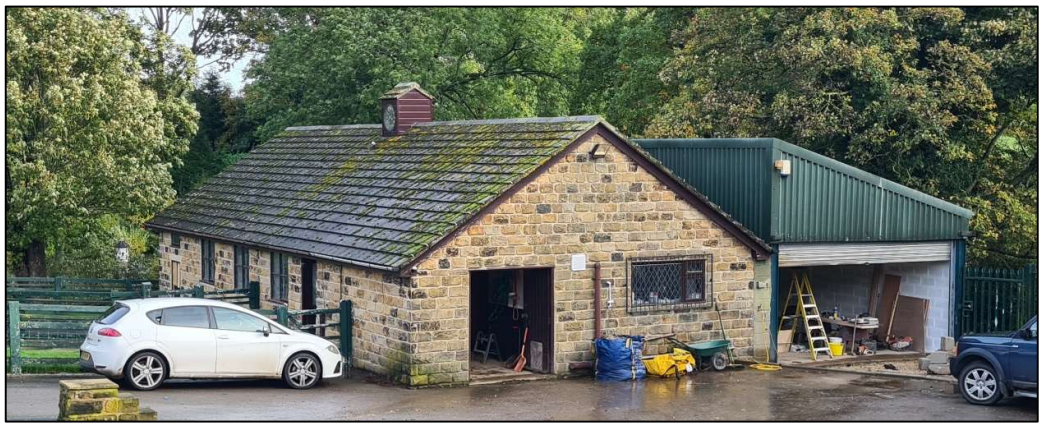
5.2.2 The single storey-building was constructed from concrete blocks and stone. An adjoining storage barn (constructed from concrete blocks and a steel frame with corrugated metal cladding) was present to the east. The adjacent barn appeared to have been built more recently (Plate 1). The windows and doors were framed with timber. The soffits and fascias were also wooden. The western side of the building and the north and south gables were faced with stone with an inner skin of concrete blocks. The rear (eastern) aspect which joined the storage barn was constructed solely from concrete blocks.

5.2.3 The stables had a two-pitch roof covered with interlocking concrete tiles. A small clock

tower with a small two-pitched roof was present in the centre of the roof.

5.2.4 Flood lights were present on the gable ends, and below the clock.

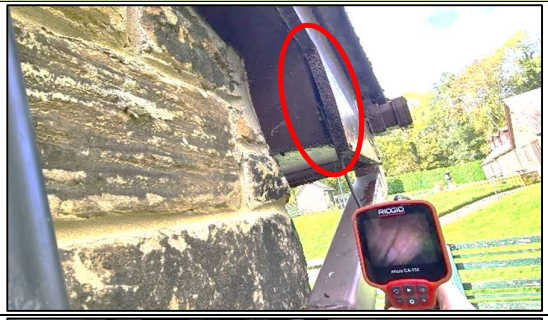
**Plate 1. The Stone stables and adjacent storage barn**



*External inspection*

5.2.5 Gaps with potential to be used by roosting bats comprised gaps between ridge tiles, gaps allowing access onto the wall top, and gaps allowing access into the soffit box at the northern end of the building and a single section of missing mortar between masonry. The PRFs are shown in Table 3 and Figure 3 below.

**Table 3. Potential Roost Features (PRF) Recorded**

| PRF | Photo | Description |
|---|---|---|
| A |  | Gaps allowing access into the soffit at the northern gable end.<br><br>The photo shows one of the gaps being checked with an endoscope. |
| B |  | Gap behind apex of barge board at both gables (photo taken from inside the building showing the light form outside clearly visible). |

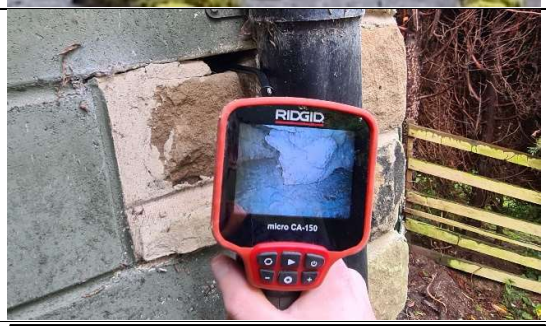
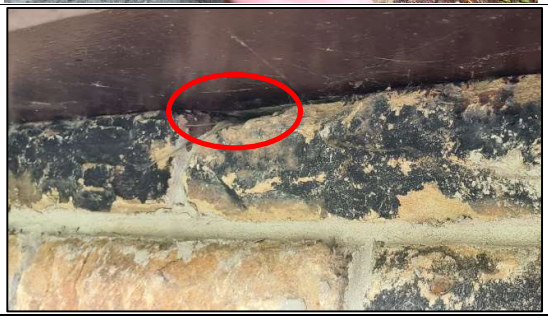
| PRF | Photo | Description |
|---|---|---|
| C |  | Gaps between ridge tiles. |
| D |  | Missing mortar in masonry (being checked with an endoscope). |
| E |  | Gap beneath soffit box allowing access onto the wall top. |

**Figure 3. PRF Locations**


*Internal inspection*

5.2.6 The majority of the internal space was allocated to stables with a tack room at the southern end. A flat ceiling had been installed over the stables and tack room on the eastern half of the building with the western half open to the roof pitch (Plate 3). The

roof was supported by modern trusses and was backed with a plastic membrane (Plate 4).

**Plate 3. Interior of the stables**

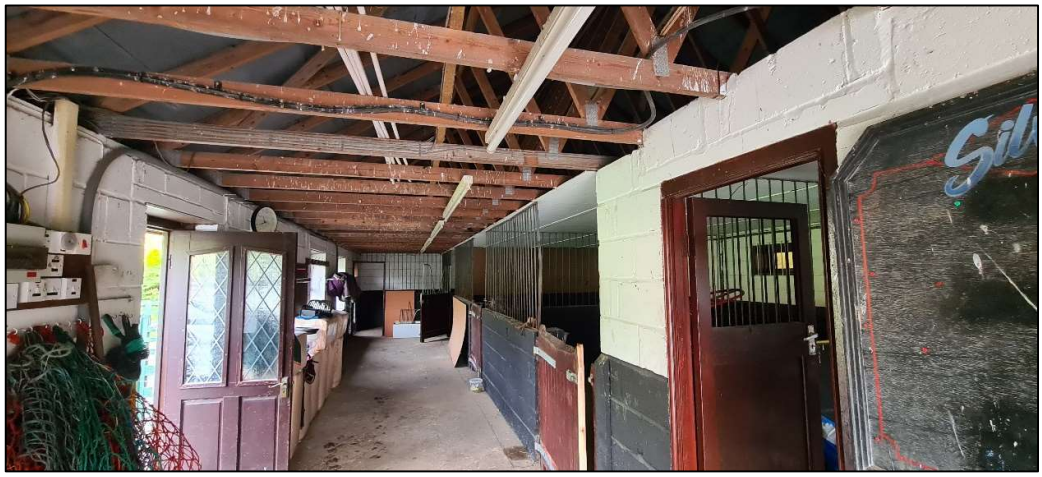
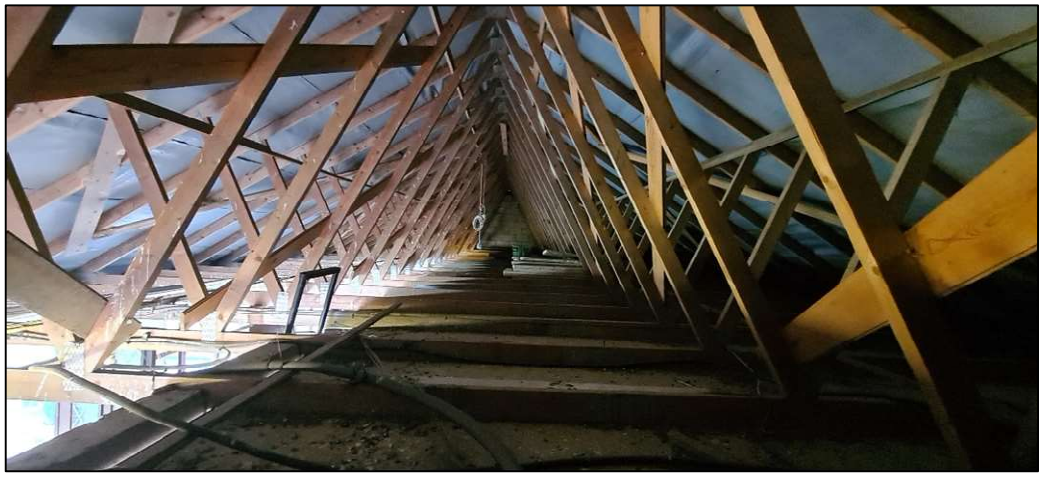


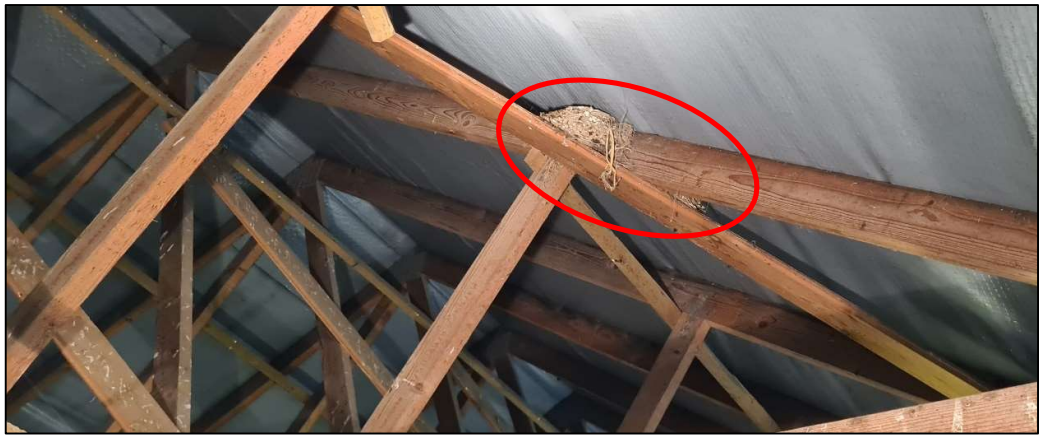
**Plate 4. Roof truss construction**



5.2.7 Some bird and rat droppings were present on the ceiling of the stables / tack room but no bats or signs of bats were recorded during the inspection. Features A, B, D, and E could all be inspected with an endoscope and no bats or bat droppings were recorded. It is considered likely that droppings would have been present within the features and that they would have been recorded during the endoscope inspection, if these features had been recently used, or regularly in the past summer season. The gaps between the ridge tiles could not be closely inspected.

5.2.8 At the northern end of the building three swallow nests were recorded on the rafters (Plate 5). The swallow nest locations are shown as Feature F on Figure 3.

**Plate 5. Swallow nests on rafters inside the building**



## 6. Assessment

### 6.1 Summary and Evaluation of Findings

6.1.1 No bats were found roosting in the buildings during the assessment and there were no signs of bat occupation including within the features that could be inspected (with the exception of ridge tiles). The building was considered to offer moderate suitability to support roosting bats. Although the number of potential roost features was relatively low, they offered access to the wall top and wall cavity and the habitat in the area around the building was optimal. The endoscope inspection was sufficient to rule out the presence of a maternity roost during 2023 within the features that could be closely inspected, and no evidence of a roost within the building was present.

### 6.2 Further Survey, Recommendations and Enhancements

6.2.1 As identified by the previous bat survey report, all of the potential bat roosting opportunities were located within external areas of the building (within the walls and roof). Works affecting the external walls would comprise the cutting out of two windows at the northern gable end, and one on the front (west) elevation, plus amendments to change a window into a door at the southern end of the building. The proposals would also require the removal of some roof tiles and the installation of three skylights.

6.2.2 The standard approach would be to complete two nocturnal surveys between May and August with at least three weeks between surveys. Nocturnal surveys would require two surveyor positions.

6.2.3 However, it is considered possible that the work could be completed without impacting any potential bat roosts present. All potential bat roost features identified could be retained, and therefore the work could be completed under a precautionary working method statement (PWMS) without the need for further survey.

6.2.4 In order to proceed under a PWMS:

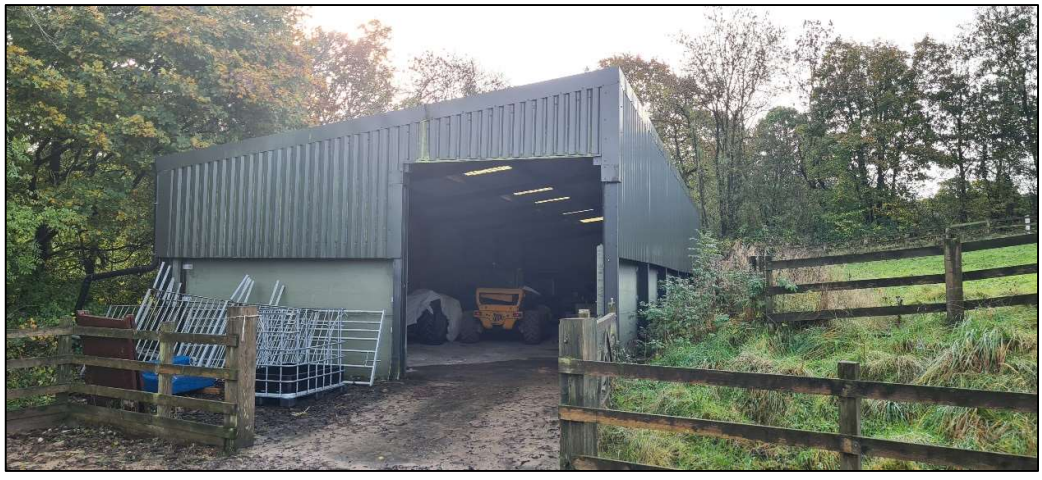
- A toolbox talk should be given to all contractors prior to the start of works. The toolbox talk should highlight:
  - the potential bat roost feature locations,
  - identification of signs of bats,

    - how to remove or open up suitable bat roost features where work is required, and
    - what to do in the event a bat is discovered.
- The missing mortar in the masonry must be retained unpointed, and the ridge tiles retained without rebedding or repointing them.
- All features should be reinspected by the supervising ecologist prior to the start of the works;
- The creation of the holes for the new windows should be supervised by a suitably qualified ecologist;
- If the soffits / barge boards require replacement, they should be subject to a destructive search by or under the supervision of a bat survey licenced ecologist. They must be replaced with wooden soffits / barge boards and access points into these locations recreated.
- Prior to internal works to the gable ends, including plastering, the contractors should be briefed by the ecologist to ensure they do not inadvertently block access points from the inside.
- If bats or signs of bats are recorded at any point, the work should cease and the need for a licence reconsidered.
- No new outside lighting should be installed.

6.2.5 As swallow nests were recorded within the barn it is recommended that the work is timed to avoid the nesting bird season (March to September inclusive), or that a nesting bird check is completed by an ecologist prior to the start of the work. If active nests are present they must be retained in-situ until the young have fledged.

6.2.6 To replace the lost nesting bird habitat, it is recommended that three new swallow nest cups are installed within a different building within the site. The client has identified a storage barn located approximately 70 m south of the stables that would be suitable. The barn was inspected during the site visit and found to be an open fronted concrete block and steel framed building with timber bracing within the steel frame which would be suitable to attach swallow nest cups to (Plate 6). No evidence of existing use of the building by swallows was recorded.

**Plate 6. Building proposed as alternative swallow nest site**



6.2.7 As an enhancement, in line with National Planning Policy Framework (see Appendix 1), and the previous bat survey report (Whitcher Wildlife, 2020), it is

recommended that two Greenwoods Echohabitat single crevice bat boxes (or similar)[1] are installed on buildings or trees within the site. The boxes should be located at least three meters high and away from light spill.

## 6.3 Conclusion

6.3.1 No evidence of bat presence was recorded within the surveyed building. Although the building is considered to have moderate suitability to support roosting bats, the scope of the work would allow any bat roosts present to be retained. As such it is considered that the work could proceed under a PWMS without further bat survey and the suitable precautions that would need to be included have been listed. Alternatively, two nocturnal surveys could be undertaken and the need for these precautions then reconsidered.

6.3.2 Measures to mitigate the loss of the three swallow nests, and to enhance the site for bats have also been provided.

6.3.3 The recommendations included in this report are considered valid for 24months from the survey date.

## 7. References

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

Whitcher Wildlife (2020) Lakeside View, Blacker Green Lane, Silkstone Bat Survey. Whitcher Wildlife Ltd.

[1] Greenwoods Ecohabitat Bat Boxes are available from: https://www.greenwoodsecohabitats.co.uk/

## Appendix 1. Legislation and Policy Guidance

Bats

Bats receive protection under the Conservation of Habitats and Species (Amendment) (EU Exit) Regulations 2019 and the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended).

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.

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.

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 bat *Myotis bechsteinii*, brown long-eared bat, greater horseshoe bat *Rhinolophus ferrumequinum*, lesser horseshoe bat *Rhinolophus hipposideros*, noctule *Nyctalus noctula* and soprano pipistrelle *Pipistrellus pygmaeus* 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.

Where it is proposed to carry out works which will have an adverse impact on roosting bats 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.

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'.

National Planning Policy Framework

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

7.1.1 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.