

Land off Work Bank Lane, Thurlstone

Bat Survey Report

5th April 2023



Prepared by:

Middleton Bell Ecology, School House, Green Moor, Sheffield S35 7DQ

Document ref: MBE/BAT/2023/018/02				
Purpose and Description	Originated	Checked	Reviewed	Date
For Planning	P Middleton MCIEEM <i>P Middleton</i>	R Bell MCIEEM <i>R Bell</i>	P Middleton MCIEEM <i>P Middleton</i>	05/04/23

Disclaimer

This report is issued to the client for the sole use and for the intended purpose as stated in the agreement between the client and Middleton Bell Ecology (MBE) under which this work was completed, or else as set out within the report. This report may not be relied upon by any other party without the express written agreement of MBE. The use of this report by unauthorised third parties is at their own risk and MBE accepts no duty of care to any such party.

MBE has exercised due care in preparing this report, it has not, unless specifically stated, independently verified information provided by others. No other warranty, express or implied, is made in relation to the content of this report and MBE assumes no liability for any loss resulting from errors, omissions or misrepresentation made by others.

Any recommendations, opinion or finding stated in this report is based on circumstances and facts as they existed at the time that MBE performed the work. Nothing in this report constitutes legal opinion. If legal opinion is required, the advice of a legal professional should be secured.

Contents

1. Summary.....	2
2. Introduction	3
3. Habitat Assessment	3
4. Methodology.....	4
5. Results	5
6. References.....	13

1. Summary

- 1.1.1 The bat survey was commissioned by planning consultant Patrick Townsend on behalf of the client Roger Coldwell on 17th March 2023, to update a bat survey first undertaken on 10th June 2022. The first survey covered only one of two site buildings and the proposed scheme has now been changed to include both buildings.
- 1.1.2 The proposals comprise demolition of former stables to make way for a residential property, together with demolition of an adjacent agricultural storage building. The site is located off Work Bank Lane, Thurlstone. The preliminary roost assessment survey was undertaken on 4th April 2023.
- 1.1.3 There were no visible signs of bat presence on either the inside or outside of the surveyed buildings. The buildings lacked features with significant potential to accommodate roosting bats and were considered to offer negligible bat roost potential.
- 1.1.4 It was concluded that no further survey effort was necessary providing that works commence within 24 months of the survey.
- 1.1.5 Evidence of use by nesting swallows was recorded from the stables. Consequently, work should be timed to take place outside the nesting bird season, which in this case is from March to September inclusive. If demolition outside this period is not possible, a pre-works check of the site should be completed by a suitably qualified ecologist to ensure no nesting birds are present at the time of demolition.
- 1.1.6 Mitigation and ecological enhancement recommendations, relating to retaining nesting swallows on site and the installation of an integrated bat box in the new dwelling, are included in the report.

2. Introduction

- 2.1.1 The bat survey was commissioned by planning consultant Patrick Townsend on behalf of the client Roger Coldwell on 17th March 2023, to update a bat survey first undertaken on 10th June 2022 (MBE, 2022). The 2022 survey covered only one of two site buildings and the proposed scheme has now been changed to include both buildings. The proposals comprise demolition of former stables to make way for a residential property, together with demolition of an adjacent agricultural storage building.
- 2.1.2 The buildings on site are proposed for demolition. Middleton Bell Ecology were contracted initially to conduct a baseline assessment to determine the likely presence or absence of roosting bats and to identify roost locations, access points, species present, level of use and the importance of nearby landscape features.
- 2.1.3 The surveyed buildings were situated on Work Bank Lane but accessed off Old Anna Lane, in the village of Thurlstone 10 km east southeast of Barnsley.

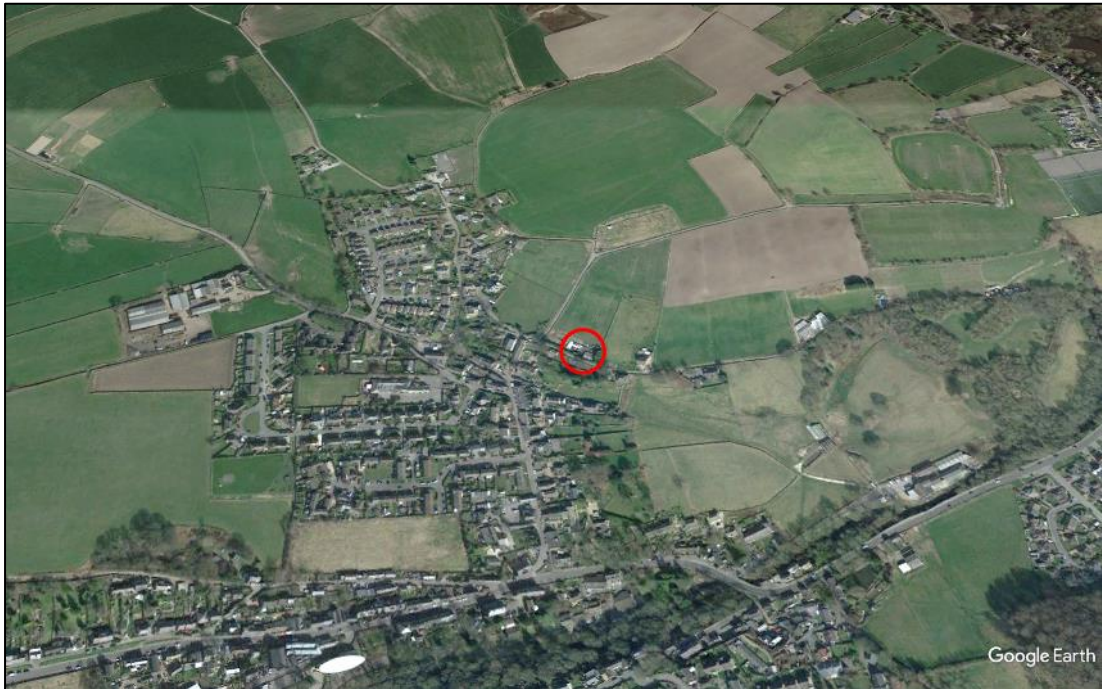
3. Habitat Assessment

- 3.1.1 The surrounding area consisted predominantly of grassland and arable with small woodland blocks further afield, and the River Don c.300 m to the south. The site was located on the northern end of Thurlstone, adjacent to residential housing. No more than a moderate abundance and diversity of species was considered likely to be present in the area (see Figure 1).
- 3.1.2 Table 1 summarises the habitats present, adjacent to and further afield of the surveyed buildings.

Table 1. Location and habitat table

Name and address: Land off Work Bank Lane, Thurlstone, Sheffield S36 9RQ			
OS Grid Ref. SE 23396 03770		Altitude. 225m	
Local Planning Authority: Barnsley Metropolitan Borough Council			
Features on site and adjacent to site			
Feature	On site	Adjacent	Comments
Buildings	✓	✓	Residential
River bordered by trees			River Don 300m south
Standing water			
Bridges tunnels and culverts			Associated with River Don
Trees		✓	In nearby gardens
Woodland			Small woodland 300 m east
Grassland		✓	Modified grassland (pasture) and silage in abundance in wider area.

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.
- Potential roosting areas and access/egress points within the buildings.
- Determine the level of bat roost potential associated with the buildings.
- The presence absence of nesting birds.
- Identify further survey work or mitigation requirements.

4. Methodology

4.1 Data Consultation

- 4.1.1 Bat records were not requested from either the local records centre or the local bat group given the lack of bat roost potential the buildings offer.
- 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

4.2.1 The following personnel conducted the survey on 4th April 2023

- 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 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).

4.2.3 In addition:

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

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

- Clulight
- Binoculars
- Endoscope
- Ladders
- Camera

4.3 Survey Limitations

4.3.1 No limitations to an effective preliminary roost assessment were identified.

5. Results

5.1 Data Consultation

5.1.1 Three bat EPS mitigation licences have been issued for locations within 2 km of the surveyed buildings. The three licenses all related to impacts upon either common pipistrelle *Pipistrellus pipistrellus* or brown long-eared bat *Plecotus auritus*. The closest licence to site was issued in 2012 to permit destruction of a common pipistrelle resting place/s in a location 470 m southwest of the site.

5.2 Field Survey

Internal and external visual inspection

5.2.1 No evidence of bat roosting was recorded on site. The buildings lacked potential bat roost features and were considered to offer negligible potential for current use by roosting bats. The building names and layout are shown in Figure 2, further descriptions are provided in this section of the report.

Figure 2. Building naming plan



Description - stables

5.2.2 This building, which was constructed between 2003-2009 consisted of a 'L' shaped stable with six compartments including one which was open fronted. The building was timber framed and wood clad beneath a multi-pitched roof covered largely in corrugated metal sheets. At one end the building comprised an open fronted lean-to with a mono pitched corrugated sheet metal roof, which was supported at the front with telegraph poles. The rear and sides of the lean-to had single-skin concrete block walls to 1.2 m (Plates 1-3).

Plate 1. Front (south-southwest elevation)



Plate 2. Looking west with open fronted section on left



Plate 3. Rear elevation



External inspection - stables

- 5.2.3 The external cladding was intact and the buildings, including the attached lean-to, lacked features with potential to support roosting bats.

Internal inspection - stables

- 5.2.4 The interior of the stables was open to the underside of the roof covering, with the covering supported by timber roof trusses, purlins and rafters. There were sterling boarding attached to the inside of stables with a void formed between the external cladding and the lining boards. There were several damaged boards which potentially

allow bats access to the void (see Plate 5). However, these were thoroughly inspected, and found to be very 'cobwebby' and probably too wide for use by crevice dwelling bats. All the roof timbers were found to be heavily cobwebbed, and no signs of bats were found. One active swallow *Hirundo rustica* nest was noted during the 2022 survey (MBE, 2022).

Plate 4. Interior of roof within stables



Plate 5. Inside of a stable compartment showing damaged sterling board



Description – agricultural storage building

- 5.2.5 This building comprised a steel-framed single storey agricultural storage building, constructed between 2003-2009, with a dual-pitched corrugated asbestos-cement sheet covered roof. The roof included skylights and vented ridge caps. Concrete block walls (hollow blocks) were present up to a height of c. 1.2 m with 'hit-and-miss' wood cladding above. Steel sheet covered double doors were present in the west elevation.

External inspection - agricultural storage building

- 5.2.6 No potential bat roosting features were recorded from the exterior of the agricultural storage building, although it was noted that bats could potentially access the interior via spaces between the wooden cladding boards.

Internal inspection - agricultural storage building

- 5.2.7 The unlined roof was suspended on steel beams and wooden purlins, with no roof void present. The building was in active use as an agricultural storage building, with a mezzanine floor present at the eastern end of the building. No signs of bat presence were found, and no suitable roosting locations were recorded from within the building. It was noted that horizontal wooden timbers covered the top of the blockwork walls, preventing any potential bat access into the hollow blocks.

Plate 6. West elevation of agricultural storage building



Figure 7. Rear (north) elevation of agricultural storage building



Figure 8. Interior of agricultural storage building



6. Assessment

6.1 Summary and Evaluation of Findings

- 6.1.1 No bats were found roosting in the buildings during the preliminary daytime assessment and there were no signs of bat occupation. The surveyed buildings lacked features with significant potential to accommodate roosting bats and were therefore considered to offer negligible bat roost potential. Nesting swallows were however present in the building during Summer 2022.
- 6.1.2 The findings of the visual inspection are considered to be an accurate account of the status of bats at the site. In this instance, it is considered the absence of roosting bats can be confidently determined. Consequently, no further bat survey work is recommended.

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 *Plecotus auritus*, greater horseshoe *Rhinolophus ferrumequinum*, lesser horseshoe *Rhinolophus hipposideros*, noctule *Nyctalus noctula* 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 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 Recommendations/enhancements

- 6.3.1 No further bat survey is considered necessary, providing that works commence within 24 months of the bat survey works. If work is to commence after this date, then Middleton Bell Ecology should be contacted to determine the requirement for update survey.

- 6.3.2 No bats were recorded roosting on site during the survey works. However, in order to enhance the ecological value of the site and in accordance with the aims of the National Planning Policy Framework (2021), it is suggested that a bat roosting feature is added as part of the re-development. It is advised that a bat box, such as either the Build-in WoodStone Bat Box or Ibstock Enclosed Bat Box C (Plates 9 - 11) would be suitable for installation. This box should be sited close to the wall top of the south or west elevation. For further information on appropriate bat roosting features please contact Middleton Bell Ecology.

Plates 9 - 11. Build-in bat roost products



Birds

- 6.3.3 It is recommended that building demolition works either commence outside the main bird nesting period (taken to be March to September inclusive), or that a nesting bird check should be undertaken by an ecologist immediately prior to works commencing.

6.3.4 In order to provide continued nesting opportunities for nesting swallows, it is advised that mitigation would take the form of an open fronted lean-to or log store on site within which two swallow nest cups should be installed.

6.4 Conclusion

6.4.1 There were no visible signs of bat occupation on either the inside or outside of the surveyed buildings and they were considered to display negligible potential for use by roosting bats.

6.4.2 The thorough daytime visual inspection is in this case considered sufficiently robust to be confident that bats are not roosting in the surveyed buildings. No further survey effort is necessary providing works commence within 24 months of the survey date. If work is to commence after this date, then Middleton Bell Ecology should be contacted to determine the requirement for 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 cease, and further advice sought without delay.

7. References

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

MBE (2022) Land off Work Bank Lane, Thurlstone – Bat Survey Report. Middleton Bell Ecology