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Biodiversity Report for

Upper Woodhead Farm & Outbuildings, Hoyland, South Yorkshire

Protected Species (Bats) Survey

Date of Report – 17th November 2011

Proprietors
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Upper Woodhead Farm & Outbuildings, Hoyland
Protected Species Survey

Name of Client:

Address of Client: Upper Woodhead Farm, Woodhead Lane, Hoyland, Barnsley, S74 9SY

Name of Agent: MBooth Design Ltd, contact Mark Booth

Address of Agent: 11 Crowden Walk, Barnsley, S75 2LU

Date of Survey: 17th November 2011

Weather: 0% cloud, slight breeze, dry, sunny, 10^0C

Address of survey site: Upper Woodhead Farm & Outbuildings, Woodhead Lane, Hoyland, Barnsley, S74 9SY

Grid Reference of survey sites: SE 371 023

Names of Surveyors: A.B.Gibney BSc (Hons), MIEEM,

Licence Numbers: Great Crested Newt 20113998, Bat 20114275 & Barn Owl 20114276 issued by Natural England

1) Aim of Survey

A protected species survey (particularly bats) was requested by the client as part of the Planning Permission for the site. There are plans to alter the main farmhouse, plus convert some of the outbuildings to residential accommodation.

2) Site Description

The site is an unoccupied farmhouse and other associated outbuildings, and their immediate surroundings. The site is within a rural setting, on the outskirts of Hoyland in South Yorkshire. It consists of a concrete and compacted gravel yard with the various outbuildings; plus the farmhouse. There was also some garden area, which consisted of mainly mown lawn, with some herbaceous and shrub planting. The boundaries to the site were mainly post & rail fencing. Beyond the site boundaries were agricultural land, mainly permanent grazed grass.
There were few trees nearby, most being in an area of woodland at about 100m to the north of the property. There was one tree about 30m to the south of the farmhouse.

3) Building descriptions

There was a range of existing buildings, which were as follows:



Photo 1: The Farmhouse

The farmhouse was a two-storey house, with a mix of stone and brick walls and a slate roof (welsh slates). It also had a lean-to single storey section on the southern gable end, which was of a similar build.

The roof was simple and had a gable end, and was attached to outbuilding 1 at the other. Timber purlins and rafters supported the roof. The roof was at one height with equal pitches on each side. There were no missing slates and were very closely fitted, the roof having been replaced in the recent past. There were no missing ridge tiles, or gaps under or between the ridge tiles. The slates had a breather membrane lining. There was a loft space, which was fully accessible for inspection.



Photo 2: Showing roof timbers in house

There were many webs on the roof timbers. There were no fascias supporting the guttering. There were both plastic and wooden framed windows and doors, and there were no gaps or cavities around these. The farmhouse appeared to have been unoccupied for a short time and was in a good state of repair. The pointing was all in place on the gable end, and the flashing around the chimney and the various roof joins was all in place and tightly fitted.



Photo 3: Outbuilding 1

This building was a two-storey outbuilding, with stone walls and a part welsh slate and part corrugated asbestos sheet roof. It was attached to the farmhouse to the south and had a gable end to the north; this gable had collapsed in part, along with some of the roof. It was attached to the farm house to the south and outbuilding 2 to the east.

Timber purlins and rafters and 'king-post' beams supported the roof. The roof was at one height and had equal pitches. The roofing material had no lining, the backs of it being fully visible for survey. There was no loft space, the roof timbers being fully accessible for survey. There were many webs in the roof space, indicating that nothing had disturbed the space for some time. There were no fascias supporting the guttering. The eaves were covered in spiders' webs. There were wooden windows and door frames. The open gable end made the building very cold and draughty. There were many cavities in the walls, which were very deep, but all appeared to be filled with spiders' webs, and no droppings or other evidence of bats was found.



Photo 4: Outbuilding 2, showing roof timbers



Photo 5: showing gable end, at north end of building



Photo 6: Outbuilding 2

This building was a two-storey outbuilding, with stone/brick walls and a corrugated asbestos/cement sheeting roof. It was attached to outbuilding 1 and outbuilding 3.

Timber purlins and rafters, and ‘king-post’ beams supported the roof. The roof was at one height and was pitched, with equal pitches. There were no missing sheeting, but there was a gap at the western end, where the adjoining roof of outbuilding 1 had collapsed. The asbestos sheeting had no lining, but sheets of plywood, which were attached to the roofing timbers, obscured a section of the roof. There was therefore a void making a section of the roof timbers inaccessible for survey. There were fascias supporting the guttering. The eaves were covered in spiders’ webs. There were wooden window and door frames, and there were no gaps around the window frames, but there were gaps around some of the door frames. The building was unheated, and was cold and draughty.



Photo 7: Outbuilding 3

This building was a single-storey outbuilding, with part stone and part brick walls and a corrugated cement sheeting roof. It was attached to outbuilding 2 and outbuilding 4.

Timber beams, purlins and rafters supported the roof. The roof was at one height and was sloping. There was no missing roof sheeting. The roof had no lining. There was no loft space, the roof timbers being fully accessible for survey. There were many webs in the roof space, indicating that nothing had disturbed the space for some time. There were fascias supporting the guttering. The eaves were covered in spiders' webs. There were wooden windows and doors, the building was unheated and was cold and draughty.



Photo 8: Outbuilding 4

This building was a single-storey outbuilding, with stone walls and a corrugated cement sheeting roof. It was attached to outbuilding 3 and outbuilding 5. It was open fronted

Timber framework supported the roof. The roof was at one height and was sloping. There was no missing roof sheeting. The roof had no lining. There was no loft space, the roof timbers being fully accessible for survey. There were many webs in the roof space, indicating that nothing had disturbed the space for some time. There were fascias supporting the guttering. The eaves were covered in spiders' webs. The building was unheated and was cold and draughty.



Photo 9: Outbuilding 5

This building was a single-storey outbuilding, with stone/block and brick walls and a corrugated cement sheeting roof. It was attached to outbuilding 4, and had a gable end to the east. It was open fronted

Timber framework supported the roof. The roof was at one height and was sloping. There was no missing roof sheeting. The roof had no lining. There was no loft space, the roof timbers being fully accessible for survey. There were many webs in the roof space, indicating that nothing had disturbed the space for some time. There were fascias supporting the guttering. The eaves were covered in spiders' webs. The building was unheated and was cold and draughty.



Photo 10: Outbuilding 6

This building was a single-storey outbuilding, with block walls and a corrugated asbestos/cement sheet roof. It was detached and had gable ends. It was open-fronted.

Timber framework supported the roof. The roof was at one height and was sloping. There was no missing sheeting. The roof had no lining. There was no loft space, the roof timbers being fully accessible for survey. There were many webs in the roof space, indicating that nothing had disturbed the space for some time. There were fascias supporting the guttering. The eaves were covered in spiders' webs. The building was unheated and was cold and draughty.



Photo 11: Outbuilding 7

This building was in sections, one section being a single-storey outbuilding, with stone walls and in part a welsh slate roof, and in part a corrugated asbestos sheeting roof. It was detached. Timber purlins and rafters and 'king-post' beams supported the roof. The roof was at one height and had equal pitches. The roofing material had breathable membrane lining. There was no loft space, the roof timbers being fully accessible for survey. There were many webs in the roof space, indicating that nothing had disturbed the space for some time. There were no fascias supporting the guttering. The eaves were covered in spiders' webs. There were no window frames. The roof had hipped and gable end. The building was very cold and draughty. There were many cavities in the walls, which were very deep, but all appeared to be filled with spiders' webs, and no droppings or other evidence of bats was found.



Photo 12: Outbuilding 7

This section was a large lean-to single-storey agricultural shed, with block walls to 3m and then corrugated asbestos sheeting walls and roof and was in a good state of repair.
A wooden framework supported the roof. The roof was at one height with gable ends, and was sloping. The roof had no lining. There was no loft space, the roof being fully accessible for survey. There were many webs in the roof space, indicating that nothing had disturbed the space for some time. The building was very cold and draughty.



Photo 13: Outbuilding 7, viewed from farmhouse

The final section was a large single-storey agricultural shed, with no walls and a corrugated asbestos sheeting roof and was in a good state of repair.
A steel framework supported the roof. The roof was at one height with gable ends, and was pitched. The roof had no lining. There was no loft space, the roof being fully accessible for survey. There were many webs in the roof space, indicating that nothing had disturbed the space for some time. The building was very cold and draughty.

4) Survey Methods

The buildings were searched in a systematic pattern, all available spaces were searched, looking for signs of bats, in particular droppings, insect remains (where bats have fed), lack of spiders' webs (where bats have roosted), the bats themselves and body oils stains (where bats have squeezed through gaps). Particular attention was paid to undisturbed surfaces, walls (where bat droppings sometimes stick) and window sills (both inside and outside the buildings). The search was carried out with a high power torch inside the building and binoculars on the outside (particularly searching under eaves and ridge tiles). All cavities were checked using an endoscope to establish if anything was within them. Bats are unlikely to be active at the time of year when the survey was undertaken, and so would be unlikely to be present at any potential roosts.

Signs of birds were also noted, particularly old nest sites and barn owl *Tyto alba* pellets, throughout the whole site. Birds are unlikely to be nesting at the time of year when the survey was undertaken.

A note was made of any signs of other protected species, or whether there was any appropriate habitat for other protected species.

5) Results

5.1 The habitat types on the site were amenity grass J1.2, introduced shrub J1.4, bare ground J4 and buildings J3.6. (England Field Unit 2007).

5.2 Bats – There was no evidence of bats found during the survey, there were no droppings or other signs, all surfaces and cavities were covered in spiders' webs and dust. The outbuildings seemed unsuitable as they were cold, draughty and in outbuilding 1, the gable end, plus some of the roof had collapsed. The main house was unoccupied, but had a new roof, which was very well sealed, and so having no access points, was unlikely to be suitable as a bat roost, also the roof timbers had spiders' webs hanging throughout, and had obviously not been disturbed for some considerable time. Outbuilding 2 was the only building that could not be fully surveyed as part of the roof timbers were hidden behind plywood boards.

5.3 Birds – There were suitable nesting sites for birds on the proposed site, within many of the buildings. There was recent evidence of birds' nests found in many of the buildings, from the previous season. These were identified as swallow *Hirundo rustica*. There did not appear to be any active nests in any of the buildings. Also there were pellets found from two species of owl, barn owl and little owl *Athene noctua,* however there was no evidence that either were nesting, they appeared to use the buildings as a feeding site, plus as a roosting site.

5.4 There was no evidence of any other protected species on the site.

6) Conclusions and Recommendations

- The proposed development is unlikely to have a negative affect on the biodiversity of the area, as it will only affect an area, which would be classed as of limited wildlife value, i.e. bare ground, introduced shrubs, buildings, and amenity grass being the habitats present. (England Field Unit 2007).

- No protected species are likely to be affected by this proposed development, as far as could be ascertained. Although it should be noted that if there is any doubt as to whether birds are nesting in the near vicinity of the proposed works, it is advised to get the area checked by a suitably qualified ecologist. Should an active nest be found, the nest must remain undisturbed until the young birds have fledged, which may cause a delay in the proposed works. Nesting Birds are protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981, which makes it an offence to intentionally kill, injure or take any wild bird or take, damage or destroy its nest whilst in use or being built, or take or destroy its eggs.

- Although no evidence of bats was found during the survey, a precautionary approach should be taken, as bats are highly mobile animals that change roosts regularly. It is advised that prior to the work being undertaken, any contractors should have been advised of the possibility of the presence of bats, and to carry out works carefully checking for bats as the work progresses, and they should be informed of what to do if one is found during the course of the work. If a bat is discovered during works, the work needs to cease immediately and a licensed consultant or Natural England should be contacted for further advice. Work on the area where the bat was found (should one be found) should not recommence until such advice is received from the consultant or Natural England. Also it would be advisable that an emergence survey is undertaken on outbuilding 2, prior to commencing any works on this building as part of the roof was obscured and could not be thoroughly surveyed. This survey should be undertaken between May and September, when bats are active and should follow the guidelines in Parsons, K. (ed.) (2007) *Bat Surveys Good Practice Guidelines.*

References and Bibliography

Mitchell-Jones, A.J. & McLeish, A.P. [ed.] (1999) *The Bat Workers' Manual* JNCC
Parsons, K. (ed.) (2007) *Bat Surveys Good Practice Guidelines* Bat Conservation Trust
Betts, C.J. (2008) *Checklist of Protected British Species* Christopher Betts Environmental Biology
Hill, D., Fasham, M., Tucker, G., Shewry, M. & Shaw, P. (Eds) (2006) *Handbook of Biodiversity Methods: Survey, Evaluation & Monitoring* Cambridge
Anon. (2002) *Barn Owls on Site, a guide for developers and planners* Barn Owl Trust

Report Produced by

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Appendix 1: Legislation

Nesting Birds: Nesting Birds are protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981, which makes it an offence to intentionally kill, injure or take any wild bird or take, damage or destroy its nest whilst in use or being built, or take or destroy its eggs. In addition to this, for some rarer species (listed on Schedule 1 of the Act), it is an offence to intentionally or recklessly disturb them while they are nest building or, at or near a nest with eggs or young, or to disturb the dependent young of such a bird.

Bats: All bats and their roosts are protected under the Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981 (*as amended*) and The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010. You must not:

- deliberately capture (or take), injure or kill a bat;
- intentionally or recklessly disturb a group of bats; where the disturbance is likely to significantly affect the ability of any significant group of animals of that species to survive, breed or rear or nurture their young or likely to significantly affect the local distribution or abundance of the species, whether in a roost or not;
- damage or destroy the breeding or resting place (roost) of a bat;
- possess a bat (alive 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 (alive or dead), or parts of bats.