

COCKLE EDGE FARM, INGBIRCHWORTH: ADDENDUM REPORT

Results of Further Bat Survey

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Terms of Reference and background to proposals

SLR Consulting Ltd was commissioned by WHP Residential Limited to undertake a further dusk/ dawn bat detector survey of Cockle Edge Farm, Huddersfield Road, Ingbirchworth, South Yorkshire, S36 7GQ (OS grid reference SE 22918 05559).

This work following an initial dusk/ dawn bat detector survey, daytime inspection, and desk study by SLR Consulting in May 2016, in which a single common pipistrelle bat was found roosting on site¹. Please refer to this earlier report for a map of the site, including the location of the various buildings referred to in this July addendum report.

It is understood that planning permission is being sought to convert the buildings, most of which are derelict and not in use, into a team room and cafe.

1.2 Relevant Legislation & Policy²

1.2.1 Legislation

In England, all British bats and their roosts are protected under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010, which defines European protected species, and the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981, as amended by the Countryside & Rights of Way Act 2000 and the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006. These pieces of legislation combine to give substantial protection to bats and their roost sites, making it an offence to:

- Deliberately/intentionally kill, injure or take a bat;
- Damage, destroy or obstruct access to any place that a bat uses for shelter or protection (this is taken to mean all bat roosts whether bats are present or not); or
- Deliberately/intentionally or recklessly disturb³ bats.

The Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006 places a duty on authorities to have due regard for biodiversity and nature conservation during the course of their operations.

1.2.2 Policy

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) lays out current government policy on sustainable development including considerations towards biodiversity and nature

¹ SLR Consulting (May 2016). Cockle Edge Farm, Ingbirchworth: Results of Preliminary Bat Survey (including initial dusk and dawn bat detector survey).

² Please note that this legal information is a summary and intended for general guidance only. The original legal documents should be consulted for definitive information. Web addresses providing access to the full text of these documents are given in the References & Bibliography section.

³ Disturbance, as defined by the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010, includes in particular any action which impairs the ability of animals to survive, breed, rear their young, hibernate or migrate (where relevant); or which affects significantly the local distribution or abundance of the species.

conservation and places a duty on planners to make material consideration to the effect of a development on legally protected species when considering planning applications.

The UK Biodiversity Action Plan (UKBAP) (Anon, 1995), organised to fulfil the Convention on Biological Diversity in 1992, to which the UK is a signatory, has produced a national priority species list with all species included having specific action plans defining the measures required to ensure their conservation. Regional and local BAPs have also been organised to develop plans for species of nature conservation importance at regional and local levels.

The UKBAP, as updated in 2007, lists seven bat species as conservation priorities:

- Barbastelle *Barbastella barbastellus*
- Bechstein's *Myotis bechsteinii*
- Noctule *Nyctalus noctula*
- Soprano pipistrelle *Pipistrellus pygmaeus*
- Brown long-eared *Plecotus auritus*
- Greater horseshoe *Rhinolophus ferrumequinum*
- Lesser horseshoe *Rhinolophus hipposideros*

2.0 METHODOLOGY

2.1 Dusk Emergence Bat Detector Survey

A dusk emergence bat detector survey was undertaken by Mr Gary Oliver on the evening of the 14th July 2016. Survey commenced at 21.12 hrs (15 minutes before local sunset) and finished at 22.57 hrs (1.5 hours after local sunset), in compliance with best practice⁴. The surveyor was positioned within Building B initially, where good views of the interior of this building could be gained, as well as views of the wall on the northern side of Building I (both of which contained a number of cracks and crevices of potential value to roosting bats). At 22.00 hours, the surveyor left Building B and stood in the central courtyard, where good views of the roofs of all buildings could be gained. The surveyor periodically entered Buildings A, B, and F (from where the upper floors of Buildings E, D, and G could be seen) to search for bats flying within these buildings, and 'light testing'.

The weather conditions were dry during the emergence survey, with an ambient temperature of 11°C at the start, dropping to 9°C by the end. A wind speed of 'moderate breeze' was recorded throughout, from a westerly direction and cloud cover varied between 1/8 and 4/8.

2.2 Dawn Re-Entry Bat Detector Survey

The dawn re-entry bat detector survey was undertaken by Mr Gary Oliver on the morning of the 15th July 2016. Survey commenced at 03.26 hrs (1.5 hours before sunrise) and finished at 05.11 hrs (15 minutes after local sunrise), in compliance with best practice⁴.

The surveyor was 'mobile' during the dawn survey; changing position at regular intervals, so that all sides of all of the buildings were covered; this is a recognised survey technique for dawn surveys, where bats tend to perform several loops/ passes of their roosts, before entering.

The weather conditions were largely dry during the dawn re-entry survey, with an ambient temperature of 8°C a wind speed of 'moderate breeze' throughout (from the west), and cloud cover of 4/8 throughout.

2.3 Search for Active Bird Nests, and Evidence of Occupation by Bats

An internal and external survey of the buildings was made on the afternoon of 14th July 2016, to search for bird nests, and signs of occupation by bats (such as droppings on walls and/ or floors).

2.4 Quality Assurance & Environmental Management

Mr Gary Oliver is a Full Member of the Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (CIEEM) and follows the Institute's code of professional conduct when undertaking ecological work.

⁴ Collins, J (ed.) (2016). Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines (3rd edition). The Bat Conservation Trust (BCT), London.

3.0 RESULTS

3.1 Results of Dusk Emergence and Dawn Re-Entry Bat Detector Surveys

During the dusk emergence survey of the 14th July 2016, a common pipistrelle *Pipistrellus pipistrellus* bat emerged from the top of the breeze block wall, on the southern aspect of Building B (see Plate 1 below). The bat was roosting very close to the roost located during the May 2016 survey, and it is very likely that it involved the same bat.

The common pipistrelle bat emerged at 21.58 hours, and circled around inside Building B four or five times, for approximately 30 seconds, before exiting the building through the open door, on its northern side.

The surveyor then left Building B.

The only other 'bat pass' heard during the emergence survey also involved a common pipistrelle, at 21.58 hours; this bat was heard very briefly but not seen; it appeared to relate to land to the west of the farm buildings.



Plate 1: Location of roost on southern side of Building B, during July 2016 dusk emergence survey

During the dawn re-entry survey of the 15th July 2016, a common pipistrelle was seen commuting to the east of buildings H and J, in a northern direction.

At 04.09 a Noctule (*Nyctalus noctula*) or Leisler's (*Nyctalus leisleri*) was heard briefly commuting past the site, but was not seen.

At 04.24 hours a common pipistrelle flew into Building B and returned to the roost above the breeze block wall, in the same location as it had emerged from, the previous night (refer to Plate 1 above).

3.2 Results of Daytime Inspections for Bat Droppings and Bird Nests

No bat droppings were found on the floor, or breeze block wall beneath/ beside the confirmed roost (at the top of the wall, on the southern side of Building B), or elsewhere on site. This supports the view that the roost is only used by a single bat.

In the order of twenty swallows (*Hirundo rustica*) were found on site, involving adults and young; these roosted in the buildings on the evening of 14th July 2016. Swallow nests (most appearing to have been used earlier this year, or last year,) were found within Building B (three nests located at southern end of lean-to attached to the main part of this building); and the roof void above Buildings D, E and G (five nests).

A woven nest was also found above a doorway in Building G; this appeared to have been built by blackbird (*Turdus merula*), but was not in use at the time.

One or two feral pigeons (*Columba livia*) were found within Building B, and may have nested high up on one of the walls (although no conclusive signs of breeding were found).

4.0 CLOSURE

This report has been prepared by SLR Consulting Limited with all reasonable skill, care and diligence, and taking account of the manpower and resources devoted to it by agreement with the client. Information reported herein is based on the interpretation of data collected and has been accepted in good faith as being accurate and valid.

This report is for the exclusive use of WHp Residential Limited. No warranties or guarantees are expressed or should be inferred by any third parties. This report may not be relied upon by other parties without written consent from SLR.

SLR disclaims any responsibility to the client and others in respect of any matters outside the agreed scope of the work.

5.0 REFERENCES AND BIBLIOGRAPHY

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