

Stables off Royd Moor Road, Thurlstone

Bat and Bird Survey Report

17th December 2020



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1. Summary

- 1.1.1 A bat survey of a stable building located off Royd Moor Road, Thurlstone was commissioned by Patrick Townsend, on behalf of the clients Julie and Les Barden on 9th December 2020.
- 1.1.2 The survey was undertaken to support a planning application to demolish the stables and build a residential dwelling on the site.
- 1.1.3 The bat survey works undertaken comprise a preliminary roost assessment undertaken on 16th December 2020.
- 1.1.4 No evidence of roosting bats was recorded from any location during the bat survey. The surveyed building comprises a recently constructed stable block of a simple design which lacks potential roost features. The stable block is considered to offer a negligible level of bat roost potential. Evidence of swallow nesting was however confirmed from the stables. No other bird nests were recorded from the building.
- 1.1.5 The thorough daytime visual inspection of the building is in this case considered sufficiently robust to be confident that bats are not roosting in the building and no further survey effort is necessary, providing works commence within 24 months of the survey date. If works are to commence after this date, then Middleton Bell Ecology should be contacted to determine the requirement for update survey.
- 1.1.6 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 be stopped, and further advice sought without delay.
- 1.1.7 It is an offence to damage or destroy active bird nests, therefore demolition should take place outside of the bird nesting season, which in this case is from March to September. Any works undertaken during the main nesting bird season should be preceded by a nesting bird check, to be undertaken by an ecologist.
- 1.1.8 It is recommended that mitigation for nesting swallow is incorporated into the new development with a bat roost enhancement also recommended.

2. Introduction

- 2.1.1 A bat survey of a stable building located off Royd Moor Road, Thurlstone was commissioned by Patrick Townsend, on behalf of the clients Julie and Les Barden on 9th December 2020.
- 2.1.2 The survey was undertaken to support a planning application to demolish the stables and build a residential dwelling on the site.
- 2.1.3 The bat survey works undertaken comprise a preliminary roost assessment undertaken on 16th December 2020.
- 2.1.4 The stables are located in open farmland approximately 850m northwest of the centre of the village of Thurlstone.

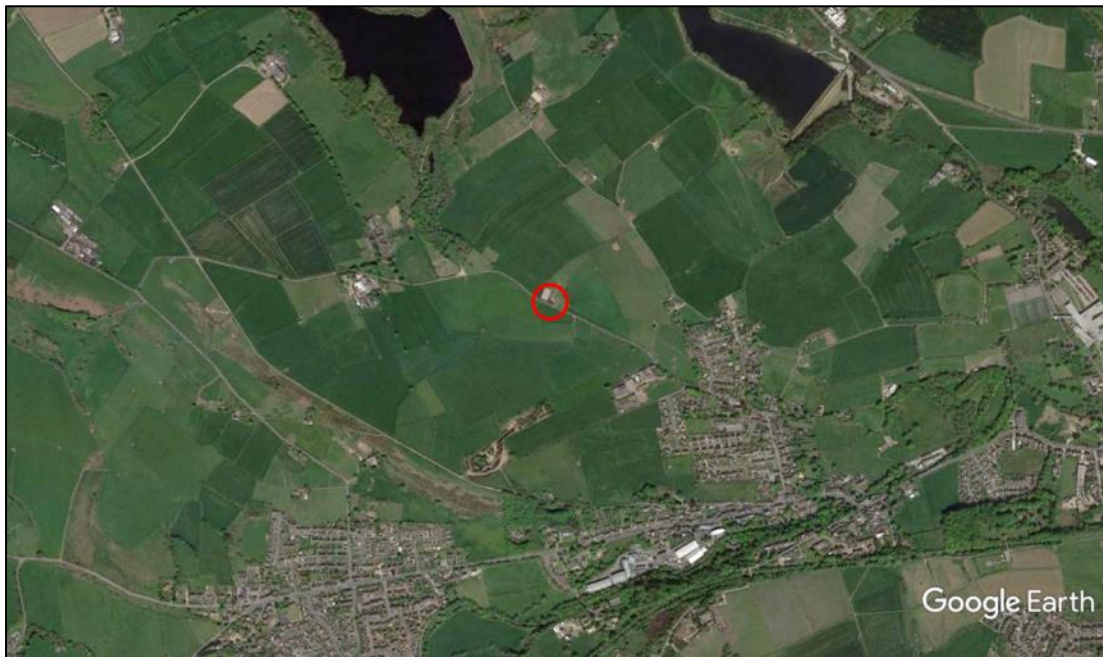
3. Habitat Assessment

- 3.1.1 The stables are located in an open and exposed situation within an area of mixed farmland, bounded by dry-stone walls.
- 3.1.2 The edge of Thurlstone village is located c.450m southwest of the site. The closest area of higher quality bat foraging habitat comprises a belt of woodland, located 280m northwest of the site. This woodland extends south from Royd Moor Reservoir, with both this waterbody and the connected Scout Dike Reservoir comprising prime bat foraging habitat.
- 3.1.3 Whilst the surrounding area experiences little light pollution, given the site's exposed position, the abundance and species diversity of bats regularly using habitats within the immediate vicinity is expected to be quite low.

Table 1. Location and habitat table

Name and address: Royd Moor Road, Thurlstone, Penistone, S36 7RD			
OS Grid Ref. SE 22684 04065		Altitude. 249m	
Local Planning Authority: Barnsley Council			
Features on site and adjacent to site			
Feature	On site	Adjacent	Comments
Buildings	✓		Located c.350m from nearest building
River			River Don 840m south of site
Standing water			620m southeast of Royd Moor Reservoir
Bridges tunnels and culverts			
Trees			Nearest tree c.280m from site
Woodland			Small area of woodland c.280m from site
Grassland	✓	✓	Stables located adjacent to pasture

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.
- Bat roosting areas and access/egress points into the structure.
- The presence/absence of roosting and/or nesting barn owl.
- The presence/absence of nesting by other bird species.
- The level of bat roost potential associated with the structure.
- The number and species of bat roosting within the structure.
- Identify further survey work or mitigation requirements.

4. Methodology

4.1 Data Consultation

4.1.1 Bat records were not obtained for this scheme given the negligible level of bat roost potential offered by the stables.

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

4.3 Field Survey

Preliminary Roost Assessment

4.3.1 The following personnel conducted the preliminary roost assessment on 16th December 2020:

- Robert Bell (MCIEEM; Bat Survey Class License WML-A34-Level 4, 2016-25236-CLS-CLS; Barn Owl Survey Class Licence CL29/00070)

4.3.2 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 building's bat roost potential (negligible, low, moderate, high or confirmed roost).
- If barn owl signs are present, determination of whether the building comprises an Occupied Breeding Site (OBS), Active Roost Site (ARS) or Temporary Roost Site (TRS).

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

- Clulight
- Binoculars
- Endoscope
- Ladders
- Camera

4.4 Survey Limitations

4.4.1 No limitations to an effective survey were encountered.

5. Results

5.1 Data Consultation

5.1.1 Three European Protected Species (EPS) mitigation licence have been issued for locations within 2km of the site. These licensed relate to either common pipistrelle *Pipistrellus pipistrellus* or brown long-eared bat *Plecotus auritus*. The closest licence was issued in 2012 to permit the destruction of a common pipistrelle resting place, located 750m southeast of the site

5.2 Field Survey

Preliminary Roost Assessment

- 5.2.1 No signs of roosting bats were recorded from the stables and they are considered to offer negligible bat roosting potential. Approximately eight historic swallow *Hirundo rustica* nests were however recorded across various sections of the stable block.

Building description

- 5.2.2 The surveyed stable building was constructed between 2003 and 2009. It comprises a single-storey L-shaped timber framed and wood clad structure with a pitched corrugated metal sheet covered roof, metal ridge and verge capping (Plates 1-3). Single paned windows and wooden stable doors are present. Guttering is uPVC and runs into water butts.

Plate 1. Northern corner of stables



Plate 2. East elevation of stables



Plate 3. Southeast corner of stables



External features offering bat roost potential

- 5.2.3 The exterior of the stables was in a good state of repair and lacked any suitable bat access points or features offering more than negligible bat roost potential.

Internal inspection

- 5.2.4 The roof is lined with chipboard and suspended on a simple timber framework. The external walls are single skin from 1m up, with a double skin below this height. There are however no potential bat access points into the double skin section of the wall.
- 5.2.5 Approximately eight former swallow nests were recorded from various compartments of the stables. These were mainly above a floating double ridge beam (Plate 4) but also at the base of the roof pitch (Plate 5).

Plate 4. Interior of roof with old swallow nest visible



Plate 5. Swallow nests at base of roof pitch



6. Assessment

6.1 Summary and Evaluation of Findings

- 6.1.1 No evidence of roosting bats was recorded from any location during the bat survey. The surveyed building comprises a recently constructed stable block of a simple design which lacks potential roost features. The stable block is considered to offer a negligible level of bat roost potential.
- 6.1.2 Evidence of swallow nesting was however confirmed from the stables. No other bird nests were recorded from the building.

6.2 Legislation and Policy Guidance

Bats

- 6.2.1 Bats receive protection under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 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, greater horseshoe *Rhinolophus ferrumequinum*, lesser horseshoe *Rhinolophus hipposideros*, noctule 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 2019. 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

- 6.2.1 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.

6.3 Further Survey, Recommendations and Enhancements

- 6.3.1 No further bat survey is considered necessary providing works commence within 24 months of the survey date. If works commence after this time, then Middleton Bell Ecology should be contacted to determine the requirement for update survey works to be undertaken.
- 6.3.2 No bats were recorded roosting on site during the survey works and consequently there is no compulsory requirement for mitigation. However, in order to enhance the ecological value of the site and in accordance with the aims of the National Planning Policy Framework (2019), it is suggested that one bat roosting feature is incorporated within the new dwelling. It is advised that an enclosed and integrated bat box, such as either the Build-in WoodStone Bat Box or Istock Enclosed Bat Box C (Plates 6-8) is installed, preferably high on a south or west facing gable. The box should be sited at wall top height away from areas of light spill. For further information on appropriate bat roosting features please contact Middleton Bell Ecology.

Plates 6-8. Build-in bat roost products



6.3.3 It is also recommended that mitigation for nesting swallows is incorporated within the development. Suitable mitigation may include the provision of two swallow nest cups within a newly constructed open sided structure (i.e. car port, stables or log store).

6.3.4 Demolition of B1 will either need to be undertaken outside the bird nesting period (March to September inclusive), or the works will need to be preceded by a nesting bird check undertaken by an experienced ecologist.

6.4 Conclusions

6.4.1 There were no visible signs of bat occupation on either the inside or outside of the stable block.

6.4.2 The thorough daytime visual inspection of the building is in this case considered sufficiently robust to be confident that bats are not roosting in the building and therefore no further survey effort is necessary, providing works commence within 24 months of the survey date. If works are 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 be stopped, and further advice sought without delay.

6.4.4 It is an offence to damage or destroy active bird nests therefore demolition should take place outside of the bird nesting season which in this case is from March to September. Any works undertaken during the main nesting bird season should be preceded by a nesting bird check, to be undertaken by an ecologist.

6.4.5 It is recommended that mitigation for nesting swallow is incorporated into the new development with a bat roost enhancements also recommended.

7. References

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