Whitcher Wildlife Ltd.
Ecological Consultants.

BUILDINGS 2 & 3, SUNNY BANK FARM, LUNDWOOD.

OS REF: SE 384-069.

BAT SURVEY.

Ref No: - **190308/B23.**

Date: **13th March 2019.**

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TABLE OF CONTENTS.

	Page Number
1. INTRODUCTION.	**3**
2. SURVEY METHODOLOGY.	**4**
3. SURVEY RESULTS.	**5**
4. EVALUATION OF FINDINGS.	**11**
5. RECOMMENDATIONS.	**12**
6. REFERENCES.	**13**
Appendix I. BAT INFORMATION.	**14**
Appendix II. NESTING BIRD INFORMATION.	**16**

1. INTRODUCTION.

1.1. Plans are being drawn up for the conversion of a series of old agricultural buildings at Sunny Bank Farm in Lundwood.

1.2. A bat survey of the buildings was commissioned to support the GPDO Permitted Development application for the site.

1.3. Whitcher Wildlife Ltd carried out a daytime survey of the site on 7th March 2019. This report outlines the findings for Buildings 2 and 3 and makes appropriate recommendations.

1.4. Appendix I of this report provides back ground information with respect to bats and the legal protection afforded to them.

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2. SURVEY METHODOLOGY.

2.1. The structure was checked for potential bat roosting sites in line by looking for the following signs: -

* Holes, cracks or crevices.
* Bat droppings.
* Prey remains.

2.2. A thorough external inspection was carried out from ground level for any gaps or openings of the structure which may provide suitable roost access points and field signs to indicate possible use by bats.

2.3. All walls and the ground around the structure were checked for signs of bat droppings or staining to indicate possible use by bats. Where necessary, ladders were utilised to gain access within the limits of health and safety. Any access constraints encountered are outlined within the following report.

2.4. All survey work was carried out in line with Collins, J. (ed.) (2016) *Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines (3rd edition)*, with an assessment of the structures suitability for roosting bats made in accordance with these guidelines.

2.5. This survey was carried out by Steven Whitcher MCIEEM. Since 2002 Steven has gained extensive experience in a professional capacity as an ecological consultant carrying out ecology, protected species and Extended Phase 1 Habitat surveys. Steven's knowledge has been supplemented through the attendance of a variety of courses run by the Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (CIEEM), the Bat Conservation Trust (BCT) and the Field Studies Council (FSC) in the relative protected species, plant species and in carrying out Extended Phase 1 Habitat Surveys. Steven holds Natural England Survey Licences in respect of bats, great crested newts, hazel dormice, crayfish and barn owls, NRW Survey Licences in respect of bats and great crested newts and an SNH Survey Licence in respect of bats. Steven is also a Registered Consultant with Natural England and is confined spaces trained and qualified in tree climbing and aerial rescue.

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3. SURVEY RESULTS.

3.1. Data Search Results.

3.1.1. A desktop data search for existing records of bats within 2km of the surveyed area was submitted to South Yorkshire Bat Group (SYBG).

3.1.2. SYBG do not hold any records of bats within the surveyed area or immediately surrounding area.

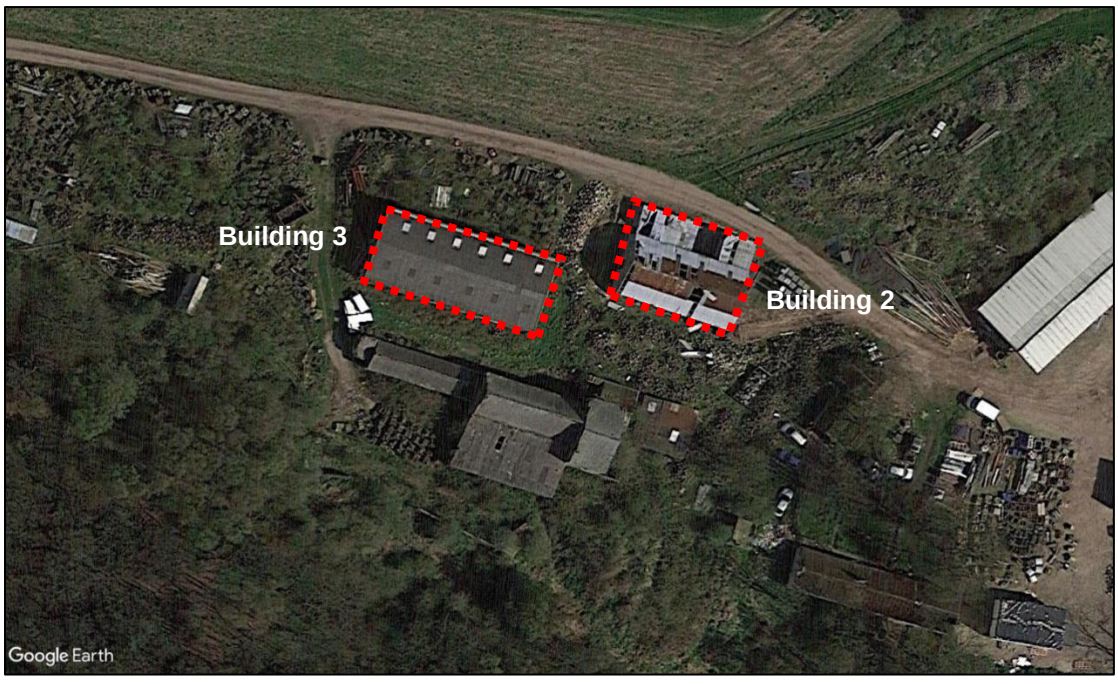
3.1.3. The closest existing records of bats are records of several species of bat within Ardsley Tunnel, which is located 800m southwest of the surveyed area. SYBG also hold several other records of bat roosts within the area including the following:

- A maternity roost of Pipistrelle bats on Lund Crescent in Lundwood.
- A single Common Pipistrelle bat roosting in Monk Bretton Priory.

3.1.4. SYBG hold further field records of bats throughout the surrounding area although none within or immediately adjacent to the surveyed area.

3.2. The Surveyed Area.

3.2.1. The surveyed area was Buildings 2 and 3 at Sunny Bank Farm in Lundwood, as shown below.



3.2.2. The buildings have been dealt with separately below.

3.2.2.1. Building 2.

3.2.2.1.1. Building 2 comprises a large concrete barn with several small lean too buildings on its northern elevation. The building is currently disused and empty.



3.2.2.1.2. The building comprises solid concrete block walls with the southern elevation of the building being open. The roof of the building comprises a pitched corrugated metal roof supported on a metal frame. Internally the building comprises one large room that is open to the inside of the roof with several small rooms within the lean too extensions.





3.2.2.2. Building 3.

3.2.2.2.1. Building 3 comprises a large open barn that is currently disused.



3.2.2.2.2. The building comprises a metal and wood frame with occasional areas of solid brick and concrete block walls present on two elevations. Further concrete block walls are present internally separating the internal space into two large rooms open to the inside of the sloping corrugated cement roof.

3.2.3. The land immediately surrounding the buildings is overgrown with birch, willow and bramble scrub.

3.2.4. The site is located in a rural area to the east of Lundwood with the surrounding area comprising open farmland to the north and east, the town of Lundwood and a large water treatment works a short distance to the west and an area of woodland extending to the River Dearne beyond to the south.



3.3. Survey Results.

3.3.1. The survey results below have been split to cover each building separately.

3.3.2. Building 2.



3.3.2.1. The concrete block walls of Building 2 were found to predominantly be in a reasonable condition with the only voids being ventilation holes leading through the walls to the interior. No other cracks or voids were identified and the walls were solid providing no available roosting sites accessible from eaves level.

3.3.2.2. The roof of the building was partially missing and where present was assessed to be unsuitable for roosting bats due to the single skin nature of the roof.

3.3.2.3. Overall the building was assessed as providing a **negligible** potential for roosting bats due to its open nature and solid construction.

3.3.3. Building 3.

3.3.3.1. The concrete block and brick sections of Building 3 were found to be in a reasonable condition with the only voids being ventilation holes leading through the walls to the interior. No other cracks or voids were identified and the walls were solid providing no available roosting sites accessible from eaves level.



3.3.3.2. The roof of the building was assessed to be unsuitable for roosting bats due to the single skin nature of the building. A small overlap of the concrete sheets was present at the western end of the building although this was found to be tight to the concrete blocks with no visible bat field signs.

3.3.3.3. Overall the building was assessed as providing a **negligible** potential for roosting bats due to its open nature and solid construction.

3.3.3.4. Occasional old pellets, potentially kestrel or little owl, and areas of droppings were identified within the building implying that the building is occasionally used as a perch although no nests were identified during this survey.

3.3.4. The habitat surrounding the buildings was assessed as providing a moderate value foraging and commuting habitat for bats, predominantly due to the woodland and connective habitats to the south. A thorough assessment of the foraging and commuting activity in the area of the buildings could not be carried out as part of this daytime survey of the site.

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4. EVALUATION OF FINDINGS.

4.1. No existing records of bats were identified within the surveyed area or immediately surrounding area with the closest record being approximately 800m from the site. Therefore, there will be no impact on known bat roosts during the proposed works.

4.2. Buildings 2 and 3 were assessed as displaying a negligible potential to support roosting bats due to the more modern, solid and open construction of the buildings. Therefore, works to these buildings are unlikely to have an impact on bats or bat roosts.

4.3. The land surrounding the buildings was assessed as providing a moderate value foraging and commuting habitat for bats, predominantly due to the connective habitats to the south. However, a thorough assessment of the foraging and commuting activity within and around the site was not possible during this daytime survey of the site.

4.4. The proposed works will remove some of the habitat immediately around the buildings but will not have an impact on the connective habitats to the south. Therefore, if a sensitive lighting plan is implemented during the works the overall impact on foraging and commuting bats is assessed as low.

4.5. Bird nests, droppings, occasional pellets and birds, including pigeons, were also identified within Building 3. Therefore, any works on this building, particularly during the nesting season, will have a high impact on nesting birds if they are present in the building.

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5. RECOMMENDATIONS.

5.1. Buildings 2 and 3 were assessed as providing negligible potential to support roosting bats and therefore there is no requirement for further bat surveys in advance of works on these buildings.

5.2. It is however recommended that the works are carried out with care due to the potential for individual bats to seek temporary refuge almost anywhere. In the unlikely event that any bats are identified during the works all works on the building should cease and further advice should be sought from the author of this report.

5.3. It is recommended that a sensitive lighting scheme is implemented during the works with minimal lighting around the buildings and no lighting shining onto the habitats along the boundaries of the site, particularly to the south.

5.4. Ideally it is recommended that no works commence on the buildings during the nesting season, which extends from March to September each year.

5.5. Any works that commence during the nesting season must be immediately preceded by a thorough nesting bird survey carried out by a suitably experienced surveyor. Any nests identified must remain undisturbed until the young have fledged from the nest.

5.6. As a biodiversity enhancement it is recommended that integral bat and bird boxes of a suitable in-keeping design are incorporated in the newly constructed buildings on the site.

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Prepared by:	
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Checked by:	
Jenny Whitcher Roebuck MCIEEM.	Date: 13th March 2019.

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Appendix I. BAT INFORMATION.

Ecology

There are currently 18 species of bat residing in Britain, 17 of which of which are known to breed here. They are extremely difficult to identify in the hand and even more so in flight.

All appear to be diminishing in numbers, probably due to habitat change and shortage of food, caused by pesticides, as insects are their sole diet.

As their diet consists solely of insects, bats hibernate during the winter when their food source is at its most scarce. They will spend the winter in hollow trees, caves, mines and the roofs of buildings.

Certain species, particularly the pipistrelle (the commonest and most widespread British bat) can quickly adapt to man-made structures and will readily use these to roost and to rear their young.

Surveys

During walkover surveys, bat roosts can be identified by looking for:

- Suitable holes, cracks and crevices within any building, tree or other structure.
- Bat droppings along walls, window cills, or on the ground.
- Prey remains, such as insect wings.

Further investigations can be made using endoscopes, by carrying out aerial inspections of trees or by conducting bat activity surveys during dusk and dawn over summer months.

Legislation

Bats are protected under Appendix II and III of the Bern Convention (1982), Schedule 5 and 6 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act (1981), Annex IV of the Habitats Directive (some species under Annex II), Annex II of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations (2010) and EUROBATS agreement. Numerous species are

also listed under section 41 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act (2006) making them species of principal importance.

All bats and their roosts are therefore protected in the UK. This makes it an offence to kill, injure or take any bat, to interfere with any place used for shelter or protection, or to intentionally disturb any animal occupying such a place.

The UK has designated maternity and hibernacula areas as Special Areas of Conservation (SAC's) under the Habitats Directive. Implementation of the UK Biodiversity Action Plan also includes action for a number bat species and the habitats which support them.

Where development proposals are likely to affect a bat roost site, a licence is required from Natural England.

Appendix II. NESTING BIRD INFORMATION.

Ecology

The nesting season will vary according to the weather each year but generally commences in March, peaks during May and June and continues until September. It is also worth remembering that some birds nest in trees and scrub, but others are ground nesting or prefer man- made structures or buildings.

Surveys

Nesting bird surveys search for potential nest sites in vegetation, buildings etc. Potential nesting sites are observed over a suitable period of time for bird movements or calling male birds that would indicate the presence of a nest. The presence of a nest can be identified from the field signs without the necessity to see the nest itself, thereby avoiding any disturbance of the nests. The best way to avoid this issue is to plan for vegetation clearance to be carried out outside the bird-nesting season.

Legislation

Nesting birds are protected under The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981.

Part 1. -(1) Of the Act states that: - If any person intentionally: - kills, injures or takes any wild bird; takes, damages or destroys the nest of any wild bird while that nest is in use or being built; or takes or destroys an egg of any wild bird, he shall be guilty of an offence.

Part 1. -(5) of the Act states that: - If any person intentionally: - disturbs any wild bird included in Schedule 1 while it is building a nest or is in, on, or near a nest containing eggs or young; or disturbs young of such a bird, he shall be guilty of an offence and liable to a special penalty.

The Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 amends the above by inserting after “intentionally” the words “or recklessly”.