

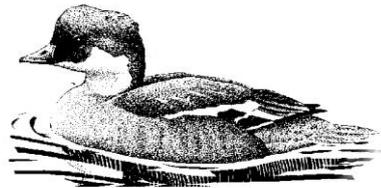
Bat Scoping Survey to
Town Farm
Churchfield Lane
Kexborough
S75 5DU

12th August 2020



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1. Summary

- 1.1 In October 2019, a bat scoping survey to Town Farm, Kexborough was commissioned to establish the likelihood of the building being used by roosting bats ahead of proposed development works. The results of the survey classified the buildings were of negligible roost potential with the exception of the farmhouse which had low roost potential. Low roost potential of the farmhouse required a single summer activity survey be undertaken at the correct time of year. This survey is the results of the survey and an update to the scoping survey of October 2019.
- 1.2 A single activity survey was carried out on 12th August 2020 and established that no bats were roosting in the farmhouse or the farm buildings and that bat activity was limited to bats commuting through the site after emerging elsewhere.
- 1.3 The small number of bats is conducive with the site as it is mostly hard standing and has little foraging habitat and the buildings do not provide much in the way of roost potential. No further surveys are required and there are no statutory constraints to the development of this site from the presence of bats.

2. Introduction

An ecological assessment and bat scoping survey was undertaken to Town Farm, Churchfield Lane, Kexborough S75 5DU (NGR SE298095) in accordance with the Planning Authority's request, to determine whether bats are using or have used the property as a roost site.

2.1 The current proposal is to demolish all buildings within the site footprint and replace with a residential development.

2.2 The survey took place at a time considered as the optimal time for bat occupancy, therefore, the survey aimed to establish the following

- the presence or absence of bats using the building by undertaking a scoping survey (Oct,2019)
- identify any potential roosting areas
- Undertake at least one activity survey
- provide an impact assessment of the development on bats
- define mitigation proposals where required
- assess the requirement for a protected species licence.
- Assess the building for use by nesting birds

3. Methodology

3.1 The building was surveyed in accordance with best practice guidelines by John Gardner, a surveyor with over 38yrs field experience in searching for bats and is registered to use the Class Survey Licence WML CL20 (Level 4). The licence number is 2015-15656-CLS-CLS. A second, very experienced surveyor was also used to cover the buildings as thoroughly as possible.

3.2 The interior and exterior of the buildings were inspected during daylight using torches and binoculars. All normal signs of bats were looked for including bats, dead baby bats, bat droppings, prey remains, scratching and staining of entry and exit holes.

3.3 The buildings were assessed for their degree of potential to support roosting bats including assessing the building design, construction, materials and condition. This combined with an assessment of the location of the site and the surrounding habitat in terms of bat suitability allows an assessment to be made as to the potential of the building to support bats. Factors such as the proximity of good foraging areas (woodland, water bodies) and features that link the site to the wider surrounds such as linear features (hedgerows etc) were also considered.

3.4 This report sets out the findings of a daytime scoping survey carried out to the above site on Tuesday 1st October 2019 and an emergence survey on 12th August 2020, highlighting the ecological constraints and opportunities associated with the proposed works and appraising the potential impacts. Appropriate actions to ensure the protection of bats are identified and mitigation measures detailed where appropriate.

4. Survey constraints

4.1 None.

5. Site Description & Context

5.1 This site comprises several large agricultural units of modern construction along with a single storey livestock shed and modern, detached farmhouse. There are residential dwellings in the immediate vicinity that will also offer roosting potential. Linear features connect the site to the wider landscape and the site is close to excellent foraging habitat.

Figure 1. Site location plans

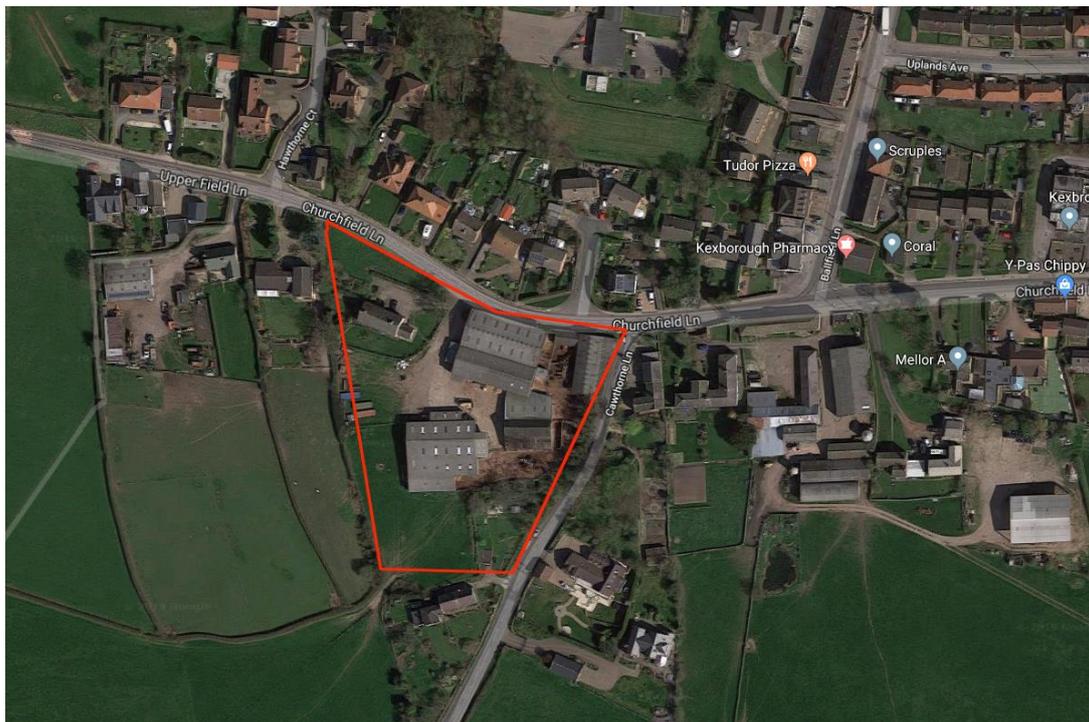
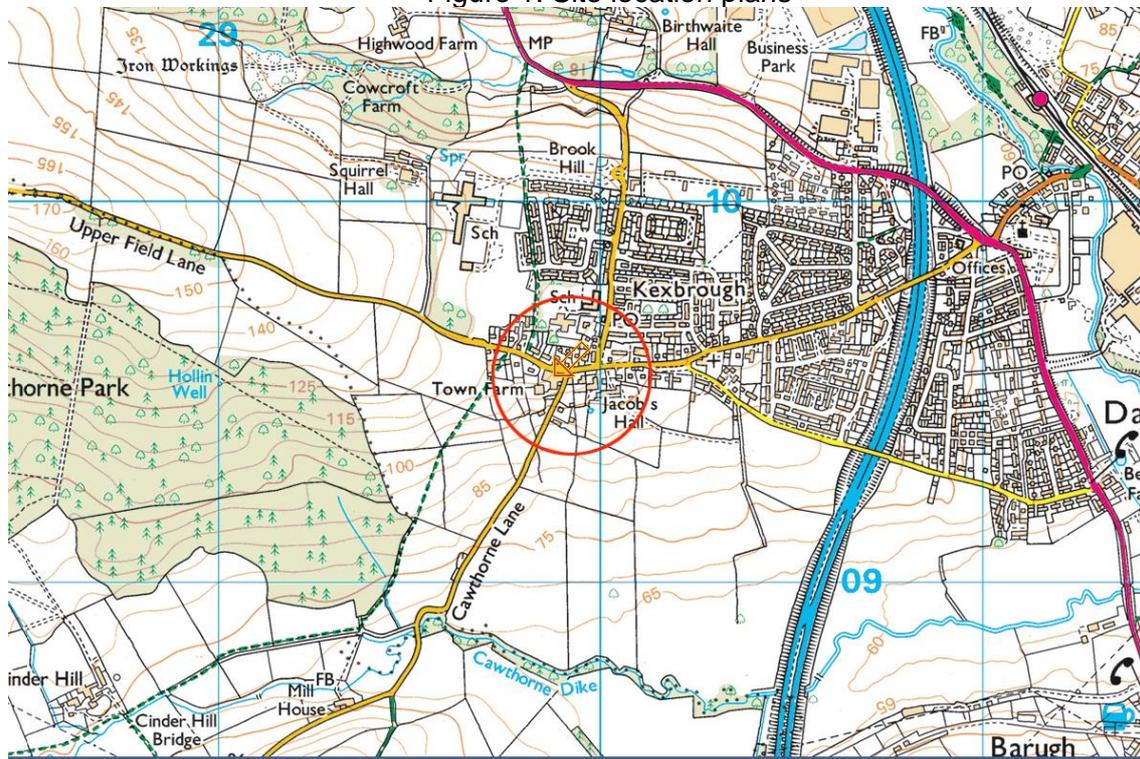


Figure 2 Aerial view of the site, surrounds and buildings surveyed

6. Desk Study

6.1 A data search covering 2km from the site centroid was requested from South Yorkshire Bat Group. This returned 158 records, none of which have any relevance to the site. The records simply plot bat worker coverage with the nearest records from Darton (c.1.5km east) and Cawthorne and Canon Hall (c.2km west). Most records date from the 80s when there was an active bat worker in Barnsley and there are very few confirmed roost sites locally with most being from Canon Hall. There are no records within 800m of the site and none from Kexborough at all which is not a true reflection of the status of bats in the village. Bat records gained from this survey supersede all other records.

7. Activity surveys

7.1 A single emergence survey was carried out at Town Farm as required from a site with low bat roost potential. Two very experienced surveyors covered the house at Town Farm as the barns are deemed to have negligible potential. The survey took place on 12th August 2020 after a day of daytime temperatures reaching 30°C+

8. Survey results

8.1 The daylight survey

The site consists of several large agricultural units, a livestock shed and a farmhouse. Figure 3 plots the location of each and identifies each of the buildings.

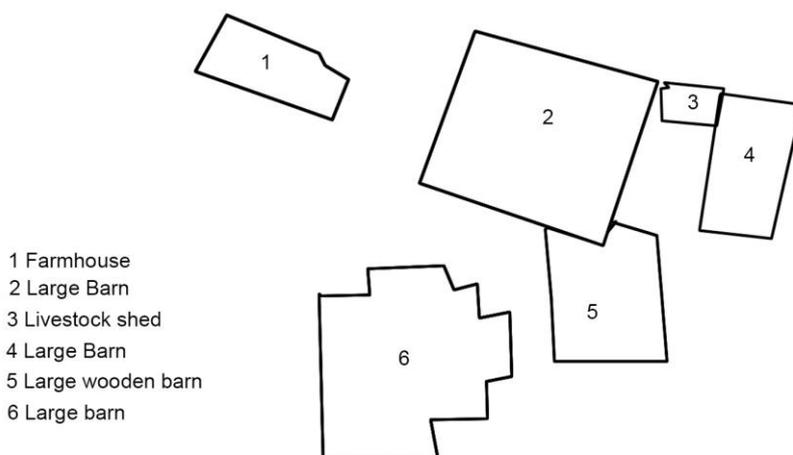


Figure 3. Layout of the buildings

The large units (fig.3 buildings 2, 4 & 6) are all of the same style of construction with the lower section of walls made from breeze block in between a steel framework, while the upper walls and roofing is covered with corrugated sheeting, mostly cement fibre. The walls have no cavities that would allow bats to roost and the single thickness sheeting on the upper walls and roof are also of no potential interest to bats. The ridge sections tend to be wide, open and without a central ridge beam and are highly unlikely to be used by ridge dwelling species.

Building 3 is a small, open-fronted livestock shed that has been partially bricked up to the front. The original building has stone walls to rear and sides and a slate roof. The roof has been replaced in recent years and is in good condition with a full set of ridge tiles that are well bedded and in situ. The gable walls have heavy stone caps and are sound on the verges. There is no

evidence to suggest use by bats and the building appears to have limited potential. It may be worth checking during the summer period when the farmhouse is being surveyed.

Building 5 is a large open-fronted wooden barn with a tin sheeting over the roof. The lower walls are single thickness blockwork while the upper walls are single thickness cedar planks on a timber frame. The lack of wall cavity and open ridges make this an unlikely unit for bats to roost in.

The farmhouse is built from artificial stone and is sound and has no structural cracks. The walls have a traditional cavity that bats often use when they can gain access to them. The dry verges are very well sealed and the roof has a sound, slate covering which has no obvious entry points. The soffits along the north elevation are fairly well sealed to the walls and, where there are any minor gaps, they have a heavy build-up of dust and cobwebs. The soffits running along the south elevation do have some suitable gaps between the woodwork and the stone walls. In places these are large enough for birds to gain entry and may be less suited to bats. However, given the south facing aspect and the partial suitability of the gaps, it would be difficult to establish that bats are not present without at least one activity survey during the summer months.

9 Activity survey results

- 9.1 A single activity survey was carried out on August 12th covering just the farmhouse as this is the only building on site with any roost potential. Two experienced surveyors were used to cover the house from opposite corners and employed both heterodyne and RTE detectors. Surveying started 30 minutes prior to sunset until 80mins after sunset. Conditions were perfect with temperatures above 18°C and no wind. Sunset was officially 20:40hrs
- 9.2 The first bat detected was a common pipistrelle at 21:15, almost 40mins after sunset, and it flew into the site from the west and passed along the south side of the house and continued on over the farmyard and out into fields. A common pipistrelle was detected at 21:25 and entered the site from the same direction and hunted briefly along the south side of the house before disappearing. Only three more bat passes were recorded from 21:40 onwards.
- 9.3 No bats were observed emerging from the building and bat activity on the whole was unremarkable.

10. Interpretation and analysis

- 10.1 The large, modern agricultural units are not particularly suited to use by bats in terms of roosting and the open, featureless farmyard has little to support hunting bats. No bats were observed emerging from the farmhouse and the times of the first appearance of the bats combined with their flight into the site suggest they are roosting elsewhere and passing through the site on their way to foraging sites. There are many residential dwellings close to the site and it is highly likely that the nursery roost of pipistrelles will be found in these buildings.
- 10.2 Given that there is little vegetation in the farmyard and the habitat surrounding the site is only poor to moderate in terms of foraging, the low number of bats is to be expected and, despite it being relatively late in the season for bats, is probably a true representation of bat numbers on the site.
- 10.3 Before the bat survey was undertaken, a check of the farm buildings was made to determine if swallows were nesting on site. No nests were found and no swallows were seen anywhere on site. There was also no evidence of barn owls using the site, though this species is recorded and seen in the area.

11. Impact assessment

11.1 It is highly unlikely that bats are using the agricultural buildings on the site but the farmhouse had some potential to support roosting bats behind the soffits. However, very few bats were recorded on site and there is nothing to suggest the site has any value to bats apart from feeding as they pass through the site. In the event of this site being changed to residential, it is very likely that, by including permanent roost features and sympathetic planting, the site will be of much greater value to the common species of bats than it is at present. Demolition of the barns is unlikely to impact bats and will not destroy any maternity roosts or cause fragmentation of habitat.

12. Mitigation and compensation measures

12.1 The following mitigation and compensation measures should be adopted as part of the proposed planning application:

- Any scheme put forward for the site must include compensation and mitigation for both bats and birds, including starling and house sparrow.

The proposed conversion is subject to planning regulations and therefore, any of the above could be conditioned as part of any planning permissions that may be granted.

Appendix 1: Photographs of the survey site





