

METHOD STATEMENT FOR BATS

**Green Farm
High Lane
Ingbirchworth
S36 7GG**

Client:

Rebecca Stafford

© John Gardner
32 Nostell Lane
Ryhill
Wakefield
WF4 2DJ
Tel 01924 229800
07887 627005

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1. Background and Scope of Report

This method statement relates to the conversion of a barn (referred to hereafter as The Barn) into residential units. The barn is located at Green Farm, High Lane, Ingbirchworth S36 7GG (NGR SE223056

The building is a former barn and stables and is constructed of rubble-filled solid stone walls with a stone, unlined roof. It is in a relatively good state of repair.

The preliminary bat roost assessment and activity surveys (July 2022) did not record evidence of bats in the barn. Active swallow nests were recorded however.

Because bat roosts will not be destroyed due to conversion works, there is no requirement for a European Protected Species Licence before works can be undertaken.

The purpose of this report is to outline all sensitive working methods, mitigation and compensation measures that are required.

1.2. Swallow Nesting Areas

Swallows were actively nesting in the lower section of the barn. In order to prevent their returning during the works, all doors and windows should be closed off to prevent access. This may involve panelling some of the openings in the upper floor. This work should be carried out by mid-April before the birds return to nesting sites.

2 METHOD STATEMENT

2.1. Introduction

In order to ensure that bats are not harmed during conversion works and that there are no adverse effects on bat roosts or on wider bat populations, the method statement contains the following elements:

- Provision of bat boxes;
- Toolbox talk to contractors;
- Timing of works;
- Provision of permanent dedicated bat roosting areas;
- Working methods to ensure minimal disturbance to bats, and avoidance of killing or injury to bats;
- Methods to be followed in the event of a bat being discovered during works;
 - Use of approved materials and timber treatment chemicals, if required; and
 - Requirements in relation to lighting.

2.2. General

An ecological clerk of works (ECW) will be appointed by the client to ensure that the details of this method statement are complied with, copies of which will be available on site. Contractors will be given a “toolbox talk” by the ecologist at the commencement of works so that they are aware of the particular issues relating to this site and their responsibilities in the event of a bat being found in the absence of an ecologist (see Section 2.7 below).

2.3. Provision of Bat Boxes and access points

Prior to commencement of works, a Schwegler 1FF bat box will be installed on a building on site (this must be a permanent and undisturbed location) at a height of at least 3 m and preferably facing SE, S or SW. Location to be agreed with the ecologist prior to installation. Bat boxes will be placed on the barn at the earliest possible time and located as above and as directed by the ecologist (see Section 2.6 below). Bat boxes will remain in place for at least 5 years.

2.4. Timing

Works are scheduled to start in spring 2023. To avoid any possible risk to hibernating bats during cold weather conditions, it is advised that works that might affect bats, mainly the stripping of the roof, should be carried out after mid-March and preferably before the end of May. If these timescales cannot be met, then a licensed ecologist will undertake a dawn return survey on the day of the works commencing to ensure bats are not present. If bats are present then work may be delayed until the bat can be safely excluded or leaves the site. This work will be advised by the ECW as required.

2.5. Working Methods

A licensed bat ecologist will be on site for the stripping of the ridge tiles. Should any roosting bats be found all work must cease temporarily while the bats are captured, if possible, by the licensed bat ecologist; any captured bats will be transferred by hand to the pre-installed bat box (see 2.3 above).

2.6. Bat Roost and Access Provision

- Gaps along the eaves lines of the building to allow bats to access the wall tops. These will be explained during the tool talk.
- Include a small gap 100mmx20mm in the ridge pointing at the southern end of the roof.



Figure 1 detailing access gap to ridge pointing

- Prior to works commencing, one Schwegler 1FF bat box to be placed in nearby tree or on an undisturbed elevation of the dwelling at a minimum of 3 m height; precise location to be agreed in advance with the ecologist.

It is a condition of the bat licence that these bat boxes should remain in place for at least 5 years.

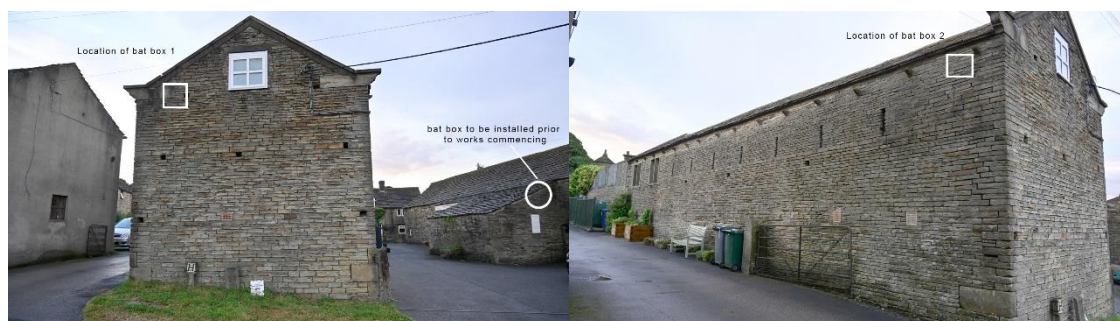


Figure 2 showing location of bat boxes

2.7. Procedures in the Event of Discovering a Bat in the Absence of an Ecologist

All site workers will be made aware of the possibilities of finding bats and the procedure to follow should they be found when the ecologist is not on site.

If at any point a bat is discovered, contractors will stop work immediately and telephone an ecological professional qualified to deal with the species. Telephone numbers of such will be held on site (John Gardner: 07887 627005 or 01924 229800).

Should any bats fall out of structures or be injured, they will be gently placed in a secure ventilated box (e.g. a cardboard box) by the contractor and left in a cool dark

place, until appropriate advice can be sought. Bats should not be handled without gloves.

2.8. Timber Treatment and roof lining

Should timber treatment be required, only Natural England approved timber treatment chemicals (for use in bat roosts) will be used in this project. A comprehensive list of currently approved timber treatment chemicals is available in Natural England's *Technical Information Note TIN092*. This list is available from: <http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/31005?category=31008>

The roof will be lined with traditional hessian felt and breathable membranes will be avoided as bats have been found entangled in the fibres of these.

2.9. Lighting

Any newly installed external lighting will be arranged so as to not illuminate roost access points and important flight lines away from the roost. Any necessary external lighting will be located sensitively and will incorporate directional cowlings to prevent light spill up towards the roofs.

2.10. Final Check

The ecologist will visit the site on completion of the works to check that the method statement has been complied with and that all mitigation measures for bats have been installed correctly.