Whitcher Wildlife Ltd.
Ecological Consultants.

BUILDING 1, SUNNY BANK FARM, LUNDWOOD.

OS REF: SE 384-069.

BAT SURVEY.

Ref No: - **190308/B1.**

Date: **13th March 2019.**

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1. INTRODUCTION.

1.1. Plans are being drawn up for the conversion of an old agricultural building at Sunny Bank Farm in Lundwood.

1.2. A bat survey of the building 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 Building 1 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.

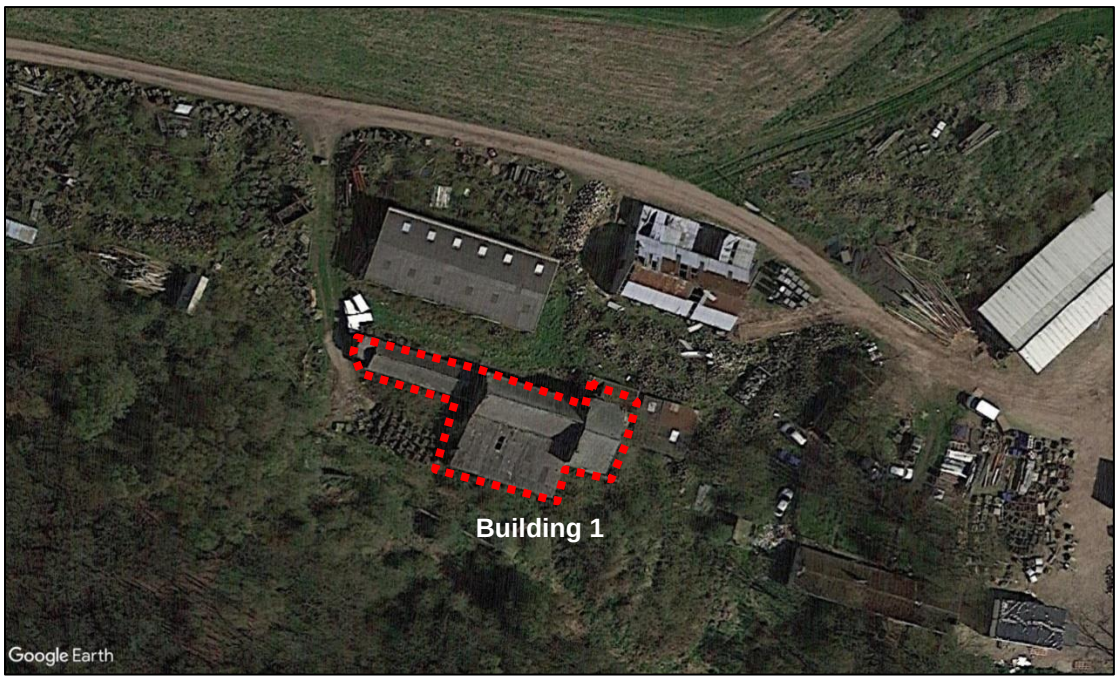
3.1.3. The closest existing records of bats are records of several species of bat within Ardsley Tunnel, which is located 800m southwest of the surveyed area. SYBG also hold several other records of bat roosts within the area including the following:

- 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 Building 1 on Sunny Bank Farm in Lundwood, as shown below.



3.2.2.Building 1.

3.2.2.1. Building 1 comprises an old disused stone building with several more modern extensions. The building is disused and empty.



3.2.2.2. The walls of the building vary from two and three storey high stone walls on the oldest sections of the building to single storey solid brick and concrete block walls on the more modern extensions. There are predominantly no soffits or fascia's present around the building.





3.2.2.3. The roof of the building comprises a mixture of tiled pitched roofs on the old sections of the buildings, a pitched corrugated cement roof on one of the extensions and sloping corrugated cement and metal roofs on the other extensions.

3.2.2.4. Internally the building is in a deteriorating condition restricting access to some areas. The visible areas of the building comprise a mixture of small rooms and large open barns that are open to the inside of the roofs with no lining present. The roof timbers vary between open A frames in the older sections of the building with purlin and rafter timbers elsewhere.





3.2.3. The land immediately surrounding the building 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. Building 1.

3.3.1.1. The walls of Building 1 were found to vary in condition. The stone areas of the walls were in a deteriorating state and displayed abundant cracks, voids, areas of deterioration and missing windows allowing potential for bats to access the rubble fill of the walls and the interior of the building.



3.3.1.2. The stone and concrete sections of the walls were found to be in a better condition although occasional cracks were identified.
3.3.1.3. Abundant voids were also identified leading into the eaves of the building allowing bats access to the top of the walls or the building's interior.

3.3.1.4. No bat field signs were identified around the exterior walls of the building during this survey.

3.3.1.5. The roof of the building was predominantly in a deteriorating state with areas of missing or slipped tiles, missing ridge tiles and missing corrugated sheets.





3.3.1.6. Internally the building was found to be in a deteriorating state, which restricted access to some areas of the interior.

3.3.1.7. The two and three storey sections of the building were open into the roof void with no lining present and abundant voids in the timbers. The single storey sections had occasional roof voids present although these could not be accessed for safety reasons.





3.3.1.8. The floors around the building were predominantly covered in debris and in a deteriorating state. No bat field signs were identified within the accessible areas of the building during this survey.



3.3.1.9. Overall the building was assessed as displaying a **moderate** potential to support roosting bats due to the abundant cracks, voids and open areas allowing access for bats into the walls and roof of the building and throughout the interior.



3.3.1.10. During the survey barn owl pellets of varying ages were identified in the old stone sections of the buildings. In addition bird droppings were identified on the roof timbers throughout some areas of the building.

3.3.1.11. Occasional other nests were identified throughout the building with some of the nests displaying green material

implying current use. Pigeons were also identified within the building during the survey although no nests were identified.

3.3.2. The habitat surrounding the building 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. Building 1 was assessed as displaying a moderate potential to support roosting bats due to abundant cracks, voids and open areas of the building allowing potential access for bats to the walls, roof and interior of the building for roosting. No bat field signs were identified during this survey of the site although access during the survey was constrained by the deteriorating state of the building, which made access to all areas of the building impossible. Therefore, any works carried out on the building have the potential to have a high impact on bat or bat roosts, if they are present in the building.

4.3. The land surrounding the building 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 building 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. Barn owl pellets were identified within Building 1 during this survey with abundant signs of droppings throughout the building. A nest location was not identified during this survey although access to all areas was not possible and the survey was carried out very early in the nesting season, before barn owls will typically be nesting. Therefore, any works on Building 1 may have an impact on barn owls, particularly works carried out during the nesting season, which extends from March to September each year.

4.6. Further bird nests and droppings were also identified elsewhere in Building 1. Therefore, any works on these buildings, 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. It is recommended that no works commence on Building 1 prior to further bat activity surveys being carried out, in line with the Bat Conservation Trust Good Practice Guidelines.

5.2. The guidelines require a further two bat activity surveys carried out between May and August, one at dusk and one at dawn. The surveys must be carried out by sufficient surveyors to cover all areas of the building and must be separated by at least two weeks. Further recommendations relating to the requirement for a Natural England licence to cover the proposed works should be made on completion of the surveys.

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. It is recommended that the additional bat surveys of Building 1 also identify how barn owls use the building and identify whether a nest site is present. Further recommendations relating to barn owls should be made on completion of the surveys.

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

5.6. 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.

5.7. 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:	
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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”.