

Land off Cooper Lane, Hoylandswaine

Bat and Bird Survey Report

8th July 2022



Prepared by:

Middleton Bell Ecology, School House, Green Moor, Sheffield, S35 7DQ

Document ref: MBE/BAT/2022/60/01				
Purpose and Description	Originated	Checked	Reviewed	Date
For Planning	R Bell MCIEEM <i>R Bell</i>	P Middleton MCIEEM <i>P Middleton</i>	R Bell MCIEEM <i>R Bell</i>	08/07/22

Disclaimer

This report is issued to the client for the sole use and for the intended purpose as stated in the agreement between the client and Middleton Bell Ecology (MBE) under which this work was completed, or else as set out within the report. This report may not be relied upon by any other party without the express written agreement of MBE. The use of this report by unauthorised third parties is at their own risk and MBE accepts no duty of care to any such party.

MBE has exercised due care in preparing this report, it has not, unless specifically stated, independently verified information provided by others. No other warranty, express or implied, is made in relation to the content of this report and MBE assumes no liability for any loss resulting from errors, omissions or misrepresentation made by others.

Any recommendations, opinion or finding stated in this report is based on circumstances and facts as they existed at the time that MBE performed the work. Nothing in this report constitutes legal opinion. If legal opinion is required, the advice of a legal professional should be secured.

Contents

1. Summary.....	3
2. Introduction	4
3. Habitat Assessment	4
4. Methodology.....	5
5. Results	Error! Bookmark not defined.
6. Assessment.....	9
7. References.....	12

1. Summary

- 1.1.1 A bat survey of a building on land off Cooper Lane, Hoylandswaine was commissioned by the clients Stephen and Theresa Rymer on 17th June 2022.
- 1.1.2 The survey was undertaken to inform proposals to demolish the existing stables building in order to construct a new dwelling.
- 1.1.3 A previous bat survey report was produced for the site by Whitcher Wildlife in 2014 which concluded that whilst the stables displayed a low level of bat roosting potential, roosting bats appeared to be absent from the surveyed building.
- 1.1.4 Bat survey works detailed in this report include a desk-based study and an internal and external visual inspection, undertaken on 4th July 2022.
- 1.1.5 Evidence of a single bat roost was recorded in the south elevation of the former stables. This roost is expected to comprise a pipistrelle day roost. The stables were considered to display a low level of bat roost suitability.
- 1.1.6 The requirement for bat licensing and mitigation will be confirmed following further nocturnal survey work.
- 1.1.7 If works are to commence during the bird nesting season (March- August), then they should be preceded by a nesting bird check.
- 1.1.8 A nesting bird enhancement recommendation has been provided.

2. Introduction

- 2.1.1 A bat survey of a building on land off Cooper Lane, Hoylandswaine was commissioned by the clients Stephen and Theresa Rymer on 17th June 2022.
- 2.1.2 The survey was undertaken to inform proposals to demolish the existing stables building in order to construct a new dwelling.
- 2.1.3 Bat survey works detailed in this report include a desk-based study and an internal and external visual inspection.
- 2.1.4 A previous bat survey report was produced for the site by Whitcher Wildlife in 2014 (Whitcher Wildlife, 2014). This survey included a desk study, an internal and external inspection of the stables undertaken in October 2013 and a single dusk emergence survey carried out in late April 2014. At this time the stables were considered to display a low level of bat roosting potential, nevertheless, no signs of bat presence were noted and roosting bats were considered to be absent from the surveyed building.
- 2.1.5 The site is located off Cooper Lane between the villages of Silkstone and Hoylandswaine, c.7.5km west of Barnsley town centre.

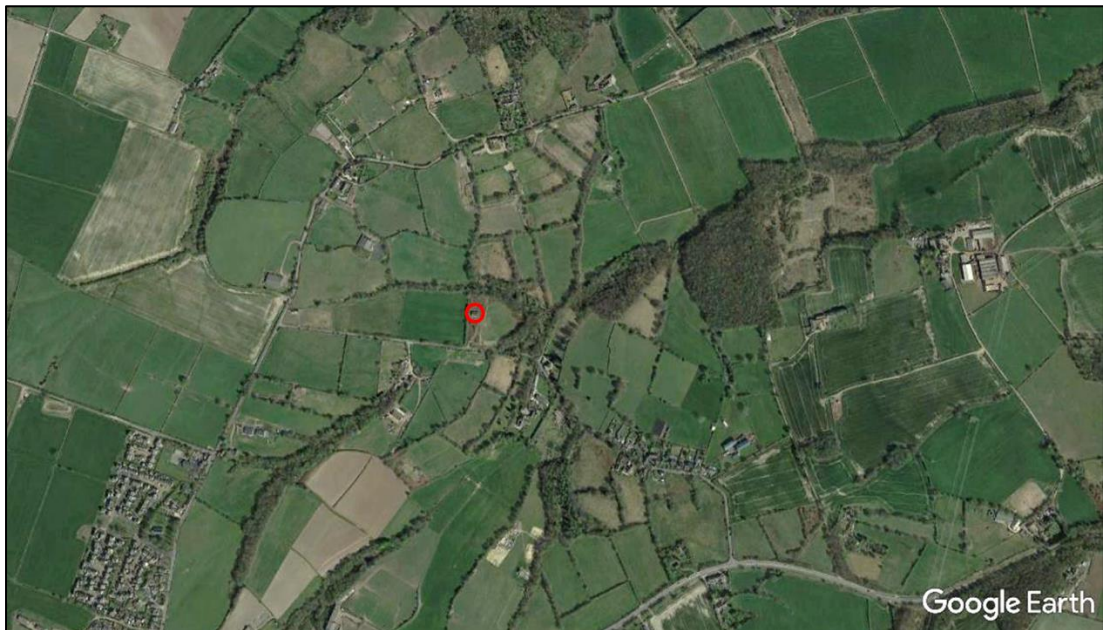
3. Habitat Assessment

- 3.1.1 The site comprises a former stable block accessed via a surfaced access track from Cooper Lane. The building is located in a plot with unmanaged neutral grassland and scrub. An intact native hedge borders the building to the west and a linear woodland, which supports a minor stream, forms the northern site boundary.
- 3.1.2 The linear woodland to the north connects to other larger woodland blocks, including the ancient woodlands of Whin Moor Plantation and Bullhaw Carrs.
- 3.1.3 It is anticipated that a moderate density of bats, belonging to a varied range of species, is likely to use habitats within the local area.

Table 1. Location and habitat table

Name and address: Land off Cooper Lane, Hoylandswaine, S36 7JE			
OS Grid Ref. SE 26697 05730		Altitude. 154m	
Local Planning Authority: Barnsley Metropolitan Borough Council			
Features on site and adjacent to site			
Feature	On site	Adjacent	Comments
Buildings			The surveyed stables are in a quite isolated location 190m from nearest dwelling
River			
Standing water			
Bridges tunnels and culverts			
Trees		✓	Linear woodland 40m north of stables building
Woodland			
Grassland		✓	Permanent grassland field adjacent to stables

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 building.
- The level of bat roost potential associated with the building.
- The number and species of bat roosting within the buildings if present.
- Identify further survey work or mitigation requirements.

4. Methodology

4.1 Data Consultation

4.1.1 A desk study with both Barnsley Biological Records Centre (BBRC) and South Yorkshire Bat Group (SYBG) was undertaken in 2014, with no records received for the site itself.

4.1.2 It was decided not to repeat this data search, given that the former stables are small, isolated, lack a roof and cannot be surveyed from publicly accessible areas. Consequently, the chance of any relevant records having been obtained since the 2014 data search is considered to be very low.

4.2 Field Survey

Internal and External Visual Inspection

4.2.1 The following personnel conducted preliminary roost assessments on 4th July 2022:

- Robert Bell (MCIEEM; Class license WML-A34-Level 4, 2016-25236-CLS-CLS)

4.2.2 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).

4.2.3 In addition:

- Recording of any signs of nesting bird usage of the buildings.

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

- Clulight
- Binoculars
- Endoscope
- Ladders
- Camera

4.3 Survey Limitations

4.3.1 No limitations to an effective preliminary roost assessment were encountered.

5. Results

5.1 Data Consultation

5.1.1 One European Protected Species (EPS) mitigation licence has been issued for a location within 2km of the site. This licence was issued in 2018 to permit the destruction of a Natterer's bat *Myotis nattereri* resting place. The licence was issued for a location c.1.2km north of the site.

5.2 Field Survey

Preliminary Roost Assessment

5.2.1 Evidence of a single bat roost was recorded in the south elevation of the former stables. This roost is expected to comprise a pipistrelle day roost. The stables were considered to display a low level of bat roost suitability.

Description and external bat roost potential

5.2.2 The site building comprises a relatively modern detached stone and concrete block built former stables with stone copings on the gables (Plates 1 & 2). The former pitched roof was stripped in 2014, following the previous bat survey, exposing the pre-

fabricated roof trusses. Three wooden stable doors, one set of double doors and three single-paned wood-framed window are present in the south elevation with three stable doors and four single-paned wood-framed windows in the north elevation. Wooden soffits, which are open at the top, are present along both the north and south elevations.

- 5.2.3 The exterior of the former stables is mainly well sealed. One open joint, 15mm in width and at a height of 1.9m on the south elevation, leads to crevices between stone blocks in the outer skin of the wall and also possibly into the crevice between the inner and outer skin of the wall (Plate 3). A cluster of four fairly recently deposited bat droppings was present at the base of this open joint, within the wall, indicating the presence of a roost in the wall. On the basis of morphology and roost location, the droppings are considered likely to originate from a pipistrelle *Pipistrellus* species, with the roost likely to comprise a day roost. A sample of these droppings was taken for subsequent DNA analysis to species, if required. A low number of mainly superficial additional open joints were present across the external walls, but all were thoroughly inspected from a ladder and no further signs of bats were found.

Internal inspection

- 5.2.4 The roof covering is missing with the prefabricated roof trusses remaining. The walls of the stable comprise the exposed inner face of the concrete blockwork.
- 5.2.5 There are numerous openings into the cavity between the concrete blockwork inner skin and the stone outer skin of the walls, including openings along wall tops and around doors. Several cracks are also present in the inner face of the block walls, with these cracks up to 15mm in width. However, No signs of bats were recorded from the interior of the former stable block.
- 5.2.6 The former stable block is considered to display a low level of bat roost suitability.

Plate 1. Southeast corner of former stables



Plate 2. Northeast corner of former stables



Plate 3. Evidence of bat roost recorded from south elevation of former stables



Plate 4. Pre-formed trusses in roof structure of former stables



6. Assessment

6.1 Summary and Evaluation of Findings

- 6.1.1 The former stables support at least one bat roost, expected to comprise a pipistrelle day roost. The building displays a low level of potential to support further bat roosts. No evidence of bird nesting was recorded in the building.

6.2 Legislation and Policy Guidance

Bats

- 6.2.1 Bats receive protection under the Conservation of Habitats and Species (Amendment) (EU Exit) Regulations 2019 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 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 2021. 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

6.2.7 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

Bats

6.3.1 In accordance with the accepted bat survey guidelines (Collins, 2016) two further nocturnal surveys of the former stables should be undertaken to determine bat roost presence/absence. These surveys should comprise dusk emergence and/or dawn return surveys, to be led by a licensed bat worker, with survey visits to be separated by at least 14 days.

6.3.2 The need for bat mitigation licensing and roost mitigation/compensation will be confirmed following nocturnal survey works. Some form of bat mitigation licence will however need to be obtained following the grant of planning permission.

6.3.3 It is however expected that the mitigation/compensation measures detailed below will form the basis for any bat licence application:

- The optimal times for the licensable works (i.e. those impacting roosts) would be either spring (March-May) or autumn (September-November). The supervised strip and bat exclusion works should certainly avoid the peak hibernation period (December-February) to reduce the likelihood of encountering bats at this sensitive time of year.
- The bat roost should be excluded using a one-way device following the delivery of a Toolbox Talk to contractors.
- It is recommended that two integrated bat boxes (i.e. Build-in WoodStone Bat Box (Plates 5 & 6) be incorporated into the new dwelling. These boxes should be fitted at apex height, away from artificial lighting.
- No post development monitoring survey is considered necessary as roosts are of low conservation value.

6.3.4 The linear woodland and to a lesser extent the western boundary are expected to comprise important landscape elements for bats, forming commuting and foraging linkages in the landscape. As a result, new external scheme lighting should be avoided wherever possible, with any new external lighting designed to avoid light spill across the woodland and hedge. Where new external lighting is required, it would be desirable if this could be PIR sensor operated, with lighting units to be low height, directional, of a warm colour temperature and low output.

Plates 5 & 6. Build-in WoodStone Bat Box



Birds

- 6.3.5 Building renovation works should commence either outside the bird nesting period (March to August inclusive), or the works will need to be preceded by a nesting bird check.
- 6.3.6 In accordance with the aims of the National Planning Policy Framework, it is recommended that a new integrated swift *Apus apus* box (i.e. Manthorpe Swift Brick) should be installed within the new dwelling. This box should be fitted at wall top height and may be installed across any elevation. Studies have shown that swift boxes are used by other bird species that utilise buildings and consequently this measure will provide potential nesting space for house sparrows *Passer domesticus* and starlings *Sturnus vulgaris*, in addition to potentially providing future nest space for swift.

6.4 Conclusions

- 6.4.1 The former stables on Land off Cooper Lane support at least one bat roost location. This building is considered to display low bat roost suitability.
- 6.4.2 The requirement for bat licensing and mitigation will be confirmed following further nocturnal survey work.
- 6.4.3 If works are to commence during the nesting bird season (March- August), then they should be preceded by a nesting bird check.
- 6.4.4 A nesting bird enhancement recommendation has been provided.

7. References

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

Whitcher Wildlife (2014) Stable at Cooper Lane, Hoylandswaine – Bat Survey Report. Whitcher Wildlife Ltd, Barnsley.