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Bat Scoping Survey to

Green Farm
High Lane
Ingbirchworth
S36 7GG

28th May 2025

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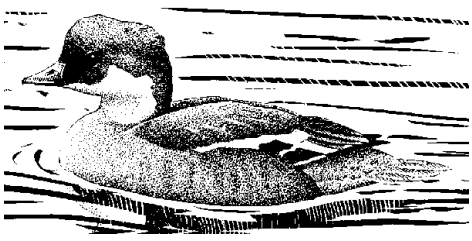

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1. Summary

1.1 A bat scoping survey has been carried out to two modern agricultural barns at Green Farm, Ingbirchworth to determine if there are features that have any potential to be used by roosting bats and whether bats are present or likely to be present. The survey is required for the planning application process and was undertaken at the optimal time for bat occupancy and therefore aimed to establish the *presence or absence* of bats in the building. The barns were also checked for nesting birds. The application seeks to convert the barns to residential.

1.2 Both barns are modern units constructed from steel portal frames with blockwork walls to around 2.5m and upper walls constructed from corrugated cement fibre and/or wooden slats. Both units have corrugated fibre sheet roofing and have no ridge sections. In both buildings, the blockwork walls, the upper walls and roof are all single thickness material and offer no potential roosting features that bats would be likely to use. All British bats are crevice dwelling and neither building offer any of the features that bats require for roosting.

1.3 No nesting birds were noted in either unit, again due to the limited opportunities with this style of barn. There was no evidence to suggest nesting or roosting by barn owls or kestrel and swallows were nesting in other traditional barns on site.

1.4 Both barns lack any potential roosting features and are of negligible interest to bats and are not considered essential to species survival. Bats are not present in the buildings, and the project is unlikely to impact bats and will not result in harm to bats; it will not result in loss of roosting sites and will not cause fragmentation of habitat. Permanent bat roosting features should be incorporated in the fabric of the new buildings to improve roosting potential.

1.5 There are no statutory constraints from the presence of bats and there is no requirement for further bat survey work.

2. Introduction

2.1 A bat scoping survey was carried out to two modern barns at Green Farm, High Lane, Ingbirchworth S36 7GG (NGR SE223056) to determine whether bats have or are using the building as a roost site. The site was also checked for the presence of nesting birds such as barn owl, kestrel and swallows.

2.2 The current proposal seeks planning permission to convert the two barns to residential.

2.3 The survey took place at a time considered to be the optimal period for bat occupancy aimed to establish the following:

- The presence or absence of bats using the buildings by undertaking a scoping survey.
- Identify any potential roosting features (PRFs).
- Determine if activity surveys are required.
- 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 site was surveyed in accordance with BCT best practice guidelines ***and*** surveyor experience by John Gardner, a surveyor with 45yrs 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.

3.2 The buildings were inspected during daylight using torches, binoculars, a Zeiss DTI 3/35 Gen 2 thermal scope and an endoscope where possible. 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 and emergence survey carried out to the above site on Wednesday 28th May 2025. The report highlights the ecological constraints and opportunities associated with the proposed works and appraises the potential impacts. Appropriate actions to ensure the protection of bats are identified and mitigation measures detailed where appropriate.

4. Survey constraints

4.1 There were no constraints to the survey.

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5. Site Description

5.1 The site consists of two modern steel portal framed barns within a traditional farm setting in a rural area. The site is surrounded by pasture and has a woodland shelter belt of mature natural species and has many features connecting the site to the wider landscape. The foraging habitat can be described as moderate to good, and bats of a local provenance are known to present but appear to be limited to the commoner species based on previous surveys at the site

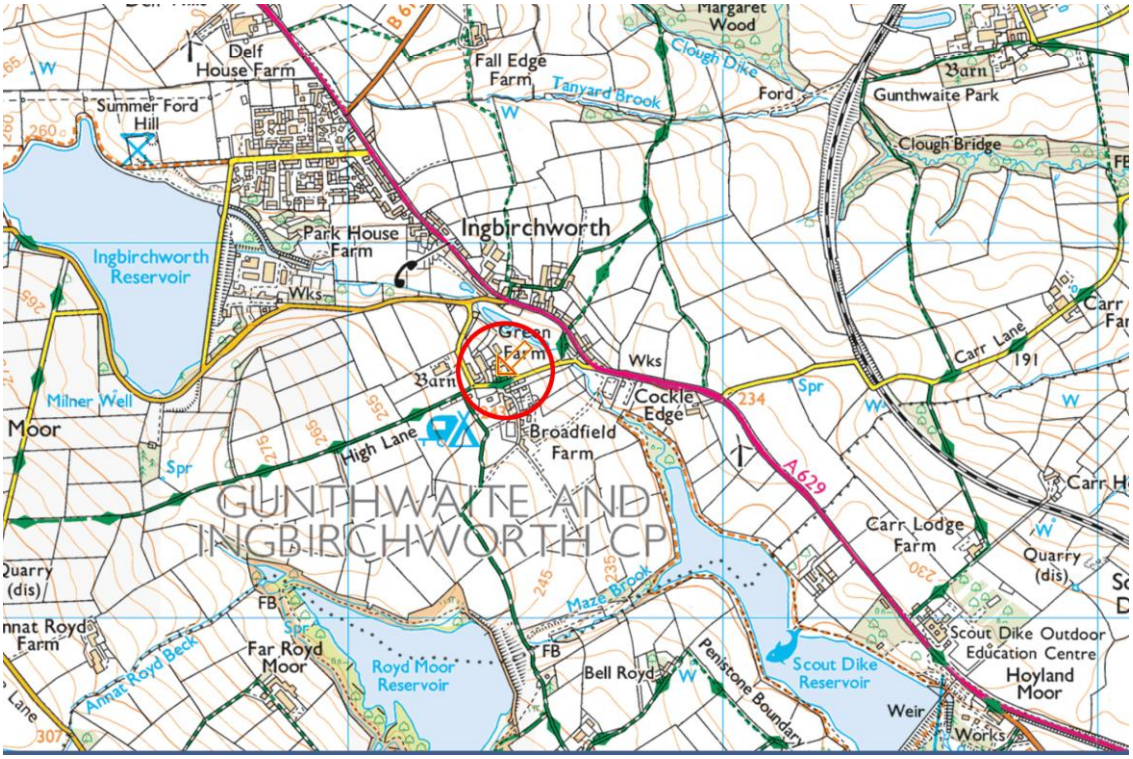

Figure 1. Site location plan

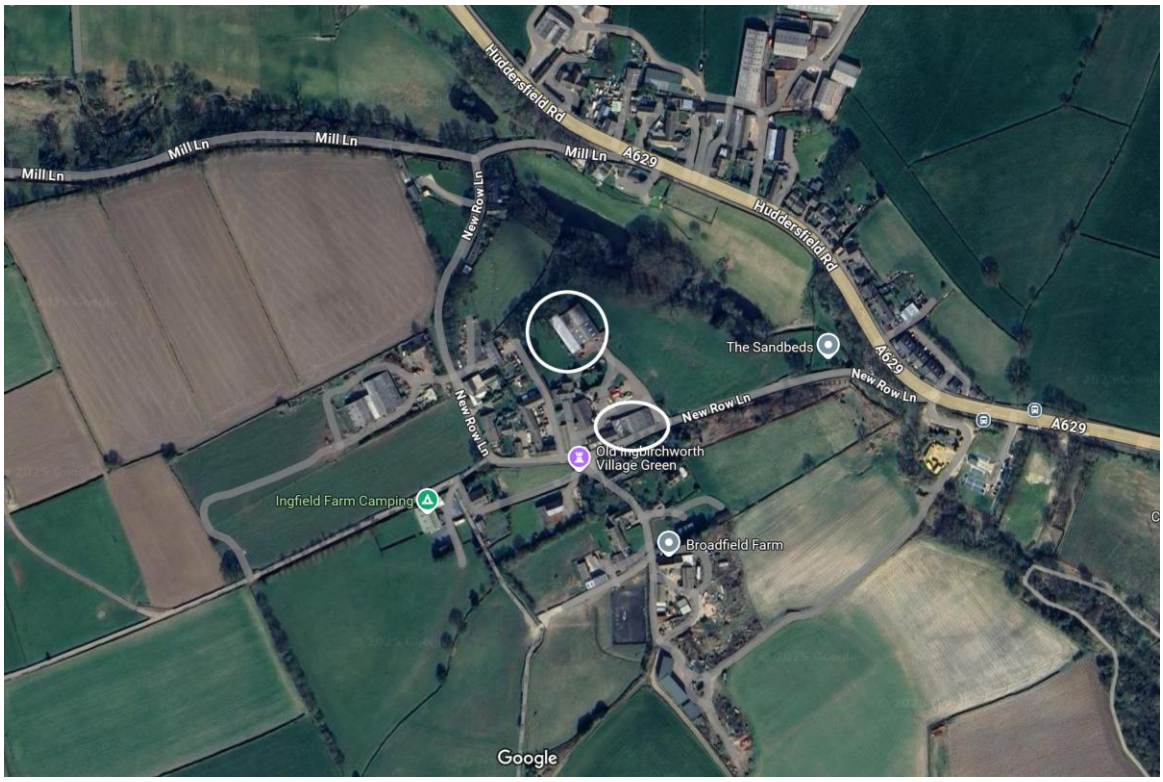

Figure 2 Aerial view of the site, surrounds and specific buildings surveyed.

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6. Desk Study

There is no requirement for data searches as previous activity surveys at this site (Gardner, 2023) established that common pipistrelles forage around the site but were not found to be roosting. The two buildings forming the current survey have no value to bats.

7. Activity surveys

7.1 No activity surveys have been undertaken as the buildings are of negligible interest to bats and it extremely unlikely that bats would use these buildings.

8. Survey results

Scoping survey

Both buildings are essentially the same style of construction being steel portal frames with single thickness blockwork to around 2.5m with the upper walls having either corrugated sheeting or wooden slats or a combination of both. In both buildings there is no ridge section, the sheeting simply bends over the apex. Both barns are open fronted and subject to constant light ingress.

Photo 1 showing building 1 from all elevations (adjacent High Lane)

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Photo 2: showing typical wall and roof interior of building 1.

Both buildings are constructed in much the same style and both equally have negligible interest to bats. Building 2 which is located at the rear of the site is shown in the following photograph which clearly shows the construction style and lack of roosting features.

Photo 3: Showing building 2 (at the rear of the site)

9. Interpretation and analysis

The information collected in this report is based on a single scoping survey in May 2025 undertaken in good conditions and after a prolonged warm spell in which bats are known to have returned to summer roosts at other sites. No signs of bats having used the site were noted

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during the current survey and construction style of the barns along with surveyor experience suggests it is extremely unlikely bats are using these buildings for roosting.

Both buildings display a distinct lack of potential roosting features and have none of the usual crevices that British bats require. It is unlikely that a nursery roost is present or likely to be present and the buildings do not offer features that might provide daytime or transitions roosting opportunities even for a small number of bats.

Previous activity surveys at this site suggests that common pipistrelles are present locally and use the site for foraging and commuting and are likely to be present in residential dwellings which surround the site, all of which offer much greater roosting potential.

There was no evidence to suggest that barn owl, kestrel or little owl have used the site and there were no swallows nesting in the barn. Other than the wall tops of the blockwork, there is little opportunity for birds to nest in these barns.

10. Impact assessment

Both buildings have been assessed as being of *negligible* interest to bats and surveyor experience in conjunction with the assessment of the site suggests there will be no direct impact to local bats. The proposed conversion of the barns will not result harm to bats or fragmentation of habitat, There will be no loss of existing roosting sites but the potential to support roosting bats is likely to increase if permanent roosting features are built into the fabric of the new dwellings. A bat and bird box nesting scheme along the shelter belt would greatly enhance the biodiversity of the site.

11. Mitigation and Compensation

The buildings are regarded as being of *negligible* interest to bats and no bats were found during the surveys, consequently, there is no requirement for a European Protected Species Mitigation Licence (EPSML). The assessment is based on a daytime visit which, given the lack of roosting features, is considered sufficient and robust for the site. The buildings are not essential to species survival and have no potential for bats to roost and therefore require no mitigation or precautionary instructions for site workers.

Permanent roosting features
Permanent roosting features should be included in the fabric of both of the converted barns and should be included prior to occupation. A Schwegler 1FTH or similar should be included in the west and south elevation walls and be placed high up and away from windows.

No nesting birds were found during the survey, but consideration should be given to provision of a selection of nestboxes along the boundary shelter belt where the mature trees would provide an excellent location for a variety of nestboxes aimed at general hole nesting species (titmice, flycatchers and starlings) and a few open fronted nestboxes for robins and chats.

12. Conclusion

A bat scoping survey was carried out to two modern barns at Green Farm, Ingbirchworth and determined that the buildings offer *negligible* bat roosting potential and there was no evidence to suggest use by nesting birds. Previous surveys suggest that bats of a local provenance are present locally but appear to be limited to the commoner species and low in number. Permanent bat roosting features should be included in the fabric of the new dwellings and a nest box scheme has been suggested. There are no statutory constraints due to the presence of bats and no further survey work is required.

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Appendix 1: Surveyor experience

Surveyor experience – John Gardner

The primary surveyor has been surveying for bats for over 40years and holds a Class Level 4 licence. Since surveying for bats in Wakefield, he has found roosts of over 7 species of bats including the first record of Nathusius' pipistrelle for West Yorkshire. Prior to his starting bat surveying in Wakefield, only a single occurrence of Leisler's bat was known from South Yorkshire, but extensive surveying in the 80s in Wakefield established that this species is widespread and common. The survey effort in Wakefield with this species resulted in a total rewrite of the UK distribution maps for Leisler's bat. A bat box scheme run at Bretton Country Park resulted in a nursery roost of over 80 Leisler's bats in 2 boxes and was visited by Durham Bat Group and others for experience. Long term roost monitoring of common pipistrelles was carried out and the results have been used in international papers by Dr John Altringham. He continues to survey for bats when not commissioned to survey for planning applications.