

The Stack Yard, Ingfield Farm, Ingbirchworth

Bat Survey Report

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1. Summary

- 1.1.1 The bat survey was commissioned by planning consultant James Roberts on behalf of the clients Mr & Mrs Knowles on 5th August 2019. The survey was undertaken to inform a planning application for the proposed conversion of a barn to residential.
- 1.1.2 The site comprises a brick-built barn beneath a pitched asbestos cement sheet roof, together with an adjoining steel framed agricultural lean-to with a sheet metal mono pitched roof.
- 1.1.3 The preliminary roost assessment survey was conducted on the 9th August followed by a single dusk emergence survey on 11th August 2019.
- 1.1.4 The building displays a low number and diversity of roost features and is considered to offer a low level of bat roost potential. The nocturnal survey further demonstrated the probable absence of roosting bats.
- 1.1.5 No further survey effort is necessary, providing that works commence within 24 months of the nocturnal survey date. If works commence after this time, then Middleton Bell Ecology should be contacted to determine the requirement for an update survey.
- 1.1.6 Proposed development works should take place outside the main nesting bird period (March to September). If works are to commence during this period, then they should be preceded by a nesting bird check to be undertaken by an ecologist.

2. Introduction

- 2.1.1 The bat survey was commissioned by planning consultant James Roberts on behalf of the clients Mr & Mrs Knowles on 5th August 2019. The survey was undertaken to inform a planning application for the proposed conversion of a barn to residential.
- 2.1.2 The site comprises a brick-built barn and agricultural lean-to. Middleton Bell Ecology were contracted initially to conduct a baseline assessment to determine the likely presence or absence of roosting bats and to identify roost locations, access points, species present, level of use and the importance of nearby landscape features.
- 2.1.3 The preliminary bat roost assessment survey of the building was undertaken on 9th August 2019 followed by a dusk emergence survey on 11th August 2019. The surveyed building is sited in a rural location in the village of Ingbirchworth approximately 11km west of Barnsley.

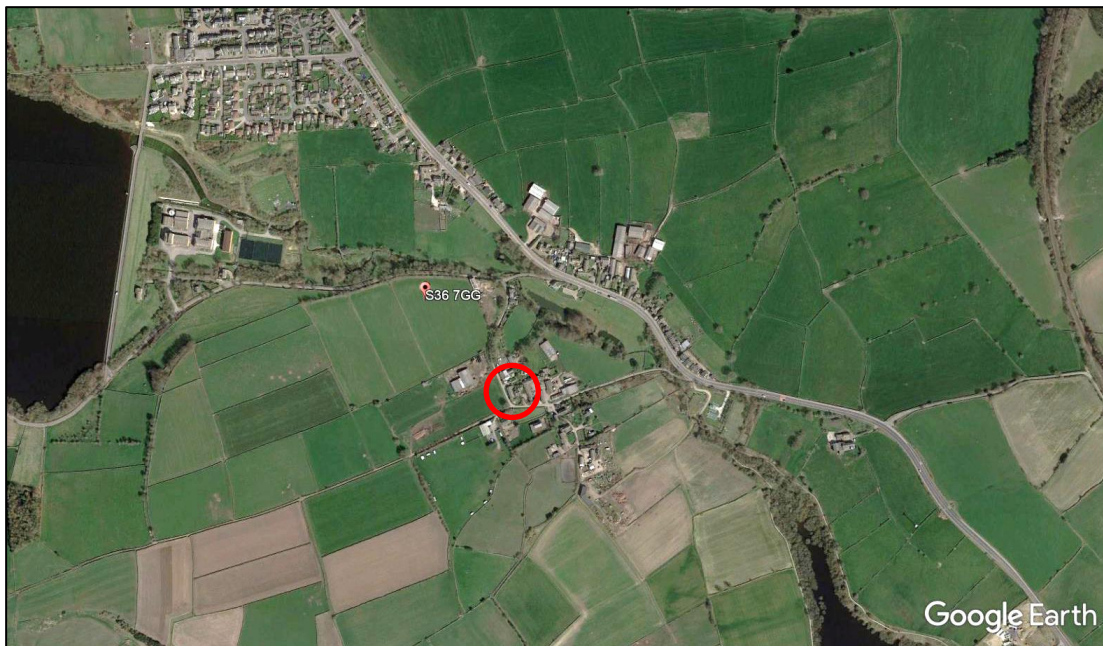
3. Habitat Assessment

- 3.1.1 The Stack Yard, Ingfield Farm is located in an area comprising permanent grassland and arable farmland with linear woodland copses associated with three nearby reservoirs. There are no large woodlands in the vicinity, but the surrounding area receives relatively little light pollution. A moderate assemblage of bat species is therefore likely to be present.
- 3.1.1 Table 1 summarises the habitats present, adjacent to and further afield of the surveyed building.

Table 1. Location and habitat table

Name and address: The Stack Yard, Ingfield Farm, New Row Lane, Ingbirchworth S36 7GG			
OS Grid Ref. SE 2232 0566		Altitude. 246m	
Local Planning Authority: Barnsley Metropolitan Borough Council			
Features on site and adjacent to site			
Feature	On site	Adjacent	Comments
Buildings	✓	✓	Farm building and residential
River bordered by trees			Dyke associated with reservoirs 180m north
Standing water			Pond 130m northeast and Scout Dyke Reservoir 600m southeast
Bridges tunnels and culverts			Associated with dyke
Trees	✓	✓	Along New Row Lane and adjacent to dyke and ponds
Woodland			No large woodlands within 1km
Grassland		✓	Extensive grasslands in the area

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.
- Potential roosting areas and access/egress points into the structure.
- Determine the level of bat roost potential associated with the structure.
- Identify further survey work or mitigation requirements.

4. Methodology

4.1 Data Consultation

4.1.1 Bat records were requested from South Yorkshire Bat Group (SYBG) for locations within a 2km radius of the site. A search of the Multi-Agency Geographical Information for the Countryside (MAGIC) website was undertaken to identify historic European Protected Species (EPS) licences obtained for locations within 2km of the site.

4.2 Field Survey

4.2.1 The following personnel conducted the survey on 9th August 2019:

- Peter Middleton (MCIEEM; Class license WML-A34-Level 4, 2017-27977-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 site building's, for their bat roost potential (negligible, low, moderate, high or confirmed roost).

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

- Clulight
- Binoculars
- Endoscope
- Ladders
- Camera

4.2.4 One two-person dusk emergence survey was undertaken by Peter Middleton and Carl Dixon on 11th August beginning 15 minutes before sunset and finishing 90 minutes after sunset. The surveyors were positioned to cover all elevations of the building and were equipped with Wildlife Acoustic EM Touch full spectrum bat detectors.

4.3 Survey Limitations

4.3.1 No limitations to an effective bat survey were identified.

5. Results

5.1 Data Consultation

5.1.1 South Yorkshire Bat Group provided 30 bat records for locations within a 2km radius of the site. Species positively identified in the data consultation comprised common pipistrelle *Pipistrellus pipistrellus*, noctule *Nyctalus noctula* and Daubenton's bat *Myotis daubentonii*. The nearest record to site comprised an unknown species of bat recorded from a location 1.25km south east of the site in 1991.

5.1.2 No historical bat European Protected Species (EPS) mitigation licences have been issued for locations within 2km of the surveyed buildings.

5.2 Field Survey

5.2.1 The building displays a low number and diversity of potential bat roosting features. Consequently, it is considered to display low bat roost potential. The building is described in detail below.

Description

- 5.2.2 The site comprises a brick-built barn with a pitched asbestos cement sheet roof supported by kingpost trusses. The building has brick walls on two elevations (west & north) with an adjacent stone built single storey farm building providing the south wall. The east elevation is open and supported by two brick pillars together with a steel-framed lean-to with a mono-pitched sheet metal roof adjoining this elevation. The two walls are solid 9ins brick with two hay loft openings on the west elevation and a single opening on the north facing gable (see Figure 1 & Plates 1 to 4).

Plate 1. View from north



Plate 2. West elevation and south gable



Plate 3. North elevation



External inspection

- 5.2.3 With the exception of a small section of defective brickwork over a collapsed wood lintel and a section under the eaves on the west elevation, the external brickwork is largely in good condition. These features were inspected with the aid of a ladder and no signs of bats were found but one defunct swallow *Hirundo rustica* nest was located.

Internal inspection

- 5.2.4 Holes in mortar joints of the internal brickwork were found to be superficial and crevices in the stone wall of the adjoining building were found to be very dusty and 'cobwebby'. No signs of bats were found. The only features with potential to accommodate bats are the voids between the corrugations of the asbestos sheets and the roof trusses and beneath the asbestos ridge.

Plate 4. Inside of barn



- 5.2.5 **Dusk survey, 11th Aug 2019** – (Sunset 20:56) – The temperature at the beginning of monitoring was 13°C, with a Beaufort Scale Force 3 westerly wind and 10% cloud. The cloud cover decreased to 0% shortly after the start and the temperature dropped to 11°C by the end of monitoring.
- 5.2.6 The first bat to be recorded was a foraging common pipistrelle around the trees to the north of the surveyed building at 21:11. At 21:13 it entered the barn briefly before continuing foraging elsewhere. It entered the barn on several occasions prior to the recording of a Leisler's bat *Nyctalus leisleri*, flying overhead at 21:37. A common pipistrelle foraged intermittently along the trees adjacent to New Row Lane intermittently thereafter. No bats were seen to emerge from the surveyed building.

6. Assessment

6.1 Summary and Evaluation of Findings

- 6.1.1 The building and adjoining lean-to display a very low number and diversity of roost features. The surveyed buildings together with the adjacent single stone farm building are considered to offer a low level of bat roost potential.

- 6.1.2 The nocturnal survey further demonstrated the probable absence of roosting bats and it is considered to be an accurate account of the status of bats at the site.

6.2 Legislation and Policy Guidance

- 6.2.1 Bats receive protection under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 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”. *Barbastella barbastellus*, Bechstein’s *Myotis bechsteinii*, brown long-eared, greater horseshoe *Rhinolophus ferrumequinum*, lesser horseshoe *Rhinolophus hipposideros*, noctule *Nyctalus noctula* 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 2019. 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’.

6.3 Recommendations/further survey

- 6.3.1 No bats were recorded roosting on site during the survey works and consequently there is no compulsory requirement for mitigation. However, in order to enhance the ecological value of the site and in accordance with the aims of the National Planning Policy Framework (2019), it is suggested that a bat roosting feature is added as part of the re-development. It is advised that a bat box or boxes, such as the Beaumaris Woodstone Bat Box (see Plate 5) is fitted onto the building. The box should be sited at wall top height on the south or west elevation and away from areas of light spill. For further information on appropriate bat roosting features please contact Middleton Bell Ecology.

Plate 5. Beaumaris Woodstone Bat Box



6.4 Conclusion

- 6.4.1 There were no visible signs of bat occupation on either the inside or outside of the surveyed building and it is considered to offer low bat roost potential.
- 6.4.2 No further survey effort is necessary for the building providing the recommendations provided in this report are enacted and works commence within 24 months of the survey date. If works are to commence after this date, then Middleton Bell Ecology should be contacted to determine the requirement for update survey.
- 6.4.3 Works should proceed with caution and vigilance for unexpected bat presence, as single bats can roost almost anywhere. If bats are subsequently discovered, work should cease, and further advice sought without delay.
- 6.4.4 Development works should take place outside of the bird nesting season (March to September) or they should be preceded by a nesting bird check, to be undertaken by an ecologist.

7. References

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

Appendix 1. Bat Records

In accordance with best practice and the requirements of bat licensing, bat records collected during surveys are supplied to the relevant biological record centres and bat groups. The records to be supplied in accordance with this survey are shown below. House names/numbers are not given out by record holding organisations except under very particular circumstances. Please let us know if you object to the distribution of these records.

Date	Species	Site Address	OS Grid Reference	Notes
11.08.19	Common pipistrelle	New Row lane, Ingbirchworth	SE 2232 0566	Foraging
11.08.19	Leisler's bat	New Row lane, Ingbirchworth	SE 2232 0566	Foraging