Whitcher Wildlife Ltd.
Ecological Consultants.

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1. Introduction.

1.1. Planning Consent 2021/1107 has been granted for the replacement of the existing dwelling at Banks View, Greenmoor. Condition 4 of the planning consent states.

No development or other operations being undertaken on site shall take place until a detailed Method Statement, for bats, including plans for a sympathetic lighting scheme has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The method statement shall be implemented in full according to the specified timescales.

1.2. This document seeks to satisfy that condition.

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2. Bat Method Statement.

2.1. One final check of the existing bungalow will be undertaken immediately before demolition to determine whether circumstances have changed. The check will be in the form of a Potential Roost Assessment (PRA) carried out by a suitably experienced ecologist who holds a level 2 bat license and can be carried out at any time of year. In the event there has been a change in circumstances and there is fresh evidence of bats being present, the ecologist will advise accordingly.

2.2. Further surveys will be necessary under these circumstances to support a Natural England licence application. These would need to be carried out between May and August when bats are active.

2.3. In the event that circumstances remain as at present and there are no bats present, the demolition will be undertaken with due care and with a suitably experienced ecologist who holds a level 2 bat license present during the roof strip. This should be undertaken between November and February when bats will be in hibernation.

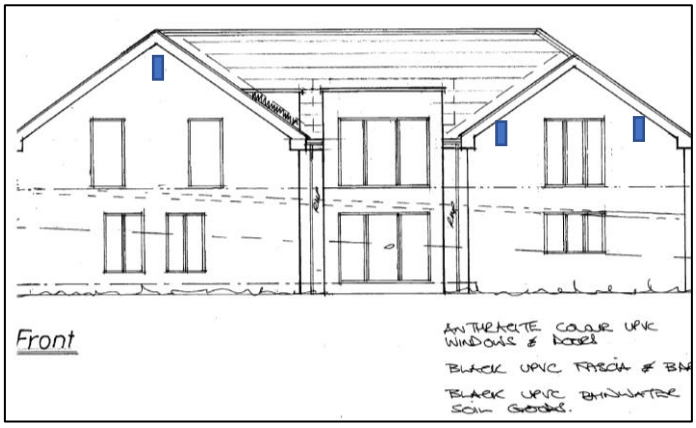
2.4. Prior to that happening, a bat box will be erected on a tree around the site perimeter. A Harlech Woodstone bat box as shown below or equivalent will be erected at least 3m up a suitable tree. In the unlikely event of a bat being found, if the bat cannot be safely left in situ, it can then be moved and placed into the bat box and it will provide the bats with an alternative roost during the development.



2.5. In addition, bat roosting opportunities will be built into the new dwelling. Three integrated bat bricks with a finish to match the new dwelling will be placed high in the gable end walls. The design will be as shown below or equivalent.



2.6. The locations of the integrated bat bricks are shown on the following plans. The bat bricks are shown as a blue square.



2.7. If a bat is found at any point during the works, the bat should be covered and protected from harm and all work on site will stop until the licenced ecologist advises how to proceed. Bats can be found under roof tiles and in any small gaps that may be present in a existing dwelling, including in cracks, crevices, under flashing and under roof tiles. The toolbox talk appended to this report will help advise the developer where bats are likely to be found. If a bat is found, it is likely that a Natural England licence will need to be applied for to cover the remaining works.

2.8. There are no limitations on what membrane should be used in the new dwelling as the bat access tiles have been replaced by an additional bat brick in the building outer walls. The roof of the building will be well sealed with no opportunities for bats to gain access and become in contact with any roof felt.

2.9. If a bat is found and a licence is needed, it may be necessary to avoid the use of a breathable membrane. This will be specified within the licence application in such an event.

2.10. The lighting strategy will avoid light interference of the roosting opportunities shown above. A detailed scheme has been prepared and submitted by others. The following is a summary of that strategy.

“The proposed exterior lighting for the project consists of wall-mounted downlights positioned at a height of 1.8m. The lights utilise a 4.5W 2700K warm white LED lamp. Importantly, all proposed light sources have a 0% upward light ratio to minimise light pollution. Furthermore, their positioning has been carefully planned to avoid any light spillage onto ecologically sensitive areas. These measures ensure that the lighting design is environmentally conscious and considers the impact on the local ecology.”

Prepared by:	
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Toolbox Talk: Bats

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18 species of bat have been recorded in Britain, 17 of which are known to breed here.



Identification.

Some species can be extremely difficult to identify in the hand and even more so in flight.

Species such as the Brown Long Eared bat pictured above can be more easily identified in the hand. Whereas, the Common Pipistrelle and Soprano Pipistrelle are more difficult to identify.

Bats are more easily identified by field signs such as droppings or feeding remains.





Habitat.

Bats are highly specialised creatures and require a relatively narrow range of suitable conditions in order to sustain a viable population. Bats require an abundant supply of flying insect food in places where they can easily be caught and they need safe and reliable roosting sites, particularly during breeding and hibernation.

Bats are heavily dependent on buildings and trees for their roost sites and therefore extremely susceptible to disturbance from human activities. Development schemes can also isolate bat populations and sever roost sites from favoured feeding areas by removing hedgerows or other features used as commuting routes.

Bats are susceptible to disturbance and have been known to abandon roost sites after instances of disturbance. The effects of disturbance are more pronounced at different times of year. Serious disturbance during breeding can result in the breeding females being killed or the abandonment and subsequent starvation of dependant young. Repeated disturbance during winter hibernation can result in the death of adult animals from starvation.

The level of protection afforded to bats in the UK and European legislation reflects the fact that it is now generally accepted that bats have declined substantially, maybe by as much as 60%, over recent years. Most species are declining and vulnerable with all species being protected.

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 occasionally the roofs of buildings.

Certain species, particularly Pipistrelle, can quickly adapt to manmade structures and will readily use these to roost and to rear their young.

Legislation.

Bats and their roosts are fully protected at all times (whether the bats are currently present or not). This protection comes from the Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981 (updated by the Countryside Rights of Way Act 2000) and the Habitats Regulations 1994. Under this legislation it is an offence to intentionally or recklessly kill, injure, capture or disturb bats or to damage, destroy or obstruct access to any place used by bats for shelter or protection.

Under the Habitats Regulations, where bats may be affected by development proposals, a licence is required from Natural England. Natural England's published guidelines on the licence procedure indicate that if, on the basis of survey information and specialist knowledge of the species concerned, the proposed activity is reasonably likely to result in an offence then a licence is required. If, on the other hand the proposed activity is reasonably unlikely to result in an offence, then a licence is not required.

If bats or bat field signs are identified during works, stop all works and contact Whitcher Wildlife Ltd directly on 01226 753271 or at info@whitcher-wildlife.co.uk