Martin Prescott Environmental Services

Woodland Management, Ecological Surveying, Wildlife Events...

John Barnes
Moordale Paddock
Huddersfield Road
Diggle

01457873373

jbarnesarchitect@btconnect.com
cc info@westyorkshiredogrescue.co.uk

Martin Prescott
330 Hollins Lane,
Hollins,
Bury,
Lancs.
BL9 8BS

0161 796 6211
07946 488467
martin.dauby@tiscali.co.uk

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Initial Bat Survey of Barn at New Hey Farm, Marsden
Surveyor- Martin Prescott (lic. no. 2015-15466-CLS)

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Summary

The building was considered to have moderate bat roosting potential for transitory Pipistrelles and initially, two activity surveys are recommended at the appropriate season. Maternity roosts and other species are considered very unlikely.
The possibility of nesting birds must be considered.

1. Introduction

1.1 Reason for Survey

It is planned to demolish linking sections between the house and barn and to convert the barn into living accommodation. There is a possibility that the barn may have to be partially or totally rebuilt.
There is the potential to harm bats and destroy their roosts and a bat survey was requested.

1.2 The Site

The building was at New Hey Farm, Old Mount Road, Marsden. HD7 6DT. Map ref. SE041114.

1.3 The Building

The buildings consisted of an old barn linked by newer sections of building to an adjacent farmhouse. See plan.

2. Method

2.1 Risk Assessment, Possible Hazards

The buildings were easily accessed. There were no hazards other than those normally encountered when surveying basically sound buildings.

2.2 Daylight Survey, 6.1.2017

A daylight survey was carried out in order to assess the site and search for potential roosting sites and sign of bat occupation.
All possible roosting areas inside and on the outside of the building were searched for bats, their prey remains, droppings and urine stains.

Areas searched were:

2.2.1 Outside the buildings, the ground and surfaces underneath the eaves around the perimeter of the building likely to catch bat droppings, the walls, roofs and eaves for likely bat access holes.
2.2.2 The inside walls and floors, including a small loft, for signs of bat occupation such as droppings and prey remains and crevices suitable for roosting bats.

It may have been several months since any significant bat activity and signs of occupation, especially to the outside, may no longer be evident.

2.3 Equipment

The equipment used consisted of a hand held torches, ladders and short focus binoculars.

3. Results

3.1 Possible Roost Sites, Daylight Survey, 6.1.2017, see photos and plan

The main barn was of stone with pitched stone tile roof lined with traditional bituminous felting. This felting is more suitable than modern fibrous types as it does not snag in the bats claws.
There was an internal boarded out space used as a workshop with a small loft on top.
The rest of the barn was open to the roof.
It was unheated.
The connecting links were also of stone with a board-lined sloping slate roof.
Link 1 was well sealed with board lining. Link 2 had a board-lined roof, but the walls were exposed and contained many crevices suitable for roosting bats.
There were many gaps suitable for bat roosting bats in the masonry, under a fascia (link 1), under wooden cladding (link 2) and under the stone roofing tiles of the barn.

The barn and linking sections were relatively clear of clutter and easily searched.
Many mouse droppings were found throughout the three directly affected building sections.
No signs of bat occupation were found.

Indirect impact is likely on the east gable of the house and there were gaps under the end tiles in this area.

3.2 Possible Foraging Sites

The immediate area was mostly upland pasture, but there were areas of small trees and tree lines likely to have low bat foraging potential. A wooded clough about 100 metres away provided a good connection with richer habitat in the valley below.

3.3 Alternative Roosting Sites

There were a few buildings, including dwellings, nearby which were likely to have significant potential for roosting bats.

4. Conclusions

4.1 The buildings were considered to have moderate bat roosting potential and the immediate area low bat foraging potential.
There were many crevices in all the buildings affected considered suitable for roosting bats. However, this building is unheated and on an exposed hillside in relatively poor bat foraging habitat and is very unlikely to be used as a maternity roost.
The only bat occupation at all likely would be by occasional transitory Pipistrelles.

4.2 There were few buildings nearby which were considered to have significant bat roosting potential.

4.3 There were no signs of nesting birds, although small birds such as Wrens may have nested within the gaps in the masonry out of sight.

5. Recommendations

5.1 Initially, two bat activity surveys, either dawn and/or dusk must be carried out. These must be carried out when bats are fully active, at this location, approximately 270 metres above sea level, between mid-April and late September, but weather dependant. Work can commence with minimal risk to roosting bats once these surveys have shown no bats present.
If roosting bats are suspected, further surveys may be required. A bat box or gaps left at the eaves of the final building would be ample mitigation for transitory Pipistrelles.
The sooner demolition/conversion takes place after a negative survey the lower the risk to roosting bats.
If more than 12 months elapses after these surveys before the commencement of any works, a repeat survey is recommended.

5.2 It should be remembered that bats are occasionally found in the most unexpected places. If any bats are found during the work, Natural England (01942 820364) or myself (0161 796 6211, 07946 488467) should be notified and work stopped immediately.

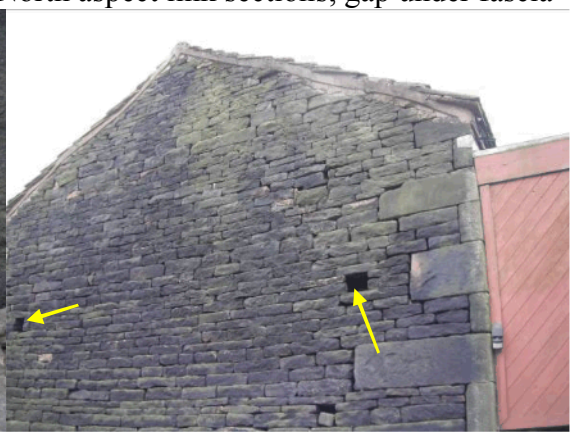
5.3 Although no nesting birds were found, they are possible and a nesting bird survey should be carried out between early April and late May. This can be done in conjunction with one of the bat activity surveys.
Any active nests found must be left undisturbed until the young have fledged. If in any doubt refer to the consultant.

6. Photos/plan

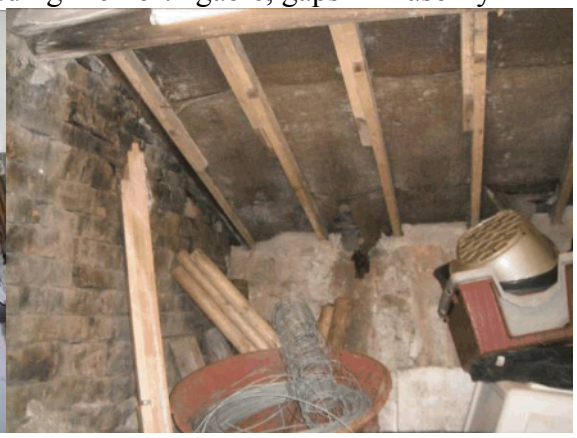
P1 East side and north gable

P2 East side and south gable, gaps under tiles

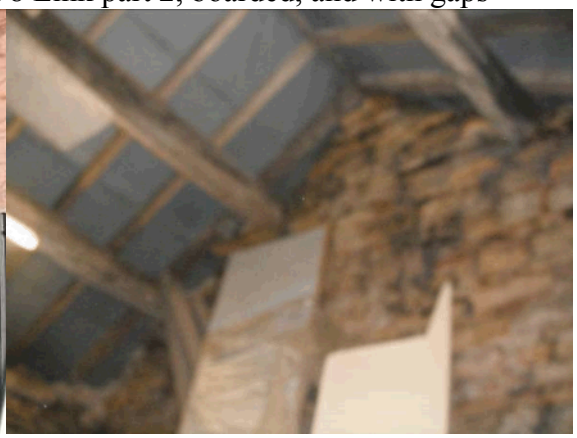
P3 Roof of link sections from south P4 North aspect link sections, gap under fascia



P5 North aspect link section, gap under cladding P6 north gable, gaps in masonry



P7 Link part 1, boarded and well-sealed P8 Link part 2, boarded, and with gaps



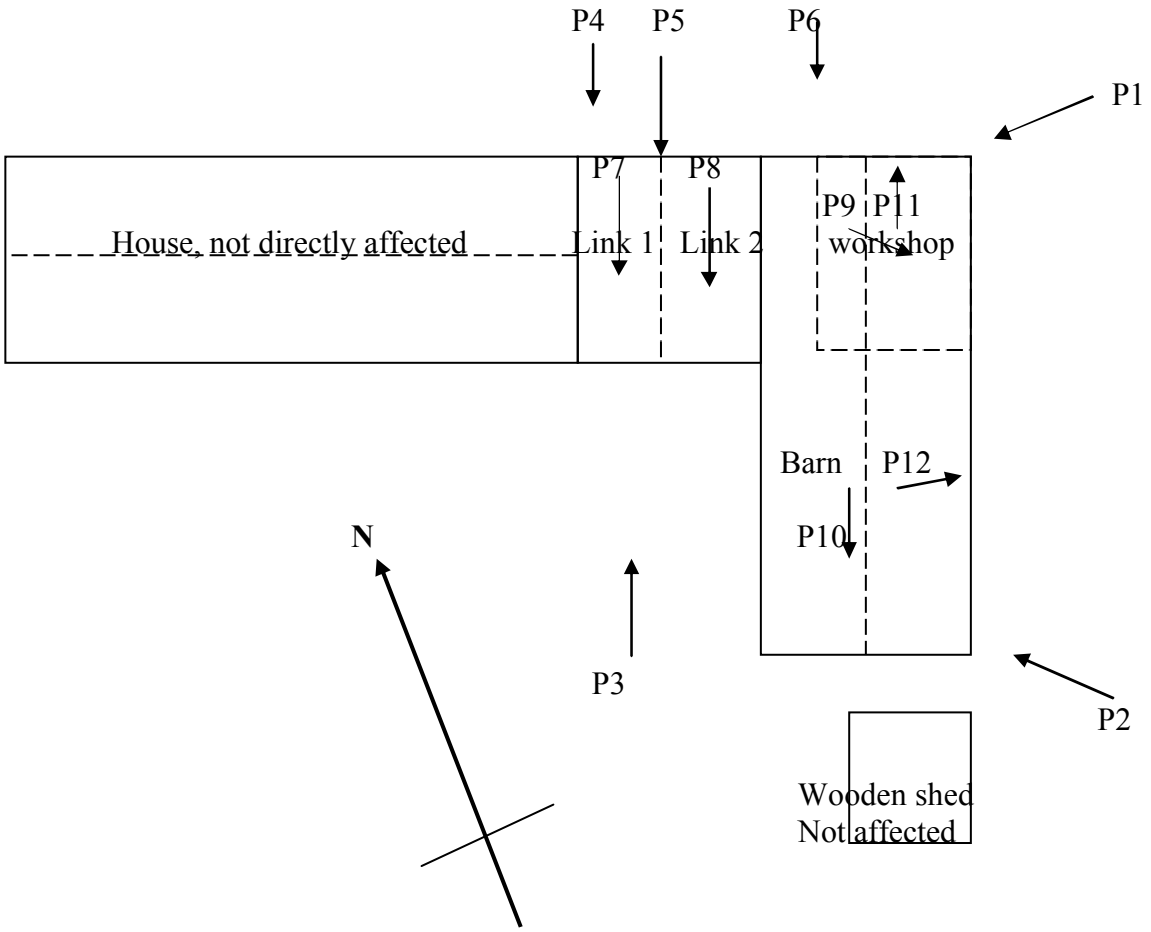
P9 Internal workshop in barn

P10 Inside south gable of barn

P11 Internal gaps in masonry, barn

P12 Internal gaps in masonry, barn

Plan, not to scale



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