

Westfield Farm,  
Flockton, Huddersfield

**Update Bat Survey Report and Statement**

March 2023

<b>Report reference</b>	1759a
<b>Revision</b>	3
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<b>Issue date</b>	Rev 1. 4 <sup>th</sup> October 2022 Rev 2. 5 <sup>th</sup> October 2022 Rev 3. 17 <sup>th</sup> March 2023

This report is valid for a period of 12 months from the issue date.

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# 1 Introduction and Background

- 1.1.1.1 This report presents the results of an Update Bat Survey undertaken at Westfield Farm, Barnsley Road, Flockton, Huddersfield, WF4 4DW. The site is located at OS grid reference grid ref. SE23381482 and comprises a series of derelict agricultural buildings. The site (see Figure 1) is located on the western edge of the settlement of Flockton and approximately 9 km east-south-east of Huddersfield town centre.
- 1.1.1.2 A survey was undertaken on 26<sup>th</sup> September 2022 to inform future development activities at the site.
- 1.1.1.3 The aims of the current work were as follows:
- To review the previous information relating to bats at the site (including the previous Bat Report<sup>1</sup>).
  - To determine the current status of bats at the site by means of an Update Bat Survey on 26<sup>th</sup> September 2022.
  - To inform the proposed development in relation to bats and likely mitigation requirements as necessary.
  - To prepare a statement (if possible and appropriate) to the effect that suitable measures are in place to ensure the development can proceed without resulting in an offence under regulation 43 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017.

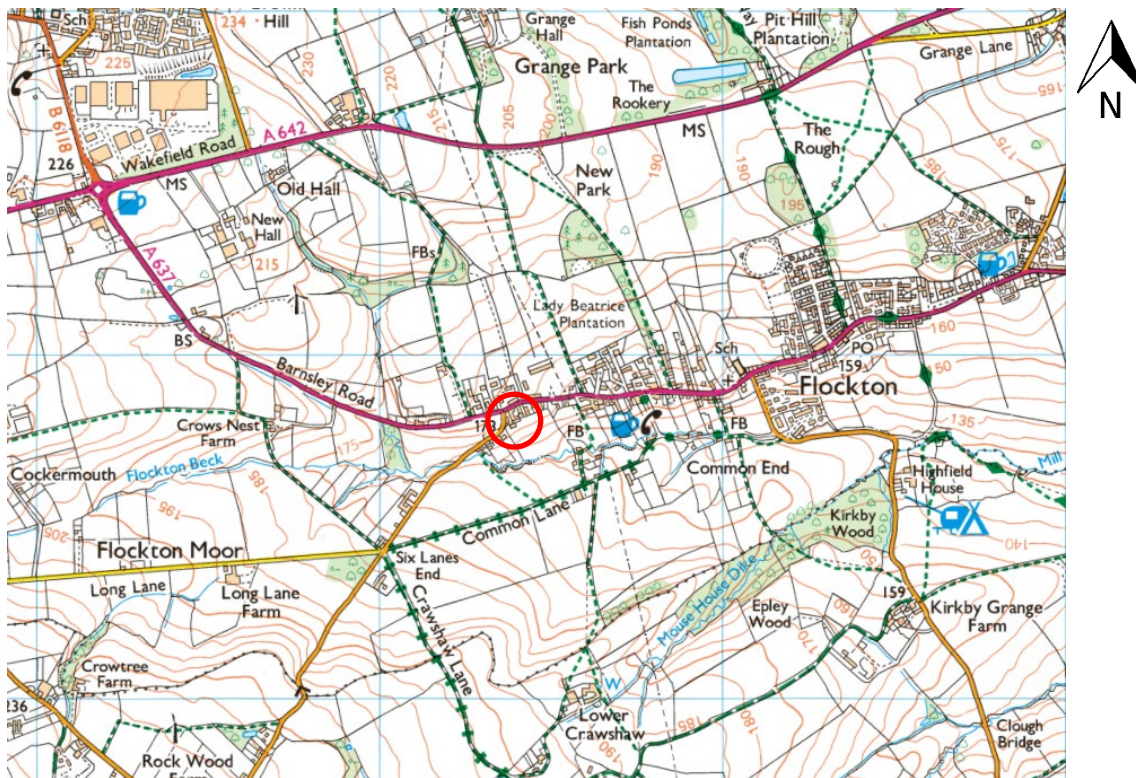
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<sup>1</sup> Middleton Ecological Consultancy. (2019). Westfield Farm, Flockton. Bat Survey Report, 16th July 2019.

**Figure 1. Site location outlined in red (aerial imagery dated 2020)**



**Figure 2. Site Location**



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## 2 Methodology

### 2.1 *Review of Previous Bat Report*

- 2.1.1.1 The previous bat report was reviewed in order to understand the previous status of bats at the site:
- Middleton Ecological Consultancy. (2019). Westfield Farm, Flockton. Bat Survey Report, 16th July 2019.

### 2.2 *Personnel*

- 2.2.1.1 The Update Bat Survey was undertaken by Toby Fisher CEnv MCIEEM<sup>2 3</sup>. This document has been prepared by Toby Fisher CEnv MCIEEM; a Suitably Qualified Ecologist with over 20 years' experience as an ecological consultant in the UK.

### 2.3 *Update Bat Survey*

- 2.3.1.1 All buildings at the site were subject to detailed external and internal inspections for signs of bats on 26<sup>th</sup> September 2022. This involved searching the exterior and interior of all buildings for signs of bats such as droppings and alive/dead animals and for potential bat roost locations. The buildings were assessed in terms of their potential to support bat roosts using the following categories:
- Negligible potential.
  - Low potential.
  - Moderate potential.
  - High potential.
  - Confirmed roost.

### 2.4 *Limitations*

- 2.4.1.1 All parts of the site were fully inspected with the exception of the upper level (first floor) of Building 7 which was only partly accessible due to rotten floorboards; the majority of this first floor area was directly accessed on 26<sup>th</sup> September 2022 however parts of this area were inspected using close-focussing binoculars. There are no basements. The surveys were undertaken towards the end of the main bat survey season, therefore it was not possible to undertake dusk emergence bat surveys. Overall, there were no significant limitations given the aims of the survey.

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<sup>2</sup> Natural England Class Licence Registration No. 2015-10756-CLS-CLS - CL18 Level 2 (Bats).

<sup>3</sup> Natural England Class Licence Registration No. WML- CL08:2015-16681-CLS-CLS (Great Crested Newts).

## 3 Results

### 3.1 Review of Previous Bat Report

3.1.1.1 The previous bat survey comprised the following surveys:

- Bat records search via West Yorkshire Bat Group (WYBG).
- A search for granted bat European Protected Species Mitigation (EPSM) licences via MAGIC website.
- Preliminary roost assessment and detailed bat inspection survey on 3<sup>rd</sup> August 2017.
- A four-person dusk emergence survey on 3<sup>rd</sup> August 2017.
- A two-person dawn return survey on 24<sup>th</sup> August 2017.
- A two-person dusk emergence survey on 19<sup>th</sup> September 2017.
- An Anabat SD1 static monitoring survey in Building 7 from 24<sup>th</sup> August to 30<sup>th</sup> August 2017.

3.1.1.2 The results of the previous bat survey are summarised as follows:

- WYBG identified three bat records within 2 km of the site (Pipistrelle / unidentified bat species); the closest record comprises a roost of at least one bat (unidentified species) located approximately 420m east of the site, dated 2003.
- MAGIC identified no granted EPSM bat licences within 2km of the site.
- During the daytime survey on 3<sup>rd</sup> August 2017, evidence of bat activity was recorded from Building 7 only. Building 5 was considered to have high bat roost potential. Buildings 1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 8 and 9 were considered to have low bat roost potential; and Buildings 10 and 11 were considered to have negligible bat roost potential.
- During the daytime survey on 3<sup>rd</sup> August 2017, evidence of roosting bats was recorded from three locations on the first floor of Building 7:
  - a cluster of approximately 100 probable Brown Long-Eared bat droppings was noted at the base of the southern internal wall;
  - a cluster of 40 Yellow Underwing Moth wings and 10 probable Brown Long-Eared bat droppings was recorded from the centre of the first floor; and
  - approximately 50 Yellow Underwing Moth wings were recorded from the interior face of the northern gable.
  - The central and the northern pile of moth wings were considered to comprise evidence of Brown Long-Eared bat feeding roosts, with the southern dropping pile comprising evidence of a probable Brown Long-Eared bat day or night roost location.
  - A sample of bat droppings from the southern dropping cluster was subject to DNA analysis which confirmed the droppings tested as originating from Whiskered bat. Whilst the southern dropping cluster clearly contains whiskered bat droppings, it was considered that there are also Brown Long-Eared bat droppings interspersed. A Whiskered bat day roost was present in this location.
- During the dusk emergence and dawn return surveys in 2017, three bat roosts were identified:
  - A maximum count of eight Brown Long-Eared bats were recorded emerging from Building 7 on 19<sup>th</sup> September 2017. A Brown Long-Eared bat was observed roosting on the ridge beam in the centre of this building, with no other roost locations identified for this species. Bats from this roost emerged from the building via the circular first floor window opening in the western wall of Building 7. On the basis of the number of bats recorded roost, it was considered most likely that Building 7 supports a Brown Long-Eared bat maternity roost.
  - A Whiskered bat day roost was recorded from a location between asbestos roof sheets towards the south-east end of Building 7. This roost was used by a maximum count of one bat during each of the three nocturnal surveys, with this bat also recorded accessing the building via the circular opening in the south-western wall.
  - A Common Pipistrelle day roost was recorded in Building 7; the exact location of this roost is unknown however a single bat was recorded emerging from Building 7 during the nocturnal survey on 19<sup>th</sup> September 2017.
- It was concluded the bat roosts at the site were of local importance to resident bat species.

## **3.2 Update Bat Survey**

3.2.1.1 The following evidence of bats was identified during the inspection survey on 26<sup>th</sup> September 2022:

- Building 7: Scattered bat droppings within Building 7 (approximately 20 droppings; typical of Brown Long-Eared) along with feeding remains (Yellow Underwing Moth wings).
- Building 5: Accumulation of >500 bat droppings and feeding remains beneath ridge in Building 5 (indicative of Brown Long-Eared roost).
- Building 11: 5 bat droppings (typical of Pipistrelle) were found scattered on surfaces within Building 11. This indicates likely foraging behaviour within this open-fronted building; it is also possible that bats may roost in this building although there are only very limited potential bat roost features, e.g. between roof verge on east gable.

3.2.1.2 Based on their size, shape and particle size, the bat droppings found appeared to comprise mostly Brown Long-Eared bat droppings but a number of the bat droppings were more consistent with Pipistrelle and/or *Myotis* sp. bats e.g. Whiskered Bat.

3.2.1.3 In terms of the potential of the various buildings to support bat roosts, the 2022 survey reaches similar conclusions as the previous survey, i.e.:

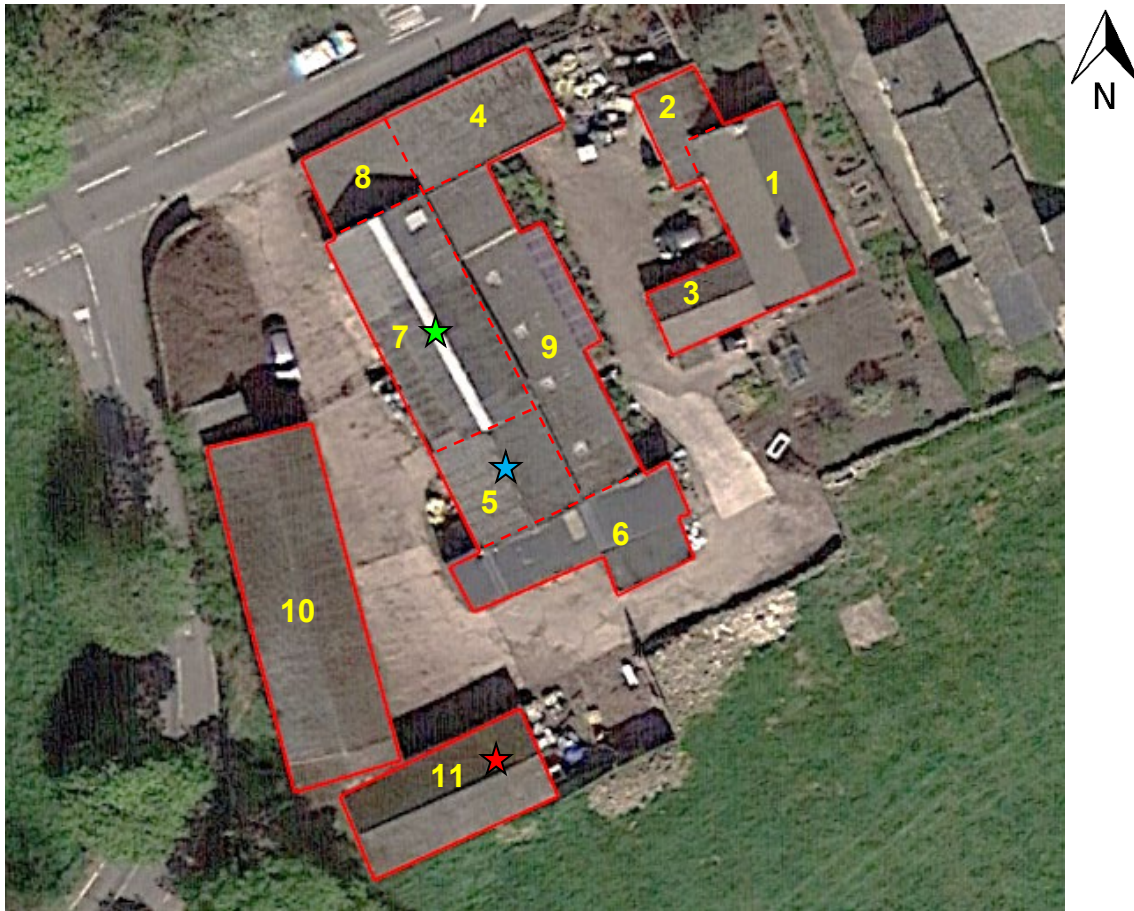
- Buildings 5 and 7 are confirmed bat roosts (Brown Long-Eared roost(s) possibly comprising a maternity roost along with feeding/night roost and/or day roost); plus potential for Whiskered and/or Pipistrelle day roosts to remain extant.
- Buildings 1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 8, 9 and 11 have low bat roost potential.
- Building 10 has negligible bat roost potential.

## **3.3 Interpretation**

3.3.1.1 Based on the results of the 2017 surveys and the update bat survey on 26<sup>th</sup> September 2022, the following conclusions can be made:

- Buildings 5 and 7 support confirmed bat roosts (potentially comprising an extant Brown Long-Eared maternity roost (along with feeding/night roost and/or day roost); plus potential for Whiskered and/or Pipistrelle day roosts to remain extant).
- Scattered bat droppings were found in Building 11 and this may relate to foraging activity within the open-fronted building or could possibly relate to a roost within this building.
- No evidence of bats has been found in any of the other buildings and all other buildings are assessed as having low / negligible bat roost potential.

**Figure 3. Building Numbers and Location of Bat Evidence (26<sup>th</sup> September 2022)**



Key:

- 11** Building with reference
- ★ Scattered bat droppings within Building 7 (approx 20 droppings; typical of Brown Long-Eared along with feeding remains)
- ★ Accumulation of >500 bat droppings and feeding remains beneath ridge in Building 5 (indicative of Brown Long-Eared roost)
- ★ 5 bat droppings scattered in open-fronted Building 11 (typical of Pipistrelle bats)

## 4 Bat Statement and Bat Method Statement

### 4.1 *Bat Statement*

4.1.1.1 It is considered that the consented development can proceed without resulting in an offence under Regulation 43 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 provided the measures detailed in the Bat Method Statement below are complied with.

### 4.2 *Bat Method Statement*

4.2.1.1 Based on all available information, it is concluded that bats currently roost in Buildings 5 and 7 at the site. There is no evidence of bats roosting in any of the other buildings at the site (scattered bat droppings found in the open-fronted Building 11 are likely to relate to foraging rather than roosting activity) and all other buildings at the site are assessed as having low or negligible bat roost potential.

4.2.1.2 In order to avoid damage or destruction of bat roosts and disturbance of bats, no works will take place to Buildings 5 or 7 until an EPSM licence has been obtained from Natural England and suitable mitigation measures have been employed as per the EPSM licence conditions.

4.2.1.3 In order to enable essential ground investigation works to place at the site, it will be necessary to dismantle parts / all of Buildings 1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 8, 9, 10 and/or 11 (low / negligible bat roost potential). None of these buildings are reliant on Buildings 5 or 7 for their structural integrity and it will be possible to carefully dismantle each of these buildings without affecting the integrity of Buildings 5 or 7. Dismantling of Buildings 1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 8, 9, 10 and/or 11 will only take place under an Ecological Watching Brief, with key elements of the dismantling process undertaken only by hand and under the direct supervision of a Suitably Qualified Ecologist. As part of the Ecological Watching Brief, particular care will be taken to minimise disturbance of Buildings 5 and 7, e.g. by minimising noise/vibration.

4.2.1.4 If bats or evidence of bats is found in Buildings 1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 8, 9, 10 and/or 11 at any stage, work will stop immediately and work will not proceed until an EPSM licence has been obtained from Natural England.

4.2.1.5 Wherever possible, activities such as ground investigations will take place outside a 3-metre buffer zone from the outer walls of Buildings 5 and 7. Certain activities could potentially cause illegal disturbance of bats in Buildings 5 and 7 at distances greater than 3 metres, e.g. noisy, vibrating activities such as demolition and/or using a jack-hammer or concrete-breaker. However, no such activities are proposed at this site until an EPSM licence has been obtained. The 3-metre stand-off zone from Buildings 5 and 7 will be marked to all sides by the following means:

- 3 metre buffer zone will be spray-painted on the ground to all sides; and
- Signs stating '*Bat Roost in Building – Do Not Enter*' will be affixed to all doorways.

### 4.3 *Bat Licensing Requirements*

4.3.1.1 Prior to any works affecting Buildings 5 or 7, it will be necessary to obtain a European Protected Species Mitigation (EPSM) licence prior to the start of work. An EPSM licence is required to allow an activity to occur that would otherwise be classed as unlawful i.e. damage/destruction and/or disturbance of a bat roost or obstructing access to a bat roost. Natural England can issue bat EPSM licences for the purpose of development upon application and presentation of evidence-based mitigation.

4.3.1.2 Before issuing a licence, Natural England need to be satisfied that the following '3 tests' are met (this will include measures to minimise impacts on bats through design/mitigation/timings etc.):

1. That the action is for the purpose of preserving public health or public safety or other imperative reasons of overriding public interest including those of a social or economic nature;
2. that there is no satisfactory alternative; and

3. that the action authorised will not be detrimental to the maintenance of the species concerned at a favourable conservation status in their natural range.
- 4.3.1.3 As part of an EPSM licence application, a Bat Method Statement must be prepared and strictly followed as part of the licence conditions.
  - 4.3.1.4 A Natural England EPSM bat licence application must be informed by survey data within the most recent annual survey season. Therefore, it will be necessary to undertake update bat activity surveys to inform an EPSM licence application for this site.
  - 4.3.1.5 Natural England aims to process licence applications in 30 working days. Natural England will only process licence applications once planning permission (if applicable) has been granted and all wildlife-related conditions, that are capable of being discharged, have been discharged.

## Appendix 1. Legislation and Conservation Context

### **Bats**

Bats are fully protected through The Conservation of Habitats and Species (Amendment) (EU Exit) Regulations 2019 as European Protected Species (EPS). They also receive some protection through inclusion in Schedule 5 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended).

It is an offence to deliberately capture, injure or kill a bat. It is an offence to damage or destroy a breeding site or resting place of a bat. It is an offence to deliberately disturb a bat; in particular any disturbance which is likely (a) to impair their ability - (i) to survive, to breed or reproduce, or to rear or nurture their young, or (ii) in the case of animals of a hibernating or migratory species, to hibernate or migrate; or (b) to affect significantly the local distribution or abundance of the species to which they belong.

Under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended), it is also an offence to intentionally or recklessly disturb a bat while it is occupying a structure or place which it uses for shelter or protection; or obstruct access to any structure or place which any such animal uses for shelter or protection.

The 'appropriate authority' (Natural England in England) has powers to issue licences for various purposes including - (a) scientific or educational purposes... and (e) preserving public health or public safety or other imperative reasons of overriding public interest including those of a social or economic nature and beneficial consequences of primary importance for the environment. The appropriate authority shall not grant a licence under this regulation unless they are satisfied - (a) that there is no satisfactory alternative, and (b) that the action authorised will not be detrimental to the maintenance of the population of the species concerned at a favourable conservation status in their natural range. It is an offence for any person authorised by virtue of a licence to which this paragraph applies to contravene or fail to comply with any condition which the licence requires him to comply with.

### **Nesting Birds**

All wild birds in the UK are protected under Section 1 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) which makes it an offence to intentionally kill, injure or take any wild bird or take, damage or destroy the nest (whilst being built or in use) or its eggs. Bird species listed in Schedule 1 of the 1981 Act, e.g. barn owl, receive further protection which makes it an offence to intentionally or recklessly disturb these species while building a nest or in, on or near a nest containing eggs or young; or to disturb dependent young of such a bird. If posing a risk to health, the nests of pest bird species including feral pigeons may be destroyed using approved methods under a licence from Natural England.

## Appendix 2. Photographs

**Photo 1. Buildings 7 and 5 – west elevations (taken from within Building 10)**



**Photo 2. South elevation of Buildings 5 and 6**



**Photo 3. Looking west to Buildings 10 (left) and Building 11 (right)**



**Photo 4. Looking north-east to farmhouse (Buildings 1, 2 and 3)**



**Photo 5. Looking west to Building 9 (left foreground) and Building 4 (on right)**



**Photo 6. Looking north-west to Building 6 (foreground) and Building 5 (on left)**



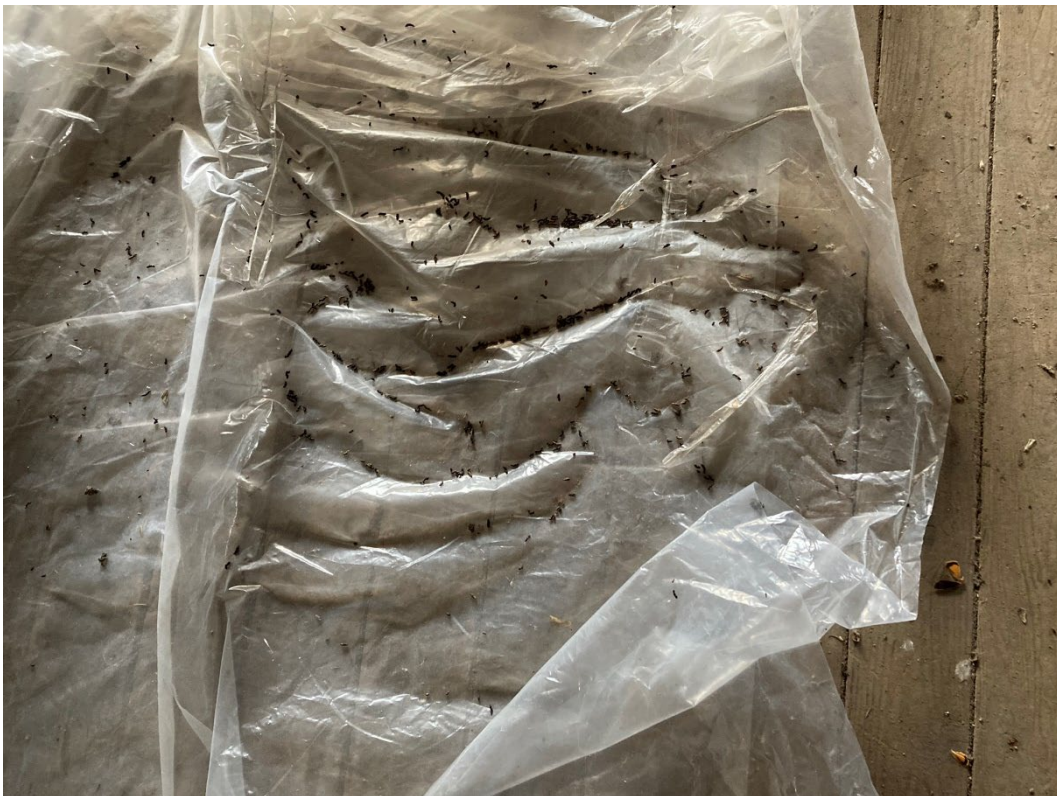
**Photo 7. Building 7 interior – looking to north gable**



**Photo 8. Bat dropping (typical of Brown Long-Eared bat) on upper floor of Building 7**



**Photo 9. Accumulation of Brown Long-Eared bat droppings and feeding remains in Building 5**



**Photo 10. Building 5 interior – looking towards south gable wall**

