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Bat Survey to
Fernside Avenue
Almondbury
Huddersfield
HD5 8NR

11th July 2022

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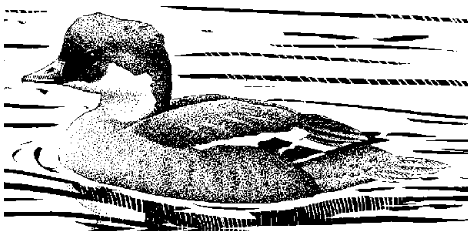

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1. Summary

1.1 This report details the results of a bat survey carried out to the barn at Fernside Avenue, Almondbury to determine if the property is being used by roosting bats ahead of proposed demolition works. The survey was undertaken at the optimal time for bat occupancy and aimed to establish the presence or absence of bats in the building. The application seeks to demolish the barn and erect 4 residential dwellings on site.

1.2 The building comprises a small stone barn attached to the end of a row of cottages. It has a felt lined stone roof and stone outer walls with some inner walls lined with brick. The roof is in a reasonable condition with few missing or slipped tiles. The dry verge has been repointed and the ridge tiles are in situ and are well bedded. The walls have missing pointing but close inspection show these to be shallow and simply where the outer section of mortar has fallen away. There are a limited number of potential roost features (PRFs), mainly crevices around window apertures and the roof offer potential beneath the stone tiles.

1.3 The daylight scoping survey assesses the barn to be of ‘low potential’ to roosting bats and therefore, only a single activity survey is required. An emergence survey was undertaken on the same evening as the scoping survey and resulted in no bats emerging from the barn and no bats recorded in the vicinity. The negative result is not unusual as the site is in an urban area and there is limited foraging within the immediate bounds of the site. The habitat suggests that bat numbers will be unremarkable and limited to commoner species though common pipistrelle are likely to pass through the site occasionally as they commute to foraging sites. A previous survey (Bagshaw Ecology, 2019) also classified the site ad being of low roost potential and the results if the two surveys are in line with each other. It is reasonable to assume that bats are not using the site.

1.4 There are no statutory constraints to the development of this building from the presence of bats and no further survey work is required.

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2. Introduction

2.1 A bat scoping survey was carried out to the barn at Fernside Avenue, Almondbury, Huddersfield HD5 8NR (NGR SE162158) to determine whether bats have or are using the property as a roost site.

2.2 The current proposal seeks to demolish the existing barn and erect 4 residential dwellings on the site.

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

- the presence or absence of bats by undertaking a scoping survey
- determine if activity surveys are required
- identify any potential roosting areas
- 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 by John Gardner, a surveyor with 41yrs 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 interior and exterior of the building was inspected during daylight using torches and binoculars. 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 building was assessed for its 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 survey carried out to the above site on Monday 11th July 2022 and an evening emergence survey was carried out on the same day. This 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.

5. Site Description

5.1 The site consists of a stone barn at the end of a small row of period stone cottages. The barn is located in an urban area with only limited foraging habitat in the immediate surrounds. There is extensive foraging habitat located to the west and the site is connected to the wider landscape by a series of linear features.

Figure 1. Site location plan

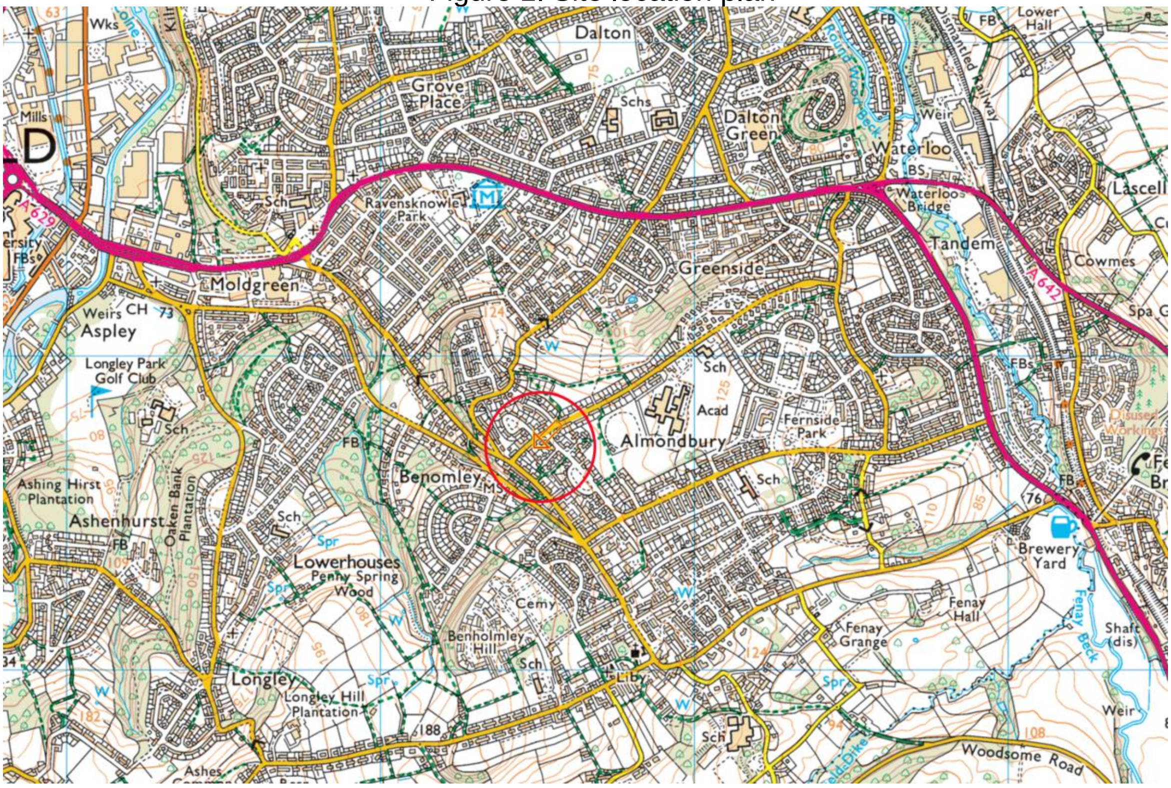

Figure 2 Aerial view of the site, surrounds and specific buildings surveyed

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6. Desk Study

WYBG hold no bat records for the site and the previous survey (Bagshaw 2019) carried out searches which delivered a nil return for the site. It is highly unlikely that there has been any change in status since then. Data gathered during this survey supersedes all other data.

7. Activity surveys

7.1 The building was assessed as having 'low' bat roost potential and therefore, the required single activity survey was carried out on the same evening as the scoping survey. A single, very experienced surveyor covered the site, and this is considered robust for the survey given the size of the building.

8. Survey results

Scoping Survey

The barn is a medium sized barn attached to the end of a row of period stone cottages and therefore has only one gable and this faces slightly NE. The roof is local stone tiles and is in reasonable condition having been reroofed in previous years. All ridge tiles are present and mostly well bedded and the dry verge on the single gable is very well pointed and has no gaps. There are no decorative wooden features externally; all gutters sit on metal brackets and there are no facia or soffits. Internally, the roof is felt lined and the ridge relatively clean and free from cobwebs. There was no evidence of use by bats and there is a strong petroleum or bitumen type smell which may be unpleasant to bats.

The walls are stone and in parts have large gaps where stonework has fallen away, particularly on the NE corner. However, the walls are generally sound and gaps in the gable wall surveyed in torchlight at dusk can be seen to be very shallow and superficial. There are suitable crevices around the old wooden window covers.

Given the limited amount and diversity of potential roost features, the barn is assessed as being of 'low' bat roost potential.

Emergence survey

An assessment of 'low' roost potential requires a single activity survey and this was undertaken on the same evening as the scoping survey. The emergence survey was carried out by a single highly experienced surveyor using both heterodyne and an RTE detector. The conditions were perfect for the survey with temperatures of 23^{o}C and no breeze. The survey covered the period 60mins prior to sunset until 60 mins after sunset and sunset was recorded at 21:35

No bats were recorded emerging from the building and no bats were recorded during the survey.

9. Interpretation and analysis

The survey results determined that the barn has low potential to support roosting bats as it has a limited number and diversity of PRFs. No bats were recorded emerging from the site, and none were recorded in the area. The fact that no bats were recorded is not unusual as the site is in an urban area and has limited foraging in the immediate vicinity, though the area of ruderal grasses and other vegetation to the rear of the site would support foraging for small numbers of bats. The conditions were perfect for the survey with high temperatures and no breeze and the absence of bats is a result of a low number of bats of a local provenance rather than weather related or other factors. There are other dwellings in the area, many of which are closer to habitat and bats are likely to be present close by.

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The building has been surveyed twice by independent surveyors and both determined that the building is unlikely to support bats.

10. Impact assessment

The proposed works to demolish the barn is not likely to impact bats or damage a maternity roost or particular roosting features. It will not cause fragmentation of habitat and the project has a low ecological impact. No further survey work is required.

11. Mitigation measures

The building has low interest to bats and, consequently, there are no requirements for an EPS licence and, given the low numbers of bats in the area, no requirement for compensation has been specified. The survey suggests that bat numbers in the area are unremarkable, and inclusion of permanent roosting features is unlikely to result in an uptake by bats. It would be far more beneficial to provide a sparrow nesting terrace and/or starling boxes under the eaves of the proposed dwellings. Boxes should be placed on the north elevation away from direct sunlight.

Features and enhancements

- Consideration should be given to inclusion of starling nesting boxes or a sparrow terrace on the north elevation of the dwellings.

Timings

There are no timing constraints to the works being carried.

Mitigation

- All roof tiles to be stripped by hand while carefully checking for the presence of bats.
- In the unlikely event that bats are found, all work must cease in that area and advice sought from a qualified ecologist.

12. Conclusion

The survey concluded that the building has low potential to support roosting bats and bat numbers locally are low and likely to be limited to the common pipistrelle species. The potential roost features are limited to mainly under roof tiles and therefore, the roof tiles should be removed by hand which is likely to happen anyway as the slates will be reclaimed. Installing sparrow nesting terraces and starling boxes within the new dwellings is likely to be more beneficial than a bat roosting feature and nest boxes of this kind will result in a net gain in biodiversity of the site.

No further bat survey work is required.

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Appendix 1: Photographs of the building