Whitcher Wildlife Ltd.
Ecological Consultants.

BARN COTTAGE, THUNDERBRIDGE.

OS REF: SE 19161 10977

PRELIMINARY ROOST ASSESSMENT.

Ref No: **250208**

Date: **11th February 2025**

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1. INTRODUCTION.

1.1. There are plans to demolish an existing property on Long Lane, Corn Mill Bottom in Shelley, with plans to rebuild on the existing plot.

1.2. Whitcher Wildlife Ltd was therefore commissioned to carry out a bat survey of the site to establish whether there are any issues that may affect the proposed works.

1.3. The preliminary roost assessment was carried out on 6th February 2025 and this report outlines the findings and makes appropriate recommendations.

1.4. Appendices I of this report provides additional information on bats, and the protection afforded to them and is designed to assist the reader in understanding the contents of this report.

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2. SURVEY METHODOLOGY.

2.1. The buildings were thoroughly checked internally and externally for potential bat roosting sites by looking for the following signs: -

* Holes, cracks or crevices.
* Bat droppings.
* Prey remains.
* Staining on external walls.

2.2. Unless otherwise stated, all lofts were accessed and inspected using a high-powered torch and where necessary an endoscope.

2.3. A thorough external inspection was carried out from ground level for any gaps or openings in the roof and ridge tiles, behind soffits and fascia's and in the walls of the structure for suitable roost access points and field signs to indicate possible use by bats.

2.4. All windowsills, walls and the ground around the structure were checked for signs of bat droppings or staining to indicate possible use by bats. Where necessary, ladders were utilised to gain access within the limits of health and safety.
Any access constraints encountered are outlined within the following report.

2.5. All survey work was carried out in line with Collins, J. (ed.) (2023) *Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines (4th edition)*, with an assessment of the buildings suitability for roosting bats made in accordance with these guidelines.

2.6. The survey was led by Alexandrea White BSc (Hons) MSc ACIEEM MIEnvSc CEnv. Alex has worked as a consultant since 2013 carrying out array of different habitat and species surveys. Alex holds Natural England Survey Licences for Great Crested Newts, Bats, Hazel Dormice, White Clawed Crayfish and Barn Owls. She also holds Scottish Natural Heritage Licences for bats and great crested newts and Natural Resources Wales Licence for Great Crested Newts, Bats and Hazel Dormice. She holds an undergraduate honours degree in Zoology and a master's degree in environmental management (Landscape and Wildlife Conservation). She has successfully completed courses run by the Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (CIEEM), Field Studies Council and the Mammal Society to further her knowledge of protected species and plant identification. Alex is an Associate member of CIEEM, a full member of IES and a Chartered Environmentalist.

2.7. The survey was supported by Frances Teasdale, who is an Assistant Ecologist at Whitcher Wildlife Ltd. Frances attained a BSc in Wildlife and Practical Conservation at the University of Salford in 2021 and since graduating has undertaken an array of different habitat and species

surveys, including preliminary ecological appraisals (PEA), preliminary roost assessments (PRA) and species-specific surveys including badger, bat, great crested newt and breeding bird surveys. Frances is qualifying member of the Chartered Institute of Ecological and Environmental Management (CIEEM) and is committed to continuous professional development.

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3. SURVEY RESULTS.

3.1. Data Search Results.

3.1.1. A data search request was submitted to West Yorkshire Joint Services (WYES) for records of bats and bat roosts within 2km of the survey area. This section of the report provides a summary of these results.

3.1.2. The data search returned 52 records of six bat species. The closest record from 2015 is of a potential pipistrelle roost approximately 86m east of the survey area, within another property along Long Lane, whilst a previous survey undertaken by Whitcher Wildlife in 2018 confirmed a pipistrelle roost within another property approximately 120m east.

3.1.3. Other bat species recorded within 2km of the survey area include Daubenton's, whiskered, noctules, soprano pipistrelle and the brown long-eared, which was most recently recorded in 2021 approximately 1.5km from the site, described as a maternity roost.

3.1.4. There were further historic records although given their age (pre-2015), they are not thought the accurately represent the current species distribution.

3.1.5. MAGIC Maps was also used to identify any records of granted bat mitigation licenses, of which none were identified.

3.1.6. The data search also returned records of designated sites within 2km of the survey area, which identified eleven non-statutory local wildlife sites (LWS). Only one of these is relevant. This is Shepley Mill Wood (LWS), which is an area of ancient woodland located approximately 10m to the immediate south. This also forms part of the Kirklees Wildlife Habitat Network.

3.1.7 A copy of the data search results can be provided to the client upon request but should not be placed into the public domain.

3.2. Site Description.

3.2.1. The site is located in a small residential area within rural Shelley, Huddersfield. It is surrounded by areas of woodland, arable and agricultural land, as well as residential properties and gardens. The village of Shelley is located approximately 450m to the east, and the hamlet of Thunderbridge is approximately 460m northwest.

3.2.2. The aerial map below shows the location of the survey area, indicated by the red dot, as well as the surrounding landscape.

3.2.3. The survey area comprises Barn Cottage on Corn Mill Bottom, which is a two-storey detached property with a loft, and a conservatory extension to the rear of the property facing north. The extent of the property has been defined by the red line boundary in the aerial image below.

3.3. Preliminary Roost Assessment

3.3.1. The building was primarily constructed using stone, including stonework around the window and door surrounds, PVC drainage and rendering. The stonework was in all around

good condition, with no cracks, gaps or crevices suitable for roosting bats. Additionally, all windows and doors were well sealed and no potential access points for bats were identified.

Southeast facing: *Northwest facing:*

3.3.2. There was a sloping extension to the rear of the property. This was stone based, with timber framed windows and doors. The stonework was, similarly to the rest of the building, in good condition, and there were no identifiable features, which may allow access to roosting bats.

3.3.3. The roof of the property was pitched and covered with stone tiles with gable ends to the northwest and northeast. The pointing and ridge tiles appeared to be in generally good condition at the gable ends, with no potential features for roosting bats identified. The door to the rear of the property extends outwards and forms a cross gable with a porch, which appears to be in a similar condition.

Northeast facing: *Northwest facing:*

Cross gable with porch:

3.3.4. The roof was pitched with overlapping stone tiles, which form a hip at the southwest corner of the property.

3.3.4.1. The ridge tile and pointing appeared to be in relatively good condition from ground level, with no missing mortar identified.

3.3.4.2. The tiling was generally intact and in good condition, although there were occasional slipped, missing or broken tiles, which may provide potential access points for roosting bats.

3.3.4.3. The nature of the stone tiles also means that there are gaps present underneath and between the tiles

3.3.4.4. Gaps were identified beneath the timber fascia, which underlies the guttering surrounding the building. These gaps appeared to extend into the internal roof void and could be seen internally (see section 3.3.5.1.).

3.3.5. Access to the loft was permitted by the client. The loft was found to comprise two connected areas in an L- formation, as could be seen from the outside of the building. The roof was lined with breathable roofing membrane with exposed timber trusses present throughout.

3.3.5.1. The locations of the aforementioned gaps beneath the timber fascia were identified within the loft space, evidenced by the light, which could be seen shining through. No bats were identified within the loft and no definitive field signs were identified at the time of the survey.

3.3.6. The results of this survey found that a number of features that provided potential access into the loft space of the property were present, in addition to potential roosting features beneath slipped and damaged tiles. The gaps identified beneath the timber fascia offer potential access into the loft space for roosting bats, particularly Brown Long-Eared (BLE). Access to the loft is not probable via the external tiles, as the lining is present and in good condition throughout the loft, however the features created by slipped and damaged tiles may offer roosting opportunities for low numbers of bats during the summer months. Furthermore, the relatively rural location of the property within a small residential area means that light levels are likely to be low, and the adjacent woodland to the south offers optimal habitat for foraging and commuting. The building has therefore been assessed as providing **moderate potential for summer roosting bats**.

3.3.7. The fluctuating temperatures within the loft provide unsuitable conditions for hibernating bats. There is no cellar or underground space within the building. Therefore, the building has been assessed as providing **negligible potential for hibernating bats**.

3.4. Other Ecological Issues

3.4.1. Several of the features identified may provide potential access points for nesting birds. Whilst no evidence of nesting birds was found during the initial assessment, there remains potential for sparrows where larger voids are present (shown 3.3.5.1.), and whilst unlikely due to suboptimal conditions, there is some potential for nesting martins and swifts.

3.4.2. During the initial survey, rockspray cotoneaster (*Cotoneaster horizontalis)*, a Schedule 9 invasive non-native species (INNS) listed on the Wildlife and Countryside Act (1981) was identified within the survey area. The approximate location of the plant is indicated by the red arrow on the aerial map below.

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4. EVALUATION OF FINDINGS.

4.1. The building was assessed as providing moderate potential for summer roosting bats. Several potential features that may be used for access were present, and records of bats and bat roosts were returned from the WYES data search. Roosts were identified as close as 86m east in 2015, and 120m east in 2018. A brown long-eared maternity roost was previously recorded approximately 1.5km from the site boundary, which is one of the primary species of concern given the optimal conditions provided within the loft. Further surveying is recommended to determine whether the proposed works will have an impact on bats roosting within structures.

4.2. The conditions within the loft mean that the building has been assessed as providing negligible potential for hibernating bats, and as such, the proposed works will not have an impact on any hibernating bats.

4.3. The rural location of the property and the woodland to the south is likely to provide optimal foraging and commuting habitat for bats. Light pollution levels are likely to be low, and connectivity within this habitat is good. The proposed works therefore have the opportunity to **negatively impact** commuting and foraging bats, and as such, recommendations are in place.

4.4. Other Ecological Impacts

4.4.1. The Shepley Mill Wood (LWS, ancient woodland and Kirklees Wildlife Habitat Network) lies to the immediate south of the survey area boundary. This habitat is protected by law, and as such, the proposed works **should not** encroach onto this habitat, including any de-vegetation works that may be required.

4.4.2. Whilst no evidence of nesting birds was found within the loft, several of the features identified may provide potential access points for nesting birds, particularly sparrows, martins and swifts. Should nesting birds be present within the loft, the proposed works have the potential to **negatively impact** nesting birds during the nesting season, which extends from March to September. Recommendations are in place to prevent this.

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4.4.3. *Cotoneaster horizontalis* is a Schedule 9 species listed on Wildlife and Countryside Act (1981) and present in the survey area. This species is spread via long lasting berries, which have the potential to spread into the wider environment during the demolition works. Therefore, without due care, the planned works will potentially have **a Negative Impact** on the spread of this species.

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5. RECOMMENDATIONS.

5.1. Bats

5.1.1. The building is assessed as having moderate potential for roosting bats according to the Bat Conservation Trust's 'Good Practice Guidelines'. Therefore, it is recommended that two dusk emergence surveys are carried out during the active bat season, which extends from May to August inclusive, to determine whether bats are using the building to roost. The surveys need to be carried out at least three weeks apart.

5.1.2. If during the survey, bats are found to be using the building to roost, a further survey will be required to inform a mitigation strategy, which will be submitted with the planning application. A Natural England European Protected Species licence will also be required to cover the demolition works, which can only be applied for once planning consent has been issued. If no bats are found during the survey, then no further surveys or licencing will be required.

5.1.3. It is recommended that a sensitive lighting scheme be introduced that will avoid light impacts on the woodland areas, and as such limit any potential impact of the proposed works on foraging and commuting bats, along with any other wildlife that may be present.

5.2. Other Ecological Impacts

5.2.1. It is recommended that any vegetation clearance and demolition works are carried out outside of the nesting bird season, which extends from March to September each year. Any works undertaken during the nesting season should be preceded by a nesting bird survey and any active nests identified must remain undisturbed until the young have fledged.

5.2.2. It is recommended that a method statement be drawn up outlining how the *Cotoneaster horizontalis* will be treated, in order to eradicate this plant from the site and avoid causing any further spread into the wild. This will need to consider treatment of soils that will be contaminated by cotoneaster berries. A toolbox talk has been appended to this report to aid with the identification of this species.

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Prepared by:	
Frances Teasdale BSc	Date: 18th February 2025.

Checked by:	
Derek Whitcher, BSc, MCIEEM, MCMI	Date: 20th February 2025.

6. REFERENCES.

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Appendix I. BAT INFORMATION.

Ecology

There are currently 18 species of bat residing in Britain, 17 of which of which are known to breed here. They are extremely difficult to identify in the hand and even more so in flight.

All appear to be diminishing in numbers, probably due to habitat change and shortage of food, caused by pesticides, as insects are their sole diet.

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 the roofs of buildings.

Certain species, particularly the pipistrelle (the commonest and most widespread British bat) can quickly adapt to man-made structures and will readily use these to roost and to rear their young.

Surveys

During walkover surveys, bat roosts can be identified by looking for:

- Suitable holes, cracks and crevices within any building, tree or other structure.
- Bat droppings along walls, window cills, or on the ground.
- Prey remains, such as insect wings.

Further investigations can be made using endoscopes, by carrying out aerial inspections of trees or by conducting bat activity surveys during dusk and dawn over summer months.

Legislation

Bats are protected under Appendix II and III of the Bern Convention (1982), Schedule 5 and 6 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act (1981), Annex IV of the Habitats Directive (some species under Annex II), Annex II of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations (2010) and EUROBATS agreement. Numerous species are also listed 19 under section 41 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act (2006) making them species of principal importance.

All bats and their roosts are therefore protected in the UK. This makes it an offence to kill, injure or take any bat, to interfere with any place used for shelter or protection, or to intentionally disturb any animal occupying such a place.

The UK has designated maternity and hibernacula areas as Special Areas of Conservation (SAC's) under the Habitats Directive. Implementation of the UK Biodiversity Action Plan also includes action for a number of bat species and the habitats which support them.

Where development proposals are likely to affect a bat roost site, a licence is required from Natural England.

Appendix II. NESTING BIRD INFORMATION.

Ecology

The nesting season will vary according to the weather each year but generally commences in March, peaks during May and June and continues until September. It is also worth remembering that some birds nest in trees and scrub but others are ground nesting or prefer man- made structures or buildings.

Surveys

Nesting bird surveys search for potential nest sites in vegetation, buildings etc. Potential nesting sites are observed over a suitable period of time for bird movements or calling male birds that would indicate the presence of a nest. The presence of a nest can be identified from the field signs without the necessity to see the nest itself, thereby avoiding any disturbance of the nests. The best way to avoid this issue is to plan for vegetation clearance to be carried out outside the bird-nesting season.

Legislation

Nesting birds are protected under The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981.

Part 1. -(1) Of the Act states that: - If any person intentionally: - kills, injures or takes any wild bird; takes, damages or destroys the nest of any wild bird while that nest is in use or being built; or takes or destroys an egg of any wild bird, he shall be guilty of an offence.

Part 1. -(5) of the Act states that: - If any person intentionally: - disturbs any wild bird included in Schedule 1 while it is building a nest or is in, on, or near a nest containing eggs or young; or disturbs young of such a bird, he shall be guilty of an offence and liable to a special penalty.

The Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 amends the above by inserting after “intentionally” the words “or recklessly”.

Appendix III. INVASIVE PLANT SPECIES INFORMATION.

Ecology

The Government has acknowledged the problems that can be caused by non-native invasive species. In 2008 the Government launched "The Invasive Non-Native Species Framework Strategy for Great Britain". The strategy provides a framework for a more co-ordinated approach to invasive species management. It seeks to create a stronger sense of shared responsibility across government, key organisations, land managers and the public.

The Non-Native Species Secretariat has been established to oversee the implementation of the strategy. Details of the secretariat including risk assessments and action plans for some species are available at www.nonnativespecies.org.

In general, there are four basic methods of controlling weeds; mechanical, chemical, natural and environmental.

- ***Mechanical control*** *includes cultivation, hoeing, pulling, cutting, raking, dredging or other methods to uproot or cut weeds.*
  Where this method is used all plant material must be considered "controlled waste" and must be disposed of properly.
- ***Chemical control*** *uses approved herbicides.*
- ***Natural control*** *uses pests and diseases of the target weed to weaken it and prevent it from becoming a nuisance.*
- ***Environmental control*** *works by altering the environment to make it less suitable for weed growth, for example by increasing or decreasing water velocity.*

Surveys

A site will be searched for invasive plant species growing on site, from mature plants to new shoots. A site will also be searched for dead stems indicating that plants that may have seasonally died back are present.

Legislation

Invasive species listed under Schedule 9 are prohibited from release into the wild. Schedule 9, Section 14(2) prohibits 'planting' or 'causing to grow' in the wild of any plant listed in Part 2 of Schedule 9.

The following is a list of all the species of plant listed under Schedule 9 of The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981.

Common Name	**Scientific Name**	**England & Wales**	**Scotland**
Alexanders, Perfoliate	*Smyrnium perfoliatum*	✓	
Algae, Red	*Grateloupia luxurians*	✓	
Archangel, Variegated Yellow	*Lamiastrum galeobdolon subsp. Argentatum*	✓	
Azalea, Yellow	*Rhododendron luteum*	✓	
Balsam, Himalayan	*Impatiens glandulifera*	✓	
Carolina Water-shield	*Cabomba caroliniana*	✓	✓
Cotoneaster	*Cotoneaster horizontalis*	✓	
Cotoneaster, Entire Leaved	*Cotoneaster integrifolius*	✓	
Cotoneaster, Himalayan	*Cotoneaster simonsii*	✓	
Cotoneaster, Hollyberry	*Cotoneaster bullatus*	✓	
Cotoneaster, Small Leaved	*Cotoneaster microphyllus*	✓	
Creeper, False Virginia	*Parthenocissus inserta*	✓	
Creeper, Virginia	*Parthenocissus quinquefolia*	✓	
Dewplant, Purple	*Disphyma crassifolium*	✓	
False-acacia	*Robinia pseudoacacia*		✓
Fern, Water	*Azolla filiculoides*	✓	✓
Fig, Hottentot	*Carpobrotus edulis*	✓	✓
Garlic, Few-flowered	*Allium paradoxum*	✓	✓
Garlic, Three-Cornered	*Allium triquetrum*	✓	
Hogweed, Giant	*Heracleum mantegazzianum*	✓	✓
Hyacinth, water	*Eichhornia crassipes*	✓	✓
Kelp, Giant	*Macrocystis angustifolia*	✓	✓
Kelp, Giant	*Macrocystis integrifolia*	✓	✓
Kelp, Giant	*Macrocystis laevis*	✓	✓
Kelp, Giant	*Macrocystis pyrifera*	✓	✓
Kelp, Japanese	*Laminaria japonica*	✓	✓
Knotweed, Giant	*Reynoutria sachalinensis*	✓	
Knotweed, Hybrid	*Reynoutria japonica x Reynoutria sachalinensis*	✓	
Knotweed, Japanese	*Reynoutria japonica*	✓	

Knotweed, Japanese	*Polygonum cuspidatum*		✓
Lettuce, water	*Pistia stratiotes*	✓	✓
Montbretia	*Crocosmia x crocosmiiflora*	✓	
Parrot's-feather	*Myriophyllum aquaticum*	✓	
Pennywort, Floating	*Hydrocotyle ranunculoides*	✓	
Pigmyweed, New Zealand	*Crassula helmsii*	✓	✓
Potato, Duck	*Sagittaria latifolia*	✓	
Primrose-willow, Floating	*Ludwigia peploides*	✓	
Primrose, Water	*Ludwigia grandiflora*	✓	
Rhododendron	*Rhododendron ponticum*	✓	
Rhubarb, Giant	*Gunnera tinctoria*	✓	
Rose, Japanese	*Rosa rugosa*	✓	
Salvinia, Giant	*Salvinia molesta*	✓	✓
Seafingers, Green	*Codium fragile*	✓	
Seafingers, Green	*Codium fragile tomentosoides*		✓
Seaweed, Californian Red	*Pikea californica*	✓	✓
Seaweed, Hooked Asparagus	*Asparagopsis armata*	✓	✓
Seaweed, Japanese	*Sargassum muticum*	✓	✓
Seaweeds, Laver (except native species)	*Porphyra sp. except -* *P. amethystea* *P. leucosticta* *P. linearis* *P. miniata* *P. purpurea* *P. umbilicalis*	✓	✓
Shallon	*Gaultheria shallon*		✓
Wakame	*Undaria pinnatifida*	✓	✓
Waterweed, Curly	*Lagarosiphon major*	✓	✓
Waterweeds	*All species of the genus Elodea*	✓	

Toolbox Talk: Cotoneaster species

Whitcher Wildlife Ltd

Ecological Consultants

Cotoneasters are a large group of trees and shrubs with some species being evergreen and some deciduous. The species is becoming naturalised through birds eating the berries and causing the spread of the plant. One of the species is native, Wild Cotoneaster (*Cotoneaster cambricus*) which occurs occasionally throughout North Wales.

Identification.

Cotoneaster species vary although the most common species, Wall cotoneaster (*Cotoneaster horizontalis*) is distinctive with flattened herring-bone like branches. Most species have shiny leaves located alternate along the stem.

Habitat and Spreading.

Cotoneaster grows in a variety of habitats. In urban areas the plant is characteristic of disturbed dry sites. Some species are also commonly found in herb-rich limestone grassland, crags and other semi-natural habitats.

Cotoneaster spreads through small red berries that are present on the plant during the later summer and autumn.

The best form of control of the plant is to prevent it from seeding by cutting back or pulling before the berries are present.

Legislation.

Under section 14 and Part II of Schedule 9 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 it is an offence for it to be planted or otherwise caused to grow in the wild. This includes spreading the species by transferring polluted ground material from one area to the other.

If Cotoneaster is identified during works, stop all works and contact Whitcher Wildlife Ltd directly on 01226 753271 or at info@whitcher-wildlife.co.uk