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Bat Survey to
Marsh Lane Farm
Marsh Lane
Shepley
HD8 8BT

15th July 2026



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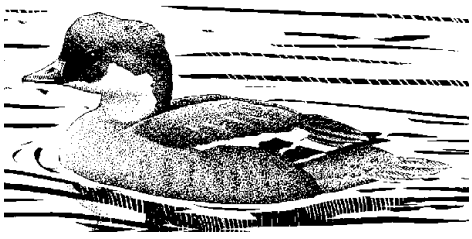

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1. Summary

1.1 A bat scoping and activity survey has been carried out to barns at Marsh Lane Farm, Marsh Lane, Shepley to determine if there are features that have any potential to be used by roosting bats and whether bats are present or likely to be present. The survey was undertaken at the optimal time for bat occupancy and therefore aimed to establish the *presence or absence* of bats in the building. The application seeks change of use to residential.

1.2 The site comprises a large T-shaped barn forming the east end of a row of stone cottages. The barn is in good condition with rubble-filled stone walls and York stone roof tiles. The walls are generally sound and without structural cavities and the unlined stone roof is sound and without slipped or missing tiles and much of the roof is still original while some sections have modern timbers from reroofing works. Internally there are no signs of use by bats such as droppings or discarded prey remains and the internal ridge sections are very thick with cobwebs and dust for the most part. Where there are clean sections to the ridge, there is no evidence of bats. The north and south side of the main barn is obscured by lean-to, open-fronted barns with steel shooting to the roof and timber supports. The site is located on Marsh Lane and is close to residential dwellings but has very low-quality foraging areas around the site which is mostly open fields and lacking in linear features that would allow commuting. The lack of close foraging availability and limited potential roosting features affects the suitability of the site to support bats, and it is assessed as being of low interest to bats.

1.3 A single emergence survey was carried out on the same evening as the daytime survey and recorded a small number of common pipistrelles during the survey, but no bats emerged from the survey site. The first bat was recorded just 20 minutes after sunset indicating a very close emergence, but the bat was clearly seen flying into the site from residential dwellings to the east of the site. A second bat from the same direction followed at 22:05, around 30 minutes after sunset but still suggesting emergence from residential dwellings, and over the next 40 minutes, small numbers of bats were observed hunting around the barns along the eastern edge of the yard. No bats were noted inside the barns during internal searches and were not picked up on internal detectors. It is highly unlikely that any ridge dwelling species are present. Towards the end of the survey, bat passes were scant and throughout the survey, only small numbers of common pipistrelles were noted except for a single noctule bat high overhead.

1.4 There are limited potential roosting features at the site despite the size and age of the barns. The unlined stone roofing is limiting and likely to appeal to individual bats rather than nursery roosts and the heavy cobwebs suggest no use by ridge dwelling species. The limited number of potential roosting features combined with poor foraging habitat limits the species of bats to the commonest of species and this is reflected in the survey results. The survey confirms that bats are not present in these buildings and that bats will not be affected by the proposed conversion.

1.5 There were no nesting birds noted and no evidence of previous use by barn owl or barn swallows.

1.6 There are no statutory constraints to the redevelopment of the site from the presence of a bat roost. No further activity surveys are required.

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2. Introduction

2.1 A bat scoping and activity survey has been undertaken to Marsh Lane Farm, Marsh Lane, Shelley, Huddersfield HD8 8BT (NGR SE186094) to support a planning application by determining if bats are using the property as a roost site. The site was also checked for the presence of nesting birds though none were noted.

2.2 The current proposal seeks to convert the barn to residential.

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

- The presence or absence of bats using the buildings by undertaking a scoping survey.
- Identify any potential roosting features (PRFs).
- Determine if activity surveys are required.
- 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 ***and*** surveyor experience by John Gardner, a surveyor with 46yrs 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 building was inspected during daylight using torches, binoculars, a Zeiss DTI 3/35 Gen 2 thermal scope and an endoscope where possible. 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 scoping survey carried out to the above property on Thursday 16th July 2026 and 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.

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4. Survey constraints

There were no survey constraints.

5. Site Description

5.1 The site consists of a large, two-storey barn forming the east end of a row of stone cottages with double pitched roof forming a T-shape. The site is located on Marsh Lane and is close to other residential dwellings but there is very little foraging habitat close to the site and this will significantly affect the number of bats present.

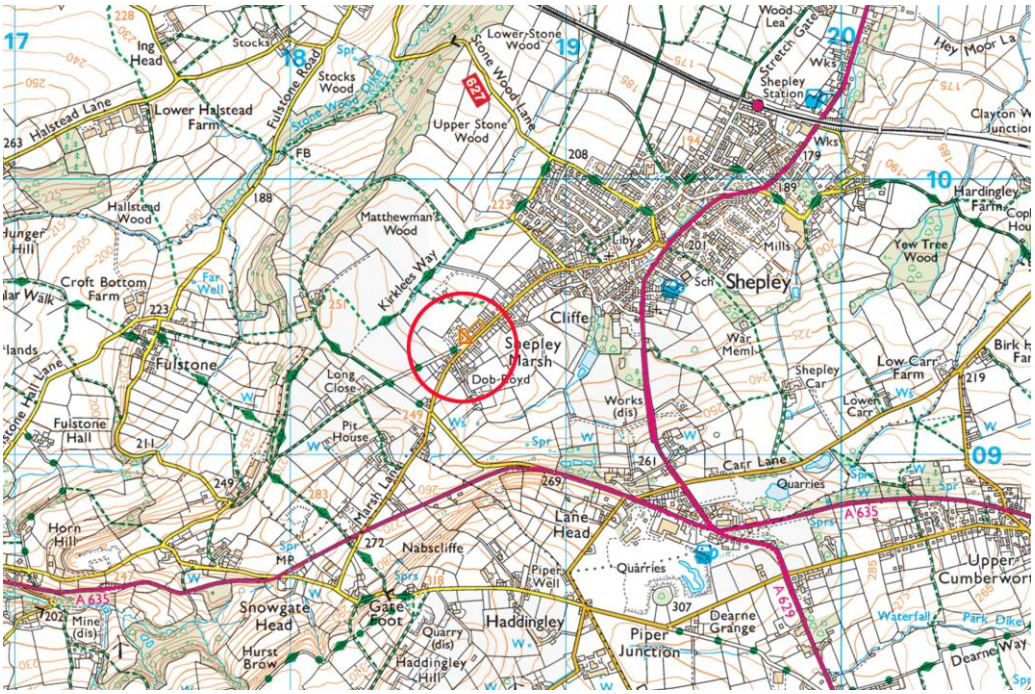

Figure 1. Site location plan



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

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6. Desk Study

There are no existing records for the site and only historical records from this area. Previous surveys close to this site have only ever recorded common pipistrelle and while bats of a local provenance are present, the numbers are unremarkable. An activity survey has now been carried out at this site and provides the most up to date information for the site. For this reason, no data searches have been carried out and none are required.

7. Activity surveys

7.1 A single emergence survey as called for with a site assessed as 'low' bat roost potential was undertaken on the same evening as the scoping survey. The survey was carried out from 50mins prior to sunset until 90mins after sunset using thermal imaging, RTE and multiple heterodyne detectors by a very experienced surveyor and assistants. Sunset was recorded at 21.29 and the temperature was 20°C with no wind and conditions were considered perfect for the survey.

8. Survey results

8.1 The daylight survey

The building is a T-shaped barn forming the east end of a row of stone cottages. The barn is stone and has a stone roof and on both the north and south elevations of the main barn is a lean-to, open fronted barn with corrugated steel sheeting to the roof. There is a single storey extension on both the south and east elevation, with the latter having a cement fibre corrugated roof covering.

There is a large barn running south from the main barn and this is constructed from stone and has a stone roof covering. Generally, the walls are sound and without structural gaps or cavities and there are no external decorative wooden features. The internal roof is unlined, and the roof tiles are easily inspected from the inside. The timbers are modern indicating a reroofing in the past, but this is not recent as the ridges have a build-up of cobwebs and dust. There is no roof lining and there is no light ingress along the ridge. There were no droppings or discarded prey remains on the floor or on any of the stored goods. Although bats could use the ridge sections, they would not be present under tiles except as singletons. There is a single storey extension off the south end of this barn which also has an unlined stone roof but is subjected to consonant light ingress as the doors are left open for the sale of farm produce and closed only at dusk.

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Photo 1: General view of the section of barn running south

The main section of barn runs east and extends from the cottage and is built of stone and has an unlined stone roof. This roof is original and has been renewed only on the extreme east end but remains unlined. The ridge section is very heavy with cobwebs, and the floor shows no evidence of use by bats. Any droppings or discarded prey remains would be evident on the floor or stored goods but there appears to be no use by ridge dwelling species. The walls are sound and have only minor bits of missing mortar externally and at dusk, torchlight reveals them to be shallow and simply the result of frost damage to mortar. On both the north and south elevations of this barn, there are lean-to extensions built on pole timbers and having a metal corrugated roof. The east gable has a solid dry verge that offers no gaps. Again, the unlined roof limits use by bats to small numbers or individual bats beneath tiles rather than a nursery roost. There is no evidence of a feeding perch or any other accumulations of droppings. A single storey extension is tagged onto the southern elevation, but this has a single thickness corrugated sheet roof with translucent panels and is of negligible interest to bats.



Photo 2. Main barn general views

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Photo 3: Showing the gable and interior along with lean-to sections

The buildings have limited potential bat roosting features and are assessed as low interest to bats, especially when consideration is given to the poor quality of foraging areas close by. A single activity survey during this period will confirm the presence or absence of bats.

8.2 The emergence survey

An emergence survey was carried out on the same evening as the scoping survey and conditions were favourable with temperatures of 20ºC and no wind and high humidity. Sunset was recorded at 21:29. The first bat detected was a common pipistrelle at 21:47 and this was clearly seen flying into the survey site from the east and the time confirms that it would have emerged from residential dwellings to the east of the site. At 22:05, a second bat came into the site from the same direction, and this continued for the next 40 minutes or so with low numbers of bats feeding around the east and north side of the survey site. No bats were recorded along the west edge of the barn. Only small numbers of bats were noted with two being the maximum at any one time. An hour after sunset, bats were almost absent from the site with some heading east and only two flying south over Marsh Lane towards trees to rear of the dwellings opposite the survey site. A single noctule was recorded over the site.



Figure 3: Location surveyors and areas of bat activity and flight direction.

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9. Discussion and analysis

There was no evidence of bats having used the barns, particularly internally where stored goods and boarded floors would highlight any scattered droppings or discarded prey remains. The main ridges were heavily built up with cobwebs and none of the roofs are lined which does limit the chances of a maternity roost being present. The site is surrounded by open arable land with little or no edge features such as hedgerows or trees and this landscape offers very little foraging opportunities for bats. There is low quality and limited foraging around residential dwellings and some larger trees opposite the survey site but overall, foraging is very poor and unlikely to support larger numbers of bats.

The activity survey confirmed that the site is poor for bats with no bats seen emerging from the buildings and none being recorded inside the buildings after sunset. The limited number of bats all clearly came from residential dwellings to the east and these buildings are more likely to suit the commoner species. Bat numbers were unremarkable and as expected given the lack of foraging. The buildings are not considered essential to species survival.

10. Impact assessment

The conversion of the buildings to residential will not impact bats and will not result in loss of roosts or fragmentation of habitat. Building works are very unlikely to impede on foraging areas currently used by bats. Conversion will result in the roof sections becoming better for bats once they are lined and the removal of the lean-to sections and addition of gutter boards is likely to create greater roosting opportunities.

11. Mitigation measures

The building has limited potential roosting features and bats are not present in the building currently. Consequently, there are no requirements for a European Protected Species Licence (EPSML). The inclusion of permanent roosting features should be considered as this will increase the site's potential to support bats in the future. A permanent roosting feature should be included in on the south elevation of the dwelling, and its location can be marked on the final plans. No nesting birds were noted at the site and creation of opportunities for swallows to nest may be beneficial.

Timings

There are no timing constraints to the works but if a winter roof strip is possible when bats are least likely to be present, this would reduce still further any disturbance to bats.

Precautions

- Contractors to be made aware that bats are transitional and may turn up at any time and to be vigilant when removing roof tiles, particularly the ridge tiles, and check for the presence of bats.
- All tiles should be lifted by hand while carefully checking for the presence of bats.
- In the unlikely event of finding a bat, all work in that area will cease and advise sought from an experienced ecologist. Only a suitably experienced ecologist will handle the bat.

Permanent roosting features

- A permanent roosting feature should be added to the south elevation of the main barn and placed high up at eaves level. Both Ibstock bricks and Schwegler offer a variety of roosting features and www.nhbs.co.uk is a reputable supplier with a good selection of roosting features.
- Inclusion of nesting opportunities for swallows in some of the other existing barns would be beneficial.

12. Conclusion

A bat survey undertaken to Marsh Lane Farm, Shepley established that there are limited potential roosting features available and that bats are not currently using the site. Bats are present locally and emergence of common pipistrelle just after dusk suggest a local roost, but this is almost certainly in a residential dwelling just east of the site. The conversion of the buildings is unlikely to have any impact on the local bats and will not cause fragmentation of habitat. The building is not considered essential to species survival and inclusion of a permeant roosting feature has been specified.

No further bat survey work is required.

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Appendix 1: Surveyor experience

Surveyor experience – John Gardner

The primary surveyor has been surveying for bats for over 40years and holds a Class Level 4 licence. Since surveying for bats in Wakefield, he has found roosts of over 7 species of bats including the first record of Nathusius' pipistrelle for West Yorkshire. Prior to his starting bat surveying in Wakefield, only a single occurrence of Leisler's bat was known from South Yorkshire, but extensive surveying in the 80s in Wakefield established that this species is widespread and common. The survey effort in Wakefield with this species resulted in a total rewrite of the UK distribution maps for Leisler's bat. A bat box scheme run at Bretton Country Park resulted in a nursery roost of over 80 Leisler's bats in 2 boxes and was visited by Durham Bat Group and others for experience. Long term roost monitoring of common pipistrelles was carried out and the results have been used in international papers by Dr John Altringham. He continues to survey for bats when not commissioned to survey for planning applications.

Surveyor experience – Heather Gardner

Heather also began bat surveying in the 80s and held a level 4 licence for over 20yrs before family commitments prevented her from more regular surveying. She has experience at searching for and handling six species of bat and has completed hundreds of hours of field surveys. Along with John Gardner, she has visited bat roosts outside the county to observe horseshoe bats in Wales and has taken part in bat searches in Lancashire. She has provided surveyor services with the primary surveyor for the past 14yrs as and when required where multiple surveyors are required.

Surveyor experience – Olivia Young

Olivia is used in surveys when required and has been working under the supervision of the lead surveyor for around six years and has experience of observing buildings and using bat detectors during both dawn and dusk surveys. Although not holding any level of bat licence, she is educated to degree level and is very capable of providing an extra set of eyes and operating a bat detector.