Bat Survey
of
Colesdale Farm
Cuffley

On behalf of:

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1) Summary

As part of a planning proposal involving a series of buildings in light industrial use at Colesdale Farm, North Northaw Road West, Cuffley, Potters Bar, Hertfordshire EN6 4QZ, a site visit was conducted on 15th May 2018 to determine whether the buildings had been used by bats.

Photo 1: Building 2. The buildings at the site comprised warehouses and open barns used for storage

The survey building comprised an existing brick barn, a single-storey brick building with a large lean-to attached and several functional, contemporary buildings. The survey found that all received regular disturbance, received daylight or artificial illumination to allow evening use, or were open-sided and exposed to wind and rain. In such conditions, bats seek out dark areas or crevices in which to roost, and the lack of such features meant that these buildings lacked potential as roosting places for bats. In addition, the survey found that there were cobwebs in parts of the roof of the older buildings, conditions that are usually a deterrent to colonisation by bats. No evidence of their presence was found on the floor and walls of the buildings, or on items stored within the buildings.

There is no vegetation affected by the project that has crevices, loose bark or woodpecker holes that might be colonised by bats. No evidence of their presence was found at this site.

The lack of potential roosting places and absence of any evidence of the presence of bats means that **no** further surveys are required for these buildings.

Since there was no evidence of bats at the site, a European Protected Species Licence will **not** be required for this project.

Although no evidence of bats was found, it is probable that bats from nearby roosts will forage across the site and in the gardens of adjacent properties. This behaviour would be expected to continue after any building work has been completed and therefore it is considered that the planning proposal for this site will not have a detrimental effect on the local bat population.

Please note that this survey records the status of the buildings at the time of the survey. However, if more than a year were to elapse before the start of the building work, it is considered unlikely, due to the lack of potential roosting places, that bats would colonise the site during the intervening period.

2) Introduction

Essex Mammal Surveys were requested to carry out a survey of light industrial buildings at Colesdale Farm, Cuffley to investigate for signs indicating the presence of bat colonies and their roosts. The identification of protected species is vital in the proposed development of a site to comply with existing legislation and also allows any work that may otherwise be detrimental to bats to be appropriately scheduled. John Dobson, a bat worker and trainer licensed by Natural England (Licence No. 2015-15258-CLS-CLS) and author of *Mammals of Essex* (Essex Field Club, 2014), carried out the survey on 15th May 2018. John Dobson has been elected a Fellow of the British Naturalists' Association and received the David Bellamy Award for natural history in 2015. The site is located at Grid Reference: TL297018.

This report has been compiled in accordance with the Bat Conservation Trust's *Bat Survey Guidelines for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines.*

Ref: Collins, J. (ed.) (2016) Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines (3rd edn). The Bat Conservation Trust, London.

However, the first page of all three editions includes the following: *The guidelines should be interpreted and adapted on a case-by-case basis according to site-specific factors and the professional judgement of an experienced ecologist. Where examples are used in the guidelines, they are descriptive rather than prescriptive.*

3) Legislation and planning policy relating to bats in the UK

All bat species in Britain are protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 through inclusion on Schedule 5. They are also protected under the Conservation (Natural Habitats &c.) Regulations 1994 (which were issued under the European Communities Act 1972), through inclusion on Schedule 2. On 1st November 2017, these Regulations, together with

subsequent amendments, were consolidated into the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017.

European protected animal species and their breeding sites or resting places are protected under Regulation 39. It is an offence for anyone to deliberately capture, injure or kill any such animal or to deliberately take or destroy their eggs. It is an offence to damage or destroy a breeding or resting place of such an animal. It is also an offence to have in one's possession or control, any live or dead European protected species.

The threshold above which a person will commit the offence of deliberately disturbing a wild animal of a European protected species has been raised. Now, a person will commit an offence only if he deliberately disturbs such animals in a way as to be likely significantly to affect (a) the ability of any significant groups of animals of that species to survive, breed, or rear or nurture their young, or (b) the local distribution of abundance of that species. However, please note that the existing offences under the Wildlife and Countryside Act (1981) as amended which cover obstruction of places used for shelter or protection (for example, a bat roost), disturbance and sale still apply to European protected species.

This legislation provides defences so that necessary operations may be carried out in places used by bats, provided the appropriate Statutory Nature Conservation Organisation (in England this is Natural England) is notified and allowed a reasonable time to advise on whether the proposed operation should be carried out and, if so, the approach to be used. The UK is a signatory to the Agreement on the Conservation of Bats in Europe, set up under the Bonn Convention. The Fundamental Obligations of Article III of this Agreement require the protection of all bats and their habitats, including the identification and protection from damage or disturbance of important feeding areas for bats.

Paragraph 98 of Circular 06/2005 states that '*the presence of a protected species is a material consideration when a planning authority is considering a development proposal that, if carried out, would be likely to result in harm to the species or its habitat*'.

Section 9 of the National Planning Policy Framework 2012 (NPPF) states that '*the planning system should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by ….minimising impacts on biodiversity and providing net gains in biodiversity where possible.*'

Since August 2007, building development that affects bats or their roosts needs a Protected Species Licence under The Conservation (Natural Habitats &c.) (Amendment) Regulations 2007 administered in England by Natural England.

4) Methods

The exterior surfaces of the buildings were examined for any signs of use as bat roosts, such as the presence of droppings on walls, windows or staining around roost entrances. The use of a crevice by a colony of bats produces droppings on brickwork and adjacent surfaces close to the crevice, together with an accumulation of droppings beneath the roost entrance. However, upon examination, many surfaces will have one or two droppings, randomly placed, caused by bats seeking out new roost sites.

The internal survey was conducted using a powerful torch. The roofs of the buildings were searched for evidence of roosting, the floor areas for droppings and the beams for crevices and staining indicative of the presence of roosting bats. An Xtend & Climb Pro Ladder and a ProVision 300 endoscope were available to inspect crevices in brickwork and around beams.

5) Results

5.1 Building 1

This is a large, single-storey building with block walls and corrugated asbestos cladding and roof. Although access was not gained to this building, there were no cavities on the external walls that might be occupied by bats.

Photo 2: Building 1

5.2 Building 2

This is a large concrete-framed warehouse with metal sheet walls and a corrugated asbestos roof. The interior receives daily disturbance and lacks features that might be occupied by bats. No evidence of their presence was found to be associated with this building.

Photo 3: Building 3

Photo 4: Looking south-westwards in Building 2

Photo 5: Looking north-eastwards in Building 2. Note lack of features that might be occupied by bats

5.3 Building 3:

This is a large, concrete-framed warehouse with a corrugated asbestos roof and metal sheet walls. A large lean-to area has been added to the north-western side. The interior receives daily disturbance and artificial illumination from ten strip lights in the lean-to section and three spot lights in the barn area. Such a level of disturbance, together with a lack of cavities meant that this building was unsuitable as a roosting place for bats.

Photo 6: Building 3

Photo 7: Interior of Building 3

Photo 8: The lean-to area had a metal sheet roof

5.4 Building 5

This is an existing brick barn with an asbestos roof that is currently used for storage. The interior receives regular disturbance and has artificial lighting installed to allow evening working. There were no features that might offer potential roosting places for bats.

Photo 9: Note security light that would deter roosting or foraging by bats

Photo 10: The interior is used for storage

5.5 Building 6

This is an open-sided, metal-framed Dutch barn with a semi-circular roof that acts as a canopy for the scaffolding materials stored within. This building was exposed to wind and rain and had no potential as a roosting place for bats.

Photo 11: Building 6

5.6 Building 7

This is a structure with a sloping roof of corrugated tin and corrugated tin walls. Although access was not gained to this building, experience gained over forty years indicates that this building would be unsuitable as a roosting place for bats.

Photo 12: Building 7

5.7 Buildings 8 & 9

This comprises a single-storey brick barn with an unlined corrugated asbestos roof. A large lean-to area has been added to the south-eastern side. This part of the building has a sloping roof of corrugated tin. The interior receives daylight illumination, and there is a light covering of cobwebs on several of the surfaces. In such conditions, bats seek out dark areas or crevices in which to roost, and the lack of such features in the brick walls and sawn timber beams meant that the building was less suitable as a roosting place for bats. No evidence of their presence was found on the walls and floor of the building.

Photo 13: Building 8 & 9

Photo 14: Area beneath the lean-to

Photo 15: Looking north-eastwards along the single-storey brick barn

Photo 16: Looking south-westwards along the single-storey brick barn. Note lack of features that might be occupied by bats

5.8 Building 10

Located on the western side of the site, this structure is a corrugated tin canopy beneath which scaffolding poles and boards are stored. It is exposed to wind and rain and has no potential as a roosting place for bats.

Photo 17: Building 10

5.9 Other buildings
The buildings have been numbered as on a site plan showing the site as it existed in 2008. This forms page 10 of a document issued by DLA Town Planning Ltd (Document reference DLA ref: 18/137) issued in May 2018.

Building 4 does not appear on that plan, and Building 11 is no longer present.

There is no vegetation affected by the project that has crevices, loose bark or woodpecker holes that might be colonised by bats.

No evidence of their presence was found at this site.

6) Discussion

Bats are inquisitive, highly mobile animals, which constantly investigate their surroundings, evaluating good feeding areas and potential roosting opportunities. Where suitable habitat such as woodland, woodland edge or sheltered pasture occurs, bats will travel up to several kilometres to take advantage of this resource. To reach favoured sites, small bats will follow linear landscape features such as hedgerows, streams and lanes etc. The absence of such features can make an otherwise suitable site inaccessible to bats. In addition, new roosts will become established in such areas - examples being the rapid colonisation of artificial roost boxes placed in conifer forests or the occupation of new houses by nursery colonies of pipistrelle bats within a year or two of their completion.

Since there was no evidence of bats at the site, a European Protected Species Licence will **not** be required for this project.

Although no evidence of bats was found, it is probable that bats from nearby roosts will forage across the site and in the gardens of adjacent properties. This behaviour would be expected to continue after any building work has been completed and therefore it is considered that the planning proposal for this site will not have a detrimental effect on the local bat population.

Please note that this survey records the status of the buildings at the time of the survey. However, if more than a year were to elapse before the start of the building work, it is considered unlikely, due to the lack of potential roosting places, that bats would colonise the site during the intervening period.