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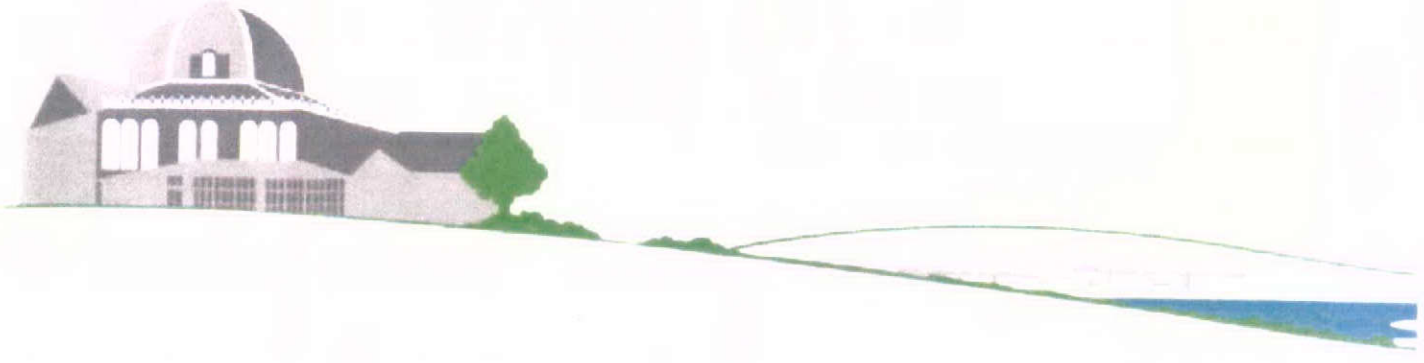
Penny Anderson Associates Ltd
CONSULTANT ECOLOGISTS

MRS PENNY COXON

THE BARN, 18 CHARLESTOWN, GLOSSOP, DERBYSHIRE

PROTECTED SPECIES SCOPING REPORT



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This project has been undertaken in accordance with PAA policies and procedures on quality assurance

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Penny Anderson Associates Ltd

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Penny Anderson Associates Ltd (PAA) was commissioned by Penny Coxon to undertake a protected species scoping survey to include a bat building inspection of the stone barn adjacent to 18 Charlestown, Glossop, Derbyshire. This survey was conducted to support a planning permission application to convert the barn into a dwelling house. The building is currently being used for storage by the owner.

1.2 This report presents the findings of the survey and evaluates the results in relation to the development of the barn.

Legal and Conservation Status

1.3 All species of bat are protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) affording significant protection to both bat roosts and the animals themselves. All species of bats are also European Protected Species listed on Appendix III of the Bern Convention Annex IV of the EC Habitats Directive and Appendix II of the Bern Convention (and included under the Agreement on the Conservation of Bats in Europe). They are therefore additionally protected under The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010. Both the animals and their roosting sites are protected by this legislation. A summary of the legislation relating to bats is enclosed as Appendix I.

1.4 In addition, under UK's Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP), seven native British bat species, including the soprano pipistrelle (*Pipistrellus pygmaeus*) and the brown long-eared bat (*Plecotus auritus*) that are frequently found in buildings, are listed as a Priority Species. UK BAP Priority Species are also referred to as species of principal importance for the conservation of biodiversity in England and Wales within Section 74 of the CRoW Act 2000 and Sections 41 (England) of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006.

1.5 In Planning Policy Statement 9, local authorities in England are required to take measures to protect the habitats of these species from further decline, protect the species from the adverse effect of development and refuse planning permission for development that harms these species unless the need for, or benefit of, the development clearly outweighs that harm.

1.6 All wild species of breeding bird are protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) affording protection to the nest (whilst active), eggs and dependent young. A summary of the legislation relating to breeding birds is enclosed as Appendix II.

2. METHODOLOGY

2.1 The protected species survey included a comprehensive site walkover identifying any potential for protected species to be affected by the proposed development. In this instance, the only species considered likely to be affected by the barn conversion were bats and breeding birds.

2.2 The bat survey consisted of both an internal and external inspection of the barn conducted on 7th June 2011 following the guidance set out in the *Bat Mitigation Guidelines* (Mitchell-Jones 2004) and the Bat Conservation Trust's (2007) *Bat Surveys Good Practice Guidelines*. Licensed bat worker Jessica Eades (Licence Number 20110728) completed the survey assisted by Tom Austin.

Building Inspection

2.3 The survey of the barn was completed during daylight hours. The external inspection of the building involved walking slowly around the building and visually inspecting structures such as windows, window sills and walls. Evidence of bat use searched for included the presence of bat droppings, staining on crevices from fur-oil and urine, and prey residues (such as butterfly or moth wings). Potential access points and crevices were assessed by looking for features such as gaps between stone work, dislodged mortar and crevices around window frames and lintels. The survey was aided by close-focusing binoculars, high-power torches and endoscopes.

2.4 An internal room inspection of the barn was conducted with the aid of a high-power torch to identify any access points that could be used by bats and to search for evidence of bat use including bat droppings, stains from fur-oil and urine, prey residues and the bats themselves.

2.5 Any evidence of breeding bird activity within the interior or exterior of the building or within the grounds was recorded. Where possible the species were be noted and the age of any chicks determined.

Constraints on the Survey

2.6 Bats use a variety of roosts, ranging from maternity, mating, swarming and hibernation roosts which can contain a large number of individuals, to 'bachelor' or night-feeding roosts with few individuals or single animals. Bats also tend to be nomadic although they are faithful to certain favoured roosting sites, spending variable lengths of time in a variety of roosts. This can make identifying specific roost types particularly problematic when evidence is limited.

3. RESULTS

3.1 The stone built barn is approximately 8m long by 4m wide with a pitched tile roof and has a paved and concrete area to the rear and side used for parking. The roof appears in sound condition, with no missing tiles or ridge tiles visible from the front of the building. The pitch of the roof to the rear could not be viewed by surveyors as an adequate vantage point could not be found.

3.2 The exterior of the barn is in good condition with some small areas of missing mortar to the frontage localised around the barn doors and window frames. However, most of these are heavily cobwebbed. Both the gable ends and the rear of the barn have been re-pointed and are in good condition.

3.3 A small gap between the wall and the fascia board runs at both the front and rear of the barn with the gap becoming larger where it meets the barn door on the front.

3.4 To the rear of the barn there are two access doors with 5cm gaps at the top which have been internally bricked up so no longer provide access to the interior of the barn. While these doors could not be opened, surveyors were able to check the cavity behind each of the doors with the aid of an endoscope and high-powered torch. Both cavities are highly cobwebbed at all access points providing no space for bats to roost behind or shelter from inclement weather conditions.

3.5 Above the two aforementioned doors are gaps where two stones have been removed from the wall. These gaps provide no access to any cavity within the wall. They are free of cobwebs, but show no evidence of bats roosting within them, or of nesting birds.

3.6 The roof is of a collar beam construction with roofing felt under the tiles. The ridge beam within the barn appeared heavily cobwebbed. Internally the barn is open from the ground floor to the apex of the roof in the most part, with the exception of a 3m by 4m mezzanine hayloft area accessed via a ladder. Two windows provide access from the rear to this mezzanine level, with both windows missing glass allowing both birds and bats to potentially fly straight into the building.

3.7 There was a large accumulation of bird droppings under one of the purlins[1] on the mezzanine level. There was evidence of an old barn swallow (*Hirunda rustica*) nest on the purlin which had degraded over time. There was no current evidence of breeding birds within the barn, however, a pair of barn swallows were recorded displaying behaviour that indicated that they were preparing to start building a nest within the barn.

Continuous timbers running horizontally on the underside of the rafters just above the collar-beam (if present).

4. SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

4.1 The barn was assessed as having a low to medium potential to support roosting bats with no evidence of bats roosting within any of the features identified within the barn. The features identified during the building inspection are of low potential for roosting bats. However as the windows to the rear of the barn are open, this allows for bats to fly in at any time in the future to consider roosting within the main area of the barn, which provides the greatest potential for them to roost.

4.2 No evidence of roosting bats was identified during the building inspections and given the low potential of the features within the building, no further activity surveys were required. However a protocol should be set in place during the re-roofing works which will be required for the conversion of the barn to a dwelling house.

4.3 In the unlikely event that a bat should be found during works to the roof of the barn, the following bullet points can act as an emergency protocol for dealing with uncovering a bat during works as follows:

- Should a bat or bats be uncovered during works, the work will cease and a licensed ecologist will be informed immediately. If safe to do so, the exposed bat should be covered over again to minimise the risk of the bat emerging inside the building.
- The contractor, builder and/or developer are expressly forbidden from handling any bats uncovered during works.
- The roof will be left for a period of at least 24 hours (or longer if the temperature is below 8°C) to allow any bats to emerge and disperse during the following night.
- The emergence period will be monitored by a licensed bat ecologist to gather information on numbers/species of bats, after which the site will be re-inspected and any bats that remain will be removed (using gloves) and placed in a secure container.
- Once the ecologist is satisfied that all bats are removed from the barn, development works can continue. The bats will be held until dusk of the same day where they will be released on site if active, in good condition and the weather is suitable. The licensed ecologist will have experience in bat care and rehabilitation, and would follow Bat Conservation Trust (2008) guidance on Bat Care.
- If a bat is in poor condition (e.g. below weight) and/or the weather is unsuitable, it will be temporarily taken into care and released close to the barn once its condition and/or the weather improves.
- Any injured bat will be immediately taken into care and assessed for recovery/rehabilitation. A severely injured bat (such as one with a serious fracture or significant loss of wing membrane) may require euthanasia and a vet will be consulted in all cases. Injured bats that require long term rehabilitation may be transferred to a local wildlife hospital where a flight cage is available for exercise.
- The welfare of any bat will be paramount throughout.

4.4 A pair of barn swallows were identified flying through the open windows located at the mezzanine level displaying behaviour which suggested that they were considering starting to build a nest on one of the purlins within this section of the barn.

4.5 The remains of a degraded swallow nest suggest that there has been breeding activity within the barn previously.

4.6 It is recommended that any works on the barn are conducted outside of the breeding bird season and having ensured that any nesting barn swallows have left the nest and any chicks have fledged and are no longer dependant on the adults. Works could potentially commence from September through to the end of February.

5. REFERENCES

Bat Conservation Trust, 2007. *Bat Surveys Good Practice Guidelines*. Bat Conservation Trust.

Bat Conservation Trust, 2008. *Bat Care Guidelines – A guide to bat care for rehabilitators*. Bat Conservation Trust.

Mitchell-Jones, A.J., 2004. *Bat Mitigation Guidelines*. January 2004. English Nature.