Bat and Barn Owl Survey Report,
For
The Barn,
Manor Park Road,
Old Glossop,
Derbyshire,
SK13 7SQ.

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Executive Summary

A bat and barn owl survey was commissioned by Mr and Mrs Potts to accompany a planning application for the redevelopment of the Barn, Manor Park Road, Old Glossop. This submission includes the results of an internal and external inspection of the building to look for evidence of use as a roost site by bats and barn owl. Bats receive full protection under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981. They are also protected under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010. The barn owl (*Tyto alba*) is protected under Schedule 1 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act, 1981.

The building inspection identified features within the exterior stone work and stone roof of the barn with the potential to provide roost opportunities for crevice dwelling bats, in addition brown long eared bat (*Plecotus auritus*) feeding remains were identified on the interior of the barn. The first floor of the barn and adjoined dwelling could not be inspected on grounds of health and safety.

As potential features for roosting bats were identified, and areas of the building interior are inaccessible to survey coupled with the presence of brown long eared bat feeding remains it is recommended that two bat activity and emergence surveys are undertaken at the appropriate time of year between May and September on evenings of suitable weather conditions.

This additional survey data will inform the level of mitigation and compensation required in relation to the redevelopment of the building and whether or not a Natural England licence is required. If the potential impacts to bats are not considered to be significant on a population level then reasonable avoidance measures to avoid any compromise of the legal protection afforded to bats will be more appropriate.

No evidence of barn owl was found within the areas of the barn accessible to survey, with access available for this species to the barns interior through the open first floor windows. The evening bat activity and emergence surveys should also ascertain whether the building is in use by barn owl through sighting of the species emerging or entering the barn.

The building has been used as a nest site by birds and this should be taken into consideration prior to any redevelopment work on the house. Work should ideally be undertaken outside the nesting bird season which runs from March to August inclusive. Alternatively if work is programmed for within the nesting season then the house should be checked for active nests by a competent person prior to the start of work on site; if active nests are located then no work can commence until the young have fledged the nest.

1. Introduction

A bat and barn owl survey was commissioned by Mr and Mrs Potts to accompany a planning application for the redevelopment of the Barn, Manor Park Road, Old Glossop, Derbyshire, SK13 7SQ. The location of the barn is indicated on Plan 1, Appendices. This submission includes the results of internal and external inspections of the barn to look for evidence of use as a roost site by bats and barn owl.

Bats receive full protection under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981. They are also protected under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010.

- It is an offence for any person to intentionally kill, injure or take any wild bat.
- It is an offence to intentionally damage, destroy or obstruct access to any place that a wild bat uses for shelter or protection. This is taken to mean all bat roosts whether bats are present or not.
- It is an offence to intentionally disturb any wild bat while it is occupying a structure or place that it uses for shelter or protection.

In this sense a bat roost has been interpreted to mean any structure or place which is used for shelter or protection whether or not bats are present at the time.

A bat roost may be defined (AM Hutson 1993) as either:

(i) Spring/autumn transitional/gathering roosts
(ii) Maternity roosts
(iii) Mating roosts
(iv) Night roost and feeding roosts
(v) Prehibernal roosts
(vi) Hibernation roosts

The Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 amends the Wildlife and Countryside Act to also make it an offence to intentionally or recklessly damage, destroy or obstruct a place that bats use for shelter or protection. The term 'reckless' is defined by the case of Regina v Caldwell 1982. The prosecution has to show that a person either deliberately took an unacceptable risk, or failed to notice or consider an obvious risk.

Licences to disturb or take bats can be issued for certain purposes under Section 16 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 and under Regulation 44 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations permitting activities that would otherwise be illegal under the legislation. Licences can take up to thirty working days to be issued by Natural England. Where impacts on bats are unavoidable mitigation will be required to maintain and enhance the favourable conservation status of bats. Losses of bat roosts must be compensated for by the provision of new roosting sites and planting of new foraging habitat. Mitigation measures will need to be designed on a site specific basis and only in consultation with an expert. All mitigation proposals must be agreed with Natural England and put in place prior to the commencement of works.

The barn owl (*Tyto alba*) is on Schedule 1 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act, 1981; therefore the birds, their nests, eggs and young are fully protected at all times throughout the UK. It is also an offence to intentionally or recklessly disturb barn owls at an active nest site with eggs or young or before eggs are laid, or to disturb the dependent young.

Loss of barn owl roosts to development must be compensated for by the provision of alternative roost and nest sites within 200 metres of the development, these should be made available at least 30 days prior to the start of works though the longer the better. Timing constraints will apply to avoid the periods when barn owl are nesting and raising dependant young. The provision of permanent roost and nest sites will be required within the redevelopment.

During the building inspection any evidence of other nesting birds was also noted. Under the 1981 Wildlife and Countryside Act all wild birds, their nests and eggs are protected by law and it is an offence to;

- Intentionally kill, injure or take any wild bird
- Intentionally take, damage or destroy the nest of any wild bird while it is in use or being built
- Intentionally take or destroy the egg of any wild bird.

2. Methodology

Building Inspection

An inspection of the interior and exterior of the building was undertaken during the morning of 18th October 2010 by Neil Lee-Gallon, MIEEM, C Env, an experienced ecologist and bat worker, to identify the possible use of the barn as a bat and barn owl roost.

Externally the roof and associated voids between the roof stones, eaves and walls were inspected with the aid of high-powered binoculars and/or ladders for evidence of use by bats. This evidence includes staining and scratch marks around potential entrance points, bat droppings, and feeding remains. The lower walls, entrance points and windowsills of the building were also inspected for the presence of bat droppings and feeding remains.

Internally the walls, floors and roof beams of the barn were inspected for the presence of bat droppings and feeding remains with the aid of ladders and torch.

The exterior of the barn was also assessed for potential access to the building for barn owls. Whilst the interior was searched for disused nests, barn owl feathers, droppings and owl pellets. Other bird nests were also noted during the building inspection.

Survey Constraints

The interior of the barn is over two floors, the first floor joists and boards are rotten and this area was not surveyed on grounds of health and safety. A dwelling adjoins the barn and this has a loft again the joists are rotten and the loft was not inspected on grounds of health and safety.

3. Results

The Barn is located in a semi rural area of Derbyshire being bounded by residential properties and numerous farm buildings beyond which lies open countryside that is predominantly grassland managed as pasture bounded by fences and mature hedgerows with areas of woodland. These semi-natural habitats will provide invertebrate rich foraging and commuting habitat for bats and potential foraging habitat for barn owls.

The barn and adjoining dwelling is constructed from stone with the main ridged roof covering being stone. The roof of the barn is in an advanced state of disrepair with numerous holes, raised roof stones and ridge tiles and these have the potential to provide roost opportunities for crevice dwelling bat species. Photographs of the barn are included within the appendices. There are no barge boards or soffits present around the exterior of the eaves and gable ends. The windows and doors of the building are wooden framed, with all windows and doors on the ground floor boarded up and sealed around the edges with expanding foam, the windows to the first floor are broken and open to the elements. Potential access points for bats are present through the broken windows and at the eaves.

Numerous cavities and cracks are present within the exterior stone work some of which are relatively deep and probably extend to the wall cavity behind. The external inspection of the barn revealed no obvious staining, scratch marks, bat droppings or feeding remains on the walls, windowsills or access points to the building. The numerous holes, voids and cavities within the walls have the potential to provide roost sites for crevice dwelling bat species. Several of these holes have been utilised in the past by nesting birds.

Internally the barn has two storeys in the main section of the building with the loft space inaccessible to survey due to the condition of the first floor. The interior of the barn is draughty and relatively light with open windows to the first floor and numerous holes in the roof. The inspection of the ground floor revealed two small clusters of butterfly and moth wings which are typical feeding remains of brown long eared bats (*Plecotus auritus*), no bat droppings were found on the ground floor. Several old bird nests were also present within the barn. No evidence was found of barn owl on the ground floor of the barn but access is available to the interior for barn owl through the open first floor windows.

The adjoining dwelling, unoccupied since the 1960's, is over two floors and the external inspection of the building is covered above. Internally no evidence was found of bats or nesting birds with the loft left uninspected on grounds of health and safety.

A stone outbuilding with a ridged slate roof in a state of disrepair adjoins the dwelling and the inspection of this portion of the building revealed no evidence of roosting bats or nesting birds.

4. Conclusions and Recommendations

From the survey results it has been concluded that the interior of the barn has been used in the past as a feeding roost by low numbers or individual brown long eared bats. The exterior of the building has potential bat roost opportunities across the roof and within cavities present within the stone walls, in addition areas of the barn where not accessible to inspect on grounds of health and safety. Whilst no direct evidence was found of these features being used as roost sites by bats it is recommended that two activity and emergence surveys are undertaken at the appropriate time of year between May and September on evenings of suitable weather conditions. This is in accordance with the Bat Conservation Trust Bat Survey Best Practice Guidelines.

This additional survey data will also inform the level of mitigation and compensation required in relation to the redevelopment of the building and whether or not a Natural England licence is required for the redevelopment. If the potential impacts to bats are not considered to be significant on a population level then reasonable avoidance measures to avoid any compromise of the legal protection afforded to bats may be more appropriate.

No evidence of barn owl was found within the areas of the barn accessible to survey, with access available for this species to the barns interior through the open first floor windows. The evening bat activity and emergence surveys should also ascertain whether the building is in use by barn owl through sighting of the species emerging or entering the barn.

The building has been used as a nest site by birds and this should be taken into consideration prior to any redevelopment work on the house. Work should ideally be undertaken outside the nesting bird season which runs from March to August inclusive. Alternatively if work is programmed for within the nesting season then the house should be checked for active nests by a competent person prior to the start of work on site; if active nests are located then no work can commence until the young have fledged the nest.

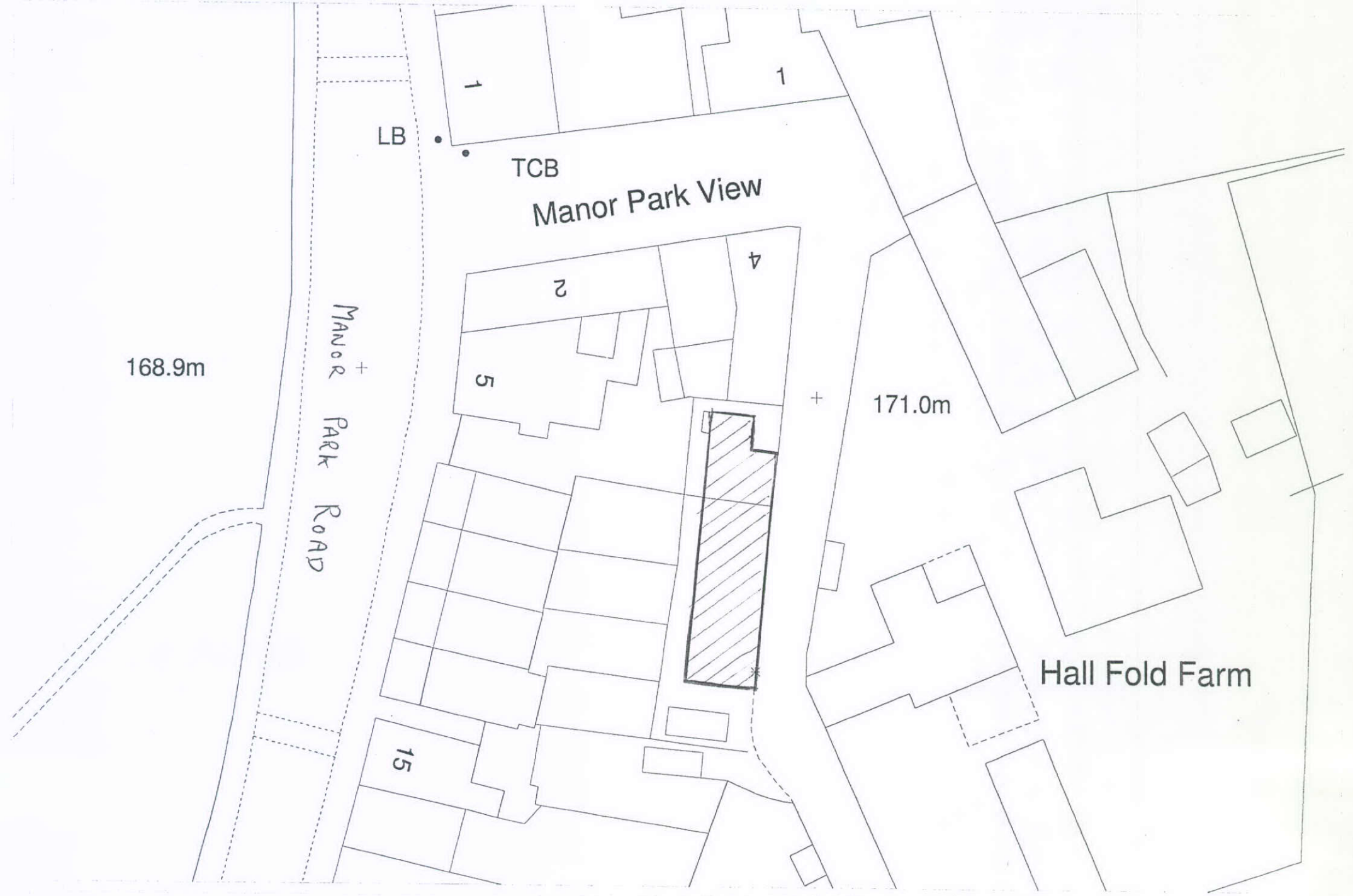
References

Bat Conservation Trust (2007); *Bat Surveys – Best Practice Guidelines*

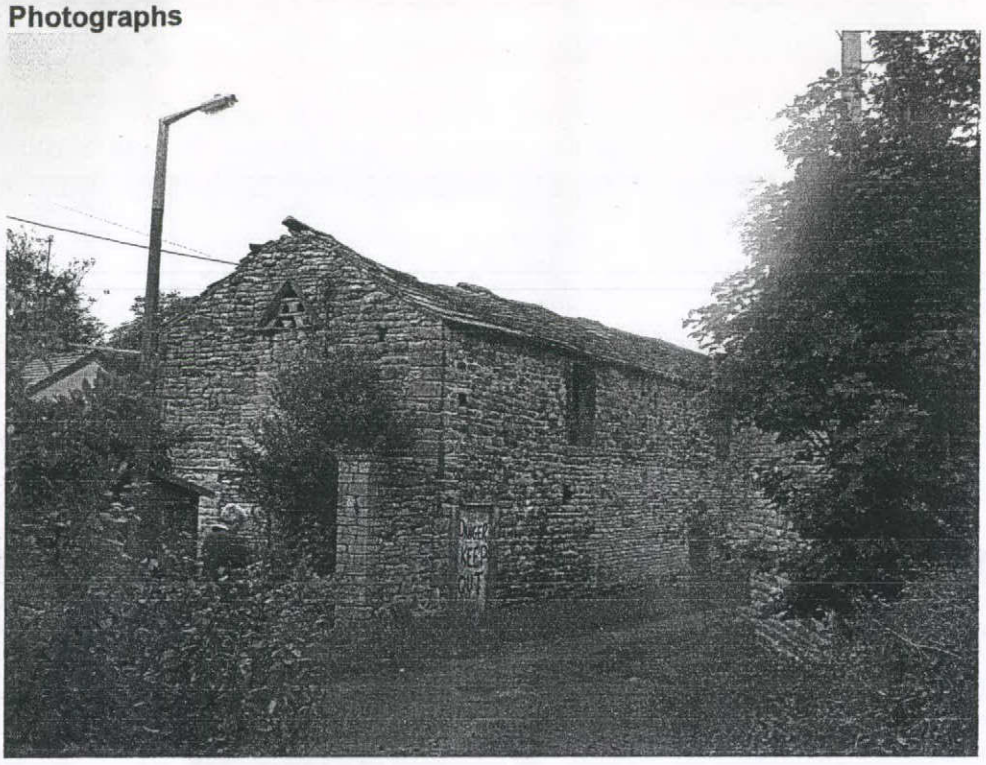
Hutson, A. M. (1993). *Action plan for conservation of bats in the United Kingdom.* The Bat Conservation Trust, London.

Appendices

Plan 1 – Location of the Barn.


1
1
LB
TCB
Manor Park View
2
4
5
168.9m
Manor Park Road
171.0m
15
Hall Fold Farm

Photographs



The barn section.



Barn and adjoined dwelling