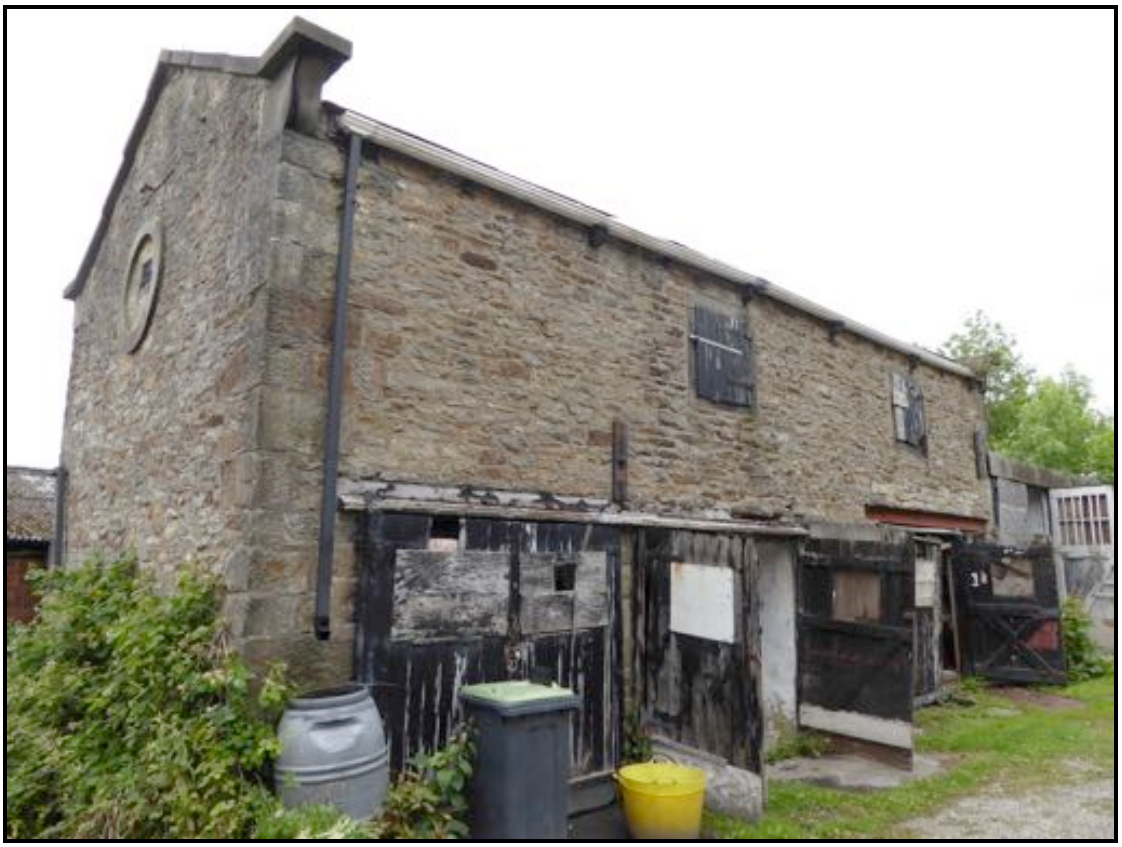
DAYTIME BAT SURVEY AT MARSH LANE, NEW MILLS, DERBYSHIRE

JUNE 2016



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1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Rachel Hacking Ecology Limited was commissioned in 2016 by Ian Calder to undertake a daytime bat survey of a barn building and attached garage off Marsh Lane, New Mills, Derbyshire. The site will be the subject of a planning application for the demolition of the building to provide access to a large residential development.

1.2 The Barn and garage at Marsh Lane are located in New Mills, Derbyshire (O.S. grid reference: SK 00642 85389). The property comprises of a detached, two storey agricultural barn, with a sheet metal shed attached.

1.3 The site is surrounded by residential developments and a former quarry, offering bat foraging and commuting opportunities.

1.4 Biodiversity is a material consideration to the planning process and consideration must be given to protected species. The proposed works to the structures at Marsh Lane will be destructive and therefore consideration should be given to roosting bats and other protected and notable species, which could potentially utilise the property.

1.5 All bat species are protected under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010, the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended), the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000, the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006 and the Environmental Damage Regulations 2009. It is illegal to disturb or damage a bat roost whether bats are present or not.

2.0 METHODOLOGY

2.1 A daytime bat survey of the property at Marsh Lane was undertaken to search for, and to assess the potential for, a bat roost to be present within the building.

2.2 An external survey was carried out, which included, for example, looking for gaps between any soffit boards and walls, gaps between window frames and the walls, and looking for bat droppings on the walls and window ledges.

2.3 The buildings were also searched internally for evidence of a bat roost, which included looking for the following signs:

- live or dead bats
- bat droppings
- bat entry/exit points
- bat urine staining
- grease marks on any timbers
- feeding remains such as insect wings
- areas clear of cobwebs.

2.4 A pair of close-focussing binoculars and a high-powered torch were used to search for evidence of bats externally and internally.

Personnel and Timing

2.5 Joel Hacking carried out the daytime bat survey on the 27th June 2016. Joel is experienced and fully trained in protected species surveys, in particular bat surveys. The weather on the day of the survey was warm with occasional showers.

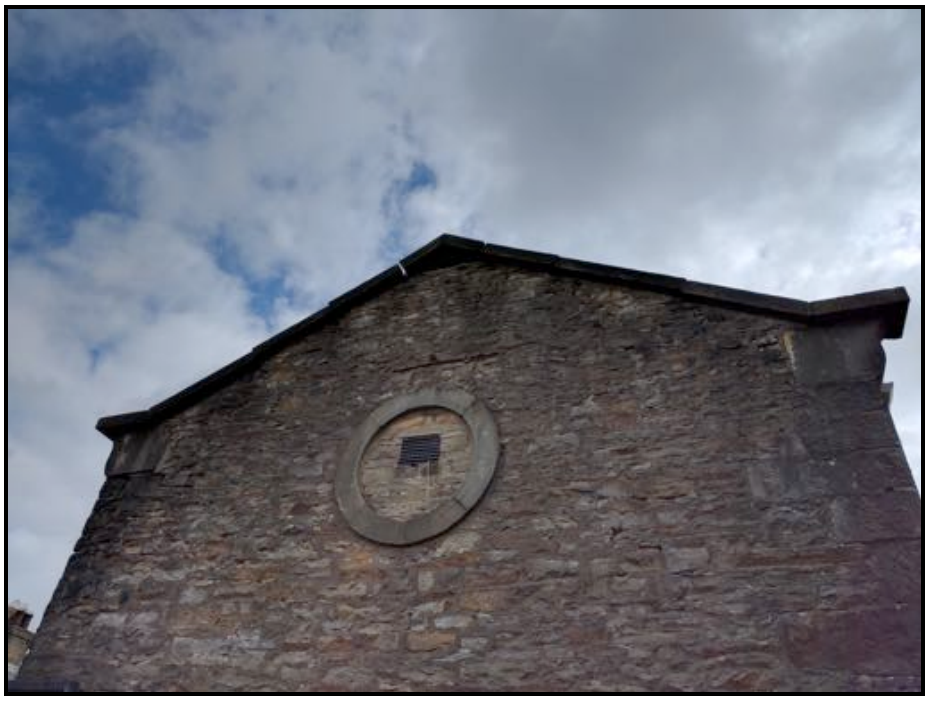
Survey constraints

2.6 Daytime bat surveys can be undertaken at any time of year, with June being an optimal time of year for bat surveys. The property was fully accessible. There were negligible constraints to the survey.

3.0 RESULTS

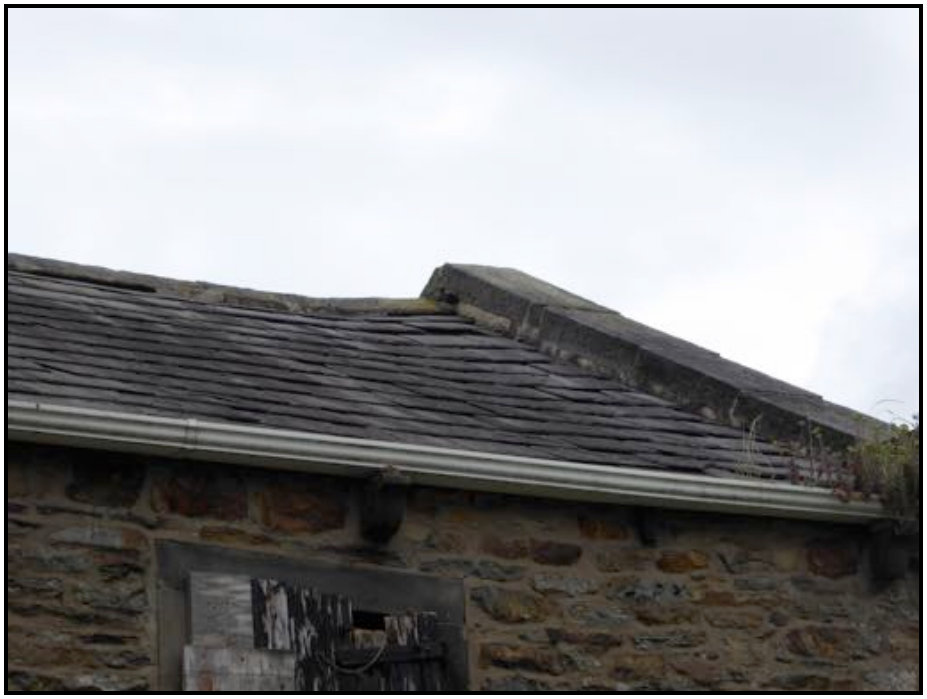
External Survey

3.1 The existing site comprises a stone barn building with an attached garage. The barn stonework is complete, but with some broken mortar and gaps between stones on the eastern elevation. The stone eaves are complete and intact.



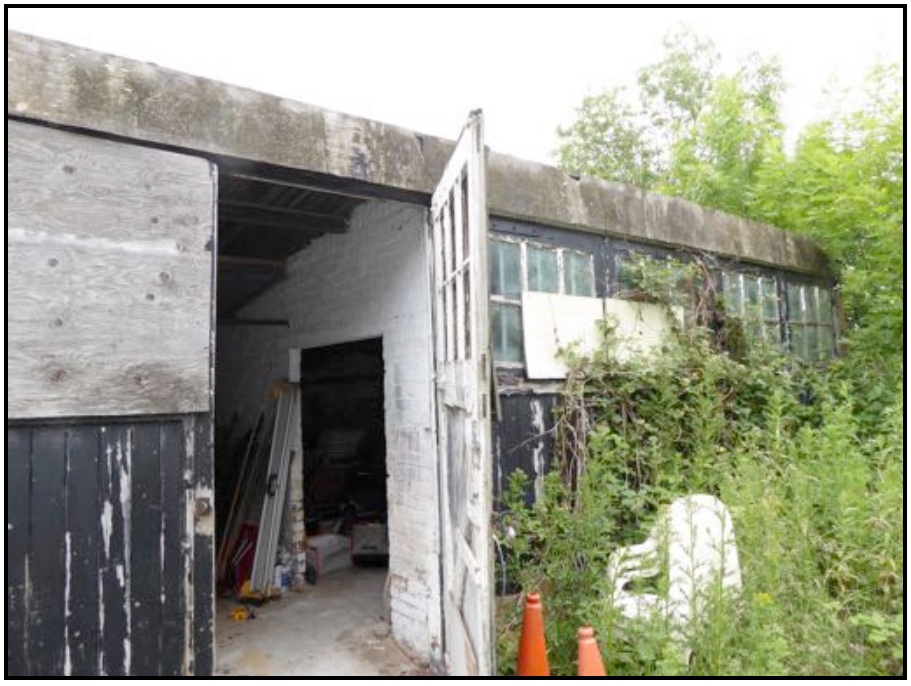
Photograph 1 showing one of gable ends

3.2 The barn has a single-pitched and tiled roof. The roofline is uneven, but all tiles are present (see Photograph 2), though minor gaps are present underneath some of the tiles. The concrete ridge is complete, but with a small gap underneath the southern edge of the ridge.



Photograph 2 showing the tiled roof

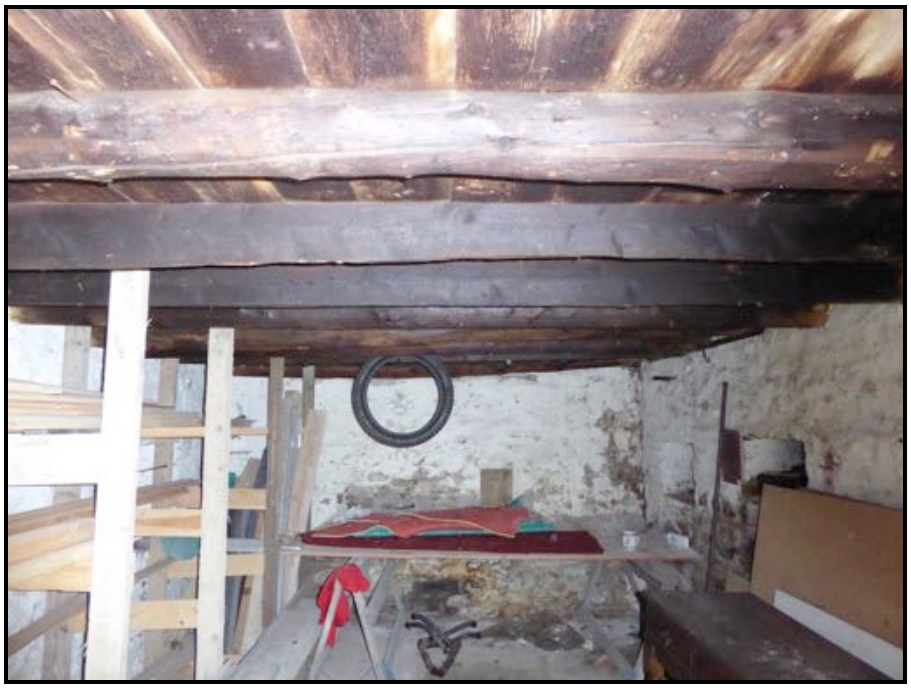
3.3 There is a garage attached to the main barn building and this is in a poor state of repair (see Photograph 3). The garage has a flat roof which appeared to be moderately sealed, though the wooden panelling shows signs of rotting. No observable cavities existed on the exterior of the garage.



Photograph 3 showing the attached garage

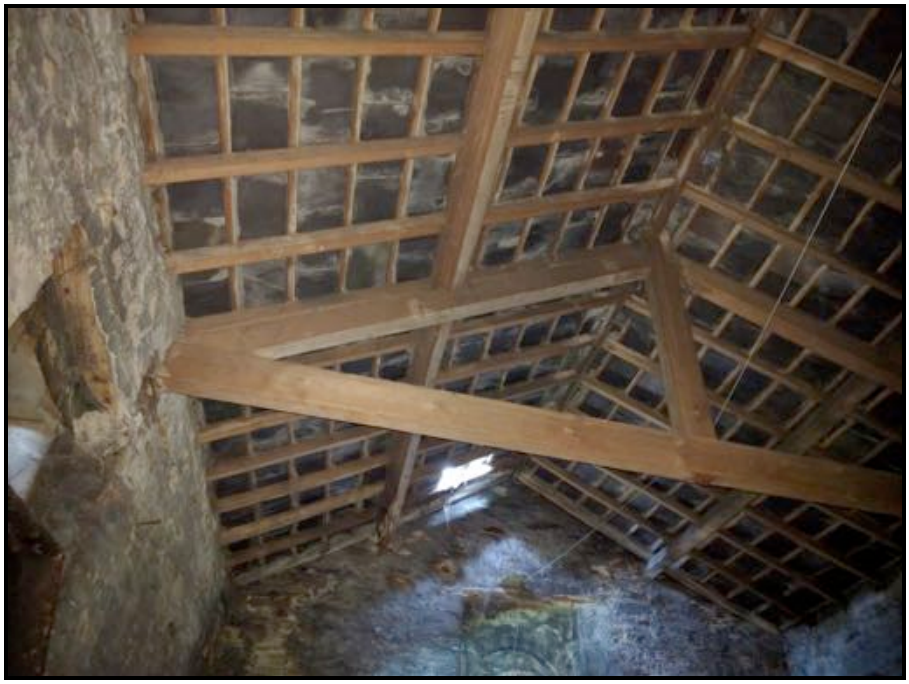
Internal Survey

3.4 Internally, the barn is split over two levels. The ground floor has several rooms, with exposed floorboards above (see Photograph 4). The ground floor rooms have complete brickwork and are dusty and cobwebbed throughout. No suitable roosting cavities were present in the ground floor rooms.



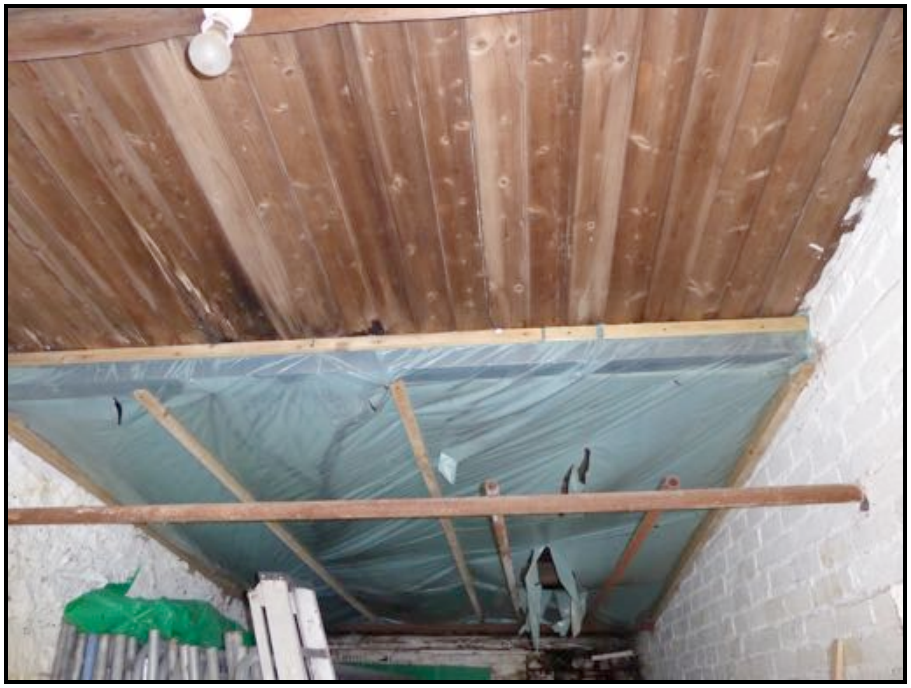
Photograph 4 showing the ground floor room of barn

3.5 The upper floor has exposed tiles and wooden roof beams. The beams are complete and without gaps or cracks. The stonework, tiles window lintels and central ridge beam are considerably dusty and cobwebbed, suggesting no recent bat usage. No evidence of bat activity, such as droppings, were observed in the interior of the barn.



Photograph 5 showing the upper floor of the barn

3.6 The interior of the garage has a wooden panel ceiling and the internal brickwork is complete. No visible gaps or cavities could be observed internally, and the garage as a whole appeared to be moderately well sealed.



Photograph 6 showing ground floor room of garage

3.7 The remainder of the site is reported on in an Extended Phase 1 Habitat Survey (see *Extended Phase 1 Habitat Survey at land off Marsh Lane, New Mills, Derbyshire 2016 – Rachel Hacking Ecology 2016*)

4.0 SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

4.1 No evidence of bat access or activity could be located at the barn or garage at off Marsh Lane. The barn is in a moderate state of repair and the attached garage is in a poor state of repair. Due to the absence of cavities that could feasibly support a bat roost, both buildings are considered to have **negligible bat roost suitability**.

4.2 Evidence of bird nesting materials, was observed during the survey, with a large amount of twigs and moss on the upper level. If works to any nesting habitat takes place within the bird nesting season (generally March-August), then a nesting bird survey will be required immediately prior to any work commencing. Nesting birds can be somewhat mitigated for by allowing no works to be carried out to potential nesting sites within the bird nesting season.

4.3 It is the opinion of the author of this report that the development can proceed without the need for further survey work (e.g. bat activity surveys) or bat mitigation due to the negligible potential of the structures to support bats. However, if the work is delayed by longer than two years from the date of this survey, a further bat survey will be required to update the findings.

4.4 It should be noted that bat absence is very difficult to prove definitively due to their mobility and size, and single or small numbers of bats are able to roost in extremely small spaces, such as in gaps within brickwork. Development will be undertaken with care due to the adjacent residential building.

4.5 **If during development works a bat (or an accumulation of bat droppings) is discovered at any time, work is to temporarily cease whilst an experienced bat ecologist is contacted for guidance and assistance**. This can be Rachel Hacking Ecology (0161 427 3548) who undertook the initial survey, any licensed bat worker, or the Bat Conservation Trust (BCT) helpline (0845 1300 228).

REFERENCES

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

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