

HUNDRED ACRES FARM, SOPWORTH SN14 6PP

BAT TECHNICAL NOTE –29TH APRIL 2025

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1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 On 7th April 2025, ACD Environmental Ltd were instructed to carry out a Preliminary Roost Assessment (PRA) for a barn outbuilding at Hundred Acres Farm, Sopworth.
- 1.2 The address of the site is Hundred Acres Farm, Sopworth SN14 6PP and it is centered at Ordnance Survey Grid Reference ST 83502 85921. The client intends to submit a planning application for the conversion of the barn.
- 1.3 A Preliminary Roost Assessment (PRA) was undertaken on 22nd April 2025 by ACD Environmental Ltd to assess roosting opportunities for bats within the barn and ascertain whether further surveys would be required to support the proposed planning application. The results and recommendations following this site visit have been determined as suitable for presentation in the current report format of a Bat Technical Note.

Competence

- 1.4 This report has been carried out by Cerys Read at ACD Environmental Ltd. Cerys is an Assistant Ecologist with ACD Environmental Ltd and a Qualifying Member of the Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (MCIEEM).

2.0 Methodology

- 2.1 The PRA was undertaken with reference to best practice guidelines¹.
- 2.2 The PRA comprised an internal and external assessment, all of which was non-intrusive due to the nature of the assessment. The assessment comprised a systematic assessment of the walls, roofs and ground.

¹ Collins, J. (ed.) (2023). *Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines (4th edition)*. The Bat Conservation Trust, London.

2.3 The assessment included searching for the following:

- Roosting bats within crevices or free-hanging.
- Bat corpses.
- Bat droppings beneath roosting features.
- Feeding remains e.g. moth/butterfly wings and beetle wing casings.
- Scratch marks and staining from fur oil/urine beneath bat roosting features.
- 'Clean' gaps associated with bat roosts.
- Bat fly *Nycteribiidae* spp. pupal cases.
- Clean swept floor/s, which may indicate evidence as above has been removed.

2.4 The following equipment was used for the assessment:

- Ladder.
- High-powered torch.
- Camera to record the building assessed.

3.0 Results

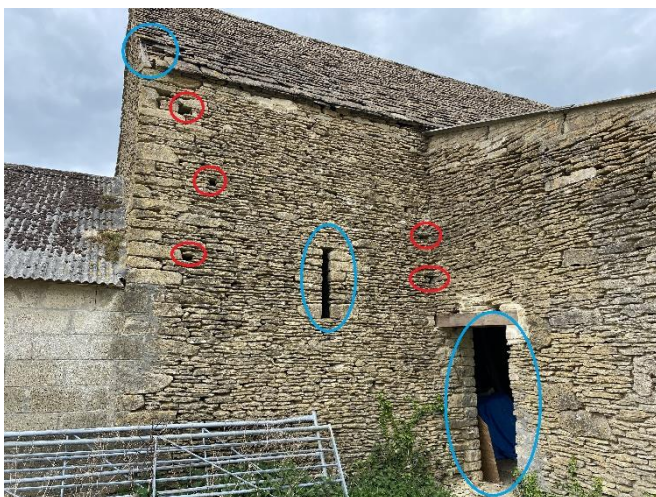
Bats

3.1 The barn features stone walls, and the larger/main barn area features wooden beams and a tile roof which is lined with traditional bitumen roofing felt. The adjoining buildings have metal roofing.

3.2 Within the tile roof, there are a few gaps in the tiles/felt providing potential bat access points. Further to this, there are also areas of damaged felt under retained roof tiles which provides good roosting potential for bats. Timber wooden beams located within the internal roof

structure of the barn provide good roosting opportunities. On the external walls of the barn there are multiple missing stones within the brickwork with gaps large enough to accommodate roosting bats. The barn also features large openings including open windows, open barn doors, and open arrow slits which further provide potential bat access points. Due to the barn's open structure, internal draughts are present, likely reducing the building's ability to maintain optimal temperatures for bat roosting. Further potential roosting features could be found within the dense ivy growing on the external stone walls of the building.

- 3.3 Although no bats or evidence of bats was found, there are a number of Potential Roost Features (PRFs) both externally and internally providing opportunities for crevice dwelling bats; raised/missing tiles on the tile roof; damaged felt lining on the tile roof; missing stones within the stone walls; wooden beams and ivy on the external walls of the building.
- 3.4 There is some potential to connective/wider habitat for foraging bats with hedgerows in the surrounding area.
- 3.5 The building's external PRFs (red) and access points (blue) are highlighted in **Photographs 1-4**.



Photograph 1: Southern side of the building.



Photograph 2: Eastern side of the building.



Photograph 3: Northern side of the building.



Photograph 4: Dense Ivy and PRFs on northern wall.

3.6 The buildings internal PRFs (red) and access points (blue) are highlighted in **Photographs 5-8**.



Photograph 5: Internal features on northern wall.



Photograph 6: Internal access points eastern wall.



Photograph 7: Internal roof PRFs.



Photograph 8: Internal wooden beams.

- 3.7 The barn outbuilding is assessed as offering moderate potential to support roosting bats and, with reference to best practice guidelines, two bat emergence surveys (each with three surveyors) are required to determine presence/absence during the optimal season of May to August. It should be noted that if roosting bats are confirmed present during the emergence surveys, a third survey might be necessary to further determine more information on the roost.

Other considerations

- 3.1 During the PRA, other ecological considerations were noted as below.
- 3.2 Within the main barn building, three birds' nests were found internally, although it was undetermined whether these were active birds' nests due to no birds being present within the nests at the time of the survey. A crow *Corvus cornix* was noted flying out of the barn when surveyors entered the building. Therefore, if any approved works were to be deemed necessary during the nesting bird season, a nesting bird check must be undertaken by an ecologist within 24 hours prior to the works starting. However, it must be noted that, due to climate change, the season for breeding birds is no longer as predictable and any site visit

must be careful in terms of the potential presence of nesting birds.

4.0 Conclusions

- 4.1 As above, although no bats or evidence of bats were found within the barn during the PRA survey, the barn building offers moderate potential to support roosting bats, with many optimal PRFs both internally and externally. With reference to best practice guidelines, two bat emergence surveys (each with three surveyors) are required to determine presence/absence during the optimal season of May to August.
- 4.2 No works are to be undertaken until further bat emergence surveys are conducted to determine if roosting bats are present/absent within the building. Prior to any approved works commencing, a nesting bird check must be undertaken by an ecologist within 24 hours prior to the works commencing.