



Ms F. Pullen
JSA Architects
Middle Shop
Waltham Road
Maidenhead
SL6 3NH

Our Ref: TAP_SFBW_apl_FP230512
Date: 12th May 2023

Frances,

BAT ROOST RE-ASSESSMENT REPORT CHICKEN BARN, STOKES FARM, BINFIELD ROAD, WOKINGHAM, RG40 5PR

We write to confirm the bat roosting potential of a chicken barn within Stokes Farm, off Binfield Road in Wokingham, hereafter referred to as the 'Barn'.

This Barn was previously subjected to an ecological appraisal, see *Preliminary Bat Roost Assessment Report* (Chase Ecological Consultancy, January 2021) but this is now out-of-date. Since then, the building has remained unused and unheated.

Methodology

The exterior and interior of the Barn were inspected on 10th May 2023 for signs and/or potential for roosting bats in accordance with *The Bat Workers Manual* (JNCC, 2004). These include the presence of live or dead bats, droppings, urine stains, insect remains, holes within or an absence of cobwebs etc.

Results

Explanatory photographs are attached to this Statement.

The Barn has a corrugated steel sheet exterior that has been tightly rivetted, however, the design has numerous obvious openings that might permit bat access. These include:

- Approximately 14 extractor fans (now stalled) and six chicken entry/exit flaps on either side of the building; and
- A c.200mm wide gap along the apex of the entire length of the roof.

These features alone create internal illumination and good ventilation, such that wind was passing through the Barn on the day of survey.

Additional features of note were as follows:

- Well-sealed frontage to the Barn, however, the rear door was damaged and permanently open;
- Tight-fitting steel panelling beneath the roof along the long-sides of the Barn, and polystyrene tiles underlying the roof within the central Barn area. Many of the polystyrene panels had holes and defects, while a few were also missing. There was a gap between the steel panelling and the polystyrene panels along the entire length of the Barn.
- Simple fabricated steel and wooden timber frame that offers no obvious potential roosting features.

Therefore, there are numerous access points into the Barn, and ready access into the only available void that lies between polystyrene panels and the external steel roof panels.

The central bare earth floor area was covered in dry guano, while the sides have a concrete pad that has a lighter covering of guano, along with intermittent clusters of rat droppings and bait traps. There was no obvious signs of bat droppings or insect remains.

Evaluation

Bats

Legal Status – All species of bat are protected in the UK on Schedule 5 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act, 1981 (as amended by the Countryside and Rights of Way Act, 2000), and on Schedule 2 of the Conservation (Natural Habitats &c.) Regulations, 1994. The latter further implements European legislation protecting bats. Bats are also protected from cruel ill-treatment by the Wild Mammals (Protection) Act, 1996.

The combined national and European legislation makes it an offence to kill, injure, capture or disturb bats; and similarly, it is an offence to block access to, damage or destroy a bat roost. The Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 further amended national legislation to make 'reckless' disturbance, damage or destruction of a roost an offence.

Status of Bats – The results a 15th January 2021 survey as presented in the previous *Preliminary Bat Roost Assessment Report*, found no evidence of bats either externally or internally. This report did not recommend any additional bat assessment work, however, it is now over 2 years out-of-date.

No evidence of bat presence was identified during the May 2023 walkover survey, and this current re-assessment has reached similar conclusions. The building itself is very draughty due to numerous access points on the exterior, and is well-illuminated internally as a result of natural light entry.

The only significant roost features are the two large voids that run along the length of the Barn, lying between the steel exterior panels and the internal polystyrene insulation panels. There are a number of ready access points into these two voids. However, the nature of the steel exterior is that it provides no thermal insulation from temperature extremes and therefore these expansive voids would be most unsuitable for roosting bats.

Recommendations – For the reasons previously stated, the Barn is considered unsuitable for roosting bats and is it is considered acceptable to demolish or refurbish as required without further consideration of these species.

Birds

Legal Status – Breeding birds are protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 and amendments, and in accordance with the CROW Act 2000. This legislation makes it necessary to ensure that breeding birds are not disturbed or harmed during the nesting season.

Status of Bats – There was no current evidence of roosting or breeding birds at the time of the May 2023 walkover survey, but this will need future consideration.

Recommendations – Prior to any demolition/soft strip work, there will be a need to ensure that breeding birds are not disturbed or harmed, or that Schedule 1 birds such as Barn owl *Tyto alba* are not roosting.

Breeding/roosting birds will be anticipated during the breeding season that runs between mid-March and the end of August, therefore ideally any potentially damaging work will be undertaken outside this period.

If this is not possible for any reason, then any potentially damaging work must be undertaken under the supervision of a suitably qualified and experienced Ecologist, surveying for nesting behaviour prior to any clearance work. The work would, however, be at risk as should breeding/Schedule 1 roosting birds be noted, all work would need to halt until the breeding had been completed.

We trust that this Statement will be satisfactory and understand that it may be issued to the LPA as part of planning work.

Yours sincerely,

Ashley Leftwich
Director

PHOTOGRAPHS

PHOTOGRAPHS



Frontage to Barn



Side of Barn



Barn interior



Chicken access points



Fans



Open rear to Barn



Gap between steel & polystyrene
Panelling



Missing polystyrene panel