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ECOLOGISTS

Curious Ecologists
Ecological Consultants
156, Meadow Lane
Coalville
LE67 4DP
Tel. 01530 457440
curiousecologists@yahoo.co.uk

Report for

Barns, at Manor Farm, Barton in the Beans, Leicestershire
Protected Species Survey

Date of Report – 16th April 2009

Proprietors

Bern Gibney (Ecologist) – 07875 484342 (mob)
Karen Headley (Ecologist) – 07913 873904 (mob)
Martin Randall (Woodland and Arboricultural Consultant) – 07968 297893 (mob)

Protected Species Survey at Barns at Manor Farm, Barton in the Beans

Name of Client: Mr D. Jackson

Address of Client: Manor Farm, 2 Carlton Road, Barton in the Beans, nr Nuneaton, Warwickshire, CV13 0DE

Name of Agent: Fox Bennett, contact- Stephen Buckingham

Address of Agent: 6 Lewis Court, Thorpe Way, Grove Park, Enderby, Leicestershire, LE19 1SD

Date of Survey: 16th April 2009

Weather Conditions: 100% cloud, drizzle, breezy, 5^0C

Address of survey site: Barns at Manor Farm, 2 Carlton Road, Barton in the Beans, nr Nuneaton, Warwickshire, CV13 0DE

Planning Application Number: 09/00210/FUL

Grid Reference of survey site: SK 3988 0636

Name of Surveyor: A.B.Gibney BSc (Hons), MIEEM

Licence Numbers: Bat 20083261 issued by Natural England

1) Background

1.1 Reason for survey

It is proposed to convert the existing barns to domestic residences at some time in the future and an extension to the existing planning permission is required. A protected species (particularly bats, barn owls and nesting birds) survey was requested as part of the Planning Permission conditions to extend the permission.

1.2 Description of site

The site was in a village setting, and consisted of two barns within a farmyard adjoining the main farmhouse. The immediate surroundings were hard standing, which was a concrete yard area. There were several other farm buildings next to the site, which are unaffected by the proposed development. The surrounding area was residential and agricultural, with mostly grazed permanent improved grassland and some arable, plus the gardens associated with the residential properties. There are a few trees in the vicinity of the site, these are unaffected by the proposals.

1.3 The Buildings

There were two buildings; the first was a large single storey barn:



This barn was brick with a tile roof (flat tiles) and was used for livestock. The roof consisted of two pitched sections at the same height with a valley at the join and with gable ends. It was supported by wooden purlins and rafters, and beams with morticed joints. These joints were very tightly fitting and covered in spiders' webs. There were no bargeboards or soffits supporting the guttering, and the eaves were full of cobwebs. The roof

timbers, particularly the ridge boards were also covered in webs. There was no loft area or roof felt, however there was some evidence of torching on the backs of the tiles. The roof was completely open for inspection. There were missing tiles, gaps under tiles and ridge tiles, missing bricks, pointing missing in the gable ends and many other cavities and gaps. All were full of webs, showing they had not been disturbed for some time.

The second barn was two storeys in part and single storey in part:



This barn was brick with a tile roof (flat tiles) and was used for partly for livestock and partly for storage/workshops. The roofs consisted of equal pitched sections at two heights with gable ends. They were supported by wooden purlins and rafters, and beams with morticed joints. These joints were very tightly fitting and covered in spiders' webs. There were no bargeboards or soffits supporting the guttering, and the eaves were full of cobwebs. The roof timbers, particularly the ridge boards were also covered in webs. There was no loft area above the upper floor, but there was some roof felt, which was in very poor condition with many holes and tears. The roof was completely open for inspection. There were missing tiles, ventilation ridge tiles, gaps under tiles and ridge tiles, missing bricks, pointing missing in the gable ends and many other cavities and gaps. All were full of webs, showing they had not been disturbed for some time. Open windows and doors allowed access for birds and there was evidence of birds' nests and roosts.

2) Survey Methods

The buildings were searched in a systematic pattern, all available spaces were searched, looking for signs of bats, in particular droppings, insect remains (where bats have fed), lack of spiders' webs (where bats have roosted), the bats themselves and body oils stains (where bats have squeezed through gaps). Particular attention was paid to undisturbed surfaces, walls (where bat droppings sometimes stick) and window sills (both inside and outside the buildings). The search was carried out with a high power torch inside the building and binoculars on the outside (particularly searching under eaves and ridge tiles). All cavities were checked using an endoscope to establish if anything was within them. Bats would not be active at this time of year so an emergence survey could not be carried out.

Signs of birds were also noted, particularly old nests and barn owl *Tyto alba* pellets. Birds are likely to have started nesting at the time of the year when the survey was undertaken.

A note was made of any signs of other protected species, or whether there was any appropriate habitat for other protected species.

3) Results

3.1 Bats – There was no evidence of bats found during the survey, there were no droppings or other signs, all surfaces, gaps and cavities were covered in spiders' webs. The buildings appeared to be too cold and draughty for bats to roost.

3.2 Birds – There were old nests found in the second barn, probably house sparrow *Passer domesticaus*. There were no barn owls pellets found during the survey.

3.3 There was no evidence of any other protected species on the site, and there did not appear to be any habitat suitable for other protected species.

4) Conclusions

4.1 The barns had not been used by bats as a roost site, and the barns did not appear to be suitable as roost sites, being too cold and draughty.

4.2 The buildings had been used for birds to nest, but had not been used by barn owls.

4.3 There were no indications of any other protected species on the site.

5) Legislation

Nesting Birds: Nesting Birds are protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981, which makes it an offence to intentionally kill, injure or take any wild bird or take, damage or destroy its nest whilst in use or being built, or take or destroy its eggs. In addition to this, for some rarer species (listed on Schedule 1 of the Act), it is an offence to intentionally or recklessly disturb them while they are nest building or, at or near a nest with eggs or young, or to disturb the dependent young of such a bird.

Bats: Bats and their roosts are protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended by the CRoW Act 2000), and by the European Habitats Regulations 1994. To summarise; it is an offence to damage or destroy any place of shelter and protection used by bats (their roosts); deliberately, intentionally or recklessly obstruct a bat roost; deliberately, intentionally or recklessly disturb a bat; or intentionally kill, injure or take any bat.

6) Recommendations and Mitigations

- Birds – It is recommended that any works on the building are scheduled to begin outside the bird nesting season (normally considered to be March-August, although this can be extended with certain species and due to climate change factors). Alternatively the buildings should be made ‘bird proof’ outside the bird nesting season. If there is any doubt as to whether birds are nesting, it is advised to get the area checked by a suitably qualified ecologist. Should an active nest be found, the nest must remain undisturbed until the young birds have fledged, which may cause a delay in the proposed works.

- Bats are highly mobile animals that change roosts regularly, and it is advised that prior to the work being undertaken, which I understand may be at some considerable time in the future, a full bat survey at the appropriate time of the year be undertaken.

References

Mitchell-Jones, A.J. & McLeish, A.P. [ed.] (1999) *The Bat Workers' Manual* JNCC

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Heaton, A. (1998) *Rare Wildlife in Leicestershire and Rutland* Kairos Press

Betts, C.J. (2001) *Checklist of Protected British Species* Christopher Betts Environmental Biology

Anon. (2002) *Barn Owls on Site, a guide for developers and planners* Barn Owl Trust

Report Produced by

Alan Bernard Gibney BSc (Hons), MIEEM - Ecologist (Curious Ecologists)