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ECOLOGISTS

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

Report for

Farmhouse at
Hill Farm, Fenny Drayton, Leicestershire
Protected Species Survey

Date of Report – 20th July 2011

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 Hill Farm, Fenny Drayton

Name of Client: Mr D. Williams

Address of Client: Hill Farm, Fenny Drayton, nr Nuneaton, Warwickshire, CV13 6BJ

Name of Agent: Hayward Architects, contact- Lee J Ward

Address of Agent: 19 Station Road, Hinckley, Leicestershire, LE10 1AW

Date of Survey: 19th July 2011

Weather Conditions: 100% cloud, breezy, dry, warm, 19^0C

Address of survey site: Hill Farm, Fenny Drayton, nr Nuneaton, Warwickshire, CV13 6BJ

Planning Application Number:

Grid Reference of survey site: SP 3583 9775

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

Licence Numbers: Great Crested Newt 20103624, Bat 20103625 & Barn Owl 20103623 issued by Natural England

1) Background

1.1 Reason for survey

There are plans to re-roof the existing farmhouse, plus which is a listed building. A protected species (particularly bats) survey was requested to apply for Planning Permission to carry on the development.

1.2 Description of site

The site was in a rural setting, and consisted of a detached house surrounded by a yard (mostly concrete) and garden (mown lawn, and shrub/herbaceous planting). There were no trees in the near vicinity of the site, and the site was very exposed and windy. There were no ponds on the site. There was no vegetation to be removed from the building.
The surrounding area consisted of agricultural land, (mostly arable), a range of agricultural buildings (both modern and traditional, which are unaffected by the proposals and a domestic residence and its garden.

1.3 The Buildings



Photo 1: The house, front view

The house was detached, with solid brick walls and with a tile roof (flat clay 'rosemary-type tiles). There were flat roof extensions to the rear of the property (both two and single-storey). These had wooden roofs with a tarred felt covering. They had fascias, but there were no gaps between these and the walls, they were also covered in webs. The main house was three-storey, the third storey being an attic with a small void above it, the roof timbers were accessible for survey. The main roof was in sections, which had gable ends, the gables were rendered. It was at more than one height, with equal pitches either side of each section of pitched roof. The

roof was supported by rafters and purlins. The tiles weren't lined, but there was some evidence of cement torching.



Photo 2: showing webs on roof timbers

The roof timbers were covered in spiders' webs. There were some missing tiles, but the ridge tiles were all in place, with no gaps between them. There were no fascias or soffits. There were no gaps between the walls and tiles, and the eaves were covered in spiders' webs. There were no gaps in the pointing under the ridge tiles or in the gable ends, between the tiles, as render covered any potential gaps. There were no bargeboards on the gable ends. The pointing on the chimney joints was all in place and tight fitting.



Photo 3: Rear view of house

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 are likely to be active at the time of year that the survey was undertaken, and a bat detector was on at all times, in case light from the torch disturbed bats.

Signs of birds were also noted, particularly old nests. Birds are likely to be nesting at the time of year that the survey took place.

The ground was searched for tracks, trails or signs (particularly droppings and food/feeding signs) of 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 and cavities were covered in spiders' webs and dust. However there were points whereby bats could access the roof. However the site was very cold and exposed and there were no trees or hedges within the vicinity of the site, making it a very cold inhospitable site for bats.

3.2 Birds – There were no nests found on the building. There was no vegetation in the vicinity of the proposed re-roofing that would be suitable for birds to nest in.

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 Bats had not used the buildings as a roost site; however there were access points for bats to get into the buildings and roof spaces.

4.2 The buildings had not been used by birds as nesting sites.

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

5) Legislation

Bats: All bats and their roosts are protected under the Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981 (*as amended*) and The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010. You must not:

- deliberately capture (or take), injure or kill a bat;
- intentionally or recklessly disturb a group of bats; where the disturbance is likely to significantly affect the ability of any significant group of animals of that species to survive, breed or rear or nurture their young or likely to significantly affect the local distribution or abundance of the species, whether in a roost or not;
- damage or destroy the breeding or resting place (roost) of a bat;
- possess a bat (alive or dead), or any part of a bat;
- intentionally or recklessly obstruct access to a bat roost;
- sell (or offer for sale) or exchange bats (alive or dead), or parts of bats.

6) Recommendations:

6.1 The proposed development is unlikely to have a negative effect on the biodiversity of the area, as it will only affect an area, which would be classed as of limited wildlife value, i.e. yard/garden and buildings being the habitats present. (England Field Unit 2007).

6.3 Although no evidence of bats was found during the survey, a precautionary approach should be taken, as bats are highly mobile animals that change roosts regularly, and there were access points within the buildings' structure that would allow bats to enter. It is advised that prior to the work being undertaken, any contractors should have been advised of the possibility of the presence of bats, and to carry out works carefully checking for bats as the work progresses, and they should be informed of what to do if one is found during the course of the work. If a bat is discovered during works, the work needs to cease immediately and Natural England should be contacted for further advice. Work on the area where the bat was found (should one be found) should not recommence until such advice is received from Natural England.

6.4 Please apply the following precautions during work operations:

a. All contractors, workmen and associated parties should be made aware that there is a potential for roosting bats to be present underneath roof coverings or within roof voided areas of the building. Care and diligence should be applied at all times when working within or around these areas.

b. Any roof coverings if required to be removed such as tiles, lead flashings and sarking should be lifted in a slow and controlled manner and as vertically as possible so as to ensure that no bats are injured or killed if roosting underneath such materials.

c. Areas of stone or brickwork that offer potential roosting or bat access/exit points such as mortar gaps, splits/cracks in stone/brickwork, stone/brickwork cavity or between timbers and masonry that have dimensions of 15mm by 40 mm or larger should be first inspected by torch. Bats are well recorded for roosting in such features externally and internally of buildings.

d. If it is confirmed that no bats are present within such features any works should be undertaken immediately or before dusk. Leaving any gap open over night may allow for bats to utilise the gap for roosting over night. Bats will move roosting sites throughout the night.

e. In the event that an area is left open overnight, the area will be required to be re-inspected by torch to confirm that no bats are present before further works takes place.

f. In the event that a bat or evidence of bats such as bat droppings, urine and fur staining or scratch marks are observed within or around an area to be worked upon or working within, work should stop immediately or not begin and further advice should be sought from a licensed bat worker to re-visit if required or offer further advice and recommendations to resolve the issue.

References

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

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

England Field Unit (2007) *Handbook for Phase 1 habitat survey – a technique for environmental audit* JNCC

Report Produced by

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