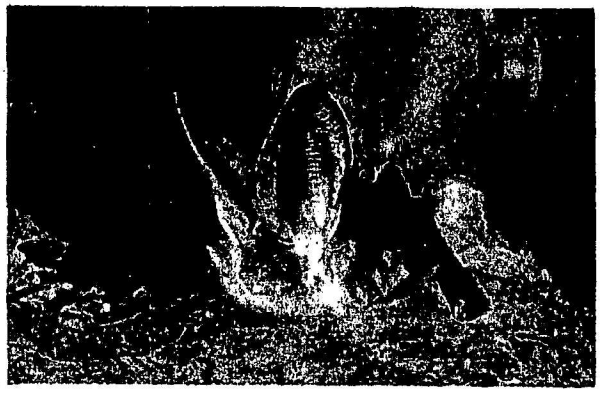
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DEVELOPMENT SERVICES
19 MAR 2008
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Report for

Top House Farm, Shackerstone, Leicestershire

Protected Species Survey

Date of Report –2nd March 2008

Proprietors
Bern Gibney (Ecologist) – 07875 484342 (mob)
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Protected Species Survey at Top House Farm, Shackerstone, Leicestershire

Name of Client: Mr W.M. Oldham

Address of Client: Top House Farm, Shackerstone, Nuneaton, CV13 0BT

Name of Agent: Graham Harris Partnership

Address Of Agent: 11 Ridgeway, Littlethorpe, Leicestershire, LE9 5JJ

Date of Survey: 2nd March 2008

Weather Conditions: Sunny, breezy. Temperature 11^{0}C.

Address of survey site: Top House Farm, Shackerstone, Nuneaton, CV13 0BT

Planning Application Number: 03/00275/FUL

Grid Reference of survey site: SK 38210780

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

Licence Numbers: Bat 20073155 issued by Natural England

1) Background

1.1 Reason for survey

Planning Permission needs renewing at the site, to convert the barn to a domestic residence at some time in the future. A protected species survey was requested as part of the conditions to renew the Permission.

1.2 Description of site

The site is an old barn, which is attached to the main residence, and is currently used as a workshop/ store. It is surrounded by garden (Lawn, hard standing, and various plant beds) and agricultural fields (mostly permanent grassland). The boundary of the garden/property was hedges with some mature trees.

1.3 The Building

The barn is a two storey, brick walled structure with a flat tiled roof. The walls are solid (i.e. no cavity). The ground floor has an open wooden ceiling, which acts as a floor to the room above. The roof is open with wooden beams supporting the rafters and a ridge board at its apex. The tiles had a one time been torched, but much of this had fallen out leaving gaps between the tiles. The roof had equal pitches with a gable end in the section, which was continuous with the house. The other part of the barn

which was at right-angles to the house was joined to the main roof with a valley between them, it also had equal pitches. This section continued into an open fronted barn, which is not included in the proposed development.

2) Survey Methods

2.1 Date

The survey was carried out on Sunday 2nd March 2008.

2.2 Methods and Limitations

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, ridge tiles, and between the tiles). Signs of birds were also noted, particularly their nests and whether they were in use.

Bats would not be active at this time of year so an emergence survey could not be carried out.

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 evidence of bats having used the barn, in particular, droppings were found (Brown Long-eared being definitely identified). There were also some remains of butterfly wings on the floor of the barn. Evidence was found in both the upper and lower parts of the barn. The droppings were not present in large amounts, which would indicate that the barn is likely to be used occasionally for bats to hunt for sheltering butterflies and then consume them. It is unlikely to be a breeding roost. Generally the barn showed no other evidence of a bat roost, having lots of spiders webs throughout and no other signs of bat use.

3.2 Birds – There was one very old nest inside the barn but it was not active.

3.3 There was no evidence of any other protected species on the site.

4) Conclusions

4.1 The barn had been used as a roost by bats.

4.2 The barn had been used by birds as a nesting site.

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

5) Legislation

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.
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.

6) Recommendations and Mitigations

- Birds – It is recommended the building should be checked for nesting birds prior to any works being started. Ideally the works could be scheduled 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). 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 – It is recommended that prior to any works being undertaken on the barn, a full bat survey (to include an emergence survey) should be undertaken. Depending on the results of this survey appropriate mitigation measures should be put in place, according to the recommendations found in Natural England's 'Bat Mitigation Guidelines'.

References

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

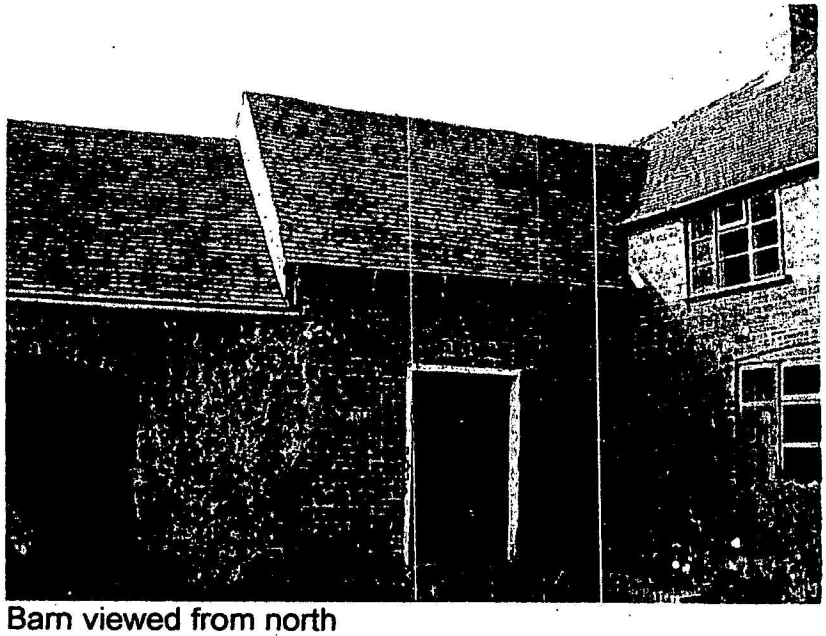
Mitchell-Jones, A.J. (2004) *Bat Mitigation Guidelines)* English Nature

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

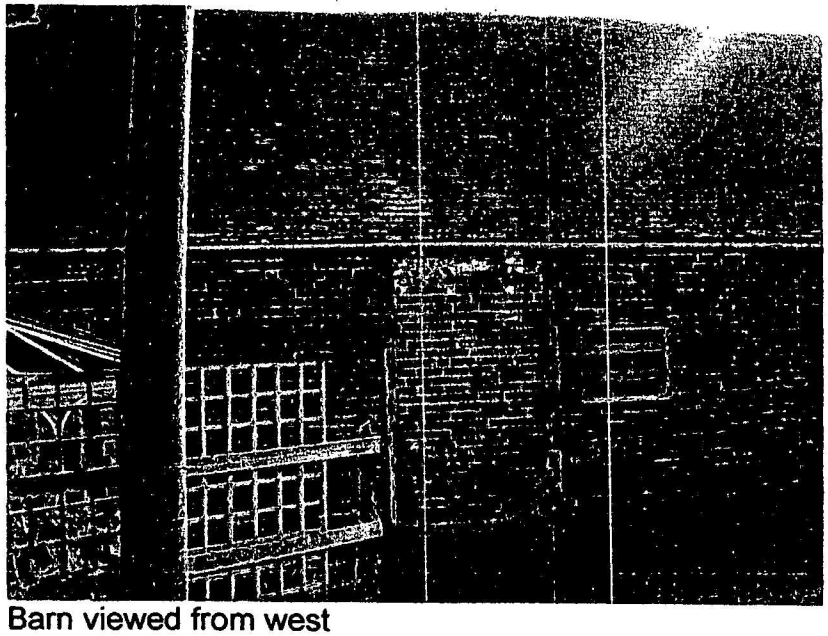
Betts, C.J. (2001) *Checklist of Protected British Species* Christopher Betts Environmental Biology

Appendix 1

Photographs of Site



Barn viewed from north



Barn viewed from west

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

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