



**Leigh Ecology Ltd**

Protected Species and Habitat Surveys

**Barn at Brook House Farm,  
Lower Road,  
Halewood,  
L26 3UB**

**On behalf of T&O Harrison**

**Bat Scoping Survey Report**

**Report number:** HALEW/2022

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# CONTENTS

|          |                                               |           |
|----------|-----------------------------------------------|-----------|
|          | <b>Important Information to Readers .....</b> | <b>2</b>  |
| <b>1</b> | <b>Summary.....</b>                           | <b>4</b>  |
| <b>2</b> | <b>Introduction .....</b>                     | <b>5</b>  |
|          | 2.2 Legislative Framework .....               | 6         |
|          | 2.3 Site Description .....                    | 8         |
| <b>3</b> | <b>Methodology .....</b>                      | <b>14</b> |
| <b>4</b> | <b>Results.....</b>                           | <b>16</b> |
|          | Internal and external inspection .....        | 16        |
| <b>5</b> | <b>Conclusions and Recommendations .....</b>  | <b>18</b> |
| <b>6</b> | <b>References .....</b>                       | <b>19</b> |

## 1 SUMMARY

- 1.1.1 The subject building is a traditional brick barn, with both a single-storey and a two-storey configuration. The building is at Brook House Farm, Halewood.
- 1.1.2 Proposal plans include the change of use of the building, from an agricultural unit to a commercial block. Subsequent renovation is planned for the building, including at least a partial replacement of the current roof.
- 1.1.3 Therefore, to facilitate the works on the building and to inform the planning application, a survey for bat species *Chiroptera* was undertaken on the 14<sup>th</sup> April 2022.
- 1.1.4 The building was found to hold moderate bat potential due to its condition, especially the slate tile, single-storey section of the building. The section of the building which features a slate-tiled roof is in poor condition, with several displaced and damaged tiles noted during the survey.
- 1.1.5 No signs of ancient bird nesting were noted within the building, although several common bird species were seen around the extended area during the site visit.
- 1.1.6 It is suggested that at least one single bat activity survey be undertaken between May and September to decipher the presence of bats within the target building.

## 2 INTRODUCTION

- 2.1.1 A traditional brick barn has been identified for development work. A protected species survey was required, namely bat species *Chiroptera*, and nesting bird, in order to inform the planning application.
- 2.1.2 For development proposals requiring planning permission, the presence of protected species, and therefore the need for a survey is a material planning consideration under the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). Adequate surveys are therefore required to establish the presence or absence of protected species, to enable a prediction of the likely impact of the proposed development on them and their breeding site or resting places and, if necessary, to design mitigation and compensation methods.
- 2.1.3 For any development to proceed lawfully at a site where protected species are present, a licence issued by Natural England, under the Conservation (Natural Habitats & c.) Regulations 2010 (as amended) may be required. Information gathered during the surveys is used to inform such a licence application.
- 2.1.4 The objective of the study was to identify the presence or potential presence of bat species within the building identified on-site.
- 2.1.5 A preliminary roost survey consisting of an internal and external survey of the target building was conducted on the 14<sup>th</sup> April 2022.
- 2.1.6 This report provides the output from the bat scoping survey.

## 2.2 LEGISLATIVE FRAMEWORK

### Bats

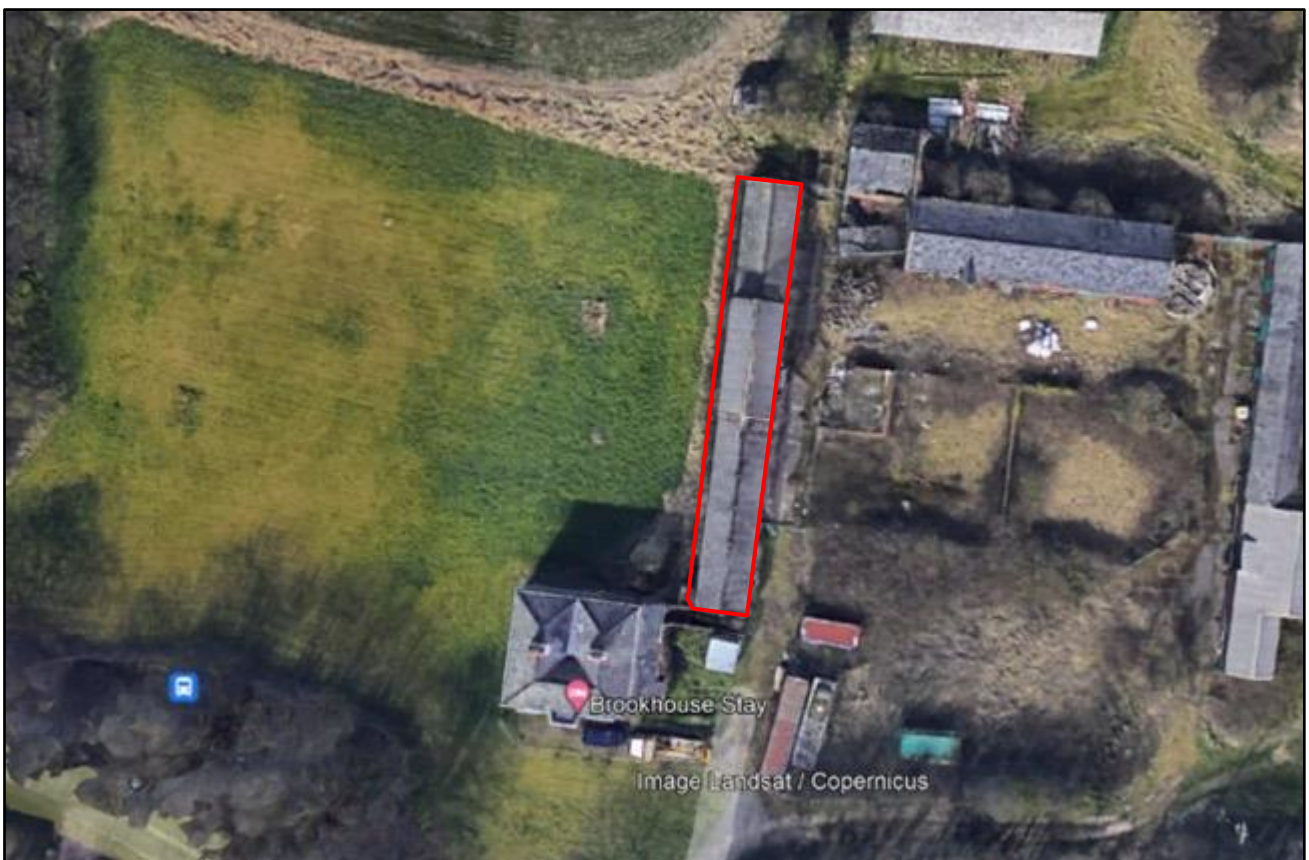
- 2.2.1 There are 17 species of bats in the UK, all of which suffered a decline in population size and distribution during the 20<sup>th</sup> century; even those species regarded to be the most common suffered a 70% decline between 1978 and 1993 (Mitchel-Jones and McLeish, 2004).
- 2.2.2 All species of bats are listed under Section 9 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended), and Regulation 41 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010 and are therefore afforded special protection. It is an offence to:
- Intentionally kill, injure or take any wild bat;
  - Intentionally damage, destroy or obstruct access to any place that a wild bat uses for shelter or protection; and
  - Intentionally or recklessly disturb any wild bat while it is occupying a structure or place that it uses for shelter or protection.
- 2.2.3 Bats are further protected under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010 which make it an offence to:
- Capture or kill a bat;
  - Significantly disturb a bat (in any location); and
  - Damage or destroy a breeding site or resting place of any bat.
- 2.2.4 If bats are present on a development site and, as a result of the development there is a likelihood that a roost may be damaged or destroyed, or where there is considered to be a reasonable possibility that bats occupying a roost may be significantly disturbed, or where there would be a requirement to significantly disturb a bat irrespective of its location, the development can only proceed if a European Protected Species (EPS) licence is issued by Natural England.
- 2.2.5 In England and Wales, the Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006 imposes a duty on all public bodies, including local authorities to make material consideration to biodiversity conservation in the determination of all types of planning applications. The UK Biodiversity Strategy was produced in response to the convention.

The strategy contains action plans for species considered to be of conservation priority at a national (under Species Action Plans (SAP) and local scale (under Local Biodiversity Action Plans (LBAPs).

- 2.2.6 The UKBAP lists seven bat species considered as priorities, the relevant SBAP (Cheshire) lists several bat species, Noctule bat (*Nyctalus noctule*) and Pipistrelle bat (*Pipistrellus Pipistrellus* and *P. pygmaeus*).

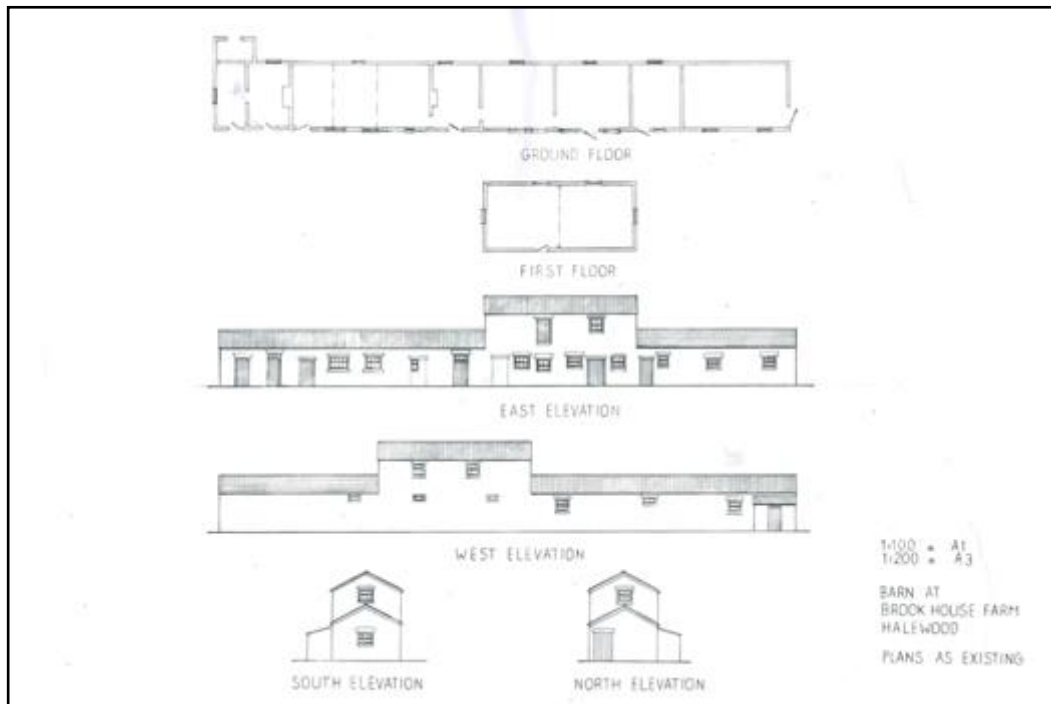
## 2.3 SITE DESCRIPTION

- 2.3.1 The proposal building comprises both two-storey and a single-storey configuration. A corrugated asbestos roof features atop two of the sections, with a traditional slate tile roof atop the third section.
- 2.3.2 The building is located within a hard standing yard, adjacent to two other barn buildings. Beyond this, large open fields with surrounding hedgerows feature, offering ideal bat foraging flight lines.
- 2.3.3 The approximate site grid reference is S J469850.
- 2.3.4 Development plans include a usage change of the building from an agricultural to a commercial unit. Internal work and a roof replacement is included within the proposal plans.
- 2.3.5 The site map shown below shows the scope of the survey and maps the position of the target building, which is within the red line boundary.



**Figure 1:** Site location

(Google Earth 2018)



**Fig 2:** Existing elevations of the building.



**Fig 3:** Proposed elevations of the building.



**Fig 4:** A view of the subject building. The middle section of the building is in a two-storey configuration, with a corrugated asbestos roof atop.



**Fig 5:** A view of the slate roof section of the building.



**Fig 6:** A closer view of the slate roof section. Several displaced tiles have been circled.



**Fig 7:** A view of the single-storey section with a corrugated asbestos roof. Windows throughout the building are open, creating ideal access points for foraging bats.



**Fig 8:** View of the southern gable. The gable is in fair condition, but an obvious entry point is seen at the apex.



**Fig 9:** A view of the internal roof space within the northern section of the barn. Wooden beams and rafters sit beneath the slate tiles. No deep cavities were noted within the external walls; there is also a lack of obvious crawlspace or areas suitable for roosting bats.



**Fig 10:** The upper floor of the two-storey section could not be accessed due to obvious rotting and damage. The roof space could be clearly seen despite this. Wooden purlins and rafters support the corrugated asbestos roof.



**Fig 11:** A view from the western side of the building.

### **3 METHODOLOGY**

3.1.1 The internal and external roost survey was undertaken by a Natural England licensed surveyor: Roy Leigh NE licence 2015/15883-CLS and ecologist Christian Leigh.

3.1.2 Survey methods were based-upon the standard and specification detailed in the BCTs Bat Surveys- Good Practise Guidelines (BCT, 2016). The building was inspected internally and externally on 14<sup>th</sup> April 2022.

#### **External Inspection**

3.1.3 The objective of the survey was to locate any signs of bat activity, for example:

- Bat droppings;
- Feeding remains;
- Grease staining/ urine marks;
- Corpses or skeletons;
- Potential access points to internal roosts.

3.1.4 The bat signs listed above are visible from the outside of the building. The following areas were searched using binoculars:

- Ground floor casing;
- Rendering;
- Any cracks/ holes in brickwork/ woodwork;
- Between wall cavities at window points;
- On external brickwork.

## **Internal Inspection**

3.1.5 Bats regularly utilise specific areas within roof spaces/open roof configurations (see below), which were searched as a priority for any bat field signs:

- Dividing walls;
- Beneath hip joints and junctions;
- Staining above/ around gaps;
- Within cobwebs;
- Staining around tile gaps;
- In cavities of walls within the roof wall joints;
- Timber / wall joints.

3.1.6 The upper floor of the two-storey section could not be accessed due to rotting and damage, but the roof space could be comprehensively analysed.

3.1.7 The surveys were undertaken using a 168-lumen flashlight and 10x42 Swarovski binoculars.

3.1.8 Ladders were used to access elevated areas with potential for bat signs.

## **Survey limitations**

3.1.9 All areas of the building were fully assessed, despite the lack of access to the upper floor, and care was taken; therefore, the survey was considered comprehensive.

## 4 RESULTS

### Internal and external inspection

- 4.1.1 The subject building offered moderate bat potential as only one section of the building featured a suitable external roof, but due to the findings of bat feeding remains (seen below), meaning it is likely bats use the building as a foraging space.



**Fig 11:** Feeding remains found within the building.

- 4.1.2 The building is set on a hard-standing farmyard, adjacent to two other barn buildings; one building offers ideal potential for bat activity. The extended environment comprises large open fields, with bordering hedgerows and trees, creating bat foraging routes.
- 4.1.3 Therefore, the findings from the survey suggest that at least one single bat activity survey be undertaken to determine the presence of bats within the subject building.

## **Site Location**

- 4.1.4 The subject site is in close proximity to ideal bat foraging habitat.
- 4.1.5 One of the adjacent barns, that is not included within current proposal plans, features several ideal entry points for bat species, with a slate tile roof configuration, creating realistic roosting potential for roosting bats.

## 5 CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

- 5.1 Results of the bat scoping survey indicate that the building offers moderate bat roost potential.
- 5.2 No signs of ancient bird nesting were noted within the building, but common species such as blackbird, robin and house sparrow were noted within the extended farmyard during the survey.
- 5.3 **Therefore, it is recommended that at least one further single bat activity survey be undertaken between the months of May-September to decipher the presence of bats within the target building.** This conclusion is due to the obvious entry points created by displaced/ damaged roof tiles, and the buildings proximity to ideal bat foraging habitat.

## 6 REFERENCES

Collins, J. (ed.) (2016). Bat surveys for professional ecologists: Good practice guidelines. 3<sup>rd</sup> edition. Bat Conservation Trust. London.

Bat Conservation Trust (2016). Bat Surveys – Good Practice Guidelines. Bat Conservation Trust, London.

Mitchell-Jones, A. J. and McLiesh, A.P. (2004) Bat Workers Manual. 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. JNCC, Peterborough.

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

