Bat Activity Survey Report

Petersburgh Farm
Beckermet
Cumbria
CA21 2XW

Prepared for: Adams Planning and Development Ltd
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Reference: J033

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CONTENTS

NON-TECHNICAL SUMMARY

Executive Summary		
Background		Natural Ecology were instructed to undertake bat emergence surveys of buildings at Petersburgh Farm, Beckermet, Cumbria CA21 2XW (central grid reference NY 02181 05947, What3Words:/// clever.blindfold.advantage) following a Preliminary Roost Assessment undertaken by Envirotech in October 2023. The result of this PRA confirmed the requirement for further nocturnal bat activity surveys, which were undertaken during the survey season of 2024.
Site Description		The site comprises a series of adjoined buildings including four rendered barns and one stone barn. The buildings lie approximately 800m south of the village of Beckermet.
Development Proposal		Development proposals comprise renovation of the buildings for residential purposes and therefore require change of use planning permission. The proposals will not alter the overall footprint.
Purpose		The purpose of the survey was to: • Assess the potential value of those features for bats following the best practice guidelines; • Assess the potential of the surrounding habitats for foraging and commuting bats; • Undertake a single nocturnal bat activity survey to determine whether the building is in use as a bat roost; • Recommend further surveys, if necessary; and • Recommend mitigation, compensation, and enhancement measures. • A nesting bird check was also completed where possible.
Results		**Nocturnal Survey** No bats were identified roosting within either building during the course of the surveys. Three bat species were observed during the survey: common pipistrelle *Pipistrellus pipistrellus*, soprano pipistrelle *Pipistrellus pygmaeus* and noctule *Nyctalus noctula*. None of these were seen using the building for roosting. All activity was a result of commuting and foraging along the lane and over the site.
Recommendations		Given the survey results, it is considered that bats are not using the buildings for roosting. No further action is required for works to be carried out on site. In the unlikely case that bats are found during works, all works should stop immediately, and a licensed bat ecologist contacted.

1. INTRODUCTION

Background

1.1 Natural Ecology were commissioned by Adams Planning and Development Ltd to undertake nocturnal bat surveys of buildings at Petersburgh Farm, Beckermet, Cumbria CA21 2XW (central grid reference NT 02181 05947, What3Words: ///clever.blindfold.advantage) during May to July 2024 (hereafter referred to as the 'Building/Site').

1.2 The site was subject to a preliminary roost assessment in October 2023, undertaken by Envirotech. The purpose of the PRA was to establish, as far as possible, whether the site offered any potential to support roosting bats and assess the necessity for any further bat surveys to support a planning application.

Survey Objectives

1.3 The purpose of the nocturnal survey was to:

- Assess the potential value of features highlighted during the PRAs for bats following the best practice guidelines;
- Assess the potential of the surrounding habitats for foraging and commuting bats;
- Recommend further surveys, if necessary; and
- Recommend mitigation, compensation, and enhancement measures.

1.4 The following assessment is informed by the Bat Conservation Trust's publication Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists – Good Practice Guidelines (Collins, J. (Ed) 2023).

2. FORMER SURVEYS

Preliminary Roost Assessment

2.1 A preliminary roost assessment for the site to be affected by the proposed works was completed on the 19th October 2023 by a different consultancy - Envirotech. The exterior and interior of the buildings were visually assessed for potential access points and evidence of bat activity. Suitable roosting features were noted, and evidence searched for including feeding remains, staining and droppings.

2.2 The surveys were assigned potential using Collins (2016), cross referencing suitability with risk level to produce survey level for each building. **The executive summary appears to not match the field results for recommendations,** and as such the survey effort was taken directly from the field survey section when carrying out emergence surveys.

2.3 Now follows a summary of the details and categorisations found within the original PRA report "BAT, BARN OWL & NESTING BIRD SURVEY AT Petersburgh Farm, Beckermet, CA21 2XW" Envirotech, 26th October 2023:

2.4 Building 1 had **moderate** potential, building 2 had **negligible** potentials, and buildings 3 to 6 had **low** potential. Further details are provided below:

2.5 Building 1 was summarised as being of moderate size with walls in good condition, and well-sealed eaves. No roof voids were present, and the roof coverings were in excellent condition with no raised slates. Bat droppings were observed throughout the first floor and were thought to indicate a bat roost but could not be thoroughly searched for Health and Safety purposes. The building was awarded moderate potential for use by bats, with their categorisation being 6 "Two surveys between May and August".

2.6 Building 2 was summarised as having walls in excellent condition. The eaves had gaps over them which were draughty and cold. The building was awarded negligible potential, with their categorisation being 2 "Surveyor to make judgement as to if additional surveys likely to provide useful information about the site".

2.7 Building 3 was summarised as having walls in good condition with some gaps and cracks and holes for ventilation. The eaves were well sealed, and the roof lined. There were several gaps under the roof coverings, and a large gap under the ridgeline, none of which had indication of use by bats. Some bat droppings were observed scattered intermittently on the floor, indicating the use of the barn for feeding rather than roosting. The building was awarded low potential for use by bats, with their categorisation being 5 "Single survey (dusk or dawn) between May and August."

2.8 Building 4 was summarised as having walls in moderate condition. The eaves were well sealed. No roof voids present, and the roof was lined. The roof tiles were in excellent condition, with only one missing which had no evidence of use by bats. The building was awarded low potential for use by bats, with their categorisation being 4 "Single survey (dusk or dawn) at appropriate time of year May to August".

2.9 Building 5 was summarised as having walls in excellent condition. The eaves were well sealed. No roof voids present and roof coverings in excellent condition. There are no roof voids and the roof coverings are in excellent condition. The building was awarded low potential for use by bats, with their categorisation being 3 "Surveyor to make judgement as to if additional surveys likely to provide useful information about the site".

2.10 Building 6 was summarised as having walls in excellent condition. The eaves were well sealed. There are no roof voids, and the roof coverings were in excellent condition. The building was awarded low potential for use by bats, with their categorisation being 5 “Single survey (dusk or dawn) between May and August”.

2.11 Based on the above result from the original PRA, building 1 was given 3 surveys due to the indication it may have been in use as a bat roost, buildings 3 to 6 were given 1 survey each, and building 2 had no surveys. Due to the close proximity of the buildings to each other, all buildings within eyesight were observed during each of the surveys though only the buildings being formally surveyed were covered by cameras.

3. METHODS

Site Survey

3.1 Natural Ecology visited the site on the 8th, 21st and 29th May, 20th June and 11th July to conduct dusk emergence surveys, by experienced bat surveyors in suitable weather conditions, and following the guidelines set out by the Bat Conservation Trust's "Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists". Observations were made by surveyors situated around the building at locations that were considered most likely for bats to emerge.

3.2 The emergence survey was conducted from 15 minutes before sunset and concluded approximately 1.5 hours after sunset.

3.3 Detectors used for bat observation and identification were Echo Meter Touch 2's with Samsung tablets. Bat passes were observed, and flight paths mapped (commuting, foraging).

3.4 NVAs used included Nightfox Whiskers, Nightfox Cape and Nightfox 110R. All NVAs were mounted on secure tripods and covered all required features of the building/s surveyed, with additional IR lights where needed. Example photos for two of the buildings are included in the appendices showing darkest point with IR on and off.

3.5 Analysis was performed as necessary on calls made.

Limitations

3.6 There were no significant constraints to the nocturnal survey; weather conditions were good for the surveys.

Legislation

3.7 Bats and their roosts are protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) and by the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010. In summary, this makes it an offence to damage, destroy or obstruct any place used by bats for breeding and shelter, disturb a bat, or kill, injure, or take a bat. Seven bat species including noctule *Nyctalus noctula* (but not common pipistrelle *Pipistrellus pipistrellus*) are listed at Species of Principal Importance under the provisions of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006.

3.8 The ODPM Circular 06/05 makes the presence of a protected species a material consideration within the planning process. It states that it is essential for the presence of protected species and the extent they may be affected by proposed development be established through appropriate surveys before the planning permission is granted and encourages the use of planning conditions to secure the long-term protection of the species.

3.9 The NERC Act, as amended, puts an obligation on public bodies to have regard, so far as is consistent with the proper exercise of their functions, to the purpose of conserving biodiversity. Under the terms of the Act, conserving biodiversity includes restoring or enhancing populations and/or habitats. The local planning authority (LPA) or other determining authority must therefore consider the effects of planning applications upon biodiversity and how it can be mitigated for or enhances.

3.10 Furthermore, the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) required that 'Planning policies and decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment' and that 'opportunities to incorporate biodiversity improvements in and around developments should be encouraged, especially where this can secure measurable net gains for biodiversity'.

4. Results – Nocturnal Survey

Site Description

4.1 The site is situated 800m south of the village of Beckermet, Cumbria (Figure 1).

4.2 There is fragmented woodland in the local area, but the site is in an exposed position.

4.3 The surveyed buildings comprised three rendered barns under slate roofs, one stone-built barn and one small stone-built building under slate roofs, and on rendered building under a flat corrugated roof.

4.4 It is proposed to apply for change of use and convert the barns into residential dwellings.

4.5 Construction is unlikely to affect any other buildings or landscape in the area.

Figure 1: Petersburgh Farm situated in the wider landscape and approximate site boundary, highlighted in red.

Nocturnal Activity Survey

4.6 A breakdown of the bat activity can be found below. No bats were observed roosting within the buildings during the nocturnal surveys.

Table 2: Surveyors and Equipment

Survey Date	Surveyor	Experience	Equipment
All Dates.	Lucinda Spencer	10 years survey experience as a bat consultant Licence Number 2022-CL18-BAT	Echo Meter Touch 2, Samsung Tablet, Nightfox Whisker Infra-Red Camera
	David Watson	4 years survey experience	Echo Meter Touch 2, Samsung Tablet, Nightfox Whisker Infra-Red Camera

Table 3: Survey Conditions

Survey Date	Survey Times		Sunset Time	Temperature (C)		Precipitation		Cloud Cover (%)		Wind Speed (mph)	
	Start	End		Start	End	Start	End	Start	End	Start	End
08.05.2024	20:45	22:30	21:00	12	12	Dry	Dry	100	100	7	7
21.05.2024	21:05	22:55	21:20	16	15	Dry	Dry	100	100	3	3
29.05.2024	21:20	23:05	21:35	12	12	Dry	Dry	90	90	10	10
20.06.2024	21:35	23:25	21:50	17	15	Dry	Dry	5	5	1	1
11.07.2024	21:30	23:25	21:45	15	15	Dry	Dry	80	50	4	4

Survey 1 – 8th May 2024 Building 1

4.7 Three bat species was observed in total: common pipistrelle *Pipistrellus pipistrellus*, soprano pipistrelle *Pipistrellus pygmaeus* and noctule *Nyctalus noctula*. No more than a single bat was observed at one time. The bats were not associated with the building, and were seen to be flying along the lane, foraging and commuting. Bats were also observed flying along the eastern hedgerow of the property.

4.8 The first bat recorded was at 21:24, with low activity by a common pipistrelle.

4.9 No roosting bats or roosting behaviour was observed during the survey.

Survey 2 – 21st May 2024 Building 4 & Building 5

4.10 Three bat species were observed: common and soprano pipistrelle and noctule. No more than two bats were observed at one time.

4.11 The first bat was recorded at 21:38, a soprano pipistrelle flying over the site. Bats were observed flying along the lane, over the buildings and within the courtyards.

4.12 No roosting bats or roosting behaviour was observed during the survey.

Survey 3 – 29th May 2024 Building 3

4.13 Three bat species were observed: common and soprano pipistrelle and noctule. No more than two bats were observed at one time. Bats were seen to be flying along the lane, over the buildings and within the courtyards.

4.14 The first bat recorded was at 21:55, with two noctules flying down the lane and across the site, foraging.

4.15 No roosting bats or roosting behaviour was observed during the survey.

Survey 4 – 20th June 2024 – Building 1

4.16 Three bat species were observed: common and soprano pipistrelle and noctule. No more than two bats were observed at one time. Bats were seen to be flying along the lane, over the buildings and within the courtyards.

4.17 The first bat recorded was at 22:09, with constant foraging activity from noctules along the lane and over the site. Pipistrelles were first heard on site at 22:10.

4.18 No roosting bats or roosting behaviour was observed during the survey.

Survey 5 – 11th July 2024 – Building 1 & Building 6

4.19 Three bat species were observed: common and soprano pipistrelle and noctule. No more than two bats were observed at one time. Bats were seen to be flying along the lane, over the buildings and within the courtyards.

4.20 The first bat was recorded at 21:56, with noctules foraging over the site.

4.21 No roosting bats or roosting behaviour was observed during the survey.

5. CONCLUSIONS

5.1 The PRA identified potential roost features (PRFs) and bat access points into the building.

5.2 Nocturnal bat surveys are carried out to establish if bats are roosting in a structure or tree, and if they do, they help determine species and roost type present, and the level of further survey effort, mitigation and compensation required for the development to lawfully proceed.

5.3 During the bat activity survey, activity from bats was relatively low, with the most recorded species being passes by common and soprano pipistrelles and noctules commuting and foraging along hedgerow and tree lines and through the site.

5.4 Although the internal inspection revealed bat droppings in various area, the activity survey confirmed that bats are not currently using the buildings as no bats were seen to emerge.

5.5 The proposed works will **not** result in the destruction or disturbance of any bat roosts, and as such a European Protected Species Licence (EPSL) from Natural England will be **not** be required.

5.6 No roosting activity was observed during the course of the survey.

5.7 As no roosting behaviour was observed, the recommendation for works involving roofs and roof structures of the building, should be for it to be carried out under an **Ecological Clerk of Works (ECoW).**

5.8 Due to the legal protection of bats in the UK, if any bats are unexpectedly discovered during works, all activities in that area should immediately cease and the advice of a licensed bat ecologist sought.

6. RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 Final recommendations are as follow:

- The proposed works will **not** result in the destruction or disturbance of potential bat roosts, and as such no further action is required with regards to licencing.

- The best recommendation for all work involving the roofs for it to be carried out under an **Ecological Clerk of Works.**

- Due to the legal protection of bats in the UK, if any bats are unexpectedly discovered during works, all activities in that area should immediately cease and the advice of a licensed bat ecologist sought.

- As it has been found that breathable roofing membranes (BRM's) pose risk of entrapment to bats, they should not be used in locations where bats are likely to roost. Either Type 1F hessian reinforced bitumen felt should be used within the roof or measures must be taken to ensure that bats cannot come into contact with any BRM's.

- External lighting should be kept to a minimum and, where necessary, should be low wattage and should include measures to reduce reflective rebound into the surrounding sky.

- Site lighting will be kept to a minimum during construction and operational phases. If lighting is necessary, there are a number of ways to minimise the effect of lighting on bats. Information can be taken from the Institution of Lighting Professionals and Bat Conservation Trust's Guidance Note 08/18 Bats and artificial lighting in the UK (2018). If further clarification is required, the ecologist should be consulted.

- As bats are opportunistic animals, and are transitory in nature, if the start of works is delayed by more than one year (into the summer of 2025 or later) then update surveys of all buildings is likely to be required.

- On a further note, barn owls are breeding within building 5 in a barn owl nest box, the chicks have been heard calling on several occasions. No works can be done to this building until the chicks have fledged. The nest box can then be boarded to prevent further use and put up in a different suitable location on site.

7. REFERENCES AND SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS

Bat Ability (2019) Assessing Sites for Hibernation Potential. A Practical Approach, including Proposed Method and Supporting Notes

Bat Conservation Trust (2018) Guidance Note 08/18 Bats and artificial lighting in the UK

COLLINS, J. (ED.) (2023) Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists – Good Practice Guidelines, 4th Edition. Bat Conservation Trust, London https://www.bats.org.uk/news/2023/09/bat-surveys-for--ecologists-good-practice-guidelines-4th-edition-launched

Envirotech (2023) Bat, Barn Owl & Nesting Bird Survey, Petersburgh Farm, Beckermet CA21 2XW. Report reference: 8912

Grid Reference Finder (2023): GRF, online http://www.gridreferencefinder.com, accessed at report date.

Magic (2023): Magic Maps, NEPS licences and designated sites, online http://www.magic.gov.uk, accessed at report date.

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

Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (2005), Circular 06/2005: Biodiversity and Geological Conservation. Para. 99

8. APPENDICES

APPENDIX A - PHOTOGRAPHS

Photo 1: 08-05-24 Building 1 S1 survey start

Photo 2: 08-05-24 Building 1 S2 survey start

Photo 3: 08-05-24 Building 1 S1 survey end

Photo 4: 08-05-24 Building 1 S2 survey end

Photo 5: 21-05-24 Building 4 S2 survey start

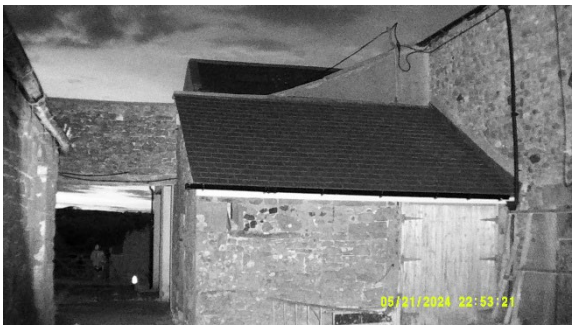

Photo 6: 21-05-24 Building 1 S2 survey end

Photo 7: 21-05-24 Building 5 S4 survey start

Photo 8: 21-05-24 Building 5 S4 survey end

Photo 9: 21-05-24 Building 5 S4 survey end example without IR

Photo 10: 29-05-24 Building 3 S5 survey start

Photo 11: 29-05-24 Building 3 S3 survey start

Photo 12: 29-05-24 Building 3 S2 survey start

Photo 13: 29-05-24 Building 3 S5 survey end

Photo 14: 29-05-24 Building 3 S3 survey end

	
Photo 15: 29-05-24 Building 3 S2 survey end	Photo 2: 20-06-25 Building 1 S1 survey start
	
Photo 15: 20-06-25 Building 1 S2 survey start	Photo 2: 20-06-25 Building 1 S1 survey end
	
Photo 15: 20-06-25 Building 1 S1 survey end	Photo 2: 10-07-24 Building 1 S1 survey start
	
Photo 15: 10-07-24 Building 1 S2 survey start	Photo 2: 10-07-24 Building 1 S1 survey end

	
Photo 15: 10-07-24 Building 1 S2 survey end	Photo 2: 10-07-24 Building 1 S1 survey end no IR
	
Photo 15: 10-07-24 Building 1 S2 survey end no IR	Photo 2: 10-07-24 Building 6 S6 survey start
	
Photo 15: 10-07-24 Building 6 S4 survey start	Photo 2: 10-07-24 Building 6 S6 survey end
	
Photo 15: 10-07-24 Building 6 S4 survey end	Photo 2: 10-07-24 Building 6 S6 survey end no IR

 Photo 15: 10-07-24 Building 6 S4 survey end no IR	

Appendix B - Bat Survey Plan