

Ecological Appraisal - Bats

1. Introduction

This Appraisal has been prepared to support an application for planning permission and one for listed building consent at Moresby Hall, Whitehaven. The Appraisal is specific to consideration of the possible impact of the proposed conversion of a former barn and staff cottage at Moresby Hall to provide 3no. self-contained holiday lets.

The northern part of the Hall's curtilage contains former agricultural ranges and later structures, several of which are in a poor condition. A former barn provides a workshop/laundry on the ground floor with storage above ancillary to the use of the Hall as a boutique hotel. The cottage adjoining the barn provides staff accommodation on the ground floor and storage on the first floor. There is also an attached two-storey barn in a ruinous condition without a roof and relatively large sections of walling. Retaining walls run broadly north-south along the western edge of the yard. Ground levels within the yard are lower than the public road to the west.

2. Relevant proposed works

In 2019, under application numbers 4/18/2242/0F1 and 4/18/2243/0L1, planning permission and listed building consent were issued for the repair and reconfiguration of existing structures to provide additional accommodation; erection of an extension on the site of a former Dutch barn to provide 10 letting rooms, and associated facilities/parking.

The scheme approved under 4/18/2242/0F1 and 4/18/2243/0L1 involved the retention of the existing laundry; conversion of the ground floor of the barn from a workshop to a holiday let unit; the conversion of the first floor store above the workshop to a let unit; the retention of the ground floor of the "staff cottage"; and two let bedrooms on the first floor of the staff cottage.

By way of comparison, the current proposal involves retaining the workshop and laundry but with three self-contained holiday let units utilising the first floor store and both floors of the staff cottage.

The relevant plans are "2511-51 Barn and Staff Cottage As Existing", and "2511-52 Barn and Staff Cottage As Proposed". The submitted drawings show that the external roof works are limited to the insertion of 4 no. conservation-style rooflights, comprising 2 no. rooflights on the south elevation and 2 no. rooflights on the north elevation. No other general roof alterations are proposed, other than the installation of the proposed rooflights.

3. Desk-based check and available information

A check of publicly available NBN Atlas records for the site has not identified any bat records within a 0.5 km radius. No bat evidence has been identified from the information reviewed in association with the specific areas of roof affected by the proposed rooflights.

4. Assessment

The proposed intervention is limited, localised and confined to the existing roof plane. It does not involve wholesale roof replacement, demolition of the roof structure, works to the eaves, verges or ridge, or alteration of any known roosting feature.

Having regard to the limited extent of the proposed rooflight works, the absence of bat records returned by the public NBN Atlas search within 0.5 km, the absence of identified bat evidence in the information reviewed, and the lack of works to higher-risk roof features such as eaves, ridge or verges, the risk of impact arising from the rooflight installation is considered to be minimal/negligible.

5. Conclusion

The proposal is not expected to give rise to a material ecological impact or to require further bat survey work in respect of the rooflight installation.

Works would nevertheless proceed cautiously. Should bats, or evidence of bats, be encountered during the works, works would cease and appropriate ecological advice sought before proceeding further.