Whitcher Wildlife Ltd.
Ecological Consultants.

POW BECK, WHITEHAVEN.

OS REF: NX 984-155.

BAT SURVEY.

Ref No: **211293.**

Date: **22nd January 2021.**

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1. INTRODUCTION.

1.1. East Bridgford Residential Investments Limited propose to submit a planning application to develop Pow Beck Care Home, which has been disused for approximately four years. Pow Beck Care Home was located off Meadow Road, Whitehaven.

1.2. Whitcher Wildlife Ltd was therefore commissioned to carry out a bat survey of the site to establish whether there are any issues that may affect the proposed works.

1.3. This survey was carried out on 22nd January 2021 and this report outlines the findings of that survey and makes appropriate recommendations.

1.4. Appendix I and II of this report provides additional information on bats and nesting birds and the protection afforded to them and is designed to assist the reader in understanding the contents of this report.

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2. SURVEY METHODOLOGY.

2.1. The structure was checked for potential bat roosting sites in line by looking for the following signs: -

* Holes, cracks or crevices.
* Bat droppings.
* Prey remains.

2.2. A thorough external inspection was carried out from ground level for any gaps or openings of the structure which may provide suitable roost access points and field signs to indicate possible use by bats.

2.3. All walls and the ground around the structure were checked for signs of bat droppings or staining to indicate possible use by bats. Where necessary, ladders were utilised to gain access within the limits of health and safety. Any access constraints encountered are outlined within the following report.

2.4. All survey work was carried out in line with Collins, J. (ed.) (2016) *Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines (3rd edition)*, with an assessment of the structures suitability for roosting bats made in accordance with these guidelines.

2.4. A dusk emergence survey was not undertaken as the survey was carried outside the bat activity season.

2.5. This survey was carried out by James Campbell MCIEEM. Since 2003 James has had experience in a professional capacity as a Wildlife Consultant carrying out Ecology Surveys and Phase 1 Habitat surveys and is a full member of CIEEM. James holds licences with several licensing bodies including:-

- Natural England Survey Licences in respect of bats, great crested newts, white clawed crayfish and barn owls.
- Scottish Natural Heritage Licences in respect of bats and great crested newts.
- Countryside Council for Wales Licences in respect of bats and great crested newts.

He has also successfully completed numerous courses run by CIEEM, BCT and FSC regarding protected species and in carrying out Phase 1 Habitat surveys. He is also confined spaces trained and qualified to NVQ Level 2 in tree climbing and aerial rescue.

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3. SURVEY RESULTS.

3.1. Data Search Results.

3.1.1. A desktop data search was carried out with Cumbria Biodiversity Data Centre for records of bats and bat roosts within 2km of the survey area.

3.1.2. Numerous records of Noctule, Common Pipistrelle and Brown Long Eared bat roosts, casualties and sightings were identified within 2km of the survey area. However, the nearest record of a roost was over 300m to the north of the survey area. The proposed works will have no impact on any known bat roosts.

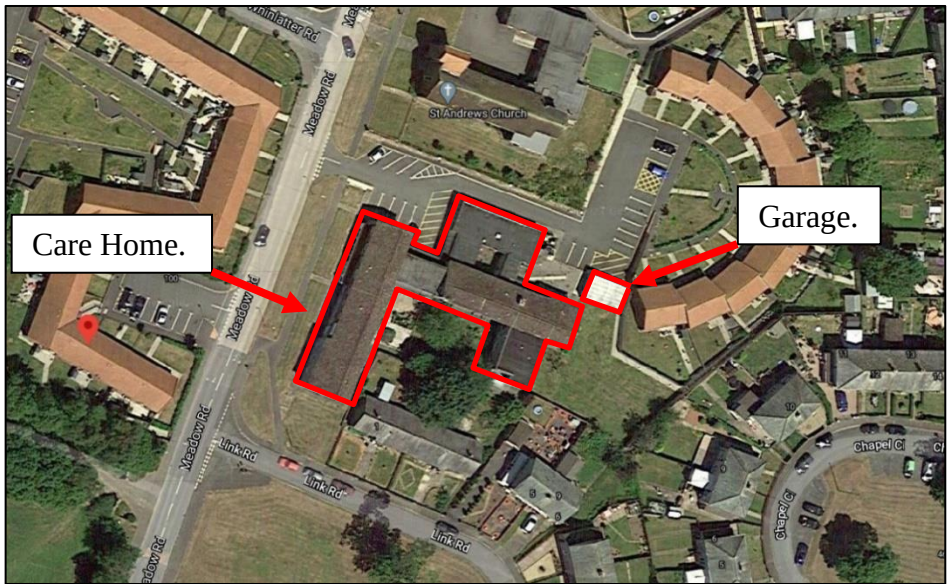
3.2. Site Description.

3.2.1. The surveyed buildings were a two storey and single storey disused care home and a garage.

3.2.2. The photograph below shows the northern elevation of the buildings.

3.2.3. The immediate surrounding area was dense residential housing with a woodland corridor immediately adjacent to the west.

3.2.4. The aerial photograph below shows the location of the surveyed buildings and the immediate surrounding area.



3.3. Daytime Survey Results.

3.3.1. Care home.

3.3.1.1. The surveyed building comprised two, two story sections with pitched roofs, which were connected by single storey flat roofed sections. The majority of the windows and doors were in situ and closed with metal shutters covering them externally. The building had brick cavity walls and two areas of hanging tiles on the northern and western walls. The building had four gable ends and wooden soffit and fascia boards around the eaves. These were all tight fitting and in a good condition. The brickwork was generally in a good condition with no visible cracks or crevices suitable for roosting bats.

3.3.1.2. The photograph adjacent shows the northern elevation of the building.

3.3.1.3. The photograph adjacent shows the western elevation of the building.

3.3.1.4. The photograph adjacent shows the southern elevation of the building.

3.3.1.5. The two story sections of the building were covered with generally tight fitting interlocking tiles with a tight fitting hessian liner. Internally the roof was supported by a timber ‘A frame’, which was in a good condition with no gaps or cracks suitable for roosting bats.

3.3.1.6. The photograph below shows the internal elevation of the roof.

3.3.1.7. The flat roofed sections comprised a wooden frame, which was covered with a tight fitting bitumen felt. The roof was tight fitting and in a good condition with no gaps or cracks suitable for roosting bats.

3.3.1.8. No bat roosts or bat field signs were identified internally or externally during this survey.

3.3.1.9. No nests or nesting activity was identified within the building during this survey.

3.3.2. Garage.

3.3.2.1. The surveyed building was a single storey flat roofed garage. Access could not be gained internally. However, a visual inspection could be carried out through an area of missing timber above the garage door and the building was assessed as unsuitable for roosting bats. All the doors were in situ and generally tight fitting. The building had solid brick walls and wooden fascia boards. These were all tight fitting and in a good condition. The brickwork was generally in a good condition with no visible cracks or crevices suitable for roosting bats.

3.3.2.2. The flat roofed sections comprised a wooden frame, which was covered with a tight fitting bitumen felt. The felt covering was in a good condition with no gaps or cracks suitable for roosting bats.

3.3.2.3. No bat roosts or bat field signs were identified internally or externally during this survey.

3.3.2.4. No nests or nesting activity was identified within the building during this survey.

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4. EVALUATION OF FINDINGS.

4.1. Care Home.

4.1.1. The building was assessed for the suitability for roosting bats. The brickwork was in a good condition with no visible cracks or crevices suitable for roosting bats. The roof was generally tight fitting with no gaps for roosting bats. No bat roosts or bat field signs were identified during the survey. Therefore, the building was assessed as having negligible potential and the proposed works will have **no impact** on roosting bats.

4.1.2. The building will provide limited suitability for nesting birds. However, no nests were identified internally and externally during this survey. Therefore, if the works were carried out during the nesting bird season, which extends from March to September, there would be a **high impact** on nesting birds. However, if the works were carried out outside the nesting bird season there would be **no impact** on nesting birds.

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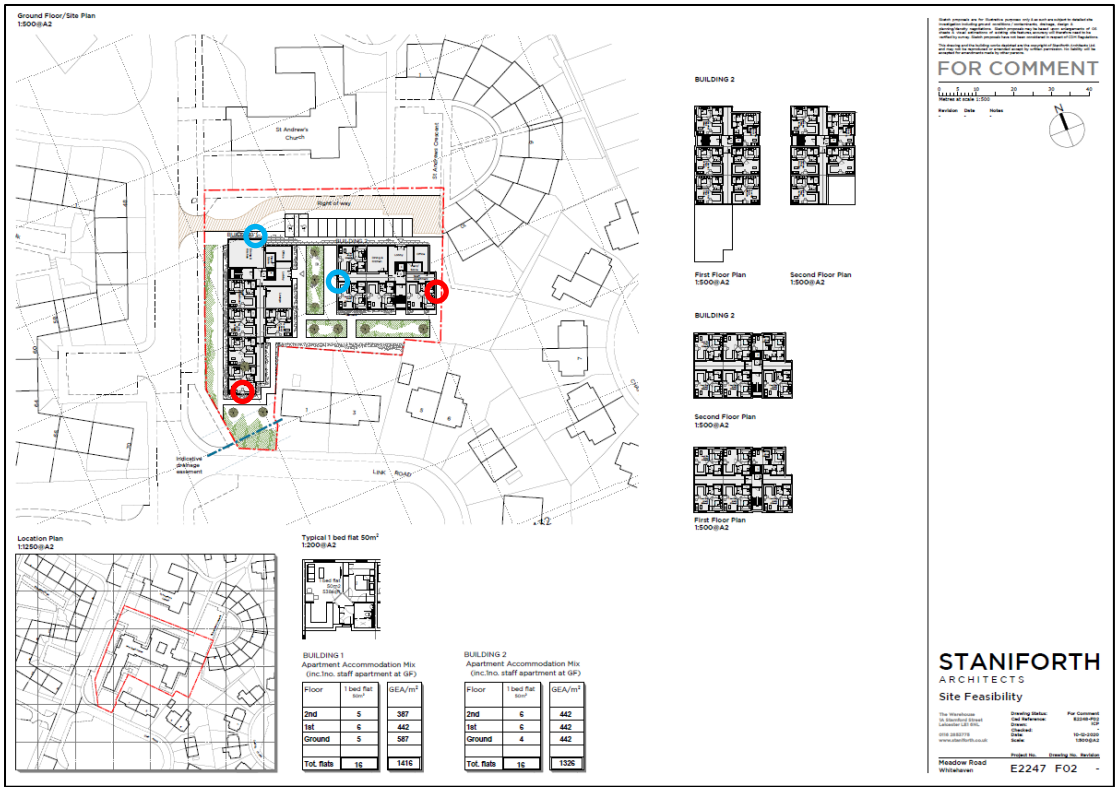
5. RECOMMENDATIONS.

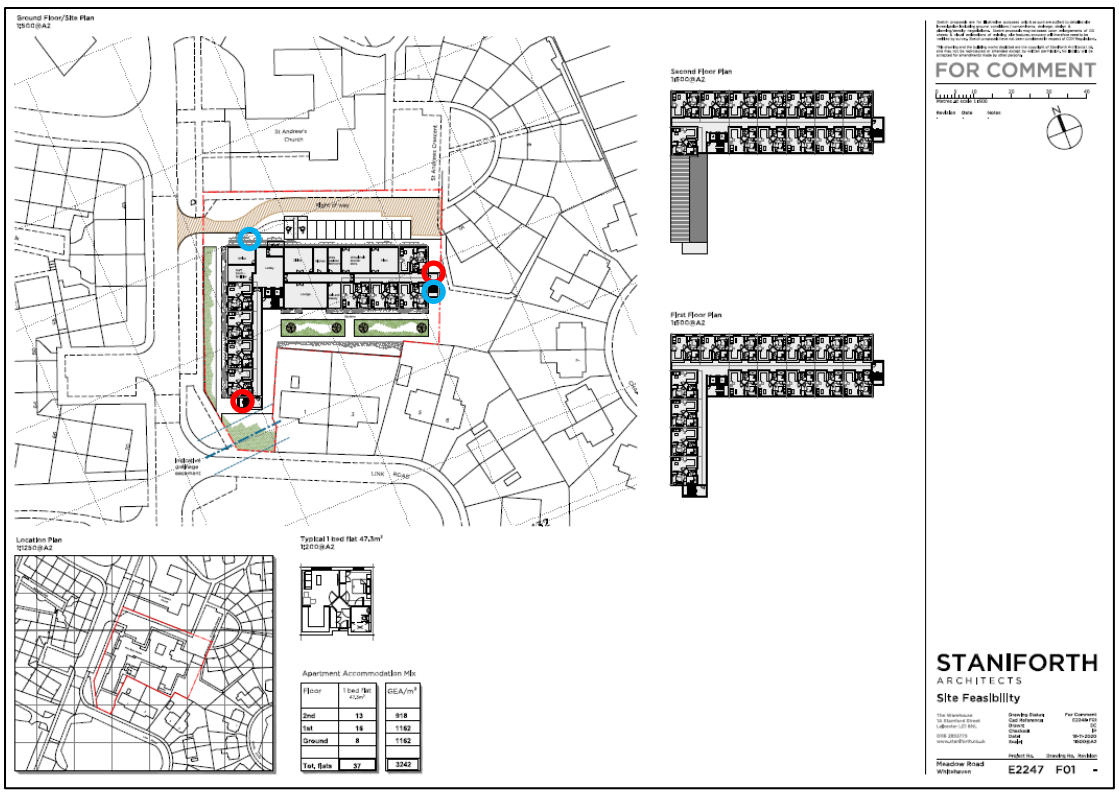
5.1. It is highly unlikely that bats will be present within the surveyed buildings. Therefore, the building has been assessed as having negligible potential for roosting bats. Nevertheless, individual bats can seek temporary shelter almost anywhere and therefore it is recommended that the works are carried out with due care and in the very unlikely event a bat is found, the bat should be covered and protected, work should cease at that location and the undersigned contacted for further advice.

5.2. It is recommended that the works are carried out outside the nesting bird season, which extends from March to September. However, if the works are carried out during the nesting bird season the works should be preceded by a thorough nesting bird survey carried out by a suitably experienced person. If an active nest is identified during this survey the nest should be left undisturbed until the young have fledged.

5.3. As habitat will be lost during the proposed works, biodiversity enhancements should be included in the proposed development. These should include two integrated bat bricks and two integrated bird nesting boxes. Examples of these are shown below.

5.4. Currently there are two proposed plans, which are shown below. The proposed locations of the integrated bat boxes are shown as red circles and the integrated bird boxes are shown as blue circles.





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Prepared by:	
James Campbell MCIEEM.	Date: 22nd January 2021.

Checked by:	
Jenny Whitcher Roebuck MCIEEM.	Date: 28th January 2021.

6. REFERENCES.

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Appendix I. BAT INFORMATION.

Ecology

There are currently 18 species of bat residing in Britain, 17 of which of which are known to breed here. They are extremely difficult to identify in the hand and even more so in flight.

All appear to be diminishing in numbers, probably due to habitat change and shortage of food, caused by pesticides, as insects are their sole diet.

As their diet consists solely of insects, bats hibernate during the winter when their food source is at its most scarce. They will spend the winter in hollow trees, caves, mines and the roofs of buildings.

Certain species, particularly the pipistrelle (the commonest and most widespread British bat) can quickly adapt to man-made structures and will readily use these to roost and to rear their young.

Surveys

During walkover surveys, bat roosts can be identified by looking for:

- Suitable holes, cracks and crevices within any building, tree or other structure.
- Bat droppings along walls, window cills, or on the ground.
- Prey remains, such as insect wings.

Further investigations can be made using endoscopes, by carrying out aerial inspections of trees or by conducting bat activity surveys during dusk and dawn over summer months.

Legislation

Bats are protected under Appendix II and III of the Bern Convention (1982), Schedule 5 and 6 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act (1981), Annex IV of the Habitats Directive (some species under Annex II), Annex II of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations (2010) and EUROBATS agreement. Numerous species are

also listed under section 41 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act (2006) making them species of principal importance.

All bats and their roosts are therefore protected in the UK. This makes it an offence to kill, injure or take any bat, to interfere with any place used for shelter or protection, or to intentionally disturb any animal occupying such a place.

The UK has designated maternity and hibernacula areas as Special Areas of Conservation (SAC's) under the Habitats Directive. Implementation of the UK Biodiversity Action Plan also includes action for a number bat species and the habitats which support them.

Where development proposals are likely to affect a bat roost site, a licence is required from Natural England.

Appendix II. NESTING BIRD INFORMATION.

Ecology

The nesting season will vary according to the weather each year but generally commences in March, peaks during May and June and continues until September. It is also worth remembering that some birds nest in trees and scrub, but others are ground nesting or prefer man- made structures or buildings.

Surveys

Nesting bird surveys search for potential nest sites in vegetation, buildings etc. Potential nesting sites are observed over a suitable period of time for bird movements or calling male birds that would indicate the presence of a nest. The presence of a nest can be identified from the field signs without the necessity to see the nest itself, thereby avoiding any disturbance of the nests. The best way to avoid this issue is to plan for vegetation clearance to be carried out outside the bird-nesting season.

Legislation

Nesting birds are protected under The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981.

Part 1. -(1) Of the Act states that: - If any person intentionally: - kills, injures or takes any wild bird; takes, damages or destroys the nest of any wild bird while that nest is in use or being built; or takes or destroys an egg of any wild bird, he shall be guilty of an offence.

Part 1. -(5) of the Act states that: - If any person intentionally: - disturbs any wild bird included in Schedule 1 while it is building a nest or is in, on, or near a nest containing eggs or young; or disturbs young of such a bird, he shall be guilty of an offence and liable to a special penalty.

The Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 amends the above by inserting after “intentionally” the words “or recklessly”.

Toolbox Talk: Bats

Whitcher Wildlife Ltd
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18 species of bat have been recorded in Britain, 17 of which are known to breed here.

Identification.

Some species can be extremely difficult to identify in the hand and even more so in flight.

Species such as the Brown Long Eared bat pictured above can be more easily identified in the hand. Whereas, the Common Pipistrelle and Soprano Pipistrelle are more difficult to identify.

Bats are more easily identified by field signs such as droppings or feeding remains.

Habitat.

Bats are highly specialised creatures and require a relatively narrow range of suitable conditions in order to sustain a viable population. Bats require an abundant supply of flying insect food in places where they can easily be caught and they need safe and reliable roosting sites, particularly during breeding and hibernation.

Bats are heavily dependent on buildings and trees for their roost sites and therefore extremely susceptible to disturbance from human activities. Development schemes can also isolate bat populations and sever roost sites from favoured feeding areas by removing hedgerows or other features used as commuting routes.

Bats are susceptible to disturbance and have been known to abandon roost sites after instances of disturbance. The effects of disturbance are more pronounced at different times of year. Serious disturbance during breeding can result in the breeding females being killed or the abandonment and subsequent starvation of dependant young. Repeated disturbance during winter hibernation can result in the death of adult animals from starvation.

The level of protection afforded to bats in the UK and European legislation reflects the fact that it is now generally accepted that bats have declined substantially, maybe by as much as 60%, over recent years. Most species are declining and vulnerable with all species being protected.

As their diet consists solely of insects, bats hibernate during the winter when their food source is at its most scarce. They will spend the winter in hollow trees, caves, mines and occasionally the roofs of buildings.

Certain species, particularly Pipistrelle, can quickly adapt to manmade structures and will readily use these to roost and to rear their young.

Legislation.

Bats and their roosts are fully protected at all times (whether the bats are currently present or not). This protection comes from the Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981 (updated by the Countryside Rights of Way Act 2000) and the Habitats Regulations 1994. Under this legislation it is an offence to intentionally or recklessly kill, injure, capture or disturb bats or to damage, destroy or obstruct access to any place used by bats for shelter or protection.

Under the Habitats Regulations, where bats may be affected by development proposals, a licence is required from Natural England. Natural England's published guidelines on the licence procedure indicate that if, on the basis of survey information and specialist knowledge of the species concerned, the proposed activity is reasonably likely to result in an offence then a licence is required. If, on the other hand the proposed activity is reasonably unlikely to result in an offence, then a licence is not required.

If bats or bat field signs are identified during works, stop all works and contact Whitcher Wildlife Ltd directly on 01226 753271 or at info@whitcher-wildlife.co.uk

Toolbox Talk: Nesting Birds

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The bird nesting season varies according to the weather each year but generally commences in March, peaks during May and June and continues until September.
A bird's nest is the place in which a bird lays and icubates its eggs. Some species build a nest structure while other species lay their eggs directly onto the ground or on a rocky ledge. Nests can be constructed from a variety of materials and are usually lined with feathers or fur.

Identification.

Some birds construct nests in an area where it can be seen while others construct nests that are hidden from view and are more difficult to identify.

The photograph to the right shows a Moorhen nest which can easily be seen.

Nests can also be identified from field signs without the necessity to see the nest itself. The presence of a nest can be identified by seeing the adult birds leaving and returning to the nest regularly with food to feed the chicks.

The photograph to the left shows a Wren's nest in overhanging tree roots, which is almost impossible to see.

Care should be taken at any time during the nesting season particularly when regular bird activity is seen, or birds can be heard calling.

Habitat.

Birds regularly nest in a variety of places with some species nesting in buildings or vegetation and others nesting on the ground or on water. However, birds may nest in any habitat or situation if they identify a suitable nest site.

Legislation.

Part 1. -(1) of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 states that:

If any person intentionally or recklessly:

- Kills, injures or takes any wild bird.
- Takes, damages or destroys the nest of any wild bird while that nest is in use or being built, or
- Takes or destroys an egg of any wild bird.

He shall be guilty of an offence.

Part 1. -(5) of the Act states that:

If any person intentionally or recklessly:

- Disturbs any wild bird included in Schedule 1 while it is building a nest or is in, on, or near a nest containing eggs or young, or
- Disturbs young of such a bird.

He shall be guilty of an offence and liable to a special penalty.

If a nest or potential nesting activity is identified during works, stop all works and contact Whitcher Wildlife Ltd directly on 01226 753271 or at info@whitcher-wildlife.co.uk