



Precautionary Working Method Statement

Petersburgh Farm
Beckermeth
Cumbria
CA21 2XW

Prepared for: Adams Planning and Development Ltd
Date: November 2025
Reference: J033



DOCUMENT CONTROL SHEET

Report Number: J033/PWMS/LS/19.11.25/FINAL

Client: Adams Planning and Development Ltd

Project Name: Petersburg Farm, Beckermest, Cumbria CA21 2XW

Project Number: J033

Report Type: Precautionary Working Method Statement

Status: Final

Date of Issue: 19 November 2025

CONTENTS

Contents	2
Non-Technical Summary	3
Executive Summary	3
1. Introduction	4
Background	4
Report Objectives	4
2. Method Statement.....	5
Pre Works.....	5
Works Under Ecological Supervision.....	6
Timing.....	6
Management	6
3. Conclusions	7
4. References and supporting documents.....	8
5. Appendices.....	9
Appendix A – Toolbox Talk.....	9

NON-TECHNICAL SUMMARY

Executive Summary

Background	In October 2023 a preliminary roost assessment was undertaken by another ecological consultancy, EnviroTech, of Petersburgh Farm, Beckermat, Cumbria CA21 2XW (central grid reference NY 02181 05947, What3Words:///clever.blindfold.advantage). 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 Beckermat.
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.

1. INTRODUCTION

Background

- 1.1 Natural Ecology were commissioned by Adams Planning and Development Ltd to undertake a nocturnal bat surveys of Petersburgh Farm, Beckermest, Cumbria CA21 2XW (central grid reference NY 02181 05947, What3Words: [///clever.blindfold.advantage](https://www.what3words.com/en/clever.blindfold.advantage)) in 2024 (hereafter referred to as the 'Building/Site').
- 1.2 The site was subject to a preliminary roost assessment in October 2023. 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. The PRA survey was carried out by EnviroTech, a separate ecological consultancy.
- 1.3 The site was then subject to nocturnal activity surveys in 2024.

Report Objectives

- 1.4 This document outlines precautionary working methods and acts as a method statement for works on site
- 1.5 This report is to satisfy the planning conditions to allow the works to go ahead as planned.
- 1.6 The purpose of this report is to detail appropriate precautionary working measures to ensure that potential impacts to bats, barns owls, nesting birds and reptiles/amphibians are negligible and that no legislative breach occurs as a result of the proposed works.

2. METHOD STATEMENT

- 2.1 A method statement is provided below to avoid (through timings of work) a breach of legislation.
- 2.2 Works to the buildings on site must be supervised by a bat licenced bat ecologist.
- 2.3 Works impacting potential bird nesting habitat (building, scrub etc) should be undertaken outside of the nesting season (March – September inclusive).
- 2.4 Any works to suitable habitat for reptiles and amphibians must avoid the hibernation period to avoid disturbance to hibernating individuals.
- 2.5 Any excavations must be covered overnight and/or a means of escape provided for any wildlife (for example; badger, hedgehog, hare). If excavations left open, they must be inspected first thing daily.

Pre Works

- 2.6 Prior to works commencing on site, an Ecological Clerk of Works (ECoW) will provide any contractors associated with the works with a toolbox talk, to make them aware of the legislation protecting bats, barn owls, nesting birds and reptiles/amphibians, as well as the potential presence of roosting bats and nesting barn owls on site, and measures will then be carried out as detailed within this method statement. The toolbox talk will also include information on how to proceed if a protected species is discovered during the course of the work
- 2.7 Pre-commencement checks of potential roost features within the buildings are to be undertaken by a licenced bat ecologist.
- 2.8 If any bats are found during the pre-commencement checks, all work must cease, and guidance sought from the licenced bat ecologist on next steps and licencing options.
- 2.9 An internal and external inspection will be undertaken of buildings 4 and 5 to determine if the buildings are still being used by barn owls. The nesting box must be checked and blocked off if barn owls are not currently using it for nesting. No work should be carried out on these buildings when they are actively used by nesting birds, and works are to be re-scheduled to an appropriate time.
- 2.10 If it is not possible to do works outside of the bird breeding season, a nesting bird check must be undertaken immediately before work commences by a suitably qualified ecologist. This gives a 24-hour window in which to start works in that area. If nests are found to be in use, work must cease until chicks have fledged and parent birds have abandoned the nest (on average 21 days).
- 2.11 Pre-commencement fingertip searches of suitable reptile/amphibian habitat must be undertaken by a suitably qualified ecologist.
- 2.12 Directional, staged strimming of vegetation must be undertaken to allow reptiles/amphibians to leave the area safely.

Works Under Ecological Supervision

- 2.13 A licensed bat ecologist will be appointed as an Ecological Clerk of Works for the proposed works.
- 2.14 Removal of suitable PRFs are to be supervised by the licenced ecologist, and they will be on call for the duration of the works should a bat be found.
- 2.15 If bats are discovered during any point of the works, work will cease immediately and further advice sought.
- 2.16 The barn owl nesting box in Building 5 must be moved to a suitable location, after barn owls have finished nesting in it for the season, and chicks have fledged (to be confirmed and evidenced by an Ecologist during pre-commencement checks). No work should be carried out on these buildings when they are actively used by nesting birds.

Timing

- 2.17 Due to the areas of the building being affected by the proposed works, the suitability of these areas, and the results of the nocturnal bat surveys, it is considered highly unlikely that bats will be discovered.
- 2.18 Despite the above, it is recommended that works are undertaken over winter 2025-2026 (between October 2025 and April 2026) to reduce the likelihood of encountering bats, nesting barn owls and nesting birds.
- 2.19 Vegetation works should be undertaken between March and October to avoid hibernating reptiles/amphibians.

Management

- 2.20 Any deviation from the Proposed Work and/or schedule of works needs to be reviewed by an ecologist to make sure there are no potential impacts.

3. CONCLUSIONS

- 3.1 A Method Statement with regards to bats, barn owls, nesting birds and amphibians/reptiles (as detailed within this report) is required to ensure the proposed works does not result in the disturbance of protected species, and subsequently breach legislation.
- 3.2 Works can only commence in strict accordance with this Method Statement. Any deviation from the Proposed Works and/or schedule of works needs to be reviewed by an ecologist to make sure there is no impacts.
- 3.3 If bats or evidence of bats are discovered at any point during works, work must cease immediately, and Natural England be contacted for advice.

4. REFERENCES AND SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS

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>

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

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

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.

5. APPENDICES

Appendix A – Toolbox Talk

Bats

There are 18 species of bat in the UK, eight breeding species in Cumbria and two vagrant species. Bats rely heavily on the built environment, some roosting almost exclusively in buildings. However, bats are not only found in old buildings, and can be found in virtually all types of built structures, from small bridges to large industrial units.

Bats can be found in the open areas like loft spaces and barns and garages. However, the majority of the bat species in the UK roost in small crevices, such as under roof slates, in pointing, or in wooden features, such as soffit boards. These locations are not often immediately obvious, and bats are not always apparent from the outside.

Legal & Protection

UK Bats are classed as a European Protected Species and are protected by schedule 5 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act (as amended) and schedule 2 of the Conservation (Natural Habitats &c) Regulations 1994.

Through these legislations, it is illegal to;

- Deliberately capture, injure or kill a bat,
- Intentionally or *recklessly* disturb a bat in its roost or deliberately disturb a group of bats,
- Damage or destroy a bat roosting place (even if bats are not occupying the roost at the time),
- Possess or advertise/sell/exchange a bat (dead or alive) or any part of a bat, or
- Intentionally or *recklessly* obstruct access to a bat roost.

Contravention of these laws carries an unlimited fine and/or a 6 month jail sentence. Further fines can be levied, such as Proceeds of Crime Act (POCA) and Corporate Liability. The maximum penalty so far has been over £600,000 for the destruction of a roost; this was not for a rare species, but for a soprano pipistrelle roost, one of the commonest species in the country.

Barn Owls

Barn owl protection involves legal safeguards under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981, making it illegal to harm them, their nests, or their eggs. Because barn owls are listed under Schedule 1 of the act, they have additional protection against disturbance, especially during the nesting season. It is illegal to intentionally or carelessly disturb them while they are building a nest or are in or near a nest with young.

Nesting Birds

In the UK, all wild birds, their nests, and eggs are protected by the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981. It is illegal to intentionally harm or kill a wild bird, or to destroy or damage its nest while it is in use or being built.

Reptiles/Amphibians

In the UK, common reptiles like the adder, common lizard, grass snake, and slow worm are protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) against intentional killing and injury. Common species like common frogs, common toads, and smooth newts are protected from trade (e.g., sale or barter), but not from being harmed or killed. All native amphibians are covered under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981, and common toads are also listed as a Species of Conservation Concern.



Method Statement

The following method statement must be adhered to, to prevent any offences being committed under the Wildlife and Countryside Act;

- Works are to be undertaken between October and March, when bats, barns owl and nesting birds are less likely to be present and are less vulnerable to disturbance.
- Prior to works commencing, a pre works inspection is to be carried out by a Natural England bat licence ecologist to look for bats or evidence of recent bat activity, barn owls, and nesting birds.
- Site workers are to be made aware of the presence of protected species in the buildings and works to be undertaken slowly, by hand and with care. For example, if applicable, roof slates are to be removed carefully and checked on the underside for the presence of bats before being discarded.
- If bats, or signs of bats, are discovered during works when the ecologist is not present on site, then all work must stop until advice has been obtained from the ecologist or from Natural England (01539 620168).
- The barn owl nest box is to be blocked and moved to another location if **not currently** in use.
- Ground-level vegetation must have a fingertip search for amphibians/reptiles prior to directional, staged strimming. Any works that break the ground of suitable reptile/amphibian habitat must avoid the hibernation period to avoid the disturbance of hibernating herpetofauna.

I confirm that I have read and understood the above and will adhere to the method statement.

Name	Signed	Date