

From: WYG.EcologyServices.CumberlandCouncil
Sent: 17 June 2025 15:54
To: Christie Burns
Cc: WYG.EcologyServices.CumberlandCouncil; Ishbel Almeida
Subject: RE: PETERSBURGH FARM, BECKERMET 4/25/2169/0F1

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Dear Christie,

Thanks for your time this morning and following on from our discussion our response is set out below:

The proposed development is for the conversion of 5 disused stone barns into 2 different self-build homes under planning application reference 04/25/2169/0F1. We understand this follows approved works to convert Building 1 to a dwelling and the demolition of part of Building 2 to allow access under application [4/24/2392/0F1 | Copeland Borough Council](#). As part of the current application we have reviewed the 2023 Bat, Barn owl & Nesting Bird Survey by Evirotech and the 2024 Bat Activity Survey Report by Natural Ecology.

Roosting Bats

Daytime bat and bird surveys were carried out in October 2023 identified evidence of roosting bats (droppings) in Building 1 and 3. Nocturnal surveys in 2024 did not identify any roosting bats and these are considered inactive roosts. Surveys were carried out by Natural Ecology during May, June and July of 2024 in accordance with the 2016 Bat Conservation Trust Guidance which is now superseded by the 2023 4th Edition, however Night Vision Aids were used which was a key iteration in the guidance

Please can we request further details associated with the 2024 bat survey methodology:

- An annotated plan from 2024 to confirm building references and locations are the same as in 2023;
- A screenshot of the darkest point of the survey for each location (cross-referenced with building reference); and
- Confirmation that the condition of the buildings hadn't changed between 2023 and 2024 and that the suitability for bats is the same as in 2023 (i.e. Building 3 and 4 were of moderate suitability)

Please can the ecological consultant provide justification for the non-standard approach in 2024 in which Building 3 and 4 were subject to one nocturnal bat survey? This deviates from best practice guidance (Collins, 2023) which recommends two nocturnal bat surveys for buildings with moderate roosting suitability (Building 3) or three surveys for buildings with evidence of roosting bats (Building 3).

Subject to receiving the above information and the status of inactive roosting in 2024, it's considered that precautionary working methods would be appropriate (as detailed below).

Nesting Barn Owl

In 2023, a barn owl was nesting in Building 4 and in 2024 barn owl were nesting in the nest box of Building 5. A pre-commencement check of Building 4 and 5 is required in 2025 prior to works to determine if the buildings are used by nesting barn owls. Works to any building used by Barn Owls must not start until nesting is complete and the young have fledged. The barn owl nest box in building 5 must be moved to a suitable location (ideally another building or suitable tree) by a suitably qualified ecologist.

Other Protected Species

A small area of grassland habitat will be lost to facilitate the proposed package treatment plan. Although there are waterbodies in the wider area, it is considered that impacts on great crested newts and common amphibians and reptiles are unlikely. As a precaution, works to the grassland must be carried out using Precautionary Working Methods as detailed below.

Precautionary Working Methods

- A toolbox talk regarding all protected species which could be using the site (including bats and barn owls) must be given to all contractors prior to works commencing.
- Works impacting on nesting habitat (buildings, scrub) should avoid the nesting season (March-September inclusive) where possible. If this is not possible, a nesting bird check must be carried out on all suitable nesting features to be impacted (including buildings) immediately before work commences (within 24hours) by a suitably qualified ecologist. If any nests are found to be in current use, work must cease until all chicks have fledged and parent birds have abandoned the nest.
- A **pre-commencement** check of Building 4 and 5 is required in 2025 prior to works to determine if the buildings are used by nesting barn owls.
- **Pre-commencement** inspection of Potential Roosting Features (PRFs)/previous roosting areas using endoscope and/or torch by a suitably licensed bat ecologist.
- Previous roosting feature / areas with high suitability for roosting bats removed by hand under the supervision of a licensed bat ecologist
- If any bats are identified during pre-commencement checks, all works **must cease** and the licenced bat ecologist consulted immediately for next steps and licensing options.
- Any excavations on Site must be covered overnight or a means of escape provided for any wildlife which may become trapped within the excavation. The excavations, if left open, will need to be inspected daily prior to works commencing.
- If any equipment or materials are to be stored on site overnight, all possible entrances must be blocked and checked for wildlife the following morning prior to work commencing. If present, the Ecologist should be contacted for advice.

In addition to the above PWM, the following recommendations set out in Section 5.1 of the 2024 Bat Activity Report are to be implemented during the works as a condition of planning:

- 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 there have been bats previously on site (due to droppings noted during the preliminary roost assessment), breathable roofing membranes (BRM's) should **not** be used due to an

entrapment risk to bats. Type 1F hessian reinforced bitumen felt should be used within the roof.

The loss of bat roosting habitat must be compensated onsite by the installation of 3x general purpose bat boxes or alternatively incorporating at least 3 gaps of 20mm into the new build ridge tiles, beneath roofing tiles or soffits.

Please let me know if you have any further queries.

Kind regards
Candice

Candice Howe, CEcol MCIEEM | Associate Ecologist
Pronouns: she, her, hers

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