

Phil Richardson, Bat Consultant

10 Bedford Cottages

Great Brington

Northampton

NN7 4JF

01604 770632 (Tel and fax)

07969 883815

PRichabat@aol.com

Protected Species (Bat & Bird) Report

**Out-buildings, Hatton Fields Cottage,
Sutton Lane, Hilton DE65 5GQ**

**9th September 2014,
Updated 2021**



Contents

Summary.....	3
1. Introduction.....	3
2. Methodology.....	4-5
3. Results and Assessment.....	6-10
4. Mitigation and Conclusions.....	11
Appendices	

Summary

No bats use the buildings.

No owls use the buildings.

No special Protected Species licence will be required.

1. Introduction

1.1. This report, on behalf of Mr G Haslam, sets out the findings of a bat and bird survey at outbuildings by Hatton Fields Cottage (SK225322).

1.2 These are three modern farm barns close to the north-east corner of the house.

1.3 A survey was required due to plans to re-roof and develop the buildings.

1.4 Legislation protects bats and their roosting places, and other Protected Species. Advice and licences must be obtained before disturbing bats or damaging their roosts. This report sets out suggested mitigation.

2. Methodology

2.1 The survey was carried out on 9th September 2014 by Phil Richardson, a licensed bat worker (CLS 03405, survey levels 3 & 4). This is a time when signs of summer's use of buildings by bats and birds will be apparent.

2.2 Weather: Calm, sunny. Temperature of 19°C.

2.3 The building survey consisted of searching in daylight externally and internally using torches, ladders, endoscope and binoculars for

- bat droppings
- stains around roosting places and entrance points
- urine marks
- prey remains
- areas devoid of cobwebs
- live or dead bats
- suitable cracks and crevices for bats to enter

2.4. Emergence survey.

Observers are placed at strategic positions outside the buildings and watch for bats emerging from sunset for two hours. Electronic bat detectors are used and any calls are recorded for later analysis to determine species identification.

Interpretation of such findings, coupled with experience of bats' roosting and feeding habits, can provide evidence or indications of roosting positions, roost use, roost size and species of bats present. They also give an indication of potential use by bats if no bats are present, especially when linked to external features of landscape, geographical situation and aspect.

The surveyor has over 30 years of surveying experience of bats (six of which were as the National Trust's bat conservation officer), and has extensive knowledge of bats' roosting and foraging habits. He has had two books published on bats and has produced, or helped produce, many national guidance notes on surveying bats in the UK.

The surveyor has over 40 years experience of birds and surveys, having been the BTO Regional Representative for Northamptonshire for 30 years and organising surveys on their behalf. He has experience of UK mammals, being Mammal Recorder for Northamptonshire for 40 years.

❖ **Low probability of bat interest.** Buildings in this category fall in to two main types: Generally well maintained without cracks and crevices, no gaps between bargeboard or soffit and wall or without an attic space. Or those which contain some or all of the above features, but are both draughty and thick in cobwebs or contain strong odours such as solvents, diesel etc.

It must be borne in mind that a building from this latter group can become suitable for bats due to refurbishment. This often happens to houses once the attic space has been cleaned and under-felted prior to timber treatment.

Trees with low bat interest are usually young trees without any deadwood or holes. Most conifers fall into this category as they are usually planted as a crop

and are then felled prior to becoming old, although once old age is attained as in a landscape tree, suitable bat roosts may develop.

No licence is required for development to a building classified as Low probability of bat interest

- ❖ **Medium probability of bat interest.** The buildings here contain many sites suitable for roosting bats although no obvious signs were recorded during the survey. In exposed conditions on large buildings the signs of bat usage such as droppings and urine marks can be obliterated by heavy rain. Occasionally a light scattering of droppings will be recorded in an attic or a semi derelict building, which is considered by the surveyor unsuitable for use as a bat roost. The medium probability of bat interest category can be used based on the surveyor's experience.

Whilst no licence is required for development to a building classified as Medium probability of bat interest, it is often best practice to conduct sensitive roof stripping or architectural salvaging to minimise any possible disturbance

Trees in this category will have holes, cracks and crevices and loose bark suitable for roosting bats but no obvious roost signs such as staining and droppings at entrances.

- ❖ **High probability of bat interest.** This group includes buildings with known roosts or signs of bat occupancy such as droppings and staining at a roost entrance. The description of high probability buildings will also contain an indication as to the time of the year when it will be occupied by bats i.e. Summer – nursery roost. Winter – hibernation

Trees here will contain all the obvious roost features such as holes, cracks and crevices and loose bark but will also contain staining and droppings at the roost entrance or have been identified as a roost via a visual sighting of an exiting bat.

If the building or trees fall in to the high probability group then the area of bat interest should be identified on site with the contractors to ensure that work does not affect the bats roost.

If it is thought the work will have a direct effect on the bat roost and is unavoidable then advice must be sought from the Species Officer for Natural England (formerly English Nature and DEFRA).

3. Results and assessment

The three outbuildings are of modern or relatively modern construction and have been well-maintained. They consist of two large barns joined by a smaller, lower building. They are used for household storage, garages and a gym.

3.1 North barn

This has brick walls and a corrugated asbestos roof set on iron supports. The roof is unlined and has six skylights, making the inside light. There is a large wooden sliding door for access in the west side. The east gable is attached to the neighbouring property with a party wall.



View from west of North barn

3.1.1. Internal survey

There are no divisions inside and the underside of the roof is open to the floor with no hay loft. It is light and generally unsuitable for day-roosting bats.

The underside of the corrugated asbestos roof is unlined and there are no suitable bat roosting places. The support beams are iron and have no crevices that bats could use for roosting. There are no bat signs.

The walls are painted and in good condition with no crevices between bricks or around door or window frames, and no bat signs.

The floor and stored goods have no bat signs on them – no bat droppings, urine splashes or prey remains.

3.1.2. External survey

The corrugated roof has no suitable places for bats and there are no bat signs. The eaves are not boxed and the corrugations are open allowing access inside, where there are no bat signs. The west verge has no overhang and is covered by a flat metal fascia securely fixed with no gaps around it, and no bat signs.

The walls are well-maintained and painted with no crevices, or gaps around the door and window frames. There are no bat signs.



View looking east

Low probability of bat interest

No birds nest in or on the building.

3.2. Mid-barn

This is a small single-storey building sandwiched between the two larger barns. It is brick and originally appears to have had a concrete slab flat roof, but a new pitched roof has been placed over it. This new roof is tarred felt on boards. The interior has been plastered and decorated and is in use as a gym. There is a glazed window and door in the west gable end, making the inside light.



View from west of Mid-barn

3.2.1. Internal survey

The underside of the concrete slab has been plastered as a ceiling and has no suitable bat roosting places. The decorated walls also have no suitable roosting places for bats and no bat signs.

The floor has no bat signs on it.

3.2.2. External survey

The tarred-felt roof is modern and in good condition. There are no possible crevices in its construction that bats could use and no access points around it.

The verge is sealed tightly closed with a metal fascia with no gaps between it and the walls, and no bat signs.

Low probability of bat interest

House martins have nested under an extended verge on the east side, but not this year.

3.3. South barn

This has brick walls from the ground for the first 1-2m, then corrugated sheets fitted above on a wooden frame to reach the roof. The west gable end has new corrugated aluminium sheets and the east and south walls have corrugated asbestos. The pitched roof is corrugated asbestos sheets fixed to a wood and metal frame. There are skylights in the roof making the inside light. A double up-and-over garage door in the west gable end provides access.

Internally there is a concrete block cubicle on the north side used as a store. It is around 3m high.



View from south-west

3.3.1. Internal survey

The underside of the corrugated asbestos roof is unlined and there is no hay loft. There is nowhere suitable for bats to roost on the underside of the asbestos sheets and no bat signs.

The metal and wood supports also have no crevices and no bat signs are present on them

The walls are sheets of corrugated asbestos or aluminium and have no crevices. The lower brick walls are painted and have no crevices bats could use.

The cubicle inside has no bat signs in it or on it, or any crevices suitable for bats.

The floor and stored goods have no bat signs on them

3.3.2. External survey

The corrugated roof has no places for bats to roost or enter. The eaves are sealed with expanded foam and provide no crevices suitable for bats. The verges are sealed with a metal fascia board and the gaps under the corrugations are sealed with foam. There are no bat signs.

The door has no gaps around its frame and no bat signs on it or around it.



View from west

Low probability of bat interest

No birds nest in or on the building.

3.4. Emergence survey

One observer was placed at the north-west corner of the three barns and another at the south side.

No bats emerged. No bats flew around the area.

4. Mitigation and conclusions

The buildings are not used by bats.

None are suitable for day-roosting bats, having no suitable dark crevices, no roof voids, no boxed eaves or verges, no quiet areas. All buildings are in regular (human) use and are light. There are buildings nearby that are far more suitable for bat roosting opportunities.

House martins have bred under the verge of the Mid-barn, but not this year. It would be safer, to avoid any nesting disturbance, to work on this barn outside of the bird breeding season, usually April to September for this species, or prevent them nesting under the verge before they return in April.

House martins have recently begun to also nest under the eaves of the house (south and west sides). This can be encouraged further by driving a few large nails, well-spaced, into the wall at nest height to act as perches or support for the mud nests that are built. This will act as enhancement for the loss of the Mid-barn old nest site.

This survey is valid for the time of the survey and gives an indication of the way the bats have, or have not, used the buildings in the recent past.

**Additional detailed enhancement details for birds (added November 2021).
These should be read in conjunction with the original report.**

Some enhancement can be achieved by attaching artificial House Martin nest boxes under the eaves of the house to mitigate for loss of those on the Middle Barn. These should be placed on the south and west faces, directly under the eaves so the eaves give some weather protection, and not too close to the present nests that the birds have been using. This will help to enlarge the local colony.

For longevity it is best to use woodcrete type boxes as they are maintenance-free and long lasting. These mimic the size and shape of the real nests and are mounted on a board to attach to the eaves. I suggest that NHBS House Martin nest box double entrance (type 210794 produced by CJ Wildlife). See NHBS website.

- Three double boxes on the west side, and one on the south.

Reminder. The present barns with the nests should only be demolished out of the bird-nesting season (usually April to September).



Appendices

1. Bat legislation

The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (WCA) transposes into UK law the Convention on the Conservation of European Wildlife and Natural Habitats (Bern Convention). Amendments were made under the Countryside and Rights of Way (CROW) Act 2000 which added the word “recklessly”. All species of bats are listed under Schedule 5 of the 1981 Act so it is an offence to

- intentionally kill, injure or take a bat
- possess or control any live or dead specimens or anything derived from a bat
- intentionally or recklessly disturb a bat while it is occupying a structure or place which it uses for that purpose

The Conservation (Natural Habitats &c.) Regulations 1994 (amended 2007) (the Habitats Regulations) transpose into UK law Council Directive 92/43/EEC of 1992 (often referred to as the Habitats Directive). All bats are listed under Annex IV and some (horseshoe bats, Bechstein’s and barbastelle) are also listed under Annex II which relates to Special Areas of Conservation. These Regulations make it an offence to

- deliberately capture, injure or kill a bat
- deliberately disturb bats in a way as to be likely significantly to affect the ability of any significant groups of bats to survive, breed or rear or nurture their young, or to affect the local distribution of abundance of that species
- damage or destroy a breeding site or resting place of a bat
- keep, transport, sell or exchange, or offer for sale or exchange a live or dead bat or any part of a bat.

Penalties are fines of up to £5000 per bat and up to 6 months custodial sentence. The CROW Act made these arrestable offences.

Exceptions and licenses

- A defence that the action was “the incidental result of a lawful operation and could not reasonably have been avoided” was removed in 2007.
- Licenses can be obtained to disturb bats or damage a roost from Natural England, formerly the department known as Department of Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA).
- Licences can also be obtained for scientific study and conservation through Natural England.

2. Extract from *Bat Mitigation Guidelines 2004*, English Nature.

Conservation significance	Roost status	Mitigation/compensation requirement (depending on impact)
Low ↓ High	Feeding perches of common/rarer species	Flexibility over provision of bat-boxes, access to new buildings etc. No conditions about timing or monitoring
	Individual bats of common species	
	Small number of common species. Not a maternity site	
	Feeding perches of Annex II species	Provision of new roost facilities where possible. Need not be exactly like-for-like, but should be suitable, based on species' requirements. Minimal timing constraints or monitoring requirements
	Small numbers of rarer species. Not a maternity site	
	Hibernation sites for small numbers of common/rarer species	Timing constraints. More or less like-for-like replacement. Bats not to be left without a roost and must be given time to find the replacement. Monitoring for 2 years preferred
	Maternity sites of common species	
	Maternity sites of rarer species	Timing constraints. Like-for-like replacement as a minimum. No destruction of former roost until replacement completed and usage demonstrated. Monitoring for at least 2 years
	Significant hibernation sites for rarer/rarest species or all-species assemblages	
	Sites meeting SSSI guidelines	Oppose interference with existing roosts or seek improved roost provision. Timing constraints. No destruction of former roost until replacement completed and significant usage demonstrated. Monitoring for as long as possible
	Maternity sites of rarest species	