

**BAT AND BIRD SURVEY OF A COTTAGE AND
ASSOCIATED FARM BUILDINGS, PINWOOD
FARM, OFF HOLME LANE, SCUNTHORPE,
NORTH LINCOLNSHIRE**

FINAL

OCTOBER 2015

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TITLE: Bat and Bird Survey of a Cottage and Associated Farm Buildings, Pinewood Farm, off Holme Lane, Scunthorpe, North Lincolnshire

VERSION: Final

DATE: October 2015

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ISSUED TO: Mr Julian Kirk-Alton
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SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

COMMISSION

ESL (Ecological Services) Ltd. has been commissioned by Mr Kirk-Alton, the owner, to undertake a bat and bird survey of buildings to inform a planning application to North Lincolnshire Council for residential development.

METHODS

The survey was carried out on 2 June 2015 by two ecologists with Natural England bat survey licences using standard methods.

RESULTS

No evidence of use by bats was recorded in any building and opportunities for use are very low.

No active nests were recorded, however, use by building dwelling species cannot be ruled out during the breeding season. Faecal splashings associated with barn owl were recorded in an open-fronted brick barn but no nest site was recorded. There is anecdotal evidence of breeding barn owls within a box sited in the adjacent small woodland block to the west of the buildings. The box was not occupied at the time of survey but barn owls were seen quartering the field to the north.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. A Biodiversity Management Plan is included in Appendix 2. If adhered to, this would avoid the commission of any offences under the relevant legislation, mitigate any adverse impacts and achieve biodiversity gain as recommend under the National Planning Policy Framework.
2. Surveys represent only a snapshot in time, so this survey should be repeated if planning consent has not been granted by **1 June 2016**.

**BAT AND BIRD SURVEY OF A COTTAGE AND ASSOCIATED FARM BUILDINGS,
PINWOOD FARM, OFF HOLME LANE, SCUNTHORPE, NORTH LINCOLNSHIRE**



COMMISSION	ESL (Ecological Services) Ltd. has been commissioned by Mr Kirk-Alton, the owner, to undertake a bat and bird survey of buildings to inform a planning application to North Lincolnshire Council for residential development.
Site Location, Survey Area & Context	The site is located off Holme Lane on the south-eastern outskirts of Scunthorpe. NGR: SE923069. The location of the buildings included in the survey is given as Figure 1. The application area comprises a cottage and adjoining single-storey stable/storage buildings. The site is bounded by rough grassland and scattered trees with dwellings to the south and a small woodland block to the west. The wider landscape is dominated by arable fields with large woodlands to the east.



Figure 1 Location of buildings surveyed

Planning Authority & Application No.	North Lincolnshire Council
Survey Date	2 June 2015
Surveyors	Grant Berky, Natural England bat survey licence No.: 2015-10574-CLS-CLS (CL18). David Hughes, Natural England bat survey licence No.: 2015-14463-CLS-

	CLS (CL20).
METHODS	
BATS	
Desk Study	The Natural England MAGIC website was used to evaluate the level of detail required to inform the desk study. Given the scale of the proposed development, the search area was set at 2km. The NBN Gateway was not consulted due to licencing restrictions on the use of data for commercial purposes. Lincolnshire Bat Group was asked to provide any bat records for the site and the immediate area. A summary of relevant protected species legislation is given in Appendix 1.
Daytime Assessment Methods	Aided where necessary by a powerful torch, ladders and close-focusing binoculars, a visual search was made both internally and externally of the cottage and farm buildings. All undisturbed surfaces were inspected for evidence of past and present occupation by bats in the form of live animals, desiccated remains, droppings and urine or fur staining (BCT, 2012).
Emergence Watch	Date: 2 June 2015. Start & finish times: 21:00-23:00hrs (Sunset: 21:22hrs). Weather conditions were suitable with still, dry conditions and an ambient temperature of c.12°C.
Equipment	The surveyors used ultrasonic detectors and night vision equipment. Two Anabat SD-1 ultrasound detectors were placed within the courtyard of the farm buildings and adjacent to the access road.
BIRDS	All of the buildings were searched for evidence of past or present use by nesting birds. A particular search was also made for any evidence of use at any time by barn owls <i>Tyto alba</i> . The field signs of this species include regurgitated pellets, faecal splashing and feathers.
RESULTS	
BATS	
Desk Study	The boundary of Manton and Twigmoor SSSI lies 1km to the southeast, beyond the M180 motorway. It is considered unlikely that the proposed development will adversely affect this site. There are no Local Nature Reserves within 2km of the site. No European Protected Species licences have been granted within 1km of the site. The nearest ponds suitable to support amphibians are approximately 500m to the northwest and southeast. Lincolnshire Bat Group holds no bat records for the site. There is historic evidence of a bat roost in buildings 250m to the east.
Daytime inspection	The site comprises a two-storey, semi-derelict cottage (Photograph 1) and small range of single-storey barns around a crewyard (Photograph 2). All of the buildings are constructed of solid brick walls under pitched roofs covered in un-lined clay pan tiles. There are no soffits or fascias that bats

	<p>could roost on or behind. There is access for bats and birds through missing doors, unglazed windows and slipped or missing roof tiles. Internally, the roof timbers have no mortise holes that bats could roost in and all were heavily cobwebbed with no signs of recent disturbance. Ambient light levels were generally high and microclimates unstable due to the missing and slipped roof tiles. No evidence of use by bats was recorded.</p> <p>To the north is a single-storey storage building constructed of breezeblock under corrugated fibre-cement sheets. This building has very limited potential for roosting bats and will be demolished as part of the proposals to be replaced with a two-storey structure.</p>
	
<p>Photograph 1. View of the cottage from the south</p>	<p>Photograph 2. View of the cottage and stables</p>
<p>Emergence Watch</p>	<p>No bats were recorded emerging from any of the buildings surveyed.</p> <p>A common pipistrelle <i>Pipistrellus pipistrellus</i> was recorded foraging along the track from 21:53hrs (31mins after sunset).</p>
<p>BIRDS</p>	<p>No active nests were recorded, however, use by building dwelling species cannot be ruled out during the breeding season. Faecal splashes associated with barn owls were recorded in an open-fronted barn but no nest site was recorded. There is anecdotal evidence of breeding barn owls within a box sited in the adjacent small woodland block to the west of the buildings. The box was unoccupied at the time of survey but two barn owls were seen quartering the adjacent field to the north and so they were probably nesting nearby. This site is clearly within their home range.</p>
<p>SURVEY CONSTRAINTS</p>	<p>There were no survey constraints in relation to bats as full access was available into all buildings surveyed. The survey was carried out early in the bird breeding season and this is reflected in the recommendations within the Biodiversity Management Plan in Appendix 2.</p>
<p>DISCUSSION</p>	
<p>Interpretation of survey data</p>	<p>No evidence of use by bats was recorded in any building and although local habitats are favourable, significant use by bats is probably limited by high ambient light levels and unstable microclimate within the buildings.</p>
<p>Assessment of any</p>	<p>Significant use by bats is not expected in the cottage or associated buildings and therefore further surveys are considered unnecessary in</p>

Impacts	advance of determining the application. The small, open fronted barn is used as an occasional roost by barn owls. Future use of the buildings by nesting birds cannot be ruled out in the active season, which typically runs from March to mid-August.
Suggestions for Biodiversity Gain	A Biodiversity Management Plan is provided in Appendix 2.
RECOMMENDATIONS	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. A Biodiversity Management Plan is included in Appendix 2. If adhered to, this avoids the commission of any offences under the relevant legislation, mitigates any adverse impacts and achieves biodiversity gain as recommend under the National Planning Policy Framework. 2. Surveys represent only a snapshot in time, so this survey should be repeated if planning consent has not been granted by 1 June 2016.
REFERENCES	Bat Conservation Trust. 2012. <i>Bat surveys – Good practice guidelines</i> . 2 nd Ed. Bat Conservation Trust, London.
	English Nature. 2004. <i>The Bat Mitigation Guidelines</i> . English Nature. Peterborough.

APPENDIX 1

Summary of Legal Protection for Statutorily Protected Species

SUMMARY OF LEGAL PROTECTION FOR STATUTORILY PROTECTED SPECIES

1 BATS

1.1 In England, Scotland and Wales, all species of bats are fully protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 and as amended, including by the Countryside and Rights of Way (CRoW) Act 2000. They are also protected under European legislation, being included on Schedule 2 of The Conservation of Habitats & Species Regulations 2010. Taken together, this legislation makes it illegal, *inter alia* to:

- intentionally or recklessly kill, injure or capture a bat
- deliberately disturb a bat when it is occupying a roost
- damage, destroy or obstruct access to a bat roost

1.2 A bat roost is defined as being any structure or place that is used for shelter or protection, and since it may be in use only occasionally or at specific times of year, a roost retains such designation whether the bats are present or not.

2 BIRDS

2.1 The Wildlife and Countryside Act (1981 and as amended) protects all wild birds and their nests and eggs. Under this Act it is an offence to:

- kill, injure or take any wild bird
- take, damage or destroy the nest of any wild bird while it is in use or being built
- take or destroy the egg of any wild bird.

2.2 Bird nesting sites are not themselves protected when not in use and the common species are not protected from disturbance whilst occupying their nest-sites. However, certain rare breeding birds, listed on Schedule 1 of the Act (e.g. barn owls), are also protected against disturbance whilst building a nest or on or near a nest containing eggs or young.

APPENDIX 2

Biodiversity Management Plan for the Re-development of a Cottage and Associated Farm Buildings, Pinewood Farm, off Holme Lane, Scunthorpe, North Lincolnshire

**BIODIVERSITY MANAGEMENT PLAN FOR
THE RE-DEVELOPMENT OF A COTTAGE AND
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1 ESL (Ecological Services) Ltd. has prepared this Biodiversity Management Plan to accompany a planning application to North Lincolnshire Council for the renovation and conversion of redundant farm buildings at Pinewood Farm, Holme, North Lincolnshire.
- 2 Four bat access points will be installed in the external ridge tiles of the cottage and proposed two-storey new build. Two access points will be installed into each ridge.
- 3 The roof coverings on the buildings will be removed by hand by the contractor under a watching brief by a Natural England licensed ESL bat ecologist.
- 4 A barn owl box of an approved, standard design will be attached to a suitable tree within the tree group to the west of the existing buildings.
- 5 An ESL ecologist will carry out a search for active nests in advance of any work that could affect birds in the breeding bird season (14 March to 15 August.). The applicant/his agent will ensure that any nests found with eggs or young are protected until the young have fledged.
- 6 ESL will carry out an inspection of the bat and bird boxes in the first season they are available for use for any evidence of habitation.
- 7 ESL will prepare a short report (with photographs) detailing the work carried out under this Biodiversity Management Plan. The applicant will forward the report to the Local Planning Authority as evidence of compliance.

**BIODIVERSITY MANAGEMENT PLAN FOR THE RE-DEVELOPMENT OF A COTTAGE
AND ASSOCIATED FARM BUILDINGS, PINWOOD FARM, OFF HOLME LANE,
SCUNTHORPE, NORTH LINCOLNSHIRE**

1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 ESL (Ecological Services) Ltd. has prepared this Biodiversity Management Plan (BMP) to accompany a planning application to North Lincolnshire Council for the renovation and conversion of redundant farm buildings at Pinewood Farm, off Holme Lane, Scunthorpe, North Lincolnshire.
- 1.2 The BMP is based on the findings of a survey report prepared by ESL to inform the planning application.

2 OBJECTIVES OF THE MANAGEMENT PLAN

- 2.1 The following plan is intended to provide a clear and workable methodology to avoid and/or mitigate adverse impacts on faunal species and to provide compensation and biodiversity gain for the proposed development at Pinewood Farm. Compensation features for bats and mitigation for barn owls will be incorporated into the refurbishment of the cottage and proposed two-storey new build. This will result in an increase in the site's overall ecological value.

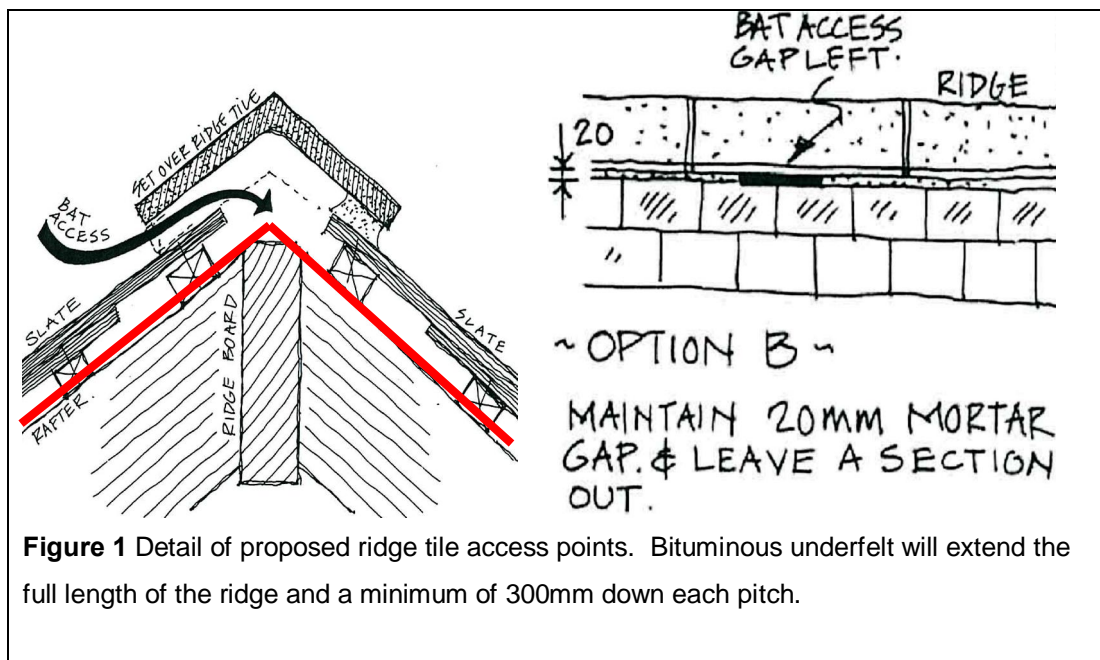
3 MANAGEMENT PRESCRIPTIONS FOR BATS

3.1 MEASURES TO AVOID HARM TO ROOSTING BATS

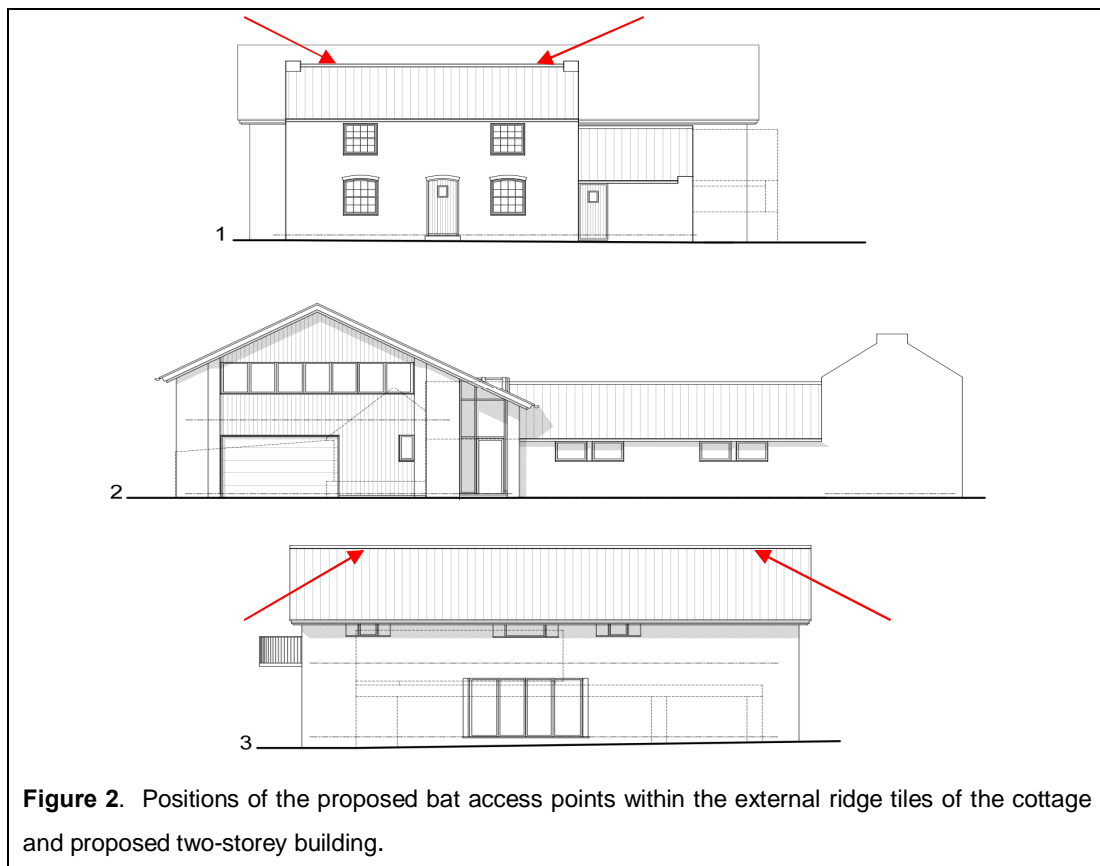
- 3.1.1 An ESL bat ecologist will attend site to carry out a watching brief when the existing roof coverings are removed from the buildings. The contractor will remove tiles by hand to ensure that any bats that might be present are not killed or injured during the work. Whilst there is currently insufficient evidence to warrant a restriction on the timing of this work, ideally, it is better if it is done to avoid the most sensitive time of year (typically 1 May to 1 September) if at all possible.
- 3.1.2 Bats are transient creatures and the possibility of a bat or even low numbers of bats being present when work starts can rarely be totally ruled out. If *any* bats are found at *any* stage of the work, then all activity in that area must stop immediately and advice must be sought from ESL (01522 539325). Work in other areas can continue with caution.

3.2 PROVISION OF BAT ROOSTING FEATURES

- 3.2.1 In order to compensate for the loss of potential bat roosting habitat, four bat access points will be provided in the external ridge of the cottage and the proposed two-storey new build. This will provide a roost niche under the ridge tiles. The details are given in Figure 1.
- 3.2.2 In each case, a length of bituminous underfelt, NOT breathable membrane, will extend the full length of the ridge, gable-to-gable, and extend 300mm down each pitch. The purpose of this is to prevent bats from coming into contact with breathable membrane, which is increasingly used in modern roof construction but has been shown to fray, producing fibres in which bats can become entangled, resulting in their deaths. Breathable membranes can be used elsewhere on the roof if required, as bats are likely to be confined to the ridge area.
- 3.2.3 When the ridge tiles are bedded, a section 25-30mm high and 100mm long will be left unmortared to create an entry point. The gap must be smooth-edged and carefully checked to ensure that there are no spots of mortar causing an obstruction.
- 3.2.4 This discreet, maintenance-free feature will have a minimal aesthetic impact on the appearance of the building and create a permanent roost niche suitable for most building-dwelling species found in the locality, in particular *Pipistrellus sp.*



3.2.5 Figure 2 below shows the recommended positions of the bat access points within the external ridge tiles of the cottage and proposed two-storey building.



4 MANAGEMENT PRESCRIPTIONS FOR BIRDS

4.1 MEASURES TO AVOID HARM TO NESTING BIRDS

4.1.1 It is proposed that the removal of roof coverings be undertaken outside the breeding-bird season, which typically runs from early March to August inclusive, although active nests for some species (especially pigeons) can still be present outside this time. Should any removal of the roof coverings need to proceed within the typical breeding season, ESL will carry out a search for active nests in advance of works. Any nests found with eggs or young will be identified and protected until the young have fledged.

4.2 PROVISION OF A NEST BOX FOR BARN OWLS

4.2.1 After reviewing the plans, it is not considered appropriate to install a barn owl box on the buildings due to potentially high levels of human disturbance. Instead, a barn owl box of an approved, standard design will be installed on a tree within the tree group to the west of the

buildings, which are within the curtilage of the property. The box will be placed on a tree at a minimum height of 4m and away from any potential light spill from vehicles using the drive way. The box will be installed a minimum of four weeks prior to any works on the buildings commencing. Any large tree within the group with a clear flight line to the surrounding habitat north of the site would be appropriate. ESL can supply and fit a box or offer advice on siting if required. An example of a suitable box can be found at <http://www.barnowltrust.org.uk/product/barn-owl-nestbox-for-use-on-trees/> and is shown below as Photograph 1.



Photograph 1. An example of a barn owl box suitable for siting on trees

5 MONITORING

- 5.1 ESL will carry out an inspection of the bat and bird boxes in the first season they are available for use for any evidence of habitation.

6 COMPLIANCE WITH THE BIODIVERSITY MANAGEMENT PLAN

6.1 SITE ATTENDANCE

6.1.1 An ESL ecologist will visit the site at the following key stages:

- To provide a watching brief during the removal of roof coverings.
- To carry out an inspection of key areas subject to work during the breeding bird season (if required).
- To inspect and sign off the installation of the bat access points within the external ridges of the cottage and proposed two-storey new build.
- To inspect and sign off the installation of the barn owl box.
- To carry out a post-work monitoring visit.

6.2 REPORTING

- 6.2.1 ESL will take representative photographs of all works carried out under the BMP during the monitoring visits and these, together with all other relevant information, will be compiled into a short report. The applicant will forward the report to North Lincolnshire Council as evidence of compliance with the condition, thus enabling it to be discharged. The report will be issued within two weeks of the completion of all works under this BMP.

6.3 COMMUNICATIONS

- 6.3.1 The point of contact at ESL is Grant Berky, 01522 539325 grant.berky@esl-lincoln.co.uk
- 6.3.2 It is strongly advised that the requirements of the Biodiversity Management Plan be incorporated into the development programme to ensure that site staff are aware of what needs doing and when. See Section 6.1 for details.

7 BIBLIOGRAPHY

ESL. 2015. *Bat and Bird Survey of a Cottage and Associated Farm Buildings, Pinewood Farm off Holme Lane, Scunthorpe, North Lincolnshire*. Unpublished report issued to Mr. J. Kirk-Alton.

<http://www.barnowltrust.org.uk/> Accessed 12.10.2015