Ben Jones Ecology
10 Oldford Rise
Welshpool
Powys
SY21 7SZ

07 December 2024

Plant & Robinson
Ref: Lower Farm Barns
Lower Farm Road
Bowling Bank
Wrexham
LL13 9RY

UPDATE OF ECOLOGICAL UNDERSTANDING OF BARNS AT LOWER FARM.

Background

The barns were originally assessed by Leigh Ecology in 2019, after which planning permission P/2019/0647 was granted by Wrexham County Council. Greenscape Environmental Ltd was commissioned in 2022 to assist with the discharge of several ecological conditions, including updating the bat activity surveys.

In summary, these surveys identified:

- 2x day roosts of brown long-eared bats (one with 3x bats, one with 2x bats)
- 1x large day roost of common pipistrelle (peak 5)
- 1x day roost of Natterer's bat (peak 1)

In order to proceed with a lawful development, it was recommended that work proceed under a bat mitigation licence from Natural Resources Wales, including appropriate mitigation for the above-listed species.

Updated Assessment

Ben Jones Ecology was commissioned in 2024 to update the ecological understanding prior to work commencing before the planning permission runs out in January 2025.

A site visit was conducted on 5th December 2024, during which the entirety of the barns was accessed. It is acknowledged that this is a suboptimal time of the year for the assessment of bats, but evidence of bats can be seen year-round. During the 2024 visit evidence of bats was seen scattered throughout the barns, and the barns appear in much the same condition as they were during the 2022 surveys. The metal lean-to on the western side of the barn has been removed, but the barn itself is unchanged.

The bat roosts previously identified are considered unlikely to have changed. This cannot, of course, be confirmed prior to updated activity surveys between May and the end of August, but for the purposes of commencement prior to planning expiry the previous documentation submitted by Greenscape Environmental in September 2022 should still be considered valid.

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Figure 1. Barns in 2024



Figure 2. Scattered bat droppings in 2024



Figure 3. Western side (former lean-to location) in 2024

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As bats are known to roost in the buildings and present evidence suggests this has not changed, work will still require a bat mitigation licence from Natural Resources Wales. This application cannot use data greater than 24 months old, which the 2022 surveys clearly are. It is therefore suggested that commencement of work such as site clearance and groundworks outside the building should be considered a sufficient start to avoid planning expiry. Bat activity surveys will then be updated in Summer 2025 to support a bat licence application, hopefully permitting works on the barns in general in Autumn 2025.

During the 2024 walkover evidence of barn owls was found in an upper floor room previously not accessible. The pellets here range in age from recent to several years, but no evidence of nesting or breeding was found. It is suspected that the activity is from an individual owl just as a perch rather than a nest.



Figure 4. Owl pellets in 2024

Appropriate mitigation will be included to ensure the barn owls have shelter throughout the development – a box installed on the exterior will be sufficient.

Yours sincerely,

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