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P/2021/0250 – BAT MITIGATION STRATEGY FOR THE OLD FARMHOUSE, COED DERWEN, ERBISTOCK, WREXHAM

Background

Andy Harmer Limited was commissioned in 2022 by Mr David Watkin to provide a Bat Mitigation Strategy for The Old Farmhouse, Coed Derwen, Erbistock, Wrexham. The site is the subject of a planning application with Wrexham County Borough Council (WCBC) for the demolition of the existing farm buildings, conversion of a barn to one dwelling, a first-floor extension to the existing dwelling and alterations to access (planning application reference **P/2021/0250**).

A number of bat surveys were undertaken at the site in 2021 by Andy Harmer Limited (see Bat Surveys at The Old Farmhouse, Coed Derwen, Erbistock, Wrexham 2021). The emergence and re-entry surveys found a maximum of two Brown Long-eared bats *Plecotus auritus* emerging from Building 1 (the dwelling) and a maximum of three Brown Long-eared bats re-entering Building 1 (see Figure 1 for the building locations). It is considered that Building 1 supports a day roost for small number of Brown Long-eared bats. Despite finding bat droppings within Buildings 2 and 4 during the daytime bat survey, no bats were seen emerging or re-entering Buildings 2 and 4 during the surveys and these buildings can be considered to not support an active bat roost.



Figure 1 showing the building locations

Natural Resources Wales (NRW) was consulted as part of the planning application and NRW requested further information on the bat mitigation to be provided on site including:

- Mitigation/Compensation Measures in respect of bats, including plans,
- External lighting/internal light spillage assessment and plans that are compliant with the provisions of the Institution of Lighting Professionals and Bat Conservation Trust: Guidance Note 08/18: Bats and Artificial Lighting in the UK, and;
- Measures required to prevent or reduce accidental capture or killing.

This Bat Mitigation Strategy aims to address the queries raised.

Bat Mitigation/Compensation

The following bat mitigation and compensation plan will be implemented prior to, during and following development. See Figures 3 and 4 at the back of this document for the bat compensation scheme.

Following planning permission being granted, a Natural Resources Wales derogation licence will be applied for and must be obtained prior to work commencing on Building 1.

There are no timing constraints on the development commencing due to the type of bat roost present (e.g. non-maternity).

Prior to development commencing, two 2F Schwegler Woodcrete Bat Boxes (or similar) will be erected onto the retained tree to the south of the buildings (see Figure 2). The boxes will be erected more than 3 metres in height and facing south.



Figure 2 showing where the temporary Schwegler bat boxes will be erected (red stars)

Once the licence is obtained, and immediately prior to work commencing, a toolbox talk will be given by the licensed ecologist to all site personnel, detailing bat legislation and the working method statement. The works to destroy the bat roost at Building 1 will be undertaken under strict ecological supervision, with all roof tiles and upper brick courses lifted by hand. Any bats found will be placed within the Schwegler bat boxes by the licensed site ecologist. Site personnel must not handle bats.

To compensate for the loss of the Brown Long-eared bat day roost, two bat boxes will be installed on site. These boxes will be either Habibat Integrated Boxes or Greenwoods Large Cavity Eco Bat Boxes depending on availability. Both are inconspicuous and offer suitable internal features for Brown Long-eared bats and other cavity-dwelling bat species.

One box will be integrated into the south-facing elevation of the barn conversion, close to the roofline. The other box will be integrated into the west-facing gable of the extended bungalow (see Figures 3 and 4). The boxes must be positioned at least 3 metres in height.

The two temporary Schwegler bat boxes can be removed (by a licensed ecologist and with a check for bat usage first) following completion of the development work.

Prior to the demolition of Buildings 3, 4, 5 and 6 and the conversion of Building 2, a suitably experienced ecologist must undertake an inspection of these buildings, to check nothing has changed regarding bat usage and to search for bats. If at any time, a bat is discovered during the development, including demolition of Buildings 3, 4, 5 and 6 as well as the conversion of Building 2, **work must temporarily cease** in that location and the licensed ecologist be contacted for advice. Further survey work or licensing may be required for the site.

Following completion of the development, the bat mitigation and compensation habitats will be inspected and the licence return completed.

The bat mitigation and compensation plan will maintain the favourable conservation status of the species. The bat boxes will provide secure roosting habitat on site.

Lighting

No lightspill contour plan has been provided but it has been confirmed that no artificial lighting will be used where the compensatory bat boxes will be installed, including wall mounted uplighters and security lighting. The bat box locations must remain dark. No lightspill greater than 1Lux will affect the retained trees and adjacent habitats on and off site, including the hedgerows, to protect bat foraging and commuting habitat. All lighting used on site must be compliant with the provisions of the Institution of Lighting Professionals and Bat Conservation Trust: Guidance Note 08/18: Bats and Artificial Lighting in the UK.

Protection Measures

The above mitigation plan, including a toolbox talk, strict ecological supervision of roost destruction, provision of temporary bat roosts (safe roosts) and the on-call scheme for if a bat is found, will ensure prevention of prevent of accidental capture or killing.

FIGURE 3 – BAT COMPENSATION SCHEME (yellow stars indicate integrated bat boxes) (Base plans courtesy of David Watkin)

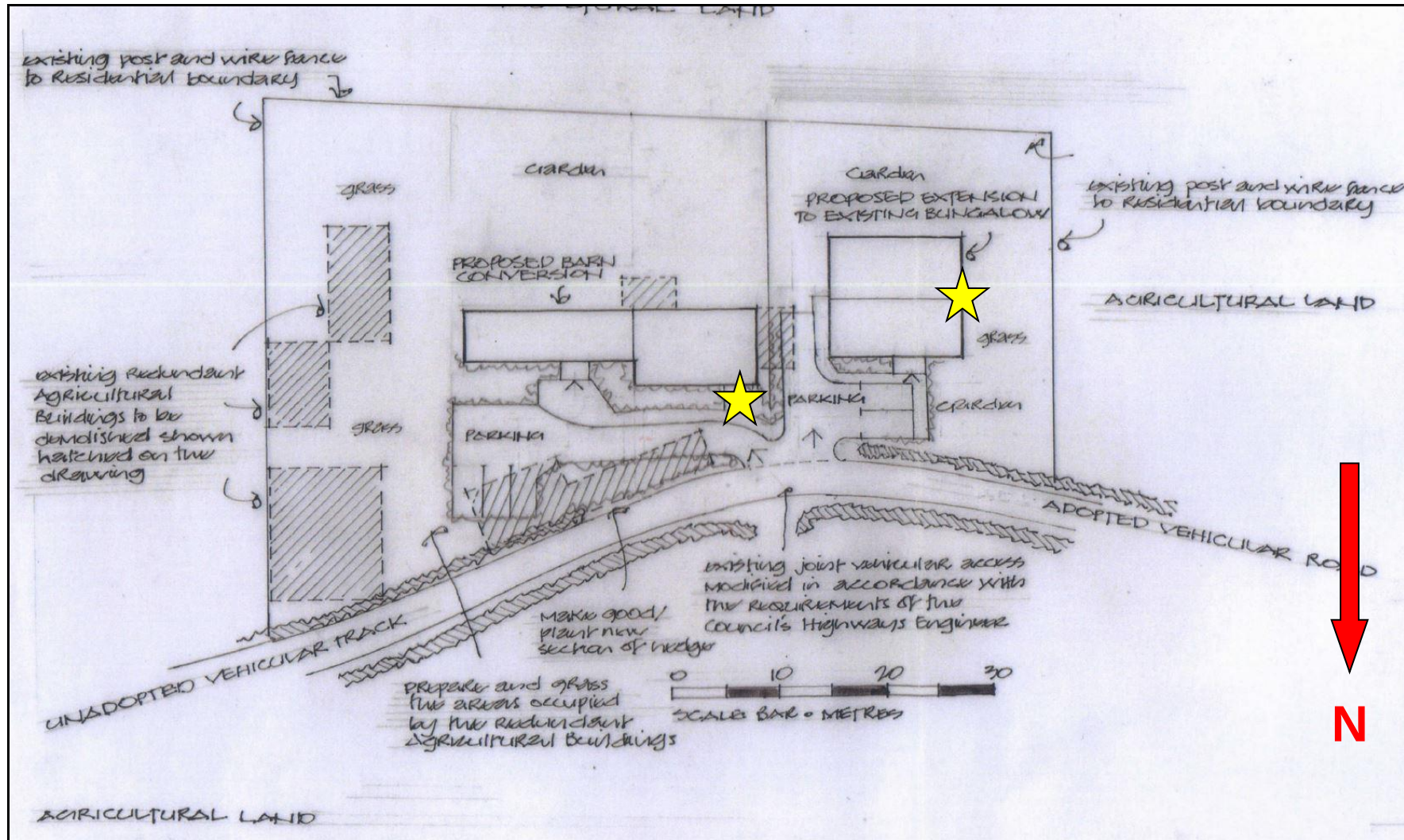


FIGURE 4 – BAT COMPENSATION SCHEME WITHIN ELEVATIONS OF BARN (LEFT) AND BUNGALOW (RIGHT) (yellow stars indicate integrated bat boxes) (Base plans courtesy of David Watkin)

