C/44/181C Colt Park Barn Owl & Bat Notes

Barn Owl:

The Wold Ecology Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA) dated November 2023 indicates that a Barn Owl box is present in Colt Park Barn and that evidence of Barn Owl roosting, but not breeding, was observed.

To enable continuity of the roost site, the PEA proposed that the Barn Owl box be moved into the adjacent barn or within 100 metres of Colt Park Barn at least 30 days before disturbance works commence, and that an inspection be undertaken by a qualified Barn Owl surveyor within 30 days prior to development works taking place.

The Barn Owl Trust conservation mitigation guidelines endorsed by Natural England state that, for sites where Barn Owls are known to have roosted within the last two years, the following mitigation measures should be followed:

- A temporary alternative roosting site be provided by erecting one or more Barn Owl boxes within 200 m and in clear line of site of the development at least 30 days before any works commence.
- An immediate pre-development survey of the site for evidence of Barn Owl breeding be undertaken by a suitably qualified person no more than three days before works commence, to ensure no offence is committed under the Wildlife and Countryside Act (1981) as amended.
- A permanent and accessible roosting and nesting place for Barn Owls be created within the development.
- Create as a minimum the same amount of suitable Barn Owl foraging habitat to that which is being lost through the development.

The mitigation proposed for Barn Owls in the PEA is not quite in accordance with the above guidelines. As such, if planning permission is granted for these works, there must be a condition stating that, to confirm the continued absence of breeding Barn Owl, a check must be undertaken at the barn by a suitably qualified and licenced ecologist no more than three days prior to commencement of works, and an alternative permanent and accessible nesting and roosting site for Barn Owl must be installed inside the adjacent barn at least 30 days prior to commencement of works, or else at another suitable location within 200 metres of Colt Park Barn that is agreed with the ecologist. If the existing Barn Owl box in Colt Park Barn is to be used to this effect, it must first be checked by a licenced ecologist before being moved, to ensure there are no Barn Owls nesting within it. Provided that the Barn Owl box will remain there permanently, we are happy that this will cover both the requirements for a temporary roosting site within 200 m of the site and the provision of a permanent roosting and nesting place.

Bats:

The Wold Ecology Bat Survey report dated November 2023 identified two Common Pipistrelle day roosts each used by one bat and one Daubenton's Bat day roost used by a single bat at Colt Park Barn. These roosts will be lost if the development is carried out, but this should not adversely affect the local conservation status of the two species recorded due to the small numbers of bats involved, which are not indicative of a significant roost. The report judged the predicted scale of impact of the works on the species concerned to be of 'Site' level, as

opposed to ‘County’ or ‘Regional’. Therefore, presence of bat roosts is not a constraint on the proposed development provided adequate mitigation is secured.

A Method Statement in sections 7.3 to 7.10 (inclusive) of the bat survey report outlines detailed mitigation measures that would be followed under licence from Natural England should planning permission be granted, which include timing restrictions, site induction, pre-works surveys, exclusion of roosts, destructive search, measures for if bats are discovered during works and proposed new roost creation, in the form of the installation of two ‘bat tubes’ in specific locations. These measures are considered to be in line with the current CIEEM UK Bat Mitigation Guidelines, which state that required compensation for the loss of non-breeding day roosts of ‘Site’ value are flexible in terms of timing and type, and for those of ‘District’ value (the highest value attributed to this kind of roost), like-for-like replacement with no timing constraints is acceptable compensation.

As such, if planning permission is granted for these works there must be a condition imposed requiring that all the measures are implemented that are outlined in Sections 7.3 to 7.10 (inclusive) in the bat survey report.

We note that the findings of the bat survey report are now over 18 months old, but pre-works surveys are proposed in the Method Statement which will confirm the current status of the roosts prior to commencement of works.