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PANT GLAS FARM

UPDATED BAT BUILDING INSPECTION AND ACTIVITY REPORT

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 David Rees was commissioned by Michael Johnston to undertake an updated suite of bat activity survey at the Pant Glas Farm barns located in Bryncoch (Grid Ref: SN 74486 00623). The historic barns are proposed to be converted into tourist accommodation.
- 1.2 Greg Jones Consultant Ecologist was originally commissioned to conduct a building inspection with regards to roosting bats and nesting birds in 2013¹. The building inspection identified bat droppings indicative of Pipistrelle species in the garage attic space and on the exterior of the roller door of the north barn. The building inspection showed no field signs on the south barn, and no bats were recorded emerging from southern barn during the evening survey. Further bat activity surveys at the barns identified that the original north barn and garage structures were being utilised by a small number of Pipistrelle bats, with Soprano Pipistrelle *Pipistrellus pygmaeus* positively identified, and possibly Common Pipistrelle *Pipistrellus pipistrellus*.
- 1.3 The 2022 survey conducted by Bay Ecology identified the barns onsite as being in a similar state to the 2013 inspection with two historic stone barns with pitched slate roofs present onsite. The northern barn had been extended with a modern breeze block garage that was clad in stone with a pitched slate; whilst the southern barn had mono lean-tos located on eastern and western gable ends. The barns had a combination of metal garage and roller doors with wooden window frames and doors also present. A combination of wooden and uPVC fascias were also present. The barns were in a good state of repair. However, multiple potential bat roosting features were associated with the fascias. During the inspection historic bat dropping indicative of Pipistrelle was identified within the western extent of the southern barn as well as on the western roller door of the northern barn; whilst a small accumulation of bat droppings indicative of Pipistrelle were identified within the southern extent of the northern barn conversion.
- 1.4 To inform the current planning submission and the European Protected Species derogation licence application required to facilitate the conversion works, a suite of updated dusk emergence surveys were conducted on 29th August 2022 and 26th September 2022.
- 1.5 This report provides a summary of the updated daytime inspection and further bat activity surveys conducted between August and September 2022, and includes recommendations on any ecological constraints/ opportunities associated conversion works.

¹ G.Jone (2013). Pant Glas Farm Brans and Garges, Bryncoch – Bat Survey Report. 2013
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2.0 METHODOLOGY

2.1 In order to establish the baseline ecological conditions on site and in the adjoining habitats, a combination of desk-based consultation and building inspection was undertaken in August 2022.

Desk study

2.2 This element of the work primarily involved an internet search and existing report review to identify any known records of bats or nesting birds onsite or within the surrounding area (within 2km and 0.15km radius respectively) that could require consideration as part of any development proposal (i.e. to inform constraints/opportunities).

Daytime Inspection

2.3 The ecological appraisal comprised of an external and internal inspection of the Pant Glas Barns. In order to establish the potential presence of roosting bats (or nesting birds) at the building, the survey aimed to identify:

- if bats are, or have been, present within the building and, if so, which species are present;
- the type of roost (e.g. day roost, feeding perch, night roost, hibernaculum);
- how bats use the buildings (e.g. location of, exit and entrance points to potential roosts);

2.4 External surveys at the site involved the use of binoculars and ladder to identify possible access/entry points into the buildings and aimed to identify any evidence of use by bats such as droppings, staining, prey remains etc. The internal survey searched for similar evidence of current or historical use by bats. The survey was undertaken from ground-level around the exterior of the buildings; and was assisted by the use of close-focus binoculars and a high powered torch (1 million candlepower).

2.5 The surveyor searched for roost evidence (droppings, staining, scratch marks, etc.) as described above and an assessment of the buildings potential to support nesting birds was also undertaken. The scope of the bat inspection survey was based on guidelines published by the Bat Conservation Trust (BCT)(2016).

Bat Activity Surveys

- 2.6 The daytime inspection conducted at Pant Glas Farm barns identified the structures as being of 'moderate' bat roosting potential (as described in the Bat Conservation Trust 2016 guidelines) due unto the potential bat roosting features identified on the structures, as well as the individual/small accumulation of bat droppings identified externally and internally. As described within the guidelines, buildings with moderate potential require at least a single dusk emergence survey and a dawn re-entry survey conducted at least two weeks apart to establish the likelihood of bats being present, with a single survey required between May-August. However, due to the low levels of bat activity associated with the structure during the first survey, a further dusk was considered sufficient to establish the presence of any further roosting bats in the structure and the status of any roost. In order to achieve visual coverage of the potential access/entry points associated with the structure, a team of 4 surveyors were present during the survey.
- 2.7 The dusk emergence survey was undertaken on the 29th August 2022 by two experienced surveyors. The dusk emergence survey commenced 15 minutes prior to sunset and extended for approximately 90 minutes after sunset (BCT, 2016). Weather conditions were of no constraint to the survey with no precipitation experienced during the survey and a light wind (Beaufort 0-1). A temperature of 19°C was recorded during the survey.
- 2.8 The dusk emergence survey was undertaken on the 26th September 2022 by two experienced surveyors. Weather conditions were of no constraint to the survey with no precipitation experienced during the survey and a light breeze (Beaufort 2-3). A temperature of 12°C was recorded during the survey.
- 2.9 The surveyors were positioned to ensure maximum coverage of the building's potential bat roosting features (Appendix I). Full spectrum detectors (Echo Meter Touch 2 & Peersonic) were used to allow both in field and office based sonogram analysis of bat calls. All calls were recorded and identified on computer-based sonogram analysis software (Wavesurfer) and BatClassify.

3.0 RESULTS

Desk study

- 3.1 The internet data search confirmed that there were no records of bats onsite. However, multiple records of foraging, commuting and roosting bats were identified within 2km of site. The records of bats were dominated by Common Pipistrelle *Pipistrellus pipistrellus* & Soprano Pipistrelle *Pipistrellus pygmaeus* identified in multiple bat surveys. The records of Pipistrelle sp. were considered to be of most relevance to the property with its limited crevice dwelling features.

Day-time inspection

Overview

- 3.2 The results of the day-time inspection are summarised in the following sections.

Southern Barn

- 3.3 The southern historic stone barn possessed a pitched slate roof with a combination of wooden and uPVC fascias (Photo 1). The barn had a slate tile roof lean-to on its eastern gable end as well as a corrugated metal lean-to located on the western gable end with historic steps that used to lead to the first floor (now not present) (Photo 2). The barn was being utilised for storage and possessed exposed wooden beams and roof slates internally with wooden doors and window frames evident. During the survey an old bat dropping indicative of Pipistrelle sp. was identified internally at the western extent of the barn. Potential bat roosting features were also associated with the gaps beneath the fascias around the barn's elevations.

Photo 1: Southern barn (view looking east).



Photo 2: Western gable end and southern elevation of southern barn (view looking north).



Northern Barn

- 3.4 The western extent of the northern stone barn was the original historic structure (Photo 3) with a 'slit window' located on the western gable end. Metal roller garage doors had been installed on the northern elevation of the barn (Photo 4), and the western extent was being utilised for storage and possessed exposed wooden beams and slate roof tiles. In general the barn possessed wooden window frames and doors with a combination of uPVC and wooden fascias. During the inspection a bat dropping indicative in size and shape of *Pipistrelle* sp. was identified on the western metal roller door located on the northern elevation.
- 3.5 A modern extension had been constructed on the eastern extent of the barn (Photo 4 & 5) and was constructed from breeze block with cut stone facing located on the northern and western and southern elevations, whilst the extension was rendered on the rear eastern elevation. The garage possessed to large metal doors located on the western elevation. Potential bat roosting features were also associated with the gaps beneath the fascias around the barn's elevations. The internal inspection of the extension identified multiple loft spaces that exposed wooden trusses and bitumastic roof felting evident throughout. The extension was currently being utilised as a garage at its southern extent and as a store room at its northern extent. During the inspection an accumulation of droppings within the loft space beneath the southern gable end of the garage. The droppings were indicative in size and shape of *Pipistrelle* sp..

Photo 3: Original western extent of northern stone barn (view looking north).



Photo 4: Northern elevation of northern barn.



Photo 5: Eastern extent of northern barn (view looking east).



Photo 6: Interior of modern eastern garage.



Associated Curtilage

- 3.6 The barns are immediately bordered by a broadleaf woodland corridor to the east and south, whilst a mosaic of agricultural fields and associated hedgerows are located to the north and west; all of which were considered to be suitable foraging and commuting habitat.

Bat Emergence Survey Results

Dusk Emergence Survey 29th August 2022

- 3.5 During the evening emergence survey a single Soprano Pipistrelle was identified emerging from beneath the fascia on the southern gable end of the northern barn's eastern garage (Photo 7 & Appendix I) at 20.15h (6mins post sunset 20.09h); whilst an unidentified Pipistrelle (not echolocating) was identified emerging at the same time from beneath the fascia of the southern elevation of the northern barn (Photo 8 & Appendix I). A further Soprano Pipistrelle was identified emerging from beneath the fascia of the southern elevation of the southern barn (Photo 9 & Appendix I) at 20.45h (36mins post sunset 20.09h). In general moderate levels of bat activity was recorded across the site, which were generally attributed to individual Soprano and Common Pipistrelle bats foraging and commuting along the eastern woodland boundary. Individual Brown Long-eared bats were also recorded during the survey.

Dusk Emergence Survey 26th September 2022

- 3.6 During the second evening emergence only a single Pipistrelle (not echolocating) was identified emerging from beneath the fascia on the southern gable end of the northern barn's eastern garage (Photo 7 & Appendix I) at 19.29h (24mins post sunset 19.05h) as recorded during the August survey. In general moderate levels of bat activity was recorded across the site, which were generally attributed to individual Soprano and Common Pipistrelle bats foraging and commuting along the eastern woodland boundary, with Individual Brown Long-eared and Noctule bats also recorded during the survey.
- 3.7 During the survey a Blue Tit was identified roosting within the northern barn beneath the fascia on the norther elevation.

Photo 7: Location of Soprano Pipistrelle on southern gable end of garage.



Photo 8: Approximate location of roosting Pipistrelle on southern elevation of northern barn (view looking north).



Photo 9: Approximate location of roosting Soprano Pipistrelle beneath wooden fascia on southern elevation of southern barn.



4.0 LEGISLATION, POLICIES AND PLANS

- 4.1 The following international, national and local legislation and planning policies pertaining to bats, nature conservation and biodiversity are considered of some relevance to the extension works at Pant Glas Farm barns.

Legislation Pertaining to the Protection of Bats

- 4.2 Under Annex II of the *Council Directive 92/43/EEC 1992 on the Conservation of Natural Habitats and of Wild Fauna and Flora* (EC Habitats Directive) some bat species are listed as of Community Interest, the conservation of which requires designation of Special Areas of Conservation (SACs); Under Annex IV of the EC Habitats Directive all bat species are listed as of Community Interest, in need of strict protection. In England and Wales, the EC Habitats Directive has been transposed into law in 1994 and, following recent amendments is set out in the *Conservation of Habitats & Species Regulation 2010* to give bats, their breeding sites and resting places a high level of strict protection making it an offence (subject to certain specific exceptions) to deliberately capture or kill/injure a bat, to damage or destroy a place used for shelter or protection or to deliberately disturb a bat in such a place.
- 4.3 Bats are also afforded protection within England and Wales under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended); Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000; Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006.
- 4.4 Case Law² has placed an onus on local planning authorities to satisfy ‘three tests’ under the Habitats Directive when determining applications that could affect European Protected Species. Essentially, these three tests are: i) that there is no satisfactory alternative; ii) that the proposed development is in the over-riding public interest (including those of a social or economic nature) and iii) the proposed development would not adversely affect the Favourable Conservation Status of the species locally.

Legislation Pertaining to Birds

- 4.5 Under the Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) all wild birds are protected against killing or injury and their nests against damage or destruction whilst they are being built or contain eggs/dependent young.

² Wooley vs. East Cheshire (2009) and Morge vs. Hampshire County Council (2010)
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Planning Policy Wales (2016)

- 4.6 This document set out the land use planning policies of the Welsh Assembly Government (WAG) with Chapter 5 dealing with Conserving and Improving Natural Heritage and Coast. The advice contained within PPW is supplemented for some subjects by Technical Advice Notes (TAN), with TAN 5 addressing Nature Conservation and Planning (September 2009).

Technical Advice Note (TAN) 5 – Nature Conservation and Planning

- 4.7 Under Section 2.4 within the TAN 5, *‘when deciding planning applications that may affect nature conservation local planning authorities should’*:
- Protect wildlife and natural features in the wider environment, with appropriate weight attached to priority habitats and species in Biodiversity Action Plans;
 - Ensure that all material considerations are taken into account and decisions are informed by adequate information about the potential effects of development on nature conservation;
 - Ensure that the range and population of protected species is sustained;
 - Adopt a step-wise approach to avoid harm to nature conservation, minimise unavoidable harm by mitigation measures, offset residual harm by compensation measures and look for new opportunities to enhance nature conservation;

5.0 CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

- 5.1 The daytime inspection undertaken at Pant Glas Farm barns conducted on the 29th August 2022 identified individual bat droppings indicative of *Pipistrelle* sp. in the southern barn and on the exterior of the northern barn. The inspection of the loft space within the eastern garage also identified a small accumulation of droppings adjacent to the southern gable end. The structures were considered to be of moderate bat roosting potential and two further bat emergence surveys were conducted during August and September 2022. During the August emergence survey a single Soprano *Pipistrelle* bat was identified emerging from the southern gable end of the garage, whilst an unidentified *Pipistrelle* (not echolocating) was identified emerging from beneath the fascia of the northern barn's southern elevation. A third Soprano *Pipistrelle* was identified emerging from beneath the fascia of the southern barn's southern elevation. During the September emergence survey a single unidentified *Pipistrelle* (not echolocating) was identified emerging from the southern gable end of the eastern garage, as was recorded during the August survey. The structures onsite were considered to be utilised as daytime roosts by individual non breeding females and males bats.
- 5.2 The 2022 survey results were similar to the 2013 survey results (conducted by Greg Jones Consultant Ecologist), which identified bat droppings indicative of *Pipistrelle* species in the garage attic space and on the exterior of the roller door of the north barn. Further bat activity surveys conducted in 2013 identified that the original northern barn and garage structures were being utilised by a small number of *Pipistrelle* bats, with roosting Soprano *Pipistrelle* and Common *Pipistrellus* identified,.
- 5.3 On this basis, it is considered that the proposed conversion works will damage and destroy the fascia roosting location and will require European Protected Species (EPS) derogation licence. Any EPS licence application will require an accompanying bat method statement that will include details timings of works, required watching briefs, sensitive working methodologies, required mitigation and monitoring.

Other considerations - birds

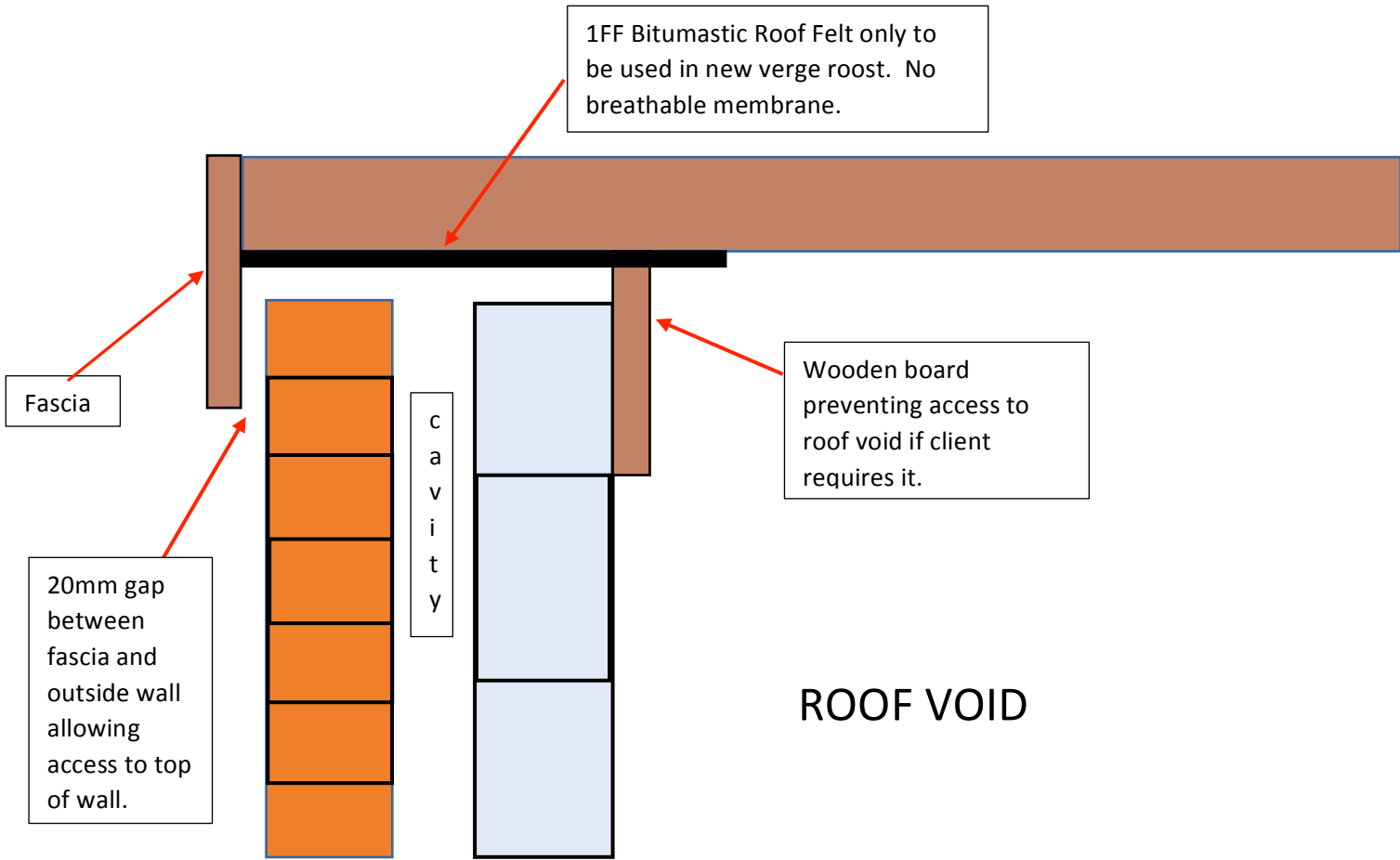
- 5.4 Additional considerations for the extension works relates to the roosting Blue Tit located within the northern barn. All nesting birds are protected under the Wildlife Countryside Act 1981 and the timing of the roof works between October and February inclusive would limit potential conflict with the bird nesting season. In the event that the conversion works were undertaken in the nesting season, a visual check of the structure would be conducted prior to site works. In the unlikely event an active nest were discovered during these works, activity would stop immediately and the project ecologist contacted. To

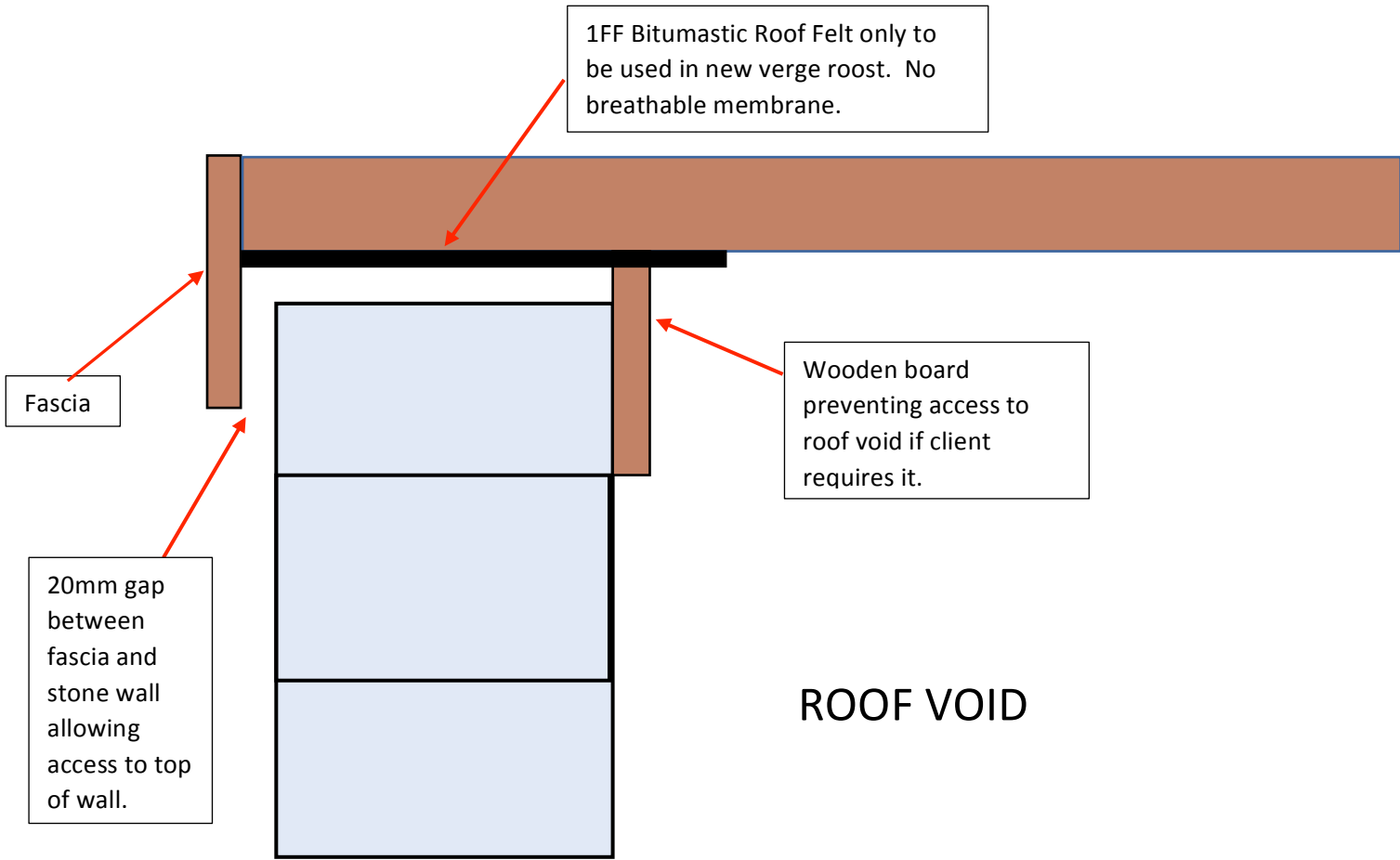
provide a continued nesting resource for passerines it is recommended that general closed faced bird boxes are installed on the barns.

REFERENCES

- Bat Conservation Trust (2016). *Bat Surveys – Good Practice Guidelines*. Third Edition. Bat Conservation Trust, London.
- EUROPA. (2007). *Guidance document on the strict protection of animal species of Community interest under the Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC; Final version, February 2007*.
http://ec.europa.eu/environment/nature/legislation/habitatsdirective/index_en.htm
- Mitchell-Jones, A.J, & McLeish, A.P. Ed., (2004), 3rd Edition Bat Workers' Manual, 178 pages b/w photos, softback, ISBN 1 86107 558 8

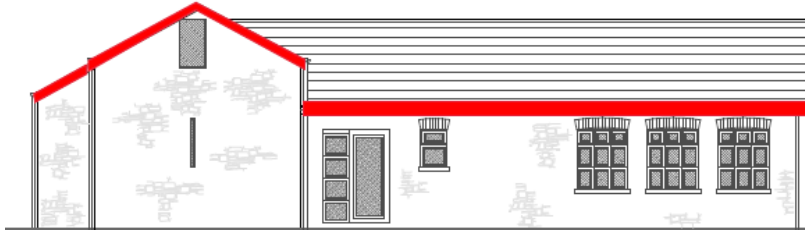
APPENDIX I – SURVEYOR & ROOST LOCATIONS



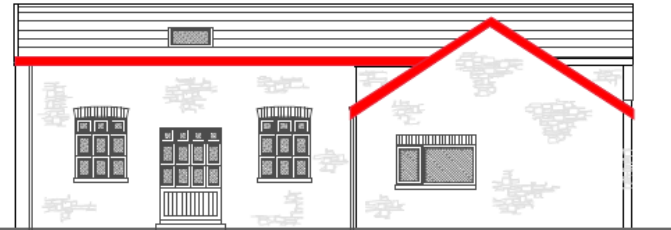


— = Fascia roost locations

Barn Number 1

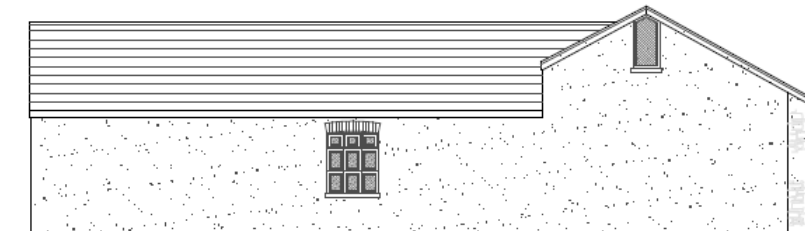


Proposed West Facing Elevation
Scale 1 : 100

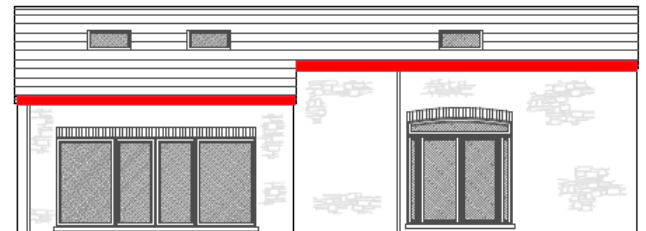


Proposed South Facing Elevation
Scale 1 : 100

— = Fascia roost locations



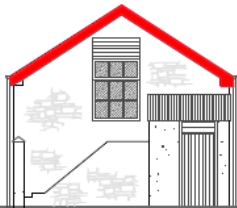
Proposed East Facing Elevation
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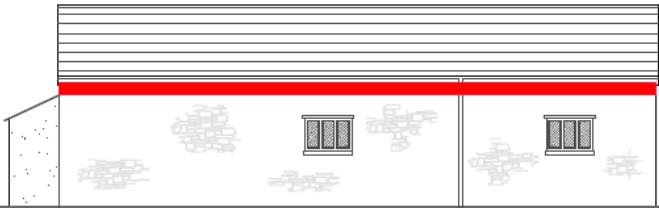
Proposed North Facing Elevation
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 = Fasica Roost Locations

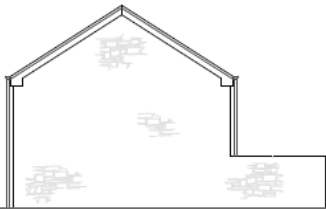
Barn Number 2



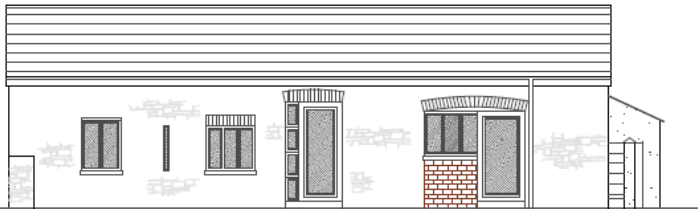
Proposed West Facing Elevation
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Proposed South Facing Elevation
Scale 1 : 100



Proposed East Facing Elevation
Scale 1 : 100



Proposed North Facing Elevation
Scale 1 : 100