

Barn Owl Method Statement and Reasonable Avoidance Measures

**Shepherd Hey Barn,
Ashworth Road,
Heywood,
OL11 5UN**

13.02.2023



**Report prepared by:
Dave Anderson
Batworker.com
dave@batworker.com
07894 338290**

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Executive summary

In January 2023 Batworker consultancy was commissioned to undertake surveys of Shepherd Hey Barn, Ashworth Road, Heywood, OL11 5UN to assess the potential for use by bats and breeding birds.

A daytime walkover survey was carried out on 1st February 2023, previous surveys including daytime walkover and static detector bat surveys were carried out in 2020 and 2017.

Evidence to suggest nesting activity by barn owl, in the form of urea splashing, owl pellets and moulted adult feathers was recorded. Barn owls have been observed flying from the main stone built barn.

This Method Statement supports development plans for the site.

The overall purpose of the Method Statement is to ensure that barn owls are fully protected to ensure the 'favourable conservation status of the species'. The Overriding principles behind this method statement follow the *Three Golden Rules in Barn Owl Mitigation* (continuity, legality, and permanence);

"Maintain continuity of occupation by creating alternative provision at least 30 days before development begins."

"Maintain the legality of the development by carrying out development works outside of the breeding season. Barn Owls are protected by law against disturbance whilst nesting."

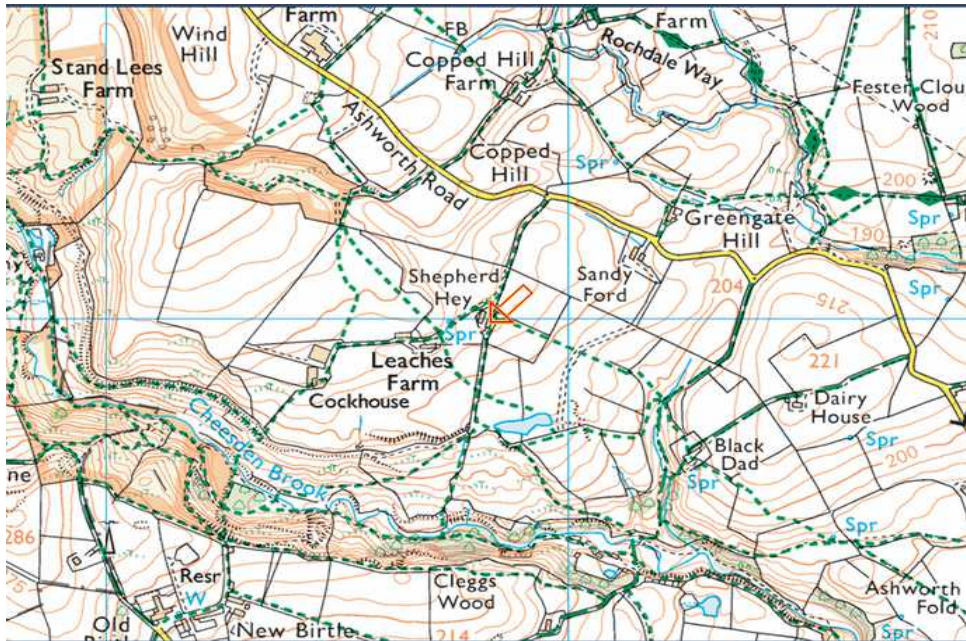
"Establish permanence by creating a permanent accessible nest/roost site space within (i.e. inside) the finished development."

This Method statement is designed to minimise or remove any potential disturbance to barn owls. By following the Reasonable Avoidance Measures that follow the development can take place, ensuring the Continued Ecological Functionality of the site.

Complying with this method statement may help establish a defence against a prosecution for intentional, deliberate or reckless disturbance of nesting birds. Failure to observe the proposed avoidance measures within this document may result in breaches of the Wildlife and Countryside Act (1981) (as amended).

Site Location

Shepherd Hey Barn, Ashworth Road, Heywood, OL11 5UN
NGR: SD8384014011



Survey summary and site assessment

Survey Type	Date	Timings
Daytime Walkover	09/05/17	1 hour.
Daytime Walkover	21/12/20	1 hour.
Daytime Walkover	01/02/23	1 hour



Area of the building used by barn owls.

The property consists of a traditional two storey stone built barn with a double pitched slate roof. The building has a single storey extension present on the southern gable and a collapsed barn section to the frontage.

Following bat surveys carried out in 2017 and 2020 barn owl have been observed using the barn in January 2023 during a walkover survey of the site.

Scattered barn owl pellets and areas of urea splashing were observed within the barn. Two barn owls were observed roosting within a barn owl box present on roof joists.



Location of barn owl nesting box within barn.

It is considered that barn owls have moved into the barn since bat surveys were carried out in 2020 and 2017.

In order to ensure the continuing ecological functionality of the wider site for barn owl a method statement and compensatory owl box pole mounted on the south east corner of the site in order to allow undisturbed flight over surrounding fields is considered to be an appropriate approach to development to reduce risk of disturbance and ensure continuing use of the site by breeding barn owls.

Method Statement

The Overriding principles behind this method statement follow the *Three Golden Rules in Barn Owl Mitigation* (continuity, legality, and permanence);

“Maintain continuity of occupation by creating alternative provision at least 30 days before development begins.”

“Maintain the legality of the development by carrying out development works outside of the breeding season. Barn Owls are protected by law against disturbance whilst nesting.”

“Establish permanence by creating a permanent accessible nest/roost site space within (i.e. inside) the finished development.”

Precautionary Measures

The following steps will ensure that nesting barn owl are not adversely affected by the proposed works:

All site personnel/contractors will receive a tool-box talk during their site induction to include details of the potential presence of barn owls and implications for work to be carried out.

1. Work should be carried out as early in Spring as possible to reduce potential disturbance. No work should be carried out between March and August inclusive to avoid potentially disturbing nesting birds.
2. A replacement breeding barn owl box (to plan within this report) will be pole or tree mounted on the south eastern corner of the site 30 days prior to building work beginning. Installation of the box should be above four metres in height.
3. Pellets and nesting debris from the barn box should be transferred to the replacement nesting box.
4. A visit by the ecologist immediately prior to sealing of the barn box will ensure absence of barn owls prior to works commencing.
5. Gaps and openings suitable for barn owl to access the barn box should be sealed with timber and secured to ensure birds cannot access the site during construction works.
6. It is proposed that monitoring to ensure continuing usage of the site by breeding barn owls should be carried out post works. The monitoring should take place for three years and inform future management measures as needed.



Location of barn owl box to allow undisturbed flightlines into surrounding habitat

Emergency measures in the unlikely event of disturbance.

Stop work. Call Dave Anderson on 07894 338290 (mobile); a site visit will be arranged to assess the situation and put in place suitable measures.

Proposed replacement barn owl box.

