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Susan Worsley

Newshams Farm
Stoneygate lane
Ribchester
Preston
PR3 2ZS

320110418P

18 May 2011

Ref: B952

Dear Susan

Protected Species Survey (Bats) at: Newshams Farm, Stoneygate Lane, Ribchester, Lancashire. PR3 2ZS

Introduction

You have requested a protected species survey at your property as a condition of a planning application to Ribble Valley Borough Council (RVBC) for building alterations. It is understood the proposal is to convert the roof void into living accommodation requiring re-roofing of the property and removal of the existing timber roof trusses in the area located in figures 1 to 5 of this report.

The Local Planning Authority must take account of the impact of a development on protected species in accordance with PPS9. YDNPA requires an appraisal of the likely impact of the proposed building alterations on protected species in addition to any mitigation measures that may be required.

A scoping survey and daylight inspection was undertaken on Wednesday 11 May 2011 between 10.00 and 11.00. The weather at the time of the inspection was mild, dry and bright (max temperature: 16°C; cloud cover: 7/8, wind: light south-westerly breeze) providing optimal survey conditions for a daylight inspection of the site.

The inspection has found no evidence of bat activity within any part of the property; it is highly unlikely that bats will be disturbed during the proposed building operations.

Survey methodology

The protected species survey (bats) provides a daylight-only assessment of the property.

The aim of a bat inspection is to make an assessment of the potential value of the site for European Protected Species (EPS) and to establish whether bats have ever been active within any part of the property that will be affected by the building operations.

The survey methodology follows the recommended monitoring guidelines published by the Bat Conservation Trust (*BCT -- Bat Surveys, Good Practice Guidelines, 2007*), Natural England (*Survey Objectives, Methods and Standards as outlined in the Bat Mitigation Guidelines, 2004*) and Survey and Monitoring Methods, (*Bat Worker's Manual, JNCC, 2004*).

Non-intrusive survey methods were used to assess the use of the property by bats. The search was made using a high-powered lamp (Clu-lite 1,000,000 candle power), close-focussing binoculars (Leica Trinovid), a digital camera (Kodak MD41) and 900mm endoscope (ProVision 300) to view all likely areas of the building for the presence of bats, ie droppings and urine and grease staining, feeding remains such as discarded moth and butterfly wings and other insects fragments typically found in a feeding and resting area.

Personnel

The survey was carried out by David Fisher (Earthworks Environmental Design) - an experienced ecological consultant with more than 25 years experience of bat ecology and field survey work and a Natural England licence holder since 1990; current NE licence No: 20103384, (Conservation, Science and Education).

Constraints

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Daylight assessments rely on standard 'non-intrusive' survey techniques (*Bat Surveys*, BCT, 2007, 3.8.2).

Evening emergence and / or dawn re-entry surveys at the property have not been undertaken.

Ultrasonic bat detectors and / or remote recording systems (sound analysis) have not been used at this site.

The survey methodology is designed to determine the likely presence of bats within the building and does not necessarily prove absence.

National Biodiversity Network (NBN Gateway) database records do not confirm presence or absence of a species or habitat.

Absence of records does not imply that a particular bat species is not present within the recording area.

The assessment was limited to the areas of the property that are directly affected by the proposed building works and does not include other buildings at the same site.

Data search

A local data search was carried to identify any relevant records of bat activity within 1km of the site. The following bat species are known to be present within the wider district:

NBN 10km squares SD 63 and SD73:

- Natterer's bat (*Myotis nattereri*)*
- Whiskered bat (*M. mystacinus*)
- Brandt's bat (*M. brandtii*)*
- Daubenton's bat (*M. daubentonii*)*
- Brown long-eared bat (*Plecotus auritus*)*
- Common pipistrelle (*Pipistrellus pipistrellus*)*
- Soprano pipistrelle (*P. pygmaeus*)
- Noctule bat (*Nyctalus noctula*)

The bat species most frequently found roosting within residential properties within this area are common pipistrelles (*Pipistrellus pipistrellus*) and soprano pipistrelles (*P. pygmaeus*) although other species are sometimes present.

There are no records of roosting bats at the property or at neighbouring properties within 200m of the site. Bat records within 2.5km of the site are shown below:

Species	Site	Grid ref.	Date	Comment
Soprano pipistrelle	St Wilfrid's Church, Ribchester	SD650350	03.07.07	Roost
Noctule bat	St Wilfrid's Church, Ribchester	SD650350	03.07.07	Foraging flight
Long-eared bat	Dutton	SD661377	25.05.07	Feeding signs
Long-eared bat	Stydd Chapel	SD654350	2007	Roost
Pipistrelle sp.	Oak Bank, Stoneygate Lane	SD650365	August 2008	Grounded bat



Figure 1:



Figure 2:

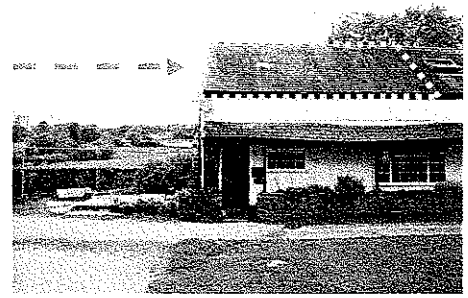


Figure 3:

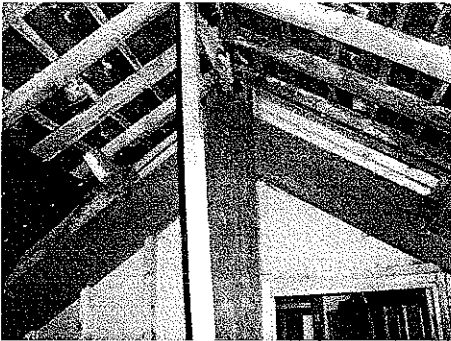


Figure 4:



Figure 5:

Description of the property

The property is a two storey semi-detached property (figure 1) formerly farm cottages; the planning application relates to the end unit as shown in figures 1 to 3. This is an extended stone-built cottage with pitched slate roof and enclosed roof void (figures 4 and 5).

The building roof has a timber post and truss frame; the slate with batten roof is mostly unlined (figure 4) although one section has an under felt present; the void is dry and well-ventilated and the area is used for storage and access.

There is a single small sky light in the roof providing some natural light into the void.

Externally the house is rendered throughout and the gable apex wall and roof verge are sealed and secure.

The south-facing elevation (figures 2 and 3) has a narrow mono-pitch slate roof forming a porch or veranda; the structure is dilapidated and the timber frame damaged beyond repair. Two dormers in the roof have rendered block walls and flat bitumen roofs.

Location of the property

NGR: SD 645515; elevation: approximately 95m

The property has a rural location and is close to Buckley Farm and Stoneygate Lane. The site is 2.5km north of Ribchester and is surrounded by open countryside with extensive grazing land and permanent pasture.

The property is not adjacent to any significant plantation or woodland although there are several small wooded cloughs and small copses, coverts and mature hedgerows nearby. The nearest significant watercourse with high-value feeding and foraging habitat and riparian woodland is the River Ribble approx. 2.5km to the south.

The site is not within the boundary of the Bowland and Pendle AONB and there are no designated nature conservation sites immediately adjacent to the property – ie. Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), Biological Heritage Sites (BHS), National Nature Reserves (NNR's), Local Nature reserves (LNR's) or Regionally Important Geological and Geo-morphological Sites (RIGS).

There is no evidence of bat activity at this property.

A previous bat survey was carried out at this site on 08.07.08 prior to demolition of a garage (survey ref: B490) no bat activity was found at the site.

Externally, there are no signs of access or roosting activity by bats within any part of the building.

Although several mouse droppings were found within the roof void there is no evidence of bat faeces or other indicative signs of entry by bats.

Evaluation of results

- The scale of impact of the development at site level on local bat populations is likely to be low / negligible¹
- All parts of the structure are well-sealed and secure, therefore the potential of this building to support roosting, resting or perching bats is relatively low.
- The potential of the building to support a maternity roost, hibernation roost or transitory / mating roost is also relatively low, consequently the overall conservation significance of the structure is also low.²
- The surrounding land / habitats provide sub-optimal feeding, foraging and commuting habitat for bats.
- The overall value of adjacent habitat features for feeding, foraging and commuting by bats is low to moderate.³
- The site is not adjacent to high-value feeding and foraging habitat and there are no significant woodland areas, riparian woodlands or watercourses within 200m.
- There are no records of roosting bats at this property or within neighbouring properties
- Using current good practice guidelines to assess the level of survey effort that is required at the property, it is recommended that further survey work is not required and building works should proceed with reasonable caution and vigilance for the unexpected presence of isolated roosting or resting bats* (refer to: mitigation notes below)

¹ The scale of main impacts at site level on bat populations – Table 6.1. p37 - (BMG, 2004)

² Guidelines for proportionate Mitigation, (Bat Mitigation Guidelines, 2004)

³ Guidance for assessing the value of habitat features – (BCT 2007, Bat Surveys, Good Practice Guidelines, p21)

* Flow chart depicting the process for deciding what level of survey is necessary, (BCT, Bat Surveys, 2007, p24)

Summary and recommendations

The proposed building alterations, including removal of the existing roof are **unlikely to cause disturbance to bats** or result in the loss of a bat roost or cause injury or death of a European Protected Species – (Bats) or result in any significant impact on a local bat population.

The scale of impact of the development at site level on local bat populations is likely to be low or negligible.

Further survey effort is not recommended at this site.

Mitigation notes are provided for your guidance; if you are aware of bat activity during the building operations you must seek further advice immediately. (see mitigation notes below)

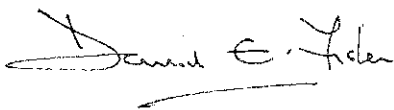
MITIGATION NOTES:

Mitigation refers to the practices adopted to reduce or remove the risk of disturbance, injury or death of a protected species or damage to a roost. The Bat Mitigation Guidelines define mitigation as "...measures to protect the bat population from damaging activities and reduce or remove the impact of development".

ACTION:	METHOD:
1. Timing constraints	None
2. Removal of roofing materials	Be aware that isolated bats are 'occasionally' found roosting beneath roofing materials at any time of year, although most commonly between May and November particularly in dwellings of this age, design and construction
3. Accidental exposure of bats	In the unlikely event of bats being exposed or vulnerable to harm, all work in that area must stop immediately. Cover the exposed bats to reduce further risk of harm and seek further advice by calling the Bat Conservation Trust (BCT) helpline on 0845 1300 228 Stop work immediately if bats are exposed or likely to be disturbed All contractors should be aware of their responsibilities to protected species. If accumulations of droppings are found during the removal of the roofing materials, stop work and seek advice before continuing work in this area
4. Avoid handling bats	Contractors should avoid handling bats but where there is no alternative, use gloves or a small container to move them to a dark and quiet area, preferably without causing them to fly in daylight.
5. Legal protection	Site contractors and project managers should be fully aware of the legal protection afforded all species of bat in the UK and procedures should be in place to mitigate for the potential impact on bats - see notes on 'Bats and the Law' in this report
6. Further advice	If you require further advice on bats during the proposed building operations or if you find an injured or resting bat, call BCT immediately; they will normally contact a qualified bat worker in the local area who will visit the site and provide further advice free of charge
7. Post-development monitoring	None
8. Additional survey effort	Not required

Please note: I do not provide a copy of this report to the local planning authority, therefore it is your responsibility to forward the report to RVBC.

Yours sincerely



David Fisher

All bat species in the UK receive full protection under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (amended by the Environment Protection Act 1990). The Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 amends the Wildlife and Countryside Act to also make it an offence to intentionally or recklessly damage, destroy or obstruct a place that bats use for shelter or protection. All species of bats are listed on Schedule 5 of the 1981 Act, which makes it an offence to:

- *intentionally kill, injure or take any wild bat*
- *intentionally or recklessly damage, destroy or obstruct access to any place that a wild bat uses for shelter or protection. This is taken to mean all bat roosts whether bats are present or not*
- *intentionally or recklessly disturb any wild bat while it is occupying a structure or place which it uses for shelter or protection.*

The protected status afforded to bats means planning authorities may require extra information (in the form of surveys, impact assessments and mitigation proposals) before determining planning applications for sites used by bats. Planning authorities may refuse planning permission solely on grounds of the predicted impact on protected species such as bats. Recent case law has underlined the importance of obtaining survey information prior to the determination of planning consent¹

*"It is essential that the presence or otherwise of protected species, and the extent that they may be affected by a development proposal, is established before the planning permission is granted, otherwise all relevant material considerations may not have been addressed in making the decision."*²

All British bat species are included in Schedule 2 of the Conservation (Natural Habitats, &c.) (Amendment) Regulations 2007, (also known as Habitats Regulations) which defines 'European Protected Species' (EPS).

¹ Bat Mitigation Guidelines. AJ Mitchell Jones, Joint Nature Conservation Committee, (2004) ISBN 1 86107 558 8

² Planning Policy Statement (PPS9) (2005) Biodiversity and Geological Conservation. ODPM

Protected species (Bats) and the planning process¹

For development proposals requiring planning permission, the presence of bats, and therefore the need for a bat survey, is an important 'material planning consideration'. Adequate surveys are therefore required to establish the presence or absence of bats, to enable a prediction of the likely impact of the proposed development on them and their breeding sites or resting places and, if necessary, to design mitigation and compensation. Similarly, adequate survey information must accompany an application for a Habitats Regulations licence (also known as a Mitigation Licence) required to ensure that a proposed development is able to proceed lawfully.

The term 'development' [used in these guidelines] includes all activities requiring consent under relevant planning legislation and / or demolition operations requiring building control approval under the Building Act 1984.

Natural England (Formerly English Nature) states that development in relation to bats "covers a wide range of operations that have the potential to impact negatively on bats and bat populations. Typical examples would be the construction, modification, restoration or conversion of buildings and structures, as well as infrastructure, landfill or mineral extraction projects and demolition operations".

(Mitchell-Jones, 2004)

¹ 2.2.3 - Planning for development, p10, Bat Surveys, Good Practice Guidelines. BCT (2007)

Other references:

Bats, development and planning in England, (Specialist support series) - Bat Conservation Trust, 5th Floor, Quadrant House, 250 Kennington Lane, LONDON SE11 5RD

Clarification of the legal duty of Local planning Authorities' to European Protected species: High Court Judgment June 2009: (Wooley v Cheshire East Borough Council) - Bat Conservation Trust

Defra Circular 01/2005 (to accompany PPS 9) - Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs www.defra.gov.uk

Natural England, 1 East Parade, Sheffield, S1 2ET, Enquiry Service: 0845 600 3078 enquiries@naturalengland.org.uk

National Planning Policy - PPS 9, Biodiversity and Geological Conservation, ODPM Circular 06/2005*

* (ODPM became Communities and Local Government on 5 May 2006)

The following websites and datasets were consulted during the preparation of this report:

1. National Biodiversity Network (NBN) database, (terrestrial mammals - chiroptera)
 2. Bat Conservation Trust (BCT)
 3. Lancashire and Cheshire Fauna Society
 4. East Lancashire Bat Group
 5. Lancashire Biodiversity Partnership
 6. Biological Heritage Sites Partnership (LCC, NE and LWT)
 7. EED dataset (Lancashire bat records 2000 - 2011)
 8. Magicmap interactive map
 9. Natureonthemap (Natural England)
 10. Multimap
 11. Google Maps
 12. MARIO - Maps and related information online (Lancashire County Council)
 13. Biodiversity Action Reporting System (BARS)
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