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Mrs Pearson  
42 Greenbank Park  
Higher Road  
Longridge  
Lancashire  
PR3 2XY

2 August 2016

Job ref: B 1723

Dear Mrs Pearson

Re: Scoping survey (European Protected Species): Providence House, Preston Road, Ribchester, PR3 3YD

You have requested a scoping survey as a condition of a planning application to Ribble Valley Borough Council (RVBC) for building alterations at the above property.

The Local Planning Authority has a duty to take account of the impact of a development on protected species in accordance with current planning policy (National Planning Policy Framework). RVBC requires an appraisal of the likely impact of the proposed development on all bat species that are present or likely to be present at the site, in addition to any mitigation and enhancement works that may be necessary.

As a consequence of the historical declines in bat populations during the second half of the twentieth century, all bats and their roosts are protected by UK law. The depletion of natural habitats throughout the UK means that some bat species are now more than ever dependent on houses and other buildings as roosting sites. It is this dependence that makes them vulnerable to redevelopments that can result in damage or destruction of a bat roost, particularly at maternity and hibernation sites resulting in negative impacts on a local bat population.

Since 2008 bats have been included as one of the UK Biodiversity Indicators which aim to show the response of species to the pressures, changes and threats to our natural and built environment.

### **Results and recommendations**

The scoping survey has found no evidence of roosting bats at this property.

Given the well-sealed external fabric of the building, the absence of signs of bat activity at the site and the sub-optimal location, the scale of impact of the proposed works on protected species (bats) is likely to be low.

It is recommended the development proceeds without the requirement to obtain a development licence (EP SL) since the proposed works are unlikely to result in a breach of the Habitats Regulations.

Please find the survey report now attached.

Yours sincerely

David Fisher  
Director (EED Surveys)

## (European Protected Species)

### PRELIMINARY ROOST ASSESSMENT – BAT SURVEY REPORT

Property: PROVIDENCE HOUSE, PRESTON ROAD, RIBCHESTER, PR3 3YD

02/08/16

#### Description and aims

A preliminary roost assessment has been undertaken to assess whether bats and / or other protected species are present or likely to be present at your property. The survey requires a detailed inspection of all accessible internal and external areas of the building to look for evidence of roosting, perching and flight activity by bats.

The aim of the survey is to determine the actual or potential presence of bats and the need for further survey and / or mitigation. The wider aim of the survey is to assess the potential value of the site for European Protected Species (EPS) to establish whether bats, barn owls and other nesting wild birds have been active within any part of the building that is likely to be affected by the proposed development.

This level of survey can be undertaken during daylight hours at any time of year and is not dependent on whether bats or wild birds are active at the time of the inspection.

From the developer's perspective, the primary objective of a survey of protected species is to ensure that a development can proceed lawfully without breaching the Habitats Regulations.

*The overall aim of surveying at a proposed development site is to collect robust data to allow an assessment of the potential impacts the proposed development will have on the bat populations present on and around the site. . . The data allow the developer to decide whether to proceed with the proposal as it stands, or whether to modify it. Proposals for appropriate mitigation, compensation and enhancement should be based on the survey data and impacts.\**

\*page 17 - Bat Surveys, Good Practice Guidelines, 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition, BCT, (2012)

#### Survey methodology

Non-invasive survey methods were used to assess the use of the property by protected species.

The survey protocol requires that a full visual inspection of the property is carried out; the survey covers all internal and external features of the building including an inspection of all accessible roof voids and out-buildings likely to be affected by the proposed works.

The survey methodology follows the recommended guidelines published by the Bat Conservation Trust - *Bat Surveys: Good Practice Guidelines, 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition, Hundt, L (2012)*, *Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists, Good Practice Guidelines 3<sup>rd</sup> edition (2016)*, Natural England (*Survey Objectives, Methods and Standards as outlined in the Bat Mitigation Guidelines, 2004*) and Chapter 3 - Survey and Monitoring Methods, (*Bat Worker's Manual, JNCC, Mitchell-Jones AJ and McLeish, AP, 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition 2004*).

The search was made using a high-powered lamp (*Clu-lite CB2 - 1,000,000 candle power*), close-focussing binoculars (*Leica Trinovid 10 x 32 BN*) and digital camera (*Sony Cyber-shot HX300*) were used to view all likely areas of the building for the presence of bats - ie. droppings and urine spots, bat corpses, bat fly larvae, roost staining or evidence of feeding remains such as discarded moth and butterfly wings or other insects fragments typically found in a perching and feeding area.

## **Timing of survey / weather conditions**

The preliminary roost assessment was undertaken on Tuesday 2 August 2016 between 11.30 and 12.30.

The weather at the time of the inspection was mild, dry and lightly overcast (minimum temperature: 17°C, cloud: 100%, wind: light westerly) providing satisfactory conditions for this level of survey.

## **Personnel**

The inspection was carried out by David Fisher (EED Surveys) - an ecological consultant with more than 25 years of experience in field survey work and development issues relating to protected species. The surveyor has held a licence since 1989 and is a volunteer bat worker with Natural England (via the BCT), a participating member of several UK bat groups and founder member of the Bowland Kilns and Caves Research Group.

Natural England Class Licence Registration Number: 2015 – 17599-CLS-CLS) CL15 (Bat Roost Visitor)

Natural England Class Licence Registration Number: 2015 – 12106-CLS-CLS) CL18 (Bat Survey)

## **Survey limitations**

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

Crevice-roosting bat species are able to roost within very narrow gaps, frequently less than 25mm wide; solitary roosting bats are sometimes overlooked during daylight inspections, particularly in situations where bats have gained access within cavity walls and roof materials or behind wall claddings, fascias and soffits.

Evidence of bat activity such as bat droppings or staining on external walls and surfaces is frequently removed by the action of wind and rain; apparent absence of evidence is therefore evaluated with caution.

National Biodiversity Network (NBN) and other data sources, whilst indicative of the bat species likely to occur within a 10km-grid square, do not confirm presence or absence of a species or habitat.

## **Pre-survey data search**

The aim of the pre-survey data search (also called a desk study or scoping study) is to collate background information around the proposed development site on bat activity, roosts and significant landscape features that may be used by bats. The key sources of information used in this report are:

- (1) European Protected Species (EPS) - ie. species records of local, regional or national significance.
- (2) National Biodiversity Network (NBN) terrestrial mammal records (chiroptera).
- (3) Local bat records: (i) East Lancashire Bat Group (ELBG) (ii) EED Surveys (iii) other ecological consultants.
- (4) Interactive maps: *Natureonthemap* (Natural England) and *Magic.gov.uk*.

## **Pre-existing information**

A local data search has found no records of roosting bats at this property or within neighbouring buildings.

A previous bat survey was carried out at the property in August 2008:

A data search has found a reference to a planning application to RVBC outlining demolition of the property - dated 19/09/08 (Application No. 3/2008/0660) which refers to a bat survey dated 05/08/08; the survey is also referenced in a subsequent planning approval notice under Condition 6 - dated 16/09/11 (RVBC Planning application No. 3/2011/0579).

## Location of the property

The property is located on Preston Road, Longridge - NGR: SD 633 365 at an elevation of approximately 85 metres. The site is outwith the boundary of the Forest of Bowland AONB. Although situated relatively close to the road, the rear of the property overlooks open countryside to the NE with extensive views to Longridge Fell.

The site is surrounded by open countryside comprising agricultural grazing land / sheep pasture – mostly category B4 improved grassland and B2.2 semi-improved neutral grassland\*; there are also a number of well-wooded stream courses comprising mainly semi-natural broadleaved woodland within the wider district

*\*Reference: JNCC Handbook for Phase 1 habitat surveys.*

There are no areas of standing open water, river channels or other significant water courses adjacent to the site and there are no extensive areas of riparian woodland or plantation within 400m. The property is located on rising ground with an open aspect to the north-east and it is not sheltered by trees or other natural features.

The location of the property is considered sub-optimal in terms of connectivity to high-value bat feeding and foraging habitat within the wider district.

A local data search has shown there are no designated nature conservation sites immediately adjacent to this property ie. Special areas of Conservation (SACs), 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).

## Description of the property

The property is a two storey house with stone and brick construction and duo-pitched slate roof with enclosed roof voids (figures 1 and 2). To the rear is a two storey extension with duo-pitched roof; on the SE side of the house is a single storey lean-to kitchen extension and single storey garage also with duo-pitch roof (figure 3).

The main house roof has a rafter-with-purlin construction and an unlined blue slate roof. The enclosed roof void is insulated with 100mm glass fibre material above the ceiling joists. The roof void is sub-divided by brick partition walls (figure 6). There are heavy accumulations of dust and debris within the roof spaces and spider webbing across the ridge and roof spars in considerable. There is no evidence of bat droppings or other indicative signs of access by bats; similarly there are no signs of nesting wild birds inside the roof voids.

The single storey lean-to extension at the rear of the house has a mono-pitch slate roof and no void is present. The garage has a rendered block wall construction and is stone-faced on the front elevation (figure 4); the building has two glazed side windows and an alloy door. The rafter-with-purlin roof is lined with bitumen felt and clad in blue slate. The garage has a concrete floor and contains a small WC and large oil storage tank.

The property is single glazed throughout. Externally the building is generally well-sealed and all stonework is pointed and secure; roof areas including all timber box soffits, fascias, verges, ridge tiles and lead flashings also appear to be secure.

The property has been un-occupied for 15 years and remains empty.

## Proposed works

The proposed works include:

- (1) Re-roofing of the property.
- (2) Demolition of the existing garage, rear two storey extension and single storey kitchen lean-to kitchen area prior to construction of a new two storey rear extension with single storey sun-lounge.

Images: Providence House, Preston Road, Ribchester. 02/08/16



Figure 1: front elevation (south-west)



Figure 2: front / side elevation (south-east)



Figure 3: rear (north-east) elevation



Figure 4: garage



Figure 5: main roof void 1



Figure 6: main roof void 2

## Survey results

There is no evidence of bat droppings or other indicative signs of access by bats within any part of the property.

The external fabric of the building is generally well-maintained and all external stonework, render and roofing materials appear secure. The roof voids show no signs of access by roosting, perching or feeding bats.

Nesting house martins are currently active on the south-east gable beneath the apex roof soffit (figure 2).

## Evaluation of results

It is unlikely that roosting bats have ever been present within the property.

The survey has found no evidence of roosting bats at this property. The conservation significance of the building in terms of its potential for attracting roosting bats is **low**.

Given the sub-optimal location of the property and the generally well-maintained condition of the property, the building currently has relatively **low potential** for supporting roosting bats.

The scale of impact of the proposed building works on roosting bats is likely to be **low risk\*** (see table 1 below).

**\*Minimal:** it is highly unlikely any bat species have been active within any part of the property.

**\*Low risk:** there is only low risk of disturbance to solitary bats or small numbers of common and widespread bat species.

**Low / moderate risk:** caution required; activity of common / rarer species is possible, including the presence of occasional / regular night perching and feeding activity or the presence of small numbers of rarer species (but not a maternity or hibernation site).

**Moderate risk:** caution required; there is moderate risk of disturbance to common bat species; activity may include the presence of regular / significant feeding perches and signs of feeding, a regularly used day / night roost or a maternity site of a common and widespread species or the likely presence of low numbers of rarer species ('rarer' as defined within the local context).

**Moderate / high risk:** considerable caution is required; this category may include a maternity site of rarer species.

**High risk:** considerable / extreme caution is required; there is a significant risk of causing disturbance to roosting bats at this site including large numbers of common species, a maternity site of locally rare or rarest UK species or a significant hibernation site for rare or rarest species; this is likely to be a site meeting the SSSI guidelines.

Table 1: \*Based on Guidelines for proportionate mitigation - Bat Mitigation Guidelines (2004) fig. 4, page 39

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## Impact assessment and recommendations

The proposed building alterations 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.

It is recommended the works proceed **without a requirement to obtain a development licence (EPSL)** since the proposed development is unlikely to result in a breach of the Habitats Regulations.

No further survey effort is required at the property.

**Nesting house martins** are currently active on the SE elevation of the house. Nesting birds should not be disturbed during the breeding season. All birds, their nests and eggs are protected by law (see Annex 1 below).

**ANNEX 1****SUMMARY OF ADVICE**

<b>Action</b>	<b>Summary</b>
1. Further survey effort at this site	Not required
2. Detailed method statement	Not required
3. Licence requirement (EPSL)	Not required
4. Removal of roofing materials	<p>Although there is no evidence of bats at this property there remains a <b>low risk</b> of disturbing solitary roosting bats during removal of roofing slates and felts.</p> <p>In the unlikely event of any bats being exposed during the removal of the roof spars, roof slates, verge tiles, bitumen felts or masonry; further operations in the area should cease until the building has been inspected by a qualified person / ecologist. (For further advice - see note 7 below)</p>
5. Accidental exposure of bats	<p>Seek advice immediately.</p> <p>Cover any exposed bats to reduce any further risk of harm. Place the bats in a small dark and very secure box and leave in a cool and quiet place.</p> <p>Wherever possible, building / roofing contractors should try to prevent any bats from flying away in daylight.</p> <p>Call the surveyor for further advice before proceeding, otherwise contact the emergency help line at the BCT.</p>
6. Legal responsibility	The onus lies with the applicant to ensure that no offence will be committed if the development goes ahead, regardless of whether planning permission has been granted.
7. Emergency advice on bats	<p>EED Surveys (David Fisher): 01200 425113 (office) or 07709 225783 (mobile) email:<a href="mailto:earthworksuk@yahoo.co.uk">earthworksuk@yahoo.co.uk</a></p> <p>The Bat Conservation Trust (BCT) provides a bat helpline: 0345 1300 228; in</p>

	<p>an emergency, BCT will call the nearest volunteer bat worker in your area to arrange a free site visit.  <a href="http://www.bats.org.uk">www.bats.org.uk</a> email: <a href="mailto:enquiries@bats.org.uk">enquiries@bats.org.uk</a></p>
<b>8. Nesting wild birds</b>	<p>Nesting house martins are currently active under the fascia soffits on the SE elevation:</p> <p>NB. All birds, their nests and eggs are protected by law and it is an offence (with certain exceptions) to intentionally kill, injure or take any wild bird or to intentionally take, damage or destroy the nest of any wild bird while it is in use or being built.</p> <p>Avoid damage to nests during the breeding season (April to September); measures to discourage birds nesting under the eaves should be in place before the birds return in spring. It is likely that any prospecting house martins will be discouraged from nesting on the property if roofing works are already underway during the spring and early summer.</p>

## ANNEX 2

### Wildlife legislation – Bats and the law

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 consent<sup>1</sup>.

*“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.”<sup>2</sup>*

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).

<sup>1</sup> Bat Mitigation Guidelines, AJ Mitchell Jones, Joint Nature Conservation Committee, (2004) ISBN 1 86107 558 8

<sup>2</sup> Planning Policy Statement (PPS9) (2005) , Biodiversity and Geological Conservation. ODPM.

### Protected species (Bats) and the planning process

Our built environment has the potential to have major negative impacts on biodiversity. However, if done sensitively, the development and refurbishment of buildings can, in fact, increase the ecological value of the site.\*

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<sup>1</sup>.

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”.<sup>2</sup>

\* Designing for Biodiversity, RIBA (second Edition - 2013)    <sup>1</sup> Bat Surveys, Good Practice Guidelines, BCT (2007).    <sup>2</sup>Tony Mitchell-Jones, (BMG, 2004)

**Other references:**

Bats, development and planning in England, (Specialist support series) - Bat Conservation Trust, 5<sup>th</sup> Floor, Quadrant house, 250 Kennington Lane, London, SE11 5RD, 0845 1300 228

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

Natural England - Cheshire, Cumbria, Greater Manchester, Lancashire and Merseyside offices are located at:

Crewe: Natural England, Electra Way, Crewe business park, Crewe, Cheshire, CW1 6GJ 0300 060 2922

Kendal: Natural England, Juniper House, Murley Moss, Oxenholme Rd, Kendal, Cumbria, LA9 7RL 0300 060 2122

Manchester: Natural England, 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor, Bridgewater House, Whitworth Street, Manchester, M1 6LT 0300 060 1062