

(European Protected Species)

PRELIMINARY ROOST ASSESSMENT – BAT SURVEY REPORT

95 Whalley Road, Read, Lancashire, BB12 7RP

8 August 2017

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Introduction

A preliminary roost assessment (also referred to as a scoping survey) requires a detailed inspection of the external and internal features of a building to look for evidence of flight, feeding, perching or other indicative signs of bat activity normally associated with roosting bats.

The aim of the survey is to determine the actual or potential presence of bats and whether further survey effort is likely to be required. 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.

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

Timing of survey / weather conditions

The scoping survey was undertaken on Tuesday 8 August 2017 between 10.30 and 11.00.

The weather at the time of the inspection was mild, dry and bright (min. temperature: 15°C, cloud: 90%, wind: light NW breeze, rain: nil) providing satisfactory conditions for this level of survey.

Personnel

The inspection was carried out by David Fisher (EED Surveys) an ecological consultant currently specialising in protected species surveys and development issues in the north-west of England having worked for 30 years in nature conservation throughout the UK.

The surveyor has held a Natural England licence since 1989 and continues to work as a voluntary bat worker via the Bat Conservation Trust / Natural England and is a founder member of the East Lancashire Bat Group.

Current licences held:

Natural England Class Licence WML-A34 - Level 1 (Registration Number: 2015 – 17599-CLS-CLS)

Natural England Class Licence WML-A34 – Level 2 (Registration Number: 2015 – 12106-CLS-CLS)

Aims* of the survey

Collect robust data to provide an assessment of the potential impacts of the proposed development on bat populations and other protected species at the property.

Facilitate the design of mitigation, enhancement and monitoring strategies for bats and all protected species.

Provide a clear assessment of risk to bats and other protected species enabling the Local Planning Authority to reach an informed planning decision.

Assist clients in meeting their statutory obligations.

Facilitate the conservation of bat populations and other protected species.

*Adapted from 'Defining aims and objectives', p15 BCT Bat Surveys - Good Practice Guidelines,

Survey methodology

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

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 any 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, 2nd Edition, Hundt, L (2012)*, 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, 3rd 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.

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

Survey limitations

The scoping survey can be undertaken at any time of the year and is not dependent on whether roosting bats are present at the time of the assessment. Roost activity surveys (ie. emergence /re-entry and swarming) are only carried out during recommended optimal survey period (May to September / early October).

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 rubble infill walls and beneath roof materials and other significant structural features.

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.

The scope of the survey includes only those areas of the property that are likely to be affected by the works.

Pre-existing information

A data search has found no records of roosting bats at this property.

Previous EPS surveys have not been carried out at this address.

Proposed works

Re-roofing and raising the roof level to accommodate first floor accommodation / dormer loft conversion.

Rear and side extension requiring removal of existing flat roof extension at rear.

Removal of an existing single garage near the west elevation.

Bats in the Ribble Valley

Ten species of bats have been recorded in the Ribble Valley and Forest of Bowland AONB since 2008; bats occur within a very wide range of habitats, both urban and rural, particularly where there are areas of standing open water, river channels, broadleaved woodlands and conifer plantations.

Although some species are largely dependent on trees and woodland, all species are known to rely on buildings for at least part of their life cycle; these include all types of residential properties, barns and agricultural units.

Contrary to popular belief, buildings constructed since 1970 are frequently used as maternity and nursery sites by breeding bats during the warmest summer months (May to August) when pregnant female bats gather in the secure sites to give birth to their young.

During late summer and autumn adults and young bats leave their breeding roosts and disperse within the wider district; there is also increasing evidence of seasonal movement and migration by certain species. All UK bat species feed exclusively on insect prey; hibernation between October / November and March / April is a period of relative inactivity, enabling bats to survive the winter period when food supply is least available.

Pre-survey data search

The aim of the pre-survey data search 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) On-line data search- European Protected Species (EPS) - 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 including: *Natureonthemap* (Natural England) and *Magic.gov.uk* and MARIO (Lancashire).

*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.

The following bat species are frequently recorded within the 10km national grid square: SD73:

Common name	Scientific name	Status of local population
<u>Myotis spp.</u>		
Natterer's bat	(<i>Myotis nattereri</i>)* ^{1 2}	widespread/common
Whiskered bat	(<i>M. mystacinus</i>) ¹	widespread/uncommon
Brandt's bat	(<i>M. brandtii</i>)	widespread/uncommon
Daubenton's bat	(<i>M. daubentonii</i>) * ^{1 2}	widespread/locally common
<u>Plecotus sp.</u>		
Brown long-eared bat	(<i>Plecotus auritus</i>)* ^{1 2}	widespread/locally common
<u>Pipistrellus spp.</u>		
Common pipistrelle	(<i>Pipistrellus pipistrellus</i>)* ^{1 2}	widespread/common
Soprano pipistrelle	(<i>P. pygmaeus</i>) ^{1 2}	widespread/common
Nathusius's pipistrelle	(<i>P. nathusii</i>) ²	current distribution unknown
<u>Nyctalus sp.</u>		
Noctule bat	(<i>Nyctalus noctula</i>) ^{1 2}	widespread/locally common

*NBN data

¹East Lancashire Bat Group

²EED surveys

³Bowland Kilns and Caves Research Group

Location of the property

Read, Ribble Valley, Lancashire. NGR: SD 762 343 Elevation: 94 metres

The property is situated on the west side of Read adjacent to Whalley Road (A671). Hammond Ground is located to the north of the property while the rear aspect overlooks open countryside and the Calder Valley to the south. The location is semi-rural in character and is relatively close to broadleaved woodland at Bridge Hey Wood approximately 400m west of the site and there is largely urban development to the east in Read.

The nearest significant watercourse is the River Calder located 1km SSE of the property; the river channel provides extensive riparian habitat for feeding and foraging bats and there are several extensive broadleaved woodlands and mixed plantations throughout the district including the Biological Heritage Sites (BHS) at New Plantation (SD 7634) and Cock Wood (SD 7434) Sabden Brook / R. Calder. The location of the property is sub-optimal in terms of feeding, foraging and commuting habitat for bats.

A local data search has shown there are no designated nature conservation sites immediately adjacent to the 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 detached bungalow with brick cavity wall construction and hipped slate roofs and a rear single storey extension with a flat bitumen roof (figures 1 and 2). To the side of the property is a single story detached garage with duo-pitched corrugated cement fibre roof and walls (figure 5).

The roof void is partly converted and boarded for access; a large D/G Velux-type roof light provides good natural light (figure 4). The ceiling is lined with fibre board panels, otherwise all roof slates are unlined.

There is an enclosed eaves void located at either end of the roof space (figure 2). The voids are dry, cool and well-ventilated without any natural light. Fine accumulations of dust and debris from the old roof slates is present within the voids and cluster flies have been active; glass fibre insulation material is present above the ceiling joists. There is no evidence of any access by roosting bats (ie. droppings) or signs of nesting wild birds.

Externally the property is well-sealed and all fascias, soffits, lead work flashings and roof verges appear to be very secure. Similarly all doors, windows and wall renderings are well-sealed and secure and there are no signs of activity by bats on any external surfaces.



Figure 1: Front elevation



Figure 2: Rear elevation



Figure 3: eaves roof void



Figure 4: main roof void



Figure 5: garage internal

Survey results

A preliminary roost assessment (scoping survey) has found no evidence of bat activity associated with any part of the property.

There are no signs of any maternity roost, mating roost or place of hibernation.

There are no records of roosting bats at the property.

Evaluation of results

The proposed building alterations are unlikely to result in disturbance to roosting bats and therefore the overall impact of the development on protected species is likely to be minimal.

The conservation significance of the building is minimal / low.

Impact assessment

Potential of property to support roosting bats, barn owls and barn swallows			
	Bats	Barn owls	Barn swallows
House and roof voids	No risk	No risk	No risk
Garage	No risk	No risk	No risk

Minimal potential	Low potential	Moderate potential	High potential
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Table 1: Potential of the property to support protected species.

Recommendations / summary

Low impact / minimal - risk.

The proposed building alterations are **unlikely to cause any 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.

ANNEX 1

Summary of advice

Action	Summary
1. Timing constraints	Not required
2. Further survey effort at this site	Not required
3. Detailed method statement	Not required
4. Licence requirement (EPSL)	Not required
5. Roof works: Removal of roofing materials	Minimal risk of exposing roosting bats. Solitary roosting / resting bats are occasionally exposed during removal of roofing materials; highest risk areas are beneath roofing felts and under roof tiles and ridge tiles. 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).
6. Accidental disturbance to bats	Seek advice immediately. 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. Wherever possible, building / roofing contractors should try to prevent any bats from flying away in daylight. Call the surveyor for further advice before proceeding, otherwise contact the emergency help line at the BCT.
7. 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.
8. Emergency advice on bats	EED Surveys (David Fisher): 01200 425113 (office) or 07709 225783 (mobile) email: earthworksuk@yahoo.co.uk The Bat Conservation Trust (BCT) provides a bat helpline: 0345 1300 228; in an emergency, BCT will call the nearest volunteer bat worker in your area to arrange a free site visit. www.bats.org.uk email: enquiries@bats.org.uk
9. Nesting wild birds	There is no evidence of any nesting / roosting in the proposed working area.

ANNEX 1

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 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 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 lawfully¹.

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".²

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

Natural England – North of England 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, 3rd Floor, Bridgewater House, Whitworth Street, Manchester, M1 6LT 0300 060 1062