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Catherine Wickham

16 Brookside
Old Langho
Blackburn
Lancashire
BB6 8AP

27 September 2017
1869

Job ref: B

Dear Catherine

Re: EPS – Daylight scoping survey: 16 Brookside, Old Langho, Lancashire, BB6 8AP

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

A preliminary roost assessment (scoping survey) has found only limited evidence of bat roosting activity at this property. A number of fresh bat droppings within one area of the roof void indicates recent activity by low numbers of crevice-dwelling bats above the neighbouring party wall.

Whilst the proposed building and roofing operations are unlikely to result in significant disturbance to roosting bats, there remains a low / moderate risk of exposing roosting bats therefore specific mitigation measures (timing constraints) are required to avoid the risk of causing disturbance, injury or death of a protected species.

Although there are no signs of any maternity roost, mating roost or place of hibernation, roofing contractors should be aware that a small number of roosting individuals (most likely pipistrelle bats) may be present beneath ridge tiles and / roofing tiles during the warmer summer months (May to August). Roofing operations requiring lifting tiles, roofing membrane and lead work flashings around the chimney should not take place between 1 May and 31 August when there is an increased risk of roosting bats being present.

Natural England recommends that re-roofing operations are best carried in the autumn period when there is least risk of disturbance and injury to roosting bats. You are therefore advised to follow the mitigation measures outlined in Annex 1 of the attached report.

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

Please find a copy of the survey report now attached.

Yours sincerely

(European Protected Species)

PRELIMINARY ROOST ASSESSMENT – EPS REPORT

16 Brookside, Old Langho, BB6 8AP

Date of survey: 26 September 2017

Introduction

The Local Planning Authority is required to take account of the impact of a development on protected species in compliance 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 property, 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 structures as roosting sites. It is this dependence that makes them vulnerable to redevelopments that can result in damage or destruction of a roost, particularly maternity roosts, resulting in negative impacts on a local bat population.

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

Timing of survey / weather conditions

The scoping survey was undertaken on Tuesday 26 September 2017 between 14.30 and 15.15.

The weather at the time of the inspection was mild, bright and dry (min. temperature: 17°C, cloud: 100%, wind: light southerly, rain: nil) providing satisfactory conditions for this level of survey.

Personnel

The inspection was carried out by David Fisher (EED Surveys) an ecological consultant 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)

Aim of the survey

The broad aim of the scoping survey is to assess the potential value of the site for European Protected Species (EPS) and to establish whether bats, barn owls and nesting wild birds have been active in 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 protected species survey is to ensure that the proposed development can proceed lawfully without breaching the Habitats Regulations.

The key aims* of this survey are to:

- (1) collect robust data to determine the likely impacts of the proposed development on bat populations and other protected species at the property.
- (2) facilitate the design of mitigation, enhancement and monitoring strategies for bats and all protected species.
- (3) provide a clear assessment of risk to bats and other protected species enabling the Local Planning Authority to reach an informed planning decision.
- (4) assist clients in meeting their statutory obligations.
- (5) 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 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 survey protocol requires that a full visual inspection of the property is carried out. The survey aims to cover all internal and external features of the building including any accessible roof voids and out-buildings that are likely to be affected by the proposed works. The main purpose of the search is to look for evidence of flight, feeding, perching or other indicative signs of bat activity or evidence of other protected species at the property.

The search was made using a high-powered lamp (*Clu-lite CB2 - 1,000,000 candle power*), close-focussing binoculars (*Swarovski Optik EL8 x 32 WB*) 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 survey 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 20mm wide; solitary roosting bats are sometimes overlooked during daylight inspections, particularly in situations where bats have gained access within rubble infill walls or beneath roof materials and other structural features.

Evidence of bat activity such as bat droppings, feeding signs and other indicative evidence such as staining on external walls and surfaces is frequently removed by the action of wind and rain – please note that absence of evidence of bats is not necessarily evidence that bats are not present.

Records whilst indicative of the bat species likely to occur within an area, do not confirm presence or absence of a species or habitat.

Local records may contain unverified public data.

Proposed works

- (1) Two storey side extension requiring modifications to the existing roof and roof void.
- (2) Single storey rear lounge extension requiring removal of an existing conservatory / sun lounge.

- (3) Rear dormer roof conversion requiring modifications to existing rear pitch and roof void.
- (4) Re-roofing operations are likely to be required during the proposed alterations.

Drawings as provided: Proposed plans and elevations, 02/09/17 Drwg. No. WIC 01 – 02 Richard Jameson.

Pre-existing information

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

The surveyor is unaware of any previous surveys carried out at this address.

Pre-survey data search

The aim of the pre-survey data search is to collate background information about the proposed development site on bat activity, roosts and significant landscape features that may be used by bats and other protected species. Information sources include:

- (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.

The following bat species are recorded within the 10km national grid squares: SD73 and SD74 (Ribble Valley):

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

*NBN data ¹East Lancashire Bat Group ²EED surveys ³Bowland Kilns and Caves Research Group

Location of the property

NGR: SD 702 360 Elevation: 60 metres

The property is located at Brookside, Old Langho, a well-established residential development (built 1954) close to several neighbouring properties of similar age, design and construction.

There is an area of woodland and a number of mature broadleaved trees to the rear of the property. The wider district is relatively well-wooded; there is extensive broadleaved habitat approximately 0.5km north of the site.

Although there are no areas of standing open water or river channel adjacent to the property, there is riparian woodland at Mill Wood, Hacking Wood and Brockhall Wood within 1km to the north close to the River Ribble.

Although the location of the property is likely to be sub-optimal in terms of feeding, foraging and commuting habitat for bats, the site has moderate habitat connectivity to high-value feeding areas within the wider district.

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 semi-detached two storey house with standard brick cavity wall construction and duo-pitched rafter-with-purlin roof (figures 1 and 2). To the front elevation is a small entrance porch with duo-pitched tiled roof. There is a single storey kitchen extension with flat bitumen roof (shown as location 'A' in figures 1 and 2) to the side of the property and a single storey sun-lounge / conservatory at the rear (location 'B' figure 2).

The main loft is boarded for access and the roof slopes are under-drawn with hardboard (figures 4 to 6). The roof void is likely to be insulated above the first floor ceiling joists (although not visible); roofing felt beneath the tiles is not visible due to the lining inside the loft area.

The loft is clean, dry and well-ventilated; a small number of bat droppings are visible immediately below the ridge board and wall apex on the neighbouring brick partition wall (located by arrow in figure 6). The chimney stack appears to be well-sealed and secure and there is no evidence of access by roosting bats or birds.

Externally the property is well-maintained; all windows and doors are double-glazed and all roof areas, roof verges (figure 3), ridge tiles and fascia-soffits appear secure.

The flat roof extension is in good condition and there are no gaps beneath the timber fascias where bats could gain entry. Similarly both front entrance porch and rear sun-lounge are both well-sealed and secure.

The roof tiles appear secure although there is some slightly raised lead work around the chimney which may potentially allow access to roosting bats beneath the ridge tiles.

Images: 16 Brookside 26/09/17



Figure 1: Front elevation

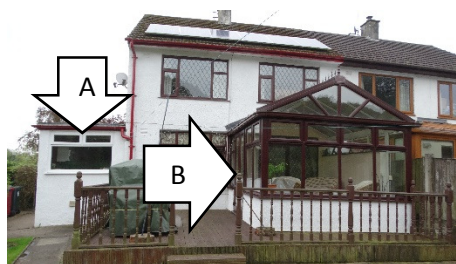


Figure 2: Rear elevation



Figure 3:



Figure 4: south-east gable end wall



Figure 5: roof void



Figure 6: partition wall to neighbouring property

Survey results

A small number of fresh bat droppings have been found on the partition wall (figure 6); the droppings are fresh and their appearance suggests the presence of several crevice-dwelling pipistrelle bats above the ridge board and beneath the ridge tiles.

There are no scattered droppings within any other part of the roof void.

There are no signs of a bat maternity roost, mating roost or place of hibernation and there is no external evidence of access by a protected species.

The building is generally well-maintained and secure although a section of lead work flashing around the chimney is slightly raised.

Evaluation of results

A small quantity of fresh bat droppings indicates recent activity by bats within the area close to the roof apex.

The underside of the roof is boarded and therefore it is not possible to determine where bats have gained access, however crevice-dwelling species such as pipistrelles tend to favour small spaces beneath ridge tiles, roofing felts and roof tiles.

Since the roost is above a neighbouring party wall rather than adjacent to an external wall, the bats are likely to have gained access beneath the roof fabric via the external lead flashing around the chimney column.

The roost is unlikely to be used by a significant number of bats and is unlikely to be a breeding roost. The common pipistrelle bat is a common and widespread UK species and is well represented within the district.

With reference to the Bat Mitigation Guidelines (p39, figure 4) the conservation significance of the property is considered to be **relatively low**.

Current guidance recommends the optimal period for carrying out roofing operations is 1 September to 1 May.

The property is **relatively low risk*** in terms of the likely impact of the proposed works on protected bat species.

Impact assessment

***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.

Summary and recommendations

Avoid disturbance to roofing materials during the period 1 May to 31 August.

Follow the mitigation advice outlined in Annex 1 of this report.

The proposed building alterations are **unlikely to result in significant disturbance to bats** or cause significant impact to a local bat population.

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

Further survey effort at the property will not be required.

ANNEX 1

Mitigation guidance

Action	Summary
1. Timing constraints	REQUIRED - Avoid disturbance to ridge tiles between 1 May and 31 August There is an increased risk of disturbing solitary bats or low numbers of roosting bats during re-roofing operations in the summer period. The areas with highest risk are ridge tiles, roofing felts and lead flashings around the chimney and along the ridge board and ridge tiles directly above the neighbouring party wall. The majority of bat roosts in houses are used only seasonally, so there is normally a period when bats are least likely to be present. The optimal time for carrying out roofing work as recommended by Natural England is during the autumn, winter and early spring between 1 September and 30 April.
2. Further survey effort at this site	Not required
3. Detailed method statement	Not required

4. Licence requirement (EPSL)	Not required
5. Roofing works: Removal of roofing materials	Highest risk of causing disturbance to roosting bats is between 1 May and 31 August. Contractors should be aware that small crevice-dwelling bats may be disturbed during removal of ridge tiles, roof tiles, roofing felts and timber battens. In the event of any bats being exposed during the removal of roofing materials, stop work in that area and seek immediate advice.
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. The site will require a visit from a licenced person to assess the situation.
7. 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

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 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

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.

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

Sheffield: Natural England, 1 East Parade, City Centre, S1 2ET, Sheffield.
