

# Preliminary Bat Roost Assessment Report

**Outbuildings at Black House Farm,  
Dale Head,  
Slaidburn,  
BB7 4TS**

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## **Summary**

In January 2020 Batworker consultancy was commissioned to undertake a survey of outbuildings at Black House Farm, Dale Head, Slaidburn, BB7 4TS to assess the potential for use by bats and breeding birds.

A daytime survey was carried out on 12<sup>th</sup> February 2020 in order to support development plans including residential conversion of existing buildings.

**No evidence was recorded to suggest bats were roosting within the building.**

**No bats were observed or recorded using the building for roosting.**

**The building is considered to be of negligible potential for roosting bats.**

**The surveyor considers survey effort to be reasonable to assess the roost potential of the building and no further survey work is deemed appropriate.**

**The surveyor does not consider the proposed development and change of use is likely to result in a breach of the Conservation (Natural Habitats &c.) Regulations 1994 (as amended) therefore the proposed development does not require an EPS Licence (EPSL) to proceed lawfully.**

**Swallow nests were observed within buildings, compensatory measures are included within this report.**

## Introduction

In January 2020 Batworker consultancy was commissioned to undertake a survey of outbuildings at Black House Farm, Dale Head, Slaidburn, BB7 4TS to assess the potential for use by bats and breeding birds.

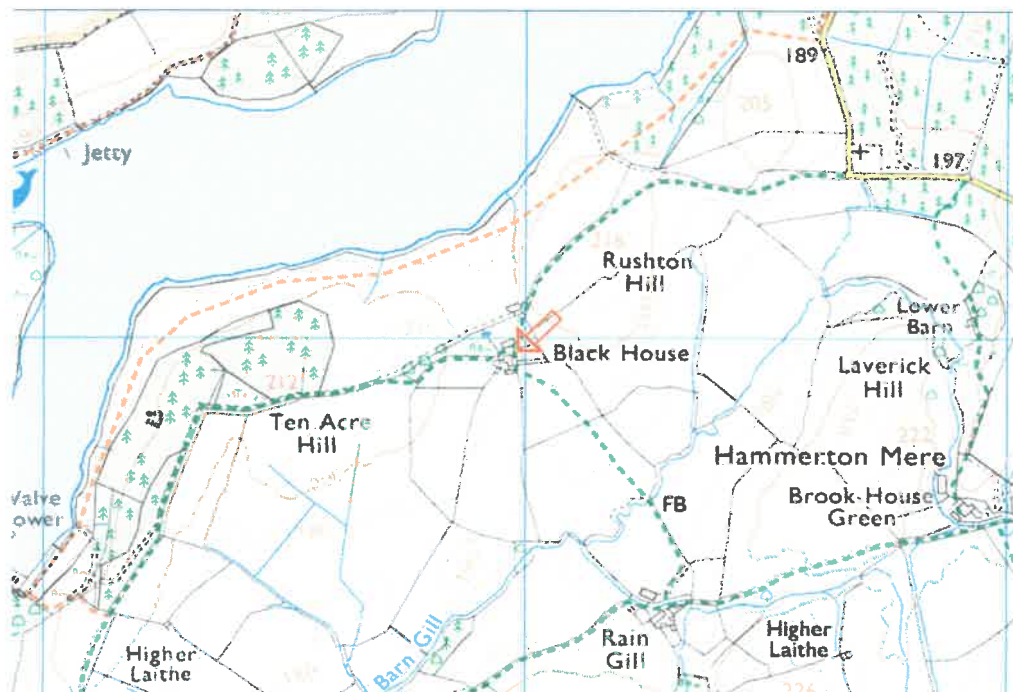
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## Survey and Site Assessment

### Objectives of the survey

The survey was carried out to determine roost potential of the building, current usage by bats, and other protected species, of the site and to establish status of the bat species using the site prior to development work being carried out.

### Survey site location



A central grid reference for the site is SD7297754981

## Site/Habitat description

The property consists of a series of three agricultural outbuildings located adjacent to Black House Farm.



## Building 1



Building one wood store consisting of stone built walls and a single pitched corrugated roof. The store is open to the front and rear. Roof timbers are band sawn. The building offers negligible roosting opportunities.

## Building 2



A series of three single storey stone built store rooms with a mix of double pitched slate and modern corrugated metal roofs. External walls are well pointed. Roof lighting allows considerable internal light penetration and roofs are unlined. To the southern end of the building considerable holly coverage has further reduced roosting opportunities.

The building offers negligible roosting opportunities.

### Building 3



A stone built single storey outbuilding with double pitched fibreboard roof, a single storey double pitched open store is present on the western facade. The open store is constructed with single skin concrete block walls. External walls are well pointed. Internally the roofs are unlined and the ridge is open and exposed.

The building offers negligible roosting opportunities.

### **Surrounding habitat.**



The property is located in a rural position surrounded by semi improved and improved grassland. A block of deciduous woodland is located adjacent to the farm to the west.

Overall foraging potential for bats can be considered moderate.

### **Pre Existing data on local bat species**

A search of the MAGIC website revealed no bat EPS licence applications within a 1km radius. East Lancashire Bat Group hold roost records of Soprano Pipistrelle and Whiskered bat associated with Gisburn Forest.

From personal experience of surveying for and researching bats in Lancashire, Yorkshire and Cumbria, the following species were considered.

Common Pipistrelle – known to roost on sites where suitable foraging habitat is available.

Soprano Pipistrelle – known to roost on sites where suitable foraging habitat is available.

Whiskered/Brandt's – species often found roosting in buildings close to woodland.

Natterer's – a typical upland bat with foraging bats being recorded high on heather moorland. Often roosting in barns.

Daubenton's – a species commonly associated with aquatic habitats.

Long Eared bat – a woodland species which has been recorded foraging over in by meadows and rough grassland sites. Often roosting in barns.

## **Field Survey Methodology**

### **Visual inspection**

An inspection was carried out to search for and identify potential feeding perches, roosting opportunities and signs of bat use both internally and externally.

The visual inspection focussed on searching for feeding remains and bat droppings both within the building and on external walls. Crevices and other potential roost sites were investigated for smear/grease marks, lack of cobwebs, urine staining.

Equipment used included:

- Lupine Pico LED torch
- SeeSnake CA 300 video endoscope
- Opticron close focusing binoculars

### **Personnel**

All surveys were conducted by Dave Anderson MSc, Natural England Science, Education and Conservation bat licence holder (2015-15784-CLS-CLS) a bat surveyor and ecologist with 20 years experience.

### **Survey Summary**

<b>Survey</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Timings</b>
Visual	12.02.2020	1 Hour

### **Survey constraints**

Access to all areas of the exterior of the buildings was possible and good visual inspection at ground level was possible.

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. In many situations it is not possible to inspect every locations where bats are present therefore it should be assumed that an absence of bat evidence does not necessarily equate to evidence that bats are absent.

Some species such as pipistrelle sp bats are opportunistic and it is possible for individuals to be found during works, even where surveys have had negative results during preliminary and activity surveys.

## **Survey Results**

### **Visual Inspection - Bats**

The buildings were observed to have no obvious potential roost features with external walls either being well pointed or constructed from solid concrete block. Corrugated roofs featured exposed ridges and no suitable cracks or crevices.

No evidence of bats – droppings, feeding remains, staining was observed on external features or within buildings at a time of year when presence of bats in the form of droppings and feeding remains would be expected.

### **Visual Inspection – Nesting birds**

Seven swallow nests were recorded during the survey.

### **Evaluation of the results**

Due to the lack of suitable roost features and well sealed nature of the buildings it is considered they offer negligible roosting potential. No evidence was recorded of use by bats at a time of year when obvious signs of roosting bats would be expected.

Seven swallow nests were observed during the survey and the householders are keen to retain nesting opportunities within the new development.

It is recommended that work avoids swallow nesting season (April - September) unless efforts are made to seal buildings prior to the birds arrival.

The internal ridge line of the proposed covered walkway offers opportunities for the installation of replacement artificial nests, and it recommended that eight Schwegler Swallow Nest (or woodcrete equivalents) are fitted post construction.

## **Conclusion**

**No evidence was recorded to suggest bats were roosting within the building.**

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**The building is considered to be of negligible potential for roosting bats.**

**The surveyor considers survey effort to be reasonable to assess the roost potential of the building and no further survey work is deemed appropriate.**

**The surveyor does not consider the proposed development and change of use is likely to result in a breach of the Conservation (Natural Habitats &c.) Regulations 1994 (as amended) therefore the proposed development does not require an EPS Licence (EPSL) to proceed lawfully.**

## **E Bibliography**

- |  |                             |
|--|-----------------------------|
| Barn Owls and Rural Planning Applications                                    | Barn Owl Trust 2009         |
| Barn Owl Survey Methodology and Techniques for use in Ecological Assessments | Shawyer, C. August 2011     |
| Bat Mitigation Guidelines  | Natural England 2006        |
| Bat Survey Guidelines 3rd Edition  | Bat Conservation Trust 2016 |
| Bat Workers Manual 3 <sup>rd</sup> Edition                                   | JNCC 2004                   |

## **Bats and the Law**

**Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981**, principally those relating to powers and penalties, have been amended by the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 (CRoW Act). The CRoW Act only applies to England and Wales.

### **Section 9(1)**

It is an offence for any person to intentionally kill, injure or take any wild bat.

### **Section 9(4)(a)**

It is an offence to intentionally or recklessly\* damage, destroy or obstruct access to any place that a wild bat uses for shelter or protection.

(\*Added by the CRoW Act in England and Wales only)

This is taken to mean all bat roosts whether bats are present or not.

### **Section 9(4)(b)**

It is an offence to intentionally or recklessly\* disturb any wild bat while it is occupying a structure or place that it uses for shelter or protection.

(\*Added by the CRoW Act in England and Wales only)

## **The Conservation (Natural Habitats, &c.) Regulations 1994**

### **Section 39(1)**

It is an offence

(a) deliberately to capture or kill any bat

(b) deliberately to disturb any bat

(d) to damage or destroy a breeding site or resting place of any bat.

The difference between this legislation and the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 is the use of the word 'deliberately' rather than 'intentionally'. Also disturbance of bats can be anywhere, not just at a roost. Damage or destruction of a bat roost does not require the offence to be intentional or deliberate.

## **Barn Owls and the Law**

### **Part 1 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act (1981)**

(1) Subject to the provisions of this Part, if any person intentionally (or recklessly as amended by the CRoW Act, 2000) (a) kills, injures or takes any wild bird; (b) takes, damages or destroys the nest of any wild bird while

that nest is in use or being built; or (c) takes or destroys an egg of any wild bird. he shall be guilty of an offence.

(5) Subject to the provisions of this Part, if any person intentionally- (a) disturbs any wild bird included in Schedule 1 while it is building a nest or is at, on or near a nest containing eggs or young; or (b) disturbs dependent young of such a bird, he shall be guilty of an offence and liable to a special penalty.

## **Countryside and Rights of Way (CRoW) Act (2000)**

### **Part III Nature conservation and wildlife protection**

#### **74 Conservation of biological diversity**

(1) It is the duty of (a) any Minister of the Crown (within the meaning of the Ministers of the [1975 c. 26.] Crown Act 1975), (b) any Government department, and (c) the National Assembly for Wales, in carrying out his or its functions, to have regard, so far as is consistent with the proper exercise of those functions, to the purpose of conserving biological diversity in accordance with the Convention.

#### **SCHEDULE 12 AMENDMENTS RELATING TO PART I OF WILDLIFE AND COUNTRYSIDE ACT 1981**

1. In section 1(5) of the 1981 Act (offence of intentional disturbance of wild birds) after "intentionally" there is inserted "or recklessly".

## **The Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act (2006)**

### **PART 3, (40): Duty to conserve biodiversity**

(1) Every public authority must, in exercising its functions, have regard, so far as is consistent with the proper exercise of those functions, to the purpose of conserving biodiversity.

(3) Conserving biodiversity includes, in relation to a living organism or type of habitat, restoring or enhancing a population or habitat.