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Mr John Thompson
Clend Barn,
Dale Head,
Slaidburn,
Clitheroe,
BB7 4TS

14 October 2020

Dear Mr Thompson,

Report of Preliminary Bat Roost Assessment Clend Barn, Dale Head, Slaidburn, Clitheroe, BB7 4TS.

You instructed us to undertake a preliminary bat roost assessment (also referred to as the; “PRA, survey, report”) at the above-named property (also referred to as the; “building”). The survey was undertaken on 7th October 2020. My qualifications and experience along with those of the reviewer of this report are summarised at the end of this report.

As I have already discussed with you, the probability that bats are roosting at your site and you might engage the legislation that protects them by progressing your development without the benefit of further investigation or mitigation is extremely low. Consequently, I have no further recommendations.

My full report follows.

Aims

In a manner that is proportionate to scale, nature and intensity of the proposed development and its probable interactions with ecological receptors, specifically bats:

Survey

The purpose of the visit was to assess the site for recent evidence of use by Barn Owls and bats; to assess any changes to the site since the previous Bat and Barn Owl Surveys and supervision works in 2016 and 2015.

Evaluation

To describe the constraints to the proposed development as a result of the risk of harm or disturbance to bats (if any).

To set out any recommendations for further survey effort, where this risk is unacceptable or a complete understanding of how bats are using the site cannot be defensibly argued.

To inform any subsequent mitigation proposals in order to achieve a planning or other statutory consent, and to comply with wildlife legislation.

Methods

Survey

For the desk study:

Given the return visit nature of this survey It was not considered necessary to undertake a desk study however an assessment of the surrounding landscape structure, using aerial images from Google Earth and Ordnance Survey maps.

General:

I systematically assessed all features that will be impacted by the development proposals for bats, evidence of bat activity, and roosting or commuting habitat.

For all structures:

Externally, I made a non-intrusive, visual appraisal from the ground using binoculars, inspecting the external features of the structure(s) for potential access and egress points, and for signs of bat use.

For buildings:

Internally, I made an inspection of the building, including the living areas of derelict or abandoned buildings and the accessible roof spaces of all buildings, using an endoscope, torch and ladders. I paid particular attention to the floor and flat surfaces,

window shutters and frames, lintels above doors and windows, and carried out a detailed search of all accessible features within the roof space.

Birds:

I also made a note of any other ecological constraints observed during the survey. Commonly, this relates to the risk of harm to breeding birds, and the suitability of the site to support barn owls *Tyto alba*.

Evaluation

The evaluation that drives an assessment of likelihood is, by nature, probabilistic. The evaluation methodology I employed is described by Colins (2016) and summarised in the table below:

Evidence, likelihood of presence and significance of habitat features	
Possible survey findings	**What this means for you**
⇒ Bats ⇒ Evidence of bat roosting or activity ⇒ Quantitatively significant or qualitatively important features for roosting ⇒ Connectivity to high quality habitat for roosting, foraging and commuting in the proximate and wider landscape	There are probable and foreseeable impacts to bats and their roosts in consequence of your development. These impacts present a real risk of harm or disturbance to bats. In order to prevent this outcome and any criminal liability, further survey effort is necessary to appropriately inform mitigation and enhancement. Thereafter, a planning decision can be defensibly made in favour of the proposed development.
⇒ No bats ⇒ No evidence of bat roosting or activity ⇒ A small number of qualitatively poor features for roosting (if any) ⇒ Limited connectivity to poor-quality habitat in the proximate and wider landscape (if any)	Any impact to bats and their roosts is extremely improbable or negligible. Bats and their roosts do not present any constraints to your development. A planning decision can be defensibly made in favour of the proposed development without delay.

Limitations

There were no limitations to the survey.

Findings

The findings collate the data of the desk study, the evidence of the physical survey and any other substantiation (such as the result of DNA tests of physical evidence collected on site).

Photographs with descriptions are only included where appropriate i.e., where they enhance the reader's comprehension of the relevance of salient features on site, or provide valuable context to the evaluation, foreseen impacts and recommendations.

Description of the site and proposed development

The building on site is a traditional stone-built building with a cross-pitched roof clad in slate tiles. The building has recently undergone refurbishment to include a new roof and new stonework, as such the roof tiles and stone work are in excellent condition with no visible gaps suitable for roosting bats. The building has UPVC soffits and eaves which are also in excellent condition with no gaps. There is one chimney on the roof pitch of the building, which has tight-fitting lead flashing around its base. The windows and doors on the building are wooden-framed and are in good condition with no gaps. Internally, the two loft spaces are tightly sealed with no daylight entering. The roof structure consists of timber beams with a bitumen felt lining, with areas of the loft spaces also lined with additional kingspan insulation.

The proposed development is to create two dormer windows within the loft areas on the south east elevation. This will require considerable alterations to the existing roof.

Figure 1: North west elevation of the buiding.

Figure 2: South east elevation of the building, showing the section of roof where the proposed dormers are to be created.

Figure 3: internal view of the first loft space to include the proposed dormer windows.

Figure 4: Internal view of the second loft space to include the proposed dormer windows

Summary of Desk Study

Given the return visit nature of this survey it was not considered necessary to undertake a desk study.

Summary of Physical Survey

The building and roof structure are in excellent condition, with a well-sealed soffits and loft spaces.

There is good surrounding habitat, with vast areas of woodland within 47m of the site. No bat evidence was observed during the survey. No EPSL records of destroyed/disturbed roosts were identified within 2km of the site.

Discussion

I have taken into account the findings of the desk study, the physical survey and made a qualitative evaluation of the habitat value at site and its utility to support roosting bats.

There is good surrounding habitat and good connectivity to the wider landscape, however the building itself is considered to have negligible habitat value due to the lack of suitable bat roosting features. Therefore it is considered that bats are extremely unlikely to be found on site.

Conclusion

My assessment is that bats should not present a constraint to development as the risk of harm or disturbance is highly improbable.

Foreseen Impacts and Recommendations (if any)

None.

References

Collins, J. (ed.) (2016). Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists —Good Practice Guidelines, 3rd edition, Bat Conservation Trust, London.

Garland & Markham (2008) Is important bat foraging and commuting habitat legally protected?

Google Earth (2020) accessed on 13/10/2020.

Magic database (2019) http://www.magic.gov.uk/MagicMap.aspx accessed on 13/10/2020.

Mitchell-Jones, A.J. (2004). Bat Mitigation Guidelines. English Nature, Peterborough.

Report ends.

I trust this is sufficient for your assessment. However, if you have any further questions please do not hesitate to contact me via 07875949691 or elengriffin@arbtech.co.uk.

E.S.Griffin

Author

Elen Griffin BSc (Hons), Consultant

Bat licence: accredited agent to Natural England Bat Licence Number: 2016-22119-CLS-CLS

Reviewer

Mel Reid BSc (Hons) MRes, Consultant

Natural England Bat Licence Number: 2019-43774-CLS-CLS

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