Preliminary Ecological Assessment

Shackletons Home and Garden,
Clitheroe Road,
Chatburn,
BB7 4JY

15.03.2020

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Summary

In January 2020 Batworker consultancy was commissioned to undertake a preliminary ecological assessment of land and buildings at Shackletons Home and Garden, Clitheroe Road, Chatburn, BB7 4JY to assess the potential for a proposed developments impact on protected species.

Daytime walkover surveys were carried out on 20th February and 11th March 2020 in order to support plans to for a proposed development to extend the site.

The site contains a section of field currently used for grazing sheep. A hawthorn, ash and oak hedgerow forms a boundary on the southern and eastern boundaries of the site. Habitat consists of species poor improved grassland with a short sward.

No evidence was recorded to suggest bats were roosting within the buildings. No bats were observed or recorded using the building for roosting. The buildings on site are considered to be of negligible potential for roosting bats. The surveyor considers survey effort to be reasonable to assess the roost potential of the buildings and no further survey work is deemed appropriate.

One mature ash tree is proposed to be felled as part of the development, it is recommended that the tree is subject to an aerial survey prior to felling to confirm absence of potential roost features unseen from the ground.

Hedgerow and boundary immature trees should be removed outwith the bird nesting season (March to September) or following a visual check by an ecologist to confirm absence of nesting birds.

No evidence of badgers was recorded within 200m of the site. The site is currently secured with fencing within the boundary hedgerows.

The land is assessed as low conservation value.

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.

Introduction

In January 2020 Batworker consultancy was commissioned to undertake a preliminary ecological assessment of land and buildings at Shackletons Home and Garden, Clitheroe Road, Chatburn, BB7 4JY to assess the potential for a proposed developments impact on protected species.

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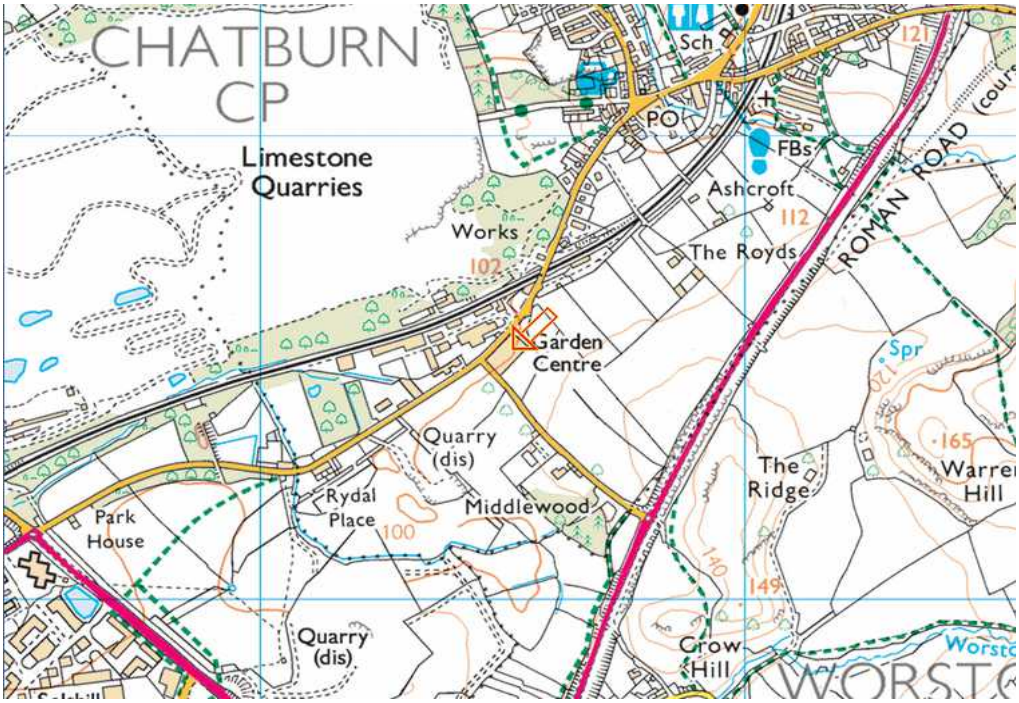
Survey and Site Assessment

Objectives of the survey

The survey was carried out to determine current usage by bats 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 SD7658743560

Site/Habitat description

View of existing site from East

View of proposed extension site from south east.

Habitat on the existing site consists of site consists of stone built retail buildings, hardstanding and tarmac car parking with hawthorn hedgerow on site boundaries. Scattered mature ash trees are present within the car parking area and are proposed to be retained.

The proposed extension site consitist of species poor improved grassland with a short grazed sward. Hawthorn, ash and oak hedgerow forms a boundary on the site boundary, hedge understorey flora is species poor. Scattered ash trees are present within the field.

Surrounding habitat.

Red line illustrates survey area

The property is located in a rural position with surrounding habitat dominated by semi improved and improved grassland. Hedgerow is present along field boundaries.

Proposed Development

Pre Existing data on local species

A search of the MAGIC website revealed no EPS licence applications within a 1km radius.

The site is within 1km of Clitheroe Knoll Reefs and Salt Hill and Bellman Quarry Sites of Special Scientific Interest, however it is isolated from both by roads and the proposed development is highly unlikely to affect either site.

Field Survey Methodology

Visual inspection - bats

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.

Field survey

The ecological value of the survey area has been assessed based on the Guidelines for Ecological Impact Assessment (CIEEM, 2018). The biodiversity value of any habitat types and associated species assemblages has been considered. Invasive species listed on Schedule 9 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act (1981 as amended 1996) were also recorded throughout the survey area.

A survey of the surrounding habitat was carried out to assess potential for other protected species – badgers, barn owls and great crested newts in line with published guidelines. This included a search for field signs, and assessment of pond habitat where applicable.

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

Survey	Date	Timings
Daytime Walkover	20.02.2020	1 hour.
Daytime Walkover	11.03.2020	1 hour.

Survey constraints

Access to all areas of the interior and exterior of the buildings was possible and good visual inspection at ground level was possible. Whilst the survey was carried out during a sub optimal period, given the species poor nature of the habitats surveyed it is felt to be sufficient to assess conservation value.

Results

Visual Inspection – Bats

The current existing retail buildings are in a good state fo repair and were observed to have no potential for cavities suitable for roosting bats. Bat roost potential was assessed as negligible.

Breeding birds

Bird nesting potential is available within boundary hedgerows.

Badgers

No evidence of presence of badgers or foraging by badgers was recorded within 250m of the site. Dog proof fencing within boundary hedgerow is likely to prevent access for foraging badgers.

Great Crested Newt

No ponds or waterbodies suitable for great crested newts are located within 250m of the site.

Target Notes

Target Note 1

Hawthorn hedge with poor understory flora proposed to be removed as part of development plans.

Target Note 2

Boundary hedgerow with immature ash, oak and hawthorn with poor understorey flora proposed to be removed as part of development plans.

Target Note 3

Stand of three mature ash trees. The northernmost tree is proposed to be removed. Trees were observed from the ground to offer low bat roosting potential.

Target Note 4

Individual mature oak with low bat roosting potential.

Target Note 5

Mature Oak and Ash with low bat roost potential.

Evaluation of the results

The site is of low conservation value with species poor habitats present. One mature ash tree with low bat roost potential is proposed to be removed as part of the development, other mature trees on site will be retained. An immature species poor hedgerow is proposed to be removed.

The site offers potential for biodiversity gain as part of the development and recommendations have been made within this report.

Conclusion

No evidence was recorded to suggest bats were roosting within the buildings. No bats were observed or recorded using the building for roosting. The buildings on site are considered to be of negligible potential for roosting bats. The surveyor considers survey effort to be reasonable to assess the roost potential of the buildings and no further survey work is deemed appropriate.

One mature ash tree is proposed to be felled as part of the development, it is recommended that the tree is subject to an aerial survey prior to felling to confirm absence of potential roost features unseen from the ground.

Hedgerow and boundary immature trees should be removed outwith the bird nesting season (March to September) or following a visual check by an ecologist to confirm absence of nesting birds.

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Biodiversity Net Gain

Planting within the proposed development offers potential to improve the biodiversity of the site. It is recommended that a planting scheme with suitable native tree species offers the opportunity to increase bird nesting opportunities and bat foraging potential.

Tree species suitable for the development include:

Bird Cherry	*Prunus padus*
Hazel	*Corylus avellana*
Rowan	*Sorbus aucuparia*
Oak	*Quercus robur*
Wild Cherry	*Prunus avium*
Small Leaved Lime	*Tilia Cordata*

Replacement hedgerow should be planted on the new northeastern and southeastern site boundaries. A species mix of hawthorn, holly, blackthorn and hazel will enhance the biodiversity of the site.

Amenity areas should be planted with a native species mix to create a diverse sward.

Betony (Stachys officinalis)
Birds-foot Trefoil (Lotus corniculatus)
Clustered Bell Flower (Campanula glomerata)
Cowslip (Primula veris)
Foxglove (Digitalis purpurera)
scabiosa)
Meadow Cranesbill (Geranium pratense)
Red Clover (Trifolium pratense)
Tufted Vetch (Vicia cracca)
Wild Marjoram (Origanum vulgare)
Black Knapweed (Centaurea nigra)
Bugle (Ajuga reptans)
Common Vetch (Vicia sativa)
Field Scabious (Knautia arvensis)
Greater Knapweed (Centaurea
Kidney Vetch (Anthyllis vulneraria)
Red Campion (Silene dioica)
Selfheal (Prunella vulgaris)
Vipers Bugloss (Echium vulgare)
Wild Thyme (Thymus polytrichus)

Bat Roosting

It is recommended that five three chamber greenwoods ecohabitats bat boxes are affixed to existing mature trees at a height of at least 4 metres. Boxes should be mounted on south, east or western aspects.