

Stuart Nash  
11 Meadowlands  
Clitheroe  
BB7 2ND

25 July 2021  
2067

Job ref: B

Dear Stuart

**Re: EPS – Preliminary Roost Assessment: 11 Meadowlands, Low Moor, Clitheroe, Lancashire BB7 2ND**

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

The Local Planning Authority is required to take account of the impact of a development on protected species in accordance 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 site, in addition to any mitigation and enhancement measures 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 local bat populations.

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.

**A preliminary roost assessment (scoping survey) has found no evidence of roosting bat activity at the property.**

There are no signs of any maternity roost, mating roost or place of hibernation and it is unlikely that roosting bats are present at this property, consequently the proposed building alterations are unlikely to result in disturbance to roosting bats. The overall impact of the operations on protected species is likely to be negligible.

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 below.

Yours sincerely

David Fisher

## PRELIMINARY ROOST ASSESSMENT – BAT SURVEY REPORT

11 Meadowlands, Clitheroe, BB7 2ND

Survey date: 20.07.2021

### Introduction

A preliminary roost assessment is a detailed inspection of the exterior and interior of a structure to look for features that bats could use for entry / exit and roosting and to search for signs of bats. The aim of this survey is to determine the actual or potential presence of bats and the need for further survey and / or mitigation.

The broad 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 preliminary roost assessment was carried out Tuesday 20 July 2021 between 12.00 and 13.00.

The weather at the time of the assessment was very warm and bright (min. temperature: 23°C, cloud: nil, rain: nil, wind light NNE / F1) providing optimal survey conditions.

### Personnel

The inspection was carried out by David Fisher (EED Surveys) an ecological consultant / licenced bat worker.

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 an active member of the East Lancashire Bat Group, North Lancashire Bat Group and founder member of Bowland Kilns and Caves Research Group.

### Current licences held:

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

### Survey objectives

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

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 local wildlife habitats, bat populations and other protected species.

## **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 methodology may involve a search of accessible roof voids to identify potential or actual roost locations, feeding signs and access points. The external inspection includes a visual inspection of the property normally from ground level using binoculars to look for signs of roosting bats.

The search was made using a high-powered torch and Swarovski EL 8x32 close-focussing binoculars. Images were taken using an Apple iPhone camera. The systematic daylight inspection of the structure was undertaken to identify any evidence of protected species such as droppings and urine spots, bat corpses, bat fly larvae, fur oil staining, feeding remains such as discarded moth and butterfly wings and other insects fragments, odour or noise of movement or squeaking calls from hidden bats in a roost.

The survey methodology follows the recommended guidelines published by the Bat Conservation Trust - *Bat Surveys: Good Practice Guidelines, 2<sup>nd</sup> 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, 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition 2004*).

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

## **Survey limitations**

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

Crevice-roosting bat species are able to roost within narrow gaps and cavities, frequently less than 25mm wide; solitary roosting bats are sometimes overlooked during daylight inspections, particularly in situations where bats have gained access in rubble walls, cavity walls, box soffits, wall claddings or beneath roofing materials.

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.

## **Bats In the Ribble Valley**

Ten bat species have been recorded in the Ribble Valley and the Forest of Bowland AONB in recent years. Bats are present within a very wide range of habitats, both urban and rural, particularly where there are areas of standing open water, significant river channels, broadleaved woodlands and conifer plantations and other high quality semi-natural habitats where flying insects and invertebrates are more abundant and roost opportunities are available.

Although some species are largely dependent on trees and woodland, all locally occurring species are known to rely on built structures for at least part of their life cycle; these include residential properties, barns, agricultural buildings, garages, commercial premises, offices and factories, cellars, bridges and culverts.

All bats are warm-blooded animals and are attracted to warm structures in summer. Contrary to popular belief, buildings constructed since 1970 are frequently used as maternity roosts between May and August when pregnant females gather, sometimes in considerable numbers at suitable 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 at cooler locations between October / November and March / April is a period of relative inactivity, enabling bats to survive the winter when food is scarce.

## Proposed works

1. Removal of existing SE – facing single storey entrance porch with mono-pitch roof (figures 1 and 2).
2. Replacement single storey porch with duo-pitched roof & extension to incorporate garage (figs 3 / 4).

## Pre-survey data search

- (1) European Protected Species (EPS) – ie. locally significant bat roosts or species records within the district.
- (2) Locally, regionally or nationally important wildlife and conservation designations.
- (3) EPS surveys undertaken at this site and other properties within 2km of the site.
- (4) National Biodiversity Network (NBN) terrestrial mammal records (chiroptera) for the 10km grid square.
- (5) Local bat records - East Lancashire Bat Group (ELBG) / North Lancashire Bat Group (NLBG)
- (6) Interactive maps: *Natureonthemap* (Natural England) and *Magic.gov.uk*.

Bat species regularly recorded within the 10km grid square SD 74 / Clitheroe, Ribble Valley:

• Natterer's bat	<i>(Myotis nattereri)</i>
• Whiskered bat	<i>(M. mystacinus)</i>
• Brandt's bat	<i>(M. brandtii)</i>
• Daubenton's bat	<i>(M. daubentonii)</i>
• Brown long-eared bat	<i>(Plecotus auritus)</i>
• Common pipistrelle	<i>(Pipistrellus pipistrellus)</i>
• Soprano pipistrelle	<i>(P. pygmaeus)</i>
• Noctule bat	<i>(Nyctalus noctula)</i>

## Pre-existing Information

Although roosting bats have been recorded at neighbouring properties in recent years, there are no records of roosting bats at this property.

**Location of the property** National Grid Reference: SD 730, 419 - Elevation: approximately 65 metres.

The property is located within a well-established residential district at Low Moor to the west of Clitheroe.

Although the site is approximately 200m from the River Ribble, the property is not immediately adjacent to open countryside or close to a designated area of wildlife conservation. The property location is largely suburban and is surrounded by other residential properties of similar age, design and construction.

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 Geomorphological Sites (RIGS).

## Description of the building

(Photos: Annex 1)

The property has been extended from the original three-bedroom detached house built circa 1998. The house has traditional rafter-with-purlin roofs with well-insulated roof voids and well-sealed PVC soffits (figures 3 & 4).

The south-west facing entrance porch has a similar construction built approximately 12 years ago; the mono-pitch roof is very well sealed and all areas appear to be secure.

There are no external signs of access by roosting bats or nesting wild birds.

### **Survey results**

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

There are no signs of any maternity bat roost, mating roost or place of hibernation; occasional roosting by solitary bats is also very unlikely.

There are no records of roosting bats at the property.

The location is sub-optimal in terms of access and connectivity to feeding, foraging and commuting habitat.

There is no current evidence of any nesting wild birds within the property.

### **Evaluation of results**

The proposed removal of the porch and 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 negligible.

The conservation significance / potential of the existing property to support roosting bats is also negligible.

### **Impact assessment**

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

### **Risk assessment**

Negligible Risk	Low Risk	Moderate Risk	High Risk
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Table 2: Risk of causing disturbance to roosting bats during the proposed building works.

## Recommendations / mitigation 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. Roofing works / demolition:  Removal of roofing materials	<p><b>Extremely low risk of exposing or disturbing roosting bats.</b></p> <p>Solitary roosting or resting bats are very <u>occasionally</u> exposed during removal of roofing materials; highest risk areas are normally beneath roofing felts and under roof tiles, ridge tiles, t &amp; g boarding, lead-work, bitumen felt roofs and fascia-soffits.</p> <p>In the unlikely event of any bats being exposed during the removal of the roof spars, roof tiles, verge tiles, bitumen felts and box soffits; further operations in the area should cease until the building has been inspected by a qualified person ecological consultant.</p> <p>(For further advice - see note 8 below).</p>
6. Accidental disturbance to bats	<p><b>Seek advice Immediately.</b></p> <p>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.</p>
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	<p>EED Surveys - David Fisher (mobile) 07498 364568  <a href="mailto:earthworksuk@yahoo.co.uk">email:earthworksuk@yahoo.co.uk</a></p> <p>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.</p> <p><a href="http://www.bats.org.uk">www.bats.org.uk</a> email: <a href="mailto:enquiries@bats.org.uk">enquiries@bats.org.uk</a></p>
9. Nesting wild birds	There is no evidence of any nesting / roosting bats within the property.

## Summary

The proposed building alterations are **unlikely to cause 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.

Further survey effort at this property is **not required**.

## ANNEX 1:

Images: 11 Meadowlands, Clitheroe. (20/07/21)



Figure 1:



Figure 2:



Figure 3:



Figure 4:

## 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 consent<sup>1</sup>.

*"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."*<sup>2</sup>

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).

<sup>1</sup> Bat Mitigation Guidelines, AJ Mitchell Jones, Joint Nature Conservation Committee, (2004) ISBN 1 86107 558 8

<sup>2</sup> Planning Policy Statement (PPS9) (2005), Biodiversity and Geological Conservation. ODPM.

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### 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 lawfully<sup>1</sup>.

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".<sup>2</sup>

\* Designing for Biodiversity, RIBA (second Edition - 2013)   <sup>1</sup> Bat Surveys, Good Practice Guidelines, BCT (2007).   <sup>2</sup> Tony 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, 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor, Bridgewater