21 Church Street, Ribchester

Bat Survey Report

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1 Introduction

1.1 Background

Kingdom Ecology have carried out a bat scoping survey of a small, detached outbuilding located to the rear of 21 Church Street, Ribchester, Preston, PR3 3XP (National Grid Reference SD 6499 3520). Proposals are to demolish the shed.

Field surveys comprising of a daytime bat inspection were undertaken on the 6th August 2021. Surveys were carried out by Richard Roe (BSc, MSc, MIEEM, CEnv). Richard has extensive experience of undertaking bat surveys as a professional ecological consultant with over twenty years' experience. Richard is also a licensed bat worker (Level 4 Class License and Bat Mitigation Class License).

1.2 Purpose of Report

This report provides and outlines the findings of field surveys undertaken at the site.

The field surveys examined habitats present with a focus on the existing outbuilding's suitability to support roosting bats. Survey also examined the suitability of the site to support breeding birds. Survey comprised of a daytime assessment examining the interior and exterior of the building.

Following a description of the survey findings and an evaluation of habitats at the site, the report goes on to make recommendations for further works, mitigation and ecological enhancement measures where relevant.

1.3 Protected Species Legislation

1.3.1 Bats

All British bat species are fully protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) and through their inclusion in Schedule II of the Habitats Regulations 2010 which transpose Annex II of the Council Directive 92/43/EEC 1992 on the Conservation of Natural Habitats and of Wild Fauna and Flora ("EC Habitats Directive") which defines European protected species of animals.

British bats species are afforded further protection by the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000; and the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006.

Taken together, this legislation makes it an offence to:

- Intentionally or deliberately kill, injure or capture bats.
- Deliberately disturb bats, whether at roost or not.
- Damage, destroy or obstruct access to bat roosts.
- Possess or transport bats, unless acquired legally.
- Sell, barter or exchange bats.

A bat roost is interpreted as "any structure or place, which any wild bat uses for shelter or protection." (Bat Conservation Trust 2016[1]). A bat roost is protected whether or not bats are present at the time.

All species of British bat are considered a European Protected Species (EPS). The Conservation of Habitat and Species Regulations (2010) provide derogation against certain offences which could potentially affect an EPS through the EPS Licensing system.

[1] Bat Conservation Trust (2016) 'Bat Surveys: Good Practice Guidelines 3rd Edition'

2 Field Survey Methods

2.1 Survey Aims and Objectives

Survey comprised of a site visit and inspection of the outbuilding. The survey aim was to assess the site as to its suitability to support roosting bats and to identify suitable habitats for any other protected species including breeding birds.

Survey also aimed to identify opportunities for ecological enhancement and to inform potential mitigation measures if required to ameliorate any negative impacts attributable to the proposed works.

2.2 Survey Methods

2.2.1 Daytime Bat Inspection

The building was assessed as to its suitability to support bats following standard methodologies prescribed in English Nature's *Bat Mitigation Guidelines* (Mitchell-Jones 2004)[2] and the Bat Conservation Trust's *Bat Surveys: Good Practice Guidelines* 3rd Edition (BCT 2016)[3].

Survey, comprising of an inspection of the interior and exterior of the outbuilding, was undertaken during daylight conditions using binoculars, endoscope and a high-powered torch. The survey was undertaken during daylight hours on the 6th August 2021.

In addition to searching for evidence of an actual bat roost the survey also aimed to assess the suitability of the building to support bats and consequently the likelihood of a bat roost being present but with no obvious field signs.

Survey assessed the building's roost suitability by examining structural features and the surrounding habitat. Structural features that will influence the suitability of a building to support roosting bats include the presence of a roof void; access points into a building including gaps beneath barge boards, gaps under lead flashing, gaps within masonry, loose tiles etc, complexity of any roof void, daytime light levels in roof void etc.

[2] Mitchell-Jones, A.J. 2004. Bat Mitigation Guidelines. English Nature, Peterborough.

[3] Bat Conservation Trust (2016) 'Bat Surveys: Good Practice Guidelines 3rd Edition'

Important habitat features surrounding the structures which could influence roost potential include: whether the structure is in a semi-rural or parkland location, proximity to a significant linear feature (e.g. watercourse, mature hedgerow, wooded lane) or an area of woodland etc.

Taking account of these architectural and habitat features, the building was assigned a level of roost suitability based upon professional judgement.

3 Survey Results

3.1 Site Description

The study site comprises of a small, detached, outbuilding located at 21 Church Street, Ribchester. The outbuilding is of pre-19th century origin.

The building is located within the rear garden of a residential property. The garden comprises of astroturfed grass and stone patio. There is a playing field located immediately to the rear of the site.

Wider surrounding habitats comprise of further residential housing associated with the village of Ribchester. The River Ribble is located approximately 160m to the southeast of the site. There are scattered trees located around St Wilfred's Church and churchyard located approximately 140m to the south of the site. The river and the churchyard offer some good value bat foraging habitat whilst habitats nearer to the site are considered to offer low value bat foraging habitat.

The study site's location is shown on Figure 1 in the Appendix. Photographs of the site are also provided in the Appendix.

3.2 Protected Species

3.2.1 Bats

The site comprises of a small, detached, outbuilding. The outbuilding is constructed of stone and has a shallow mono-pitched roof clad in stone slates. The outbuilding measures approximately 3.5m x 2.5m in area and is approximately 2.5m in height.

Most of the building exterior is well pointed however there are some larger unmortared crevices at the east face of the building (see Photograph 1) however these are located at a low height (below 2m). Any bat flight lines from the crevices would be obscured by an adjacent child's Wendy house. The crevices were fully inspected with a bright torch, the crevices were partially cobwebbed over and could be fully investigated. The crevices are relatively open and go back approximately 10cm into the structure of the outbuilding. No current or historical evidence of bats was found within the crevices. Given their low height, exposure and their obstructed nature, it is considered to be very unlikely that these features would be used by roosting bats.

The outbuilding also has some minor crevices were the roof slates overlap one another, these provide an approximate 1cm wide crevices between some of the roof slates (see Photograph 2).

Given the low height of the slates and the roof in general, these could be fully inspected with an endoscope and torch. The slates were mostly cobwebbed over. The underside of the slates could also be investigated as the internal face of the roof is unlined. No current or historical evidence of bats was found between the slates. It is considered to be very unlikely that these features would be used by roosting bats.

The crevices between the roof slates are only located on the south face of the outbuilding as a neighbouring garden shed is located abutting the north face of the outbuilding and would block off any potential bat access points.

Internally, the outbuilding comprises of two small rooms. There are small doors to access the rooms which are kept closed and so there is no easy access for bats or birds to the building interior. The internal face of the roof is unlined therefore there is no roosting habitat offered between the roof slates and any felt lining. The rooms and the internal faces of the roof were observed to be heavily cobwebbed. The internal walls are well mortared.

No bat droppings or other bat field signs were found internally or externally. The building is also considered to be unsuitable for breeding birds.

Taking account of the low suitability of the potential features identified and given that the features could be fully explored using a torch and endoscope, it is considered to be very unlikely that the outbuilding would be used by roosting bats. Consequently, the outbuilding is assessed as offering a '**negligible**' bat roosting potential.

4 Recommendations

4.1 Protected Species

4.1.1 Bats

The daytime inspection did not identify any field signs indicative of roosting bats or breeding birds. Furthermore, the building was found to be of limited suitability for roosting bats with many features cobwebbed over and all potential features able to be fully explored. The building is very small with features located at a low height. Immediate surrounding habitats are not considered to be of any significant value to foraging bats.

Taking account of the above, the building is considered to offer only '**negligible**' bat roosting potential and it is considered to be very unlikely that any roosting bats would be affected by the proposals.

Nevertheless, it is recommended that a cautious approach is adopted during proposed works. Works to demolish the outbuilding would be carried out by hand. It is recommended that the roof slates are carefully lifted during demolition and checked beneath for any bats.

If any bats or bat field signs are encountered, works should immediately stop and further advice should be sought from a licensed bat ecologist.

5 Appendix

PHOTOGRAPHS

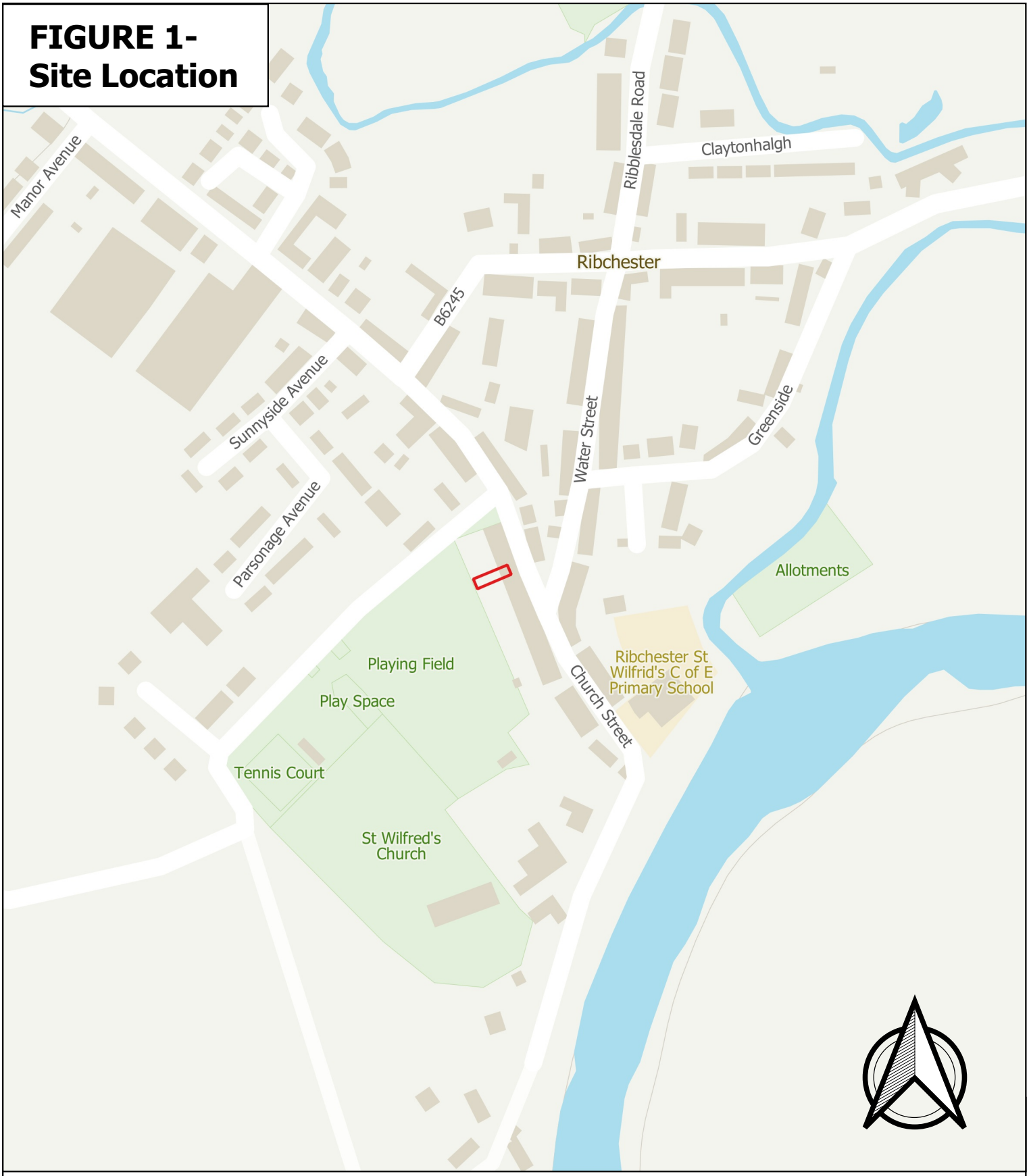
Photograph 1- Front (east face) of outbuilding

Photograph 2- View of gaps under roof slates

Photograph 3- Rear (west face) of shed

Photograph 4- Interior of shed

FIGURE 1- Site Location



KEY

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Study Site