United Environmental Services Ltd

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BAT SCOPING SURVEY

At

8 Homeacre Avenue
Sabden
Clitheroe
Lancashire
BB7 9HG

NGR: SD 77874 37739

[redacted]

[redacted]

Date: 4th May 2022
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report is written by Noah Fulton [redacted] It provides an assessment of the potential impacts on bats as a result of the proposed development at 8 Homeacre Avenue, Sabden, Clitheroe, Lancashire.

A bat scoping survey was undertaken on 20th April 2022. The objective of the survey was to establish the suitability of the building on site to support roosting bats, based on a site-specific survey and habitat assessment. The building was searched externally and internally (where accessible) for bat presence and features associated with bat activity, as detailed in Bat Conservation Trust (BCT) guidance (2016). The proposed development involves the demolition of the existing conservatory present on the north-western facing aspect and the construction of a single-story extension in its place.

The habitats on site at 8 Homeacre Avenue provide negligible foraging and commuting opportunities for bats due to the very small and intensively managed areas of vegetation on site. The site is situated in an area that provide moderate quality habitat with pockets of higher-quality habitat present within the wider landscape, including watercourses, field boundary hedgerows, scattered and lines of broadleaved trees and broadleaved woodland. These habitats will support an abundance of invertebrate prey on which bats can forage, in addition to providing dark commuting corridors.

The building on site has been assessed as having negligible potential to support roosting bats due to the lack of potential roosting features (PRFs). The only PRFs identified during the survey were only present very temporarily due to the removal of the guttering to allow general maintenance works. All temporarily exposed cavities were inspected with an endoscope and high-powered torch and no evidence of roosting bats was observed. In addition, the proposed development works will be localised to the north-western aspect which is well sealed and no PRFs were observed.

Internally, the two identical loft spaces are well-sealed with no observed PRFs or access points into the loft voids. Furthermore, no field signs of bats such as droppings were found within the loft space, suggesting no historic or present use by roosting bats.

The building on site is considered to have negligible potential to support roosting bats, and no evidence was found to suggest present or historic use by bats. As such, no further surveys, compensation or mitigation work is required for the development to proceed, with regards to bats.

However, the proposed development presents an opportunity to create roosting opportunities and enhance the habitats on site to benefit bats locally. The provision of bat boxes on site is therefore recommended.

The report should be read in conjunction with appendices 1 to 3, which give visual representations of the survey results.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Author, surveyors and qualifications

This report is compiled and written by Noah Fulton [redacted] surveyors include:

- Tom Kenwright [redacted]

All surveyors have the knowledge, skills and experience identified within CIEEM's "Competencies for Species Survey: Bats" (2013), or were under the supervision of a surveyor with the required competencies.

1.2 Survey objectives

UES was commissioned in April 2022 to conduct site surveys which include the following activities:

- Conduct internal and external building inspections to look for field signs of bats
- Assess the suitability of the building for use by roosting bats
- Recommend further surveys, mitigation and compensation, where appropriate

1.3 Proposed development

The proposed development involves the demolition of the existing conservatory present on the north-western facing aspect and the construction of a single-story extension in its place.

1.4 Structure of the report

This report sets out the methodology, results, and recommendations in relation to a specific bat survey. Recommendations are in line with statutory legislation and planning policy objectives.

The report should be read in conjunction with appendices 1 to 3, which give visual representations of the survey results.

2 METHODOLOGY

2.1 General

All surveys were carried out to recognised guidelines, timings and weather conditions, with particular reference to Natural England and BCT publications (see references for further information).

The habitats on site and in the surrounding area were assessed during a walkover survey and by studying aerial photographs, in order to gauge their suitability to support roosting, foraging and commuting bats.

2.2 Building survey

The building on site was searched both externally and internally for bat presence and features associated with bat activity, as detailed in BCT guidance (Collins, 2016). This was conducted on 20th April 2022 by Noah Fulton and Tom Kenwright.

2.2.1 External Inspection

The external inspection was carried out from ground level using binoculars, and also using ladders and an endoscope to investigate suitable gaps. The objective of the survey was to find and record any signs of bat use, for example:

- Bat droppings
- Feeding remains
- Grease staining / urine marks
- Corpses or skeletons

The bat signs listed above are visible from the outside of a building. The following areas were searched, where present:

- Roof and ridge tiles
- Lead flashing
- Eaves
- Conservatory extension
- Fascia and barge boards
- Window sills and panes
- Walls
- Gaps under felt
- Cracks / holes in woodwork
- Gaps in brickwork and mortar
- Air bricks
- Grills
- Vents

2.2.2 Internal Inspection

The internal inspection covered all of the accessible rooms and roof spaces within the building.

Bats regularly utilise specific areas within roof spaces, which were searched for any field signs of bats using high-powered torches and an endoscope, where considered necessary by the licenced ecologist. The following features were searched, where present:

- Roof beams and junctions
- Gaps under roof lining

- Dividing walls
- Chimney breasts
- Gaps in brickwork and mortar
- Cracks / holes in woodwork
- Floor or other surfaces on which droppings could accumulate

2.3 Survey limitations

The survey was carried out in April at a time when bats are spending a decreasing amount of time in torpor within hibernation sites and are likely to have recently become regularly active. For this reason, exposed droppings from summer roosts may not be evident as they are likely to have decomposed or have been washed away.

Internal field signs should still be evident at this time of year, as should droppings in sheltered locations.

3 RESULTS

3.1 Habitat assessment

8 Homeacre Avenue is located within the suburban Ribble Valley village of Sabden, Clitheroe. The site is situated within a detached part of the Forest of Bowland Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB). The building is a two-story detached residential dwelling with associated areas of hardstanding within the curtilage of the site, including a driveway that extends around to the north of the main dwelling. Small stands of planted shrubbery and a small intensively managed amenity grassland lawn are present.

The immediate surrounding area (within 500m) predominantly consists of residential dwellings with associated areas gardends to the immediate west, south and east where the village of Sabden extends. Approximately 170m north-east of the site lies a small stream that connects to Churn Clough Reservoir. The watercourse is lined with a strip of semi-natural broadleaved woodland and connects to adjacent lines of scattered broadleaved trees and field boundary hedgerows. Beyond the small residential area, pasture fields extend to the north, north-east and south-east of the site. Sabden Brook is located approximately 490m south of the site and is lined with scattered broadleaved trees and scrub. The watercourse connects with hedgerow networks and to surrounding agricultural fields. Habitats in the immediate surrounding area provide moderate quality foraging and commuting opportunities for bats.

The wider surrounding area (within 2km) largely comprises smallholding farmsteads with large agricultural fields extending to the immediate north, north-east and north-west, many of which are demarcated by field boundary hedgerows and scattered trees. Churn Clough Reservoir is located approximately 0.7km north-east of the site. Wood House Brook is located approximately 1.9km north-east of the site and is connected to numerous small waterbodies that will provide suitable foraging opportunities. A number of larger wooded areas are present including Blackhill Wood (800m south), Well Wood (1.2km south) and Robinson's Wood (1.2km south), all of which will provide high quality foraging opportunities for bats in the local area. Pendle Hill and its associated moorland and acidic grassland lies approximately 0.7km north of the site. Habitats in the wider landscape provide moderate quality foraging and commuting opportunities for bats, with pockets of high quality habitat present in the form of wooded areas, watercourses and waterbodies.

3.2 Building survey

3.2.1 External Inspection

8 Homeacre Avenue is a residential two-storey property. The proposals involve the demolition of the conservatory present on the north-western facing gable and the construction of a single-story extension in its place.

The dwelling is a 1970's, semi-detached residential dwelling with a pitched main roof (see Appendix 2, Photograph 1) and a small hipped roofed section on the north-eastern aspect (Photograph 2). The concrete roof and ridge tiles are in good condition and are well sealed, with no observable cavities or potential access points into the building (Photograph 3 & 4). A metal chimney is present on the south-eastern aspect of the property that is tightly sealed with no observed gaps. Skylights are also present on the south-western and north-eastern aspects of the property allowing significant light ingress into the roof space that is used as a bedroom. Boxed soffits are present on the south-western and fascias are present on the north-eastern aspects, all of which are tightly sealed to the rendered wall with no identified cavities (Photograph 5). At the time of the survey, the guttering had been removed to be replaced and

to allow the painting of the soffits due to general deterioration (Photograph 6). As such, multiple cavities were observed along the south-western aspect beneath the end tiles (Photographs 7 & 8). However, these cavities are only present temporarily due to the removal of the guttering. Once the guttering is replaced, these cavities are blocked and cannot be used by roosting bats. This is evidenced by the guttering that remained in place on other aspects of the building. Whilst exposed, these cavities were closely inspected with an endoscope and high-powered torch, no evidence of roosting bats was observed.

Plastic capping is present along the verge of the north-western facing gable end. This capping is tight fitting to the wall and no cavities or PRFs are present (Photographs 9 and 10). At the time of the survey, a single gap was present between the capping, end tiles and rendered wall on the westernmost corner of the property (Photograph 7). However, this cavity had been created by lifting the capping to allow the removal of the guttering and the painting of the soffit. Whilst present on site, it was shown how the capping would be re-fit with the guttering, resulting in the capping being tightly sealed with no PRFs. Whilst exposed, this cavity was closely inspected with an endoscope and high-powered torch, no evidence of roosting bats was observed. The rendered walls present are well-sealed with no observable cavities. The conservatory present on the north-western facing aspect allows high-levels of light ingress into the internal space and is entirely unsuitable for roosting bats (Photograph 11). No PRFs are present within the structure or roof of the conservatory itself with all features being superficial, lacking an enclosed crevice and unsuitable for use by roosting bats.

No bat droppings or other field signs of bats were found during the external building inspection.

3.2.2 Internal Inspection

Internally, the roof space is used as a bedroom and the only loft voids are two disconnected narrow linear voids that run along the entire south-western facing and north-eastern facing eaves of the property (Photographs 12 & 13). Both spaces are approximately 75cm in height, 1.5m in width and 7m in length. No internal drafts or light ingress were observed into either of the loft spaces, which appear to be completely sealed. The loft spaces are accessible via two separate hatches on the second story (Photograph 14). A modern breathable membrane is present on the underside of the roof within both loft spaces, beneath which are wooden rafters with no observable crevices or cavities. Breezeblock is present at the gable ends of each void, which is in good condition. The spaces are well lined with floor insulation. No evidence of bats was observed within either loft space. The internal area of the conservatory is very well lit, is connected to the main living area and has no access points, making it unsuitable for use by roosting bats (Photograph 15).

No bat droppings or other field signs of bats were found during the internal building inspection.

4 EVALUATION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

4.1 Evaluation of results

4.1.1 Qualitative assessment of foraging habitats

In summary, the habitats on site at 8 Homeacre Avenue provide negligible foraging and commuting opportunities for bats due to the very small and intensively managed areas of vegetation on site. The site is situated in an area that provide moderate quality habitat with pockets of higher-quality habitat present within the wider landscape, including watercourses, field boundary hedgerows, scattered and lines of broadleaved trees and broadleaved woodland. These habitats will support an abundance of invertebrate prey on which bats can forage, in addition to providing dark commuting corridors.

4.1.2 Qualitative assessment of roosting habitats

The building on site has been assessed as having negligible potential to support roosting bats due to the lack of PRFs. The only PRFs identified during the survey were only present very temporarily due to the removal of the guttering to allow general maintenance works. All temporarily exposed cavities were inspected with an endoscope and high-powered torch and no evidence of roosting bats was observed. In addition, the proposed development works will be localised to the north-western aspect which is well sealed and no PRFs were observed.

Internally, the two identical loft spaces are well-sealed with no observed PRFs or access points into the loft voids. Furthermore, no field signs of bats such as droppings were found within the loft space, suggesting no historic or present use by roosting bats.

There are a high number of buildings in the local area surrounding the 8 Homeacre Avenue, which will provide alternative roosting opportunities for bats.

4.2 Mitigation and compensation measures

The proposed works will involve the demolition of the existing conservatory and construction of a replacement extension on the north-western facing aspect.

There is no historic or recent evidence of bat use in the building, no PRFs are due to be impacted by the works and the building has been assessed as having negligible potential to support roosting bats. As such, it is considered that the development is highly unlikely to impact bat and no further surveys, compensation or mitigation measures are required for the development to proceed.

However, the proposed development presents an opportunity to enhance the habitats on site and create roosting opportunities to benefit bats in the local area through the provision of bat boxes.

5 CONCLUSION

In summary, the habitats on site at 8 Homeacre Avenue provide negligible foraging and commuting opportunities for bats due to the very small and intensively managed areas of vegetation on site. The site is situated in an area that provide moderate quality habitat with pockets of higher-quality habitat present within the wider landscape, including watercourses, field boundary hedgerows, scattered and lines of broadleaved trees and broadleaved woodland. These habitats will support an abundance of invertebrate prey on which bats can forage, in addition to providing dark commuting corridors.

There is no historic or recent evidence of bat use in the building, no PRFs are due to be impacted by the works and the building has been assessed as having negligible potential to support roosting bats. The lack of suitable PRFs and proposed construction activities are such that it is highly unlikely that the development will have any adverse impact on any bats or bat roosts. As such, no further survey work, compensation or mitigation measures are required in relation to bats.

6 REFERENCES

Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (2013). *Competencies for Species Survey: Bats*.

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

Department for Communities and Local Government (2021). *National Planning Policy Framework.*

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Mitchell-Jones, A.J. & McLeish, A.P. (2004). *The Bat Workers Manual*. (3rd ed.) JNCC

APPENDICES

Appendix 1 – Aerial photographs


8 Homeacre Avenue, Sabden
Close aerial photograph
Survey boundary
Map data © 2022 Google, Imagery © 2022 Google


8 Homeacre Avenue, Sabden
Wide aerial photograph
Site location
Map data © 2022 Google, Imagery © 2022 Google
Google Earth

Appendix 2 – Photographs

Photograph 1 – North-western aspect of the building that is due to be impacted by the proposed development.

Photograph 2 – Hipped roof section of the building.

Photograph 3 – The roof and ridge tiles are in excellent condition and are well sealed.

Photograph 4 – The roof and ridge tiles are in excellent condition and are well sealed.

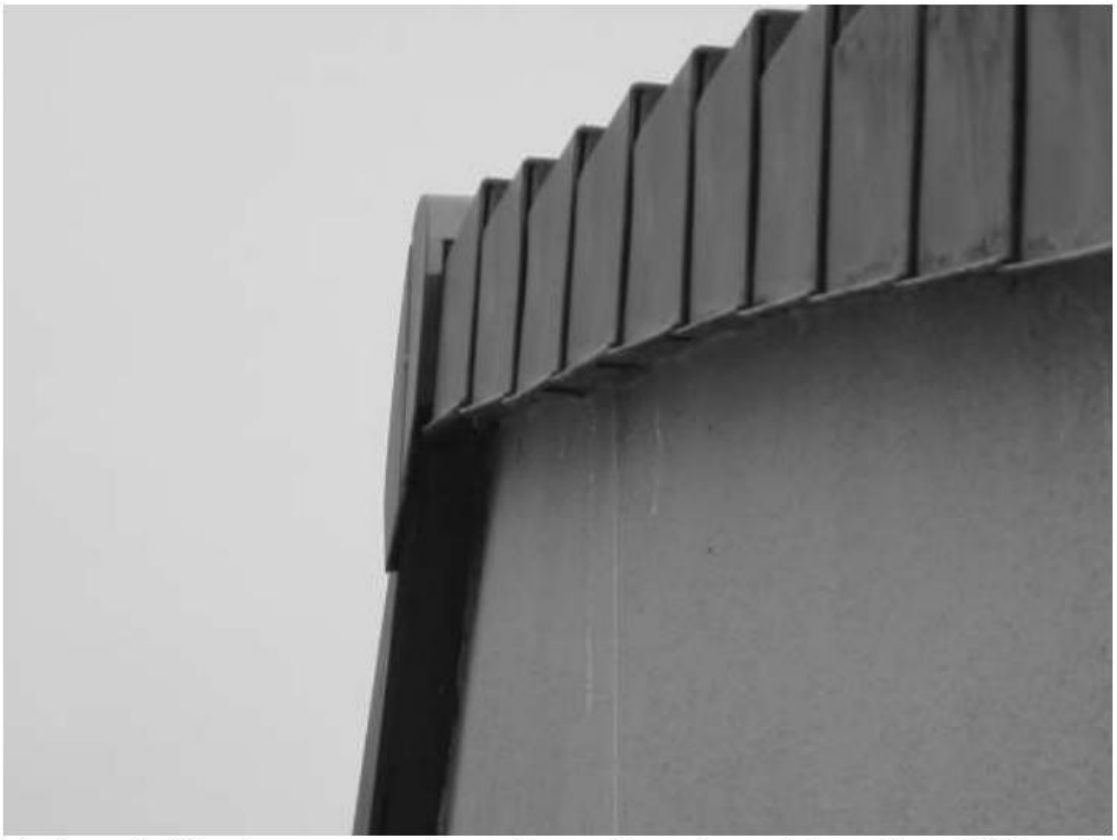
Photograph 5 – The fascias are well fitting with no associated cavities.

Photograph 6 – Showing the removed guttering and recently painted soffits on the south-western aspect of the building.

Photograph 7 – Showing the cavities under the end roof tiles and under the roof capping, all of which have temporarily been exposed due to the short-term removal of the guttering.

Photograph 8 – Close view of the temporarily exposed cavity under end tiles.

Photograph 9 – Looking towards the apex of the north-western gable-end aspect.



Photograph 10 – The verge capping on the north-western gable end is well fitting with no associated PRFs.

Photograph 11 – Looking towards to conservatory that is due to be demolished.

Photograph 12 – Narrow loft void that runs along the north-eastern facing eaves of the property.

Photograph 13 – Narrow loft void that runs along the south-western facing eaves of the property.

Photograph 14 – One of two access hatches for the loft voids.

Photograph 15 – Internal view of the conservatory.

Appendix 3 – Statutory and planning context

Ecological assessments
Ecological assessments play an important part within the planning context; they include an initial assessment which highlights any specific interests of a site. From the initial site assessment, the surveyor assesses the suitability of habitats within the site to support protected species and makes recommendations for further survey works if required. The following paragraphs provide a brief interpretation of the legislative protection that is relevant to the findings of this report.

Bats
In the United Kingdom, all species of bat and their roosts are afforded full protection under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) and the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (known as the "Habitats Regulations"). The Wildlife and Countryside Act is the domestic implementation of the Convention on the Conservation of European Wildlife and Natural Habitats (the Bern Convention) and was amended by the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000. This makes it an offence to:

- Deliberately, intentionally or recklessly kill, injure or capture a bat
- Deliberately, intentionally or recklessly disturb a bat while it is occupying a structure or place that it uses for shelter or protection
- Deliberately, intentionally or recklessly damage, destroy or obstruct access to any place that a bat uses for shelter or protection (even if the bat is not present at the time)
- Keep, transport, sell or exchange, or offer for sale or exchange any live or dead bat, any part of a bat or anything derived from a bat

Under UK law, a bat roost is *any structure or place which any wild [bat] ... uses for shelter or protection*. As bats often reuse the same roosts, legal opinion is that a roost is protected whether or not the bats are present at the time of the activity taking place.

Penalties for offences include fines of up to £5000, plus up to six months imprisonment, for each offence committed.

If an activity is likely to result in any of the above offences, a licence can be applied for to derogate from the protection afforded. These licences must provide appropriate mitigation and are issued by Natural England.

A Natural England mitigation licence application requires a Mitigation Method Statement and, in many cases, a Reasoned Statement of Application. The Mitigation Method Statement contains details of the proposed mitigation works. The Reasoned Statement needs to provide a rational and reasoned justification as to why the proposed development meets the requirements of the Conservation (National Habitats & c.) regulations 1994, namely Regulations 44(2)(e), (f) or (g), and 44(3)(a).

The National Planning Policy Framework 2021 (NPPF) provides guidance on the interpretation of the law in relation to the natural environment and development.

The Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006 lists the following bat species as species of principle importance under Section 41:

- Barbastelle *Barbastella barbastellus*
- Bechstein's bat *Myotis bechsteinii*
- Noctule *Nyctalus noctula*
- Soprano pipistrelle *Pipistrellus pygmaeus*
- Brown long-eared bat *Plecotus auritus*
- Greater horseshoe *Rhinolophus ferrumequinum*
- Lesser horseshoe *Rhinolophus hipposideros*

Section 40 requires every public body in the exercising of its functions 'have regard, so far as is consistent with the proper exercise of those functions, to the purpose of conserving biodiversity' (all biodiversity and not just section 41 species and habitats); therefore making these bats a material consideration in the planning process and requiring a detailed ecological bat survey before planning permission can be granted.

Planning policy

National Planning Guidance is issued in the form of the National Planning Policy Framework 2021 (NPPF). The most relevant section is 15: Conserving and enhancing the natural environment.

Key relevant principles stated in 15: Conserving and enhancing the natural environment are;

174. Planning policies and decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by:

a) protecting and enhancing valued landscapes, sites of biodiversity or geological value and soils (in a manner commensurate with their statutory status or identified quality in the development plan);
b) recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside, and the wider benefits from natural capital and ecosystem services – including the economic and other benefits of the best and most versatile agricultural land, and of trees and woodland;
c) maintaining the character of the undeveloped coast, while improving public access to it where appropriate;
d) minimising impacts on and providing net gains for biodiversity, including by establishing coherent ecological networks that are more resilient to current and future pressures;
e) preventing new and existing development from contributing to, being put at unacceptable risk from, or being adversely affected by, unacceptable levels of soil, air, water or noise pollution or land instability. Development should, wherever possible, help to improve local environmental conditions such as air and water quality, taking into account relevant information such as river basin management plans; and
f) remediating and mitigating despoiled, degraded, derelict, contaminated and unstable land, where appropriate.

179. To protect and enhance biodiversity and geodiversity, plans should:

a) identify, map and safeguard components of local wildlife-rich habitats and wider ecological networks, including the hierarchy of international, national and locally designated sites of importance for biodiversity[61]; wildlife corridors and stepping stones that connect them; and areas identified by national and local partnerships for habitat management, enhancement, restoration or creation[62]; and
b) promote the conservation, restoration and enhancement of priority habitats, ecological networks and the protection and recovery of priority species; and identify and pursue opportunities for securing measurable net gains for biodiversity

180. When determining planning applications, local planning authorities should apply the following principles:

a) if significant harm to biodiversity resulting from a development cannot be avoided (through locating on an alternative site with less harmful impacts), adequately mitigated, or, as a last resort, compensated for, then planning permission should be refused;
b) development on land within or outside a Site of Special Scientific Interest, and which is likely to have an adverse effect on it (either individually or in combination with other developments), should not normally be permitted. The only exception is where the benefits of the development in the location proposed clearly outweigh both its likely impact on the features of the site that make it of special scientific interest, and any broader impacts on the national network of Sites of Special Scientific Interest;
c) development resulting in the loss or deterioration of irreplaceable habitats (such as ancient woodland and ancient or veteran trees) should be refused, unless there are wholly exceptional reasons63 and a suitable compensation strategy exists; and
d) development whose primary objective is to conserve or enhance biodiversity should be supported; while opportunities to improve biodiversity in and around developments should be integrated as part of their design, especially where this can secure measurable net gains for biodiversity or enhance public access to nature where this is appropriate.