Bat Survey: Preliminary Roost Assessment

8 Whipp Avenue

Clitheroe

June 2022

Prepared for: Mr Chambers

Report prepared by: Verity Webster BSc (Hons) MSc CEcol CMIEEM

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- On 7th June 2022 a Preliminary Roost Assessment was undertaken at 8 Whip Avenue, Clitheroe.
- The house was assessed to determine its potential for roosting bats and is considered to have very low-negligible suitability for bats.
- The proposals are considered unlikely to have any impact upon bats and further survey work is not considered necessary.
- The proposals provide the opportunity to enhance the site for bats and recommendations for this have been made.

1. Introduction

1.1 Application Site

1.1.1. This report details bat survey work at 8 Whipp Avenue, Clitheroe, BB7 2QA. National grid reference SD73604116

1.1.2. Mr Chambers commissioned Verity Webster Ltd to undertake the bat survey work to inform the planning application.

1.2 Objectives

1.2.1 The objectives of the Preliminary Roost Assessment are to determine:

- The suitability of the buildings on site to support a bat roost.
- Whether bats are currently using the buildings, or have done in the past.
- The potential status of any roost present.
- How bats might be using the site and the potential species present.
- The potential impacts of the proposals on any potential roost present or on bats using the site.
- The requirement for further survey work and/or mitigation.
- How any impacts might be avoided, mitigated and/or ameliorated, including advice on European Protected Species Mitigation (EPSM) application if required.
- The potential for biodiversity net gain on site.

1.2.2 The format and content of this report follow that required by the European Protected Species Mitigation (EPSM) licence application where appropriate.

1.3 Proposals

1.3.1 The proposals comprise the extension of the property to the rear (south).

1.4 Ecologist

1.4.1 The Preliminary Roost Assessment was undertaken by Verity Webster. Verity is a licensed bat surveyor (Bat Survey Class Licence WML CL18 (Class 2) Registration number: 2015-13858-CLS-CLS).

1.4.2 Verity has worked as an ecological consultant since 2007. She has undertaken preliminary bat assessments and further bat emergence/activity surveys for a large variety of projects and schemes, producing the required impact assessment and subsequent mitigation schemes/method statements when necessary.

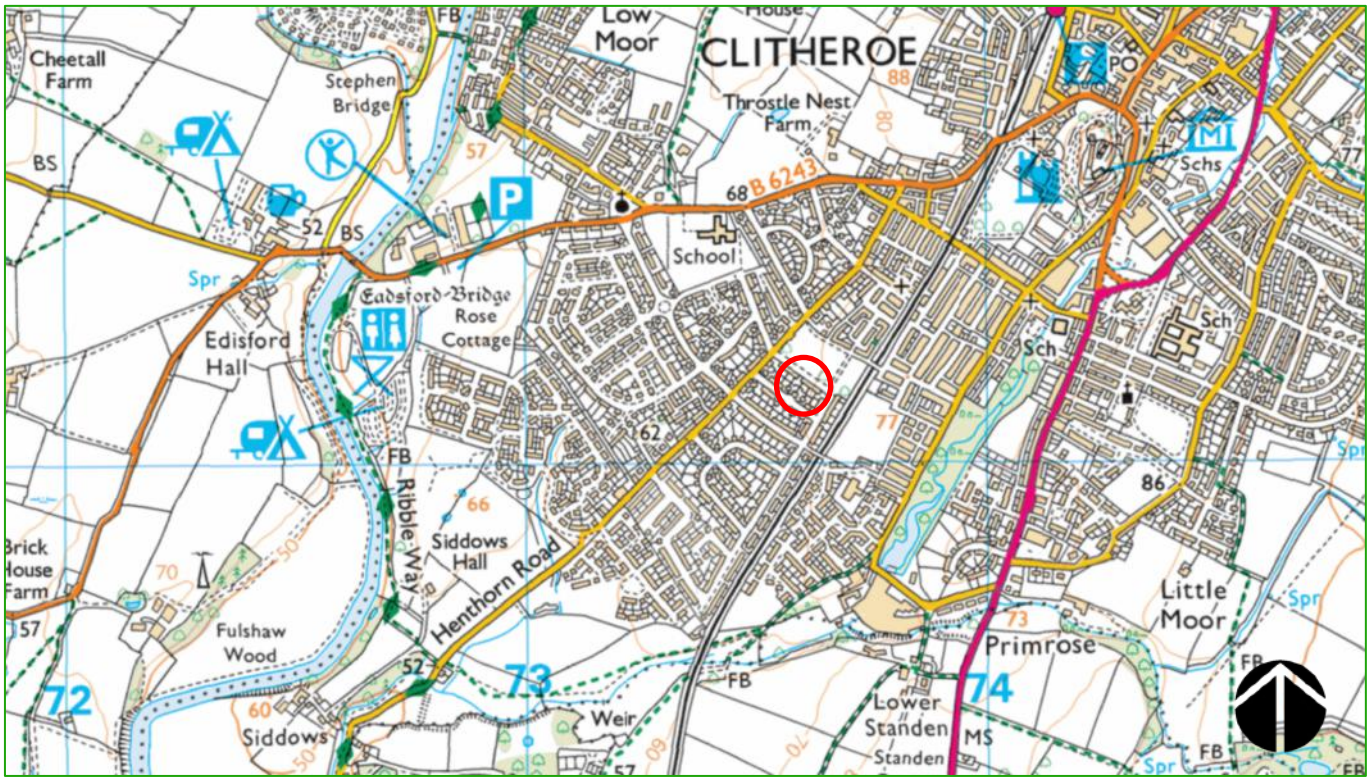
2. Site Location

2.0.1 The survey site is located in a built-up residential area of Clitheroe. Houses with gardens surround the property to the east, west and south. A small area of green space lies immediately beyond Whipp Avenue to the north.

2.0.2 Open countryside comprising arable and pasture land divided by a matrix of tree lines and hedgerows extends in all directions beyond the town and closest 250m to the south of the site. The River Ribble weaves north to south through he landscape approximately 1km to the west of the site.

2.0.3 Overall, the site is in a good location for bats. The housing provides many potential roost opportunities whilst the open landscape provides good foraging habitat.

Figure 1: Ordnance survey map showing the location of the proposed development site.



Ordnance survey 1:25000

Key

Survey site

Figure 2: Aerial image showing the proposed development site and immediate surroundings

From Google Earth

250m

Key

Survey site

3. The Survey Site

3.0.1 8 Whipp Avenue is located to the south of Whipp Avenue. The property comprises a house with driveway to the front and mature garden to the rear.

The House

3.0.2 The house is a two-storey semi-detached, rendered brick structure with a hipped, slate roof. The roof overhangs the walls and is boarded beneath. There is a plastic fascia.

3.0.3 Internally there is a loft void which is approximately 1m to the apex. The slates are unlined.

The south elevation of the house

The north elevation of the house

4. Legislation

Full details of relevant legislation and planning policy can be found in Appendix A.

4.1 UK and EU Legislation

4.1.1 Key legislation regarding the protection of bats:

- Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended)
- The Countryside and Rights of Way Act (CROW), 2000
- The Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act (NERC, 2006)
- Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended)

4.1.2 Under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 and the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2018, it is a criminal offence to:

- Deliberately capture, injure or kill a bat
- Intentionally or recklessly disturb a bat in its roost or deliberately disturb a group of bats
- Damage or destroy a bat roosting place (even if bats are not occupying the roost at the time)
- Possess or advertise/sell/exchange a bat (dead or alive) or any part of a bat
- Intentionally or recklessly obstruct access to a bat roost.

4.2 Planning Policy and Legislation

4.2.1 Under the NERC Act 2006, planning authorities are obliged to make sure that they have all the information on the presence of protected species on site before they make a decision on the planning permission.

4.2.2 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF, 2021) encourages Local Planning Authorities to conserve and enhance biodiversity.

Chapter 15, Para 174 of NPPF states: *''The planning system 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….*

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***".

4.2.3 Para 179 states: "*Plans should: distinguish between the hierarchy of international, national and locally designated sites;*
allocate land with the least environmental or amenity value, where consistent with other policies in this Framework; take a
strategic approach to maintaining and enhancing networks of habitats and green infrastructure; and plan for the enhancement of
natural capital at a catchment or landscape scale across local authority boundaries.''

4.2.4 Para 180 identifies that plans should do the following to protect and enhance biodiversity and geodiversity:

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; wildlife corridors and stepping stones that connect them; and areas identified by national and local partnerships for habitat management, enhancement, restoration or creation; and***

b) ***Promote the conservation, restoration and enhancement of priority habitats, ecological networks and the protection and recovery of priority species; and identify and peruse opportunities for securing measurable net gains for biodiversity.***"

4.2.5 Para 175 states that "*when determining planning applications, local authorities should apply the following principles:*

a) ***if significant harm to biodiversity from a development cannot be avoided…,adequately mitigated, or, as a last resort compensated for, then planning permission should be refused***"

4.2.6 The local planning authority has a responsibility, therefore, to obtain all information regarding the potential for protected species on a site prior to making a decision about a proposal.

5. Survey Methodology

5.0.1 The Preliminary Roost Assessment was undertaken in accordance with currently accepted guidance: Collins, J. (ed.) (2016) Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines (3rd Edn). The Bat Conservation Trust, London.

5.1 Desk Study

5.1.1 Data sources used to establish background information about bats and their likely presence in the locality:

- Magic Map, Natural England (2016)
- Bing Maps (2017)

5.1.2 Satellite mapping, Ordnance survey, road map, habitat and designated site data from Magic Map (Natural England, 2014) was used to assess the value of the surrounding habitat for bats in the area at a landscape scale (5km), including any potentially important habitat corridors (linear habitat features), feeding grounds or potential roost opportunities, such as large expanses of woodland. The features and habitats immediately surrounding the site (local area) were also assessed at a finer scale as these influence the likely presence of bats within the survey site.

5.2 Preliminary Roost Assessment

5.2.1 An internal and external inspection of the structures was undertaken during daylight to determine the suitability for bats and establish, if possible, whether bats are using the building or have been in the past.

5.2.2 All accessible parts of the structures were inspected to look for bats and signs of the presence of bats, including:

- Droppings.
- Feeding remains including moth and butterfly wings.
- Staining from urine or oils near crevices or holes or on timber (such as roof beams), walls, chimney breasts etc.
- Scratch marks on walls and timber.
- Squeaking or chattering calls.

5.2.3 The systematic search inside the building included inspection of beams, floors, surfaces of stored materials, loose roof insulation or felt covering, junctions between roof timbers and timbers and the walls, and crevices within brickwork. Potential access into the building was also inspected by searching for holes in insulation and any light penetration into the interior from the outside.

5.2.4 The assessment outside the building included inspection of all walls, windows, window sills, fascias, soffits, eaves and tiles, including a search for any crevices under tiles, under lifted lead flashing or lifted roofing felt, missing mortar, gaps in the ridge or gable end of the roofs, crevices in brickwork or under flaking paintwork or render, gaps in cladding or hanging tiles and any other potential bat roost opportunities.

5.2.5 Equipment: During the survey, a strong torch with directional beam was used to inspect the buildings.

5.2.6 As a result of the preliminary roost assessment, the structure on site was characterised as having 'negligible', 'low', 'medium' or 'high' suitability for bats. It may also be possible to confirm the presence of a roost.

5.2.7 Buildings or structures typically characterised as having:

- **Negligible** suitability for bats will lack features with any potential to support roosting bats. Modern or newly-built well-sealed structures may fall into this category. Structures that are metal clad with metal internal beams might have negligible potential if there are no favourable roosting spaces. Structures may also be unfavourable due to the level of disrepair, being subject to poor weather conditions.

- **Low** suitability for bats will have sub-optimal roost features with limited potential for roosting bats. Features may be used by single bats opportunistically, but do not provide enough space, shelter, protection, appropriate conditions and/or suitable surrounding habitat to be used on a regular basis by large numbers of bats.

- **Medium** suitability for bats may have few features with potential for bats, that provide enough space, shelter, protection and other suitable conditions, or several features with limited potential for bats. It may also be that a potentially suitable structure is situated in an area with habitat that has an only low potential for foraging and commuting bats.

- **High** suitability for bats will support at least one or more features that provide opportunities for roosting bats such that they might be used regularly, for longer periods by larger numbers of bats. These may be external features, such as lifted weatherboard or crevices in brick or stonework, or internal, such as large loft spaces with potential access. Barns, with open doorways and windows with wooden rafters and beams, may fall into this category. If a structure is close to good habitats, such as a waterway, marshland or woodland, this also increases the potential for roosting bats.

- **Confirmed** roost presence when it is evident as a result of signs from inspection, such as droppings, or sight of bats, that a roost exists within the building. It is not always possible to ascertain the presence or absence of a roost even if some signs, such as droppings or feeding remains are found.

6. Survey Limitations

6.0.1 The survey was undertaken in daylight in early June. At this time of year bats are occupying summer roost sites. Evidence of bats on the exterior of a building is likely to be present if using a property, but may be washed away by the weather. Evidence of use of the interior of a building by bats over the previous seasons is likely to be present where signs (such as droppings and feeding remains) are protected from the elements.

6.0.2 Data from the local biological records centre of known bat roosts and bats recorded in the area was not obtained to inform this assessment. The inspection alone is considered sufficient to inform any necessary requirements for further survey work and/or mitigation.

7. Findings: Preliminary Roost Assessment

7.1 Suitability of the Locality for Bats

7.1.1 At a landscape level, the area surrounding the survey site is good for bats. Refer to Figure 2.

7.1.2 Open green space lies within close proximity to the site. The habitat, including grassland, trees and waterways will support a variety of bat species such as the widespread common and soprano pipistrelle bat (*Pipistrellus pipistrellus* and *Pipistrellus pygmaeus* respectively). Species that favour open habitats such as Leisler's (*Nyctalus leisleri*) and noctule bat (*Nyctalus noctula*) are also expected. Woodland is sparce in the immediate landscape so species that favour wooded habitat, such as Natterer's bat (*Myotis natterri*), whiskered bat (*Myotis mystacinus*) and Brandt's bat (*Myotis brandtii*) are less likely to be present in the area.

The Conservation Status of Bats in the Area

7.1.3 The conservation status of bats in the area is shown in Table 1.

***Table 1**: The Conservation Status of Bats in the area at a Local, County and Regional Level*

Species	***Local***	***County***	***Regional***
Common pipistrelle	*Likely to be common in the area. There are records of this species in the area (10km).*	*Common and widespread Frequently recorded.*	*Common and widespread Frequently recorded across the Northwest*
Soprano pipistrelle	*Likely to be present due to the presence of riparian habitat.*	*Widespread. Frequently recorded.*	*Common and widespread Frequently recorded across the Northwest*
Nathusius's pipistrelle	*Likely to be rare in the area.*	*Infrequently recorded, but this may be due to low survey effort. Not yet recorded breeding in the county.*	*Rare across the northwest. A migratory species.*
Brown long-eared bat	*Likely to be in the area. There is a recent record of this species within 10km of the site.*	*Common and widespread Frequently recorded.*	*Common and widespread Frequently recorded across the Northwest.*
Natterer's bat	*Likely to be in the area, although this species favours woodland habitat, which is infrequent in the landscape.*	*Scattered distribution in Lancashire.*	*Widespread and scattered across the Northwest.*
Noctule	*Present*	*Widespread and frequently recorded.*	*Common and widespread. Frequently recorded in the Northwest.*
Whiskered bat	*Present but likely rare*	*Present*	*Widespread.*

Brandt's bat	*Rare / absent*	*Present*	*Widespread.*
Alcathoe's bat	*Unknown*	*Unknown*	*Widespread. Likely under-recorded.*
Daubenton's	*Presence is likely due to the riparian habitat present.*	*Widespread, frequently recorded near water.*	*Widespread*
Serotine	*Rare / absent*	*Unknown*	*Restricted to south and southwest Britain, rarely recorded in the northwest.*
Leislers	*Rare*	*Unknown*	*Rare, but widespread in Britain. Present in the northwest.*
Barbastelle	*Unlikely to be present in the area. This species is a woodland-specialist and there is a lack of this habitat present.*	*Unknown*	*Present south of a line from North Wales to the Wash.*

7.2 Preliminary Roost Assessment

7.2.1 The building inspection and bat roost assessment was undertaken in daylight on 6th June 2022.

The House

7.2.2 **The house is considered to have very low- negligible suitability for bats.**

7.2.3 Externally the walls are in good condition, as are the soffits. However, there are a small number gaps in the roof where slates have shifted.

7.2.4 No evidence of bats was found externally.

7.2.5 Internally, the loft void is unlined and open to the eaves. The loft void is of a size that would be potentially suitable for bats, such as brown long-eared bat, in which to fly prior to leaving a roost. However, no bats and no evidence of bats was found internally. If bats were roosting in the roof structure with any regularity, some droppings would be expected on the loft floor.

7.2.6 Overall, the likelihood of a roost within the house is considered to be very low – negligible.

7.2.7 The proposed extension works are considered very unlikely to impact this species group. However, precautionary mitigation is recommended during works to the roof of the house to reduce to negligible the risk of harm to itinerant bats during works.

The loft void in the house

8. Appraisal

8.0.1 The Preliminary Roost Assessment at 8 Whipp Avenue, Clitheroe was undertaken to determine the suitability of the house for roosting bats and to determine the likely impact of the proposed works on bats.

8.0.2 No bats or signs of the presence of bats were found during the external and internal inspection of the building.

8.0.3 The proposals are very unlikely to have any negative impact upon bats or bat roosts in the locality, however precautionary mitigation is recommended during works to the roof of the house to reduce any potential impact to itinerant bats to negligible.

8.0.4 The proposals provide the opportunity to enhance the site for bats and recommendations for this have been made.

9. Recommendations

Mitigation

9.0.1 As a precaution, to minimise the risk of harm to bats during works to the roof of the house, the following is recommended:

- A Toolbox Talk on bats is delivered to operatives on site prior to the start of works. This will include details of the legislation, signs of bats to look for and what to do if a bat is found during works.
- Roof slates on the house are removed by hand with care whilst checking for bats and evidence of bats.
- If bats are found or if there is any concern, an ecologist must be contacted for advice.

9.0.2 Overall, if the recommendations are followed, the proposed development is considered very unlikely to be of significance to bats in the locality and no further survey is necessary.

Enhancement

9.0.3 The proposals provide the opportunity to enhance the site for bats.

9.0.4 It is recommended that:

- A crevice-roost site for roosting bats is integrated into the extension.
- This could be in the form of a bat roost slate, to allow bats to enter a space in the roof, between the slates and the lining. See Appendix B. However, it is imperative that bitumen roofing felt (not breathable roofing membrane) is used beneath these spaces as bats get

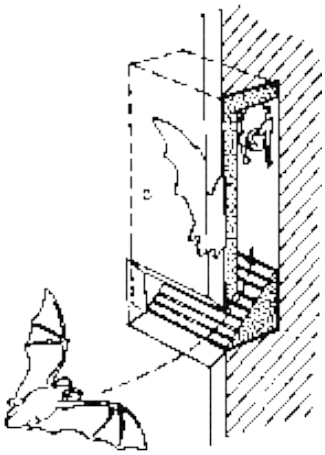
caught in the fibre of breathable roofing membrane.

- Alternatively, a bat box could be attached externally to the building, or integrated into the stonework – see he examples below. There are many alternatives at NHBS.com.

Bat Boxes

1FE Schwegler bat access panel

This box is durable and does not require cleaning.



Ibstock Enclosed Bat Box 'C'

This box is durable and does not require cleaning.

Beaumaris Woodstone Bat Box

This box is durable and does not require cleaning.

All bat boxes are available from NHBS Ltd

10. References

- BING maps (Acessed 2022) http://www.bing.com/mapspreview
- Collins, J. (ed.) (2016) Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines (3rd edn). The Bat Conservation Trust, London. ISBN-13 978-1-872745-96-1
- Google maps (Accessed 2022) https://www.google.co.uk/maps
- MAGIC Map (Accessed 2022) http://www.magic.gov.uk/MagicMap.aspx. DEFRA.

• APPENDIX A: Wildlife Legislation and Planning Policy

UK AND EU LEGISLATION

10.1. KEY LEGISLATION

10.1.1. Key legislation regarding the protection of bats:

- Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended)
- The Countryside and Rights of Way Act (CROW), 2000
- The Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act (NERC, 2006)
- Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended)

10.2. WILDLIFE AND COUNTRYSIDE ACT 1981 (AS AMENDED)

10.2.1. The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 is UK legislation.

10.2.2. Bats are listed on Schedule 5 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act (WCA) 1981. Under Section 9 of this legislation it is an offence to:

- Kill, injure or take a bat.
- Possess, a live or dead bat.
- Intentionally or recklessly damage or destroy any structure of place which any bat uses as shelter or protection.
- Intentionally or recklessly disturb a bat whilst it is occupying a structure or place which it uses for shelter or protection.
- Internationally or recklessly obstruct access to any structure or place which a bat uses as shelter or protection.
- Sell, offer or expose for sale any live or dead bat.

10.3. COUNTRYSIDE AND RIGHTS OF WAY ACT 2000

10.3.1. Schedule 12 of the Countryside and Rights of Way (CROW) Act 2000, amended by the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 by removing the need to prove intent to damage a roost / harm (etc) a bat or other species listed on Schedule 1 by adding the words 'or recklessly' after 'intentionally' into the wording in Section 9 of the WCA 1981. The CROW act also strengthened the penalties for offences to bats and other species listed on Schedule 5.

10.4. CONSERVATION OF HABITATS AND SPECIES REGULATIONS 2017 (AS AMENDED)

10.4.1. The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended) consolidate all the various amendments made to the Conservation (Natural Habitats, &c.) Regulations 1994 in respect of England and Wales.

10.4.2. The 1994 Regulations transposed Council Directive 92/43/EEC on the conservation of natural habitats and of wild fauna and flora (EC Habitats Directive) into national law. The regulations came into force on 30 October 1994.

10.4.3. The Regulations provide for the designation and protection of European Sites and European Protected Species, including bats.

10.4.4. Under the Regulations, competent authorities (ie any government department or public body) have a general duty, in the exercise of any of their functions, to have regard to the EC Habitats Directive.

10.4.5. With regard to European Protected Species (including bats), the Regulations make it an office to:

- Deliberately capture;
- Kill;
- Disturb or;
- Trade in animals listed in Schedule 2, which include all UK bat species.

10.5. European Protected Species (EPS) Licenses and the Three Tests

10.5.1. These actions can me made lawful through the granting of licenses by the appropriate authorities. Licenses may be granted for a number of purposes (such as science and education, conservation, preserve public health and safety). For such a licence to be granted the appropriate authority would have to be satisfied that an application has met the three tests, which are:

1) - The licence may be granted ''to preserve public health or public safety or for reasons of overriding public interest, including those of a social or economic nature and beneficial consequences or primary importance for the environment''

2) - There must be ''no satisfactory alternative''

3) - The proposal ''will not be detrimental to the maintenance of the species at a favourable conservation status in its natural range''

10.6. NATURAL ENVIRONMENT AND RURAL COMMUNITIES (NERC) ACT 2006 (PLANNING SYSTEM)

Planning Authorities: A Duty to Conserve Biodiversity

10.6.1. Under this legislation, planning authorities are obliged to make sure that they have all the information on the presence of protected species on site *before* they make a decision on the planning permission.

10.6.2. Part 2, Section 40 confers on the planning authorities a duty to conserve biodiversity and states:

''*Every public authority must, in exercising its functions, have regard, so far as is consistent with the proper exercise of those functions, to the purpose of biodiversity*''

Species of Principal Importance

10.6.3. Part 3, Section 41 requires the Secretary of State to ''*publish a list of the living organisms and types of habitat which in the Secretary of State's opinion are of* ***principle importance*** *for the purpose of conserving biodiversity*''.

10.6.4. This requirement lead to production of a list of species and habitats of Principal Importance. This lists includes all UK bats.

PLANNING POLICY

10.7. NATIONAL PLANNING POLICY FRAMEWORK

10.7.1. Under the NERC Act 2006, planning authorities are obliged to make sure that they have all the information on the presence of protected species on site before they make a decision on the planning permission.

10.7.2. The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF, 2021) encourages Local Planning Authorities to conserve and enhance biodiversity.

Chapter 15, Para 174 of NPPF states: *''The planning system should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by:*

b) ***protecting and enhancing valued landscapes, sites of biodiversity*** *or geological value and soils….*

e) ***minimising impacts on and providing net gains for biodiversity, including by establishing coherent ecological networks that are more resilient to current and future pressures***".

10.7.3. Para 179 states: "*Plans should: distinguish between the hierarchy of international, national and locally designated sites;*
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strategic approach to maintaining and enhancing networks of habitats and green infrastructure; and plan for the enhancement of
natural capital at a catchment or landscape scale across local authority boundaries.''

10.7.4. Para 180 identifies that plans should do the following to protect and enhance biodiversity and geodiversity:

c) "***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; wildlife corridors and stepping stones that connect them; and areas identified by national and local partnerships for habitat management, enhancement, restoration or creation; and***

d) ***Promote the conservation, restoration and enhancement of priority habitats, ecological networks and the protection and recovery of priority species; and identify and peruse opportunities for securing measurable net gains for biodiversity*****."**

10.7.5. Para 175 states that "*when determining planning applications, local authorities should apply the following principles:*

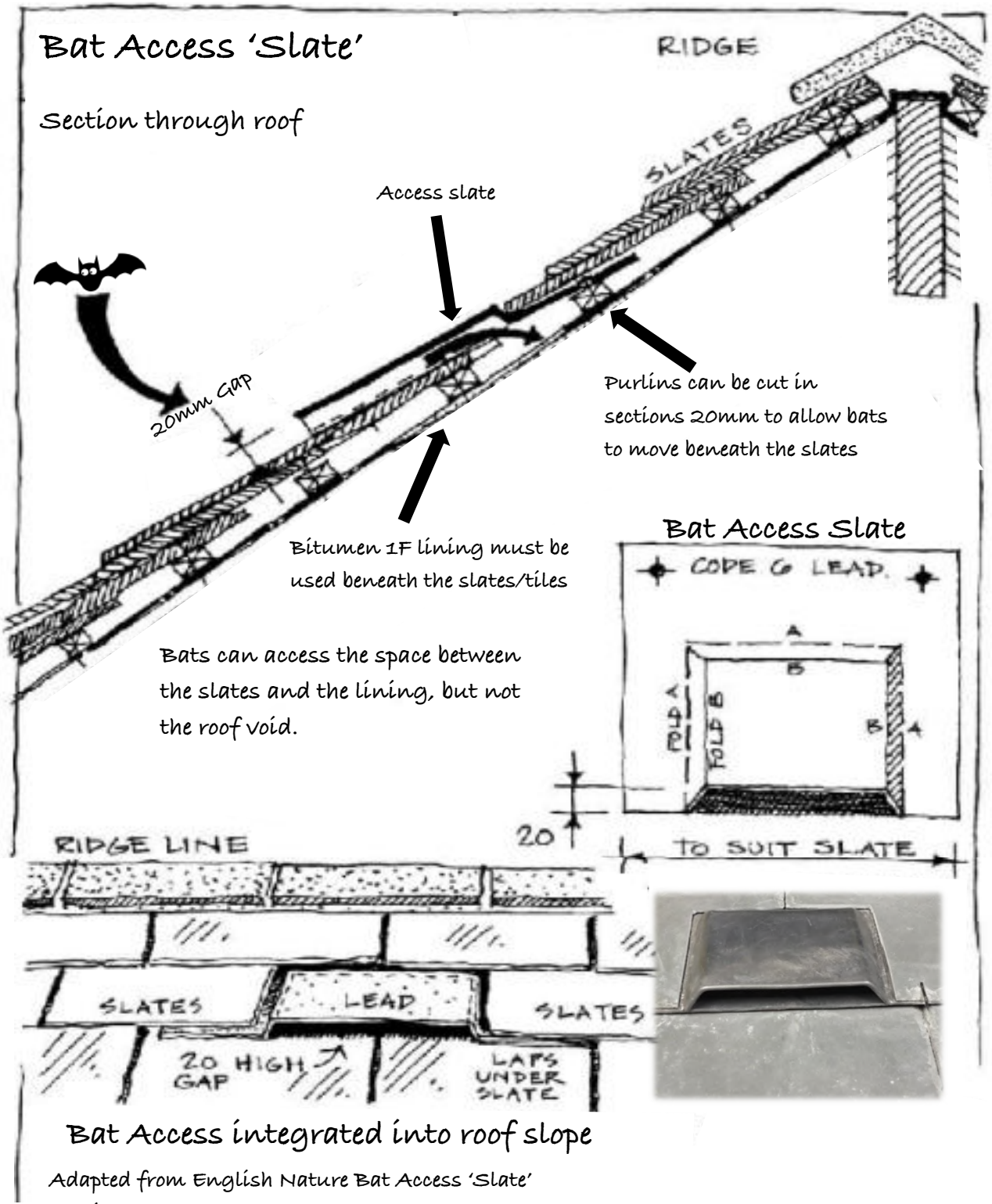
b) ***if significant harm to biodiversity from a development cannot be avoided…,adequately mitigated, or, as a last resort compensated for, then planning permission should be refused*****''**

10.7.6. The local planning authority has a responsibility, therefore, to obtain all information regarding the potential for protected species on a site prior to making a decision about a proposal.

10.8. ODPM CIRCULAR 06/2005: BIODIVERSITY AND GEOLOGICAL CONSERVATION

10.8.1. This document, to be read in conjunction with NPPF provides administrative guidance on the application of the law relating to planning and nature conservation as it applies in England. It makes it clear that it is the intention of the government that local authorities and developers consider protected species at the earliest possible stage in the planning process. Any planning application that is likely to affect protected species should come with details of the surveys which have been undertaken and should include, if necessary, recommendations for mitigation. Applications which do not include sufficient data should be rejected.

- **Appendix B – Bat Access Slate**



Bat Access integrated into roof slope

Adapted from English Nature Bat Access 'Slate' Detail 1B