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# BAT EMERGENCE SURVEYS

1 SOUTHPORT BARN COTTAGE,  
SAWLEY, LANCASHIRE

2022

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## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

### Site Information

1.1 Rachel Hacking Ecology Limited was commissioned in 2021 by Mr. John Sibbald, via Hawthorn Estates Limited, to undertake two dusk bat emergence surveys at 1 Southport Barn Cottage, Sawley, Lancashire (O.S. grid reference: SD 77628 46111 – see Figure 1). The proposed development site currently comprises a two-storey residential property, which sits at the southern end of a terrace. The site is in a rural location surrounded by open agricultural land with scattered residential properties. The River Ribble lies to the south-west of the site. The habitats immediately surrounding the site offer suitable bat foraging and commuting opportunities.



Figure 1 showing the location of the site

### Survey History

1.2 A preliminary bat roost assessment was carried out in November 2021 (see *Daytime Bat Survey – 1 Southport Barn Cottages, Sawley, Lancashire* - Rachel Hacking Ecology). A small number of scattered bat droppings were found in the roof void space. The building was found to provide suitable potential entry points along the eaves.

1.3 Given the evidence found and the potential entry points located, the building was considered to offer moderate bat roost suitability and therefore two bat activity surveys were recommended.

### Description of Development

1.4 The site will be the subject of a planning application with Ribble Valley Borough Council for a loft conversion, rear extension and internal reconfiguration.

### Biodiversity in Planning

1.5 Biodiversity is a material consideration, and Local Planning Authorities (LPAs) have a requirement to consider biodiversity and protected species when determining planning applications. Section 15 of the National Planning Policy Framework (July 2021) gives specific reference to minimising the impacts of development on biodiversity. Local and Neighbourhood plans also provide guidance towards protecting and enhancing biodiversity, including priority habitats and notable species.

### Legal Context

1.6 All bat species are protected under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2019 (Amendment) (EU Exit), which make is an offence to:

- Deliberately kill, injure or capture a bat;
- Deliberately disturb bats;
- Damage or destroy a breeding site or resting place of a bat.

The Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) contains further provisions making it an offence to intentionally or recklessly:

- Obstruct access to any structure or place which any bat uses for shelter or protection; or
- Disturb any bat while occupying a structure or place which it uses for that purpose.

Proposed development works that are likely to disturb or destroy bats or their roosts will need to obtain a licence from the relevant Statutory Nature Conservation Organisation (e.g., Natural England) prior to work commencing.

## 2.0 METHODOLOGY

### Bat Emergence Surveys

2.1 Two dusk emergence surveys were undertaken in accordance with the Bat Conservation Trust's *Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines* (2016). For the survey, two surveyors monitored the building, to ensure complete coverage for any emerging bats. The emergence surveys began 15 minutes before dusk and continued for 90 minutes after dusk. The surveyors used Anabat and Echometer Touch 2 Pro bat detectors to record the echolocations of emerging bats.

### Personnel and Seasonal Timing

2.2 Ben Crossthwaite (Senior Ecologist) and Steve Smith (Ecologist) carried out the dusk emergence surveys on the 8<sup>th</sup> and 27<sup>th</sup> of June 2022. Both surveyors are fully trained and experienced in nocturnal bat surveys and Ben holds a Natural England Level 2 Class Survey Licence for bats (Licence Ref: Ben - 2020-48541-CLS-CLS).

### Survey Constraints

2.3 The site was fully accessible, and the survey was carried out in appropriate weather and temperature. There were no constraints to the surveys.

## 3.0 RESULTS

### Surveyor Positions

3.1 Figure 2 shows the locations of the bat surveyors during the survey.



Figure 2 showing the building surveyed (yellow) and the locations of the surveyors (red stars)

### Survey Results

3.2 No bats were seen to emerge from 1 Southport Barn Cottage, or the adjacent property during the two dusk emergence surveys. Low levels of bat activity were recorded during the surveys, with Common Pipistrelle *Pipistrellus pipistrellus* and Soprano Pipistrelle *Pipistrellus pygmaeus* recorded foraging infrequently around the surrounding trees and travelling between the southern gable end and parallel vegetation. Noctule *Nyctalus noctula* was recorded commuting overhead and foraging above the grassland to the west.

### Bat Activity Table

3.3 Bat activity from the emergence surveys is recorded in Tables 1 and 2 below. Figure 3 shows a map with the bat activity recorded.

*Table 1. Results from the first dusk emergence survey*

Survey Type	Date	Average Temp (°C)	Sunset/ Sunrise	Weather
Emergence	08/06/2022	10°C	21:37	100% cloud cover, mild, dry, still
<b>Results</b>				
Soprano Pipistrelle, and less frequently Common Pipistrelle recorded infrequently passing/foraging along the hedgerow to the east, along the southern gable end and surrounding trees, vegetation between 21:54 and 22:39.				
Brown Long-eared bat <i>Plecotus auritus</i> recorded travelling east-west over the building at 21:57.				
Soprano Pipistrelle recorded commuting/foraging north-south along the rear gardens and brook between 22:02 and 22:36.				
Noctule seen above the grassland to the west 22:19.				
Myotis species recorded commuting north-south along the rear gardens/brook at 22:24.				

*Table 2. Results from the second dusk emergence survey*

Survey Type	Date	Average Temp (°C)	Sunset/ Sunrise	Weather
Emergence	27/06/2022	9°C	21:45	30-10% cloud cover, cool, dry, still
<b>Results</b>				
Soprano Pipistrelle recorded infrequently passing along the southern gable end and foraging around the surrounding tree, vegetation between 22:07 and 22:47.				
Noctule seen commuting northwest – southeast over the house at 22:07				
Soprano Pipistrelle recorded commuting/foraging north-south along the rear gardens and brook between 22:08 and 22:36.				
Noctule seen commuting east - west over the house at 22:10				
Noctule recorded foraging over the grassland to the west at 22:14				
Noctule recorded heard not seen at 22:35				



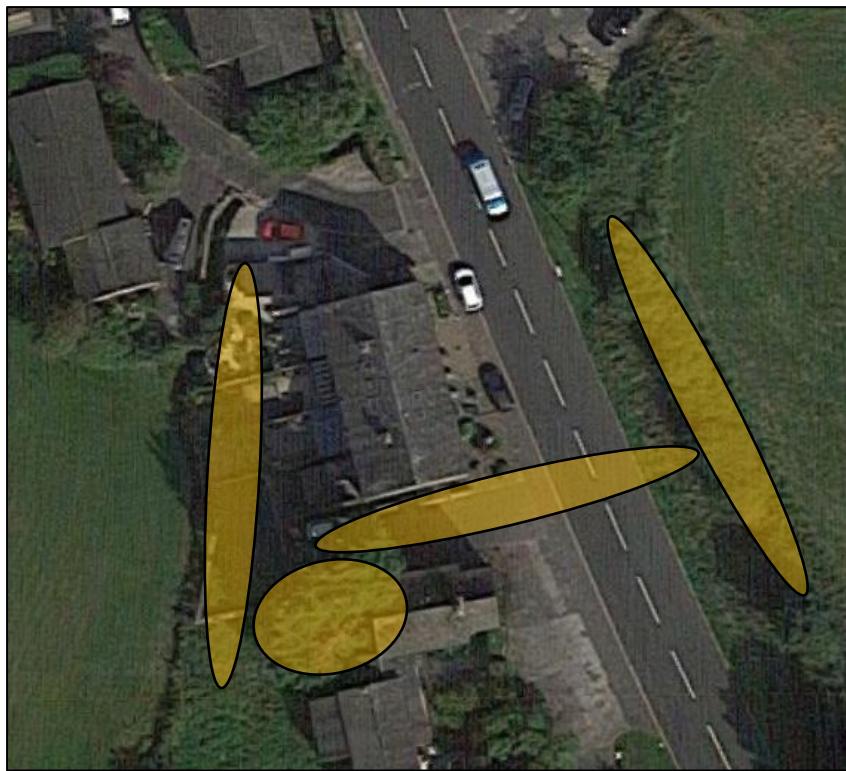


Figure 3 showing the areas of low-level bat activity recorded during the survey

## 4.0 SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

### Summary of Findings

4.1 A daytime bat survey of 1 Southport Barn Cottage was undertaken in November 2021 with evidence of a small number of scattered bat droppings found in the roof void space. The building was found to provide suitable potential entry points along the eaves. Therefore, the building was considered to offer moderate bat roost suitability and two dusk emergence surveys were recommended and were subsequently carried out in June 2022. No bats were seen to emerge from the building during the two bat emergence surveys.

4.2 It is considered that 1 Southport Barn Cottage does not have an active bat roost present and that it is likely, given the evidence found during the preliminary bat roost assessment, that the building was once host to a day roost. The evidence found was not conducive with a maternity roost.

4.3 The emergence surveys were undertaken during optimum weather conditions with no impediment to the visits. The temperatures were optimum prior to and during the surveys. It is considered that the bat usage of the site can be robustly characterised following the two dusk surveys carried out.

### Recommendations

4.4 It is the opinion of the author of this report that the site proposals can proceed without further bat survey effort or licensed mitigation works. However, if the work is delayed by longer than two years from the date of this survey, a further bat survey will be required to update the findings.

4.5 It should be noted that bat absence is very difficult to prove definitively due to their mobility and size, and single or small numbers of bats are able to roost in extremely small spaces, such as in gaps between tiles. The proposed work should be undertaken with care, for example with roof tiles lifted rather than dragged.

4.6 If during development works a bat (or an accumulation of bat droppings) is discovered at any time, work is to temporarily cease whilst an experienced bat ecologist is contacted for guidance and assistance. This can be Rachel Hacking Ecology (0161 465 8971) who undertook the initial survey, any licensed bat worker, or the Bat Conservation Trust (BCT) helpline (0845 1300 228).

## 5.0 REFERENCES

Collins, J. (ed.). (2016) *Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines, 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition*. Bat Conservation Trust. London.

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