Bat Survey Report and Method Statement
European Protected Species (Bats)

Reasonable Avoidance and Mitigation Measures

Lower Reaps Farm,
Whinney Lane,
Mellor,
BB2 7EL

19.09.2022

Report prepared by:
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Executive summary

In June 2022 Batworker consultancy was commissioned to undertake a preliminary bat roost assessment of Lower Reaps Farm, Whinney Lane, Mellor, BB2 7EL to assess the potential for impact on protected species.

A daytime survey was carried out on 20th July 2022 in order to support proposed residential development plans, including roofing works, assessed the buildings as having moderate to high bat roost potential.

Static bat detector monitoring within the barn between 20th July and 4th August 2022 recorded low levels of common pipistrelle foraging behaviour including calls at times suggestive of bats emerging from nearby roosts.

A dusk activity survey on 9th August 2022 recorded twelve common pipistrelle bats emerging from a roost within the eastern gable end of the farmhouse.

A dawn survey on the 23rd August 2022 recorded approximately 15 common pipistrelle bats dawn swarming and reentering a roost at the eastern gable end of the farmhouse.

A dusk survey on 4th September 2022 recorded seven common pipistrelle bats emerging from a roost within the eastern gable end of the farmhouse

Surveys carried out on site have found evidence to suggest use of the main farmhouse by a small non breeding roost of common pipistrelle bats.

"The presence of a significant bat roost (invariably a maternity roost) can normally be determined on a single visit at any time of year, provided that the entire structure is accessible and that any signs of bats have not been removed by others". - Mitchell-Jones, A (2004) Bat mitigation guidelines. English Nature

The roosts consist of a small number of a common species and can be characterised to be of low conservation value. Survey effort is considered appropriate to characterise the roost potential of buildings and design suitable mitigation for Natural England EPS licencing.

It is considered that a precautionary approach to development with suitable reasonable avoidance measures with mitigation in the form of timing of works and compensatory bat boxes would be an appropriate approach to roost compensation commensurate with that expected by Natural England for the purposes of licencing.

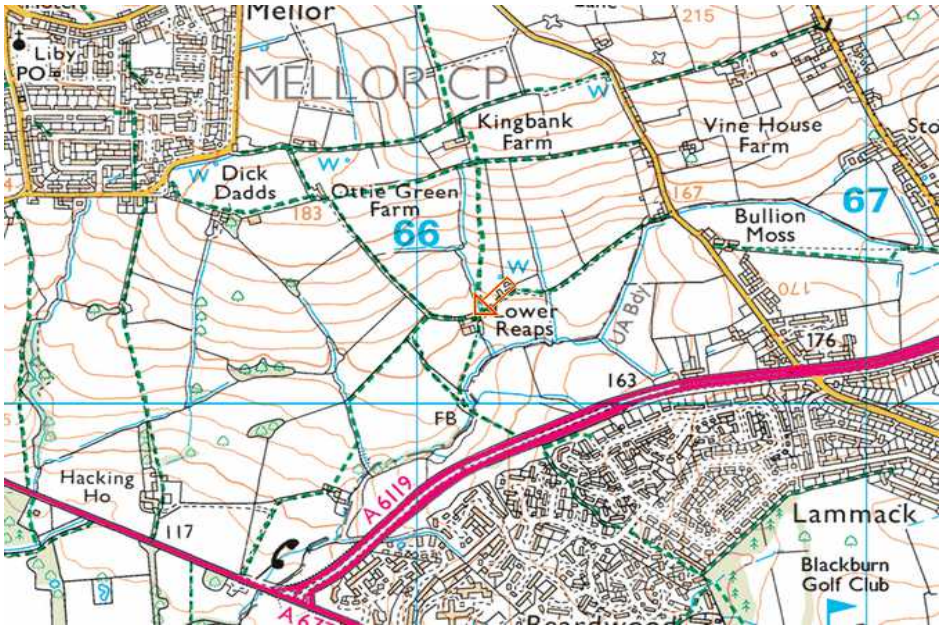
Compensatory bat boxes (Two Greenwood Eco Habitats three crevice boxes) will be placed on trees on site prior to work commencing and it is proposed that bat boxes along the boundary treeline will form suitable commensurate mitigation for any necessary EPS licence application.

No work will take place until a Natural England EPS Development licence has been applied for and the licence is in place.

The overall purpose of the Method Statement is to ensure that bats and their roosts are fully protected to ensure the 'favourable conservation status of the species'.

This method statement is designed to minimise or remove any potential disturbance to bats. By following the Reasonable Avoidance Measures and mitigation included in this document the work can take place, ensuring the Continued Ecological Functionality of the site.

Site Location
Lower Reaps Farm, Whinney Lane, Mellor, Blackburn, BB2 7EL
NGR: SD6612430211



Site Layout

The property is located within a rural area with surrounding habitat dominated by semi improved and improved grassland with hedgerow and scattered deciduous tree cover present on field boundaries. Semi natural deciduous woodland cover is present to the south of the property.

Bat foraging potential was assessed as low to moderate.

Survey summary and site assessment

Pre-existing information on the bat species present at this site.

Bat record data: records were obtained from Magic.gov.uk. A search of the MAGIC (www.magic.gov.uk) website revealed no bat EPS licence applications within a 1km radius.

From personal experience of surveying for and researching bats in Lancashire, Yorkshire and Cumbria, the following species were considered.

Common Pipistrelle – known to roost on sites where suitable foraging habitat is available.

Soprano Pipistrelle – known to roost on sites where suitable foraging habitat is available.

Whiskered/Brandt's – species often found roosting in buildings close to woodland.

Natterer's – a typical upland bat with foraging bats being recorded high on heather moorland. Often roosting in barns.

Daubenton's – a species commonly associated with aquatic habitats.

Long Eared bat – a woodland species which has been recorded foraging over in bye meadows and rough grassland sites. Often roosting in barns.

Survey Personnel.

Personnel on surveys included: David Anderson, an experienced ecologist and bat researcher with 25 years experience of fieldwork and bat ecology, a founder member of the East Lancashire Bat Group and 'Batworker.com', formerly a Natural History Curator and manager of the East Lancashire Biological Records Centre. (Natural England licence No:2015-15784-CLS-CLS, Conservation, Science and Education).

Survey Summary

Survey	**Date**	**Timings**
Visual	20.07.2022	1 Hour
Static Detector Monitoring	20.07 – 04.08.2022	Sunset to sunrise.
Emergence Survey	09.08.2022	3 Hours
Dawn Survey	23.08.2022	3 Hours
Emergence Survey	04.09.2022	3 Hours

Survey constraints

Access to all areas of the exterior of the buildings was possible and good visual inspection at ground level was possible. 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. In many situations it is not possible to inspect every locations where bats are present therefore it should be assumed that an absence of bat evidence does not necessarily equate to evidence that bats are absent. Some species such as pipistrelle sp bats are opportunistic and it is possible for individuals to be found during works, even where surveys have had negative results during preliminary and activity surveys.

Preliminary Bat Roost Assessment

The property consists of a detached two storey stone built farmhouse with double pitched corrugated fibreboard roof and adjoining barn.

The main farmhouse has generally well pointed external walls, however gaps and crevices are present below the eaves and on gable ends. Roof panels were mainly close fitting.

The building was assessed as offering a moderate to high level of bat roost potential.

The separate barn is a two storey traditional stone built building with a double pitch stone slate and corrugated fibreboard roof, a single storey lean-to is present on the northern facade with a single pitch corrugated fibreboard roof. External stone walls have gaps and crevices present. The main roof is unlined and roof lights allow light penetration to the interior,the lean to roof is unlined to the interior.Roof slates are in poor condition with areas of lifted, missing and slipped slates allowing weather and light penetration to the interior.

The building was assessed as offering a moderate level of bat roost potential.

Two further single storey outbuildings are present. A stone outbuilding with double pitch slate roof, and a brick built outbuilding with double pitch slate roof. Both buildings were assessed as offering low bat roost potential.

No physical evidence, in the form of concentrated or scattered droppings, urine splashing, feeding remains or grease staining, was observed during visual checks of the buildings either during the initial assessment or prior to follow up surveys.

Nesting Birds

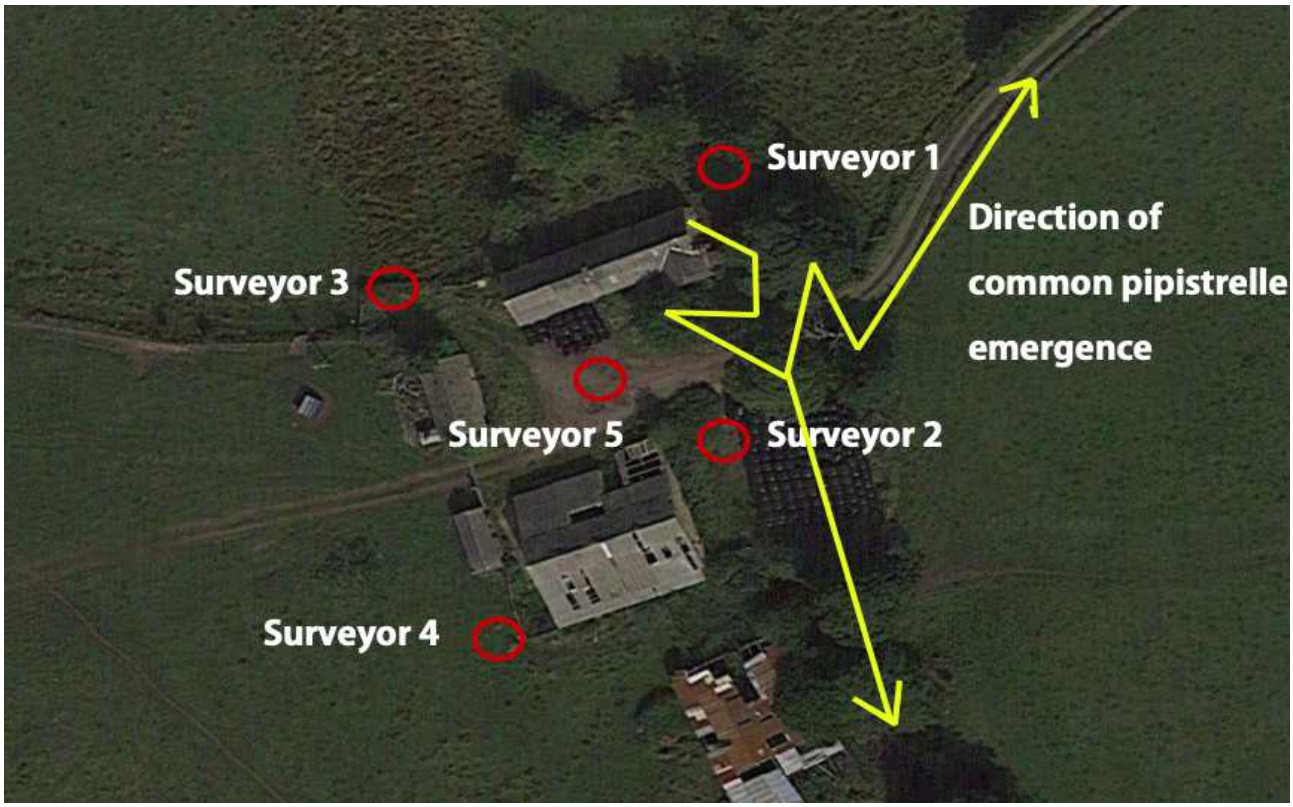
No evidence to suggest use by nesting birds was recorded during the survey. No evidence, in the form of pellets, urea splashing or moulted feathers, to suggest use by barn owls was observed.

Static Bat Detector Monitoring.

Three Anabat Express zero crossing static bat detectors were placed within the barn and outbuildings to monitor bat activity for a period of eight nights. The detectors were programmed to record bat activity from 30 minutes prior to sunset until 30 minutes after sunrise.

Bat activity was analysed post survey using AnalookW to identify species recorded and record timing of bat activity.

Low levels of common pipistrelle bat foraging activity were recorded throughout the survey period. Timing of bat activity was consistent with bats emerging from nearby roosts.



Survey summary *– yellow line shows emergence of common pipistrelle bats.*

Emergence Survey - 9th August 2022
Start:20.35 Sunset: 20.52 Finish:22.22 Start temp 16.3c / Finish temp 16.0c
100% Clear Sky / Wind Bft 0

Surveyors equipped with Anabat Walkabout , Anabat Scout, Anabat Chorus and Anabat Swift full spectrum detectors aided with Canon XA50 and XA25 infrared video cameras with infrared flood and spot lights were positioned around the buildings to monitor for emerging bats.

Recorded bat calls were analysed post survey using Anabat Insight software. Video footage was reviewed on a 42” 4K monitor at realtime post survey.

Between 21.04 and 22.04 twelve common pipistrelle bats were observed emerging from a roost at the eastern gable end of the main farmhouse and foraging along the treeline to the east of the property before dispersing into the wider landscape.

Dawn Survey - 23rd August 2022
Start:04.30 Sunrise: 06.00 Finish:06.15 Start temp 14.2c / Finish temp 14.0c
100% Clear Sky / Wind Bft 0

Surveyors equipped with Anabat Walkabout and Anabat Scout full spectrum detectors aided with Canon XA50 and XA25 infrared video cameras with infrared flood and spot lights were positioned around the building to monitor for emerging bats.

Recorded bat calls were analysed post survey using Anabat Insight software. Video footage was reviewed on a 42" 4K monitor at realtime post survey.

Fifteen common pipistrelle bats were observed 15 common pipistrelle bats dawn swarming and reentering a roost at the eastern gable end of the farmhouse.

Emergence Survey - 4th September 2022
Start:19.30 Sunset: 19.49 Finish:21.20 Start temp 21.4c / Finish temp 20.5c
60% Cloud Cover / Wind Bft 1 Westerley

Surveyors equipped with Anabat Walkabout and Anabat Scout full spectrum detectors aided with Canon XA50 and XA25 infrared video cameras with infrared flood and spot lights were positioned around the building to monitor for emerging bats.

Recorded bat calls were analysed post survey using Anabat Insight software. Video footage was reviewed on a 42" 4K monitor at realtime post survey.

Seven common pipistrelle bats emerging from a roost within the eastern gable end of the farmhouse and foraging along the treeline to the east of the property before dispersing into the wider landscape.

Interpretation of results

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Impact Assessment

Short-term impacts – disturbance Low risk:

Roof stripping where necessary will be undertaken by hand and under supervision following a precautionary further emergence survey work carried out between May and September and installation of compensatory roost boxes.

Long-term impacts - Roost loss: No impact on a local bat population.
Long-term impacts - Fragmentation and isolation: Minimal risk, the impact of the proposed development on local bat species will be insignificant.

Predicted scale of impact
No loss of roosting sites of a common and relatively widespread species.

Method Statement and Reasonable Avoidance Measures

The overall purpose of the Method Statement is to ensure that bats and their roosts are fully protected to ensure the 'favourable conservation status of the species'. The Method statement is designed to minimise or remove any potential disturbance to roosting bats.

A Method Statement is normally required by the local planning authority to ensure that procedures are in place before the development works are carried out and will form part of the EPS Licence application where necessary.

No work should commence without contractors receiving a toolbox talk.

All contractors will be made aware of the legal protection afforded all species of bats in the UK and procedures will be in place to mitigate for the potential impact on bats before any building work is undertaken.

Compensatory bat boxes (Two Greenwood Eco Habitats three crevice box) will be placed on trees on site prior to work commencing and will be used to house any bats found during works.

Timing of works – No work will take place until a Natural England EPS Development licence has been gained.

Work to affected roof areas will take place under supervision of the bat worker on days following a night temperature of 5c.

Removal of roof slates will be carried out by hand and under supervision where necessary.

Enhancement Roosts

Compensatory bat boxes (Two Greenwood Eco Habitats two crevice boxes) will be kept on trees on site post development.

A copy of the Method Statement should be available to site / project managers in advance of any works being carried out.

The existence of a Method Statement helps to establish a defence against prosecution for intentional (WCA), deliberate (Habitat Regulations.) or reckless (WCA) disturbance of bats or damage to roosts. All work should take place under the supervision of the ecologist.

Accidental exposure of bats - EMERGENCY ADVICE

In the unlikely event of bats or their roosts being exposed or vulnerable to harm, suspend further work in that area. Cover the exposed bats to reduce any further risk of harm and seek advice immediately. Call Dave Anderson (Batworker) on 07894 338290 (mobile); a site visit will be arranged to assess the situation and recover any bats / safely remove them from site.