

Laneside House, Bolton by Bowland
PRELIMINARY BAT ROOST ASSESSMENT
May 2023



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1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Instruction and Report Aims

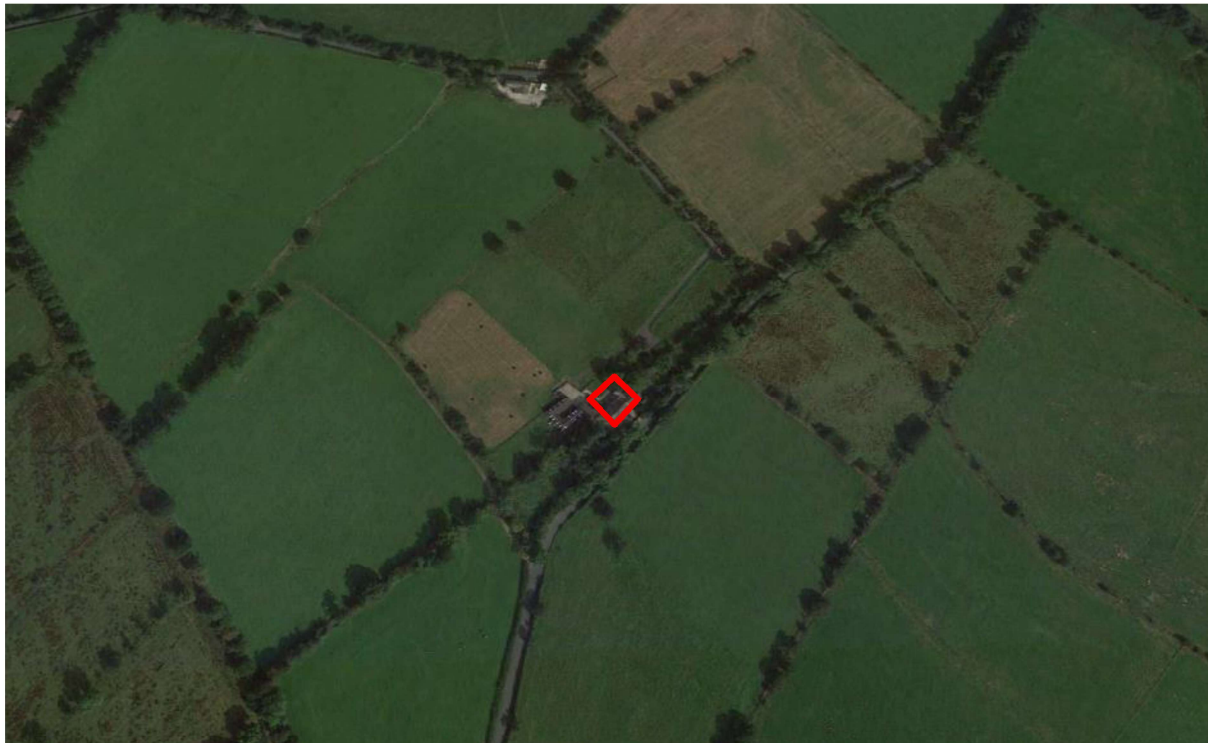
Knight Sky Ecology was commissioned to undertake a preliminary bat roost assessment at Laneside House, Settle Road, Bolton by Bowland, BD23 4SL. The assessment was undertaken to provide supporting information for the proposed extension plans at the property including modifications to the roof.

The aim of this report is to inform the proposals of all considerations relating to bats at the site. This includes presenting information to determine the likelihood of the presence or absence of a bat roost at the property; providing recommendations for mitigation of any potential impacts to bats where appropriate; and, providing guidance should any further detailed assessment be required. Appendix A provides details of the legislation afforded to bats for further context.

1.2 Site Description

The property is a Grade II listed, stone-built house situated in a rural location at grid reference SD 79236 53661. The development plans involve the construction of an extension to the rear of the property. The surrounding area comprises pasture land bound by a network of hedgerows with occasional woodlands and farmsteads. The property is 185m above ordnance datum (AOD). Figure 1.1 provides an aerial image of the property location.

Figure 1.1. Property location



2 METHODS

2.1 Survey Personnel

The preliminary bat roost assessment was undertaken by Ryan Knight MCIEEM who holds a Level 2 Natural England Class Licence (ref. 2015-12611-CLS-CLS) and has held this licence for over 10 years. Ryan has also acted as the named ecologist on numerous European Protected Species (EPS) mitigation licences issued by Natural England which covered several bat species and roost types.

2.2 Overarching Guidance

The preliminary bat roost assessment was primarily based on the methods described in '*Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines. 3rd edition. Bat Conservation Trust, London*' (Collins, J., 2016). Any deviation from standard practice is justified where required.

2.3 Site Survey

A preliminary bat roost assessment of the property was undertaken on 19th May 2023. The assessment involved a visual inspection of the property to search for bats and evidence of bats (e.g., droppings) and an appraisal of the extent and suitability of any potential bat roost features present. The assessment included the use of a torch and ladders. A digital endoscope was available for use but not required. All relevant section of the interior (i.e., the loft) and exterior of the property were fully inspected.

Other considerations which would influence the suitability of the property for use by bats were also taken into account. This included the site location, expected night time lighting levels and the suitability of the surrounding habitats. This information was gathered from the site survey and web-based mapping sources (i.e., Google Earth).

Following the assessment, the property was assigned a bat roost suitability category of negligible, low, moderate, high or confirmed roost based on the collated information.

2.4 Assessment Comments and Limitations

The scope of the assessment was designed in relation to the predicted degree of risk to bats and the nature and scale of the proposals. With this proportionate approach in mind, a full desk top study was not considered to be required for the assessment.

The interior and exterior of the property was fully inspected. The survey was undertaken during the main active period for bats (May to October) when bats and evidence of bats are most evident.

This report will remain valid for a period of 18 months from the date of issue. An ecologist should be contacted for advice on the revalidation requirements of the report if planning permission is not obtained (if required) or works do not commence within this time period.

3 RESULTS

3.1 Preliminary Roost Assessment

Building Description and Potential Bat Roost Features

The property is a stone built, semi-detached dwelling. The stonework has been rendered at the rear of the property in the location of the proposed extension. This render was in very good condition with no potential for bat roosts to be present. It was also observed that the plastic guttering was very tight fitting to the wall which also limited any potential bat roost features at the roof verges. The roof of the property comprised concrete tiles with a modern breathable roof membrane. The loft of the property was relatively shallow (approx. 1.2m high) and was fully insulated. The roof appeared to be very well sealed. It is understood that the property had undergone some roof work several months prior to the site visit. The ridge tile pointing was in very good condition and there were several roof timbers of the north aspect which also appeared to have been replaced. Overall, no potential roost features were observed.

Habitat Description

The property is situated within a rural location and features a mature garden with several trees. There are treelines to the direct south-west and north-east which provide connectivity and suitable foraging habitats for bats. The surrounding area comprises pasture land bound by a network of hedgerows with occasional woodlands and small watercourses. Bat activity levels within the locality are expected to be moderate to high and include several species known to be present in the region. Overall, no environmental constraints to the presence of bats were encountered and there are a mix of habitats of notable value for bats in the locality.

Evidence of Bats and Bat Roost Suitability

No evidence of a bat roost was recorded and no potential roost features for bats were observed in any section of the property that would be affected by the proposals. Therefore, the property is categorised as **negligible** in terms of its suitability for use as a bat roost.

3.2 Nesting Birds

No evidence of nesting birds was observed.

4 EVALUATION AND CONCLUSIONS

The main results and conclusions derived from the preliminary bat roost assessment are listed as follows:

- No evidence of a bat roost was recorded.
- The property was in good structural condition with no potential roost features for bats recorded.
- The property is categorised as negligible in its roost suitability.
- No habitats of foraging value for bats are to be affected by the proposals.

Based on the evidence, bats are not considered to represent a significant ecological constraint to the development plans. The plans will remain legally compliant (see Appendix A for details of the legislation afforded to bats) and no further survey or assessment is required.

5 RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Enhancements

The development proposal presents a good opportunity to enhance the site for bats via the provision of a bat box. There is an oak tree adjacent to the rear of the property which would provide a suitable location for a bat box. The bat box is recommended to be one of the following models:

- 1FF Schwegler Bat Box with built-in wooden rear panel (<https://www.nhbs.com/>); or
- Greenwood's two or three crevice bat box (<https://www.greenwoodsecohabitats.co.uk/shop>); or
- 2no. Eco Kent bat box (<https://www.nhbs.com/>).

Please note, there can be a considerable waiting time for delivery and low levels of stock of certain boxes, therefore, several options have been provided.

The box should be fixed on the main stem at least 4 metres in height from the ground and provide allowance for a clear flight path to / from the box. The box should be sheltered from strong winds and exposed to the sun for part of the day (usually south or south-west).

APPENDIX A. LEGISLATION FOR BATS

The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981

All bat species in England are listed in Schedule 5 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended). Section 9 of the Act make it an offence to intentionally or recklessly kill, injure or take any wild animal included in Schedule 5. In addition, it is an offence to (intentionally or recklessly):

- Damage or destroy any structure or place which any wild animal specified in Schedule 5 uses for shelter or protection;
- Disturb any such animal while it is occupying a structure or place which it uses for shelter or protection; or
- Obstruct access to any structure or place which any such animal uses for shelter or protection.

In addition, under this legislation there are offences relating to sale, possession and control of bats.

The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017

Bats are listed within Schedule 2 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended) (the Habitats Regulations) as European Protected Species of animals. Part 3 (Protection of animals); Regulation 43 (1) of the Habitats Regulations make it an offence to:

- Deliberately capture, injure or kill any wild animal of a European protected species;
- Deliberately disturb wild animals of any such species;
- Deliberately take or destroys the eggs of such an animal; or
- Damages or destroy a breeding site or resting place of such an animal.

For the purposes of the legislation, the disturbance of wild animals includes any disturbance which is likely to impair their ability to survive, to breed or to reproduce, or to rear or nurture their young; or in the case of hibernating or migratory species, to hibernate or migrate; or to affect significantly the local distribution or abundance of the species to which they belong.

In addition, under this legislation there are offences relating to possession, control sale and exchange of European Protected Species.

APPENDIX B. PHOTOS

Photo 1.
Loft of
property.



Photo 2.
View of rear
elevation
(area of
proposed
extension).



Photo 3.
View of roof
(south-east
facing
aspect).



Photo 4.
View of rear
elevation.



Photo 5.
View of roof
(north-west
facing
aspect).

