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

Reasonable Avoidance and Mitigation Measures

Cuckoo Hall Farm,
Higher Road,
Longridge,
PR3 2YX

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Executive summary

In August 2023 Batworker consultancy was commissioned to undertake a survey of buildings at Cuckoo Hall Farm, Higher Road, Longridge, PR3 2YX to assess the potential for impact on protected species.

A daytime survey on 30th August 2023 was carried out on in order to support plans for a residential development, including demolition of existing buildings. The buildings, when assessed in combination with location and surrounding habitat, were observed to have low levels of bat roost potential when location and surrounding habitat were taken into consideration.

Previous surveys in 2021, consisting of 21 nights static bat detector monitoring found no evidence of bats using the buildings to roost, very low levels of common pipistrelle bats were recorded foraging past and through the site at times suggesting bats flying from distant roosts to forage (+ 3 hours post sunset).

A single emergence survey was carried out on 11th September 2023, no bats were recorded emerging from buildings on site, bat activity was limited to a low level of Common Pipistrelle foraging behaviour (<10 bat passes) with activity only observed late in the survey suggesting bast commuting onto site from a distant roost.

Survey effort is considered appropriate to characterise the roost potential of buildings and that the presence of a significant bat roost is unlikely on site.

"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.

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

Compensatory bat boxes (Two Greenwood Eco Habitats two crevice boxes) will be placed on trees on site prior to work commencing and will be used to house any bats found during works. The number of boxes is commensurate with expected compensation for low conservation bat roosts.

Bat boxes will remain on site as part of proposed biodiversity enhancement.

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
Cuckoo Hall Farm, Higher Road, Longridge, PR3 2YX
NGR: SD6389639024

Surrounding Habitat

The property is located in a rural position with surrounding habitat dominated by rough in-bye, improved and semi improved grassland with little scattered mature deciduous tree cover present on field boundaries. An area of semi natural deciduous clough woodland associated with Cowley Brook is present approximately 200m to the east.

Connectivity to the wider landscape is good. Overall foraging potential for bats can be considered low.

Survey summary and site assessment

Pre-existing information on the bat species present at this site - A search of the MAGIC website revealed no EPS licence applications within a 1km radius.

The surveyor has carried out surveys within 500m of the site and holds records of foraging common pipistrelle.

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	08.09.2021	2 Hours
Static Monitoring	08.09 – 05.10.2021	Sunset to Sunrise
Visual	30.08.2023	2 Hours
Emergence Survey	11.09.2023	3 Hours

Survey constraints

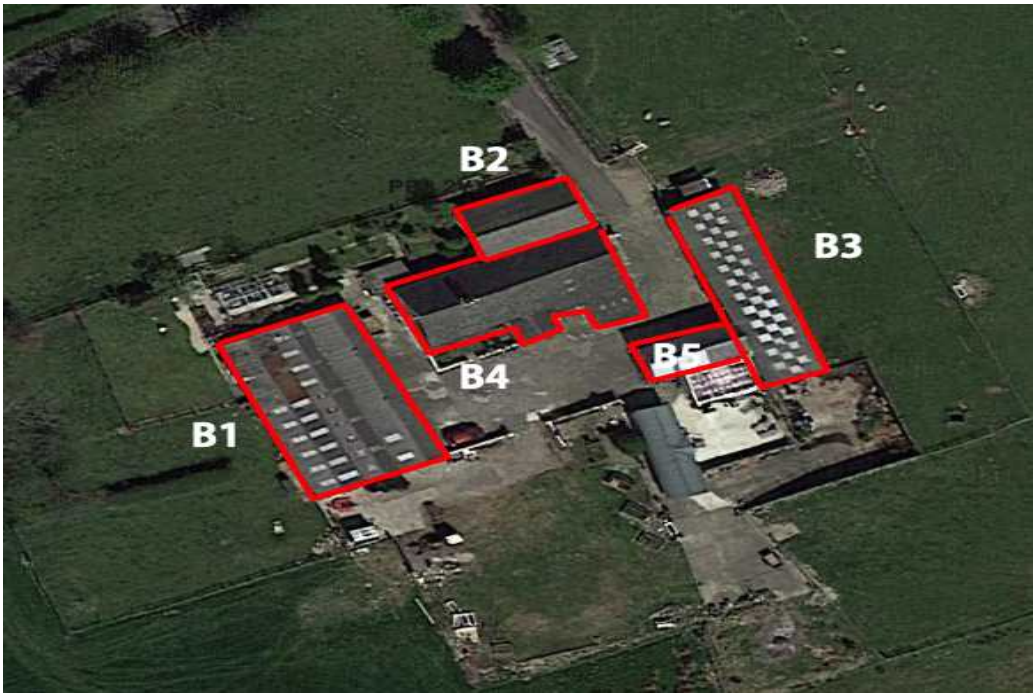
Access to all areas of the interior and exterior of the buildings was possible and good visual inspection at ground level was possible. Evidence of bat activity such as bat droppings or staining on external walls and surfaces is frequently removed by the action of wind and rain; apparent absence of evidence 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.

Survey Results

Visual Survey/Preliminary Bat Roost Assessment

The property consists of a complex of former agricultural buildings and outbuildings which will be demolished as part of the proposed residential development.



Buildings proposed for development.

Building 1

Building 1 is a complex of three single skin single storey outbuildings. Exterior walls are single skin with no obvious cavity, and concrete half walls are well pointed with no obvious cracks, crevices or gaps present. No fascia boarding is present with guttering being directly attached to exterior walls.

Rooflights and windows are present allowing light penetration into the interor.

No evidence, such as droppings, feeding remains, urine splashing or grease marking was observed to suggest the presence of roosting bats despite interior spaces and multiple horizontal surfaces being undisturbed. The building was assessed as offering negligible potential for roosting bats.

Building 2

Building 2 is a corrugated fibreboard outbuilding with an unlined double pitched corrugated fibreboard roof. Exterior walls are single skin with no obvious cavity, and well pointed with no obvious cracks, crevices or gaps present. No fascia boarding is present.

The building has a double pitched corrugated fibreboard roof which is well sealed. Roof panels are unlined and the ridge is exposed to the interior.

No evidence, such as droppings, feeding remains, urine splashing or grease marking was observed to suggest the presence of roosting bats despite interior spaces and multiple horizontal surfaces being undisturbed. The building was assessed as offering negligible potential for roosting bats.

Building 3

Building 3 is a single storey block built outbuilding with a single pitched corrugated fibreboard roof. Exterior walls are single skin with no obvious cavity, and generally well pointed with no obvious cracks, crevices or gaps present.

The building has a single pitched corrugated fibreboard roof and is well sealed. Roof panels are unlined and rooflights are present allowing considerable light penetration into the interior of the building.

No evidence, such as droppings, feeding remains, urine splashing or grease marking was observed to suggest the presence of roosting bats despite interior spaces and multiple horizontal surfaces being undisturbed. The building was assessed as offering negligible potential for roosting bats.

Building 4

Building 4 consists of an existing two storey farmhouse with a double pitched slate roof, the property has an adjoining barn, External walls are rendered and painted, with no missing pointing, gaps, or crevices present. Roof slates are close fitting with no obvious missing, slipped or lifted slates. Ridge tiles are pointed and well sealed.

No evidence, such as droppings, feeding remains, urine splashing or grease marking was observed to suggest the presence of roosting bats despite interior spaces and multiple horizontal surfaces being undisturbed.

The property can be considered to be of low potential for roosting bats.

Building 5

Building 5 consists of a stone built detached barn with an conservatory present on the southern facade. Roofing is a mix of slate and corrugated metal and fibreboard. External walls are rendered, painted and well sealed with no missing pointing, gaps or crevices present.

No evidence, such as droppings, feeding remains, urine splashing or grease marking was observed to suggest the presence of roosting bats despite interior spaces and multiple horizontal surfaces being undisturbed.

The building was assessed as offering negligible potential.

Barn Owls and other nesting birds.

Evidence of use by barn owls was observed within buildings. A separate method statement accompanies this report.

No nesting birds were observed during the survey, however, suitable nesting and foraging resources for common woodland and urban fringe bird species are present on site.

Static Detector Monitoring.
8th to 29th September 2021 Sunset to Sunrise

Two Anabat Express static bat detectors were positioned within buildings 4 assessed as offering negligible to low potential for roosting bats and set to record bat activity from sunset to sunrise for 21 nights. Bat calls were subsequently analysed using AnalookW software post survey. Weather throughout the survey period was generally in keeping with weather conditions suitable for bat activity to be recorded.

A very low level of bat activity was recorded and typified by common pipistrelle bats arriving from three hours post sunset to forage. Foraging activity, typically 3 bat passes was recorded on five nights, with most activity was recorded in the hour before and after midnight.

No social calling or calls at times suggestive of bats emerging from/or returning to a roost were recorded, no bats were recorded at times which suggested bats emerging from a roost (typically in the hour after sunset) for pipistrelle bats). Similarly no bat activity was recorded in the two hours prior to sunrise.

Dusk emergence Survey - 11th September 2023

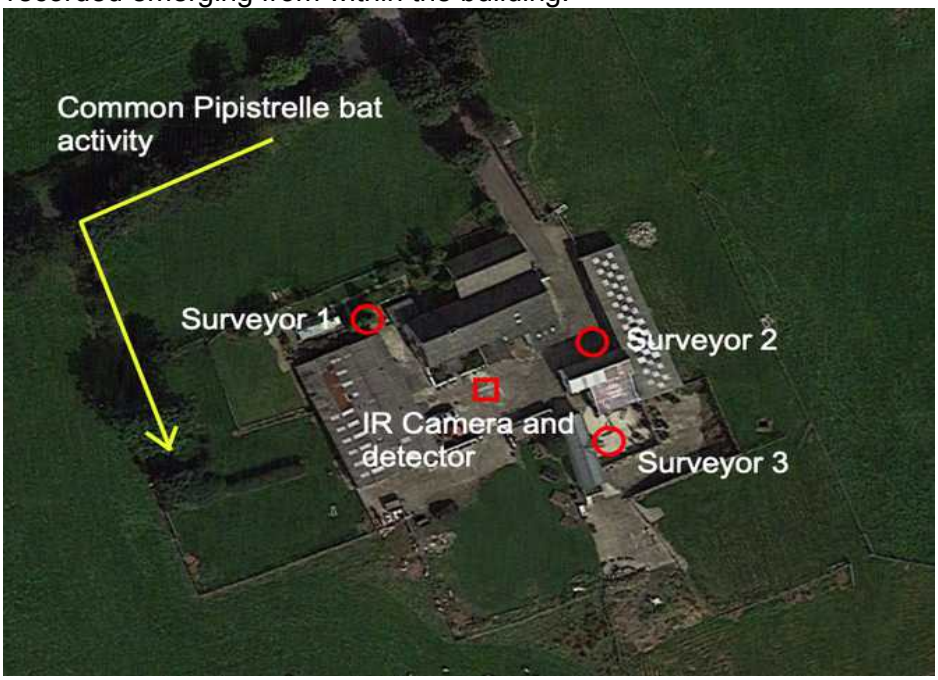
Start Temp: 14.1c Finish Temp: 13.0c 70% Clear Sky Wind: Bfd 1 Westerly Precipitation 0
Start: 19.20 Sunset: 19.35 Finish: 21.10

Surveyors equipped with Anabat Walkabout and Anabat Scout full spectrum detectors aided with Canon XA50 HD and Nightfox Whisker infrared video cameras with infrared flood and spot lights positioned covering 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 by two separate surveyors.

At 20.57 two Common Pipistrelle bats were recorded to the west of the site foraging along the hedgerow and foraging along the north of the buildings. A low level of activity was recorded with less than 10 bat passes.

No bats were recorded emerging from within the building.



Survey results

Interpretation of results

No physical evidence to suggest use by bats was recorded during the preliminary follow up surveys at a time of year when evidence of use by bats would be expected and despite suitable undisturbed horizontal surfaces being present.

Buildings were assessed as negligible to negligible to low potential for roosting bats.

Static bat detector surveys carried out on site in 2021 have recorded no activity at times suggestive of bats using the buildings to roost. The surveys found no evidence of bats using the buildings to roost, however common pipistrelle bats were recorded at times to suggest commuting onto site and foraging past and through the site at times suggesting bats flying from distant roosts to forage.

A single emergence survey was carried out on 11th September 2023, no bats were recorded emerging from buildings on site, bat activity was limited to a low level of Common Pipistrelle foraging behaviour (<10 bat passes) with activity only observed late in the survey suggesting bast commuting onto site from a distant roost.

Survey effort is considered appropriate to characterise the roost potential of the buildings and that the presence of bats is unlikely on site given a combination of the lack of physical evidence observed, timings of recorded activity and the limited roosting opportunities on site.

"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 combination of call types recorded during the monitoring period, and the consistent timing of these calls did not suggest that bats were roosting on site. Bat calls recorded were consistently outside the timing parameters of an emergence survey.

The lack of physical evidence of bat use observed during the daytime preliminary roost assessment, combined with recorded bat activity during static monitoring and emergence survey, is not indicative of bats using the buildings on site to roost.

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 should it be necessary.

Compensatory bat boxes (Two Greenwood Eco Habitats two crevice boxes) will be placed on trees on site prior to work commencing and will form suitable commensurate mitigation in the unlikely event that an EPS licence application is necessary.

Impact Assessment

Short-term impacts – Disturbance Low risk: Roof stripping where necessary will be undertaken by hand and under supervision.

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.

Work to affected roof areas will take place under supervision of the batworker.

Roof slates where present should be removed by hand and under supervision.

Roof work will take place following an evening temperature of +5c

Timing of works

No demolition should take place between May and September inclusive unless a precautionary emergence survey is carried out prior to works commencing.

The emergence survey should be carried out by suitably experienced ecologists in sufficient numbers to ensure good coverage of the buildings.

Once absence of bats has been confirmed mechanical demolition can commence.

In the unlikely event bat emergence is recorded, further survey work will be undertaken to support a Natural England EPS development licence.

Compensatory bat boxes (Two Greenwood Eco Habitats two crevice boxes) will be placed on trees on site prior to work commencing and will be used to house any bats found during works. Bat boxes will remain on site as part of proposed biodiversity enhancement. The number of boxes is commensurate with expected compensation for low conservation bat roosts.

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.

Nesting bird mitigation

Any removal of scrub, immature trees or hedgerow should take place outside the optimum period for bird nesting (March to August inclusive), unless a breeding bird survey by a suitably qualified ecologist is carried out in the 48 hours prior to clearance and no nesting birds are found.

If an active bird nest is detected at any point, works in that sector will immediately cease and an area of 5m radius around the nest will be cordoned off and clearly marked using hi-visibility tape and appropriate signage to prevent disturbance to nesting birds. Any noisy machinery, or activity, will be moved at least 10m away from the location of the nest. Works within the cordoned off area

where active bird nests have been detected will only proceed once an experienced ecologist has confirmed the nests are no longer active.