

Preliminary Bat Roost Assessment Report

**Fencegate Farm,
Ribchester Road,
Dinckley,
BB6 8AL**

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**Report prepared by:
Dave Anderson
Batworker.com
Dave@Batworker.com
07894 338290**

Summary

In December 2023 Batworker consultancy was commissioned to undertake a survey of Fencegate Farm, Ribchester Road, Dinsley, BB6 8AL to assess the potential for use by bats and breeding birds.

A daytime survey was carried out on 22nd January 2024 to support residential development plans.

A previous survey on 14th March 2023 found no evidence to suggest use by bats.

No evidence to suggest use by nesting birds, including Barn Owl was recorded.

No evidence was recorded to suggest bats were roosting within the buildings.

No bats were observed or recorded using the buildings for roosting.

The property is considered to be of negligible potential for roosting bats.

No evidence to suggest use of outbuildings by barn owls was observed.

The surveyor considers survey effort to be reasonable to assess the roost potential of the buildings and no further survey work is deemed appropriate.

The surveyor does not consider the proposed development and change of use is likely to result in a breach of the Conservation (Natural Habitats &c.) Regulations 1994 (as amended) therefore the proposed development does not require an EPS Licence (EPSL) to proceed lawfully.

Introduction

In December 2023 Batworker consultancy was commissioned to undertake a survey of Fencegate Farm, Ribchester Road, Dinckley, BB6 8AL to assess the potential for use by bats and breeding birds.

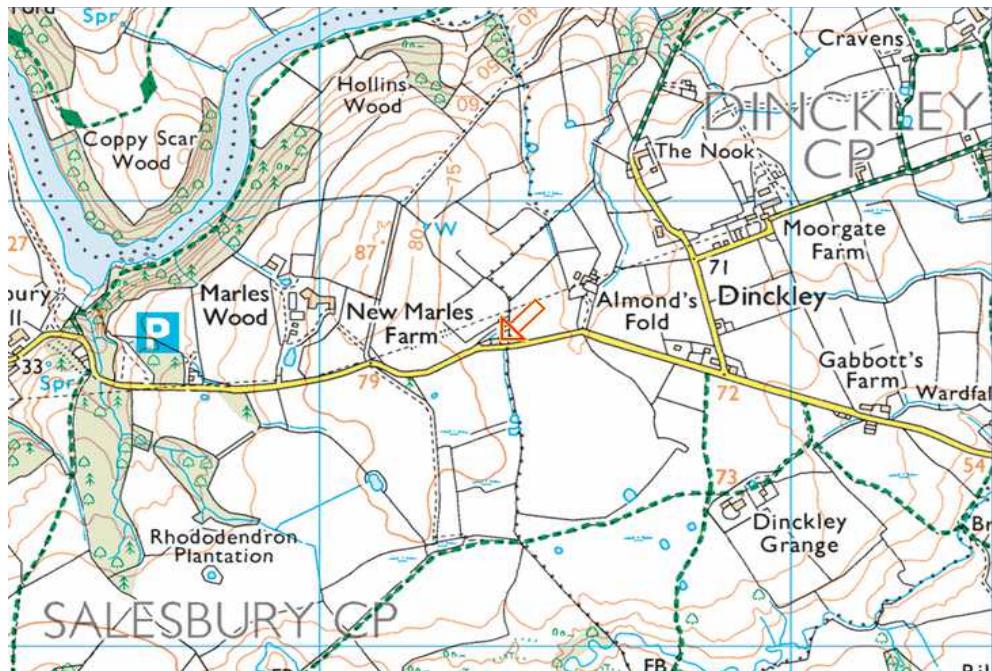
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Survey and Site Assessment

Objectives of the survey

The survey was carried out to determine roost potential of the building, current usage by bats, and other protected species, of the site and to establish status of the bat species using the site prior to development work being carried out.

Survey site location



A central grid reference for the site is SD6838235688

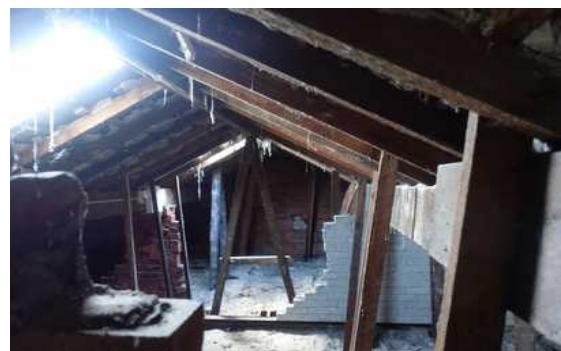
Site Description

The property consists of a detached bungalow with a double pitched slate roof. A flat roofed extension is present on the eastern gable of the property.

External walls are well pointed, and rendered, with no obvious cracks, gaps or crevices present. Gable ends are pointed and sealed.

The roofs are in good general condition with close fitting slates, no lifted, slipped, or missing slates were observed. Roof slates are unlined with a plaster and lathe construction. Two single skin outbuildings are present to the north of the bungalow.

The property can be considered to offer negligible bat roost potential.



Pre Existing data on local bat species

A search of the MAGIC (www.magic.gov.uk) website revealed no bat EPS licence applications within a 1km radius.

A previous survey by the surveyor on 14th March 2023 found no evidence to suggest use by bats.

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.

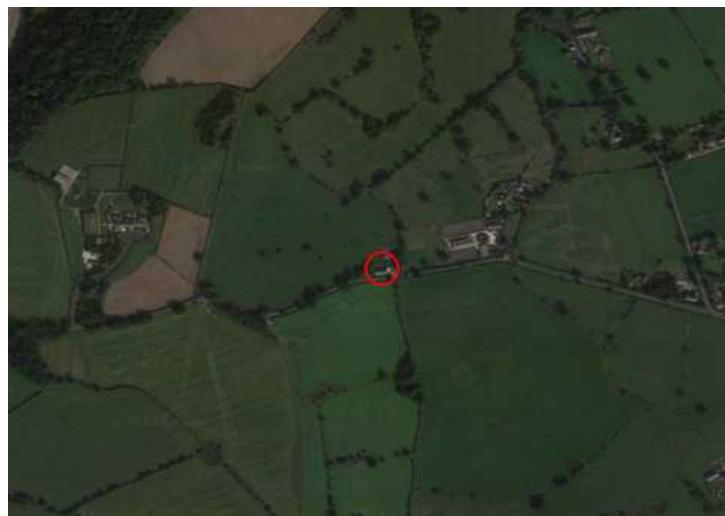
Whiskered/Brandt's – species often found roosting in buildings close to woodland.

Natterer's – a typical upland bat, often also associated with lowland woodland, but 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 typically woodland species which has been recorded foraging over in bye meadows and rough grassland sites. Often roosting in barns.

Habitat



The property is located in a rural position with surrounding habitat dominated by improved and semi improved grassland with scattered deciduous tree cover present on field boundaries, ancient woodland associated with the River Ribble is present approximately 600 metres to the northwest of the site.

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

Field Survey Methodology

Visual inspection

An inspection was carried out to search for and identify potential feeding perches, roosting opportunities and signs of bat use both internally and externally. The visual inspection focussed on searching for feeding remains and bat droppings both within the building and on external walls. Crevices and other potential roost sites were investigated for smear/grease marks, lack of cobwebs, urine staining.

Equipment used included:

- ! Exposure Diablo 1300 lumen LED torch
- ! SeeSnake CA 300 video endoscope
- ! Opticron close focusing binoculars

Personnel

All surveys were conducted by Dave Anderson MSc, Natural England Science, Education and Conservation bat licence holder (2015-15784-CLS-CLS) a bat surveyor and ecologist with over 20 years experience.

Survey Summary

Survey	Date	Timings
Visual	14.03.2023	1 Hour
Visual	22.01.2024	1 Hour

Survey constraints

Access to all areas of the exterior of the building was possible and good visual inspection at ground level and aerial inspection 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 Inspection - Bats

The building is generally well sealed with no cracks, gaps, cavities or crevices suitable for roosting bats and was assessed as offering negligible roosting potential, despite a recent gap forming on the flat roofed extension.

No evidence (in the form of scattered droppings, urine splashing, feeding remains or grease marking) to suggest use by bats was recorded.

Visual Inspection – Nesting birds

No evidence to suggest use of the building by nesting birds was recorded. Outbuildings were inspected for presence of nesting birds and barn owls. No evidence to suggest use by barn owl was recorded.

Evaluation of the results

No evidence of use by bats was recorded during the survey and the property was assessed as offering negligible roosting potential.

Given the lack of roosting potential it is considered that the development proposals do not risk negative impacts on roosting bats.

Conclusion

No evidence was recorded to suggest bats were roosting within the buildings.

No bats were observed or recorded using the buildings for roosting.

The property is considered to be of negligible potential for roosting bats.

No evidence to suggest use of outbuildings by barn owls was observed.

The surveyor considers survey effort to be reasonable to assess the roost potential of the buildings and no further survey work is deemed appropriate.

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Proposed Biodiversity Net Gain

The installation of a Greenwoods Ecohabitats Two Chamber Bat Box or Kent Bat Box within the site would provide roosting potential for the local bat population.

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, contact Natural England where necessary, and recover any bats / safely remove them from site.

E Bibliography

Barn Owls and Rural Planning Applications Barn Owl Trust 2009

Barn Owl Survey Methodology and Techniques for use in Ecological Assessments
Shawyer, C. August 2011

Bat Mitigation Guidelines Natural England 2006

Bat Survey Guidelines 3rd Edition Bat Conservation Trust 2016

Bat Workers Manual 3rd Edition JNCC 2004

Bats and the Law

Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981, principally those relating to powers and penalties, have been amended by the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 (CROW Act). The CROW Act only applies to England and Wales.

Section 9(1)

It is an offence for any person to intentionally kill, injure or take any wild bat.

Section 9(4)(a)

It is an offence to intentionally or recklessly* damage, destroy or obstruct access to any place that a wild bat uses for shelter or protection.

(*Added by the CRoW Act in England and Wales only)

This is taken to mean all bat roosts whether bats are present or not.

Section 9(4)(b)

It is an offence to intentionally or recklessly* disturb any wild bat while it is occupying a structure or place that it uses for shelter or protection.

(*Added by the CRoW Act in England and Wales only)

The Conservation (Natural Habitats, &c.) Regulations 1994

Section 39(1)

It is an offence

- (a) deliberately to capture or kill any bat
- (b) deliberately to disturb any bat
- (d) to damage or destroy a breeding site or resting place of any bat.

The difference between this legislation and the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 is the use of the word 'deliberately' rather than 'intentionally'. Also disturbance of bats can be anywhere, not just at a roost. Damage or destruction of a bat roost does not require the offence to be intentional or deliberate.

Countryside and Rights of Way (CROW) Act (2000)

Part III Nature conservation and wildlife protection

74 Conservation of biological diversity

- (1) It is the duty of (a) any Minister of the Crown (within the meaning of the Ministers of the [1975 c. 26.] Crown Act 1975), (b) any Government department, and (c) the National Assembly for Wales, in carrying out his or its functions, to have regard, so far as is consistent with the proper exercise of those functions, to the purpose of conserving biological diversity in accordance with the Convention.

SCHEDULE 12 AMENDMENTS RELATING TO PART I OF WILDLIFE AND COUNTRYSIDE ACT 1981

1. In section 1(5) of the 1981 Act (offence of intentional disturbance of wild birds) after "intentionally" there is inserted "or recklessly".

The Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act (2006)

PART 3, (40): Duty to conserve biodiversity

- (1) 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 conserving biodiversity.
- (3) Conserving biodiversity includes, in relation to a living organism or type of habitat, restoring or enhancing a population or habitat.