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

Reasonable Avoidance and Mitigation Measures

Ribble Valley Council Offices,
Church Walk,
Clitheroe,
BB7 2RA

28.06.2024

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Executive summary

In June 2023 Batworker consultancy was commissioned to undertake a survey of Ribble Valley Council Offices, Church Walk, Clitheroe, BB7 2RA to assess the potential for proposed installation of solar panels to impact on protected species.

A preliminary bat roost assessment survey was carried out on 15th June 2024

The building, when assessed in combination with location and surrounding habitat, was observed to have a negligible to low level of bat roost potential.

An emergence survey carried out on 15th June 2024 recorded no bats emerging from the building, bat activity was limited to a single pass of a Soprano Pipistrelle from the north heading south. Timing of activity was suggestive of a bat commuting from a distant roost to forage.

Survey effort is considered appropriate to characterise the roost potential of the building and that the presence of a significant or low conservation value bat roost is unlikely.

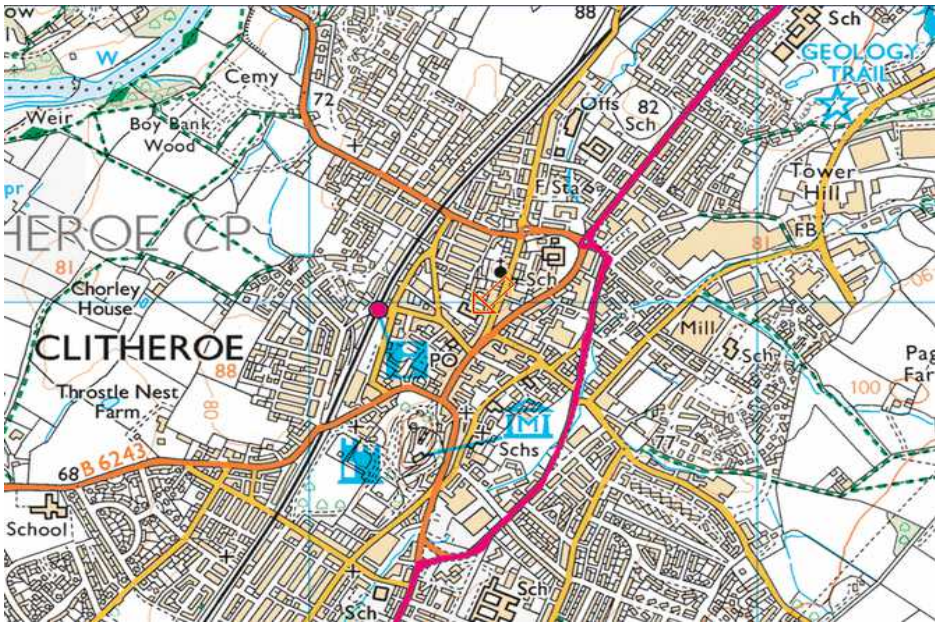
"The presence of a significant bat roost (invariably a maternity roost) can normally be determined on a single visit at any time of year, provided that the entire structure is accessible and that any signs of bats have not been removed by others". - Mitchell-Jones, A (2004) Bat mitigation guidelines.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

It is considered unlikely that significant or low conservation value roosts are present within the building, however given the building offers low potential and the opportunistic nature of Pipistrelle bats it is recommended that proposed works to construct a rear extension are carried out under supervision.

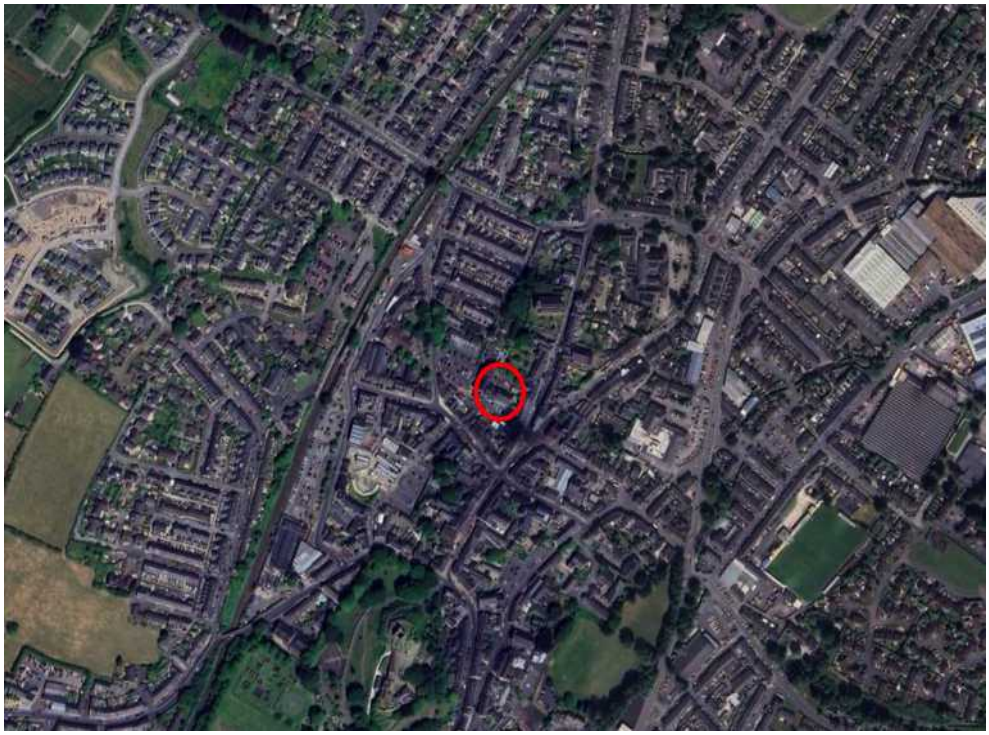
The overall purpose of the Method Statement is to ensure that bats and their roosts are fully protected to ensure the 'favourable conservation status of the species'.

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
Ribble Valley Council Offices, Church Walk, Clitheroe, BB7 2RA
NGR: SD7436141971



Surrounding Habitat



The property is located in an urban position in the centre of Clitheroe with surrounding habitat limited to mature domestic gardens and some scattered deciduous tree cover. Street lighting is likely to have a considerable negative effect on bat activity.

Connectivity to the wider landscape is poor. Bat foraging potential is 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.

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**
Preliminary Roost Assessment	15.06.2024	1 Hour
Emergence Survey	15.06.2024	2 Hours

Survey constraints

Access to all areas of the interior and exterior of the building 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 Roost Assessment

The property consists of a four storey stone built office complex with double pitched and single pitched slate roofs, a single storey extension adjoins the barn to the rear.

External walls are generally well pointed with no obvious cracks, gaps ore crevices present. Areas of hanging slates are present on some gable ends, however slates are generally close fitting..

Roof slates are generally close fitting with no obvious missing, lifted or slipped slates present. Ridge tiles are generally pointed sealed.

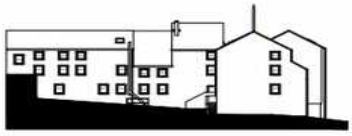
The building was assessed as offering negligible to low bat roost potential when surrounding habitat was taken into consideration.

Proposed Works

South West Elevation

South East Elevation

North West Elevation



North East Elevation

Proposed works consist of installation of solar panels to west and east facing roof aspects.

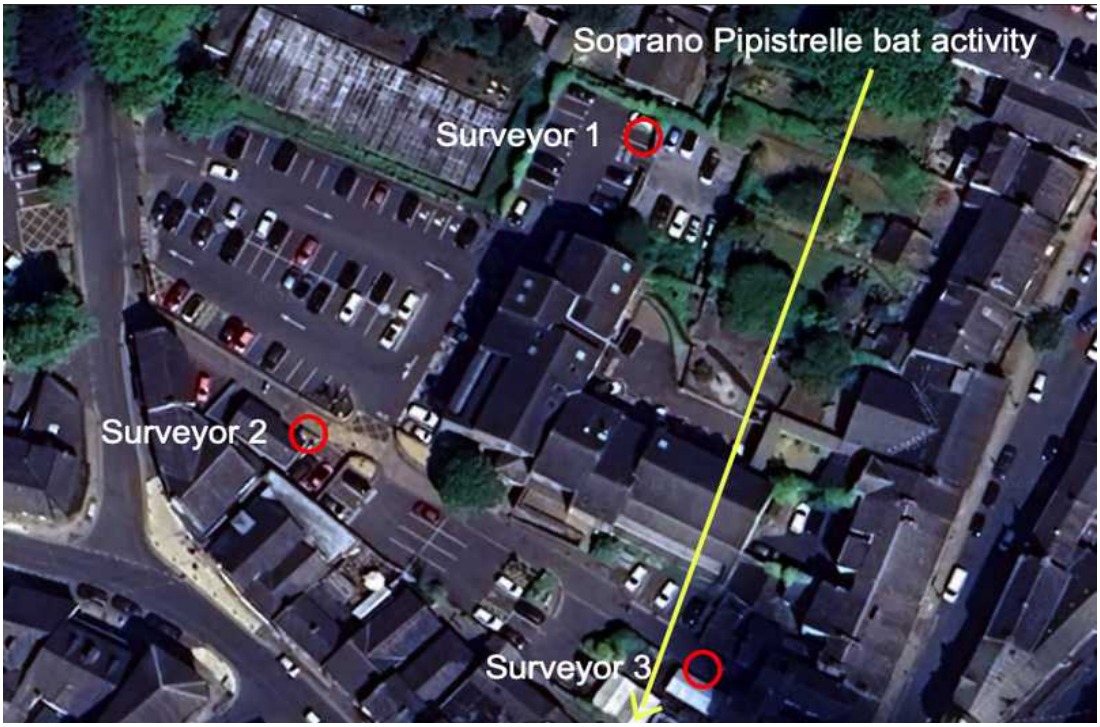
Emergence Survey 15th June 2024

Start Temp: 15.3c Finish Temp: 14.1c
50% Cloud Cover. Wind: Bft 0. Precipitation 0
Start: 21.25 Sunset: 21.43 Finish: 23.15

Surveyor points equipped with Anabat Walkabout, Anabat Scout and Echometer Pro full spectrum bat detectors were positioned around the building to monitor for emerging bats.

Recorded bat calls were analysed post survey using Anabat Insight software.

No bats were recorded emerging from the building and general bat activity was low with a single Soprano Pipistrelle observed commuting across the site from north to south at 22.42.



Survey Summary

Interpretation of results

A preliminary bat roost assessment survey was carried out on 15th June 2024

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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.

Common and soprano pipistrelle bats are considered an opportunistic species and it is possible for individuals to be found during works, even where surveys have had negative results during preliminary and activity surveys.

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.

Timing of works – Work should take place following a night temperature of 5c

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

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

In the unlikely event bats are found during works. The area should be carefully covered and work stop until the batworker can attend to assess the appropriate way forward.

A compensatory bat box (Greenwood Eco Habitats two crevice box) will be placed on site prior to work commencing. Bat boxes will remain on site as part of proposed biodiversity enhancement.

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.