

Preliminary Bat Roost Assessment Report

**Sandrock,
Avenue Road,
Hurst Green,
Clitheroe, BB7 9QB**

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Summary

In August 2024 Batworker consultancy was commissioned to undertake a survey of Sandrock, Avenue Road, Hurst Green, Clitheroe, BB7 9QB to assess the potential for use by bats and breeding birds.

A daytime survey was carried out on 29th August 2024 to support residential development plans to extend the property. A two storey extension is proposed for the northern gable end.

Whilst a Pipistrelle bat roost has been identified using the south western gable, proposed works are located in an area of the building unlikely to disturb the roost with suitable avoidance measures.

No evidence was observed to suggest use of the building by nesting birds.

No evidence was recorded to suggest bats were roosting within the proposed affected area of the building.

The surveyor considers survey effort to be reasonable to assess the roost potential of the building 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 August 2024 Batworker consultancy was commissioned to undertake a survey of Sandrock, Avenue Road, Hurst Green, Clitheroe, BB7 9QB 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 SD6836038286

Site Description

The property consists of a stone built single and two storey house with double pitched slate roofs. A conservatory is present to the rear.

External walls are well pointed and partially rendered with no obvious cracks, gaps or crevices suitable for roosting bats. Eaves are pointed and well sealed. Loft space above the single storey section is insulated and roof slates are lined with a bituminous roofing felt. Roof slates are close fitting, with no lifted, slipped or missing slates present. The ridge is pointed and sealed.

Gaps are present behind soffits on the southwestern gable end.



Pre Existing data on local bat species

A search of the MAGIC (www.magic.gov.uk) 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, 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 semi rural position with surrounding habitat a mosaic of mature domestic gardens, improved and semi improved grassland with some hedgerow and scattered tree cover present on field boundaries, semi natural deciduous woodland and ancient woodland.

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

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	29.08.2024	1 Hour

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 location 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

Droppings were observed adhering to the wall below gaps in the soffits on the southwestern gable end. Droppings were consistent with Pipistrellus sp bats returning to roost.

No evidence to suggest use of the single storey northern section of the property was recorded and the northern gable was observed to be well sealed.

Visual Inspection – Nesting birds

No evidence to suggest use by nesting birds was recorded.

Evaluation of the results

A daytime survey was carried out on 29th August 2024 to support residential development plans to extend the property. A two storey extension is proposed for the northern gable end.

Whilst a Pipistrelle bat roost has been identified using the south western gable, proposed works are located in an area of the building unlikely to disturb the roost with suitable avoidance measures.

Given the location of the identified bat roost, the distance and separation to the proposed development, it is considered that the development proposals do not risk negative impacts on roosting bats if suitable avoidance measures are adopted..



Proposed plans showing location of roost.

Conclusion

No evidence was observed to suggest use of the building by nesting birds.

No evidence was recorded to suggest bats were roosting within the proposed affected area of the building.

The surveyor considers survey effort to be reasonable to assess the roost potential of the building 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.

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.

Precautionary 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.

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 will take place following an evening temperature of +5c

Scaffolding should avoid the southwestern gable end to ensure flightlines from and to the identified bat roost remain clear.

Work to affected roof areas will take place with the batworker 'on call'.

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

A compensatory bat box (Two Greenwood Eco Habitats two crevice box) will be placed on site prior to work commencing and will be used in an emergency to house any bats found during works.

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.

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 4 th Edition	Bat Conservation Trust 2023
Bat Workers Manual 3 rd 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.