

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

Reasonable Avoidance and Mitigation Measures

**Agricultural Outbuildings at Meregill Farm,
Holden Lane,
Bolton by Bowland,
BB7 4LZ**

13.07.2023



**Report prepared by:
Dave Anderson
Batworker.com**



Executive summary

In May 2023 Batworker consultancy was commissioned to undertake a survey of agricultural outbuildings at Meregill Farm, Holden Lane, Bolton by Bowland, BB7 4LZ to assess the potential for impact on protected species to support a proposed residential development

A preliminary bat roost assessment survey was carried out on 9th May 2023. The building, when assessed in combination with location and surrounding habitat was observed to have a negligible to low level of bat roost potential.

No physical evidence to suggest use by bats was observed during the preliminary assessment.

No nesting birds were observed during surveys.

14 nights of static bat detector monitoring were carried out between the 9th and 24th May 2023 to support the preliminary bat roost assessment, no bats were recorded at times consistent with bats emerging from a roost during the survey period.

Bat activity was limited to low levels of Common Pipistrelle foraging activity (< 5 bat passes) typically between midnight and 1am suggesting bats travelling from distant roosts to forage.

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

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.

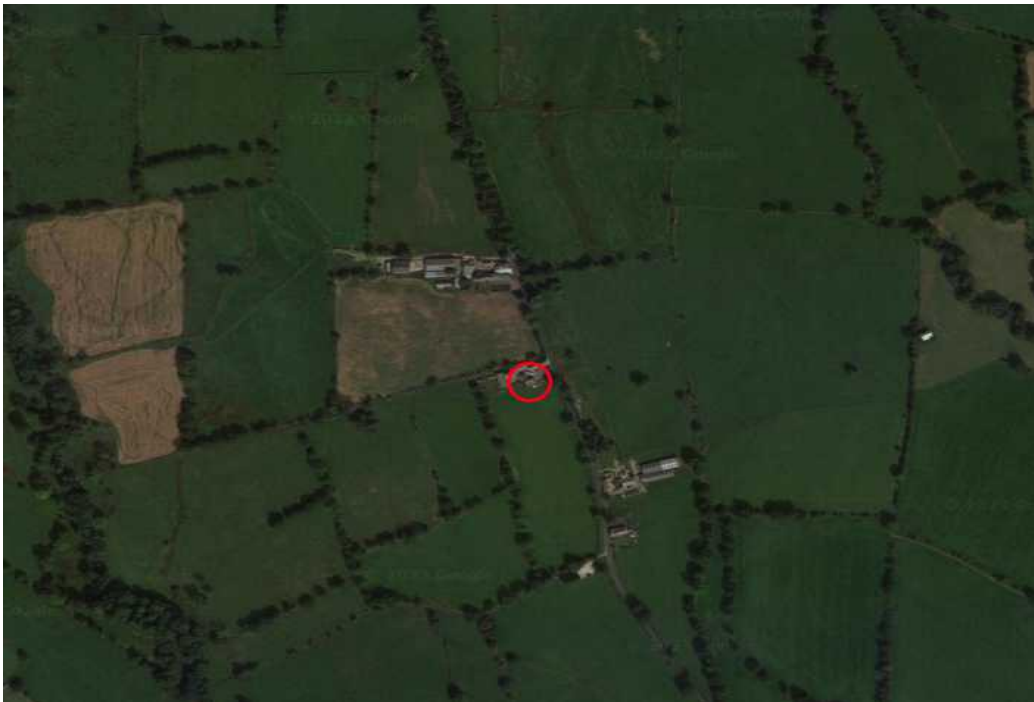
Compensatory bat boxes recommended within the method statement provide a sufficient level of biodiversity enhancement commensurate with the development.

Site Location

Meregill Farm, Holden Lane, Bolton by Bowland, BB7 4LZ
NGR: SD7640051189



Surrounding Habitat



The property is located in a rural position with surrounding habitat dominated by improved and semi improved grassland with hedgerow and scattered semi natural deciduous tree cover present on field boundaries. An area of semi natural deciduous tree cover is located to the west.

Connectivity to the wider landscape is moderate. 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.gov 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). Sharon Anderson, an experienced bat worker.

Survey Summary

Survey	Date	Timings
Preliminary Roost Assessment	09.05.2023	1 Hour
Static Bat Detector Monitoring	09 - 24.05.2023	Sunset to sunrise

Survey constraints

Access to all areas of the 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.

Preliminary Roost Assessment

The property consists of detached single storey brick built agricultural outbuildings with double pitched slate roofs. A single skin corrugated metal leant to and corrugated metal roofed outbuilding adjoin the two outbuildings.

Walls are generally well pointed, with no obvious cracks, gaps or crevices. Gable ends are pointed and well sealed at wall top level. Interior wall tops are open and exposed.

Roof slates are generally close fitting, with no lifted, slipped or missing slates present. The ridge is sealed and exposed to the interior. Roof slates are unlined and exposed to the interior.

The property was assessed as offering negligible to low bat roost potential. No physical evidence to suggest use by bats was recorded



Nesting Bird Survey

No nesting birds were observed using the building.

Static Bat Detector Monitoring Survey 9th to 24th May 2023

An Anabat static bat detector, programmed to record bat activity from 30 minutes before sunset to 30 minutes post sunrise, was placed within the outbuilding.

Recordings were analysed post survey using AnaloekW software to carry out species identification and confirm timings of recordings.

No bat activity was recorded during the survey period at times consistent with bats emerging from a roost.

Bat activity was limited to low levels of Common Pipistrelle foraging activity (< 5 bat passes) typically between midnight and 1am suggesting bats travelling from distant roosts to forage.

Interpretation of results

A preliminary bat roost assessment survey was carried out on 9th May 2023. The building, when assessed in combination with location and surrounding habitat was observed to have a negligible to low level of bat roost potential.

No physical evidence to suggest use by bats was observed during the preliminary assessment.

No nesting birds were observed during surveys.

14 nights of static bat detector monitoring were carried out between the 9th and 24th May 2023 to support the preliminary bat roost assessment, no bats were recorded at times consistent with bats emerging from a roost during the survey period.

Bat activity was limited to low levels of Common Pipistrelle foraging activity (< 5 bat passes) typically between midnight and 1am suggesting bats travelling from distant roosts to forage.

Survey effort is considered appropriate to characterise the roost potential of building and that the presence of a significant or low conservation value 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 reasonable avoidance measures contained within this method statement and the placement of bat boxes for biodiversity enhancement offers an appropriate approach to the proposed development whilst ensuring the continuing ecological functionality of the site.

Impact Assessment

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

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.

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

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

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

Roof slates should be removed by hand 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.

One 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.