Whins Lane, Read

Preliminary Roost Assessment (Bats) Survey Report

Compiled by Ecology Services Ltd.

on behalf of

Mr. M. Pollard

October 2024

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1.0 Introduction

1.1 Ecology Services Limited was commissioned by Mr. M Pollard in September 2024 to undertake a Preliminary Roost Assessment (PRA) of one building at Land off Whins Lane, Read, Burley, BB12 7RB hereinafter referred to as 'the site'. The centre of the site is located by National Grid Reference (NGR) SD 76608 35033. The location of the site is shown on Figure 1.

Site Description

1.2 The site is located to the north of the village of Read, Burnley. The site is a farm which comprises the barn (Building 1) and multiple other stone buildings and agricultural buildings within a yard. There are fields to the east, west and south with Whins Lane directly to the north with residential properties beyond.

Proposals

1.3 It is understood that proposed development activities at the site include the conversion of the barn (Building 1). The development plans have not been finalised at the time of the survey.

Survey Objectives

1.4 The aim of the preliminary roost assessment was to:

- Undertake a visual inspection of the site to establish baseline conditions;
- Complete an assessment to ascertain if potential or evidence of use existed for bat species; and
- Determine if there are requirements for further and/or more detailed surveys.
- Consider the temperature and humidity conditions likely to be present within the structure during the winter period and the suitability in this respect for it to be used by hibernating bats.

1.5 The purpose of this report is to state the survey methodology, present the results of the survey, evaluate the findings, assess the impacts of the proposals and make recommendations concerning the protection of bat species that may be present at this site. Where possible the report will aim to provide sufficient information to allow a local authority to assess fully the potential impacts of the proposed development on roosting bats.

2.0 Planning Policy and Legislation

2.1 This section provides a brief overview of planning policy and legislation relevant to bats in the England. Further information is provided in Appendix 1.

Planning Policy

2.2 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF, 2023) places a clear responsibility on Local Planning Authorities (LPAs) to contribute to conserving and enhancing the natural and local environment. LPAs should promote the conservation, restoration and enhancement of priority habitats, ecological networks and the protection and recovery of priority species (e.g. Species of Principal importance, Local Biodiversity Action Plan species); and identify and pursue opportunities for securing measurable net gains for biodiversity. In accordance with the NPPF, local planning policy and guidance, development proposals should provide integrated improvement for biodiversity at the site and seek to maintain and enhance opportunities for bats. The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM) Circular 06/2005 provides administrative guidance on the application of the law in relation to planning and nature conservation.

2.3 Protected species within England, such as bats, are a 'material consideration' in the determination of a planning application. Therefore, an LPA is unlikely to determine an application until all relevant information relating to protected species or habitats is submitted to fully inform the application. Relevant information includes adequate surveys and, where required, mitigation strategies, which will need to be submitted to inform a planning application.

2.4 The local planning authority (LPA) has a duty to ensure that protected and priority species (e.g. Species of Principal Importance, Biodiversity Action Plan species) are fully considered in a planning decision. Therefore, up to date survey information and, where required, mitigation strategies adequate to assess the impacts of the proposals and to demonstrate that opportunities for species using the site can be maintained, must be provided in support of a planning application.

Legislation

2.5 All bats and their roosts receive strict protection under the Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) and the Conservation of Habitats & Species Regulations 2017 (as amended)[1]. In brief, this legislation makes it an offence to: kill, injure or capture a bat; to destroy, damage or obstruct access to a bat roost; or to disturb a bat occupying a roost. A Local Authority is a 'competent authority' within the context of Regulation 7 of the Conservation of Habitats & Species Regulations 2017 (as amended) when dealing with planning applications where a European Protected Species (EPS) (all bat species) may be affected. Therefore, planning decisions should only be made when European Protected Species and their habitats are fully taken into account.,

2.6 Where proposed works are likely to contravene the legislation protecting bats, a Natural England licence must be applied for, and approved, before works can proceed.

2.7 Section 40 of the Natural Environmental and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006 (as amended) places a statutory duty on public authorities, in exercising their functions, to further the conservation and enhancement of biodiversity in England. Species of Principal Importance for the conservation or enhancement of biodiversity in England, identified by the Secretary of State in consultation with Natural England, are listed under Section 41 of the NERC Act. The Local Planning Authority and government bodies (e.g. Natural England) will expect the overall design of the development to further the conservation and enhancement of populations of these species. Seven bat species are listed as 'Species of Principal Importance' under Section 41 of the NERC Act 2006 (as amended):

- Noctule (*Nyctalus noctula*)
- Soprano pipistrelle (*Pipistrellus pygmaeus*)
- Lesser horseshoe (*Rhinolophus hipposideros*)
- Greater horseshoe (*Rhinolophus ferrumequinum*)
- Barbastelle (*Barbastella barbastellus*)
- Bechstein's (*Myotis bechsteinii*)
- Brown long-eared (*Plecotus auritus*)

[1] The Conservation of Habitats and Species (Amendment) (EU Exit) Regulations 2019 continue the same provision for European protected species, licensing requirements and protected areas after Brexit.

3.0 Methodology

Desktop Study

3.1 Ecological data and records searches were undertaken by contacting the sources listed in Table 1.

Table 1: Ecological Desktop Study Sources

Source of information	Information supplied
Local Biodiversity Action Plan (LBAP)	Identification of LBAP species known to occur in the region.
Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006 (as amended)	Review of Species of Principal Importance known to occur in the region.
Multi Agency Geographical Information for the Countryside (MAGIC) website	Statutory protected sites designated for their bat interest within 2km of the site. Records of bat roosts relating to Natural England EPS licences within 2km of the site.
National Biodiversity Network (NBN) Atlas	Records of bats and bat roosts within 5km of the site.

Core Sustenance Zones (CSZs)

3.2 CSZs provide an outline idea of the potential distances that particular species may be present. They are defined as the area surrounding a communal bat roost within which habitat availability and quality will have a significant influence and the resilience and conservation status of the colony using the roost. CSZ's are very species specific with some species better studied than others and where they are known, are used to help define the Zone of Influence (ZoI) of a project, assist in consideration of impacts and guide mitigation.

3.3 Data search areas have been determined based upon the Core Sustenance Zones of bats that may potentially be present within the site and the immediate surrounding habitats.

3.4 No site-specific data search has been undertaken for bats. In some cases, for Preliminary Roost Assessments of buildings in low impact / small-scale scenarios, such as an extension to a residential property, loft conversions (full or partial), installation of Velux/dormer windows, single modern agricultural or similar building conversion or demolition, it may be acceptable to not undertake a data search with the Local Environmental Records Centre or other relevant sources (CIEEM, 2020). In this instance a data search was not considered necessary due to the small-scale nature of the proposed development.

Preliminary Roost Assessment Survey

3.5 Each building was categorised according to its level of suitability; any evidence of roosting bats found during the inspection and suitability and quality of the surrounding habitat (see Appendix 2, Table 4.1).

3.6 The preliminary roost assessment followed the methodology set out in the Bat Conservation Trust's 'Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines' (2023).

3.7 An interior and exterior inspection of the building was undertaken to search for any potential roosting features and evidence of roosting bats. Signs surveyed for included droppings, dead bats, feeding remains (beetle, moth and butterfly remains), urine staining and grease marks around crevices and down walls, odour (ammonia type smell) and any noises such as scratching and audible bat calls. An Explorer Premium 8803AL (9mm) endoscope and a ladder were used to check accessible features. A Clulite Long Ranger LED Pistol Light (1200

lumens) and close focusing binoculars were used to better assess any features of interest not accessible. High resolution photographs were taken for later review.

Buildings

3.8 Preliminary roost assessments of buildings and structures can be undertaken at any of the year and can provide conclusive results, which can save expense and time for a planning applicant. The optimum time to investigate the presence of bats is usually during their active season when signs of presence can be more easily located, although this is dependent on the type of roost being inspected.

Personnel

3.9 The PRA inspection survey was undertaken by Senior Consultant Ecologist Miss C. Wood MSc, BSc (Hons), ACIEEM who holds a Bat Class Licence Level 1 (Registration number 2021-51184-CLS-CLS)

Timing

3.10 The PRA inspection survey was conducted on the 10th October 2024.

3.11 The daytime survey was conducted at a time when bats are entering their mating season and building up fat reserves in preparation for hibernation. Evidence of bat occupation is likely to be detected, should they be present at the site

Weather Conditions

3.12 Weather conditions during the survey were reasonable being warm (sunset temperature 10°C or above) with no appreciable rain or wind affecting survey.

Roost Status

3.13 If evidence of a bat roost is recorded during the surveys, the status of the roost is evaluated based on its function. This requires sufficient survey effort to determine the species and numbers of roosting bats present, the time of year that the roost is used and characteristics of the roost itself. The Bat Conservation Trust's 'Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines' details types of bat roosts which may be defined in several ways, as below:

- Day roost – where individual bats or small groups of males, rest or shelter in the day.
- Night roost – where bats rest or shelter in the night but are rarely found during the day.
- Feeding roost – where individual or few bat/s rest or feed during the night.
- Transitional/occasional roost – used for short periods of time by few or occasionally small groups of bats on waking or prior to the hibernation period.
- Swarming site – large numbers of males and females gather during late summer to autumn.
- Mating sites – where mating takes place from late summer and through winter.
- Maternity roost – where females give birth and raise their young.
- Hibernation roost - where bats may be found during winter. To have a constant cool temperature with high humidity.
- Satellite roost – an alternative roost used by individual to small numbers of breeding females over the breeding season. Usually close to main nursery colony.

3.14 Roost selection is often closely correlated with presence of suitable foraging habitat within a reasonable commuting distance from the roost. Different roost sites are used throughout the active season which is most dependent upon roost microclimate and abundance of

invertebrate prey nearby. Weather conditions can also affect the ability of bats to successfully forage. All British bats are insectivorous.

Limitations

3.15 Internal access into some of the hayloft/loft areas of the building were not gained due to health and safety concerns. One room was deemed unsafe to enter due to the condition of the ceiling and a pile of rubble in the entrance. They were viewed from a ladder/the door with binoculars and a torch and photographs were taken for later examination. Therefore, a full internal inspection of the building was not completed.

3.16 Overall, there are limitations to the survey undertaken and these have been taken into consideration when conclusions, impacts and recommendations have been made.

4.0 Results and Evaluation

Desktop Study

National Status

4.1 There are 18 species of bat that are native to the United Kingdom. The latest Review of the Conservation Status of British Mammals (2018) has shown that where change could be assessed with reasonable confidence there have been increases in the geographical range and population status of two species of UK bat (greater and lesser horseshoe bat) and decrease in the geographical range of one species (grey long-eared bat (*Plecotus austriacus)*).

4.2 Increases in population were also identified in the following species: Bechstein's, Daubenton's (*Myotis daubentoniid*), Natterers (*Myotis nattereri*), serotine (*Eptesicus serotinus)* and brown long-eared although it is noted that the reliability of the results is poor.

4.3 Population data was not available for; Alcathoe (*Myotis alcathoe*), whiskered (*Myotis mystacinus*), Brandt's (*Myotis brandti*), Leisler's (*Nyctalus leisleri*), noctule, Barbastelle and Nathusius pipistrelle (*Pipistrellus nathusii*).

4.4 Population estimates were given for common pipistrelle (*Pipistrellus* p*ipistrellus*) and soprano pipistrelle however could not be reliably compared to the results from Harris et al. (1995) as the two species had not been identified as separate species at the time of the survey. Pipistrelle species (*Pipistrellus spp.*) remain the commonest species of bat in the UK.

4.5 Serotine and barbastelle are considered vulnerable and Leisler's and Nathusius' pipistrelle, near threatened in Britain and England in the Red List for Britain's Terrestrial Mammals (Mathews and Harrower, 2020).

Regional Status

4.6 The north west of England appears to be a stronghold for Whiskered and Brandt's, both of which are reasonably rare in southern England.

Local Status

4.7 The Lancashire Local Biodiversity Action Plan (LBAP) lists eight bat species recognised as being resident in Lancashire (refer to Appendix 4) in a combined species action plan.

Designated Sites

4.8 There are no statutory or non-statutory protected sites designated on the basis of their interest for bats that are located within the vicinity of the site and which could be adversely affected by the proposed development of the site.

Records Data Search

4.9 Records of European Protected Species mitigation licences for bats in the area surrounding the site include a licence 2015-10582-EPS-MIT relating to destruction of a resting place for common pipistrelle and whiskered bat pertaining to a location approximately 320m west of the site, dated between 2015 and 2016. A second licence 2017-31537-EPS-MIT relating to destruction of a resting place for common pipistrelle pertaining to a location approximately 1.9km north west of the site dating from 2017-2022.

Preliminary Roost Assessment

Habitat Assessment

4.10 The site is located in a rural location to the north of the village of Read. The building is surrounded by other agricultural buildings of the farm with fields beyond, to the east, west and south and Whins Lane directly adjacent to the north, with residential houses and fields beyond. The fields in the wider landscape contain scattered trees, watercourses and woodland.

4.11 Land surrounding the site comprises residential properties along Whins Lane which runs east to west with agricultural land beyond with scattered trees, hedgerows, watercourses and ponds. There is an area of woodland approximately 40m north of the site across Whins Lane and other areas of woodland in the wider landscape to the south, north and west within 2km.The River Calder is located 1.4km south. These areas are likely to provide very good quality foraging habitat and other roosting opportunities for bats. Buildings along Whins Lane, and farm buildings and houses to the south-west of the site are also likely to provide roosting opportunities bats.

4.12 Overall, habitats within the immediate and wider surrounds of the surveyed buildings are considered of moderate value for foraging and commuting bats. Where suitable habitats are present in close proximity to buildings then there is generally an increased use of these for roost sites due to a higher abundance of food and better access to food sources.

Building

4.13 A description of the building can be found in the Table 2 below and overleaf. Photos of buildings/structure with annotations showing locations of potential roosting features are provided in Appendix 5.

Table 2: Description of Building

Building 1
Description:
A two-storey stone barn with pitched and intersecting hipped roof on the eastern elevation. The roof is comprised of stone tiles with skylights and chimneys. The doors and windows are wooden with some wooden and some stone lintels. Some of the windows were open at the time of the survey. There was plastic guttering with wooden fascia on the eastern elevation. Some holes have been dug around the outside of the building resulting in piles of earth/stone. Internally the main barn area is open up to the roof, which has no felt and there are holes where there are slipped/missing tiles. The roof structure is a mixture of metal and wooden beams, with

wooden battens. Some of the battens are rotting away. The building feels and smells damp. There is evidence that the barn was used for hay/silage/straw storage. The walls are stone and brick. There are four smaller rooms within the barn and two second storey areas. The rooms were all light from windows with evidence of use by livestock. The southeastern room has brick and concrete walls, concrete floor and wooden boarded ceiling with some missing along with metal beams. There is an external door on the southern elevation. The southern room has brick and concrete walls, some rendered with boarded ceiling and concrete floor. The room was very light with windows and an external door to the south. The north eastern room is small and dark, access was limited due to a hole in the floor and pile of rubble outside. The western room runs the length of the barn and had brick and concrete walls and a concrete floor with windows on the western elevation and an external door on the southern. The ceiling was wooden boards. There are two hayloft areas accessible via ladder form the main barn area. There was no access to the second floor above the room in the south east of the building. Parts of the floor within the barn have been recently dug up and there are piles of rubble and holes, some containing water.
Roost potential signs:
Externally, there are missing and slipped rooftiles on both elevations along with missing mortar and lifted ridge tiles. There are gaps around the skylights and chimneys. There are gaps in the stone work on all elevations. There were gaps around the window lintels on the western, southern and eastern elevations. On the eastern elevation there are small gaps under the wooden fascia boards with the guttering. On the southern and northern elevations there are gaps under the tiles. Some of the windows were open on the western, southern and eastern elevations. Internally, the smaller rooms offer limited potential for roosting bats. The main barn area has some gaps in the stonework and gaps between the wooden beams of the roof, which may provide roosting potential. There was debris on the ground showing the building had not been cleaned prior to arrival. No droppings or any other evidence of the presence of bats was identified which suggested present or historic use. The building is considered to have **moderate** potential for roosting bats.

4.14 An assessment of the winter roosting potential has been undertaken as detailed in Collins (2023).

4.15 An assessment of the winter roosting potential has been undertaken as detailed in Collins (2023). Building 1 is not a typical 'classic' roosting site. It is not occupied and at the time of the survey was damp and cool. Features exist on both the external and internal portions of the building (namely gaps in stonework) that are accessible to small numbers of bats, which could occupy any given feature during the winter period. Whilst it is entirely possible that bats, particularly pipistrelle species could unexpectedly be present (Korsten et al., 2015), the potential is considered to be **low to moderate**.

Summary and Evaluation

4.16 The preliminary roost assessment found Building 1 to contain **moderate** bat roost potential when considering the presence of potential roosting features, as noted within Table 2. Building 1 was assessed as having **low to moderate** winter roost suitability.

4.17 Habitats within the immediate and wider surrounds are considered to be of moderate value for foraging and commuting bats.

4.18 No evidence of past or present use of the building by roosting bats was identified.

5.0 Impacts and Recommendations

Buildings

5.1 The results of the surveys at land of Whins Lane, Read have found Building 1 to contain **moderate** potential for bat species. Therefore, there may be implications with regard to bats and the proposed development and further presence/ absence surveys are/were required to establish if bats are using these buildings.

Further Survey Requirements

5.2 The Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines produced by the Bat Conservation Trust (Collins, 2023), recommends timings and a minimum number of visits for presence/ absence surveys to give confidence in a negative result for structures (and trees although unlikely to give confidence in a negative result). These are determined by the level of suitability assigned to each individual building/structure or tree as set out below (see Appendix 4 for the full table). Presence/ absence surveys are normally undertaken at dusk (roost re-entry surveys prior to dawn risk missing bats returning early to roosts).

- For buildings with **moderate** roost suitability; two separate survey visits are required to determine the presence or absence of bats. Surveys should be undertaken between May to September, with at least one survey to be undertaken between May and August. Surveys should be spaced at least three weeks apart, preferably more.

5.3 If bats are discovered emerging from any of the buildings during the surveys, then the survey schedule should be reviewed and if required appropriately adjusted to ensure that sufficient information can be collected. A minimum of three presence/ absence surveys will be required to apply for a Natural England Licence.

5.4 Surveys should be an iterative process with each previous survey informing the subsequent one. The number of survey visits could therefore be adjusted (up or down), if necessary, depending upon site-specific circumstances.

5.5 Presence/ absence surveys are required to gather specific information over the active bat season. Several visits are required as bats, particularly pipistrelle, often have more than one roost and do not necessarily occupy a single roost over the entire active season. The survey visits will need to be spaced out over the active season.

5.6 If the works require planning approval, the Local Planning Authority will require the results of the presence/ absence surveys/ PRF or emergence surveys (where required) in support of any Planning Application, in line with current Planning Policy whether bats are present or absent.

5.7 If a bat roost/s is/are located during the survey work then an outline mitigation scheme will also be required to support a planning application to ensure that there is no detrimental effect upon roosting bats. Furthermore, work at the site could be delayed until such time that a Natural England Licence is applied for and granted to legally permit work to commence which would affect bats or their roost.

5.8 A Natural England licence can only be applied for once planning permission is gained, if planning permission is required. Natural England, the licensing authority, will require the

species, numbers and use of a roost to be ascertained before granting a licence and there may be delays in obtaining a Licence and time constraints as to when mitigation can be undertaken.

5.9 Building 1 has been assessed as having low to moderate hibernation bat roost potential and further surveys to determine how thermally suitable the building is for winter roosting bats is required. Data loggers shall be deployed within the barn and left in situ to record the temperature and humidity of the lofts during the coldest months of the year, December to February inclusive. This will allow an assessment of how stable the potential roosting environment is and whether hibernation compensation is required. Automated/static bat detectors shall also be deployed in the barn during this time. These shall be deployed each month between November and March and will be in situ for a minimum of two weeks per survey.

Other: Breeding Birds

5.10 The site also contains suitable breeding bird habitat.

5.11 The Wildlife and Countryside Act (WCA) 1981 (as amended) states that all wild birds are protected at all times against killing or injury. Under the WCA, it is an offence to kill, injure or take any wild bird, to take damage or destroy the nest of any wild bird, or to take or destroy the egg of any wild bird. It is good practice to carry out any works outside of the breeding bird season that might affect nests and result in an offence being committed. The breeding bird season is generally considered to be between March to August inclusive.

5.12 It is good practice to remove all affected breeding bird habitat during the winter months prior to works starting to prevent delays. If suitable breeding bird habitat is affected during the breeding bird season, then an assessment by an Ecologist for breeding birds should be undertaken prior to works. If breeding birds are found, it is likely that works will have to be delayed until breeding has ceased.

6.0 Conclusion

6.1 To conclude, this report details the findings of the PRA survey that has been undertaken at this site. Building 1 was found to contain moderate potential to support roosting bats and low to moderate potential to support winter roosting bats and further presence/absence and hibernation surveys have been recommended as detailed in section 5.2 and 5.9 above.

6.2 All completed surveys have been undertaken by suitably experienced surveyors at the appropriate time of year and in line with current guidance.

6.3 It is noted that bats are mobile creatures and can form new roosts at any time if works are not started within one year of this report, then it may be necessary to repeat certain surveys.

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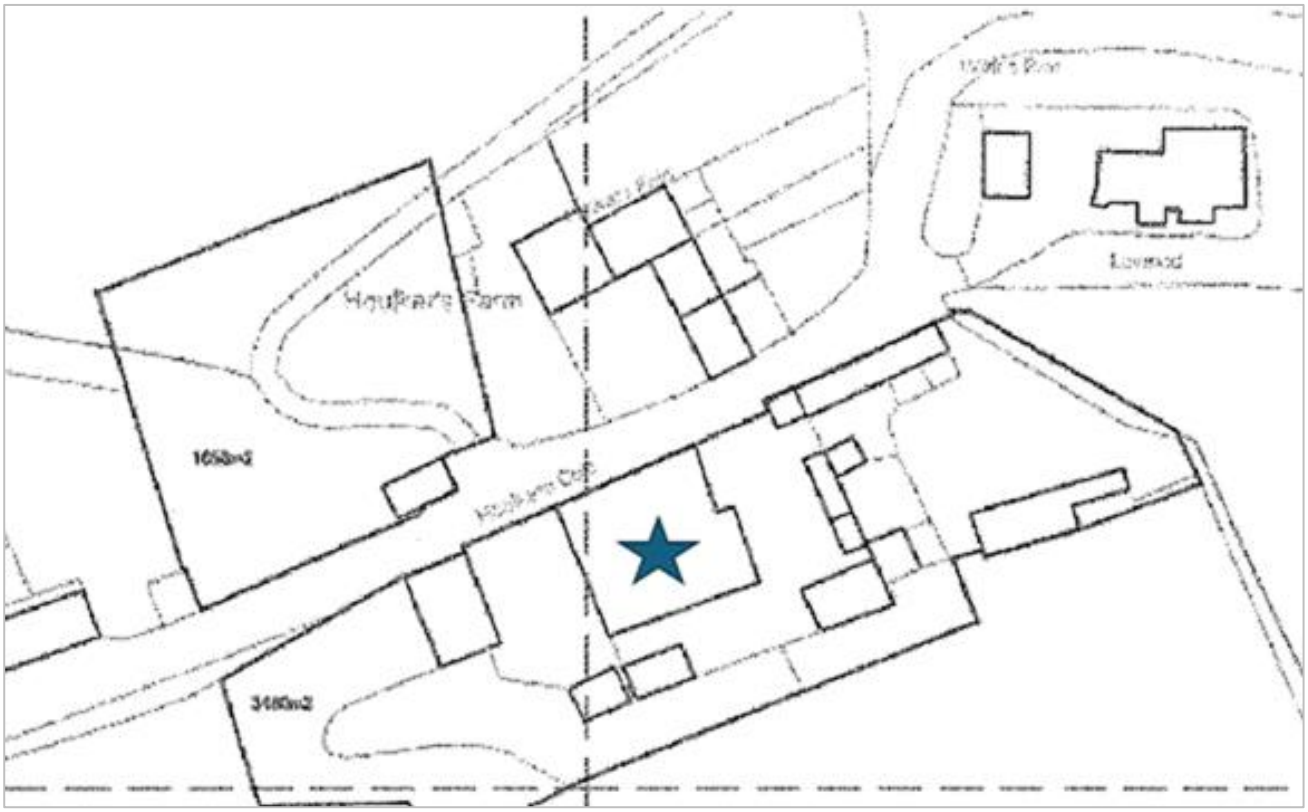
Figure 1:
Site Plan



Building 1

Appendix 1:
Planning Policy and Legislation

Disclaimer: Appendix 1 is a guide to legislation and procedure relating to biodiversity in England. It is general guidance and it does not give specific advice in relation to any site, species or project. It represents Ecology Services Ltd interpretation of legislation and procedure as at October 2024. Readers should note that legislation and procedure changes continually and is interpreted on a case-specific basis. Nothing in Appendix 1 should be construed as an offer of advice or legal opinion.

Planning Context

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF, 2023) places a clear responsibility on Local Planning Authorities (LPA) to contribute to conserving and enhancing the natural and local environment. LPAs should promote the conservation, restoration and enhancement of priority habitats, ecological networks and the protection and recovery of priority species (e.g. Species of Principal importance, Biodiversity Action Plan species); and identify and pursue opportunities for securing measurable net gains for biodiversity. The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM) Circular 06/2005 provides administrative guidance on the application of the law in relation to planning and nature conservation.

A Local Planning Authority (LPA) has a duty to ensure that protected species and habitats within the UK are a 'material consideration' in the determination of a planning application. Therefore, an LPA is unlikely to determine an application until all relevant information relating to protected species or habitats is submitted to fully inform the application. Relevant information includes adequate surveys and, where required, mitigation strategies, which will need to be submitted in support of a planning application.

Statutory Protection Afforded Bats

The Conservation of Habitats & Species Regulations 2017 (as amended), also known as the Habitats Regulations, lists all UK bat species on Schedule 2 which places an obligation to implement strict protection for these species. This legislation makes it an offence to:

- deliberately kill, injure or capture a wild bat;
- deliberately disturb* a bat;
- damage or destroy a breeding site or resting place of a bat.

*Disturbance, as defined by the Conservation of Habitats & Species Regulations 2017 (as amended), is that which is likely to:

- impair their ability –
  - to survive, to breed or reproduce, or to rear or nurture their young; or
  - in the case of animals of a hibernating or migratory species, to hibernate or migrate.
- affect significantly the local distribution or abundance of the species to which they belong.

The Conservation of Habitats and Species (Amendment) (EU Exit) Regulations 2019 continue the same provision for European protected species, licensing requirements and protected areas after Brexit.

All UK bats and their roosts are afforded further protection through their inclusion on Schedule 5 of the Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981 (as amended), which makes it an offence to:

- intentionally or recklessly disturb a bat while it is occupying a structure or place which it uses for shelter or protection;

- intentionally or recklessly obstruct access to a structure or place which a bat uses for shelter or protection.

Regulation 12 the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended) requires the appropriate authority in England and Wales to designate as Special Areas of Conservation such sites as the authority considers to be of national importance which contribute significantly to the maintenance, or restoration at favourable conservation status in the natural range of the species listed in Annex II of the EC Habitats Directive. Four bat species (greater horseshoe, lesser horseshoe, Bechstein's and barbastelle) are listed under Annex II.

When dealing with planning applications where a European Protected Species (EPS) (all UK bats) may be affected, a Local Authority is a 'competent authority' within the meaning of regulation 7 of the Conservation of Habitats & Species Regulations 2017 (as amended). The local authority must therefore exercise their functions under the provisions made within the 2017 Regulations (as amended), and planning decisions should only be made when European Protected Species and their habitats are fully taken into account.

Licensing of Works Affecting Roosting Bats

Where a bat roost is likely to be affected by development then a licence to derogate from the legal protection would be required. Licence applications are processed and issued by Natural England and can only be applied for once planning permission (if required) has been granted.

Natural England may grant a licence for the purposes specified in paragraph 55 of the Regulations. The purposes are:

- 55(2)(e) preserving public health or safety or other imperative reason of overriding public interest including those of a social or economic nature and beneficial consequence of primary importance for the environment.
- 55(2)(f) preventing the spread of disease.

Natural England must not grant a licence under paragraph 55 unless it is satisfied that:

- 55(9)(a) there is no satisfactory alternative; and
- 55(9)(b) the action authorised will not be detrimental to the maintenance of the population of the species concerned at a favourable status in their natural range.

In December 2016, Natural England introduced four policies for European Protected Species (EPS) licensing. The policies were revised in January 2022. The policies seek to achieve better outcomes for EPS and reduce unnecessary costs, delays and uncertainty that were inherent in the current system. In brief, the four policies are:

- **Policy 1.** Reduce mitigation measures for impacts on EPS
- **Policy 2.** Location of compensation habitats
- **Policy 3.** Let EPS use temporary habitats
- **Policy 4.** Alternative sources of evidence to reduce standard survey requirements

Policy 1 allows compensation for EPS impacts to be delivered without the need to relocate or exclude populations where: exclusion or relocation measures are not necessary to maintain the conservation status of the local population; the avoid-mitigate-compensate hierarchy is followed; and compensation provides greater benefits to the local population than would exclusion and/or relocation. This policy can be used to reduce mitigation measures, such as exclusion or relocation of EPS, by increasing compensation. This policy allows killing of EPS and destruction of their habitat without needing to exclude or relocate individual animals.

Policy 2 allows for the provision of off-site compensation measures where the licensing tests are met, the avoid-mitigate-compensate hierarchy is followed, there are good reasons for maximising development on the site of EPS impacts and where an off-site solution provides greater benefit to the local population than an on-site solution.

Policy 3 relates to developments, such as mineral extraction, which temporarily create habitat which is likely to attract EPS and enables works to proceed without the exclusion of EPS where the conservation status of the local population would not be detrimentally affected. On completion of development, such sites must contribute to the conservation status of the local population as much as or more than the land use which preceded development. The measures to achieve this should be set out in a management plan and secured by a legal agreement.

Under **Policy 4** Natural England may accept a lower than standard survey effort where: the costs or delays associated with carrying out standard survey requirements would be disproportionate to the additional certainty that it would bring; the ecological impacts of development can be predicted with sufficient certainty; and mitigation or compensation will ensure that the licensed activity does not detrimentally affect the conservation status of the local population of any EPS.

Natural Environmental and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006

Section 40 of the Natural Environmental and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006 (as amended) places a statutory duty on public authorities, in exercising their functions, to conserve and enhance biodiversity in England. Species of Principal Importance for the conservation of biodiversity in England, as identified by the Secretary of State in consultation with Natural England, are listed Section 41 of the NERC Act. The Local Planning Authority and government bodies (e.g. Natural England) will expect the overall design of the development to have regard for the conservation of these species. Seven bat species are listed as Species of Principal Importance under Section 41 of the NERC Act (refer to Section 2).

Appendix 2:

Guidelines for Assessing and Categorising Habitat & Roosting Suitability for Bats

Table 4.1. Guidelines for assessing the potential suitability of proposed development sites for bats, based on the presence of habitat features within the landscape, to be applied using professional judgement (Taken from the Bat Conservation Trust Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines, 2023).

Potential Suitability	Description	
	Roosting habitats in structures	**Potential flight-paths & foraging habitats**
None	No habitat features on site likely to be used by any roosting bats at any time of the year (i.e. a complete absence of crevices /suitable shelter at all ground/underground levels).	No habitat features on site likely to be used by any commuting or foraging bats at any time of the year (i.e. no habitats that provide continuous lines of shade/ protection for flight-lines, or generate/ shelter insect populations available to foraging bats).
Negligible[1]	No obvious habitat features on site likely to be used by roosting bats; however, a small element of uncertainty remains as bats can use small and apparently unsuitable features on occasion.	No obvious habitat features on site likely to be used as flight-paths or by foraging bats; however, a small element of uncertainty remains in order to account for non-standard bat behaviour.
Low	A structure with one or more potential roost sites that could be used by individual bats opportunistically, at any time of the year. However, these potential roost sites do not provide enough space, shelter, protection, appropriate conditions[2] and/or suitable surrounding habitat to be used on a regular basis or by larger numbers of bats (i.e. unlikely to be suitable for maternity and not a classic cool/stable hibernation but could be used by individual hibernating bats[2]).	Habitat that could be used by small numbers of flight-paths such as a gappy hedgerow or unvegetated stream, but isolated, i.e. not very well connected to the surrounding landscape by other habitat. Suitable, but isolated habitat that could be used by small numbers of foraging bats such as a lone tree (not in a parkland situation) of a patch of scrub.
Moderate	A structure with one or more potential roost sites that could be used by bats due to their size, shelter, protection, conditions[1] and surrounding habitat but unlikely to support a roost of high conservation status (with respect to roost type only, such as maternity and hibernation – the categorisation described in this table is made irrespective of species conservation status, which is established after presence is confirmed).	Continuous habitat connected to the wider landscape that could be used by bats for flight-paths such as lines of trees and scrub or linked back to gardens. Habitat that is connected to the wider landscape that could be used by bats for foraging such as trees, scrub, grassland or water.
High	A structure with one or more potential roost sites that are obviously suitable for use by larger numbers of bats on a more regular basis and potentially for longer periods of time due to their size, shelter, protection, conditions[3] and surrounding habitat. These structures have the potential to support high conservation roosts, e.g. maternity or classic cool/stable hibernation site.	Continuous, high-quality habitat that is well connected to the wider landscape that is likely to be used regularly by bats for flight-paths such as river valleys, streams, hedgerows, lines of trees and woodland edge. High-quality habitat that is well connected to the wider landscape that is likely to be used regularly by foraging bats such as broad-leaved woodland, tree-lined watercourses and grazed parkland. Site is close to and connected to known roosts.

[1]Negligible is defined as 'so small or unimportant as to not be worth considering, insignificant'. This category may be used where there are places that a bat could roost or forage (due to one attribute) but it is unlikely that they actually would (due to another attribute).
[2]For example, in terms of temperature, humidity, height above ground level, light levels or levels of disturbance.

[3]Evidence from the Netherlands shows mass swarming events of common pipistrelle bats in the autumn followed by mass hibernation in a diverse range of building types un urban environments (Korsten *et al.*, 2016 and Jansen *et al.* 2022). Common pipistrelle swarming has been observed in the UK (Bell, 2022 and Tomlinson, 2020) and winter hibernation of numbers of this species has been detected at Seaton Delaval Hall in Northumberland (National Trust, 2018). This phenomenon requires some research in the UK, but ecologists should be aware of the potential for larger numbers of this species to be present during the autumn and winter in prominent buildings in the landscape, urban or otherwise.

In addition to Table 4.1, if suitable potential features are present assessment of hibernation potential shall also be undertaken. None or very limited (negligible) shall be treated as LOW. Sites with PRFs such as cellars, tunnels and underground site (classic sites) shall be treated as HIGH and non-classic sites shall be treated as MODERATE, depending upon what can be surveyed at the site. The assessment shall include; the surrounding habitats which may reduce, maintain or increase survey effort based on the quality and connectivity of habitats and any presence of known roosts within or adjacent to the site or the immediate area.

Appendix 3:
Recommended Timings and Survey Effort for Presence/Absence Surveys

Tables 7.1 & 7.2. Recommended timings and minimum number of survey visits for presence/absence surveys to give confidence in a negative result for structures (also recommended for trees where other methods such as PRF inspection are not possible, but unlikely to give confidence in a negative result).

Low roost suitability or PRF-1	Moderate roost suitability	High roost suitability or PRF-M
Structures One survey visit - one dusk emergence survey[1]. Timing - May to August. Trees No further surveys required..	Structures & Trees Two separate dusk emergence survey visits[2]. Timing - May to September[3] with at least one of surveys between May and August[3].	Structures & Trees Three separate dusk emergence survey visits[2]. Timing - May to September with at least two of surveys between May to August[3].

[1]Structures that have been categorised as low potential can be problematic and the number of surveys required should be judged on a case-by-case basis. If there is a possibility that quiet calling, late-emerging species may be present then a dawn survey may be more appropriate, providing weather conditions are suitable. In some cases, more than one survey may be needed, particularly where there are several buildings in this category.

[2]Multiple survey visits should be spread out to sample as much of the recommended survey period as possible; it is recommended that surveys are spaced at least three weeks apart, preferably more. Survey timings should consider the prevailing conditions in the year of survey, which will vary geographically. In years with a cold spring, the surveys should not be started in early May or all completed in May. The surveys should maximise the possibility of detecting maternity roosts, which can switch roosts between pregnancy and lactation, and the optimum coverage includes pre-parturition, post-parturition and mating periods.

[3]September surveys are both weather and location dependant. Conditions may become more unsuitable in these months, particularly in more northerly latitudes, which may reduce the length of the survey season. September surveys are likely to miss maternity roosts due to dispersal before this time, but may pick up mating roosts.

Appendix 4:
Population Statuses of Bat Species in Lancashire

National Status
There are 18 species of bat that are native to the United Kingdom.

The latest Review of the Conservation Status of British Mammals (2018) has shown that where change could be assessed with reasonable confidence there have been increases in the geographical range and population status of two species of UK bat (greater and lesser horseshoe bat) and decrease in the geographical range of one species (grey long-eared bat). Increases in population were also identified in the following species: Bechstein's, Daubenton's, Natterers, Serotine and brown long-eared although it is noted that the reliability of the results is poor. Population data was not available for; Alcathoe, whiskered, Brandt's, Leisler's, noctule, Barbastelle and Nathusius pipistrelle.

Population estimates were given for common and soprano pipistrelle however they could not be reliably compared to the results from Harris et al. (1995) as the two species had not been identified as separate species at the time of that survey. *Pipistrellus* spp. remain the commonest species of bat in the UK despite their decline.

The State of Bats 2017 report produced by the Bat Conservation Trust used results from multiple survey types (hibernation, roost, waterway and field) of the National Bat Monitoring Programme (NBMP) to compile population trends between 1999, 2001 or 2002 to 2016. The report identified statistically significant (95% accuracy) population increase in Great Britain in the following species; greater horseshoe (hibernation and roost surveys), lesser horseshoe (hibernation and roost surveys), Daubenton's (hibernation surveys), Natterers (hibernation surveys), common pipistrelle (field surveys), soprano pipistrelle (field surveys). Significant decreases in population in Great Britain were identified in common pipistrelle (roost surveys), soprano pipistrelle (roost surveys) and brown long-eared (roost surveys).

These trends reflect relatively recent changes to bat populations since the 1990s. It is generally considered that prior to this there were significant historical declines in bat populations dating back to at least the start of the 20th century, although evidence is fragmented and few data were collected in a systematic way.

Serotine and barbastelle are considered vulnerable and Leisler's and Nathusius' pipistrelle, near threatened in Britain and England in the Red List for Britain's Terrestrial Mammals (Mathews and Harrower, 2020).

Local Status
There are eight bat species listed as being resident in Lancashire; these are as follows:

- Brown long-eared (*Plecotus auritus*)
- Whiskered (*Myotis mystacinus*)
- Brandt's (*Myotis brandtii*)
- Daubenton's (*Myotis daubentonii*)
- Noctule (*Nyctalus noctula*)
- Common pipistrelle (*Pipistrellus pipistrellus*)
- Soprano pipistrelle *(Pipistrellus pygmaeus*)
- Natterer's (*Myotis nattereri*)

Nathusius pipistrelle (*Pipistrellus nathusii*) has also been recorded in the county more recently. Although there are no known roosts in Lancashire, they have been trapped and ringed at Pennington Flash, Wigan. Lesser horseshoe (*Rhinolophus hipposideros*) is historically known to be present in Lancashire, however, the most recent record is from East Lancashire in 2009.

Populations of bats in many parts of Lancashire are comparable in size and importance to some of the best areas in the country. Estimates have not been made for Lancashire from the national population estimates as they are of poor reliability and it is not felt that the estimates would be useful or statistically valid (White (Ed.) *et. al.,* 2017).

The valleys of the Lune, Wyre, Hodder, Ribble and their tributaries support substantial populations of pipistrelle and Daubenton's. Many colonies of the latter species roost in bridges over the rivers.

There are also good numbers of most of the other bat species listed as being present in this area.

Clusters of brown long-eared colonies are strongly skewed towards the west of the county and populations are known in the Silverdale area, Fylde and West Lancashire, and whiskered and Brandt's are probably more common in the north of the county than in southern Lancashire.

Ponds in the Fylde, mill lodges and reservoirs in eastern Lancashire and other areas provide concentrated feeding areas for many bats.

Swarming activity has been identified in two locations in Lancashire; Blackburn with Darwen and close to the Yorkshire border in Ingleton. It is known that bats will travel from Lancashire to swarming sites in Yorkshire.

Appendix 5:
Site Photographs

Photo 1: (10.10.24) Eastern elevation of B1.

Photo 2: Southern elevation of B1.

Photo 3: Western elevation of B1.

Photo 4: Northern elevation of B1.

Photo 5: Example of lifted/missing roof tiles.

Photo 6: Example of gaps in stone work.

Photo 7: Example of gaps around window lintels/frames and around beam.

Photo 8: Example of gaps under fascia board/guttering.

Photo 9: Internal view of main barn.

Photo 10: Internal view of main barn.

Photo 11: Internal view of main barn.

Photo 12: Internal view of room in south-east.

Photo 13: Internal view of room in north-west.

Photo 14: Internal view of room in south.

Photo 15: Internal view of room in west.

Photo 16: View of hayloft in the south.

Photo 17: View of loft in west, looking south.

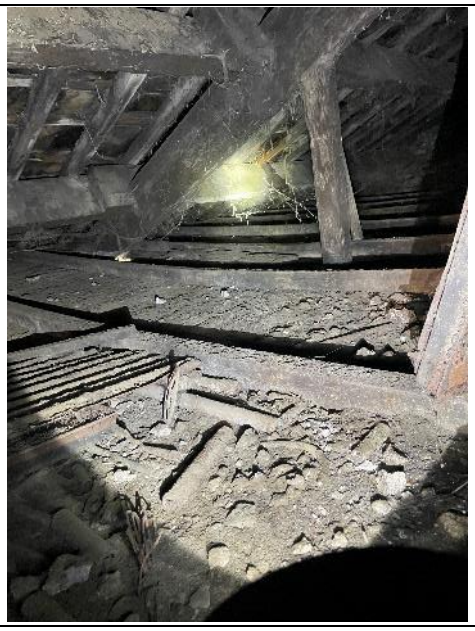


Photo 18: View of loft in west, looking north.