

1 Cockleach Cottage, Chipping Road,
Longridge,

PRELIMINARY BAT ROOST ASSESSMENT

AUGUST 22, 2024

project ecology

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1 Executive Summary

- 1.1.1 The site consists of a semi-detached dwelling and detached garage, located in a rural setting at 1 Cockleach Cottage, Chipping Road, Longridge, and is the subject of a planning application with Ribble Valley Borough Council for a two-storey side, and single storey rear extension.
- 1.1.2 The dwelling and garage were the subject of a preliminary bat roost assessment. The detached garage was found to provide no roosting suitability for bats. The dwelling was found to offer negligible bat roost suitability for bats. No further bat survey work or mitigation is required at this time.

2 Introduction

2.1 Site Location

- 2.1.1 The site is located at 1 Cockleach Cottage, Chipping Road, Longridge, Lancashire (OS grid reference SD 60306 38775).



Figure 1: Site Location Courtesy of Open Street Maps

2.2 Background

- 2.2.1 The site is the subject of a planning application with the Ribble Valley Borough Council for extension works.

2.3 Scope of Work

- 2.3.1 Kathryn Skilbeck commissioned Project Ecology to carry out a Preliminary Bat Roost Assessment of the dwelling on site to be affected by the proposals.

2.4 Aims and Objectives

- 2.4.1 The aims of the survey were to:
- Complete an assessment to ascertain if potential or evidence of use exists for bat species;
 - Determine if there are requirements for further and/or more detailed surveys.

2.5 Site Visit

- 2.5.1 The survey was undertaken on 19th August 2024 by Ben Crossthwaite *MCIEEM*. Ben has 9 years' professional experience of undertaking similar surveys across the UK and holds a level 2 class survey licence (Reference 2020-48541-CLS-CLS).

3 Survey Methodology

3.1 Bat Survey

3.1.1 A survey of the buildings on site were undertaken in accordance with the standard methods described in the 'Bat Worker's Manual' (JNCC 2004) and 'Bat Surveys – Good Practice Guidelines' (BCT 2023¹). The survey comprised the following elements:

- A preliminary inspection of the exterior of the buildings to look for obvious signs of bat activity (such as droppings on windowsills) and assessing the potential for entry/exit into the roof. The survey was carried out with the use of binoculars, drone and endoscope where required.
- An assessment of the surrounding habitat quality for bats was carried out by walking the area on foot and later from reference to aerial images (Google Maps). These searches were used to identify important land use and habitat features known to be favoured by bats.

3.1.2 Interpretation of survey findings and assessment of roosting potential was undertaken using professional judgement and criteria described in published guidance².

3.2 Survey Limitations and Constraints

3.2.1 The dwelling and detached garage were fully accessible and there were no constraints to the internal or external surveys.





¹ Collins, J. (ed.) (2023) *Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good practice guideline* (4th edition). The Bat Conservation Trust, London.

² Mitchell-Jones, A. J. (2004) *Bat Mitigation Guidelines*. English Nature, Peterborough.

4 Results

4.1 Site Survey

- 4.1.1 The site is located in a rural area close to Longridge town. The site is surrounded by pastoral farmland lined with hedgerows and trees and scattered woodlands. All these habitats provide foraging and commuting habitat for bats.
- 4.1.2 The results of the survey are described in detail in Table 1 below.

Table 1. Survey Results			
Building Reference	Description	Photographs	Bat Roost Potential Suitability
Dwelling	<p>A stone-built, two-storey, semi-detached dwelling with a pitched and hipped roof. Masonry and associated mortar in good condition with no cracks, flaking, missing or damaged sections.</p> <p>The slate roof tiles are in good condition and sitting flush to one another, with no slipped or damaged tiles.</p> <p>The ridge tiles are also in good condition, free from damage. Small sections of mortar are missing. However, do not provide any entry points or potential roost features bats may exploit.</p> <p>The masonry, mortar and lead flashings associated with the chimney stack are all in reasonable condition with no entry points or roosting habitat present.</p> <p>The roof edges are finished with timber fascia boards and soffits in places. These are in reasonable condition, with minor aesthetic degradation present only and are scribed flush with the stone masonry, with no gaps present.</p> <p>The windows and door frames are sealed to the surrounding masonry with sealant.</p>	   	Negligible

Internally, the first and ground-floor areas are currently undertaking renovation works. However, no roosting features or entry points to onward cavities are present.

The roof void space was easily accessed via a hatch and ladder. The underside of the roof is clad with timber sarking boards throughout. The boards are in good condition, fit flush to one-another with no gaps or missing sections.

The roof timbers are free from cracks and crevices.

The roof void is cobwebbed and dusty, and appears to be sealed, with no daylight or entry points located.

The gable walls are finished with lime render. The render is in good condition, free from cracks and flaking.

A vent is located on the upper section of the southwestern facing gable, where the works are proposed. This is covered with a metal grate, preventing entry by birds or bats.

The brick-built chimney stacks are in good condition, as is the associated mortar. The sarking boards are fit flush around the stacks and in places, sealed with expanding foam.

No access points or evidence of bats was found during the internal or external surveys.





Detached
Garage

A single-storey, concrete, prefabricated garage, with a shallow pitched roof is located on site. This is to be demolished as part of the sites proposals.

The external walls are in good condition, fitted flush to one-another with no gaps or damaged sections.

The uPVC fascia boards and windows are fitted flush to the concrete panels with no entry points or cavities present.

The metal doors and large garage door to the front are also in good condition, and the associated frames are fitted flush to the concrete panels with no access point of roosting habitat present.

The pitched roof is covered with corrugated cement roof sheets. These are all present and free from damage and gaps.

Internally, the garage has two areas used for storage, and can be described together. The



None

spaces are open to the underside of the roof with no roof void spaces present.

The small roof timbers are in excellent condition, with no gaps or crevices present.

The internal space is cool and well-lit by the windows located on both sides of the garage.

The garage lacks suitable conditions and features associated with roosting bats. No evidence of bats was found during the external or internal survey, and it is considered the garage offers no roosting suitability for bats and is not considered further in this report.



5 Evaluation

- 5.1.1 The dwelling is located within a rural setting with moderate foraging and commuting habitat for bats in the locality.
- 5.1.2 The nearest granted, European Protected Species License for Bats is located over 3km northeast of the site, for Brandt's *Myotis brandtii*, Common Pipistrelle *Pipistrellus pipistrellus* and Soprano Pipistrelle *Pipistrellus pygmaeus* bats between 2019-2024 (2019-39612-EPS-MIT). The licence was to destroy a 'resting place' for bats.
- 5.1.3 The dwelling is in good condition with no external roosting features or entry points providing access into the roof void or onward cavities.
- 5.1.4 UK bat species generally roost in one of two locations;
 - open locations, such as roof void, barns or caves
 - and crevice locations, such as under roof slates, between bricks and amongst stonework.
- 5.1.5 The former type of roosting bat is very unlikely to be present within the building. The roof void was found to be sealed and did not contain any bat droppings, something which would have been almost certain to be present if an open roosting bat, such as a Brown Long-eared *Plecotus auritus* bat were present.
- 5.1.6 No roosting habitat for crevice dwelling bats was found during the internal or external surveys. The masonry and roof tiles were all in good condition, with no features present.
- 5.1.7 The site proposals include the erection of a, two-storey side extension and single-storey rear extension. The existing roof, and associated roof void space, is to have minimal changes, as the new roof is to start below the existing roof on the gable end.
- 5.1.8 It is considered unlikely the proposed extension works will have any impacts on roosting and foraging bats.

6 Conclusion and Recommendations

Bats

- 6.1.1 As the dwelling is considered to offer negligible bat roost suitability, no further survey work or mitigation is required at this time.
- 6.1.2 This report is valid for 18 months, at which point a suitably qualified ecologist will assess the validity of the report, with an updated assessment likely to be required.

6.2 Precautions

- 6.2.1 It is not always possible to prove absence of roosting bats. Due to the transitional nature of bats, they can roost in suitable features opportunistically and are not always identified during surveys. It is recommended that roof coverings are removed with due caution. Should a bat/bats be identified at any time, work should stop, and a suitably qualified ecologist contacted to attend site and advise how to proceed.

7 Appendix A: Planning Policy and Legislation

National Policy

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF 2023) describes the Government's planning policy for England and how it should be applied. Within this framework, the requirements in relation to biodiversity are included within several policies. The two most relevant to individual planning decisions are Paragraphs 180 and 186, shown below:

- 180. Planning policies and decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by:
 - a) protecting and enhancing valued landscapes, sites of biodiversity or geological value and soils (in a manner commensurate with their statutory status or identified quality in the development plan);
 - b) recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside, and the wider benefits from natural capital and ecosystem services – including the economic and other benefits of the best and most versatile agricultural land, and of trees and woodland;
 - c) maintaining the character of the undeveloped coast, while improving public access to it where appropriate;
 - d) minimising impacts on and providing net gains for biodiversity, including by establishing coherent ecological networks that are more resilient to current and future pressures;
 - e) preventing new and existing development from contributing to, being put at unacceptable risk from, or being adversely affected by, unacceptable levels of soil, air, water or noise pollution or land instability. Development should, wherever possible, help to improve local environmental conditions such as air and water quality, taking into account relevant information such as river basin management plans; and
 - f) remediating and mitigating despoiled, degraded, derelict, contaminated and unstable land, where appropriate.
- 186. When determining planning applications, local planning authorities should apply the following principles:
 - a) if significant harm to biodiversity resulting from a development cannot be avoided (through locating on an alternative site with less harmful impacts), adequately mitigated, or, as a last resort, compensated for, then planning permission should be refused;

- b) development on land within or outside a Site of Special Scientific Interest, and which is likely to have an adverse effect on it (either individually or in combination with other developments), should not normally be permitted. The only exception is where the benefits of the development in the location proposed clearly outweigh both its likely impact on the features of the site that make it of special scientific interest, and any broader impacts on the national network of Sites of Special Scientific Interest;
- c) development resulting in the loss or deterioration of irreplaceable habitats (such as ancient woodland and ancient or veteran trees) should be refused, unless there are wholly exceptional reasons and a suitable compensation strategy exists; and
- d) development whose primary objective is to conserve or enhance biodiversity should be supported; while opportunities to improve biodiversity in and around developments should be integrated as part of their design, especially where this can secure measurable net gains for biodiversity or enhance public access to nature where this is appropriate.

Legislation

All bat species are protected under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2019 (Amendment) (EU Exit), which make is an offence to:

- Deliberately kill, injure or capture a bat;
- Deliberately disturb bats;
- Damage or destroy a breeding site or resting place of a bat.

The Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) contains further provisions making it an offence to intentionally or recklessly:

- Obstruct access to any structure or place which any bat uses for shelter or protection; or
- Disturb any bat while occupying a structure or place which it uses for that purpose.

Proposed development works that are likely to disturb or destroy bats or their roosts will need to obtain a licence from the relevant Statutory Nature Conservation Organisation (e.g., Natural England) prior to work commencing.

All nesting birds are protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended). It is an offence to intentionally kill, injure or take any wild bird or take, damage, or destroy its nest whilst in use or being built, or take or destroy its eggs. It is an offence to intentionally or recklessly disturb a species listed on Schedule 1 of the Act while they are nest building or at or near a nest with eggs or young, or to disturb the dependent young.