

Preliminary Bat Roost Assessment Report

Top Lodge,
Browsholme Hall,
Clitheroe Road,
Cow Ark,
Clitheroe, BB7 3DE

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Summary

In December 2024 Batworker consultancy was commissioned to undertake a survey of the Top Lodge at Browsholme Hall ,Clitheroe Road, Cow Ark, Clitheroe, BB7 3DE to assess the potential for use by bats and breeding birds.

A daytime survey was carried out on 10th December 2024 to support development plans.

Multiple gaps behind fascia boarding on the two storey flat roofed extension on the southern facade were observed.

The gaps allowed access to openings at wall top level behind the fascia boarding.

The building was assessed as offering moderate bat roosting potential.

It is recommended that two bat emergence surveys are carried out between May and September in order to confirm presence/absence of roosting bats.

Given the location of the property, surrounding habitat and proximity to known Natterer's and Brown Long Eared bat roosts it is recommended that surveys are carried out using infrared video or other night vision aids

The property is considered to be of moderate potential for roosting bats.

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

A precautionary method statement and reasonable avoidance measures are included within this report.

Introduction

In December 2024 Batworker consultancy was commissioned to undertake a survey of the Top Lodge at Browsholme Hall, Clitheroe Road, Cow Ark, Clitheroe, BB7 3DE to assess the potential for use by bats and breeding birds.

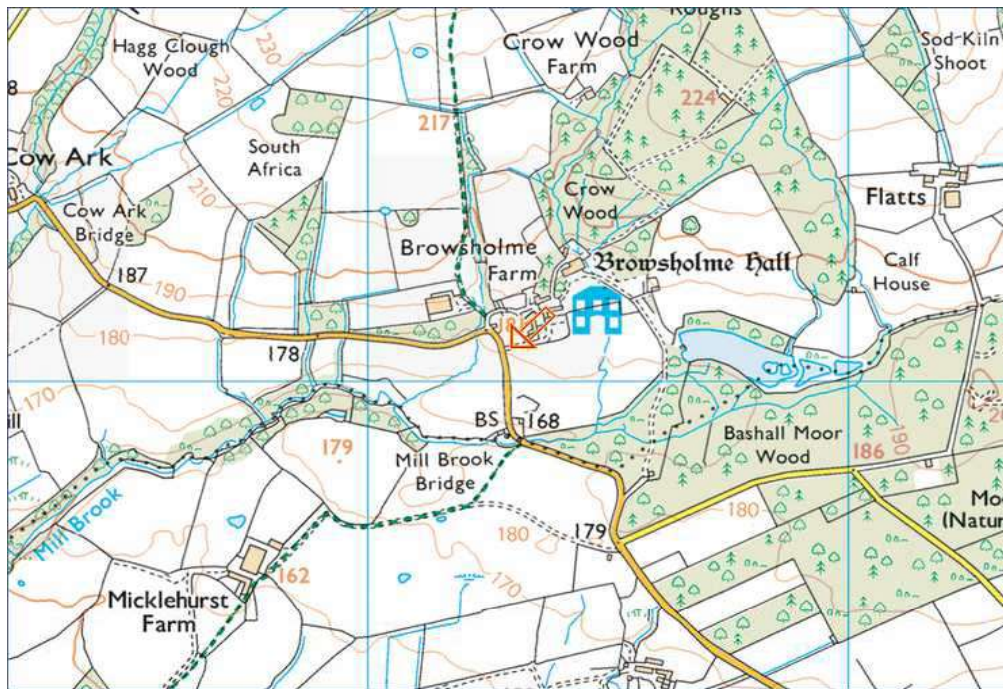
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Survey and Site Assessment

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



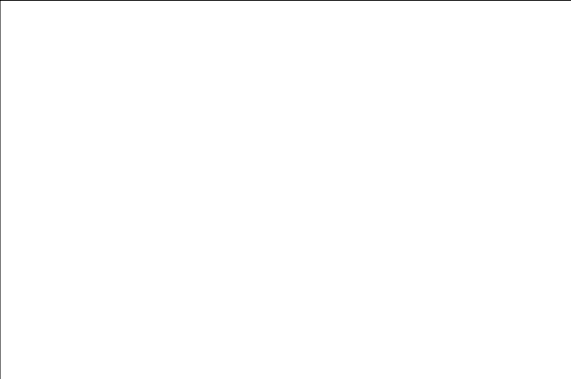
A central grid reference for the site is SD6829445072

Site Description

The property consists of a two storey detached stone built hoouse with a double pitched slate roof. The building has a two storey flat roofed extension present on the esouthern gable end and single storey flat roofed extension to the rear.

External walls are generally well pointed with no obvious cracks, gaps or crevices. The gable ends are pointed and sealed. Gaps behind fascia boarding on the flat roofed eastern gable extension were noted. Roof slates are generally close fitting with no obvious lifted, missing or slipped slates present.

The property can be considered to offer moderate roosting potential.



Pre Existing data on local bat species

A search of the MAGIC (www.magic.gov.uk) website revealed one EPS licence application within a 2km radius.

2018-37081-EPS-MIT SD67194530 Destruction of a Common Pipistrelle resting place.

The surveyor holds records of Brown Long Eared, Natterer's and Brandt's bats maternity roosts within 1.5km of the site, and Soprano Pipistrelle, Common Pipistrelle and Noctule bat non breeding roosts.

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 byre meadows and rough grassland sites. Often roosting in barns.

Surrounding Habitat



The property is located in a rural position with surrounding habitat a mosaic of improved and semi improved grassland with hedgerow and scattered deciduous tree cover on field boundaries, open water, scrub, ancient woodland, semi natural deciduous woodland.

Connectivity to the wider landscape is good. Overall foraging potential for bats can be considered 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
- ! Extendable polemounted Go Pro Session with 1100 lumen light

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. Sarah Dunham, an experienced bat surveyor.

Survey Summary

Survey	Date	Timings
Visual	10.12.2024	2 Hours

Survey constraints

Access to all areas 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 – Nesting birds

No evidence to suggest use by nesting birds was recorded.

Visual Inspection - Bats

The building was observed to have multiple gaps behind fascia boarding on the two storey flat roofed extension on the southern facade. The gaps allowed access to openings at wall top level behind the fascia boarding. Gaps were noted to be free of cobwebs.



Gaps behind fascia boarding allowing access to wall tops on two storey extension

Evaluation of the results

A daytime survey was carried out on 10th December 2024 to support development plans.

Multiple gaps behind fascia boarding on the two storey flat roofed extension on the southern facade were observed.

The gaps allowed access to openings at wall top level behind the fascia boarding.

The building was assessed as offering moderate bat roosting potential.

It is recommended that two bat emergence surveys are carried out between May and September in order to confirm presence/absence of roosting bats.

Given the location of the property, surrounding habitat and proximity to known Natterer's and Brown Long Eared bat roosts it is recommended that surveys are carried out using infrared video or other night vision aids

Conclusion

The property is considered to be of moderate potential for roosting bats.

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

A precautionary method statement and reasonable avoidance measures are included within this report.

Proposed Biodiversity Net Gain

The installation of two Greenwoods Ecohabitats Two Chamber Bat Boxes (<https://www.greenwoodsecohabitats.co.uk>) or Kent Bat Box within the site would provide roosting potential for the local bat population.

Precautionary Method Statement and Reasonable Avoidance Measures - Bats

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 – No work should commence until two emergence surveys are carried out to confirm presence/absence of roosting bats.

The emergence survey should be carried out between May and August inclusive.

Given the potential presence of Brown Long Eared and Myotis sp bats, all late emerging species, Infrared video or other suitable night vision equipment should be used

If bats are observed using the building to roost a Natural England EPS Mitigation licence will be required in order for the development to proceed lawfully.

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 [REDACTED]; 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.