Moorcock House, Waddington

PRELIMINARY BAT ROOST ASSESSMENT

March 2025

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1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Instruction and Report Aims

Knight Sky Ecology Ltd was commissioned to undertake a preliminary bat roost assessment of Moorcock House, Slaidburn Rd, Waddington, Clitheroe, BB7 3AA.

The assessment was undertaken in relation to the proposed renovation of the house which includes works that will affect the roof of the property.

The aim of this report is to inform the proposals of all considerations relating to bats. This includes an assessment of the likelihood of the presence or absence of a bat roost at the property; the detailing of measures to mitigate any potential impacts to bats where appropriate; and, the provision of guidance should any further detailed assessment be required. Appendix A provides details of the legislation afforded to bats for further context.

In addition to bats, all other potential ecological constraints to the proposal (e.g., nesting birds) was also documented where relevant.

1.2 Site Description

The property is situated on a hillside between Waddington and Newton-in-Bowland at grid reference SD 71811 46664. The surrounding area is dominated by agricultural land and open moorland. There is a stand of mainly broadleaved woodland to the immediate north. Newly constructed houses are to the immediate east. Figure 1.1 provides an aerial image of the property location.

Figure 1.1. Property location (imagery dated 05/06/2023)

2 METHODS

2.1 Desk Study

Online Resources

The 'Granted European Protected Species Applications' dataset in respect of bats was searched with use of the Multi-Agency Geographic Information for the Countryside (MAGIC) website (https://magic.defra.gov.uk) to identify bat roost records within 1km of the property.

2.2 Survey Personnel

The preliminary bat roost assessment was undertaken by Ryan Knight MCIEEM who holds a Level 2 Natural England Class Licence for bats (ref. 2015-12611-CLS-CLS) and has held this licence for over 12 years. Ryan has also acted as the named ecologist on numerous European Protected Species (EPS) mitigation licences issued by Natural England (NE) which covered several bat species and roost types including maternity, hibernation and day roosts.

2.3 Overarching Guidance

The preliminary bat roost assessment was primarily based on the methods described in '*Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines (4th edition). Bat Conservation Trust, London.' (Collins, J., (ed.) (2023).* Any deviation from standard practice is justified where required.

2.4 Site Visit

A preliminary bat roost assessment of the property was undertaken on 21st March 2025. The assessment involved a visual inspection of the property to search for bats and evidence of bats (e.g., droppings) and an appraisal of the extent and suitability of any potential bat roost features present. The assessment included the use of a torch and ladders. A digital endoscope was available for use but not required. The interior and exterior of the building (including both lofts) was comprehensively inspected.

Other considerations which would influence the suitability of the property for use by bats were also taken into account. This included the site location, environmental conditions including expected night time lighting levels and the suitability of the surrounding habitats. This information was gathered from the site survey and web-based mapping sources (i.e., Google Earth).

Following the assessment, the building was assigned a bat roost suitability category of none, negligible, low, moderate, high or confirmed roost based on the collated information.

2.5 Assessment Comments

The assessment was undertaken outside the main active season for bats (April to October) when signs of a bat roost are less evident. However, signs of a bat roost (particularly containing multiple bats) can persist in sheltered, dry locations long after bats have moved to another roost site. Overall, the seasonal constraint did not present a significant limitation to the conclusions and recommendations made within this document. The main aim of the assessment was to evaluate the suitability of the buildings for use by bats.

The property was fully accessed throughout and no limitations to the site survey were encountered.

This report will remain valid for a period of 18 months from the date of issue. An ecologist should be contacted for advice on the revalidation requirements of the report if planning permission is not obtained (if required) or works do not commence within this time period.

3 RESULTS

3.1 Desk Study

European Protected Species (EPS) Mitigation Licenses

No EPS mitigation licenses for bats were identified within the 1km search radius.

3.2 Site Survey

Building Description and Potential Roost Features

Photos of the property are provided in Appendix B for a general overview and supporting information for the assessment.

The detached house is a rendered stone construction within a complex roof system. The original section of the house has a pyramid hipped roof and the large, two storey extension has a hipped roof which was understood to have been added within the last 10-15 years. There are also single pitched roofs on the single storey extensions which cover the entire frontage, part of the rear elevation and the east elevation. The rendering was in good repair throughout.

The house features prominent roof eaves on all aspects and the soffits were tight-fitting to the walls on the entire property. There did appear to be gaps under the lead flashing on the corners of the single storey extensions; however, upon further inspection, these gaps were filled with detritus and unsuitable for use by bats.

The roof of the two-storey extension features stone roof slates which appeared to be well laid with no slipped or missing slates. There were multiple small gaps between the stone roof tiles on the original section of the house. This is generally typical of such roof types. In addition, there were gaps between the roof slates on the roof verges of the single storey extensions on the west elevation. All such gaps were closely inspected. Such gaps do offer temporary roost features.

Internally, the house has two loft spaces. The loft of the extension featured a cluttered network of roof trusses (no open access spaces). The roof had a modern breathable membrane underlining and a thick covering of insulation.

The original section of the house featured a converted attic room and this room was bound by a crawl space loft area on all sides. The roof of the house did not have an underlining and several daylight gaps were observed between the roof slates.

Habitat Description

The property is situated on a hillside location at an elevation of approximately 260m. The vast majority of the surrounding area is characterised by (open and enclosed) pastureland with limited notable habitat features. There are also open moorland habitats 500m to the north-west. There is a mainly broadleaved woodland area to the direct north of the property which will provide a sheltered foraging feature for bats. In addition, the front garden contains mature shrubs and trees which also provide an element of shelter and foraging value. Due to the elevation and openness of the surrounding habitat, bat activity levels within the area are expected to be highly influenced by the weather conditions. Overall, with respect to the surrounding habitat, bat activity levels are expected to be relatively low within the locality. However, given the rural location, a diversity of bat species may be present.

Evidence of Bats and Bat Roost Suitability

No bats or evidence of bats was recorded. A comprehensive, close visual inspection was completed both externally and internally. Potential roost features for bats were limited to the roof and comprised multiple small crevices between the roof slates. This is a typical finding for stone slated roofs. Overall, the dwelling was categorised as 'low bat roost suitability'.

3.3 Nesting Birds

No evidence of nesting birds was observed.

4 EVALUATION & CONCLUSIONS

4.1 Bat Roost Suitability Evaluation

No evidence of a bat roost was encountered and a sufficiently thorough inspection of the property was carried out. The house was categorised as low in its suitability to support bats.

Low suitability is defined by the following description:

- '*A structure with one or more potential roost sites that could be used by individual bats opportunistically. However, these potential roost sites do not provide enough space, shelter, protection, appropriate conditions 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 or hibernation*)' (Collins, 2023).

All potential roost features were within the roof with shallow crevices under the stone roof slates. It is considered that good practice working measures can be applied to mitigate the (low) residual risk of encountering a bat roost. Such measures are detailed in Section 5.

In consideration of the findings and development proposals and given the fact that a thorough examination was completed, it is the professional judgement of Knight Sky Ecology that no further detailed assessment is required (i.e., dusk emergence survey).

Bats do not present a constraint to the development proposals as the works will remain legally compliant i.e., the proposed activities are reasonably unlikely to result in an offence listed under Section 43 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 or Section 9 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (see Appendix A).

4.2 Nesting Birds

Whilst no evidence of nesting birds was encountered, as a precaution, the proposed development is minded to be aware of the legislation afforded to nesting birds:

- All wild birds in the UK are protected under Section 1 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) which makes it an offence to intentionally kill, injure or take any wild bird or take, damage or destroy the nest (whilst being built or in use) or its eggs.

The nesting bird season is generally accepted as March to August (inclusive).

5 RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Bats

Precautionary Mitigation

The following mitigation measures for the development works affecting the roof of the property must be followed and adherence to these mitigation measures are recommended to form a condition for planning consent.

- There are no restrictions in the timing of the development work within regards to bats.
- Before works commence, the development contractor is to liaise directly with a licensed ecologist to discuss the development schedule for proposals and the mitigation procedures that are required for bats. The ecologist will provide a toolbox talk to the contractors in order to explain the presence of bats, their legal protection, roles and responsibilities, the proposed method of working, basic identification of bats and procedures should bats or evidence of bats be found.
- The stone roof slates are to be carefully removed by hand and fully checked for bats and evidence of bats before being stacked.
- In the unexpected event that a bat is discovered during the works, the contractors will be advised to stop immediately and contact the licensed ecologist whom will travel to site to provide assessment and advice. Contractors will be specifically forbidden to handle bats. Contractors will be advised that if it is necessary to remove a bat to avoid it being harmed, gloves MUST be worn. It should be carefully placed in a cardboard box and kept in the dark in a quiet place until the licensed ecologist arrives on site.
- If the licensed ecologist assesses that the continuing works are, on balance, likely to result in contravention of the legislation afforded to bats (see Appendix A), the works would stop and a Natural England mitigation licence will be sought. Such a licence would require further detailed assessments.

Enhancements

The proposed development presents a good opportunity to deliver enhancements for bats at the site. Details of the two bat boxes recommended to be installed are provided in Table 5.1.

Figure 5.1. Bat box recommendations

<table>
<tr><th colspan="4">BAT BOX</th></tr>
<tr><td>Locations and positioning</td><td colspan="3">The boxes can either be fitted onto the walls of the dwelling, or on the adjacent trees (under the ownership of the applicant). The boxes must be fitted to a height of at least 3m from the ground.</td></tr>
<tr><td>Bat box models and purchasing</td><td colspan="3">Bat box models along with the locations for purchasing are provided below. There can be a considerable waiting time for delivery for certain models, therefore, two options have been provided.</td></tr>
<tr><td></td><td>Elisa Bat Box</td><td>  </td><td>These boxes are manufactured from wood and concrete and provide an ideal summer roost space for a variety of bat species, including pipistrelles, Daubenton's, noctule bat, and brown long-eared bat.
Available from: https://www.nhbs.com/</td></tr>
<tr><td></td><td>Beaumaris Woodstone Bat Box</td><td>  </td><td>This bat box is also made entirely from WoodStone. The Beaumaris box has a single narrow cavity which makes it suitable for crevice roosting bats such as common pipistrelle.
Available from: https://www.nhbs.com/</td></tr>
<tr><td>Maintenance</td><td colspan="3">The models chosen do not require cleaning as bat droppings do not typically accumulate within these types of boxes to a level likely to cause problems for future habitation.</td></tr>
</table>

APPENDIX A. LEGISLATION FOR BATS

The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981

All bat species in England are listed in Schedule 5 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended). Section 9 of the Act make it an offence to intentionally or recklessly kill, injure or take any wild animal included in Schedule 5. In addition, it is an offence to (intentionally or recklessly):

- Damage or destroy any structure or place which any wild animal specified in Schedule 5 uses for shelter or protection;
- Disturb any such animal while it is occupying a structure or place which it uses for shelter or protection; or
- Obstruct access to any structure or place which any such animal uses for shelter or protection.

The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017

Bats are listed within Schedule 2 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended) (the Habitats Regulations) as European Protected Species of animals. Part 3 (Protection of animals); Regulation 43 (1) of the Habitats Regulations make it an offence to:

- Deliberately capture, injure or kill any wild animal of a European protected species;
- Deliberately disturb wild animals of any such species;
- Deliberately take or destroys the eggs of such an animal; or
- Damages or destroy a breeding site or resting place of such an animal.

For the purposes of the legislation, the disturbance of wild animals includes any disturbance which is likely to impair their ability to survive, to breed or to reproduce, or to rear or nurture their young; or in the case of hibernating or migratory species, to hibernate or migrate; or to affect significantly the local distribution or abundance of the species to which they belong.

Where it is likely that a proposed scheme would result in contravention of this legislation, a European Protected Species mitigation licence would be required to allow the works to proceed. As part of this process, the application must meet 'three tests' for licensing under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended). Planning guidance and case law also confirm that local authorities have a statutory duty under the Regulations to have regard to these three tests when deciding whether to grant planning permission. The three tests are as follows:

- Regulation 55 (2) (e) states that a derogation licence can only be issued for preserving public health or public safety or other imperative reasons of overriding public interest including those of a social or economic nature and beneficial consequences of primary importance for the environment;
- Regulation 55 (9) (a): that there is no satisfactory alternative; and
- Regulation 55 (9) (b): that the action authorised will not be detrimental to the maintenance of the population of the species concerned at a favourable conservation status in their natural range.

Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006

Section 41 of the NERC Act 2006 requires the Secretary of State to publish a list of the living organisms and types of habitats which in the Secretary of State's opinion are of principal importance for the purpose of conserving or enhancing biodiversity. The Section 41 list is used to guide decision-makers such as public bodies, including local and regional authorities, in their duty to further the general biodiversity objective when exercising their functions, under Section 40 of the NERC Act 2006. This is also referred to as a 'biodiversity duty' which was strengthened by the Environment Act 2021. Bat species known to be present in the north of England and included on the Section 41 list comprise soprano pipistrelle, noctule and brown long-eared bat.

APPENDIX B. PHOTOS

Photo 1 Rear (north) elevation (with converted attic).	
Photo 2 East elevation.	

Photo 3 Front south elevation.	
Photo 4 West elevation.	
Photo 5 Crevices between slates on roof verge.	

Photo 6 Example photo of gaps between roof slates.	
Photo 7 Loft of extension.	

Photo 8 Crawl space around attic (fully accessed).	
Photo 9 Daylight gap in roof.