

Preliminary Bat Roost Assessment Report

**The Barn inc. Garage
Preston Road
Alston
Preston
PR3 3BL**

15.05.2025



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Summary

In May 2025 Batworker consultancy was commissioned to undertake a survey of The Barn inc. garage building, Preston Road, Alston, PR3 3BL to assess the potential for use by bats and breeding birds.

A daytime survey was carried out on 15th May 2025 to support residential development plans already in progress.

No evidence was observed to suggest use of the buildings by nesting birds.

No evidence was recorded to suggest bats were roosting within the buildings.

No bats were observed or recorded using the buildings for roosting.

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

The surveyor considers survey effort to be reasonable to assess the roost potential of the buildings and no further survey work is deemed appropriate.

The surveyor does not consider the proposed development and change of use is likely to result in a breach of the Conservation (Natural Habitats &c.) Regulations 1994 (as amended) therefore the proposed development does not require an EPS Licence (EPSL) to proceed lawfully.

Introduction

In May 2025 Batworker consultancy was commissioned to undertake a survey of The Barn inc. garage building, Preston Road, Alston, PR3 3BL to assess the potential for use by bats and breeding birds.

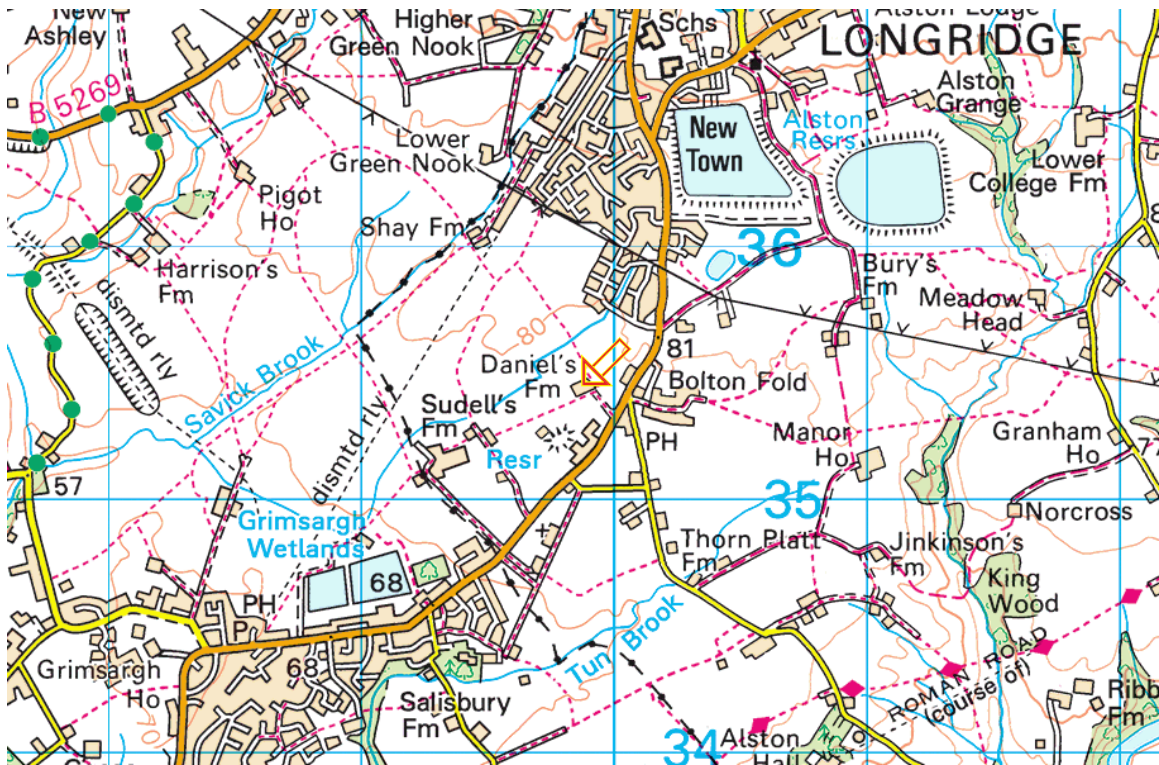
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Survey and Site Assessment

Objectives of the survey

The survey was carried out to determine roost potential of the buildings, current usage by bats, and other protected species, and to establish status of the bat species using the site.

Survey site location



A central grid reference for the site is SD5993435430

Site Description

The property consists of a converted stone barn and detached garage building.

The barn has a slate pitched roof and is currently undergoing renovation. The external walls are well pointed in some areas; however, numerous recent cracks and gaps have appeared as a result of the renovation work taking place. The gable ends are well sealed, with close fitting fascia boards. Roof slates and ridge tiles are close fitting, with no obvious lifted, missing, or slipped slates. Internally, the former loft space has been removed during the recent renovations, exposing the timber rafters. A bituminous roofing membrane is present throughout and is in good condition.

The detached stone garage building is well pointed with no obvious cracks, gaps or crevices present in the external stonework. The eaves and gable ends are well sealed, with close fitting fascia boards. Roof tiles are generally close fitting, with no missing or slipped tiles present. Ridge tiles also appear close fitting and well sealed.

Internally, the garage has exposed timber rafters with a bituminous roofing membrane, which is in good condition.

The property can be considered to offer negligible roosting potential.

The Barn:





Garage building:



Pre Existing data on local bat species

A search of the MAGIC (www.magic.gov.uk) website revealed two Natural England EPS licence applications within a 1.5km radius.

EPSM2013-6761 SD59903519 Destruction of Common Pipistrelle resting place.

2019-43457-EPS-MIT SD60603439 Destruction of Soprano Pipistrelle breeding site.

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.

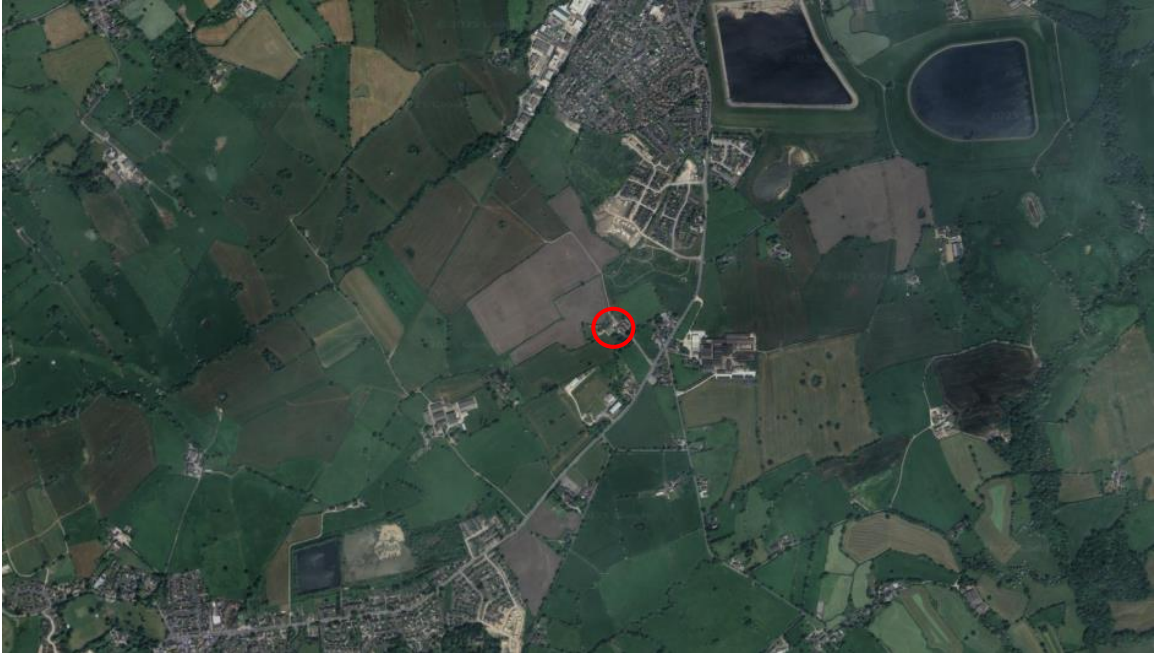
Whiskered/Brandt's – species often found roosting in buildings close to woodland.

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 by 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 scattered deciduous tree cover and hedges on field boundaries. Alston Reservoir is less than 1km from the property.

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.

The visual inspection focussed on searching for feeding remains and bat droppings.

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
Teslong TD500 HD 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	15.05.2025	1 Hour

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 no obvious suitable roost features present.

No evidence to suggest presence of roosting bats (in the form of scattered droppings, urine splashing, feeding remains or grease marking) to suggest use by bats was recorded despite suitable undisturbed horizontal surfaces being present, and at a time of year when such evidence would reasonably be expected.

Evaluation of the results

No evidence of use by bats was recorded during the survey

When location, condition of the buildings, and surrounding habitat were taken into consideration the building was assessed as offering negligible bat roosting potential.

Given the lack of roosting potential it is considered that the development proposals do not risk negative impacts on roosting bats, and that reasonable avoidance measures offer an appropriate approach to managing risk of negative impacts during development.

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 - Work should take place following an evening temperature of +5c

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

Removal of roof slates/tiles/timbers will be carried out by hand.

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 07894 338290 (mobile); 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.