Preliminary Roost Assessment

21 Berry Lane

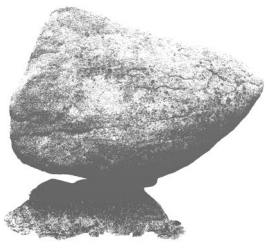
Longridge

Preston

PR3 3JA

For

Alex Dewhurst



Gritstone Ecology

www.gritstone.org | info@gritstone.org | 07958314 857

Contents

1. Introduction

1.1. Purpose of the report

The report is written by Stewart Bradshaw for Alex Dewhurst. Stewart carried out a Preliminary Roost Assessment of 21 Berry Lane, Longridge, on 22nd July 2025. The survey was completed to inform a planning application at the property.

1.2. Survey aims

The aim of the survey was to determine the actual or potential presence of bats and the need for further survey or mitigation.

1.3. Surveyor details

Stewart is licensed to disturb, take and handle all species of bats in all counties of England under licence number 2015-15615-CLS-CLS. He has more than 15 years of experience in ecological consultancy, including the planning & preparation of bat surveys, and mitigation licences.

1.4. Reason for survey

The development proposals are for the conversion of a residential apartment above commercial premises into two separate apartments, and general renovation and repairs to the building. Externally the only changes are the addition of a roof light window, and ground floor entrance.

1.5. Site context

The building is located on Berry lane, Longridge, Preston, PR3 3JA, GR SD 60553 37285, approximately 2.5km east of Altincham Town Centre. The building is on a busy main road, close to the centre of Longridge, and is surrounded by commercial premises and houses.

The site includes a pre-1950's commercial building which was occupied until recently, with commercial premises on the ground floor, and residential apartments above.

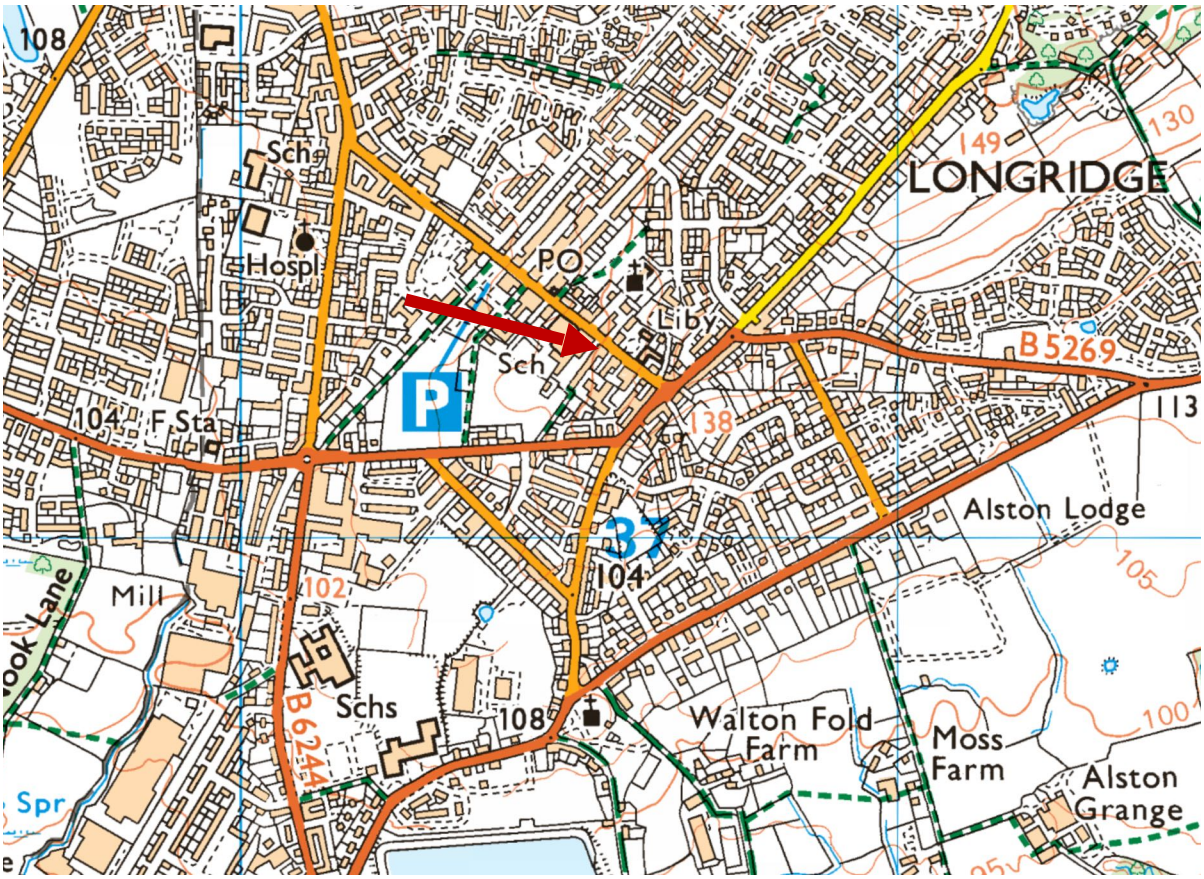
Habitat within 50m of the building includes; commercial buildings, houses, gardens, mature trees, small areas of open green-space, and busy well-lit roads.

Habitat within 500m includes, housing and busy roads, linked back gardens, areas of open green-space, and mature trees.

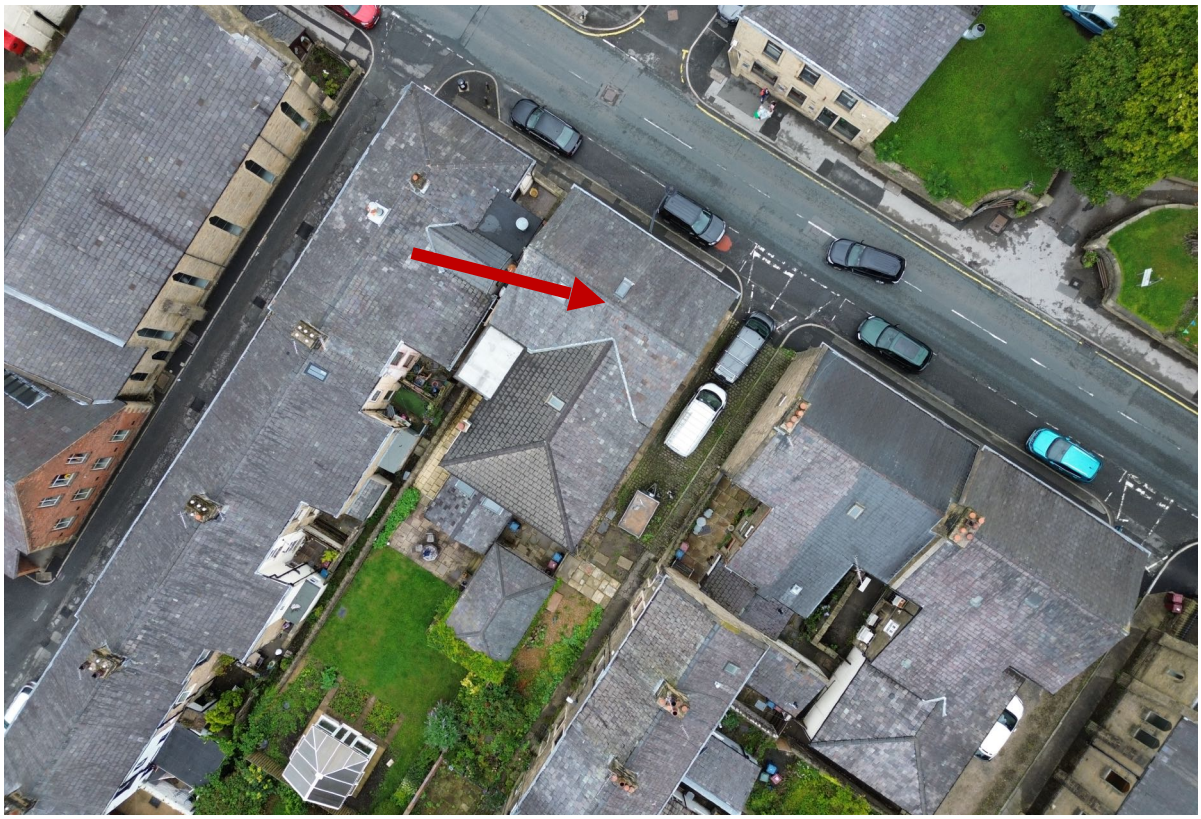
Areas of open green-space locally, and linked back gardens, potentially provide good quality foraging opportunities for bats. However, the area in general is fragmented by busy well-lit roads, noise, traffic, and other human activity.

The site and immediate surrounding area provide low quality foraging, commuting, and roosting opportunities for bats; with higher quality and less disturbed habitat around farmland 600m to the south.

1.6. Site location



1.6a – 21 Berry Lane – site location.



1.6b – 21 Berry Lane – aerial photograph.

2. Methods

2.1. Survey timings

The building inspection was completed on 22nd July 2025. Weather conditions during the survey were overcast, warm, and dry, with a temperature of 20°C.

2.2. Desk study

No desk study of the site was undertaken, prior to the preliminary roost assessment, and no other ecological surveys have been carried out in relation to the proposals.

The development has a small footprint, and impacts beyond the site boundary are unlikely. A site-specific investigation was considered more suitable.

2.3. Habitat assessment

The habitat on site and in the surrounding area was assessed using Ordnance Survey mapping, and aerial photography. Habitat features on site, and those in the surrounding area were assessed for their suitability for use by bats during the site visit.

2.4. Building inspection

A systematic search of the exterior of the building was made to identify potential or actual bat access points and roosting places, and to locate any evidence of bats such as live or dead specimens, bat droppings, urine splashes, fur-oil staining and or squeaking noises. Bat specimens and droppings are the most reliable type of evidence; the other types are not always the result of bat activity. Sometimes bats leave no visible sign of their presence on the outside of a building (even when they do wet weather can wash evidence away.)

The search included (where present) the ground beneath potential access points, windowsills, window panes, walls, behind peeling paintwork and lifted rendering, hanging tiles, weatherboarding, eaves, soffit boxes, fascia's, lead flashing, gaps under felt, under tiles / slates and in existing bats boxes. Gaps in brickwork and stonework were searched (where present). All evidence of use by bats, or features with the potential to be used by bats was recorded and photographed.

A systematic search of the inside of the building was undertaken to identify potential or actual bat access points and roosting places, and to locate evidence of bats. Bat specimens (live or dead) and droppings are the most reliable type of evidence. Other evidence can include urine splashes, fur-oil staining, feeding remains, squeaking noises, bat fly (Nycteribiid) pupal cases (Hutson 1984) or odour.

Areas inspected include;

Within rooms

- floors and surfaces
- behind wooden panelling
- in lintels above doors and windows
- behind window shutters and curtains
- behind pictures, posters, furniture, peeling paintwork, peeling wallpaper, lifted plaster and boarded up windows
- inside cupboards and in chimneys accessible from fireplaces.

Within roof spaces

- the tops of gable end and dividing walls
- the top of chimney breasts
- ridge and hip beams and other structural timbers
- mortise and tenon joints
- all beams
- the junction of roof timbers, especially where ridge and hip beams meet
- behind purlins
- between tiles and the roof lining (where accessible)
- under flat felt roofs.

The areas listed above were inspected (where present), any additional areas with potential for use were also inspected.

2.5. Equipment

The equipment listed below was available for use during the surveys and was used where required.

Clulite CB2 1,000,000 candlepower torch. Rigid Seesnake CA-300 digital endoscope with 0.9m cable reach with 17mm and 6mm imaging heads. Digital camera with 50x zoom. 8x25 close focussing binoculars, 4m ladders, bat handling gloves, DNA sampling tubes.

Additionally a camera drone was used to inspect the roof in detail.

2.6. Survey limitations

None. All accessible areas of the house were inspected in detail. The survey was completed in July, when bats are active, and external signs of use, such as droppings, are more likely to be evident, if present.

3. Results

3.1. External inspection

3.1a – The front of the building from Berry Lane.

Nº21 Berry Lane, Longridge, is a pre-1950's commercial building, which was occupied until recently. It has a pitched roof, covered with slate roof tiles and ceramic ridge tiles.

Roof pitches face northeast and southwest; gables face northwest and southeast. Lead flashing is fitted at the base of chimneys, in roof valleys, and in hidden gutters. There are no fascia boards or boxed soffits fitted at the eaves.

Walls are solid stone blockwork with no insulating cavity, lintels are a mixture of stone and steel, sills are stone; window and door frames are UPVC, all glass is intact. Ground floor window and door frames on Berry Lane have not yet been fitted, and the openings are secured with timber boarding.

The building is well maintained, and in good condition. Ridge tiles are fixed tightly, there are no damaged or missing ridge tiles. There are no missing roof tiles. Roof tiles are tightly fitted, with no viable gaps between tiles. Lead flashing is fitted tightly against stonework with no viable gaps. Stonework is in good condition, with no missing mortar or cracks.

There are no features externally which are likely be used by roosting bats, and no evidence of use by bats was present during the inspection.

3.2. Internal inspection

3.2a – The roof void.

The building has a single roof void, which has been converted into habitable space, with plastered walls and ceilings.

The roof has a timber rafter and purlin structure, lined with bitumen felt, and insulated with mineral wool between the rafters. A small area of the plasterboard had been removed to allow inspection. The roof lining is in good condition with no tears, or gaps.

There are no gaps at the eaves or gables; and there are no gaps which give direct access to the building from the outside.

The building has no cellar, and there are no other enclosed spaces which are suitable to be used by roosting bats.

3.3. Indications of use

No indications of use by bats were present during the survey, either internally, or externally.

3.4. Level of suitability

The building has **negligible suitability** for use by roosting bats. This is as the building is well maintained, in good condition, and as no suitable roosting opportunities were noted during the building inspection.

4. Evaluation

The building is set in an area which, in general, provides low quality habitat, for foraging, commuting and roosting bats, although bats are likely to be present locally.

Areas of open green-space, trees, and linked back gardens locally provide foraging opportunities for bats, in an area which is fragmented by light and noise disturbance.

Buildings immediately adjacent to good quality habitat are more likely to be used by roosting bats than those further away. However, the building is well-sealed, and has no features which could be used by roosting bats.

The area in general is fragmented by well-lit roads, traffic, noise, and other human activity. Fragmentation is likely to reduce the number of species present locally, and the number of individual bats.

The building is well maintained, and in good condition. There are no features externally, which are suitable, or likely to be used by roosting bats; the roof has no gaps which could give direct access to roosting bats, and no evidence of use was found during the inspection.

The lack of any indications of use inside the building, such as bat droppings or feeding remains, reduces the likelihood of a significant roost being present. If bats were present inside the building, even in lower numbers, some evidence of use would be likely to persist.

Roof and ridge tiles are in good condition; tiles at the gable end verges are sealed with cement. There are no gaps between roofing materials which could be used by roosting bats.

Walls are solid stone blockwork with no insulating cavity. Walls are in good condition, with no cracks, or missing mortar which could be used by crevice dwelling bats.

Window and door frames are fixed into the brickwork, gaps are filled with sealant, and offer no suitable roosting opportunities.

Lead flashing in the hidden gutters and in roof valleys and chimneys is fixed tightly against tiles and stonework, with no suitable gaps.

The small gaps between stonework, roof timbers, and roofing materials, in the roof void were inspected in detail using an endoscope. No droppings were found, and no suitable gaps were present which could give access, or shelter to roosting bats.

The majority of the proposed work is internal changes to the building to create two separate residential apartments above the ground-floor commercial premises. Changes externally are limited to the addition of a roof light, and an additional ground-floor entrance. The majority of the roof will be unaffected by the works.

Taking into account the habitat surrounding the site, and the features present, the building is unlikely to be used by roosting bats and has **negligible suitability** for use.

4.1. Legal and planning context

All species of bats in the UK and their roosts are legally protected by UK and European legislation. The UK the legal protection is summarised as follows:

You will be committing a criminal offence if you:

1. Deliberately* capture, injure or kill a bat
2. Intentionally or recklessly disturb a bat in its roost or deliberately disturb a group of bats

3. Damage or destroy a bat roosting place (even if bats are not occupying the roost at the time)
4. Possess or advertise/sell/exchange a bat (dead or alive) or any part of a bat
5. Intentionally or recklessly obstruct access to a bat roost even if bats are not present at the time

*In a court, 'deliberately' will probably be interpreted as someone who, although not intending to capture/injure or kill a bat, performed the relevant action, being sufficiently informed and aware of the consequence his/her action would most likely have.

If bats were roosting in the roof of the building, the proposed works would have limited scope to impact bats or bat roosts.

5. Impact assessment

The development proposals are for the conversion of a residential apartment above commercial premises into two separate apartments, and general renovation and repairs to the building. Externally the only changes are the addition of a roof light window, and ground floor entrance.

The building has no features which are suitable, or likely to be used by roosting bats and has negligible suitability for use.

The proposed work is unlikely to impact on bats or bat roosts; and, once completed is unlikely to provide any increase in levels of disturbance for bats locally.

6. Required actions

The building has **negligible suitability** for use by roosting bats, no field signs of use by bats were found internally or externally during the inspection, and no further survey work is required.

7. References

Department for Communities and Local Government (2012). National Planning Policy Framework.

Collins, J. (ed.) (2023). Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines. (4th ed.) The Bat Conservation Trust, London.

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

Mitchell-Jones, A.J. & McLeish, A.P. (2004). The Bat Workers Manual. (3rd ed.) JNCC

8. Appendix 1 – Photographs

1 – The front of the building.

2 – Roof and ridge tiles are in good condition with no suitable gaps.

3 – Cement at the gable end verges is in good condition with no viable gaps.

4 – Stonework and hidden gutters at the eaves are in good condition with no viable gaps.

5 – Where present, fascia, and lead flashing are fitted tightly with no suitable gaps.

6 – Stonework and mortar are in good condition with no suitable gaps.

7 – Window and door frames are tightly sealed into stonework with no suitable gaps.

8 – The roof void of the building has been converted to habitable space.