



TECHNICAL NOTE: PRELIMINARY BAT ROOST ASSESSMENT

PROJECT ADDRESS

Higher Elker Lodge, Whalley Road, Billington, BB7 9HY

PROPOSED PLANS

Two-storey extension.

1. INTRODUCTION

Knight Sky Ecology Ltd was commissioned to undertake a preliminary bat roost assessment at Higher Elker Lodge in relation to the development plans for the property.

The assessment was undertaken by Ryan Knight MCIEEM who holds a Level 2 Natural England Class Licence (ref. 2015-12611-CLS-CLS) for bats and has held this licence type for over 13 years. Ryan has also acted as the Named Ecologist on numerous European Protected Species (EPS) mitigation licences issued by Natural England covering several bat species and roost types.

This document presents the assessment results, providing the necessary data, evaluation, and guidance to meet relevant planning and conservation policy obligations and legislative requirements.

2. METHODS

The preliminary bat roost assessment was undertaken in accordance with good practice guidelines (*Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines*, 4th edition, Bat Conservation Trust, London; Collins (ed.) 2023). The scope of the assessment was proportionate to the very small-scale nature of the proposed works and the predicted low risk of impacts to bats. In line with this proportionate approach, a desk-top study was not considered necessary.

A daytime visit to the property was undertaken on 24 August 2026. The assessment comprised a visual inspection of the building 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. The 'bat roost suitability' of a building is defined as none, negligible, low, moderate, high or confirmed roost. Only an external inspection was required, as the property and the area proposed for the extension does not contain a loft (i.e. the upper floor features vaulted ceilings).

The assessment was supported by the use of a torch, binoculars, ladders and a camera drone. A digital endoscope was available but not required. The survey was undertaken during the main active season for bats (April to October), when signs of bat presence and roost occupation are typically more evident.



3. RESULTS

Property Description & Potential Roost Features

Photographs of the property, which provide supporting information for the assessment, are presented in Appendix A.

The property comprises a detached, two-storey building with a complex cross-ridge roof design incorporating several dormers. External walls are a mix of sandstone and rendered stonework. The building is relatively modern in construction and was observed to be very well maintained throughout.

No potential roost features were identified within the roof structure, dormers or soffits. All such elements were in good repair and tightly sealed to the walls, with no gaps, defects or crevice features noted that could offer roosting opportunities for bats.

The property does not contain a loft in the location of the proposed extension.

Habitat Suitability

The property is situated off Whalley Road. The surrounding landscape comprises a mix of residential and agricultural land use. Habitats of value to bats are present within the wider area, including woodland blocks located approximately 300–500 m south-west of the site and additional woodland further afield. These features provide suitable foraging and commuting opportunities for bats at a landscape scale; however, given the semi-urban location of the property and the absence of connective habitats in the immediate vicinity, overall bat activity levels and species diversity close to the site are predicted to be low.

Evidence of Bats and Bat Roost Suitability

No bats, evidence of bats, or potential roost features were recorded. The property is therefore assessed as having negligible suitability for use by roosting bats.

Nesting Birds

No evidence of nesting birds was observed and there was considered to be a negligible risk that birds' nests would be present given the lack of gaps or other suitable features on the property.

4. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

No evidence of a bat roost was recorded during the assessment, and no potential roost features were identified. A sufficiently thorough inspection was completed without any limitations.

Taking account of the survey findings and the nature of the proposed works, it is the professional judgement of Knight Sky Ecology that no further detailed assessment is required.

Bats are not considered to represent a constraint to the proposed development, and the works can reasonably proceed without further bat survey effort, subject to the works being undertaken as described. Based on the findings of the assessment, the proposed works are considered highly unlikely to result in an offence under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended) or the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended).

Enhancements

The development presents a good opportunity to increase roosting provision for bats and nesting opportunities for birds via the installation of boxes on the property. Table 4.1 provides the recommended box models.



Table 4.1. Bat & bird box models

No.	Design	Example	Positioning	Description
Bat Box x 1	Greenwoods – two crevice bat box.	BAT BOXES TWO CREVICE BAT BOX 	Suitable for attaching to external walls and should be sited as high up on the wall as possible, at a height of at least 3m from the ground. Avoid siting around external lights and windows. Ideally positioned under roof eaves – any aspect is fine	Designed for small groups of crevice dwelling bat species, such as common and soprano pipistrelles. Available from https://www.greenwoodsecohabitats.co.uk/shop
Bird Box x 1	Vivara Pro WoodStone® House Sparrow Nest Box (double chamber)		The best place to put a bird box is 2–4 metres high on a wall facing between north and east to avoid direct sunlight and the wettest winds. Ensure it is tilted slightly forward to keep rain out, has a clear flight path, and is out of reach of cats.	This house sparrow nest box is manufactured from woodstone® - a mix of concrete and FSC wood fibres. This material protects against damage from predators such as cats, woodpeckers and squirrels. It is available with one or two breeding chambers, which can be particularly suitable for house sparrows as they prefer to nest in colonies. Available from https://www.nhbs.com



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 destroy the eggs of such an animal; or
- Damage 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

Selected photos of
area of property
proposed for
extension.



