Brooks Ecological
Grounded advice

Bat Survey Report

Former Kirklees College Site, New Road, Huddersfield

Trinity One Plc

Report Reference: ER-4850-02

12/08/2020

Report Title:	Bat Survey Report Former Kirklees College Site, New Road, Huddersfield
Report Reference:	ER-4850-02
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Summary Statement

Survey has confirmed the ongoing likely absence of bat roosts on Site. However, a precautionary method of working in certain areas of the Site is recommended; the details of which are outlined in this report. Following this method, the proposals offer little risk of impacting bats or their roosts.

Introduction

1. Subsequent to recommendations set out in the Updating Walkover Survey Report (EL-4850-01), Brooks Ecological was commissioned to carry out a detailed Bat Emergence Survey at the proposed development Site at the Former Kirklees College Site, New Road, Huddersfield.

2. An initial detailed survey was carried out on Site in 2017, where no active roosts were identified. A further survey was undertaken in 2020 to corroborate these findings; survey was undertaken on buildings as highlighted in Figure 1 (below). Additional buildings were present on Site but these were left out of further survey since they were found to offer negligible or very low bat roost suitability, and appear entirely unchanged from when survey was undertaken in 2017.

Figure 1 The Site boundary – 2020 survey extent shown in purple hatch

Method

3. Brooks Ecological specialise in bat surveys ranging from individual buildings through to complex sites requiring numerous visits with large teams. In terms of the survey effort, number of personnel and number of visits required to be able to properly evaluate the building(s) use by bats, we refer to the Bat Conservation Trust Survey Good Practice Guidelines (2016). However, these guidelines are not prescriptive, and we approach each site individually as required using our professional judgement and significant experience base.

4. In this case, one visit with a team of five surveyors was deemed necessary to fully evaluate the potential use of the Site for roosting.

5. Survey was carried out with surveyors positioned around the buildings to cover all aspects where bats could potentially emerge, and to establish activity levels around the Site.

6. The surveyors, using heterodyne detectors, were in place at least 15 minutes before sunset and left once all species of bat would be expected to have left a roost and patterns of activity within the Site had been appraised. Conditions and dates are summarised in Table 1 below.

Table 1 Survey conditions.

Date	Survey Type	Temp. Start/End	Weather
30.07.2020	Emergence	20°C/18°C	Dry. No cloud cover. 5km/h easterly

7. Survey and assessment was directed by Sam Kitching BSc (Hons) MCIEEM. Sam has over eight years' experience of carrying out bat surveys in a professional capacity and is registered to use the Class Survey Licence WML CL18 (Bat Survey Level 2).

Box 1 *Bat roosts*

Bats roost in buildings and trees in different locations depending upon time of year and environmental factors such as position of the sun, proximity to heat sources and feeding grounds. The following types are commonly referred to:

Transitional roosts

Bats frequently gather early in the season (March to April) before dispersing to summer roosts. Bats can be found in high numbers in these roosts for a very short period. Transitional roosts can also be found shortly before hibernation in August to October when bats (depending upon species) can gather in roosts not used earlier in the season.

Maternity roosts

These are among the most important roosts and are normally occupied from May to August. Depending on the species involved, some maternity roosts can contain a very significant proportion of the local population.

Summer (non-breeding) roosts

Small groups of non-breeding female and male bats can gather in these roosts or bats from a local population may choose to roost individually. There are normally a large number of suitable locations for summer non-breeding roosts and these may be routinely used or used only on an occasional basis. Irregularly used summer roosts can be very hard to find without unreasonable survey effort.

Mating roosts

Around September bats will gather in roost to mate; these are often in different locations than summer or breeding roosts.

Hibernation roosts

As bats in hibernation roosts are highly vulnerable to disturbance and bats can be present in large numbers these are considered to be among the most important bat roosts. Many species of bats roost in large and nationally important hibernation roosts associated with underground sites, many of which are well known and protected. However, the most common bat in the UK (the common pipistrelle) is largely unaccounted for in winter but thought to disperse and roost individually or in small groups in thermally stable cracks and crevices in thick walls or trees.

Box 2 *Legal background*

Bats are afforded full protection under The Wildlife and Countryside Act (1981) plus amendments, and the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010. Under these Acts it is an offence among others, to recklessly kill, injure or disturb bats. It is also an offence to destroy or obstruct a roost even if bats are not in occupancy at the time of the action.

There are no defences against contravention of the Habitats Regulations 2010 which means that it is important for detailed and well-designed bat surveys to be carried out, prior to carrying out activities that may impact upon bat roosts such as demolition of buildings or removal of trees.

Where bats are found within a potential development site, a license from Natural England may need to be secured if works that could otherwise contravene legislation are to be carried out. These licences are only issued where Natural England is satisfied that works are unavoidable and would not have a negative impact on the favourable conservation status of bats. A Natural England license requires that the potential development site has full planning permission and that bats were a material consideration of the planning permission.

Survey Results

Emergence – 30th July 2020 (Sunset 21:08)

8. Bat activity was low throughout the course of the survey, reflecting the results of the previous survey effort in 2017. The maximum count of bats seen at any one time was two.

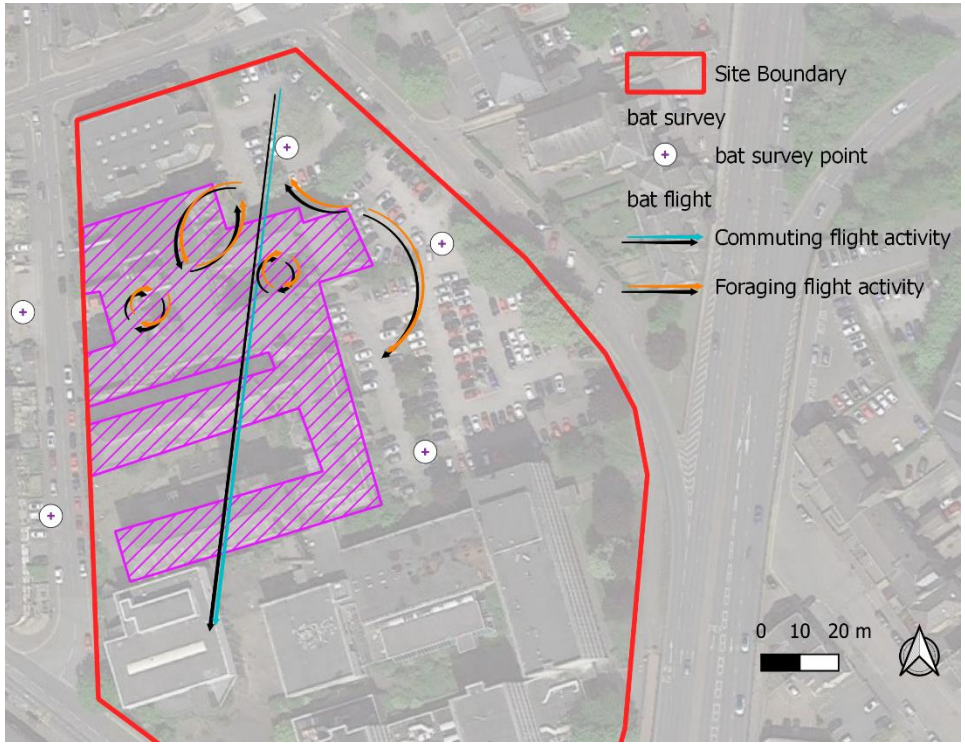
9. The first bat recorded was a noctule, heard at 21:06, two minutes before sunset. This bat was not seen, but the pattern of detection between surveyors suggested it arrived from offsite to the north moving in a southerly direction, high above the Site. This activity was seen on three further occasions, at 21:17, 21:18 and 21:29, with further brief noctule calls recorded later in the survey.

10. At 21:26 a bat was seen high above the courtyard but was not picked up on any surveyor's detectors. The flight lines of this bat suggest it had arrived in this area from elsewhere, but this was not observed.

11. From 21:38 onwards two common pipistrelle bats were observed foraging high above the centre of the building complex. Foraging was focused on this area, but occasional passes were seen to the west and south east of the buildings.

12. No bats were seen to emerge from any point of the surveyed buildings. The flight lines over the buildings when first picked up by the surveyors suggest the bats had arrived from elsewhere, but this was not directly observed.

Figure 2 Summary of bat activity observed during emergence surveys.



Evaluation & Conclusion

13. Survey has demonstrated an ongoing, likely absence of roosting.

14. However, while activity patterns suggest bats are not roosting on Site, their exact arrival in areas above the buildings was not observed, this is largely due to the scale and complexity of the buildings being subject to survey, meaning it is not possible to cover all potential routes into the Site.

15. Despite a likely absence of roosting being concluded, it would be prudent to put in place a precautionary method of working in certain areas, as per below:

    - Prior to any work commencing, the Ecologist will deliver a toolbox talk to all contractors working on areas of the building as highlighted in Figure 3.
    - Once scaffolding is erected in these areas, the Ecologist will undertake an endoscope inspection of any suitable features ahead of any renovation works.
    - The Ecologist will confirm a likely absence of roosting in writing allowing contractors to commence work in earnest.
    - In the unlikely event that a roost is found, work will cease until a Natural England Licence can be secured, or suitable Reasonable Avoidance Measures can be put in place as appropriate.

16. Current survey information is considered sufficient for planning purposes. With the above precaution in place, works would present minimal risk of impacting bats or their roosts.

Figure 3 Area requiring precautionary method

References

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