Eric Bennett Consultancy Ltd

Protected species survey and advice

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Mold Green WMC
Huddersfield

Bat Survey

February 2009.

Details of Surveyor

Surveyor	Experience
Mr Eric Bennett	Licensed bat worker since 1988. Licensed by Natural England for all bat species in all counties. NE Licence No: 20083711

Record of revisions

Date	Details
24 February 2009.	Original Report

Report of Bat Survey
Mold Green WMC, Huddersfield

1 Introduction

1.1 The survey was required in connection with proposals for the redevelopment of the site for residential use. The site was located at the junction of Church Street and Highroyd Crescent, Mold Green, Huddersfield at O.S. Grid Reference SE 156164.

2 Details of work proposed

2.1 Demolition of existing building.

3 Background to the special protection afforded to bats under UK and EC legislation.

3.1 Bats are highly specialised creatures and require a relatively narrow range of suitable conditions in order to sustain a viable population. Bats require an abundant supply of flying insect food in places where they can easily be caught and they need safe and reliable roosting sites, particularly during breeding and hibernation.

3.2 Bats are heavily dependent on buildings and trees for their roost sites and, therefore, extremely susceptible to disturbance from human activities ranging from simple maintenance work through major conversion and renovation schemes to building demolition. Development schemes can also isolate bat populations and sever roost sites from favoured feeding areas, by removing hedgerows and trees that bats use as commuting routes.

3.3 Bats are susceptible to disturbance and have been known to abandon roosts sites after instances of disturbance. The effects of disturbance are more pronounced at different times of year. Serious disturbance during breeding can result in the breeding females being killed or the abandonment and subsequent starvation of dependent young. Repeated disturbance during winter hibernation can result in the death of adult animals from starvation.

3.4 The level of protection afforded to bats in UK and European legislation reflects the fact that it is now generally accepted that bats have declined substantially, maybe by as much as 60% over recent years. Most species are declining and vulnerable and all are protected.

4 Details of Survey

4.1 Daytime survey by two surveyors.

5 Methodology for the survey

5.1 A detailed internal and external inspection of the building was carried out to identify potential roost sites and access points and any signs of actual occupation such as droppings, discarded moth wings, staining etc.

5.2 A dusk emergence and activity survey was not carried out because of the season.

5.3 Assessment of site and surrounding habitats.

5.4 Search of existing bat roost records.

6 Description of habitats

6.1 The site was located in a largely residential area with a large woodland area close by along Kilner Bank, high ground overlooking the town centre to the west. Extensive woodlands were also present to the south of the A629 Wakefield Road in the Dog Kennel Bank area.

7 Results of daytime survey

7.1 The survey was carried out on 24 February 2009.

7.2 The site consisted of the main two-storey stone building (shown coloured pink on the plan attached) with three small single-storey extensions on the front and south side and a large formerly flat mineral felt roof extension at the rear later re-roofed with a pitched roof leaving the original roof in place beneath.

7.3 The small extensions were all roofed with plain interlocking concrete tiles. Two were of brick construction and one stone. Gaps were noted behind timber fascias but these locations were quite low in relation to the remainder of the building and unlikely to be attractive to bats.

7.4 The re-roofed rear section was also covered with underfelt and plain interlocking concrete tiles. The eaves were generally quite low particularly at the back where the building was cut into the slope of the land and unlikely to be attractive to bats. The north gable along Highroyd Crescent rose to a ridge line close to the front of the building. The verge was generally well pointed with no suitable openings. One opening near the apex was probably too large for bats and likely to be used by nesting birds. This area was also examined closely from the inside and no signs found. The new roof was built into the eaves of the main building continuing the main roof in the same line. No signs were found in any part of the new roof.

7.5 The front eaves line from the north-east corner back to the eaves of the main building showed gaps in the top courses behind the guttering but no signs of use were noted. This area was not accessible internally.

7.6 The main building was built from stone with plain interlocking concrete roof tiles. The front eaves had an ornamental cornice feature leaving no potential openings for bats. The gables were hipped without an apex and the eaves showed no potential access points. The rear eaves were covered by the new roof over the former flat roofed extension. The loft was accessible and inspected. The roof was supported on king-post trusses. The ridge and gables were very cobwebby. No signs were found.

8 Results of dusk survey

8.1 A dusk survey was not carried out because of the season.

9 Existing local records

9.1 West Yorkshire Bat Group has the following records.

SE159163	Vesper Bat species. 26/07/2005. Roost. 0 Count of Adult. School Street, Mold Green, Huddersfield. Bat seen at gable end during roof works. No others found.
SE147169	Vesper Bat species. 25/01/2006. Roost. 1 Count of Adult. Huddersfield Sports Centre, Southgate, Huddersfield. Bat flying in changing room/pool area.
SE148158	Vesper Bat species. 17/07/2007. Roost. Manor Rise, Primrose Hill, Huddersfield.
SE152153	Pipistrelle Bat species. 20/07/2007. Roost. Ashenhurst Student Village, Athene Drive, off Wood Lane, Newsome. Bats getting into kitchen in student accommodation.
SE155160	Pipistrelle Bat species. 02/08/2007. Casualty. 2 days on wall. 1 Count of Adult. Kilburn Close, Huddersfield.
SE149160.	*Pipistrellus Pipistrellus.* 20/09/1996. Roost (maternity). 51-100 Count of Adult. King's Mill La, Longley, HD1. House.
SE157157	*Pipistrellus Pipistrellus*. 21/07/1999. Roost (possible). 2-5 Count of Adult. Almondbury Tennis Club.

West Yorkshire Ecology also has a locally reported roost close to site (670m). Date and location not known. No bats seen during emergence survey.

10 Protected species legislation

10.1 Bats and their roosts are fully protected at all times (whether the bats are currently present or not). This protection comes from the Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981 (updated by the Countryside & Rights of Way Act 2000) and the Habitats Regulations 1994 (updated by the Conservation (Natural Habitats) (Amendment) Regulations 2007. Under this legislation it is an offence to deliberately kill, injure, capture or disturb bats or to damage, destroy or obstruct access to any place used by bats as a breeding site or resting place.

10.2 Under the habitats regulations, where bats may be affected by development proposals, a licence is required from Natural England. Published guidelines on the licence procedure indicate that if, on the basis of survey information and specialist knowledge of the species concerned, the proposed activity is **reasonably likely** to result in an offence then, a licence is required. If, on the other hand the proposed activity is **reasonably unlikely** to result in an offence, then a licence is not required.

11 Evaluation of survey results

11.1 The survey produced no evidence to suggest the possible presence of a bat roost in any part of the building. The site was situated in an elevated and quite exposed location on the edge of high ground and open to prevailing winds. A summer breeding roost would be unlikely in these circumstances. A locally reported roost is present in the vicinity.

11.2 Overall the building contained few suitable opportunities. Openings were noted behind the guttering at the front of the building and an apex opening was noted in the north gable. The latter appeared too large for bats and more likely to be used by small birds. Openings in these areas would in any case be more likely to attract single male bats with summer breeding roosts normally found on the warmer south side (in this case the more exposed aspect).

11.3 Internally there were no signs of droppings inside the loft spaces which might indicate a roost of Pipistrelle bat in the eaves/gable area. The internal species such as Brown Long-eared bat would be very unlikely in these circumstances.

12 Site & species status assessment

12.1 No evidence to suggest the presence of a bat roost and overall considered unlikely.

13 Assessment of Impacts

13.1 No negative impacts are predicted.

Development effect	Scale of Impact			
	Negligible	Low	Medium	High
Destruction of roost site	+			
Temporary loss of roost site during building works.	+			
Modification of roost site	+			
Risk of entombing bats during building work	+			
Risk of killing/injuring bats during roof stripping		+		
Temporary disturbance from building works during breeding season	+			
Temporary disturbance from building works outside the breeding season	+			
Post development interference	+			

14 Mitigation guidelines

14.1 Mitigation is required to avoid or reduce the impact of development proposals on the population of bats present, either roosting or feeding. Licences are normally required where a roost site is threatened in some way by a scheme, but might also be necessary where the viability of a roost is threatened by the removal of the availability of crucial feeding habitat.

14.2 Natural England in their published guidelines (Bat Mitigation Guidelines Jan 2004) defines the key principles involved. i.e. **Mitigation** involving changes to the scheme or altering the timing of work to reduce or remove impacts and **Compensation**, the creation of new replacement roosts or habitats.

14.3 Natural England also requires mitigation/compensation to be proportionate to the size of the impact and the importance of the population affected and as a principle:

- There should be no net loss of roost sites and that compensation should provide an enhanced resource since the adoption of new roost sites bay bats is not guaranteed.
- The scheme should aim to replace like with like in terms of the status of the site. i.e. male roost, maternity roost, hibernation roost etc.
- Compensation should ensure that the affected bat population could continue to function as before so attention may need to be given to surrounding habitats.

15 Mitigation proposals

15.1 In this case since there are no indications to suggest the presence of a bat roost, no formal mitigation measures are required although some precautionary measures are recommended in these cases.

15.2 Purely as a precaution, roof stripping should not be carried out during the breeding season (May-August) unless the absence of bats has been confirmed by a dusk emergence survey. Care should also be taken during roof stripping lifting rather than sliding ridge tiles and checking beneath for signs of bats. If bats or droppings are found further advice should be sought immediately and work halted in that area.

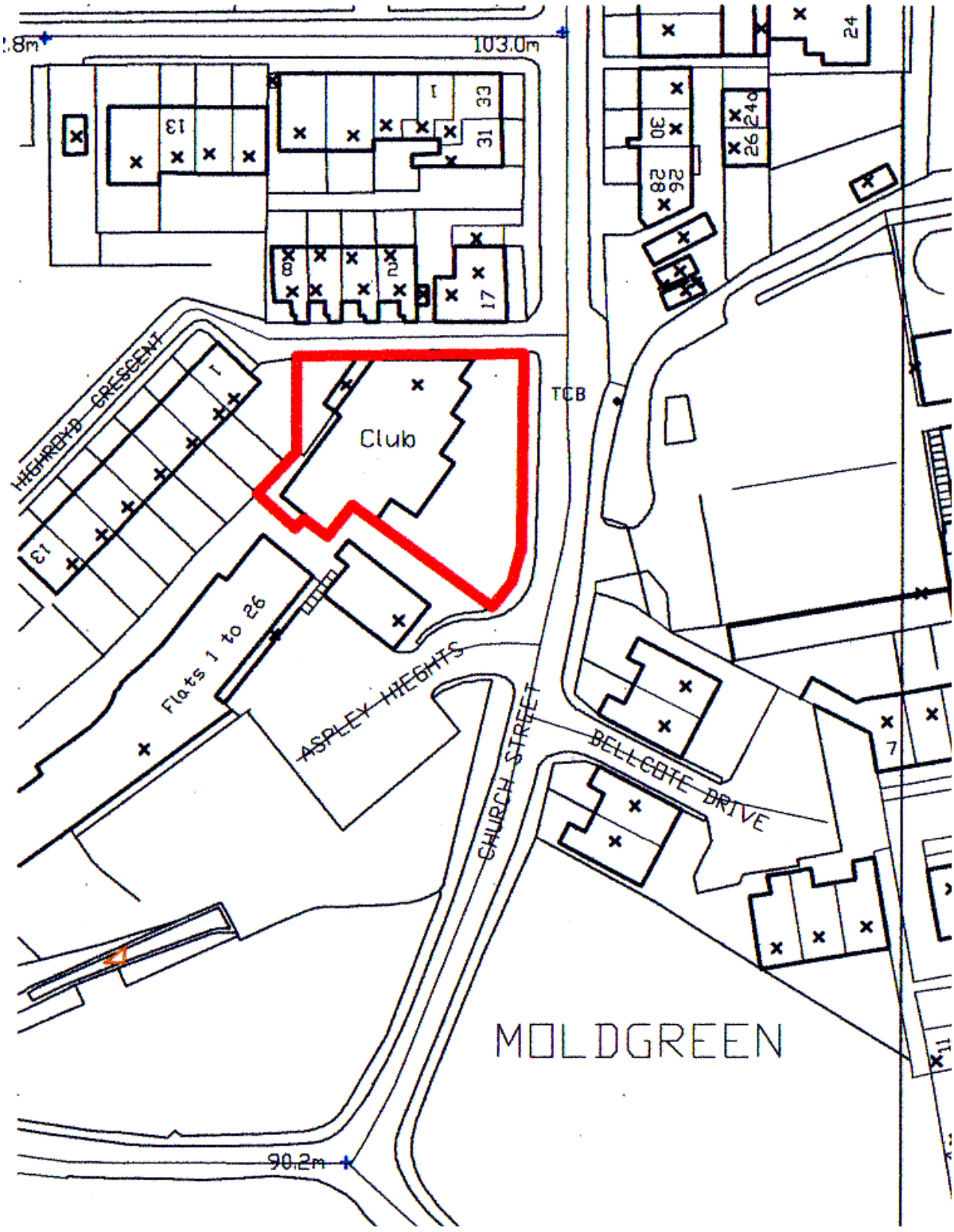
15.3 In these circumstances it is not considered that there would be any benefit in creating opportunities for bats in the new building.

16 Conclusions & Recommendations

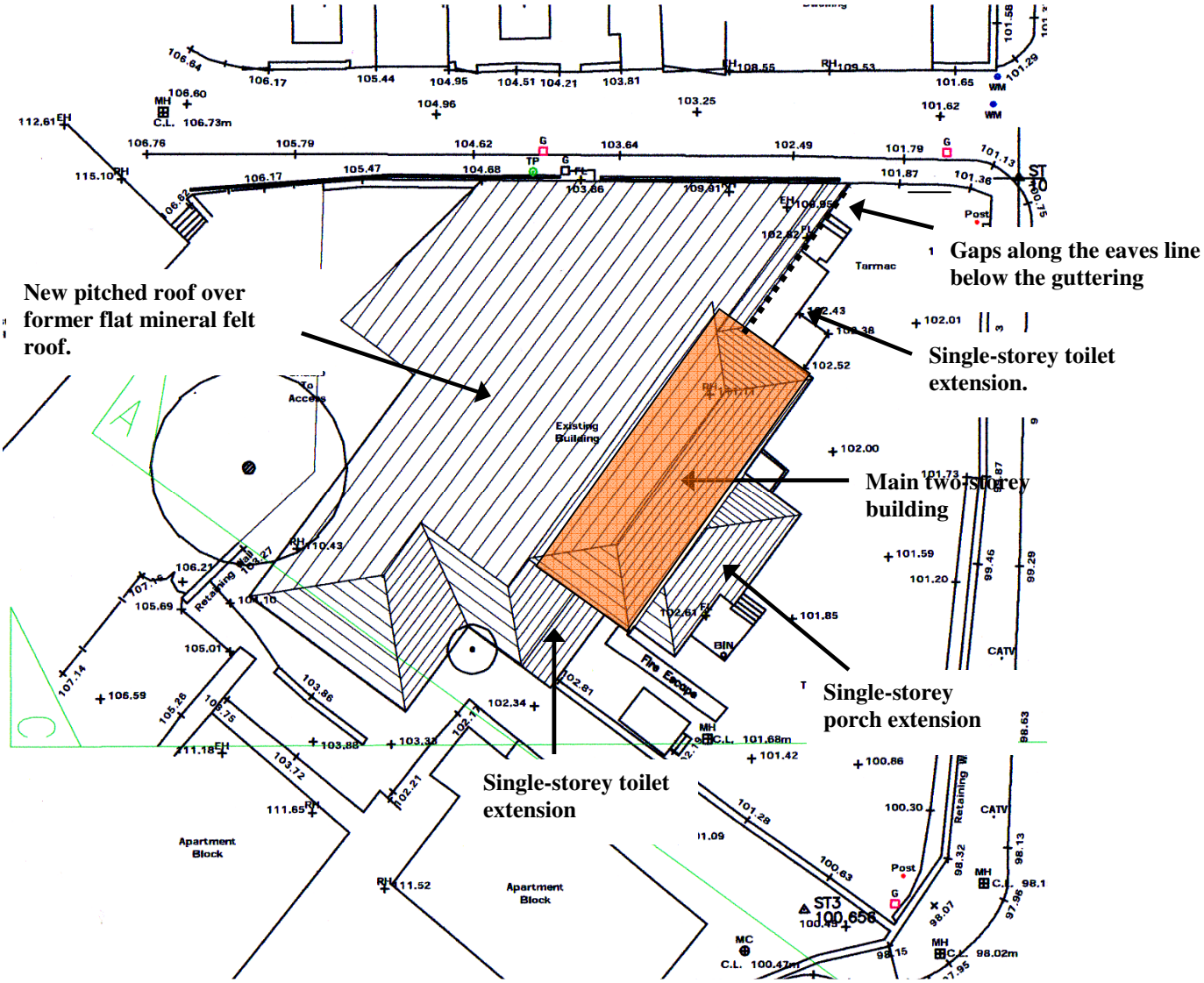
16.1 As things stand there is no evidence to suggest the presence of a bat roost and accordingly no need, therefore, to seek a Natural England license. It should be kept in mind, however, that if bats are subsequently discovered or suspected, (droppings appearing in patches on external walls, or audible sounds of scratching or chattering are heard, work should be stopped and further advice sought without delay. A Natural England license application would almost certainly be required. This process generally takes 30 working days from submission.

16.2 The precautionary mitigation measures as described are recommended.

EM Bennett
February 2009



Mold Green WMC, Huddersfield
Bat Survey – February 2009.
Not to Scale



Mold Green WMC, Huddersfield
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Not to Scale

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FIG 1