

Bat Survey Report and Method Statement European Protected Species (Bats)

Reasonable Avoidance and Mitigation Measures

**Outbuildings at Gledhill Farm,
Kaye Lane,
Almondbury,
HD5 8XU**

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Executive summary

In February 2021 Batworker consultancy was commissioned to undertake a preliminary bat roost assessment of outbuildings at Gledhill Farm, Kaye Lane, Almondbury, HD5 8XU to assess the potential for impact on protected species.

A daytime surveys was carried out on 23rd February 2021 in order to support plans to develop the buildings.

The survey found no evidence of bats using buildings to roost.

Survey effort is considered appropriate to characterise the roost potential of buildings and that the presence of a significant bat roost is unlikely on site.

“The presence of a significant bat roost (invariably a maternity roost) can normally be determined on a single visit at any time of year, provided that the entire structure is accessible and that any signs of bats have not been removed by others”. - Mitchell-Jones, A (2004) Bat mitigation guidelines. English Nature.

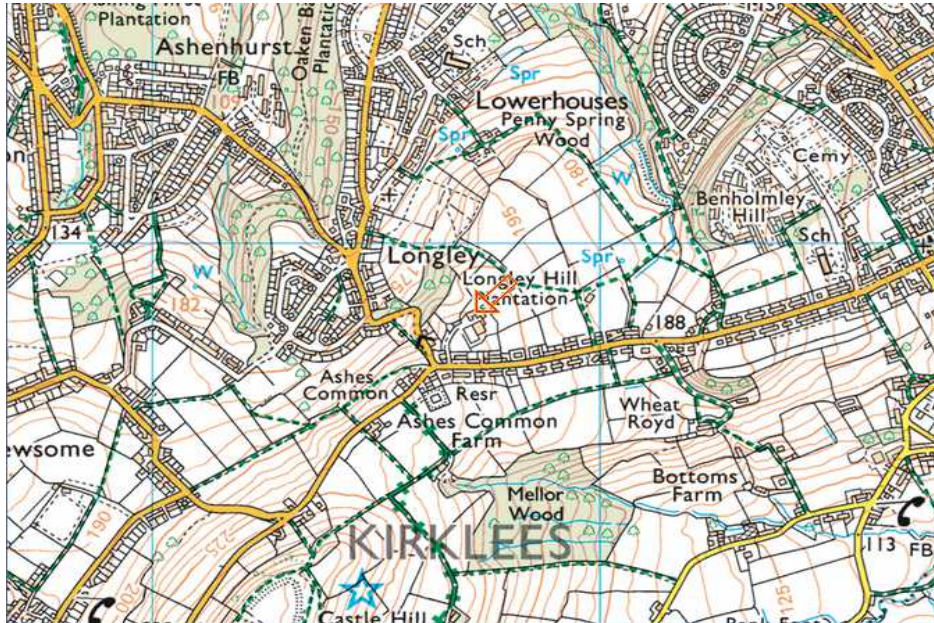
It is considered that a precautionary approach to development with suitable reasonable avoidance measures and mitigation in the form of timing of works is appropriate, and compensatory bat boxes would be an appropriate approach to roost compensation commensurate with that expected by Natural England for the purposes of licencing should it be necessary.

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’.

This method statement is designed to minimise or remove any potential disturbance to bats. By following the Reasonable Avoidance Measures and mitigation included in this document the work can take place, ensuring the Continued Ecological Functionality of the site.

Site Location

Gledhill Farm, Kaye Lane, Almondbury, HD5 8XU
NGR: SE1571614827



Site Layout



The site consists of three buildings that were assessed as offering negligible/low bat roost potential:

- 1) A two storey stone outbuilding, with proposed ground floor development.
- 2) A single storey outbuilding used for livestock.

Survey summary and site assessment

Pre-existing information on the bat species present at this site.

Bat record data: records were obtained from Magic.gov.uk. A search of the MAGIC (www.magic.gov.uk) website revealed one bat EPS licence application within a 1km radius.

2016-27076-EPS-MIT SE16391379 Destruction of brown long eared bat resting place.

The property is located in a semi-rural position with surrounding habitat dominated by a mosaic of semi improved and improved grassland, replanted ancient woodland associated with Benholmley Beck and semi natural deciduous woodland. Some remnant hedgerows is present along field boundaries. Connectivity to the wider landscape is considered to be moderate..

Foraging potential for bats can be considered to be moderate to high.

Survey Personnel.

Personnel on surveys included: David Anderson, an experienced ecologist and bat researcher with 25 years experience of fieldwork and bat ecology, a founder member of the East Lancashire Bat Group and 'Batworker.com', formerly a Natural History Curator and manager of the East Lancashire Biological Records Centre. (Natural England licence No:2015-15784-CLS-CLS, Conservation, Science and Education).

Survey Summary

Survey	Date	Timings
Visual	23.02.2021	1Hours

Survey constraints

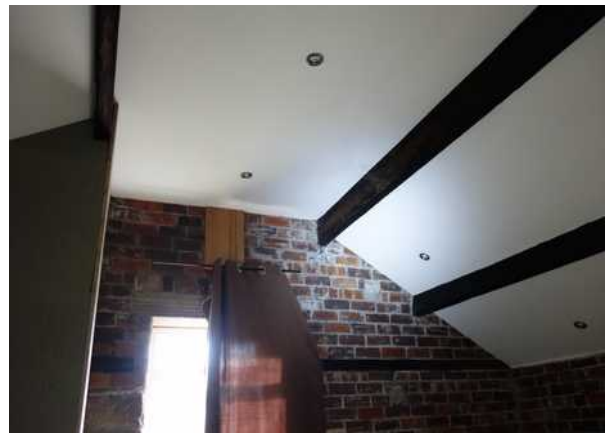
Access to all areas of the interior and exterior of the buildings was possible and good visual inspection at ground level was possible.

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 locations 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

Building 1



A two storey stone built outbuilding with double pitched stone slate roof. The roof is lined internally as the upper floor has a vaulted roof. Some gaps and crevices recorded in external walls however resulting crevices are shallow, missing pointing on gable ends offers some roost potential however it is considered the development of the building will not affect these due to work being internal and restricted to ground floor.

Building 2



A single storey stone built outbuilding, adjoining building 1, with a double pitched stone slate roof. Roof is unlined to the interior and heavily cobwebbed. External walls are generally pointed with no obvious gaps or crevices, roof slates are generally close fitting, however an area of lifted slates was recorded. Ridge tiles are pointed and sealed, a ridge vent is present allowing access to the interior. The building was assessed as offering low potential for roosting bats, however heavy cobwebbing of the interior roof space suggests a lack of bat activity.

Visual Inspection - Bats

Buildings on site were surveyed with no physical evidence of bats being recorded during inspections. The outbuildings have been assessed as offering negligible to low potential for roosting bats when combining evidence observed, location and potential roost features recorded.

Interpretation of results

Surveys carried out on site have found no evidence of bats using buildings to roost. The buildings were assessed as offering negligible to low potential for roosting bats.

Survey effort is considered appropriate to characterise the roost potential of buildings and that the presence of bats is unlikely on site given the evidence observed, location of the site and potential roost features recorded.

“The presence of a significant bat roost (invariably a maternity roost) can normally be determined on a single visit at any time of year, provided that the entire structure is accessible and that any signs of bats have not been removed by others”. - Mitchell-Jones, A (2004) Bat mitigation guidelines. English Nature

In the unlikely event that bats are present, roosts will likely consist of small numbers of common species of low conservation value.

It is considered that a precautionary approach to development with suitable reasonable avoidance measures with mitigation in the form of timing of works and compensatory bat boxes would be an appropriate approach to roost compensation commensurate with that expected by Natural England for the purposes of licencing should it be necessary.

Whilst it is possible that further survey work may identify further roosts, it is considered that these will likely consist of small day roosts of common species, low conservation value and bat boxes will be suitable compensation.

Impact Assessment

Short-term impacts – disturbance Low risk:

Roof stripping where necessary will be undertaken by hand and under supervision following a precautionary emergence survey carried out between May and September and installation of compensatory roost boxes.

Long-term impacts - Roost loss: No impact on a local bat population.

Long-term impacts - Fragmentation and isolation:

Minimal risk, the impact of the proposed development on local bat species will be insignificant.

Predicted scale of impact

No loss of roosting sites of a common and relatively widespread species.

Method Statement and Reasonable Avoidance Measures

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 and will form part of the EPS Licence application where necessary.

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.

Compensatory bat boxes (Two Greenwood Eco Habitats two crevice boxes) will be placed on trees on site prior to work commencing and will be used to house any bats found during works.

Timing of works - No work will take place until a single emergence survey is carried out (May to September) to confirm absence of bats. In the unlikely event that bats are observed further survey work will be necessary to support a Natural England EPS licence application.

Work to affected roof areas will take place under supervision of the batworker.

Removal of roof slates will be carried out by hand and under supervision where necessary.

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 and recover any bats / safely remove them from site.