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Bat Survey to
Hillhouse & Birkby Bowling Club
King Cliffe Road
Huddersfield
HD2 2RR

20th November 2022



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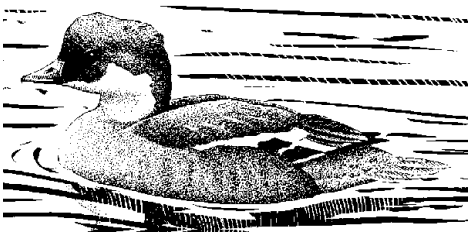

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1. Summary

1.1 A bat scoping survey has been carried out to Hillhouse & Birkby Bowling Club to assess the site's potential to support roosting bats. The site was the subject of a preliminary ecological assessment (PEA) carried out by JCA (September 2022) which assessed the building as being of 'moderate' potential to support bats due to a number of potential bat roosting features (PRFs) and the recommendation was for two activity surveys to be undertaken during the optimal period. All PRFs were described within the PEA and identified on a schematic. Subsequent to the original PEA, the owners have undertaken remedial works to all identified features which means the PRFs identified no longer exist.

1.2 The loss of PRFs means that there is no benefit in undertaking the activity surveys and instead, a further scoping survey has been carried out to reassess the building's current status in regard to potential roosting bats. The ecology surveys were requested as part of a planning application for the development of a covered 5-a-side football pitch with a link extension between the pitch and the existing building. The current scoping survey was undertaken outside the optimal time for bat occupancy and therefore aimed to establish the *likelihood* of bats using the building

1.3 The building is the former clubhouse of the bowling club and is constructed of brick with blue slate roof tiles. The main building is T-shaped with pitched roofs and there are also three flat roofed extensions encasing the main buildings. The walls are mostly brick with some rendered sections and there is no wall cavity. The original report (JCA 2022) did not include a full survey of the roof interior nor state whether there is any underfelt, but the roof appears original and it is likely that roof is unlined. The wooden soffits are deep and quite well sealed at the wall tops and the flat roof sections offer few potential roosting features. The original report suggests that the building should be assessed as being of 'moderate' roosting potential though some of the PRFs identified therein are likely to be unsuitable for bats given their size which would also allow access to squirrels and birds. The building was more likely to be regarded as being of 'low' roosting potential. However, this is all a moot point as all PRFs identified in the JCA report have been repaired such that bats can no longer use the features.

1.4 The remedial works undertaken subsequent to the original PEA means that the building should now be assessed as being of 'negligible' roosting potential as the number and diversity of PRFs are no longer available. Given that potential roosting features have been lost, permanent roosting features must be included in the development and incorporated into the plans. This will provide some recompense for any PRFs that have been lost. Internal or external roosting features should be included on both the south and west elevations of the final scheme such as those made by Schwegler.

1.5 There are no statutory constraints to the development of this building with regards to bats and no further survey work is required.

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2. Introduction

2.1 Following a PEA in 2022 (JCA Ltd) the building on site was assessed as being of 'moderate' roosting potential and all potential roosting features (PRFs) were noted on a schematic and a recommendation of two activity surveys during the optimal period was made. Subsequent to this survey, remedial works have been carried out to all features identified such that they are no longer considered PRFs and the chance of use by bats has been eliminated. In view of this, a second scoping survey has been carried out to determine of the summer activity surveys are still required. The site address is Hillhouse & Birkby Bowling Club, King Cliffe Road, Huddersfield HD2 2RR (NGR SE141181). The site was also checked for the presence of nesting birds.

2.2 The application is for a covered 5-a-side football pitch which will link into the existing buildings.

2.3 The survey took place at a time considered to be outside the optimal period for bat occupancy but still aimed to establish the following:

- The likelihood of bats using the building by undertaking a scoping survey.
- Identify any potential roosting features (PRFs).
- Determine if activity surveys are required.
- Provide an impact assessment of the development on bats.
- Define mitigation proposals where required.
- Assess the requirement for a protected species licence.
- Assess the building for use by nesting birds.

3. Methodology

3.1 The site was surveyed in accordance with BCT best practice guidelines and surveyor experience by John Gardner, a surveyor with 41yrs field experience in searching for bats and is registered to use the Class Survey Licence WML CL20 (Level 4). The licence number is 2015-15656-CLS-CLS.

3.2 The exterior of the building was inspected during daylight using torches and binoculars. All normal signs of bats were looked for including bats, dead baby bats, bat droppings, prey remains, scratching and staining of entry and exit holes.

3.3 The building was assessed for its degree of potential to support roosting bats including assessing the building design, construction, materials, and condition. This combined with an assessment of the location of the site and the surrounding habitat in terms of bat suitability allows an assessment to be made as to the potential of the building to support bats. Factors such as the proximity of good foraging areas (woodland, water bodies) and features that link the site to the wider surrounds such as linear features (hedgerows etc) were also considered.

3.4 This report sets out the findings of a daytime scoping carried out to the above site on Sunday 20th November 2022. The report highlights the ecological constraints and opportunities associated with the proposed works and appraises the potential impacts. Appropriate actions to ensure the protection of bats are identified and mitigation measures detailed where appropriate.

4. Survey constraints

4.1 No internal survey was carried out but this has been done by JCA (2022) and is not considered a constraint to the survey.

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5. Site Description

5.1 The site consists of a former clubhouse of the Hillhouse & Birkby Bowling Club and is located in an urban area but is within close proximity to moderate foraging and commuting habitat. There are many buildings locally which will also offer equal or greater roosting potential and the site is connected to the wider landscape by a series of linear features. Bat numbers are likely to be unremarkable and limited to the commoner species.

Figure 1. Site location plan

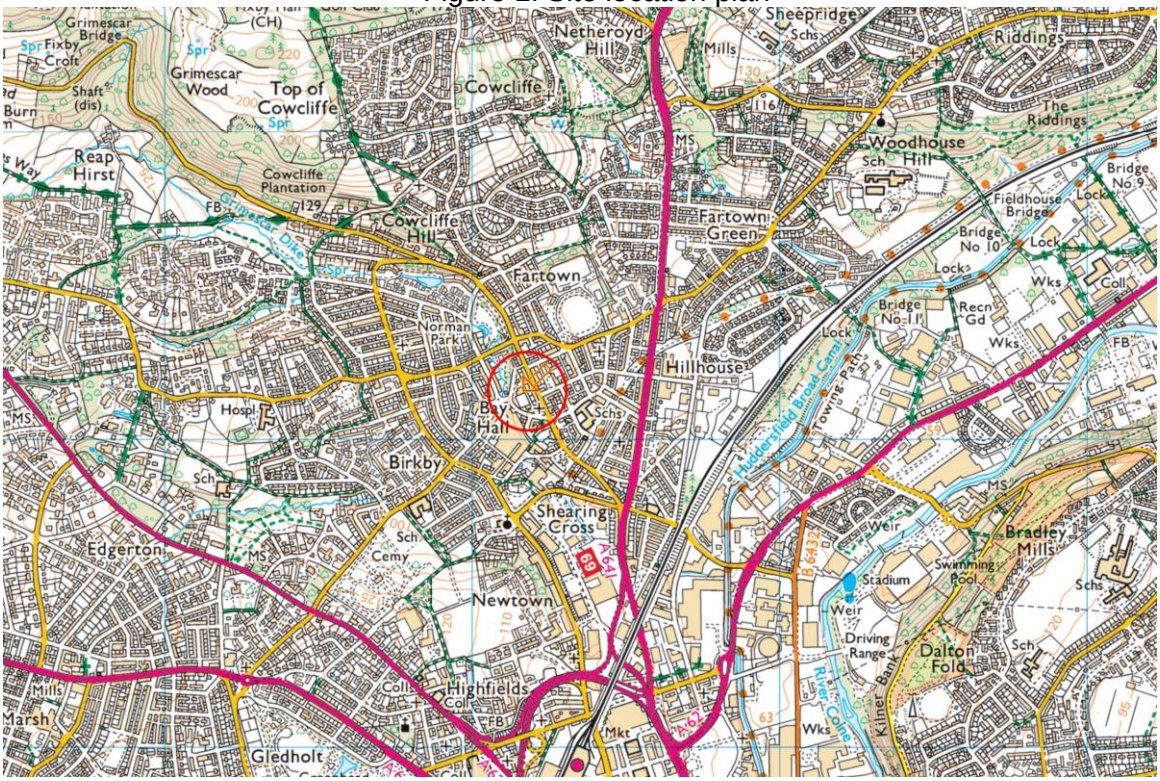



Figure 2 Aerial view of the site, surrounds and specific buildings surveyed

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6. Desk Study

Data searches carried out by JCA in September 2022 did not reveal any records relating directly to the site and most records within 2km were historical. No new data searches have been conducted. Furthermore, the zone of impact does not extend beyond the site footprint and, therefore, will have no impact on known bat roosts within this area.

7. Activity surveys

7.1 No activity surveys were undertaken as the scoping survey took place outside the optimal period for bat occupancy.

8. Survey results

The building is a former clubhouse constructed of brick with blue slate roof. The roof is sound and now has no missing or slipped tiles as all such tiles noted by JCA have been repaired along with the larger gaps noted in the roof verge. The roof is unlined so it is less likely that bats would have roosted beneath the raised tiles that were identified. The walls of the main building are brick and are header and stretcher style and therefore, there is no wall cavity. There were only minor structural cracks noted in the original PEA and these have since been repaired. The gable walls have no decorative wooden features (facia etc) though there are deep overhanging wooden soffits. There are no gaps that would allow access to the wall tops and any gaps noted in the original PEA have since been repaired.

There were small sections of raised felt along the flat roofed sections which were highlighted as being of potential interest to bats but as with the main building, these have all been repaired. A larger gap on the west elevation where the flat roof meets the end wall has also been repointed though this was ostensibly too large for use by bats and is more likely to have been used by sparrows etc. The following photographs illustrate the remedial works that have taken place to all features identified in the report by JCA and this report can be cross referenced.



Photo 1 showing remedial works that have taken place (cf. JCA report)

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9. Interpretation and analysis

The building was assessed as ‘moderate’ bat roost potential in the JCA (2022) report due to various features and defects in the building. The client has misinterpreted the identification of these features as areas requiring remedial works and has carried out repairs to all of the features identified in that report. This is not what was intended by JCA as they recommended two activity surveys be carried out during the optimal period for bat occupancy and before development works began. It could be argued that an assessment of ‘moderate’ was slightly high as the walls have no cavities and some features identified as PRFs were possibly too large to be used by bats. All British bats are crevice dwelling and nearly all prefer to squeeze into cavities whereby their stomachs and backs are pressed against the roosting feature. Large openings also allow birds and even squirrels to enter and in such cases it would be unlikely that bats would also use the feature. The building might possibly have been assessed as being of ‘low’ potential and thereby requiring only a single survey.

Due to the fact that all the identified potential roosting features have been repaired and blocked by mortar or mastic, the building is now assessed as being of negligible value as all PRFs have been destroyed. In its current state, the building seems unlikely that it would support roosting bats and there is little point in carrying out an activity survey. As potential roost features have been lost, there should be some form of compensation included in the proposed development. It would be beneficial to include at least two permanent bat roosting features during the construction phase.

10. Impact assessment

The building has been reassessed as being of negligible bat roosting potential due to the remedial works that have been carried out resulting in the loss of the PRFs originally identified. Compensation will redress the loss and potentially allow bats to roost in the building. The proposed works will not result in fragmentation or loss of habitat and will not have any impact beyond the site footprint.

11. Mitigation measures

The building has been assessed as being of ‘negligible’ interest to bats due to the lack of potential roosting features lost to the repair works. The original report assessed the building as being of ‘moderate’ potential to bats but this is no longer the case and therefore, there is a requirement for compensation in the form of permanent roosting features. There is no requirement for a European Protected Species Mitigation License (EPSML). The following compensation has been specified and should be included in any planning consent that might be granted:

Features and enhancements

- A permanent bat roosting feature will be added to both the south and west elevations of the building and can be either integral or an external fitting (Schwegler have a wide range available). External fixtures are inexpensive and easy to incorporate – Schwegler 1FQ bat houses would be ideal. These should be placed high up at eaves level and should be in place prior to the re-opening of the site.

Timings

- There are no timing constraints to the works

12. Conclusion

The survey concluded that the building nay have offered moderate roosting potential due to the presence of features noted in the original PEA survey by JCA Ltd (2022). Since the publication

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of that report, remedial works have been carried out to all the features identified which has resulted in the building being of no potential interest to roosting bats in its current state. As these works were carried out incorrectly and should have remained in their initial state until summer activity surveys had been carried out, then compensation must be provided in the new building in the form of permanent bat roosting features affixed or integral to the west and south elevation of the final project.