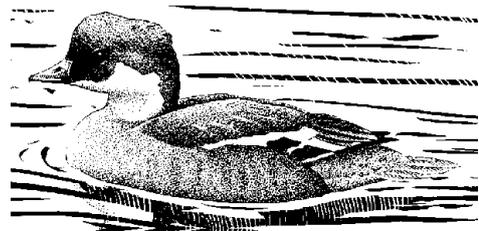


Bat Survey to
31 Chapel Hill
Linthwaite
West Yorkshire
HD7 5NJ

13th March 2023



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1. Summary

- 1.1 A bat scoping survey has been carried out to the former Methodists' chapel in Linthwaite to determine if the building is being used or has potential to be used by roosting bats. The survey is required as part of a planning application and was undertaken outside the optimal time for bat occupancy and therefore aimed to establish the *likelihood* of bats using the building. The application seeks to convert the building into residential apartments.
- 1.2 The building is a large former Methodist chapel constructed from local stone with blue slate to the roof which does not appear to have slipped or missing tiles. Internally, the roof space is large and open with a window in the east gable and a Velux window on the north slope. There were no scattered droppings or discarded prey remains on the wooden floor or the stored goods. The roof membrane goes over the ridge section and forms a seal and there is no light ingress. There was no evidence to suggest bats have used the roof. Externally, the walls are sound and without structural gaps and there are no decorative wooden features such as soffits or fascia. The gutters sit on stone corbels and do not offer roosting sites that could be seen from ground level. The west gable is carved stone with large capping stones to the verge and offer no obvious roosting sites. The east gable is difficult to inspect from ground level due to the height but appears to be a dry verge that might have some minor gaps where mortar has failed.
- 1.3 The building is three storeys in height and the east and north elevations are difficult to inspect but there appears to be little potential for bats to roost in this building and there are many other buildings close by which offer greater roosting potential. It is thought unlikely that the building is used by bats and is assessed as being of 'low' roosting potential.
- 1.4 The building is not considered essential to species survival, but a single activity survey undertaken during the optimal period would confirm the absence of bats. Therefore, at least one emergence or dawn return survey should be carried out by a suitably qualified ecologist during the period May to September.

2. Introduction

- 2.1 A bat scoping survey was carried out 31 Chapel Hill, Linthwaite, Huddersfield HD7 5NJ (NGR SE095139) to determine whether bats have or are using the building as a roost site. The site was also checked for the presence of nesting birds.
- 2.2 The current proposal seeks planning permission to convert the former chapel into residential apartments.
- 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 42yrs 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 interior and 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 Monday 6th March 2023. This 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 There were no constraints to the survey.

5. Site Description

5.1 The site consists of a large stone former Methodist Chapel which is three storeys in height and has a slate roof. It is located in an urban area with only average quality foraging close by the site is connected to the wider landscape by a series of linear features, Experience suggests that bat activity in this area is likely to be unremarkable.

Figure 1. Site location plan



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

6. Desk Study

The building is assessed as being of low bat roost potential and requires further survey work which will determine the bat activity in this area. It is highly unlikely that any bat records exist relating directly to this site and records for this area are usually sparse in general. Furthermore, the zone of impact does not extend beyond the site footprint and, therefore, will have no impact on bat roosts within this area. Therefore, no data searches have been undertaken at this time but may be requested at the time of the activity survey.

7. Activity surveys

7.1 No activity surveys were carried out due to the time of year.

8. Survey results

The building is a three-storey former Methodist chapel constructed from local stone. The blue slate roof does not appear to have missing or slipped tiles and seems to be sound with all ridges present. The west gable has large capping stones which have a sound lead flashing to the rear and do not appear to offer any potential roosting sites. The east gable has a dry verge which is very difficult to assess from ground level as it is not possible to get far enough back and it is also obscured by trees when viewed from further back. However, the verge appears reasonably sound but there are sections of failed verge mortar. Internally, the roof is lined with a breathable membrane which is sound. The timbers are all modern replacements apart from the large roof trusses and it appears that the roof has previously been in a poor state of repair but has been replaced and repaired in recent times. Some of the larger trusses are shifting and have cracks in the joints but these did not show evidence of use by bats. The membrane covers the ridge section and there is no light ingress save for that from a window in the east gable apex and a Velux window on the north slope of the roof. The attic is floored and has stored goods which would make evidence of bats easily spotted. However, there were no scattered droppings, no accumulations at the gable walls and no discarded prey remains. It seems unlikely that the roof has been used by ridge dwelling species.

The walls are stone and are sound without structural cracks or gaps. The west gable has large, detailed capping stones forming an overhanging cover of the wall and seem unlikely to have any bat roost potential. There are no fascia or soffits on any of the elevations and the east gable has only a dry verge which is reasonably sound. There appears to be a very limited number and diversity of potential roosting features, but the height of the building makes it very difficult to view the wall tops and the east gable. Because of this fact, a single activity survey should be carried out during the appropriate survey period to determine the presence or absence of bats.

9. Interpretation and analysis

The proposed conversion of this building is highly unlikely to have any impact on bats as the style and construction of the building offers a very limited number and diversity of roosting sites. There was no evidence to suggest bats have used the roof space and the roof does appear to have been repaired or recovered in recent years as it has new rafters and a breathable membrane beneath the blue slates. Experience suggests that it is unlikely that bats are using the building but given the limitations in surveying the upper sections from ground level, an activity survey conducted during the summer survey period would be beneficial and determine if bats are using the building and also the level of bat activity in the area. The building is located in an urban area and there are many buildings close by which offer much greater roost potential.

Although bats of a local provenance are likely to be present in the area, experience suggest that bat activity over the site is likely to be unremarkable given the location and surrounding habitat.

10. Impact assessment

The building has been assessed as being of low roosting potential and therefore, a single emergence survey should be carried out by a qualified ecologist using at least two surveyors to cover the building. If bata are found not to be using the building, then it is unlikely that there will be any impact to bats from the proposed conversion. There will likely be no loss of existing roost sites or habitat and no fragmentation of habitat caused by the development.

11. Further survey work

The building has been assessed as being of low interest to bats and, consequently, there is no requirement for a European Protected Species Mitigation Licence (EPSML) but a single activity survey should be undertaken during the summer period when bats are most likely to be back in summer roosts.

Timings

- The summer activity survey should take place between May and September when bats are back in their summer roosts. Weather conditions must be conducive to the survey with ground temperatures being 10°C or above at the time of the survey.

12. Conclusion

The survey concluded that the buildings offer low roost potential and it is unlikely that bats have used this building. However, due to the restrictions in a detailed scoping survey being undertaken due to the height of the building, a summer activity survey will be carried out to determine of the building is being used by bats.

Appendix 1 Supporting Photographs



Roof interior



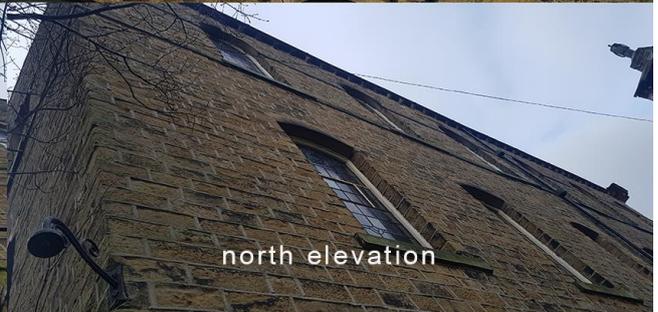
west elevation



south elevation



east elevation



north elevation