Whitcher Wildlife Ltd.
Ecological Consultants.

71 COACH ROAD, COWCLIFFE.

OS REF: SE 13612 18939

BAT SURVEY REPORT.

Ref No: **231178**

Date: **7th December 2023.**

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1. INTRODUCTION.

1.1. There are plans to demolish the existing dwelling at 71 Coach Road, Cowcliffe and to replace with a new one. A bat survey and report has been requested in support of the planning application.

1.2. Whitcher Wildlife Ltd were therefore commissioned to carry out an initial Preliminary Roost Assessment to establish whether there is a roost present prior to the works commencing.

1.3. The initial Preliminary Roost Assessment was carried out on 6th December 2023. This report outlines the findings of that survey and makes appropriate recommendations.

1.4. Appendices I and II of this report provide background information with respect to protected species and the legal protection afforded to them.

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2. SURVEY METHODOLOGY.

2.1. The structure was checked for potential bat roosting sites in line by looking for the following signs: -

* Holes, cracks or crevices.
* Bat droppings.
* Prey remains.

2.2. A thorough external inspection was carried out from ground level for any gaps or openings of the structure which may provide suitable roost access points and field signs to indicate possible use by bats.

2.3. All walls and the ground around the structure were checked for signs of bat droppings or staining to indicate possible use by bats. Where necessary, ladders were utilised to gain access within the limits of health and safety. Any access constraints encountered are outlined within the following report.

2.4. All survey work was carried out in line with Collins, J. (ed.) (2016) *Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines (4th edition)*, with an assessment of the structures suitability for roosting bats made in accordance with these guidelines.

2.5. The survey was carried out by Derek Whitcher who has over twenty years' experience of surveying for wildlife and has run his own wildlife consultancy since 1998. He has extensive experience of a wide variety of survey techniques for a variety of species of protected wildlife supplemented by attendance on a wide range of training courses through CIEEM, FSC and BCT. As a member of CIEEM he is committed to continuous professional development, a continual process of learning and career development, a condition of CIEEM membership. He holds current Natural England, CCW and NRW survey licences for, bat, great crested newt and white clawed crayfish.

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3. SURVEY RESULTS.

3.1. Data Search Results.

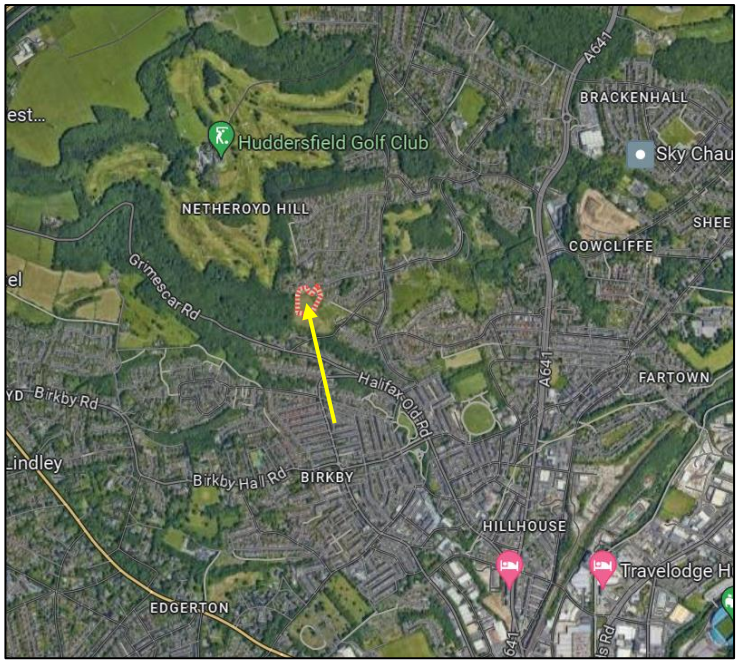
3.1.1. A data search request has been submitted to West Yorkshire Bat Group for existing records of bat roosts within 2km of the site.

3.1.2. The results of the data search include mainly Pipistrelle records and most are historic. The records include two historic records of a roost at Edgerton where 21 to 50 bats were recorded emerging in both 1996 and 1998 and a further significant roost at Fixby, where 52 bats emerged in 2005. All other records are for individual or small numbers of bats and all are dated 2017 or before.

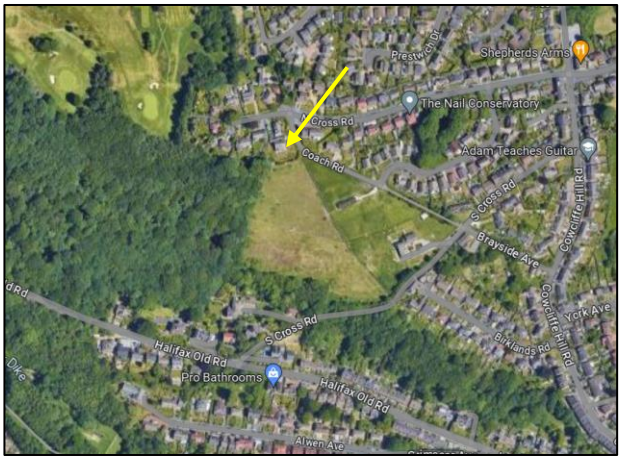
3.2. Site Description.

3.2.1. The site is located in an elevated location in Cowcliffe, overlooking Huddersfield to the south.

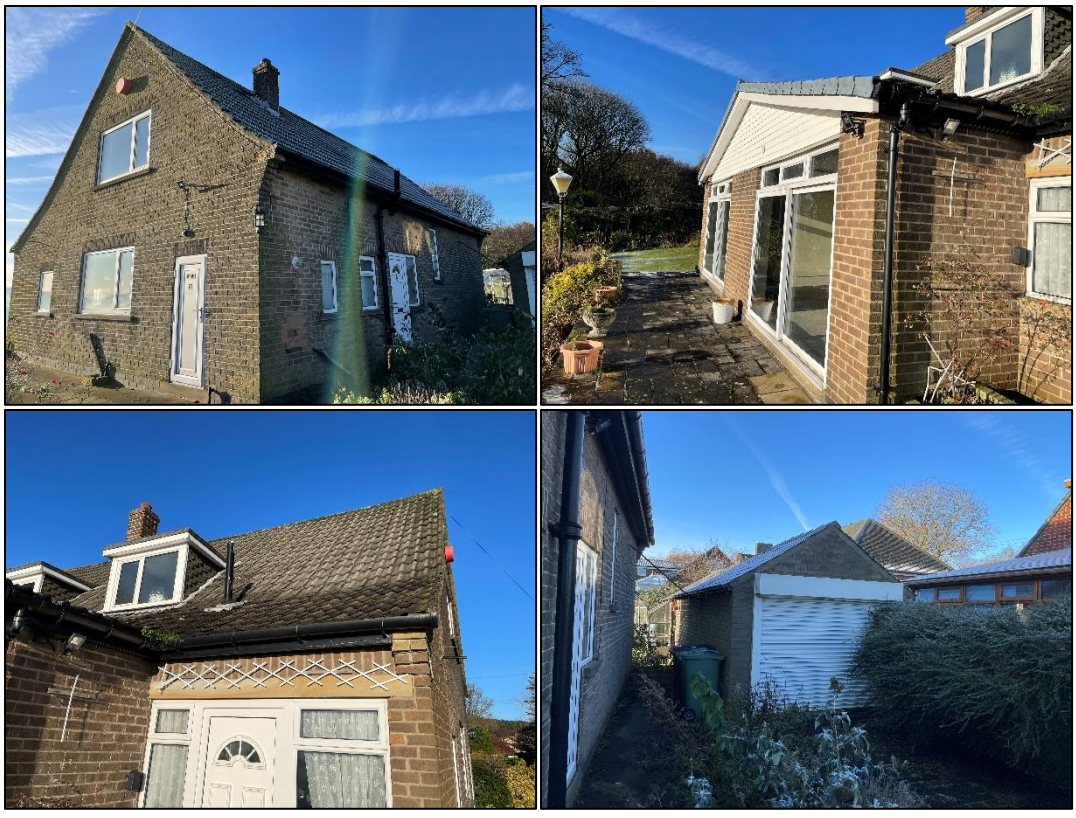
3.2.2. The site is on the edge of a residential area with open farmland to the south and a large area of woodland to the west as shown by the yellow arrow in the aerial photograph below.



3.2.3. The aerial photograph below shows the site in close up.



3.2.4. The site comprises an existing detached, two storey dwelling with a separate single storey garage and all is surrounded by garden, as shown in the photographs below.



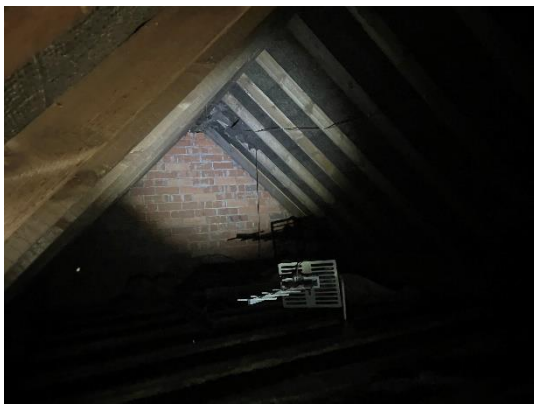
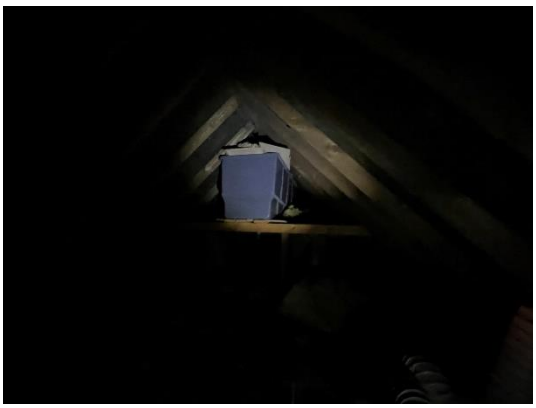
3.3. Preliminary Roost Assessment Results.

3.3.1. The walls are cavity brick walls and are in good condition throughout with no open joints, cracks or crevices.

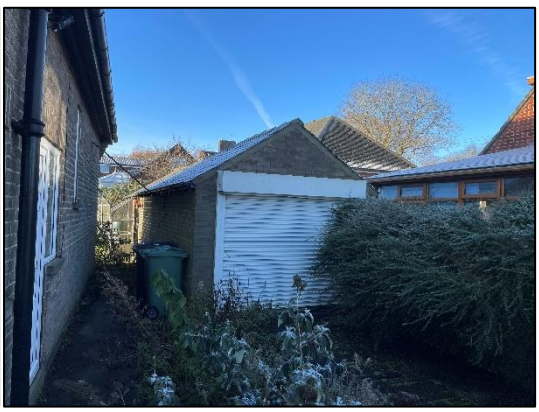
3.3.2. The roof is pitched and covered with interlocking roof tiles. These are all in place and provide no opportunities for roosting bats.

3.3.3. The pointing beneath the roof tiles above each gable end wall are sound with the exception of one small gap and that was found to be too shallow to be used by roostng bats and was blocked with cobwebs.

3.3.4. Inside, the bedrooms extend into the loft space leaving only a very shallow loft space. There is a felt lining beneath the tiles and the loft space contains the water tank, which restricts access to one end of the loft. No bat field signs were found and there was no light ingress to the loft space.

3.3.5. The garage is built with brick cavity walls and with a pitched roof covered with Welsh slate.

3.3.6. The garage is well sealed throughout with no gaps, cracks or crevices to provide opportunities for roosting bats.

3.3.7. Both the house and the garage were assessed to have negligible potential for roosting bats in line with the Bat Conservation Trust Good Practice Guidelines Edition 4.

3.3.8. No bird activity was identified around the building and there was no evidence of old nests indicating nesting birds.

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4. EVALUATION OF FINDINGS.

4.1. Both the existing dwelling and garage are in good condition throughout with no opportunities for summer roosting bats.

4.2. Both the existing dwelling and the garage are assessed to be unsuitable for hibernating bats.

4.3. Both the existing dwelling and the garage are therefore assessed to have negligible potential for roosting bats during the summer months and to have no potential for hibernation roosts in line with the Bat Conservation Trust Good Practice Guidelines Edition 4.

4.4. There were no nests and no evidence that the existing dwelling is ever used by nesting birds.

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5. RECOMMENDATIONS.

5.1. As the buildings have been assessed to have negligible potential for roosting bats, no further bat surveys are recommended, and there is no requirement for a mitigation strategy or a Natural England licence.

5.2. Nevertheless, individual bats can seek temporary shelter almost anywhere and therefore, it is recommended that the demolition be undertaken with due care. In the unlikely event that a bat is found beneath any of the roof slates, the bat must be covered and protected, work should cease at that location and the undersigned should be contacted for further advice.

5.3. The NPPF requires that biodiversity enhancements are required in the new dwelling. It is therefore recommended that at least one integrated bat brick be built into the outer skin of the walls to provide additional bat roosting opportunities.

5.4. To provide further biodiversity enhancements, it is recommended that one integrated swift nesting box be built into the outer skin of the walls to provide additional nesting opportunities.

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Prepared by:	
Derek Whitcher, BSc, MCIEEM, MCMI	Date: 7th December 2023.

Checked by:	
Ruth Georgiou. BSc, MCIEEM.	Date: 7th December 2023.

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Appendix I. BAT INFORMATION.

Ecology

There are currently 18 species of bat residing in Britain, 17 of which of which are known to breed here. They are extremely difficult to identify in the hand and even more so in flight.

All appear to be diminishing in numbers, probably due to habitat change and shortage of food, caused by pesticides, as insects are their sole diet.

As their diet consists solely of insects, bats hibernate during the winter when their food source is at its most scarce. They will spend the winter in hollow trees, caves, mines and the roofs of buildings.

Certain species, particularly the pipistrelle (the commonest and most widespread British bat) can quickly adapt to man-made structures and will readily use these to roost and to rear their young.

Surveys

During walkover surveys, bat roosts can be identified by looking for:

- Suitable holes, cracks and crevices within any building, tree or other structure.
- Bat droppings along walls, window cills, or on the ground.
- Prey remains, such as insect wings.

Further investigations can be made using endoscopes, by carrying out aerial inspections of trees or by conducting bat activity surveys during dusk and dawn over summer months.

Legislation

Bats are protected under Appendix II and III of the Bern Convention (1982), Schedule 5 and 6 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act (1981), Annex IV of the Habitats Directive (some species under Annex II), Annex II of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations (2010) and EUROBATS agreement. Numerous species are

also listed under section 41 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act (2006) making them species of principal importance.

All bats and their roosts are therefore protected in the UK. This makes it an offence to kill, injure or take any bat, to interfere with any place used for shelter or protection, or to intentionally disturb any animal occupying such a place.

The UK has designated maternity and hibernacula areas as Special Areas of Conservation (SAC's) under the Habitats Directive. Implementation of the UK Biodiversity Action Plan also includes action for a number of bat species and the habitats which support them.

Where development proposals are likely to affect a bat roost site, a licence is required from Natural England.

Appendix II. NESTING BIRD INFORMATION.

Ecology

The nesting season will vary according to the weather each year but generally commences in March, peaks during May and June and continues until September. It is also worth remembering that some birds nest in trees and scrub but others are ground nesting or prefer man- made structures or buildings.

Surveys

Nesting bird surveys search for potential nest sites in vegetation, buildings etc. Potential nesting sites are observed over a suitable period of time for bird movements or calling male birds that would indicate the presence of a nest. The presence of a nest can be identified from the field signs without the necessity to see the nest itself, thereby avoiding any disturbance of the nests. The best way to avoid this issue is to plan for vegetation clearance to be carried out outside the bird-nesting season.

Legislation

Nesting birds are protected under The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981.

Part 1. -(1) Of the Act states that: - If any person intentionally: - kills, injures or takes any wild bird; takes, damages or destroys the nest of any wild bird while that nest is in use or being built; or takes or destroys an egg of any wild bird, he shall be guilty of an offence.

Part 1. -(5) of the Act states that: - If any person intentionally: - disturbs any wild bird included in Schedule 1 while it is building a nest or is in, on, or near a nest containing eggs or young; or disturbs young of such a bird, he shall be guilty of an offence and liable to a special penalty.

The Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 amends the above by inserting after “intentionally” the words “or recklessly”.

Toolbox Talk: Bats

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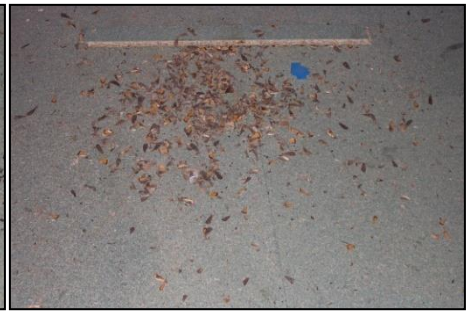
18 species of bat have been recorded in Britain, 17 of which are known to breed here.

Identification.

Some species can be extremely difficult to identify in the hand and even more so in flight.

Species such as the Brown Long Eared bat pictured above can be more easily identified in the hand. Whereas, the Common Pipistrelle and Soprano Pipistrelle are more difficult to identify.

Bats are more easily identified by field signs such as droppings or feeding remains.



Habitat.

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.

Bats are heavily dependent on buildings and trees for their roost sites and therefore extremely susceptible to disturbance from human activities. Development schemes can also isolate bat populations and sever roost sites from favoured feeding areas by removing hedgerows or other features used as commuting routes.

Bats are susceptible to disturbance and have been known to abandon roost 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 dependant young. Repeated disturbance during winter hibernation can result in the death of adult animals from starvation.

The level of protection afforded to bats in the 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 with all species being protected.

As their diet consists solely of insects, bats hibernate during the winter when their food source is at its most scarce. They will spend the winter in hollow trees, caves, mines and occasionally the roofs of buildings.

Certain species, particularly Pipistrelle, can quickly adapt to manmade structures and will readily use these to roost and to rear their young.

Legislation.

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. Under this legislation it is an offence to intentionally or recklessly kill, injure, capture or disturb bats or to damage, destroy or obstruct access to any place used by bats for shelter or protection.

Under the Habitats Regulations, where bats may be affected by development proposals, a licence is required from Natural England. Natural England's 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.

If bats or bat field signs are identified during works, stop all works and contact Whitcher Wildlife Ltd directly on 01226 753271 or at info@whitcher-wildlife.co.uk