Moss View, Holmfirth

Bat Survey Report

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For Planning	G Slack MCIEEM	P Middleton MCIEEM	G Slack MCIEEM	25/10/2023

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1. Summary

1.1.1 A bat survey of Moss View, Holmfirth was commissioned by Paul Briggs of Northern Design Partnership. The survey was undertaken to inform the demolition of the existing house and garage and the subsequent construction of two new dwellings on the site. The site was located near the western edge of Holmfirth, West Yorkshire.

1.1.2 The dwelling appeared to date from around the 1940s or 50s with the garage having been built more recently. Both buildings were assessed as having low suitability to support roosting bats and no evidence of roosting bats was recorded during the inspection of the two buildings.

1.1.3 It is recommended that a single nocturnal survey is undertaken between mid-May and August 2024. The survey is required to confirm the presence or likely absence of roosting bats, and if present to identify their roost location. This is required in order to adequately protect the bats during demolition. However, it is considered that the results of the inspection are sufficient to design a suitable mitigation strategy that would ensure the favourable conservation status of any bat populations present is maintained as a result of the proposed development.

1.1.4 In the absence of nocturnal survey information, it is recommended that each of the two proposed new buildings are designed to incorporate two integral bat boxes to replace any roosts that may be found during the nocturnal survey. If no bats are found during the nocturnal survey it is recommended that the bat boxes are provided as enhancement measures for the site.

1.1.5 New outside lighting should be kept to a minimum with passive infrared sensors and/or timers used to ensure lights are only on when they're needed. Where new outside lighting is required, it should be low level, relatively dim, and a warm white colour.

1.1.6 If the nocturnal survey identifies the presence of roosting bats, a mitigation licence must be obtained from Natural England to permit the demolition of the roost or roosts. In addition, the following precautions must be taken:

1.1.7 A toolbox talk should be delivered to the demolition staff by an experienced ecologist. The ecologist should supervise the strip of all suitable bat roost features prior to mechanical demolition of the buildings. Any bats that are captured should be moved to a temporary release box to be installed on a nearby tree. Any injured bats will be taken into care, pending future release on the site.

1.1.8 The recommendations included in this report are considered valid for 12 months from the survey date.

2. Introduction

2.1.1 A bat survey of Moss View, Holmfirth was commissioned by Paul Briggs of Northern Design Partnership on 17th October 2023. The survey was undertaken to inform the demolition of the existing house and garage and the subsequent construction of two new dwellings on the site. The site was located near the western edge of Holmfirth, West Yorkshire.

2.1.2 The preliminary roost assessment was conducted on 17th October 2023. The surveys aimed to determine the presence or likely absence of roosting bats and, if present, the roost locations. Potential access points, species present, and the level of use were also determined where possible.

2.1.3 The legislative context to the survey and assessment reported here is included in Appendix 1.

3. Habitat Assessment

3.1.1 The surrounding area comprised residential properties and associated gardens, with a derelict mill and a school to the north (Figure 1). The land sloped steeply from high ground to the north, down to the River Holme approximately 270 m to the south. A small woodland copse was present to the south of the site with more substantial woodland beyond the river to the south.

3.1.2 The habitat was considered to be above average in terms of its suitability for use by bats, although the suburban nature of the area meant that lighting from houses and street lighting was likely to reduce the suitability for light sensitive species such as brown long-eared bats. The abundance and variety of light-tolerant bat species was considered likely to be moderate to high.

3.1.3 Table 1 summarises the habitats present within, and adjacent to Moss View.

Table 1. Location and habitat table

Name and address: Moss View, Burnlee Road, Holmfirth, HD9 2LE			
OS Grid Ref. SE 13284 07812	Altitude. 183 m		
Local Planning Authority: Kirklees Council			
Features on site and adjacent to site			
Feature	On site	Adjacent	Comments
Buildings	✔	✔	Houses and associated buildings.
Watercourse bordered by trees			A small drain (mostly culverted) ran through the garden.
Standing water			None
Bridges tunnels and culverts	✔	✔	The culvert associated with the drain in the garden (approximately 10 cm high)
Trees		✔	Mature trees were present in a small copse to the south of the site.
Woodland		✔	Small copse to the south of the site.
Grassland	✔	✔	Lawned gardens.

Figure 1. Site location, outlined red

3.2 Aims

3.2.1 The survey was conducted to help determine the:

- Presence/absence of roosting bats.
- Potential roosting areas and roost access/egress points.
- Level of bat roost suitability associated with the buildings.
- Further survey work or mitigation requirements.

4. Methodology

4.1 Data Consultation

4.1.1 A desk study was undertaken with West Yorkshire Bat Group and West Yorkshire Ecology to request bat records for locations within 2 km of the site.

4.1.2 A search of the Multi-Agency Geographical Information for the Countryside (MAGIC) website was undertaken to identify historic European Protected Species (EPS) licences obtained for locations within 2 km of the site.

4.2 Field Survey

Internal and External Visual Inspection

4.2.1 The survey of the buildings was conducted on 17th October 2023 by Greg Slack (MCIEEM; Class licence WML-A34-Level 4, 2017-28068-CLS-CLS).

4.2.2 The following activities were carried out during the survey:

- A brief inspection of the site and surrounding area to identify any buildings, trees, or structures with some suitability to support roosting bats.
- An extensive examination of all parts of the dwelling and the garage to record structural features and condition, and features that may be suitable for use by roosting bats. Particular attention was paid to any holes, crevices or gaps in walls, lintels, gaps/holes in cladding and soffits and to the possibility of finding

droppings stuck to walls, floors or other surfaces, or insect remains below features.
- Any signs indicative of a bat roost presence including live or dead bats, droppings, feeding remains, scratch marks and staining were recorded.
- An assessment of the buildings' bat roost suitability (negligible, low, moderate, high or confirmed roost).

4.2.3 The following equipment was used during the survey:

- a clulight;
- binoculars;
- an endoscope;
- ladders; and
- a camera.

4.3 Survey Limitations

4.3.1 No survey limitations were encountered.

5. Results

5.1 Data Consultation

5.1.1 West Yorkshire Ecology provided 111 bat records for locations within a 2km radius of the site. Species positively identified in the data consultation comprised common pipistrelle *Pipistrellus pipistrellus* soprano pipistrelle *Pipistrellus pygmaeus*, brown long-eared bat *Plecotus auritus*, whiskered bat *Myotis mystacinus,* Daubenton's bat *Myotis daubentonii*, noctule *Nyctalus noctula*, and Leisler's bat *Nyctalus leisleri*. The nearest record to site related to a record of an unknown bat species roost within a house approximately 190 m west of the centre of the site dating from 2003.

5.1.2 West Yorkshire Bat Group provided 36 bat records for the same area. No additional species were present in the bat groups records. The closest record was the same unknown bat species roost as provided by the records centre, plus an additional 1996 record of a common pipistrelle maternity roost (of between 100 to 200 bats) present for a building located on the opposite side of the road (approximately 211 m from the centre of the site).

5.1.3 Six bat EPS mitigation licences had been issued within 2 km of the site. The details of the licences are given in Table 2 below.

Table 2. Bat EPS mitigation licences within 2 km

Species listed on the licence	Licence start date	Licence end date	What does the licence cover?	Approximate distance (m)	Direction
Leisler's bat	24/04/2009	30/06/2009	Not stated	1140	East-northeast
Common pipistrelle	11/10/2012	01/10/2014	Destruction of a resting place	1410	Northeast
Common pipistrelle	15/12/2010	31/08/2011	Destruction of a resting place	1420	Northeast
Common pipistrelle, whiskered bat	01/05/2018	31/07/2024	Damage of a resting place	1700	Southwest
Common pipistrelle, whiskered bat	13/08/2018	31/07/2024	Damage of a resting place	1700	Southwest
Common pipistrelle, whiskered bat	07/11/2018	31/07/2024	Destruction of a resting place	1700	Southwest

5.2 Field Survey

Internal and External Visual Inspection

5.2.1 The dwelling appeared to date from around the 1940s or 50s with the garage having been built more recently. Both buildings were assessed as having low suitability to support roosting bats and no evidence of roosting bats was recorded during the inspection of the two buildings.

Building description - dwelling

5.2.2 The brick-built bungalow comprised the main living accommodation on the ground floor. A first-floor bedroom with a dormer window was present, as well as a lower-ground floor room (accessed separately from outside, beneath the southern part of the house), used as a utility room.

5.2.3 The roof across the main part of the dwelling had four pitches, hipped across the entirety of the main building creating a broadly pyramid-shaped roof. This resulted in four relatively steep pitches with a small catslide section present on the eastern aspect. The southern aspect of the building comprised a converted sunroom with a flat roof covered with a rubberised membrane. A small conservatory was present on the western aspect of the building.

5.2.4 The building had uPVC framed windows, soffits (on the north, east and west aspects) and fascias on the south.

Plate 1. The garage and dwelling viewed from the north

Plate 2. The dwelling viewed from the south

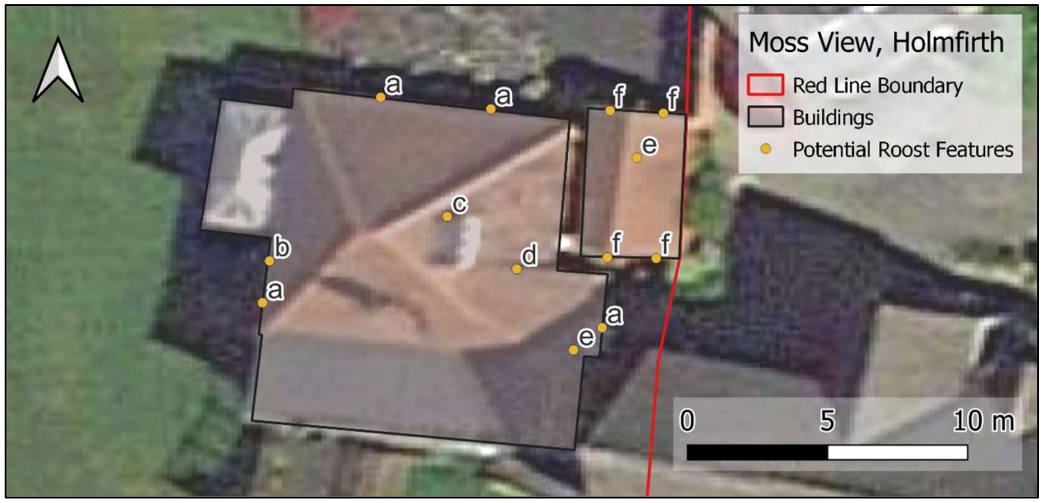
External inspection - dwelling

5.2.5 Gaps with potential to be used by roosting bats comprised a gap into the soffit box, a gap behind lead flashing on the dormer window, gaps beneath ridge tiles, ventilation grills leading to the wall cavity, and gaps beneath raised tiles. The PRFs are shown in Table 3 and Figure 3 below.

Table 3. Potential Roost Features (PRF) Recorded

PRF	Photo	Description
A		Gap at the back of the soffit box on the western elevation. All other soffits and fascias were well sealed.
B		Ventilation grills leading to the wall cavity.
C		Gap behind lead flashing next to dormer window.
D		Gaps under ridge tiles on the hips
E		Slightly raised tiles near the catslide roof and the base of the dormer window.

Figure 3. PRF Locations



Internal inspection - dwelling

5.2.6 The roof voids within the property were limited to the underdrawn eaves and a very small loft above the bedroom. The eaves were triangular in cross section and approximately 2 m high (Plate 3).

Plate 3. Underdrawn eaves

5.2.7 The roof was supported by purlins resting on brick pillars / internal walls. The tiles were backed by Type 1F bitumen coated roofing felt and insulation was present between, and on top of, the joists. No signs of bats were present within the eaves space.

5.2.8 The small loft above the upstairs bedroom was approximately 0.6 m high (Plate 4). Additional insulation was present on top of the ceiling. No bats or signs of bats were present.

Plate 4. Small roof space over the upstairs bedroom

Building description - garage

5.2.9 The brick-built garage had a two-pitched roof covered with rosemary tiles. The north and southern gables had mortared verges. The eaves of the building were enclosed by tight-fitting uPVC soffit boxes. The single-storey building was accessed via a metal roller door (Plate 1). A window, framed with uPVC, was present on the southern elevation (Plate 4).

Plate 4. The southern elevation of the garage and part of the eastern elevation of the dwelling

External inspection - garage

5.2.10 Gaps with potential to be used by roosting bats comprised a gap under a ridge tile, and gaps under tiles at the verges. The PRFs are shown in Table 4 and on Figure 3 below.

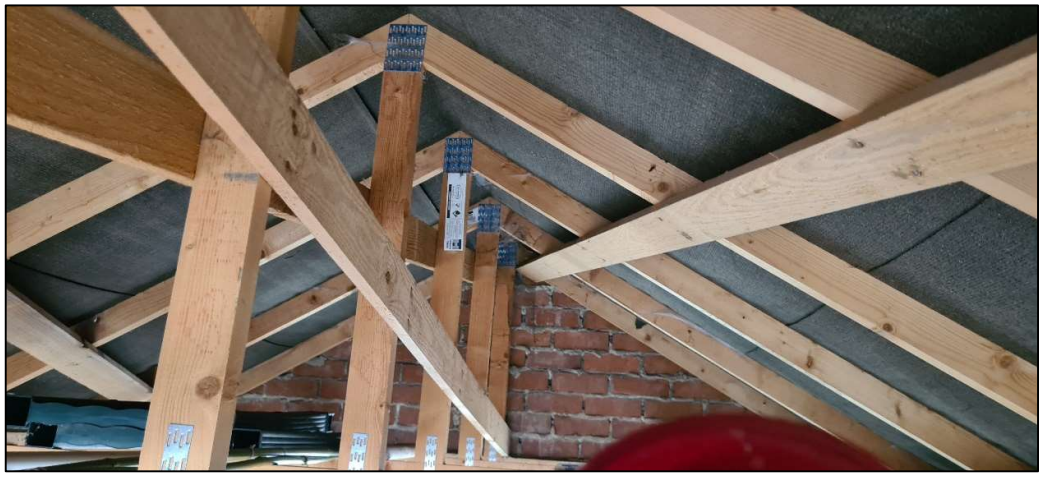
Table 3. Potential Roost Features (PRF) Recorded

PRF	Photo	Description
D		Gap under ridge tiles
F		Gaps under tiles at the north and south verges

Internal inspection - garage

Inside the garage the roof was open to the pitch (i.e. there was no roof void). Type 1F bitumen coated underfelt was present beneath the roof tiles. The roof was supported with modern prefabricated trusses (Plate 5). No bats or signs of bats were present.

Plate 5 the inside of the garage roof



6. Assessment

6.1 Summary and Evaluation of Findings

6.1.1 No bats were found roosting in the buildings during the preliminary daytime assessment and there were no signs of bat occupation. Both buildings were considered to display an overall low level of suitability for use by crevice dwelling bat species.

6.2 Further Survey, Recommendations and Enhancements

6.2.1 It is recommended that a single nocturnal survey is undertaken on the buildings from mid-May 2024. The survey is required to confirm the presence or likely absence of roosting bats, and if present to identify their roost location. It is considered that three surveyor positions would be required to cover all potential bat roost features.

6.2.2 The survey is required in order to adequately protect the bats during demolition. It is considered that the results of the inspection are sufficient to design a mitigation strategy to inform a potential licence application if one were required. The mitigation would be based on a worst-case likely scenario that would ensure the favourable conservation status of any bat populations present is maintained as a result of the proposed development. This mitigation is given below.

6.2.3 In the absence of nocturnal survey information, it is recommended that each of the two proposed new buildings are designed to incorporate two integral bat boxes[1]. The boxes should be placed at the wall top, or top of a gable and should face different aspects. This will ensure that the new dwellings are suitable to replace any roosts that may be found during the nocturnal survey. If no bats are found during the nocturnal survey it is recommended that the bat boxes remain as enhancement measures for the site.

6.2.4 In line with guidance from the Bat Conservation Trust and the Institute of Lighting Professionals outdoor lighting should be kept to a minimum with passive infrared sensors and/or timers used to ensure lights are only on when they're needed. Where new outside lighting is required, it should be low level, relatively dim, and a warm white colour (ILP, 2023).

6.2.5 If the nocturnal survey does identify the presence of roosting bats, a mitigation licence must be obtained from Natural England to permit the demolition of the roost or roosts. In addition, the following precautions should be taken:

6.2.6 A toolbox talk should be delivered to the demolition staff by an experienced ecologist. The toolbox talk should highlight:

- the bat roost locations,
- identification of signs of bats,
- the presence and location of the other bat roost features identified within the building (and any that may be created during the work),
- how to remove or open up suitable bat roost features where work is required, and
- what to do in the event a bat is discovered.

6.2.7 The removal of all potential bat roost features should be undertaken by hand prior to mechanical demolition. This should be undertaken under the supervision of the licenced ecologist or their accredited agent.

6.2.8 Any bats that are captured should be moved to a temporary release box to be installed on a nearby tree. Any injured bats will be taken into care, pending future release on the site.

[1] The results of the building inspection are considered sufficient to rule out the need for a bat loft on the basis that no signs of bats within the existing roof voids were present.

6.3 Conclusion

6.3.1 No evidence of bat presence was recorded in association with the surveyed buildings during the visual inspection. A mitigation strategy has been outlined that would cater for a worst case likely scenario that a bat roost (of a crevice dwelling species, or multiple species), was present.

6.3.2 A nocturnal survey should be completed between mid-May and August 2024 to confirm whether a bat roost is present or likely absent and this should dictate whether a mitigation licence is required from Natural England, and whether other measures such as a toolbox talk and supervision are required.

6.3.3 The mitigation suggested in this report is considered sufficient to ensure the favourable conservation status of any bat populations which may use the site.

6.3.4 The recommendations included in this report are considered valid for 12 months from the survey date.

7. References

Collins, J. (ed.) (2016) Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines. The Bat Conservation Trust.

ILP (2023) Bats and Artificial Lighting at Night. Institute of Lighting Professionals. Available online at: https://www.theilp.org.uk/documents/guidance-note-8-bats-and-artificial-lighting/

Appendix 1. Legislation and Policy Guidance

Bats

Bats receive protection under the Conservation of Habitats and Species (Amendment) (EU Exit) Regulations 2019 and the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended).

It is an offence to:

- Deliberately capture (or take), injure or kill a bat.
- Intentionally or recklessly disturb bats whilst they are occupying a structure or place used for shelter or protection or obstruct access to any such place.
- Damage or destroy the breeding or resting place (roost) of a bat.
- Possess a bat (live or dead), or any part of a bat.
- Intentionally or recklessly obstruct access to a bat roost.
- Sell (or offer for sale) or exchange bats (dead or alive), or parts of parts.

The Convention on Biological Diversity, signed in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil in 1992, requires member states to develop national strategies and to undertake a range of actions aimed at maintaining or restoring biodiversity. The UK Biodiversity Strategy was produced in response to the Convention.

In England & Wales, the Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act, 2006 imposes a duty on all public bodies, including local authorities and statutory bodies, in exercising their functions, "to have due regard, as far as is consistent with the proper exercise of those functions, to the purpose of conserving biodiversity". It notes that "conserving biodiversity includes restoring or enhancing a population or habitat". Barbastelle *Barbastella barbastellus*, Bechstein's bat *Myotis bechsteinii*, brown long-eared bat, greater horseshoe bat *Rhinolophus ferrumequinum*, lesser horseshoe bat *Rhinolophus hipposideros*, noctule *Nyctalus noctula* and soprano pipistrelle *Pipistrellus pygmaeus* are included as priority species within Section 41 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006. At a more local level there are Local Biodiversity Action Plans for smaller geographical areas which may cover a greater or lesser range of bat species.

Where it is proposed to carry out works which will have an adverse impact on roosting bats a European Protected Species (EPS) license must first be obtained from Natural England. This requirement applies even if no bats are expected to be present when the work is carried out.

The National Planning Policy Framework for England was revised in 2021. This document states that plans should 'promote the conservation, restoration and re-creation of priority habitats, ecological networks and the protection and recovery of priority species; and identify and pursue opportunities for securing measurable net gains for biodiversity'.

National Planning Policy Framework

The National Planning Policy Framework for England was revised in 2021. This

document states that plans should ‘promote the conservation, restoration and re-creation of priority habitats, ecological networks and the protection and recovery of priority species; and identify and pursue opportunities for securing measurable net gains for biodiversity’.