

Moss View, Holmfirth
Bat Survey Report, including nocturnal survey
23rd May 2024



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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 No evidence of bat presence was recorded in association with the surveyed building during the nocturnal survey. It is therefore considered that the survey work undertaken has demonstrated the probable absence of roosting bats from Moss View. The proposed works can therefore proceed without further bat survey.
- 1.1.4 As an enhancement measure it is recommended that each of the two proposed new buildings are designed to incorporate an integral bat box.
- 1.1.5 We recommend the use of bat safe roofing membranes. Standard roofing membranes can degrade, tangle, and trap bats if they come into contact with them. Although the roofs on new buildings are often unsuitable for use by bats, wear and tear over the years often creates small gaps that bats are able to roost in. Therefore, as a precaution, bat safe roofing membranes are now recommended by Middleton Bell Ecology. Further information is included in Appendix 2 of this report and available on request.
- 1.1.6 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.
- 1.1.7 Works should proceed with caution and vigilance for unexpected bat presence, as single bats can roost almost anywhere. Bats were identified in-flight in the area around the building, and the building did contain potential roost features that could be used by roosting bats. If bats are subsequently discovered, work should cease, and further advice sought without delay.
- 1.1.8 The recommendations included in this report are considered valid for 24 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 and a subsequent nocturnal survey completed on 21st May 2024. 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.

Nocturnal Survey

4.2.1 The nocturnal bat survey comprised a dusk emergence survey completed on 21st May 2024. The following personnel conducted the nocturnal survey and were equipped with Wildlife Acoustics EM Touch bat detectors and tablet recorders:

- Greg Slack (MCIEEM, Natural England Bat (WML-A34-Level 4, licence number: 2016-25236-CLS-CLS); and
- Carl Dixon.

4.2.2 The surveyors covered Surveyor Positions 1 and 2 during the survey. The surveyor Locations are shown on Figure 2.

4.2.3 Two Canon XA10 video cameras, and a Guide TK612 Gen2 Thermal Imaging Monocular were used at the surveyor positions during the nocturnal survey. One of the two Canon cameras was positioned at Surveyor Position 3. Although the surveyor at Position 1 could monitor the bat activity in that area due to the slope of the site, the camera at Position 1 was not tall enough to cover the area well. The Canon cameras were each paired with additional infrared lights. The footage from the night vision aids was reviewed as required to check and confirm the observations made by the surveyors.

Figure 2. Nocturnal survey plan



4.2.4 The nocturnal surveys were carried out in compliance with relevant Bat Survey Guidelines (Collins 2023). The survey continued from 15 minutes before sunset until 1.5 hours after sunset.

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4.3 Survey Limitations

4.3.1 At 22:30, during the nocturnal survey on 21st May 2024, spots of rain were recorded. This was one hour and 18 minutes after sunset. At approximately 22:40 the rain became light and the night vision aids were packed away. Because the rain occurred relatively late during the survey, it was not considered likely to have significantly affected the results of the survey.

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 5).

Plate 5. 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

5.2.11 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 6). No bats or signs of bats were present.

Plate 6 the inside of the garage roof



Nocturnal Survey

21st May 2024 – dusk emergence survey

5.2.12 The temperature at the beginning of monitoring was 15°C, with no wind (Beaufort Scale 0) and full cloud cover (eight oktas cloud cover). The temperature remained at 15°C and the cloud cover remained full but the wind increased slightly to a light air (Beaufort Scale 1) and at 22:30 spots of rain were observed, progressing to light rain at 22:40 (two minutes before the end of the survey). The light levels in the area around the building were considered to be relatively low during the survey, although some light

spill occurred from the buildings windows and streetlighting was present along the road to the north of the site (Plate 7).

Plate 7. View of the building and surrounding area photographed from approximately Surveyor Position 2 at 22:16 on 21st May 2024 (one hour and four minutes after sunset)¹



5.2.13 No bats were recorded emerging from the building during the survey.

5.2.14 The first bat recorded was a common pipistrelle recorded flying from east to west across the northern edge of B1 at 21:11 (one minute before sunset). It was considered likely that the bat emerged from one of the dwellings to the east of the site. Common pipistrelle passes were recorded regularly until the end of the survey. At 21:57 two common pipistrelle were recorded chasing around the buildings on site, the garden, and the property to the east of the site. That behaviour continued until approximately 22:07. The other common pipistrelle activity recorded comprised foraging bats.

5.2.15 The only other species recorded were a soprano pipistrelle which was briefly recorded at 21:56 (44 minutes after sunset), and a Myotis species recorded on one occasion at 22:10 (58 minutes after sunset). Both bats were heard but not seen by the surveyor and were not considered to have emerged from on site buildings.

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 As an enhancement measure, it is recommended that each of the two proposed new buildings are designed to incorporate an integral bat box. The boxes should be placed

¹ The photograph was taken on a Samsung Galaxy S20 with the night mode and flash turned off.

at the wall top, or top of a gable and should face different aspects.

- 6.2.2 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).
- 6.2.3 We recommend the use of bat safe roofing felt as standard, with Type 1 F bitumen coated felt the best option for known bat roosts or areas with bat mitigation. Standard breathable roofing felts are not safe for use in bat roosts. Further information on this issue is included in Appendix 2.

6.3 Conclusion

- 6.3.1 No evidence of bat presence was recorded in association with the surveyed buildings during the visual inspection or nocturnal survey. It is considered that bats are likely absent from the building.
- 6.3.2 No bat roosts were recorded, and it is considered that a suitable level of survey has been undertaken to be confident in the likely absence of bat roosts within the building. However, works should proceed with caution and vigilance for unexpected bat presence. Single bats can roost almost anywhere, common pipistrelles were recorded regularly on site during the survey, and the building does contain potential bat roost features. If bats are subsequently discovered, work should cease, and further advice sought from Middleton Bell Ecology without delay.
- 6.3.3 The recommendations included in this report are considered valid for 24 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'.

Appendix 2. Roofing and Cladding Membranes

Standard roof membranes can cause the death of significant numbers of bats. Traditional bitumen coated roofing felt is recommended where roosting bats are expected to be present.

The problem

Non-bitumen coated membranes used below roof slates and tiles present a significant problem for bats. Over time, strands are pulled away from the surface of these materials as bats crawl over them. These fuzzy strands are very strong and can tangle and trap bats, sometimes causing the death of bats over multiple years².

One example we have encountered comprised a pipistrelle roost which formed in a building extension constructed in 2009. Over the course of just 13 years the roofing felt degraded to the extent that it trapped and killed more than 10 bats. Fortunately, the problem in this roost was identified and remedial work was undertaken to replace the roofing membrane in 2022.

Plate A2.1. Four dead pipistrelles tangled in breathable roofing membrane



Although a new roof might be considered to lack potential bat access points, that is often not the case. Roofs covered with stone slates almost always have gaps large enough to be accessed by bats, this is often also the case where imitation stone slates are used. On older buildings the uneven roof timbers and/or building design also often results in gaps on wall tops and between slates. Even on new builds it is often possible for bats to access potential roosts via features such as dry verge capping. Some bats can access a space no wider than a biro pen, therefore it is not surprising that they can find their way into most buildings.

Safe roofing membranes (and membranes behind cladding)

The best roofing membrane option for areas where bat roosts are expected is traditional Type 1F bitumen coated hessian backed roofing felt. Bitumen coated roofing felts have been widely and safely used as a secondary weather barrier since approximately the 1950s/1960s. Wooden sarking has also been used for many decades and if appropriately treated, is safe for

² Wearing S. Essah E., Gunnel K. & Bonser R. (2013) Double jeopardy: the potential for problems when bats interact with breathable roofing membranes in the United Kingdom. Architecture and Environment

use in bat roosts, or where bats could be, present. Most commercially available products come pretreated but if required, a list of suitable timber treatment products is available on the government website³. Wooden sarking also has the benefit of adding additional insulation and is usually breathable.

There are breathable membrane products which have passed a test known as the snagging propensity test. The test attempts to replicate the wear and tear which results from bats crawling over the membrane. At the time of writing (to our knowledge) two products have passed the test and are accepted for use in bat roosts by Natural England: TLX BatSafe^{4,5} and SIGA Majcoat 200 SOB Diffusion. Although both have passed this test, it is unclear how they would fair over a long timeframe, and particularly within larger bat roosts. For this reason, we do not recommend that they are used for known bat roosts, and particularly for large (maternity roosts). However, they may provide a much needed option for roofs where future bat use cannot be ruled out, sarking boards are not an option, and a breathable solution is required.

Additional considerations

In recent years a fairly substantial proportion of the lofts we have surveyed which had existing breathable felt, were found to have been damaged by wasps (Plate A2.2). In these situations, the wasps appear to have chewed holes in the felt and formed nests in the holes. This doesn't appear to be a problem associated with the traditional bitumen coated roofing felt. Obviously, any holes within roofing felt would be likely to significantly reduce its functionality as a secondary weather barrier. Where bats or birds do come into contact with breathable roofing membranes, they can damage the membrane causing it to leak and they can also significantly reduce the breathability of the felt in that location.

Plate A2.2. Damage to a breathable roofing membrane adjacent to a wasp nest



Traditional bituminous Type 1F roofing felt is a non-breathable product and therefore ventilation is required. This can be achieved, even in buildings with vaulted ceilings, but requires some consideration during the design stage. Products to increase the ventilation within roofs where bituminous Type 1F felt has already been installed are also available but should not be considered as the primary ventilation option.

³ Accessible at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/bat-roosts-insecticides-and-timber-treatments/timber-treatment-products-suitable-for-use-in-or-near-bat-roosts>

⁴ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/bats-apply-for-a-mitigation-licence#full-publication-update-history:~:text=Use%20of%20safe%20roofing%20membranes>

⁵ TLX BatSafe requires all joints and cut edges to be taped in order to prevent the fraying of bare edges.

Appendix 3. Bat Records

In accordance with best practice and the requirements of bat licensing, bat records collected during surveys are supplied to the relevant biological record centres and bat groups. The records to be supplied in accordance with this survey are shown below.

Date	Species	Site Address	OS Grid Reference	Notes
21/05/2024	Common pipistrelle	Moss View, Burnlee Road, HD9 2LE	SE 13283 07812	In flight record.
21/05/2024	Soprano pipistrelle	Moss View, Burnlee Road, HD9 2LE	SE 13283 07812	In flight record.
21/05/2024	Myotis bat species	Moss View, Burnlee Road, HD9 2LE	SE 13283 07812	In flight record.