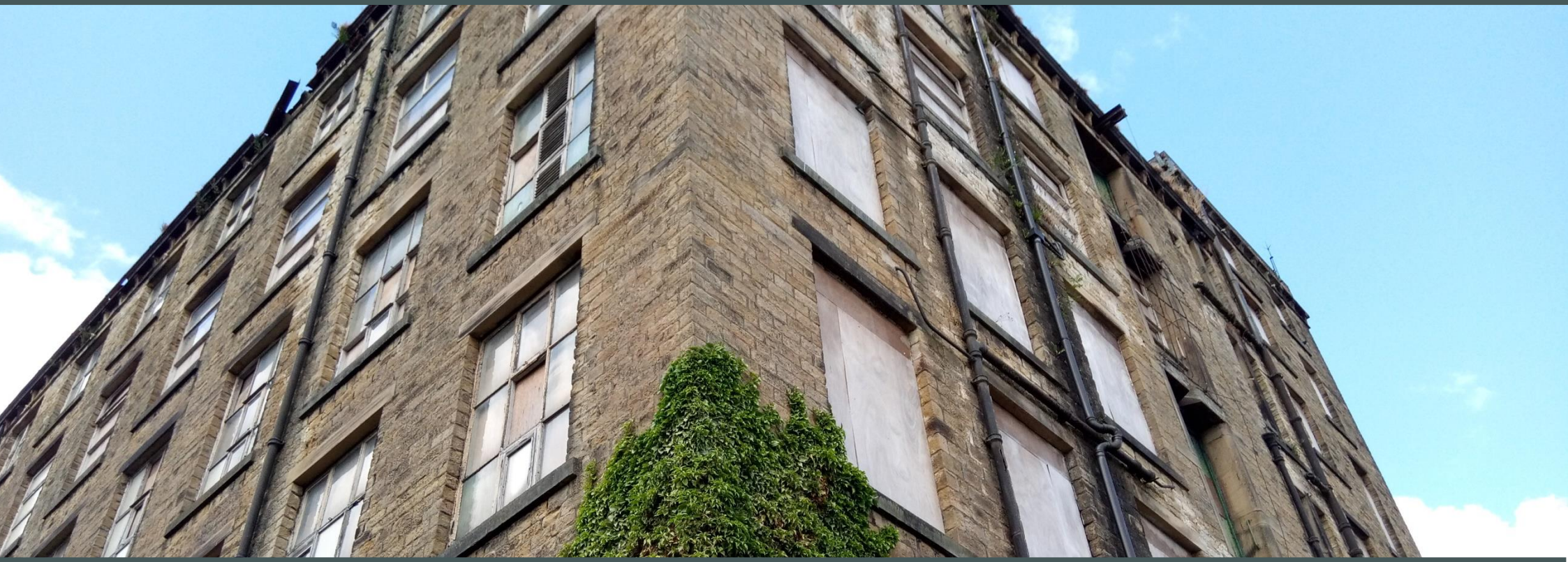
Globe Mills 2, Slaithwaite, Huddersfield



Bat Survey Report

04/09/2023

Hartley Property Trust Ltd.

Report reference	ER-6907-03 -Emergence Report
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Date	04/09/2023
Report duration	In accordance with CIEEM (2019), unless otherwise stated the findings of this report remain valid for a period of 18 months. After this period advice should be sought on the scope of any updating work required.

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Summary Statement

Two small day-roosts, occupied sporadically by low numbers of common pipistrelle bats, have been identified on Site. Work to the building affecting these roosts will require a Natural England Mitigation Licence. Based on the roost type present, the project could make use of the Bat Mitigation Class Licence to derogate offences caused in relation to damaging or destroying roosts.

Introduction

1. Brooks Ecological was commissioned to carry out a full suite of bat surveys at Globe Mill 2, Slaithwaite, Huddersfield, to ascertain the status of roosting activity on site and inform a planning application.

2. Surveys carried out at the site in 2013 identified the presence of four roosts, all used by solitary non-breeding, common pipistrelle bats, on a sporadic basis, making use of masonry gaps on the southern elevation of the mill. The building condition has deteriorated somewhat since the time of these surveys, with the client informing us that much of the roof has fallen through or is otherwise leaking, though this is not visible from ground level.

Figure 1 The surveyed building – red line

Method

3. Brooks Ecological specialise in bat surveys ranging from individual buildings through to complex sites requiring numerous visits with large teams. In terms of the survey effort, number of personnel and number of visits required to be able to properly evaluate the building(s) use by bats, we refer to the Bat Conservation Trust Survey Good Practice Guidelines (2016). However, these guidelines are not prescriptive, and we approach each site individually as required using our professional judgement and significant experience base.

4. In this case, three visits with a team of up to six surveyors was deemed necessary to fully evaluate the potential use of the Site for roosting.

5. Surveys were carried out with surveyors positioned around the building to cover all aspects where bats could potentially emerge or return, and to establish activity levels around the Site.

6. The surveyors, using heterodyne detectors, an Echo Meter Touch 2 and thermal imaging equipment were in place at least 15 minutes before sunset and left once all species of bat would be expected to have left a roost and patterns of activity within the Site had been appraised. Conditions and dates are summarised in Table 1 below.

Table 1 Survey conditions.

Date	Survey Type	Temp. Start/End	Weather
20/09/2022	Emergence	15/12°C	Clear and dry, Beaufort 1
11/07/2023	Emergence	15/14°C	Clear and dry. Wind speed at Beaufort 1.
09/08/2023	Emergence	19/18°C	Dry, 70% humidity, 100% light cloud. Light Air (B1).

7. Survey directed by Joshua Birchall BSc (Hons) ACIEEM. Josh has over 9 years of professional bat survey experience, is a member of the South Lancashire Bat Group and is also registered to use the Class Survey Licence WML CL17 (Level 1).

Box 1 *Bat roosts*

Bats roost in buildings and trees in different locations depending upon time of year and environmental factors such as position of the sun, proximity to heat sources and feeding grounds. The following types are commonly referred to:

Transitional roosts

Bats frequently gather early in the season (March to April) before dispersing to summer roosts. Bats can be found in high numbers in these roosts for a very short period. Transitional roosts can also be found shortly before hibernation in August to October when bats (depending upon species) can gather in roosts not used earlier in the season.

Maternity roosts

These are among the most important roosts and are normally occupied from May to August. Depending on the species involved, some maternity roosts can contain a very significant proportion of the local population.

Summer (non-breeding) roosts

Small groups of non-breeding female and male bats can gather in these roosts or bats from a local population may choose to roost individually. There are normally a large number of suitable locations for summer non-breeding roosts and these may be routinely used or used only on an occasional basis. Irregularly used summer roosts can be very hard to find without unreasonable survey effort.

Mating roosts

Around September bats will gather in roost to mate; these are often in different locations than summer or breeding roosts.

Hibernation roosts

As bats in hibernation roosts are highly vulnerable to disturbance and bats can be present in large numbers these are considered to be among the most important bat roosts. Many species of bats roost in large and nationally important hibernation roosts associated with underground sites, many of which are well known and protected. However, the most common bat in the UK (the common pipistrelle) is largely unaccounted for in winter but thought to disperse and roost individually or in small groups in thermally stable cracks and crevices in thick walls or trees.

Box 2 *Legal background*

Bats are afforded full protection under The Wildlife and Countryside Act (1981) plus amendments, and the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010. Under these Acts it is an offence among others, to recklessly kill, injure or disturb bats. It is also an offence to destroy or obstruct a roost even if bats are not in occupancy at the time of the action.

There are no defences against contravention of the Habitats Regulations 2010 which means that it is important for detailed and well-designed bat surveys to be carried out, prior to carrying out activities that may impact upon bat roosts such as demolition of buildings or removal of trees.

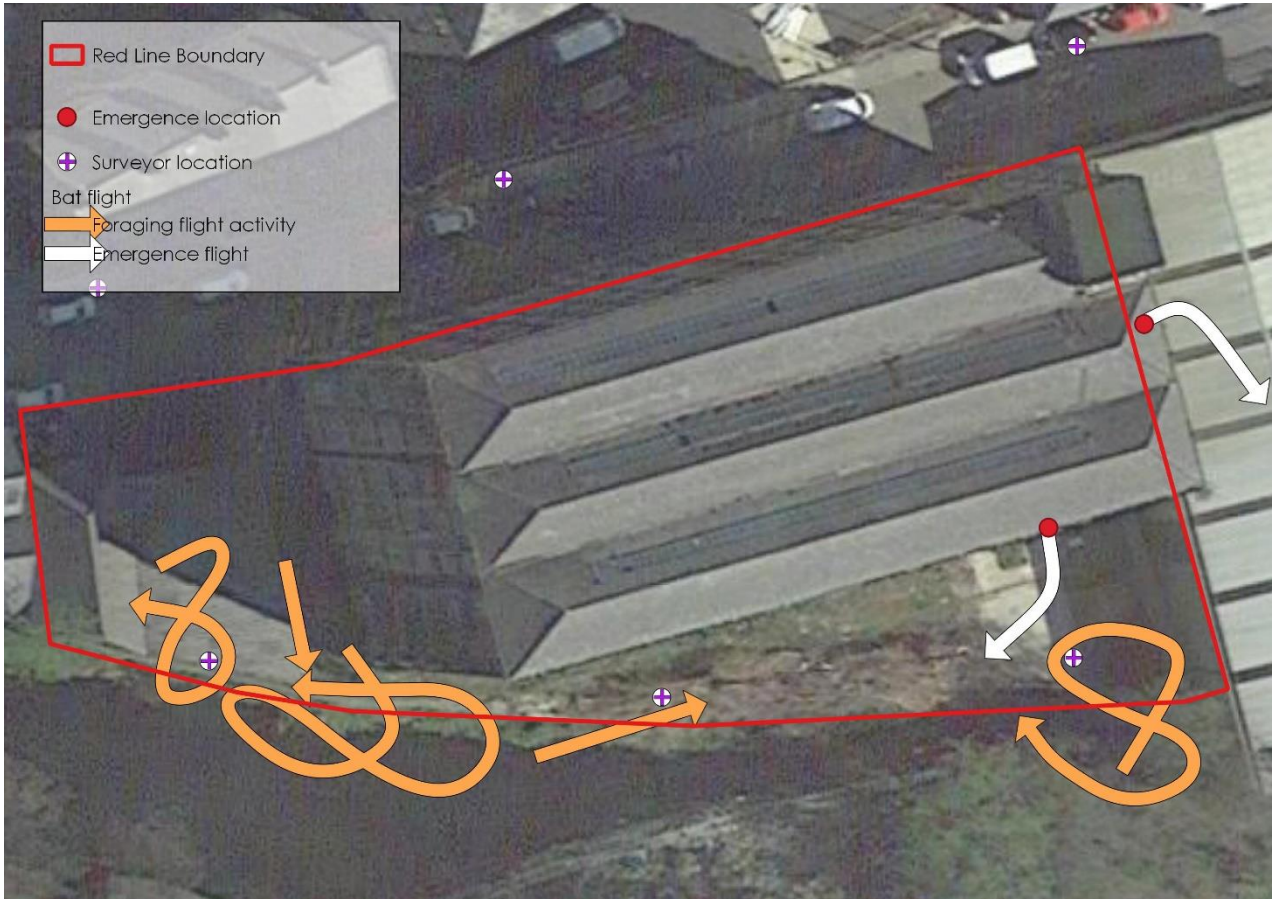
Where bats are found within a potential development site, a license from Natural England may need to be secured if works that could otherwise contravene legislation are to be carried out. These licences are only issued where Natural England is satisfied that works are unavoidable and would not have a negative impact on the favourable conservation status of bats. A Natural England license requires that the potential development site has full planning permission and that bats were a material consideration of the planning permission.

Survey Results

Emergence – 20th September 2022 (sunset 29:11)

8. Surveyors were positioned so as to cover all features with bat roost suitability.
9. The first bat seen was a common pipistrelle emerging from a roost location on the building's southern elevation. Leaving a small gap between brickwork blocking a former window opening on the first floor, and the original stone lintel. A second bat followed, also from this location, very shortly after.
10. These bats remained foraging around the same area of the building for a short time before leaving to the west.
11. A second roost location was observed when a single common pipistrelle was seen to leave a similar feature on a ground floor window on the eastern facing elevation, at 19:31.
12. Beyond emergences from these two roost locations, consistent levels of foraging were observed, particularly to the west of the surveyed building, and more intermittently to the south east. Consistent foraging commenced after 19:31, and was restricted entirely to common pipistrelle bats. Only two bats were seen at any one time.
13. A noctule was briefly heard at 20:05, this bat was not seen but assumed to be passing high over the building.
14. No other roosts were identified, or suspected, within the surveyed building.

Figure 2 Summary of bat activity observed during emergence survey.

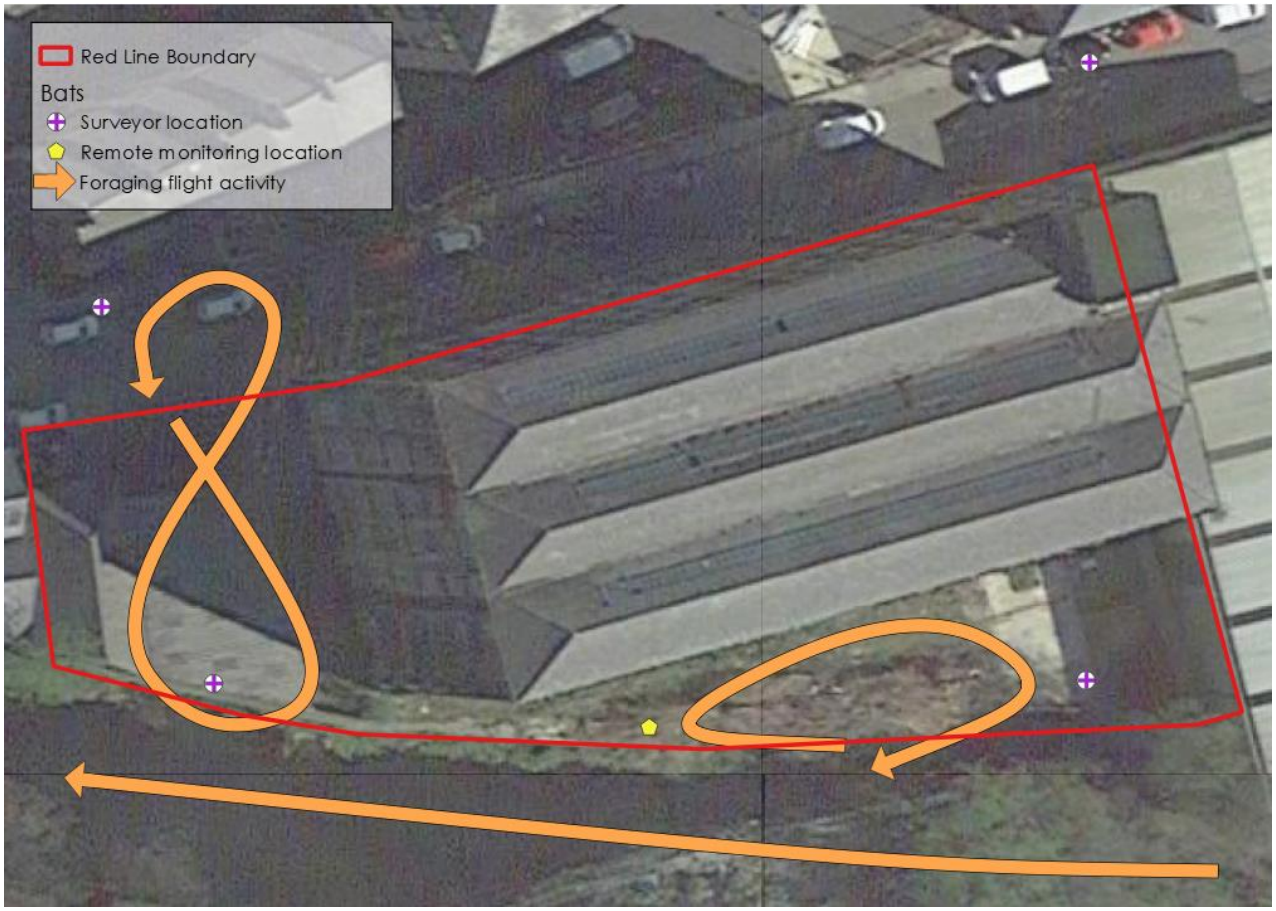


Survey Results

Emergence – 11th July 2023 (sunset 21:34)

15. Surveyors were positioned so as to cover all features with bat roost suitability. A thermal camera was used to observe the southern face of the mill building, where some emergence activity had been observed in the previous survey.
16. Overall, bat activity was considered to be relatively low elsewhere, with only a handful of contacts being made by solitary bats.
17. The first contact was logged at 22:00, when a single common pipistrelle was observed entering the southwest corner from off site and foraging in this location. This continued consistently until 22:20 and was also briefly observed on the northwestern elevation.
18. At 22:24 a single common pipistrelle, likely the same one, began foraging at the southern elevation.
19. The only other activity observed was a brief myotid bat, likely Daubenton's, encountered foraging over the river at 22:25.
20. No roosts were identified, or suspected on this occasion, within the surveyed building. Roosting activity observed in the previous survey was not repeated.

Figure 3 Summary of bat activity observed during emergence survey.



Survey Results

Emergence – 9th August 2023 (sunset 20:49)

21. Surveyors were positioned so as to cover all features with bat roost suitability. A thermal camera was again used to observe the southern face of the mill building.

22. Overall, bat activity was considered to be moderate along the river and low elsewhere, with only a handful of contacts being made by solitary bats, and up to three bats at a time along the river.

23. The first contact was logged at 20:55 when a common pipistrelle was seen commuting southwards, towards the river, down the alleyway to the east of the mill. A second common pipistrelle was seen commuting northwards up the alleyway at 21:19.

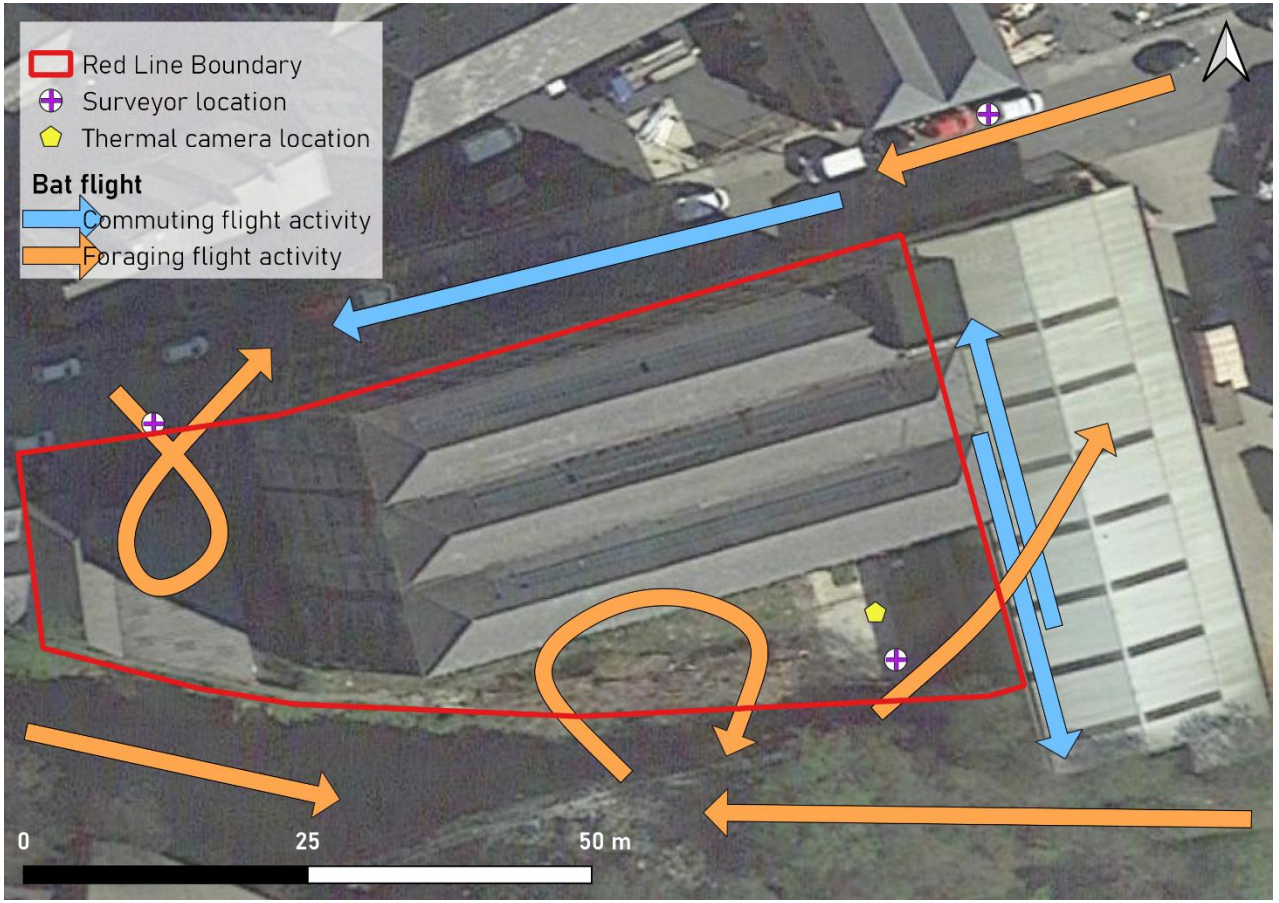
24. Up to three common pipistrelles were observed foraging over the river and surrounding vegetation, arriving from and departing to both west (upstream) and east (downstream).

25. Only individual bats were noted on the northern side of the mill, largely common pipistrelles commuting and occasionally foraging westwards along Bridge Street from 21:10 onwards.

26. At 21:37 a solitary noctule was heard, but not seen, by the two surveyors positioned on Bridge Street. This bat was likely commuting to the north of the Site and was the only other bat species detected during the survey.

27. No further roosts were identified, or suspected, within the surveyed building. Roosting activity observed in the first survey was not repeated.

Figure 4 Summary of bat activity observed during emergence survey.



Evaluation & Conclusion

28. A single survey during the late activity season 2022 and two evening emergence surveys in the peak season 2023 have confirmed the presence of two small day roosts, occupied by up to two common pipistrelle bats located within masonry gaps around blocked windows on the southern and eastern elevation.

29. Roosting appears to be reduced from the baseline as recorded in 2013, though the sporadic nature of roosting at the site, as highlighted by previous survey effort means the building may support additional, low conservation status bat roosts on occasion.

30. The presence of larger roosts elsewhere on Site is not suspected. Current survey information is considered sufficient for planning purposes.

31. Survey has shown that the roosts are used by low numbers of common species of bat and, although legally protected, the roost would be assessed by Natural England as being of 'low conservation significance'.

32. Proposals include the renovation of the building for residential use – this or any other potential disturbing works to the building will require a licence from Natural England to be in place to derogate offenses that will arise through destruction of the roost. This may be a Bat Mitigation Class Licence (BMCL) or European Protected Species Mitigation Licence (EPSML).

33. Swifts have been identified nesting in various locations around the site. Swift nest are protected from destruction while active. As such this must be a consideration when timing external renovation works.

<u>Enhancement</u>

34. The NPPF puts emphasis on development delivering biodiversity enhancement above and beyond mitigating or compensating for any impacts. To this end the new development could include integral swift nests and bat roost features to offer suitable habitat in the long term.

Natural England Licence

35. In proceeding to use, or apply for use of either license, it will be important that certain conditions are met. These are discussed below in relation to the application site:

    Has sufficient survey been carried out – is sufficient information known about the roost and its use?

36. Yes – three presence/ absence surveys have been undertaken during this peak season and during the suboptimal period of the survey season in 2022, by a team of experienced and licensed surveyors using suitable teams of assistants and equipment. The results of these surveys corroborate the findings of historic survey undertaken in 2013.

    Has detailed planning permission been granted for the site and have all conditions relating to wildlife been discharged?

37. No, planning permission is currently being sought.

38. It will be important to review any wildlife-based conditions at the earliest opportunity, as a licence can only be applied for once full planning permission has been secured, and all pre-commencement planning conditions relating to ecology have been discharged.

    Can the project satisfy the three licensing tests?

    (i) FCS Test (Regulation 53(9)(b) – Can the favourable conservation status of bats be protected?

39. Yes – the roost appears to be of low conservation significance, and its loss will not impact significantly on bat populations.

    (ii) Purpose Test (Regulation 53(2)(e) – Is the purpose of the proposed activity one which is licensable and demonstrable?

40. Yes – the project would be able to apply under the purpose of 'Imperative Reasons of Over-riding Public Interest' (IROPI), meaning that proof of its economic and social imperative would be required.

41. In presenting the application, the ecologist would need to be provided with access to the project's planning consultant and relevant documents.

    (iii) The No Satisfactory Alternative Test (Regulation 53(9)(a) – Have alternatives to the proposed activity been considered and ruled out?

42. Yes – The building in its current state is clearly not fit for habitation and the redevelopment of the Site, completed to modern standards could not accommodate the retention of the roosts in their current form.

43. You would however need to present information which showed that alternatives in terms of the use of the Site, the layout, and timing of works had been considered and the design arrived at represents the least disturbing/affecting possible.

    Mitigation

44. Natural England will not require specific mitigation for the licensed (BMCL) loss of this roost. However, replacement roost features are always recommended so as to comply with the NPPF.

45. Mitigation could include integral bat boxes being incorporated into the fabric of the exterior wall. An interim bat box will also be required, allowing the introduction of new roosts at an early stage of development and prior to the loss of the identified roosts.

46. In terms of the refurbishment of the mill, the following method should be agreed under license, but should not be the subject of any condition of planning.

    - Prior to any works commencing at the Site, the ecologist will conduct a Site meeting and toolbox talk with contractors. This will make clear the licensed method and the principle that should any additional roosts be encountered during refurbishment, that works will stop immediately whilst the ecologist's advice is sought.
    - The interim box will be installed prior to refurbishment of the roost building.
    - Once, and only once, a licence is in place will any works which may impact the identified roosts commence.
    - As the first stage of these works, safe access will be provided to the roost features to allow their full inspection. Next, the ecologist will oversee the soft demolition of the identified roost features. The ecologist will confirm the absence of bats or effect the removal of an appropriate number of bats to the interim bat box mounted on a nearby tree or building.
    - Once the ecologist has confirmed in writing that bats are absent, refurbishment of the roost building can be completed.
    - Permanent roost features will then be built into the fabric of the mill, and its correct installation confirmed by the named Ecologist.

References

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