The Gas Club

Bat Survey Report

Erith Contractors Ltd

September 2024

Seeker Ecology Ltd written on behalf of
Iceni Ecology Ltd

Quality Assurance

Report For:

Prepared for (Client)	Prepared by:
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1. Introduction

1.1 Background

Seeker Ecology Ltd was commissioned by Iceni Ecology Ltd on behalf of Erith Contractors Ltd to undertake a series of bat emergence surveys of a building, formally known as 'The Gas Club', (hereafter referred to as 'the Site'), located along Gasworks Street, Hillhouse, Huddersfield, approximate central Ordinance Survey National Grid Reference (NGR): SE 14946 17270.

1.2 Purpose of this Report

It is understood that the building 'The Gas Club' situated within the Site, is due for demolition. Following the Preliminary Bat Roost Assessment which was undertaken in July 2023[1], it was established that the building has **Moderate** suitability to support roosting bat species, and as such two bat emergence surveys are required to determine the presence/absence of roosting bat species prior to works taking place.

This report has been prepared in accordance with industry standard practice[2] and best practice guidelines for bats[3].

[1] Seeker Ecology Ltd (2023) Preliminary Roost Assessment Report. The Gas Club, Erith Contractors Ltd.

[2] IEA (1995). Guidelines for Baseline Ecological Assessment. E & F Spon, London

[3] Collins, J. (ed.) (2023) Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines (4th edn). The Bat Conservation Trust. London.

2. Bat Legislation

All species of British Bats and their roosts are legally protected, see 2.1 below. A bat roost is defined as 'any structure or place, which is used for shelter or protection' or a 'breeding site or resting place' by a bat or group of bats. Bats commonly use the same roosts at particular times of the year even after short and long periods of absence, the roost (tree, building or structure) is protected whether or not bats are currently in residence.

Seven of the UK bat species are listed as Species of Principal Importance under Section 41 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006, with a Species Action Plan prepared for each: namely, barbastelle (*Barbastella barbastellus*), Bechstein's bat (*Myotis bechsteinii*), noctule (*Nyctalus noctula*), soprano pipistrelle (*Pipistrellus pygmaeus*), brown long-eared bat (*Plecotus auritus*), greater horseshoe bat (Rhino*lophus ferrumequinum*) and lesser horseshoe bat (*Rhinolophus hipposideros*).

Kirklees Biodiversity Action Plan[4], has listed two bat species as species of principal importance these are; noctule (*Nyctalus noctule*) and soprano pipistrelle (*Pipistrellus* pygmaeus), with a further five bat species listed as specially protected species occurring within Kirklees these include; common pipistrelle (*Pipistrellus pipistrellus*), Daubenton's bat (*Myotis daubentonii)*, Leisler's Bat (*Nyctalus leisleri*), Natterer's Bat (*Myotis nattereri*) and whiskered bat (*Myotis mystacinus*).

Table 2-1 Bat Legislation

Species	Legislation	Offences
Bats **European Protected Species**	Conservation of Habitats and Species (Amendment) (EU Exit) Regulations 2019	To deliberately[5] capture, injure, or kill a bat; deliberate disturbance[6] of bats; or damage or destroy a breeding site or resting place used by a bat. [The protection of bat roosts is considered to apply regardless of whether bats are present within the roost at the time of works/survey(s).]
	Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) S.9	Intentionally or recklessly obstruct access to any structure or place used for shelter or protection or disturb[7] a bat in such a place.

Given the above legislation, the potential presence of bats at a Site represents a material consideration in the planning process. Even where planning permission is not required for the proposed works there is still a legal responsibility placed upon the developer to ensure that a breach of legislation does not occur upon the safety of a roost or bat(s). Developers therefore must obtain a Natural England mitigation licence to cover any works that has the potential to result in an offence under the above legislation.

[4] Kirklees Council (Unknown) Kirklees Biodiversity Action Plan. Kirklees Species of Principal Importance [accessed 06.09.2024] https://www.kirklees.gov.uk/beta/delivering-services/pdf/biodiversity-species.pdf

[5] Deliberate capture or killing is taken to include "accepting the possibility" of such capture or killing.

[6] Deliberate disturbance of animals includes any disturbance which is likely a) to impair their ability (i) to survive, to breed or reproduce, or to rear or nurture their young, or (ii) in the case of animals of hibernating or migratory species, to hibernate or migrate; or b) to affect significantly the local distribution or abundance of the species to which they belong.

[7] Lower levels of disturbance not covered by the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 remain an offence under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 although a defence is available where such actions are the incidental result of a lawful activity that could not reasonably be avoided.

3. Methodology

The Site was initially assessed for its suitability to support roosting bat species in July 2023[1], the outcome of the assessment was that the building supported **Moderate** potential, due to the presence of lifted and missing tiles, open grilled windows, gaps behind boarded windows, broken windows and missing mortar within the brick and stone work.

Following best practice guidelines[3] further surveys in the form of dusk emergence surveys of the building should be conducted to determine the presence/absence of roosting bat species. A building with Moderate suitability requires two separate dusk emergence survey visits between May to September with at least one survey between May and August and each survey should be at least three weeks apart.

These surveys were undertaken, by two experienced ecologists from Seeker Ecology Ltd (on behalf of Iceni Ecology ltd) who hold Natural England Bat Class Licenses WML CL19 & 20 (Bat Survey Level 3 & 4), with two survey assistants. All four surveyors utilised full spectrum detectors and NVA's. All surveys were conducted in line with the Bat Conservation Trust (BCT) survey guidelines (Collins 2023)[3] and during suitable weather conditions, see Table 3.1 below.

Table 3-1 Weather conditions

Survey	Date	Weather conditions
Survey 1	30.07.2024	Warm (Temperature 22-21˚c), dry and partly cloudy, with a light breeze reducing to a light air (6-2mph) and muggy (humidity 68-75%). Lowest overnight temperature 14˚c.
Survey 2	20.08.2024	Warm (Temperature 14-13˚c), heavy rain prior to the survey, dry during with heavy rain just before the end of the survey, overcast, with a light breeze with moderate gusts, and muggy (humidity 66%). Lowest overnight temperature 8˚c.

3.1 Bat Emergence Surveys

The purpose of these surveys was to determine the presence/absence of roosting bat species from the building within the Site through the observed emergence and/or re-entry of bats from suitable features during the survey, which would therefore indicate the presence of a bat roost. Four surveyors and four-night vision aids (NVAs) were positioned around the building in such a way that all suitable features to support roosting bat species were adequately covered throughout the survey. The surveys commenced 15 minutes before sunset and continued for 1.5-2 hours after sunset. A bat licenced ecologist from Seeker Ecology Ltd was present during each survey visit. All surveys were undertaken during suitable weather conditions (see Table 3.1).

During the surveys, surveyors observed potential access/egress points across the building. Surveyors used Batlogger M full spectrum detectors and a Pettersson U384 with four Infra-red cameras (Canon XA60 and three Reolink camera system with additional IR torches/floodlamps) on each survey to detect and record bat egress/entry activity.

The time, aspect, number, species (where possible) and direction of flight were recorded for each bat pass (discrete burst of echolocation heard, or bat activity observed) encountered during the survey. All sound files were analysed using Anabat Insight software, where possible calls were analysed down to species level (where confidence of species was above 90%) following the call parameters in Russ 2013[8].

3.1.1 Limitations

Full access to the building exterior was permitted during all surveys, and sufficient coverage of the building was possible either by NVA's or visual assessment.

Within the last 15 minutes of the survey on the 20th August 2024, torrential rain occurred, and the survey was subsequently abandoned. Therefore, the duration of the second survey was 1 hour and 20 minutes long. This is not considered a significant constraint to the survey as the weather during the survey period was optimal, and bat activity was observed during this period.

[8] Russ, J. (2013) *British Bat Calls. A Guide to species Identification.* Pelagic Publications

4. Results

4.1 Bat Emergence Surveys

4.1.1 Survey 1 – 30/07/2024

Survey start: 20:51
Sunset: 21:06
Survey end: 22:51

Bat activity during the survey was extremely low with a maximum of four bat passes detected; these were all by common pipistrelle bats. The first bat pass was detected at 21:39 (33 minutes after sunset) which was observed flying over the road to the southwest before flying east to west along the rear face of the building. A second bat was observed at 22:11 (65 minutes after sunset) which flew from the roadside (south) towards the lower-level car park towards the Huddersfield Broad Canal which lies to the west of the Site. All other bat passes detected were brief/distant and heard only.

No bat emergence was observed during the survey.

4.1.2 Survey 2 – 20/08/2024

Survey start: 20:08
Sunset: 20:25
Survey end: 21:45

Bat activity during the second survey was also extremely low with a maximum of four bat passes detected on the south-western side of the building only; all bat passes detected were by common pipistrelle bats.

The first bat pass observed was at 20:48 (23 minutes after sunset), flying from the west of the building from the lower section (within the royal mail car parking area adjacent to the Huddersfield Broad Canal) foraging south over the road. The second bat pass observed was at 20:57 (32 minutes after sunset) flying west to east to the rear of the building within the car park towards the trees to the east. No other bats were observed, all bat passes were of foraging bats or brief passes only.

No bat emergence was observed during the survey.

5. Conclusion

Bat activity during the surveys were very low with only four common pipistrelle bats detected on each survey. On both surveys a single bat was observed foraging from the west (towards the canal) up into the building access track before flying over the road heading south. Similarly, a bat was observed on both surveys foraging west to east across the rear of the building.

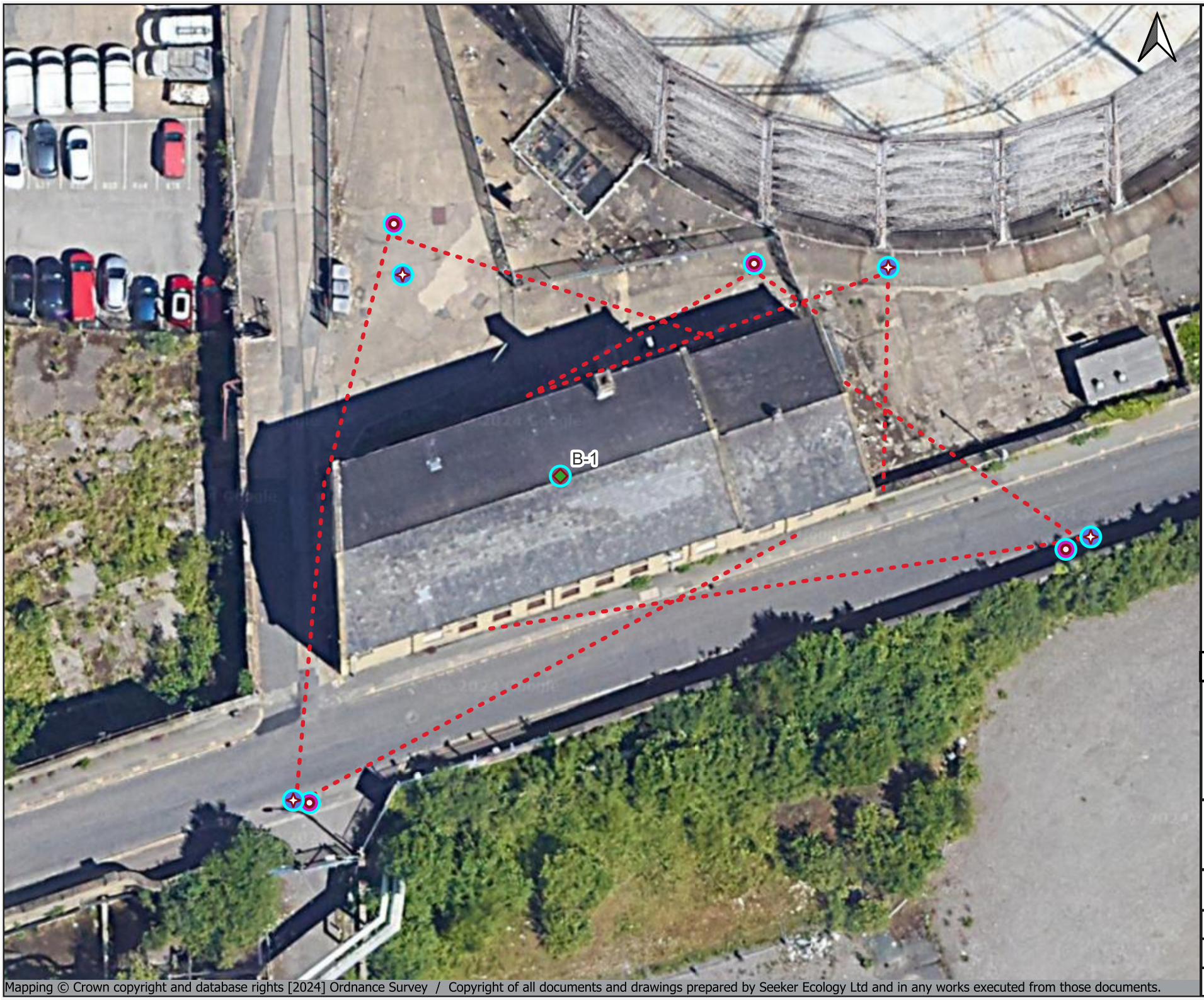
No bat emergence was observed on either survey, it is therefore, considered that the building is absent of roosting bat species and the proposed demolition works can proceed.

5.1 Recommendations

In the unlikely event that a bat is encountered during the works, the works must stop, and an ecologist contacted.

If the demolition of the building does not take place within 18 months of this report, then updated surveys may be required.

Appendix A - Location Plan/Surveyor Locations



Legend:

- NVA Position
- Surveyor Position
- Building Ref.
- Position Coverage

Seeker Ecology Ltd

Figure 1 - Bat Surveyor & NVA positions

Project: Gas Club

Client: Erith Contractors Ltd

Auth/Appr: MCG / SCG

Scale: 1/600 @A3

Appendix B - NVA visibility

North-east corner of the building looking at the rear and eastern side.

Rear of the building looking South

Front of the building looking north-west

Front of the building looking north-east