Bat Activity Survey Report	
For:	Healey Islamic Trust
Site	Buildings at Masjid Quba Mosque, Healey Lane, Batley, WF17 7SU
Report Date:	16th August 2024
Report Reference:	SQ-1153

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Client:	Healey Islamic Trust
Site Name:	Buildings at Masjid Quba Mosque, Healey Lane, Batley, WF17 7SU
Grid Reference:	SE 23305 24049
Report:	Bat Activity Report
Date of Activity Survey	9th July & 12th August 2024

Issue:	Revision:	Stage:	Date:	Prepared by:	Approved by:
1	-	Draft for review	16th August 2024	John Davies BSc(hons), Estrada Ecology Ltd	Natasha Estrada BSc(hons), MRes, MCIEEM, Estrada Ecology Ltd
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The contents of this report have been produced with due consideration of current best practice guidance, and in accordance with the Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management's (CIEEM) Code of Professional Conduct and guidelines, as outlined in Collins (2023).

This report should not be submitted as part of a planning application without any accompanying species-specific reports which may have been recommended herein.

Data within this report is valid for a maximum of eighteen months from the date of the survey. After this period, an updated site visit will be required to determine a new ecological baseline.

Whilst every effort has been taken to ensure the accuracy of this report and its contents, in view of potential ecological constraints to development or the presence or absence of species, it must only be viewed as a snapshot in time and, therefore, not be viewed as definitive. Due to external factors, such as seasonality, weather etc, having the potential to affect survey results, no liability can be assumed for omissions or changes that may, or may not occur, after the date this report was produced.

Summary

Estrada Ecology Ltd was commissioned to conduct two dusk bat activity surveys on buildings adjacent to Masjid Quba Mosque, Healy Lane, Batley, WF17 7SU (hereafter referred to as the site).

A Preliminary Ecological Assessment (PEA) was conducted by Estrada Ecology Ltd in April 2024 (*Report Ref: SQ-1978, dated June 2024*). No evidence suggesting use by bats was recorded during the survey. The buildings within the site were assessed for suitability for use by bats as a roost or a place of shelter and categorised by a licenced bat ecologist as offering moderate roost suitability. Consequently, two bat activity surveys were recommended to ascertain presence/ likely absence.

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Findings and recommendations

Bats and roosts

Two dusk activity surveys were undertaken following BCT Survey Guidelines (2023), within suitable weather conditions, as outlined herein.

During the surveys, no bats of any species were recorded emerging from or entering the buildings surveyed. Bat activity over the survey period was recorded as very low and isolated to a single non-emerging common pipistrelle foraging within the wider area.

The level of bat activity over the duration of the survey period was very low, inferring that the immediate area does not support large populations of bats.

Based on field sign evidence and the outcome of the dusk emergence surveys, the buildings on site were recorded as unlikely to be used by bats for roosting or as a place of shelter. As a result, no further surveys are recommended, and no formal mitigation is proposed, other than best practice guidance.

Hibernating bats

Crevice-dwelling bats, such as pipistrelle species, use structures for shelter and protection in winter when they hibernate. During hibernation, bats need roosts that are cool and remain at a constant temperature. They are difficult to detect in hibernation, in well-concealed crevices, and leave no obvious signs of their presence. The buildings on site were assessed for their potential to support features which bats could utilise for hibernation. All buildings within the site are deemed to offer limited potential for hibernacula use, due to the absence of crevices or cracks of a suitable depth and thermal mass which could support hibernating bats.

Breeding birds

No evidence of nesting birds was recorded over the survey period.

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1 Introduction and Site Description

1.1 Estrada Ecology Ltd was commissioned to conduct bat activity surveys on buildings at Masjid Quba Mosque, Healy Lane, Batley, WF17 7SU (hereafter referred to as the 'site').

1.2 Under current proposals, it is understood that the site is subject to future redevelopment.

1.3 The site was subject to a Preliminary Assessment by Estrada Ecology Ltd in June 2024 (*Report reference: SQ-1978*). No evidence suggesting use by bats was recorded during the survey. The buildings were deemed to offer moderate roost suitability and further survey effort was recommended.

1.4 The site is approximately 1.6Km northeast of Heckmondwike town centre. A complex of buildings is present within the site, comprising of stone and red brick structures. Several windows were recorded boarded on the eastern elevation, with the remaining windows intact. Roofing materials varied between corrugated metal, corrugated asbestos and slate.

1.5 The slate roof recorded multiple areas of damage and lifted slates. Furthermore, the gable to the stone structure showed missing mortar along the ridge. A section of the parapet on the northern boundary structure recorded a lifted stone slab which was deemed to provide suitable opportunities for bats to utilise.

1.6 The wider landscape is comprised of residential and commercial properties on all elevations, with small pockets of open vegetated areas to the north and south.

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Figure 1: The survey site within its wider setting.

Google Maps *(Imagery © Airbus plc, Infoterra Ltd & Bluesky, Maxar Technologies 2024)*

2 Protected Species Legislation

2.1 All species of bat and their breeding sites or resting places (roosts) are fully protected under The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010 (as amended).

2.2 The Regulations prohibit: the deliberate killing, injuring, or taking of bats; the deliberate disturbance of any bat species, in such a way as to be significantly likely to affect:

- Their ability of to survive, hibernate, migrate, breed, or rear or nurture their young, or the local distribution or abundance of that species.
- Damage or destruction of a breeding site or resting place (roost); and
- The possession or transport of bats or any other part thereof.

2.3 Bats are also protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) through their inclusion in Schedule 5. Under the Act, they are protected from:

- Intentional or reckless disturbance (at any level); obstruction of access to any place of shelter, breeding, or rest; selling, bartering or exchange of these species, or parts of.

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2.4 Seven British bat species are listed as Species of Principle Importance (SPI) under the Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006. These are: barbastelle *(Barbastella barbastellus);* Bechstein's (*Myotis bechsteinii);* noctule *(Nyctalus noctula);* soprano pipistrelle *(Pipistrellus pygmaeus);* brown long-eared *(Plecotus auritus);* greater horseshoe *(Rhinolophus ferrumequinum);* and lesser horseshoe *(Rhinolophus hipposideros)*.

2.5 Under the National Planning Policy Framework (2023), the presence of any protected species is a material planning consideration. The Framework states that impacts arising from development proposals must be avoided where possible, or mitigated / compensated for, and that opportunities for ecological enhancement should be sought.

2.6 Under certain circumstances, a licence may be granted by Natural England to permit activities that would otherwise constitute an offence. In relation to development, a scheme must have full planning permission before a licence application can be made.

3 Survey Objectives

3.1 The objective of the survey was to establish if bats were using the site for roosting, or as a place of shelter; and, where present to identify to species level, determine the population size and nature of the roost.

3.2 This report presents the findings of bat activity surveys undertaken in July and August 2024 and aims to:

- Outline any potential impacts of the proposed development on bats, as a result of the findings of the desk study and field surveys.
- Provide recommendations for mitigation and / or compensation measures to ensure any impacts on bat activity is avoided or minimised where applicable.
- Provide recommendations for enhancing the site for bat activity where possible; and
- Provide recommendations for mitigation and / or compensation measures to ensure any impacts on breeding bird species is avoided or minimised.

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4 Survey Methodology

4.1 Desktop study

4.1.1 A biological records search was requested from West Yorkshire Ecology Services and West Yorkshire Bat Group for a 2 km radius from the central grid reference.

4.1.2 MAGIC Maps online web application was consulted to inform on granted European Protected Species Applications licences within the 1 km search radius from the site.

4.1.3 Further inspection, using colour 1: 25,000 OS base maps (www.ordnancesurvey.co.uk), MAGIC (www.magic.defra.gov.uk) and aerial photographs from Google Earth (www.maps.google.co.uk), was also undertaken to provide additional context and identify any features of potential importance for nature conservation in the wider countryside.

4.2 Initial inspection survey

4.2.1 An initial inspection survey of the site was undertaken in June 2024 and recorded the buildings within the site as offering moderate roost suitability for use by bats.

4.2.2 No field sign evidence suggesting the use of the site by roosting bats was recorded at the time of survey.

4.2.3 Two dusk activity surveys were recommended to be undertaken on the buildings to ascertain presence/ likely absence of use by bats for roosting or as a place of shelter.

4.3 Bat activity surveys

4.3.1 The bat activity surveys were undertaken within July and August 2024 using guidance from Collins, J., Bat Conservation Trust (BCT) Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists, Good Practice Guidelines, 4th Edition (2023).

4.3.2 The number of surveys suitable for the buildings is determined by their potential to support bats, any field sign evidence gathered during the initial inspection survey in June 2024, and any subsequent activity recorded during the activity survey.

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4.3.3 The dusk emergence survey commenced twenty minutes prior to sunset and continued up to two hours after sunset, as per recommendations (Colins, 2023).

4.3.4 Echo Meter Touch 2 Pros were used during the survey to identify bat contacts. The survey results were aided by the use of Night Fox Whisker IR Cameras.

Figure 2: Location of surveyors (●) over the survey.

Google Maps *(Imagery © Getmapping plc, Infoterra Ltd & Bluesky, Maxar Technologies 2023)*

4.4 Timings

4.4.1 The activity survey was conducted during suitable weather conditions as outlined in Table 1.

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Table 1: Environmental conditions throughout the survey period.

Date	Sunset	Start time	End time	Weather conditions
9th July 2024	21:37	21:10	22:48	Temp 17°C Humidity 95%, Clear sky, No precipitation, wind speed 7mph W
12th August 2024	20:43	20:20	21:45	Temp 16°C Humidity 78%, Clear sky, No precipitation, wind speed 6mph W

4.5 Personnel

4.5.1 Surveying ecologists included Samuel Toon BSc(hons) Natural England Bat Licence Number: 2018-35446-CLS-CLS, Fern Harrison MSc, John Davies BSc(hons) and Joanne Toller BSc (hons).

5 Survey Findings

5.1 Desktop Study

5.1.1 A total of ninety-nine bat records were returned by WYES and WYBG, comprising common pipistrelle (*Pipistrellus pipistrellus*), soprano pipistrelle (*Pipistrellus pygmaeus*), noctule (*Nyctalus noctula*), brown long-eared bat (*Plecotus auritus*), Leisler (*Nyctalus leisleri*) and unconfirmed bat species, dated between 1997 and 2022.

5.1.2 Consultation with MAGIC returned one European Protected Species Mitigation License within a 2 km radius from grid.

Table 2: Mitigation licences granted within 1km radius from grid

License Number	Date	Location from Site	Species	Purpose
EPSM2011-3454	2011-2012	1107 metres south	Common Pipistrelle (*Pipistrellus Pipistrellus*)	Destruction of a Resting Place

5.2 Initial Inspection Survey

5.2.1 A Preliminary Ecological Assessment which was undertaken in June 2024. The buildings on site were recorded as offering moderate roost suitability due to external features deemed capable of supporting bats for roosting or as a place of shelter, when surveyed by a licensed bat ecologist.

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5.2.2 No fresh field sign evidence synonymous with bats was recorded during a walkover survey of the buildings prior to the commencement of the activity surveys.

5.3 Bat Activity Surveys

5.3.1 During the first dusk activity survey, no bats of any species were recorded emerging from or re-entering any feature of the buildings on site.

5.3.2 A peak count of one non- emerging common pipistrelle bat was recorded outside the site boundary to the east at 22:04. No further bat contacts were recorded over the duration of the survey.

5.3.3 No evidence of breeding bird activity was recorded at the time of survey.

5.3.4 During the second activity survey, no bats of any species were recorded emerging from any aspect of the buildings. No bat contacts from any species were recorded over the duration of the survey period.

5.4 Commuting Route Assessment

5.4.1 Bats are known to utilise linear features as commuting lines to foraging grounds and between roosts. No major commuting lines or foraging grounds were recorded during the survey periods over the wider site.

5.4.2 Field sign evidence over the survey period infers the immediate area supports very low level of bats / bat activity.

6 Survey and Site Assessment

6.1 No bats of any species were recorded emerging from or re-entering any area of the buildings present over the survey period.

6.2 Bat activity recorded at the site consisted of a single non- emerging common pipistrelle bat foraging over the wider site.

6.3 Based on evidence collated over the dusk surveys, the buildings within the curtilage of the site recorded no evidence of use by bats for roosting or a place of shelter. At this juncture, no further survey effort is deemed to be required and no mitigation licence required to legally facilitate the proposals.

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6.4 The features on the buildings are considered to have limited potential for use by bats for hibernation, due to an absence of crevices and cracks of a suitable depth capable of supporting a stable thermal mass which could support hibernating bats.

6.5 No evidence of breeding birds was recorded within the buildings over the survey period.

7 Ecological Constraints

7.1 Due to the variable properties of bat echolocation calls and the format of frequency division recordings, it is not always possible to identify a series of echolocation calls down to species level.

7.2 In most cases, it is usually possible to identify to genus level which is suitable to allow potential affects to be assessed and appropriate mitigation designed.

8 Interpretation and Evaluation

8.1 The identified features on the buildings subject to survey are confirmed as being unlikely to be used by bats for roosting or as a place of shelter.

8.2 No field sign evidence to suggest use by bats was recorded over the survey period and bat activity throughout the duration of the survey was deemed to be very low, being limited to a single non- emerging contact outside the development boundaries.

8.3 It would be expected that surveys undertaken during the period of July and August 2024 would reveal a greater level of activity, if the site were to be used regularly by a larger number of bats.

9 Assessment of Potential Impacts

9.1 Impacts on bats and their roosts

9.1.1 The results of the bat activity surveys confirms that the buildings adjacent to Masjid Quba Mosque, Healey Lane, Batley, WF17 7SU are unlikely to be used by bats for roosting or as a place of shelter.

9.1.2 The activity survey results recorded no evidence to suggest use of the survey site as a major commuting route or foraging ground. A single non-emerging common pipistrelle was recorded foraging over the survey period.

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9.1.3 No formal mitigation is proposed, and it is deemed that a mitigation licence will not be required to facilitate the works. Standard precautionary caveats of if bats or field sign evidence of bats are discovered during the works, all works should cease, and a suitably qualified ecologist consulted are applicable.

9.2 Impacts on breeding birds

9.2.1 No evidence of breeding birds was recorded at the time of survey. However, this must be viewed as a snapshot in time and not definitive, as birds could be breeding at other times of the year.

10 Conclusions and Recommendations

10.1 The result of the bat activity survey suggests the identified features on the buildings are unlikely to be used by bats for roosting or as a place of shelter. As a result, no formal mitigation is recommended.

10.2 It is deemed that a Protected Species Mitigation Licence (formerly European Protected Species Mitigation Licence) will not be required to facilitate the works.

10.3 No impacts on major foraging lines or commuting corridors are predicted via the proposals.

10.4 Whilst no evidence of breeding birds was recorded within the building at the time of survey, it is recommended that any clearance works on the buildings, as well as the vegetation around the rest of the site, is conducted outside the breeding bird season (March to September inclusive).

10.5 If this is not feasible, it is recommended that a breeding bird survey is conducted on the suitable habitats proposed to be removed prior to works. If birds are recorded nesting, attempting to create a nest, breeding, or attempting to breed, then all works should cease, and a suitably qualified ecologist consulted.

10.6 A suitable buffer zone, as advised by a suitably qualified ecologist, should be installed in order to protect the bird activity to prevent disturbance.

10.7 Only when breeding activity has deemed to have ceased and any young fledged, as assessed by a suitably qualified ecologist can works commence.

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References

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Stone, E., (2014) Bats and Lighting – Bats Conservation Trust.

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