Gynn Ln, Honley



Bat Emergence Survey Report

Vivly Living

03/09/2024

Report Ref. ER-7732-02

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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

Bat Emergence Surveys, undertaken during optimal survey conditions and time of year, have confirmed the presence of a single small day-roost within the surveyed building at Gynn Ln, Honley.

A sufficient level of information has been collected to support the planning application, however a single further survey will be required to inform a Natural England license application.

A NE mitigation licence will need to be in place prior to any works commencing on this building.

Introduction

1. Subsequent to recommendations set out in Brooks Ecological Preliminary Ecological Appraisal report (ER-7732-01), Brooks Ecological was commissioned to carry out Bat Emergence Surveys at the proposed development Site at Gynn Lane, Honley (Grid Reference: SE 1453 1215).

2. The residential property (Survey building in the figure below), was assessed as providing features with Moderate bat roost suitability. In accordance with current best practice guidelines, buildings of moderate suitability need two evening emergence surveys in order to confirm the presence or likely absence of roosting bats.

Figure 1 The surveyed building



Method

3. Brooks Ecological specialises 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 (2023). 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, two visits with a team of three 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 automated bat Echo Meter Touch 2 and T2Pro Thermal camera 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
31.07.2024	Emergence	23/21°C	Dry. 70% humidity.90% cloud cover. Light breeze (B2), moderate invertebrate activity.
22.08.2024	Emergence	14/13°C	Light to moderate rain. 70% humidity.100% cloud cover. Light air (B1), moderate invertebrate activity.

7. Survey directed by Christopher Shaw BSc (Hons) MCIEEM. Chris has over 13 years' experience of carrying out bat surveys in a professional capacity and is registered to use the Class Survey Licence WML CL18 (Bat Survey Level 2) and Bat Mitigation Class Licence WML CL21 Annex B. (Started May 2010).

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.

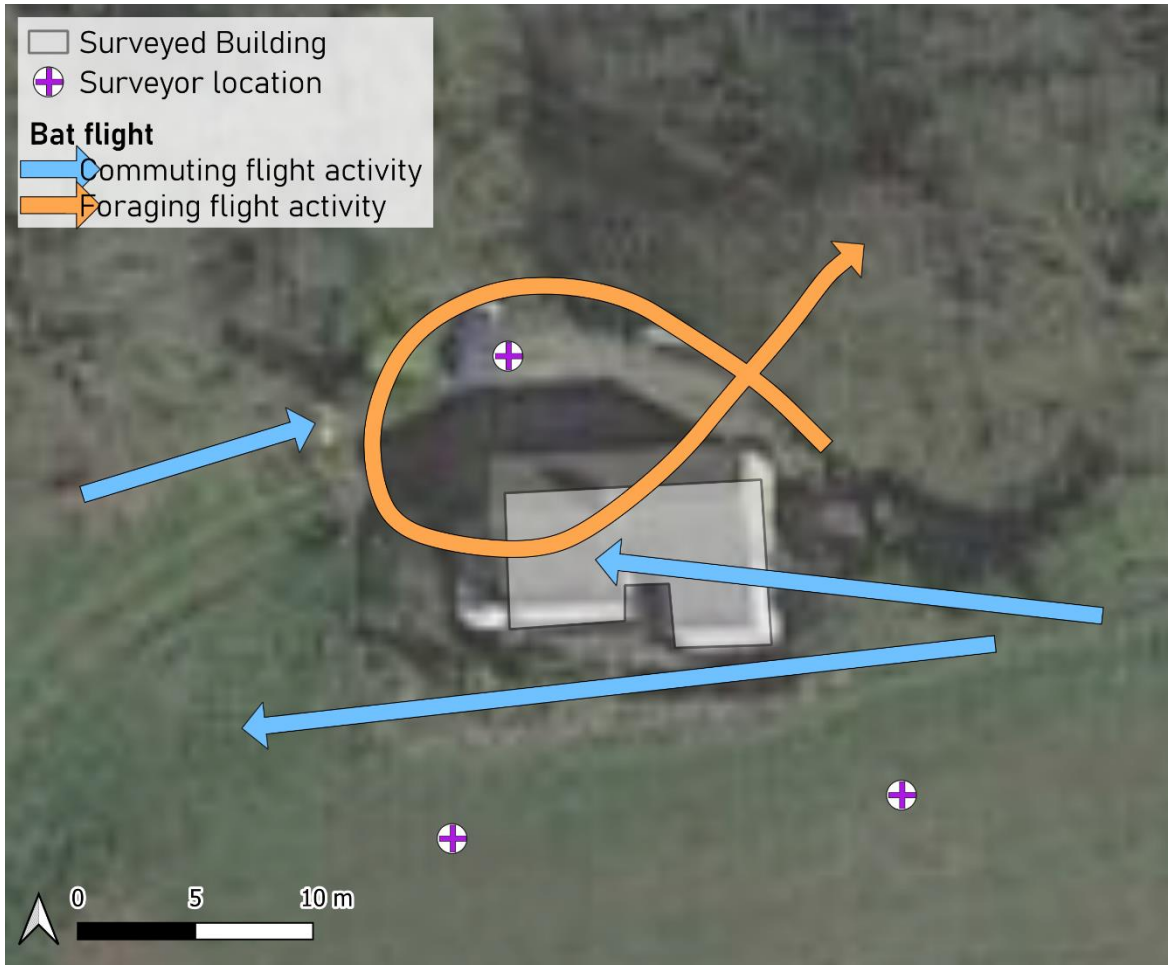
Where bats are found within a potential development site, a license from Natural England may need to be secured if works that could otherwise contravene legislation are to be carried out. These licences are only issued where Natural England is satisfied that works are unavoidable and would not have a 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 1 – 31th June 2024 (sunset 20:48)

8. Surveyors were positioned so as to cover all features with bat roost suitability.
9. Overall, bat activity was considered to be low, with contacts being made by up to three common pipistrelle intermittently throughout the survey.
10. The first contact was logged at 21:21, when a single common pipistrelle was heard by the surveyor to the north of the building.
11. This was followed at 21:24 by a common pipistrelle observed commuting east to west to the south of the building.
12. At 20:25 a common pipistrelle was observed commuting from the east to then forage over the building, and the driveway to its north.
13. Two more bats were then observed to join foraging to the north of the property from offsite at 21:27, which continued until the end of the survey, intermittently heard by the two surveyors to the south of the building.
14. No roosts were identified, or suspected, within the surveyed building.

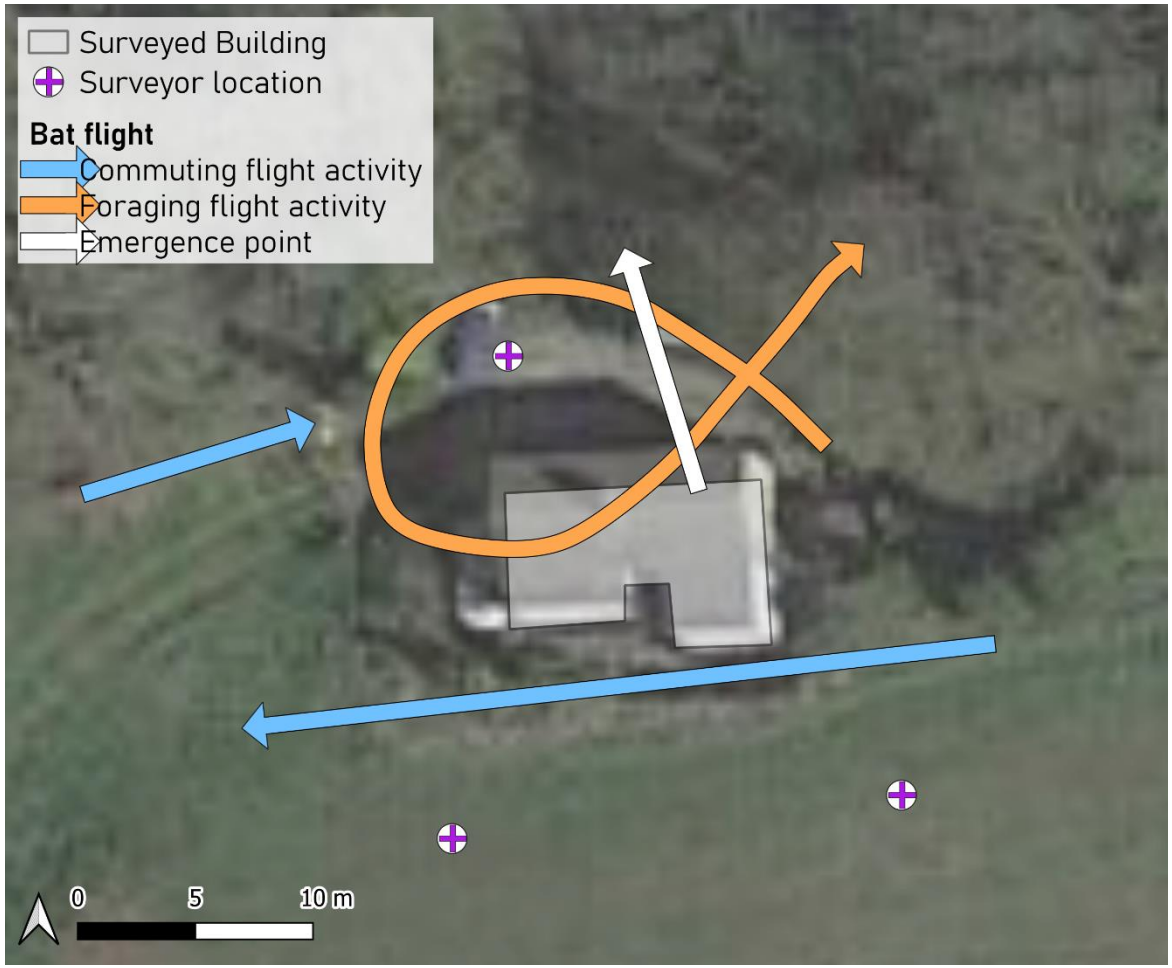
Figure 2 Summary of bat activity observed during emergence survey.



Emergence 2 – 22nd August 2024 (sunset 20:19)

15. Surveyors were positioned so as to cover all features with bat roost suitability.
16. Overall, bat activity was considered to be low, with contacts being made by up to two bats.
17. The first contact was logged at 20:29, when a solitary common pipistrelle was observed foraging over the driveway north of the building.
18. At 20:32 a solitary common pipistrelle was then observed commuting from the west along the treeline to then forage in the same location.
19. Foraging was then observed by solitary common pipistrelle around the northwestern corner of the building from 20:33 until 20:36.
20. At 20:36, a solitary common pipistrelle was observed emerging from behind gutter board above a window on the northern elevation (see Figure 4, overleaf).
21. Two common pipistrelle were observed commuting from the west along the treeline before foraging for a brief time to the north of the building briefly at 20:45. This same route was then followed by a solitary common pipistrelle at 20:47, and then by two common pipistrelle at 20:53.
22. At 20:54, two common pipistrelle were observed commuting east to west to the south of the property.

Figure 3 Summary of bat activity observed during emergence survey.



Evaluation & Conclusion

23. Two evening emergence surveys, carried out in the peak season, have confirmed the presence of a single day-roost, occupied by a solitary common pipistrelle bat. This is located behind a section of gutter board on the buildings northern elevation, as shown in the figure opposite.

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

25. Survey has shown that the roost is 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'.

26. Proposals include removal of the building to facilitate development – 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).

Standard Precaution

27. Although only a single roost has been confirmed, and the presence of other roosts on Site is not suspected, it must be noted that bats frequently move between roost sites, can be very casual in their choice of roosting location, and can turn up unexpectedly at any time.

28. On this basis the developer should always be mindful of bats as a potential constraint and have a protocol in place should any bats be seen or suspected during works: works should stop, a suitably licenced ecologist consulted, and their advice followed.

Enhancement

29. 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 bat roost features to offer suitable habitat in the long term.

Figures 4 & 5 Location of roost





Natural England Licence

30. 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?

31. Not yet – two presence/ absence surveys have been undertaken during the peak season by a team of experienced and licensed surveyors using suitable teams of assistants and equipment.

32. Further survey is required to confirm the absence of further roosts. However, activity across the rest of the Site was low and larger roosts are not suspected. In line with Natural England guidance, one further survey is recommended to collect sufficient information about the roost for licensing.

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

33. No, planning permission is currently being sought.

34. 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 as outlined in The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010?

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

35. 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?

36. 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.

37. 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?

38. Yes – The building in its current position must be demolished to accommodate installation of drainage infrastructure required to facilitate development of the land south of the building for residential housing.

39. You would 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

40. 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.

41. Mitigation could include integral bat boxes being incorporated into the new build. An interim bat box will also be required, which would be placed in trees or on buildings around the edge of the Site allowing the introduction of new roosts at an early stage of development and prior to the loss of the identified roost.

42. In terms of the refurbishment of 'the Barns', 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 to the identified roost building 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 new build, and its correct installation confirmed by the named Ecologist.

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