

Bat Roost Assessment

BE-1392-01

The Coach House, Healey House, Netherton,
Huddersfield, HD4 7DZ



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Executive Summary

David Watts Associates Ltd have been instructed by Mr Brooke to produce a Bat Roost Assessment in relation to a proposed development at The Coach House, Healey House, Netherton, Huddersfield, HD4 7DZ.

A scoping survey and two bat activity surveys identified a brown long-eared roost within the building, with a peak count of one bat. It is anticipated that the building comprises a day roost used by a single or low number of males and/or non-breeding females. Day roosts of brown long-eared bat are considered to be of low conservation status. The day roost will necessitate destruction due to the development proposals.

As all bats and their roosts are protected species, a Natural England European Protected Species (EPS) licence will need to be in place prior to the commencement of development works. This must include a method statement to ensure that bats are not harmed during works; an outline method statement is included within this report.

The development proposals must include bat roosting habitat to mitigate for the loss of the roost.

1. Introduction

1.1. Background

David Watts Associates Ltd have been instructed by Mr Brook to produce a Bat Roost Assessment in relation to a proposed development at The Coach House, Healey House, Netherton, Huddersfield, HD4 7DZ, hereafter referred to as 'the site'.

The purpose of the report is to:

- Determine if bats are present or absent in the building on the site.
- If bats are found to be present, to estimate the size and status of the roost.
- If necessary, to identify the requirement for further surveys, and for mitigation measures including avoidance of ecological impact, compensation and ecological enhancement.

1.2. Legislation and Policy

A summary of legislation and policy affecting bats in the UK can be viewed in [Appendix 2: Legislation and Policy](#).

1.3. Site Details

The site is located at grid reference SE 11502 11988 and consists of a disused two storey storage building, located to the southwest of the main residential building on the site.

1.4. Development Proposals

The development proposals are to renovate the building on the site, with a change of use from storage to residential.

2. Methods

2.1. Ecological Data Search

Aerial imagery and other online sources were consulted in order to give an appraisal of the surrounding landscape regarding its suitability for bats.

The Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs' (DEFRA) Magic Maps website and the Natural England website were consulted as to any land-based designations and protected/notable species within 2 km of the site.

2.2. Bat Scoping Survey

An initial scoping survey was undertaken on 16th July 2020 by Miranda Cowen BSc (Hons) PGCert MCIEEM, an experienced ecologist. A further scoping survey was undertaken on 26th August 2020 by David Watts BSc (Hons) PGCert FdSc MCIEEM, an experienced ecologist who holds Natural England class licences to survey bats (2016-24731-CLS-CLS) and barn owls (*Tyto alba*) (CL29/00320).

The survey was based upon methodologies prescribed by Collins (2016), Mitchell-Jones (2004) and Mitchell-Jones and McLeish (2004). This involved an inspection of the exterior and interior of the building. Any structural features with potential for use by roosting bats were recorded and any suitable access points were identified. Where possible, features were inspected with a Ridgid CA300 endoscope. Any direct evidence of bats, such as scratch marks, oil stains, droppings and feeding remains were also identified.

Taking account of the structural features of the building and the surrounding habitat, the building was assigned a level of roost suitability based upon professional judgement (see table 1).

Table 1. Bat roost suitability and descriptions

Bat Roost Suitability	Description
Confirmed presence	Bat presence confirmed during the scoping survey
High	Buildings that have many areas suitable for roosting which are obviously suitable for use by a larger number of bats including maternity colonies.
Moderate	Buildings with a smaller number of areas suitable for roosting, but still supporting feature that could be attractive to bats and potentially support maternity colonies.
Low	Buildings with limited roosting opportunities but which could be used on a sporadic or occasional basis by a low number of bats, but which are unsuitable for maternity roosts.
Negligible	Buildings which appear unsuitable for roosting bats due to a clear lack of roosting spaces such as voids and/or absence of suitable access points.

2.3. Nesting Bird Survey

An inspection of the building was undertaken for any signs of nesting birds, including nests, feathers and unhatched or broken eggs.

2.4. Bat Activity Surveys

Dusk emergence surveys of the building were carried out on 16th July 2020 and 26th August 2020. During both surveys the building was monitored for emerging and re-entering bats. Any additional bat

activity, including foraging and commuting bats, was recorded. Table 2, below, shows a summary of the survey details.

Table 2. Survey times and conditions

Date	Sunset/ sunrise time	Start time	Finish time	Surveyors	Equipment	Weather
16/07/2020	21:27	20:13	23:27	Miranda Cowan Lucy Wilson	Echo Meter Touch 2	Dry. Start temp. 14°C. Finish temp. 11°C. Wind Beaufort 0 Cloud 5%
26/08/2020	20:10	19:55	21:55	David Watts Miranda Cowan	Echo Meter Touch 2 Canon Legria infrared camera and illuminator	Dry. Start temp. 16.8°C. Finish temp. 12.4°C. Wind Beaufort 1 Cloud 0%

3. Results

3.1. Data Search

A search on Magic Maps (DEFRA, 2020) and Google Earth Pro (2020) found the immediate surrounding land use to consist of a mosaic of agricultural land and woodland. Bank Wood, an ancient/semi-natural woodland, is located approximately 85 m west of the site.

The South Pennine Moors Special Protection Area (SPA) and Special Area of Conservation (SAC) and Dark Peak Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) are located approximately 3.5 km southwest of the site. Honley Station Cutting SSSI is located approximately 3 km east of the site.

DEFRA (2020) hold one record of a granted European Protected Species (EPS) licence approximately 300 m from the site. The licence reference is 2014-4125-EPS-MIT and allowed destruction of a resting place of common pipistrelle (*Pipistrellus pipistrellus*). The licence start date was 7th November 2014 and the end date was 30th September 2019.

3.2. Bat Scoping Survey

The building consisted of a two-storey stone-built building with a hipped roof. The stonework on the exterior of the building was rendered and in relatively good condition. The roof was in poor condition, with numerous lifted roof tiles on all aspects. Lead flashing on the roof hips was loose, with visible gaps. There was a raised skylight within the centre of the roof, with broken windows providing access into the building.

The ground floor of the building was well-lit, with no signs of roosting bats.

The first floor of the building was well-lit by the skylight within the centre of the roof. The building had no separate roof void. The interior of the first floor was lined with wooden sarking, which was lifted in places, revealing a cavity between the sarking and the roof void to a depth of approximately 20 cm. Feeding remains of peacock butterfly (*Aglaia io*) and yellow underwing (*Noctua pronuba*) were observed throughout the first floor. Approximately five bat droppings, consistent in shape, size and texture to brown long-eared bat (*Plecotus auritus*) were observed within the building.

There was an extension on the north aspect of the building, which had a half pitched roof, and was open on the east aspect. Peacock butterfly feeding remains were observed on the wall within the extension, although no further signs of bats were observed.

Photographs of the building can be viewed in [Appendix 2: Photographs](#).

3.3. Bat Activity Surveys

The first dusk emergence survey did not identify any bats emerging from or re-entering the building. Common pipistrelles were observed foraging and commuting over the site throughout the survey. The first bat was observed at 21:32, five minutes after sunset, and the last bat was observed at 22:34.

The second dusk emergence survey recorded a single brown long-eared bat emerging from the south aspect of the raised skylight on the building at 21:12, 62 minutes after sunset. Common pipistrelles and noctules (*Nyctalus noctula*) were observed throughout the survey, with the first bat recorded at 20:18, eight minutes after sunset, and the last bat recorded at the survey end at 21:55. An additional

brown long-eared bat was recorded at 21:47 (although with no visual) and a single myotis bat (*Myotis* sp.) was observed at 21:19.

3.4. Nesting Birds

No signs of nesting birds were identified within the building.

3.5. Assessment

The surrounding area provides suitable habitat for roosting bats, with good terrestrial connectivity between the site and semi-natural habitat.

The scoping survey identified small numbers of bat droppings and feeding remains within the building. The activity surveys identified a single brown long-eared bat roosting within the building. Taking account of the low number of droppings within the building, and the peak count of one bat emerging from the building, it is anticipated that the building comprises a day roost used by a single or low number of males and/or non-breeding females.

Feeding remains were also identified within the open sided extension on the north aspect of the building. No droppings were identified within this area, and it is anticipated that this provides a feeding perch for brown long-eared bats.

Brown long-eared bats are a common and widespread species, and day roosts of this species are considered to be of low conservation status (Mitchell-Jones, 2004). However, as with all bat species in the UK, roosts of brown long-eared bat are protected under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 and the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981. In the absence of further mitigation, the development proposals will result in the destruction of a day roost, and the death or injury of individual bats. This will result in a medium negative impact at the site level and a low negative impact at a local level.

As development works will necessitate destruction of the roost, works will need to be carried out under a Natural England European Protected Species (EPS) licence. To do this, the development must satisfy the three derogation tests set out in the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 for licensing to permit otherwise unlawful activities:

- Test 1 – Overriding public interest;
- Test 2 – No satisfactory alternative; and
- Test 3 – Maintaining a favourable conservation status of the species.

Considering that the building is currently not in use and in need of development to be appropriate as a residential dwelling, and that there is no feasible alternative to the development which would not require destruction of the roost, Test 1 and Test 2 will be met. Provided that works are carried out subject to appropriate mitigation measures, the favourable conservation status of the species will not be impacted, thereby meeting Test 3.

Common pipistrelles, noctules and myotis bats were observed commuting and foraging over the site. The records of bat species shortly after sunset indicates that there are additional bat roosts within the nearby surrounding area. There are no foreseeable impacts upon bat commuting or foraging routes resulting from the proposals.

Designated sites, including an SPA, SAC and SSSI were identified within 3.5 km of the site. Due to the small scale of the proposals and the distance of the proposals from these habitats, there are no foreseeable impacts of the development proposals upon designated habitats.

4. Conclusion and Recommendations

4.1. Mitigation

The building contains a day roost of brown long-eared bat, which will necessitate destruction due to the development proposals. Works must be carried out under a Natural England EPS licence. This can only be applied for once planning permission is in place. The EPS licence must include a method statement to avoid the killing or injury of individual bats. An outline method statement is provided in **Appendix 3: Method Statement**. This method statement may need to be revised as part of the EPS licence application.

A bat box of type Schwegler 1FF (or similar) will be installed on a tree prior to the commencement of works, to ensure continuation of roosting habitat during the development.

In order to compensate for the loss of a bat roost, the development must include the incorporation of bat roosting habitat. An integrated bat box must be incorporated into the masonry of the building. This will be of type Schwegler 1FR, or similar. The location of the proposed roost must be detailed within the development plans.

4.2. Lifespan of Report

The findings of this report are considered valid for a period of 12 months (September 2021). Note that except in extenuating circumstances, Natural England require a survey during the latest survey season. Therefore, if an EPS licence is not in place by May 2021, an update activity survey will likely be required.

5. References

Collins, J. (ed) (2016). *Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines (3rd Edition)*. The Bat Conservation Trust, London.

DEFRA (2020). *Magic Maps* [online]. Available at: >www.magic.defra.gov.uk< [accessed 1st September 2020]

Google Earth Pro (2020). *Google Earth* [online]. Available at: >www.earth.google.com< [accessed 1st September 2020]

Mitchell-Jones, A.J. (2004). *Bat Mitigation Guidelines*. English Nature.

Mitchell-Jones, A.J., McLeish, A.P. (2004). *Bat Workers Manual*. Joint Nature Conservation Committee.

Appendix 1: Photographs



North aspect, with extension in foreground



West aspect



South and west aspects



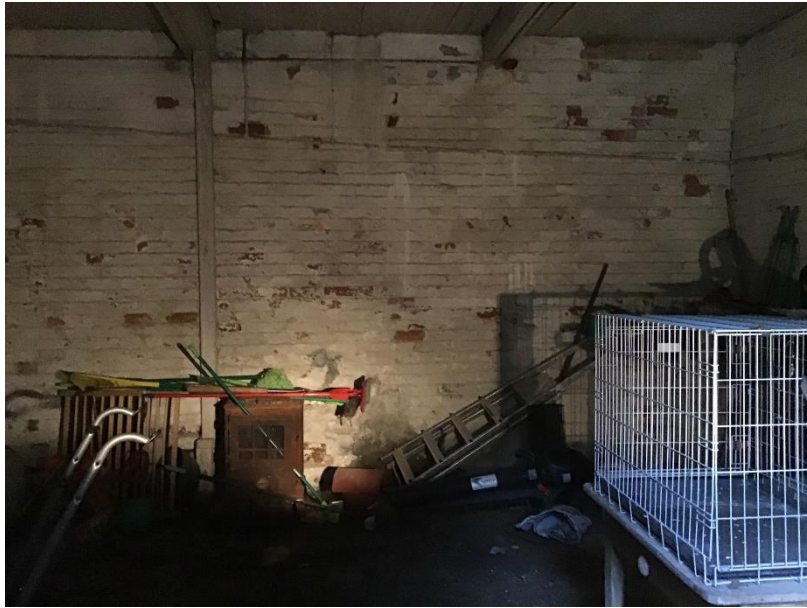
South and east aspects



Extension, east aspect



East aspect and extension



Ground floor



First floor



Skylight



Bat droppings



Skylight and sarking



Feeding remains

Appendix 2: Legislation & Policy

Legislation

All bat species are protected under Schedule II of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017. The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations makes it an offence to kill, capture or damage a bat, or to destroy a breeding site or resting place of a bat. Any development which compromises the protection afforded to bats under the regulations will require a European Protected Species License from Natural England.

All British bats are protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981, extended by the Rights of Way Act (2000), making an offence to deliberately or recklessly:

- Injure, kill or capture a bat.
- Disturb a bat (whether in a roost or not).
- Possess or control any live or dead specimen of a bat.
- Destroy or obstruct access to any structure or place used for protection by a bat species.
- Sell, barter or exchange a bat.

Policy

The UK Biodiversity Action Plan (UKBAP) includes a list of 943 national priority species and 56 habitats of principal importance, with all species and habitats having specific action plans defining the measures required to ensure their conservation. Although the UKBAP has since been superseded by the UK-Post 2010 Biodiversity Framework and a focus on County Biodiversity Plans, it remains a useful point of reference.

Section 41 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act (NERC) 2006 required that any public bodies take into consideration any species and habitats listed in the UKBAP when implementing their duty and exercising any normal functions.

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) states that planning decisions should aim to protect or enhance biodiversity and conservation interests, and where possible any development should aim to increase net gains in biodiversity.

Appendix 3: Method Statement

To ensure that bats are not harmed or disturbed by development works, the following precautionary methods must be followed:

1. Prior to the commencement of works, one bat box of type Schwegler 1FF will be erected onto a tree on the site. The bat box must be erected by a licenced bat worker, at a minimum height of 5 m with clear flight paths to and from the entrance.
2. Prior to the commencement of works, contractors will be given a 'toolbox talk', to ensure they are aware of the signs of bats, and to ensure that they know how to respond if bats are encountered.
3. Prior to the commencement of works, suitable roost features will be inspected with an endoscope.
4. The ecologist will then supervise the demolition of the roost features. All roof tiles and ridge tiles must be removed by hand. To enable close supervision, scaffolding should be in place during the demolition works, or the roof should be accessed using a mobile elevated working platform (MEWP).
5. If any bats are encountered during the demolition, they will be captured by the ecologist. They will either be stored in a ventilated box with a soft cloth and a shallow dish of water, and then released at dusk if weather conditions are suitable; or transferred to the bat box located on the tree on site.
6. If any injured bats are found they will be placed in a ventilated box with a soft cloth and a shallow dish of water, and transferred to the care of a BCT registered bat carer.
7. When the ecologist is satisfied that all potential roost features have been removed safely, then work may continue unsupervised. However, in the event that a bat is encountered during this period then all work will stop and the licenced ecologist will be contacted.

As bats are a legally protected species, a Natural England European Protected Species (EPS) licence will be required prior to the commencement of works. This method statement may need to be amended as part of the EPS Licence.