Birkdale High School, Dewsbury

Bat Survey Report

12th August 2026



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1. Summary

1.1.1 A nocturnal bat survey of Birkdale High School, Dewsbury was commissioned by Emma Davies, on behalf of Kirklees Council, following an earlier bat inspection and nocturnal survey undertaken in 2025. The surveys were undertaken to inform a bat mitigation licence application and the proposed demolition of the school buildings.

1.1.2 The site comprised the original two-storey school building, a more modern science block connected to the main building, and a former sports hall. The surrounding area was predominantly urban and included residential properties, gardens, parks, sports pitches, amenity grassland, and mature trees. The habitats surrounding the site were considered to provide average suitability for use by foraging and commuting bats.

1.1.3 No bats or signs of bats were recorded during the initial building inspection. However, numerous potential bat roost features were present. The original school building and science block were considered to have moderate bat roost suitability, while the former sports hall was considered to have negligible bat roost suitability.

1.1.4 Nocturnal surveys undertaken in October 2025 and July 2026 identified two common pipistrelle day roosts, each used by a single bat. One roost was located at the northeastern corner of the main school building and the second was associated with the interior of the science block. Overall bat activity varied from moderate to high and was dominated by common pipistrelles foraging and commuting around the site. Noctule and Leisler's bats were also recorded in flight but were not recorded emerging from the buildings. No bats were recorded emerging from the former sports hall.

1.1.5 No further bat surveys of the three school buildings were considered necessary. A bat mitigation licence would be required before demolition of the main school building or the science block could proceed. Prior to demolition, an experienced ecologist would provide a toolbox talk and reinspect the buildings for bats. The known roost and other key bat roost features would be carefully removed under ecological supervision, with the roof of the science block opened up before mechanical demolition.

1.1.6 The loss of the roosts would be compensated for through the installation of four bat boxes, comprising two on trees within the site and two on a nearby council-owned building.

1.1.7 The buildings also provided opportunities for nesting birds. A check for nesting birds would be undertaken by a suitably qualified ecologist before works commenced. Any active nests must be retained and protected until the young have fledged. Six bird nest boxes would be installed on trees within the site to provide replacement nesting opportunities.

1.1.8 The recommendations within the report were considered valid for two years. If the project was delayed beyond this period, Middleton Bell Ecology should be contacted to assess the need for an updated survey or approach.

2. Introduction

2.1.1 A nocturnal survey of Birkdale School in Dewsbury was commissioned by Emma Davies, on behalf of Kirklees Council, on 9th July 2026. The survey followed an inspection of the buildings for bats and an initial nocturnal survey on 6th October 2025 which was undertaken under a previous commission. The results from 2025 and 2026 are presented in this report.

2.1.2 The survey was undertaken to inform a licence application and demolition of the buildings in October 2026. The demolition is required because the school is in an extremely poor state of repair and has been subject to repeated vandalism and fire.

2.1.3 The legislative context to the survey and assessment reported here is included in Appendix 1.

3. Habitat Assessment

3.1.1 The school was located approximately 1.2 km from the centre of Dewsbury in West Yorkshire.

3.1.2 The area around the site comprised dwellings, gardens, parks and sports pitches. A substantial number of mature street trees were present within areas of public open space (Figure 1, Plate 1).

Figure 1. The survey area



Plate 1. The northern half of the site, and surrounding area, viewed from the southeast in October 2025



3.1.3 The habitat in the area around the site was considered to be average in terms of its suitability for use by foraging and commuting bats. Although the site was in a relatively urban location, the street trees and grassland in the public open space provided opportunities for foraging bats in the area around the site. Table 1 summarises the habitats present within, and adjacent to the site.

Table 1. Location and habitat table

Name and address: Birkdale High School, Dewsbury, WF13 4JB			
OS Grid Ref. **SE2342222631**		Elevation. 121 m	
Local Planning Authority: Kirklees Council			
Features on site and adjacent to site			
Feature	On site	Adjacent	Comments
Buildings	✔	✔	The school buildings and adjacent dwellings.
Watercourse bordered by trees			The River Calder was located c. 1.2 km south of the site.
Standing water			Duck pond c. 180 m north.
Bridges tunnels and culverts			None.
Trees	✔	✔	Mature trees around the edge of the site and within the local area.
Woodland		✔	Small woodland c. 130 m northeast.
Grassland	✔	✔	Lawns and other amenity grassland within the site and adjacent properties.

3.2 Aims

3.2.1 The survey was conducted to help determine the:

- Potential roosting areas and roost access/egress points.
- Level of bat roost suitability associated with the buildings.
- Current or historic use of the site by bats and nesting birds.
- Further survey work or mitigation requirements.

4. Methodology

4.1 Data Consultation

4.1.1 A desk study was undertaken with West Yorkshire Bat Group, and West Yorkshire Ecology in October 2025 to request bat records for locations within 2 km of the site.

4.1.2 A search of the Multi-Agency Geographical Information for the Countryside website was also undertaken in October 2025 to identify historic European Protected Species licences obtained for locations within 2 km of the site.

4.2 Field Survey

Internal and External Visual Inspection

4.2.1 An inspection of the buildings was undertaken on 13th October 2025 by Greg Slack (MCIEEM; Class licence WML-A34-Level 4, 2017-28068-CLS-CLS).

4.2.2 The following activities were carried out during the initial inspection survey:

- An examination of all parts of each building to record structural features and condition, and features that may be suitable for use by roosting bats. Particular attention was paid to any holes, crevices or gaps in walls, and to the possibility of finding droppings stuck to walls, floors or other surfaces, or insect remains below features.
- Any signs indicative of a bat roost presence including live or dead bats, droppings, feeding remains, scratch marks and staining were recorded.
- An assessment of each building's bat roost suitability (negligible, low, moderate, high or confirmed roost).

4.2.3 The following equipment was used, or on hand, during the inspection:

- a high powered torch;
- binoculars;
- ladders;
- an endoscope;
- a camera; and
- an ultralight drone (DJI Mini 4 Pro).

Nocturnal Surveys

4.2.1 Building 1 (the main school building) and Building 2 (the science block) were subject to a nocturnal survey on 13th October 2025. Although outside the standard nocturnal survey window (as discussed in the limitations section) the survey was otherwise completed in compliance with relevant Bat Survey Guidelines (Collins, 2023). The two

buildings were resurveyed across 21st and 29th July 2026 with Building 3 (the sport hall) also covered on 29th July.

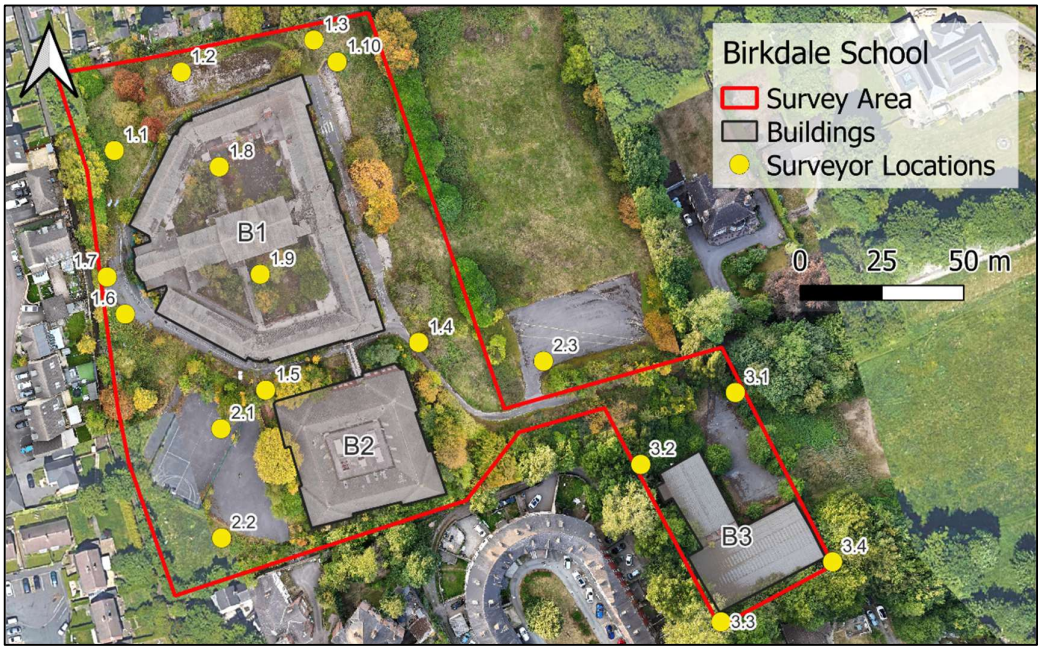
4.2.2 Twelve surveyor positions were used to cover Building 1 and Building 2 during the initial survey. Of these ten covered the perimeter with a further two covering the courtyards of the main building. The same ten positions were used to cover the perimeter of Buildings 1 and 2 during the 2026 surveys but no access into the courtyards was possible due to a recent fire and health and safety concerns. This was addressed by the use of a DJI Matrice 4T drone which was used during the survey on 29th July. Based on the results of the survey on 21st July the drone focused on the northern courtyard.

4.2.3 The surveyor positions are shown on Figure 2. The following personnel conducted the nocturnal surveys and were equipped with Wildlife Acoustics EM Touch bat detectors and tablet recorders:

- Greg Slack;
- Robert Bell (Class licence WML-A34-Level 4, 2016-25236-CLS-CLS);
- Paul Liptrott (Class licence WML-A34-Level 4, 2018-37087-CLS-CLS);
- Dan Wildsmith (Class licence WML-A34-Level 4, 2025-80365-SCI-CL20);
- Amanda Murphy (Class licence WML-A34-Level 2, 2020-47913-CLS-CLS);
- Ian Wright (Class licence WML-A34-Level 2, 2023-11218-CLS-CLS);
- Carl Dixon;
- Paul Redmond;
- Andy Musgrave;
- John Pearse; and
- Oliver Pearse.

4.2.4 Unsupervised cameras were used to cover the remaining positions as required.

Figure 2. Nocturnal survey plan



4.2.5 The night vision equipment used during each survey is shown in Table 2, along with the surveyor's initials.

Table 2. Night vision equipment used during the surveys

Surveyor Position	13th October 2025	21st July 2026	29th July 2026
1.1	JP - Canon XA10	PR - Nightfox Whisker	n/a
1.2	IW – Canon XA10	DW - Panasonic VX980	n/a
1.3	Unsupervised - Pixfra Arc A613	RB - Pixfra Arc A613	n/a
1.4	PL – Pixfra Arc A613 (position 1.4a), Pixfra Arc A613 (position 1.4b), & Canon XA50 (position 1.4c)	AM - Pixfra Arc A613	n/a
1.5	GS - Canon XA10 (position 1.5a) & Canon XA30 (position 1.5b)	GS - Guide TK612 Gen2	n/a
1.6	CD - Canon XA10	AW – Nightfox Nova	n/a
1.7	AM - Canon XA10	JP - Canon XA10	n/a
1.8	Unsupervised - Guide TK612 Gen2	n/a	n/a
1.9	RB - Canon XA10	n/a	n/a
1.10		n/a	DJI Matrice 4T Drone
2.1	Unsupervised - Guide TK612 Gen2	Unsupervised - Pixfra Arc A613	n/a
2.2	Unsupervised - Pixfra Arc A613	n/a – camera not started correctly.	Unsupervised - Pixfra Arc A613
2.3	OP – Nightfox Whisker	OP - Nightfox Whisker	n/a
3.1	n/a	n/a	JP - Canon XA10
3.2	n/a	n/a	GS - Guide TK612 Gen2
3.3	n/a	n/a	CD -
3.4	n/a	n/a	OP - Nightfox Whisker

4.2.6 The surveys continued from 15 minutes before sunset until 1.5 hours after sunset.

4.2.7 The 'night vision aid' footage was reviewed live on a screen when light levels dropped to a level that the surveyors were unable to see bats in flight. In addition, the recorded footage was checked as required to confirm the observations made by the surveyors.

4.2.8 The camera footage from the unsupervised positions was initially analysed by Wildlife Imaging Systems. Their software identified all movement (frame by frame) within the videos and produced a set of images showing the movement traces for each 30 seconds of video. These images were then reviewed by Greg Slack and where the image identified a trace that could potentially have been a bat flight, the relevant section of the video was also reviewed. An example image produced by the software is shown in Plate 2.

Plate 2. An example image showing an emerging common pipistrelle *Pipistrellus pipistrellus* (circled red) as viewed from Surveyor Position 1.3 in 2025



4.3 Survey Limitations

4.3.1 The first nocturnal survey was completed in October and was therefore undertaken outside the time of year when a maternity roost could be expected to be recorded. The potential for the buildings to support a maternity roost is considered in the Results and Assessment sections of this report.

4.3.2 The unsupervised camera at surveyor position 2.2 did not record during the survey on 21st July 2026. With this model of camera it is not possible to switch it on and start recording immediately – it requires approximately 30 seconds to warm-up. It is thought that the recording was attempted too soon and the error was not picked up until later in the survey when the camera was checked. As a result it was considered most appropriate to undertake a repeat of the survey in that location during the subsequent survey on 29th July 2026.

5. Results

5.1 Data Consultation

5.1.1 West Yorkshire Ecology provided 84 bat records within the surrounding 2 km area with 16 provided by West Yorkshire Bat Group. The species listed comprised common pipistrelle *Pipistrellus pipistrellus*, soprano pipistrelle *Pipistrellus pygmaeus*, brown long-eared bat *Plecotus auritus*, and noctule *Nyctalus noctula*. Additional records identified (to genus) as *Pipistrellus*, and *Myotis* were also reported along with records of unidentified bat species.

5.1.2 The closest record was a bat roost of an unidentified species recorded in 2007 in St Joseph's Catholic Primary School. The record was located approximately 80 m north of the survey area.

5.1.3 Two bat EPS mitigation licences had been issued within 2 km of the site. The details of the licences are given in Table 3 below.

Table 3. Bat EPS mitigation licences within 2 km

Species listed on the licence	Licence start date	Licence end date	What does the licence cover?	Approximate distance (m)	Direction
Common pipistrelle	28/09/2011	01/12/2012	Destruction of a resting place.	275	North
Common pipistrelle	04/02/2019	31/03/2024	Destruction of a resting place.	990	South-southeast

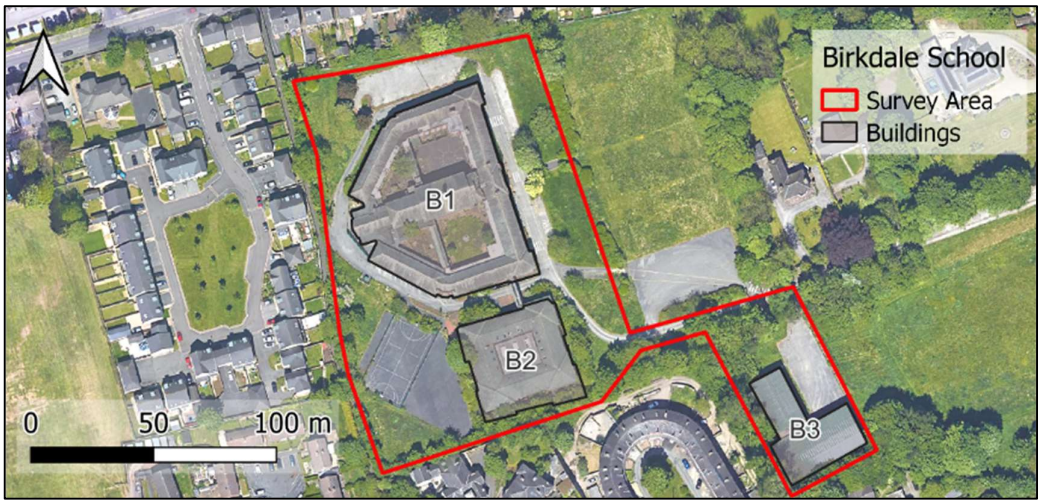
5.2 Field Survey

Site Layout

5.2.1 The survey area comprised the original school building (B1), an adjacent more modern science block (B2) to the south, and a sports centre to the southeast of Wheelwright Drive (B3).

5.2.2 The survey area layout and immediate surrounding area is shown in Figure 3.

Figure 3. Site layout



Building Description – Original School Building (B1)

5.2.3 The original school building comprised a two-storey red-brick building broadly constructed in a pentagon with two internal courtyards (B1). The multi-pitched roof was covered with Westmorland slate (Plate 3). A soffit box was present below the oversailing roof and the windows were framed in wood. The windows and doorways on the ground floor had been boarded over with perforated metal sheets and a substantial amount of damage had been done to the building, including to the roof where a large number of slates were missing in multiple locations.

Plate 3. The original school building (B1) viewed from the northeast in 2025



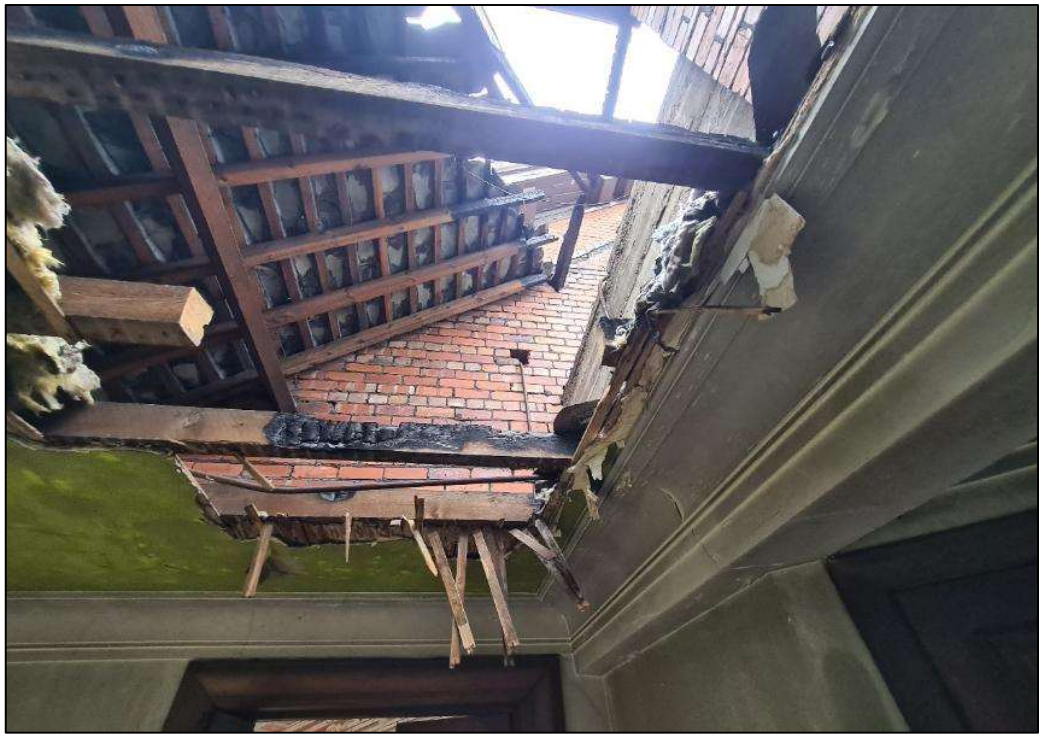
5.2.4 The underside of the roof had torching on the back of the slates but no membrane or sarking (Plate 5). The damage within the interior of the building extended to significant water ingress, missing and broken glazing, and areas where small fires had been set.

5.2.5 During the 2026 survey work although the building was not reinspected it was noted that a fire had caused a significant amount of further damage to the central hall. In Plate 4 taken in 2026 the additional damage can be seen relative to Plate 3 which is an image from October 2025.

Plate 4. The main school building showing damage to the roof of the central hall as viewed in 2026



Plate 5. The underside of the roof in 2025



Building Description – Science Block (B2)

5.2.6 The science block was a more modern building located to the south of B1 and connected by a first floor bridge (Plate 6). The Science block was constructed on a roughly square footprint with an internal courtyard lightwell (Plate 6). Roof lights were present on the internal roof pitches and the flat roof above the lightwell.

5.2.7 The roof was hipped on all sides and covered with interlocked concrete tiles. The roof was supported by steel and timber trusses, purlins, and rafters (Plate 7). The tiles were backed by Type 1F hessian felt.

Plate 6. The science block and bridge connecting it to the original school building in 2025



Plate 7. The roof structure of B2 in 2025



Building Description – Former Sports Hall (B3)

5.2.8 The former sports hall was constructed from brick and concrete blockwork with corrugated sheet metal cladding on a steel frame comprising the upper part of the building (Plate 8).

Plate 8. The former sports hall in 2025



5.2.9 No roof void was present within the sports hall and no membrane or sarking was present below the metal cladding (Plate 9).

Plate 9. The interior of the former sports hall in 2025



Inspection

5.2.10 The inspection identified extensive areas of missing slates and tiles, gaps between and below ridge tiles and at the verges, gaps leading into the soffit, and raised lead flashing. There were also broken and open windows which would allow bats into the interior of the building. The potential roost features are shown in Table 4, and Figure 4.

Table 4. Potential Roost Features Recorded

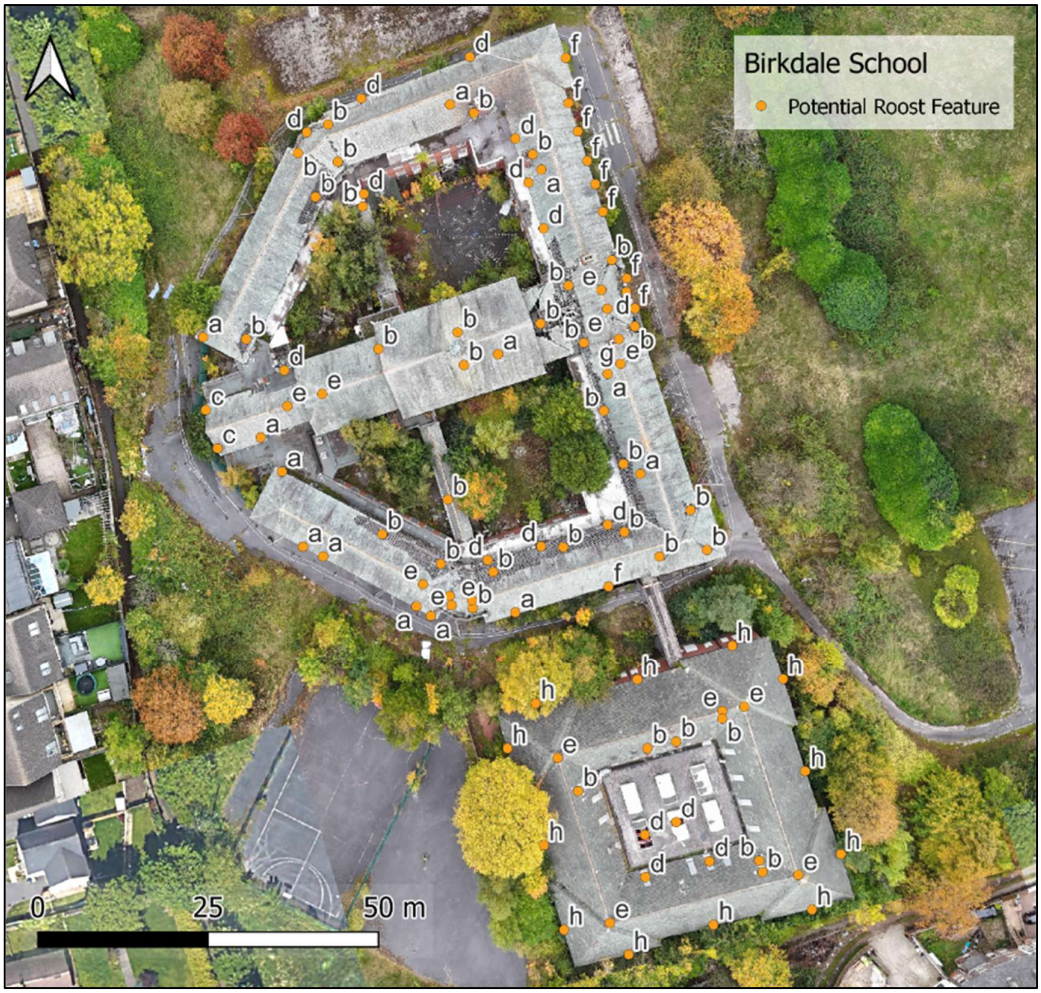
Building	PRF	Example Photo	Description
1	A		Raised/slipped slate or tile.
1, 2	B		Missing slate or tile.
1	C		Gaps in verge mortar.
1, 2	D		Missing or broken window.
1, 2	E		Gap in or below ridge tiles.

Building	PRF	Example Photo	Description
1, 2	F		Open window.
1	G		Raised lead flashing.
2	H		Gap in soffit.

5.2.11 During the inspection no bats or signs of bats were recorded in the buildings. Although some areas were fire damaged, and the ceiling had been destroyed in many locations, particularly within the science block, the majority of the walls were painted white and the presence of bat droppings would have been relatively obvious if a large bat roost had been using the interior of the buildings.

5.2.12 The original school building and the science block were considered to have moderate bat roost suitability and the former sports hall was considered to have negligible bat roost suitability.

Figure 4. Aerial photograph showing the location of potential roost features



Nesting Birds

5.2.13 No nesting birds were recorded at the time of survey but a large amount of pigeon droppings were present on the school stage.

Nocturnal Survey

13th October 2025 – dusk emergence survey

5.2.14 The temperature at the beginning of monitoring was 15°C, with eight oktas cloud cover and calm conditions (Beaufort Scale 0). The temperature decreased slightly to approximately 14°C by the end of the survey, with no rainfall recorded throughout the survey period. Sunset was at 18:14.

5.2.15 Light levels around the building were low, with no external lighting present (Plate 10).

Plate 10. The view of B1 from Surveyor Position 1.5a[1] in October 2025



5.2.16 One common pipistrelle was recorded emerging from the brickwork at the northern end of the building's façade at 18:29 (15 minutes after sunset). The roost location is shown in Plate 2, Plate 11, and Figure 5. A video of the emerging bat is available here: https://youtu.be/UM15lC56F4Y.

Plate 11. Common pipistrelle roost (one bat) location



5.2.17 No other bats were recorded emerging from the building during the survey. Overall activity levels were considered to be moderate. The first bat activity comprised a Noctule passing overhead at 18:06 (eight minutes before sunset), followed by a Common pipistrelle at 18:08 (six minutes before sunset). A Leisler's bat *Nyctalus leisleri* was subsequently recorded commuting across the western side of the building at 18:23 (nine minutes after sunset).

5.2.18 Common pipistrelle activity continued intermittently, with short foraging loops concentrated along the western and northern elevations. Noctule and Leisler's bat

[1] The photograph was taken at 19:11 (58 minutes after sunset) the photograph has been edited to increase the brightness by 20% and reduce the contrast by 40% and to allow the building to be visible.

passes were occasional and consistent with high-level commuting.

21st July 2026 – dusk emergence survey

5.2.19 The temperature at the beginning of monitoring was 19°C, with seven oktas cloud cover and a light air (Beaufort Scale 1). By the end of the survey, the temperature had fallen to 18°C, the wind remained a light air (Beaufort Scale 1), and the cloud cover had decreased to four oktas. No rain was recorded throughout. Sunset was at 21:21.

5.2.20 The level of bat activity recorded was moderate to high and was dominated by common pipistrelles. The first common pipistrelle was recorded at 21:20, one minute before sunset originating from the houses to the north of the site. Frequent commuting and foraging activity was subsequently recorded around the buildings and adjoining vegetation. This included a period of concentrated activity between 21:44 and 22:08, when at least six common pipistrelles were recorded foraging within one part of the site.

5.2.21 A common pipistrelle was recorded emerging from the northeast corner of the main school building (the same location as in 2025) at 21:26, five minutes after sunset.

5.2.22 Several common pipistrelles were also noted close to the ridge of the roof at the northwestern corner of the building from approximately 21:57. However, the surveyor considered that these bats were likely to have been silhouetted against the building rather than emerging from it. Subsequent review of the camera footage from the Nightfox Nova suggested that none of these bats emerged from the building.

5.2.23 Following a period of intense common pipistrelle activity around the northern edge of the science block a common pipistrelle was recorded emerging from a window at 22:07 (45 minutes after sunset).

5.2.24 Noctule activity was first recorded at 21:31, ten minutes after sunset, with occasional commuting, foraging, and heard-not-seen passes recorded during the survey. A Leisler's bat was heard but not seen at 22:30, 69 minutes after sunset.

29th July 2026 – dusk emergence survey

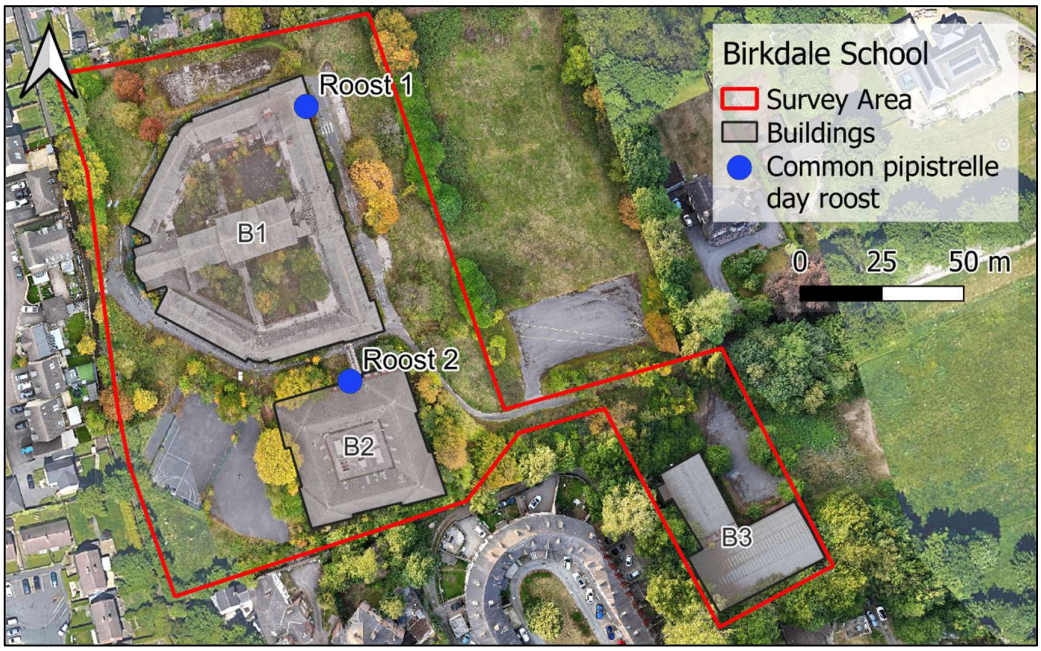
5.2.25 The temperature at the beginning of monitoring was 21°C, with four oktas cloud cover and a light air to light breeze (Beaufort Scale 1–2). The temperature had fallen to 19°C by the end of the survey, while the wind and cloud cover remained unchanged. No rain was recorded throughout. Sunset was at 21:08.

5.2.26 No bats were recorded emerging from the building during the survey. Bat activity was relatively frequent and was dominated by common pipistrelle bats foraging and commuting around the site.

5.2.27 The first bat activity comprised three common pipistrelles recorded commuting and foraging around the sports hall from 21:07, one minute before sunset. Further common pipistrelle activity was recorded throughout much of the survey predominantly around the northern end of the sports hall, the western edge of the science block, and eastern edge of the main school building. Some bat activity attributed to common pipistrelle was also recorded within the northern courtyard of the school but the bats were thought to have entered the courtyard from the north rather than emerged into it from the main school building. Activity was particularly frequent during the earlier part of the survey, with constant feeding activity noted overhead until approximately 22:00, after which occasional passes continued.

5.2.28 Noctule activity was also recorded, with the first noctule recorded commuting at 21:24, 16 minutes after sunset. A further noctule was heard and seen at 21:27.

Figure 5. The location of the two common pipistrelle day roosts at Birkdale School (all surveys)



5.2.29 A video of the two roosts recorded on 21st July and the bat activity around the front of the main school building recorded on 29th July is available here: https://youtu.be/-_l9bD8u9Pw

6. Assessment

6.1 Summary and Evaluation of Findings

6.1.1 Two common pipistrelle day roosts, each used by a single bat were recorded: one located at the northeastern end of the main school building (B1) and the second within the interior of the science block. The roosts were considered to be of Site Value (Reason & Wray, 2025).

6.1.2 The former sports hall was considered to have negligible bat roost suitability.

6.1.3 Nesting birds were considered likely to be present within Building 1. Pigeons appeared to regularly use the stage area within Building 1 but no evidence of previous nesting was recorded within any of the buildings.

Potential impacts

6.1.4 Without mitigation the proposed demolition of the buildings could result in the loss of all bat roosts and bird nesting opportunities as well as the killing or injury of bats and nesting birds.

6.1.5 No new external lighting, or the construction of new buildings, or the removal of existing mature trees is anticipated.

Licensing

6.1.6 A bat mitigation licence will be required from Natural England to allow the work to proceed. Depending on the type of licence applied for Natural England require between 15 and 30 working days to assess the application and the application can only be made once demolition consent is granted and all wildlife related planning conditions have been signed off.

Further survey

6.1.7 No further survey of the three school buildings is considered necessary.

Protection of bats during the works

6.1.8 A toolbox talk must be delivered to the demolition team by an experienced ecologist prior to the start of the works. A suitable toolbox talk is included as Appendix 2.

6.1.9 Prior to the start of demolition the ecologist should reinspect the building for any new signs of the presence of bats and should detail in writing on the toolbox talk the areas that have been signed off as safe to demolish without supervision.

6.1.10 The known roost location at the northeastern corner of the main school building should be stripped by hand, under the supervision of a suitably qualified ecologist, along with other key bat roost features. The roof of the science block should be soft-stripped progressively under ecological supervision until the ecologist is satisfied that the roosting area has been exposed/removed. Upon completion mechanical demolition can take place.

6.1.11 If a bat is present or the entirety of a key feature cannot be adequately checked before its safe removal an exclusion device must be fitted. Exclusion devices must remain in place for a minimum of five nights of suitable weather.

Replacement of roost features

6.1.12 A minimum of two Greenwoods Ecohabitats two-crevice bat boxes should be installed on trees within the site. An additional two Greenwoods Ecohabitats two-crevice boxes should be fitted to a nearby council-owned building.

6.1.13 The boxes should be fitted below the eaves or at the top of the gable at a height of at least 3 m and should not be located over doors or windows or areas subject to significant footfall. The boxes should be located away from significant light spill and ideally facing a greenspace likely to be used by foraging and/or commuting bats.

6.2 Nesting birds

6.2.1 Active birds' nests are legally protected (Appendix 1). The nesting bird season occurs between March and September inclusive although pigeons can nest at any time of year. A check for nesting birds should be made by a suitably qualified ecologist prior to the commencement of works. Any active birds' nests must be retained in situ and access for the birds to any active nest must be retained. If an active nest is present near to the working area a suitable buffer must be maintained around the nest until the young have fledged.

6.2.2 To compensate for the loss of potential nest sites it is recommended that a minimum of six bird nest boxes are installed on trees within the site.

6.3 Conclusion

6.3.1 Two common pipistrelle day roosts, each used by a single bat were recorded, one within the original school building (B1) and a second in the science block (B2). The roosts will be lost during the demolition of the building. Therefore, a bat mitigation licence is required from Natural England.

6.3.2 Measures have been recommended to protect any roosting bats that may be present during the proposed demolition and replacement roosting opportunities (four x two-crevice bat boxes) have been prescribed.

6.3.3 The buildings may also be used by nesting birds. If an active nest is discovered prior to, or during the work, it must be retained with a suitable buffer until the young have fledged. It is recommended that the demolition work commences outside the nesting bird season (March to September inclusive) and that six bird boxes are erected on trees within the site.

6.3.4 The recommendations included in this report are considered valid for two years. If the project is delayed beyond this time, Middleton Bell Ecology should be contacted to assess the need for an update survey.

7. References

Collins, J. (ed.) (2023) Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines. The Bat Conservation Trust.

Reason P. F. & Wray S. (2025) UK Bat Mitigation Guidelines: a guide to impact assessment, mitigation and compensation for developments affecting bats. Version 1.2. Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management, Ampfield.

Appendix 1. Legislation and Policy Guidance

Bats

Bats receive protection under the Conservation of Habitats and Species (Amendment) (EU Exit) Regulations 2019 and the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended).

It is an offence to:

- Deliberately capture (or take), injure or kill a bat.
- Intentionally or recklessly disturb bats whilst they are occupying a structure or place used for shelter or protection or obstruct access to any such place.
- Damage or destroy the breeding or resting place (roost) of a bat.
- Possess a bat (live or dead), or any part of a bat.
- Intentionally or recklessly obstruct access to a bat roost.
- Sell (or offer for sale) or exchange bats (dead or alive), or parts of parts.

The Convention on Biological Diversity, signed in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil in 1992, requires member states to develop national strategies and to undertake a range of actions aimed at maintaining or restoring biodiversity. The UK Biodiversity Strategy was produced in response to the Convention.

In England & Wales, the Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act, 2006 imposes a duty on all public bodies, including local authorities and statutory bodies, in exercising their functions, "to have due regard, as far as is consistent with the proper exercise of those functions, to the purpose of conserving biodiversity". It notes that "conserving biodiversity includes restoring or enhancing a population or habitat". Barbastelle *Barbastella barbastellus*, Bechstein's bat *Myotis bechsteinii*, brown long-eared bat, greater horseshoe bat *Rhinolophus ferrumequinum*, lesser horseshoe bat *Rhinolophus hipposideros*, noctule *Nyctalus noctula* and soprano pipistrelle *Pipistrellus pygmaeus* are included as priority species within Section 41 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006. At a more local level there are Local Biodiversity Action Plans for smaller geographical areas which may cover a greater or lesser range of bat species.

Birds

All wild birds are protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended by the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000), which makes it illegal (subject to exceptions) to:

- Intentionally kill, injure or take any wild bird.
- Take, damage or destroy the nest (whilst being built or in use) or eggs of any wild bird.

National Planning Policy Framework

The National Planning Policy Framework for England was revised in 2024. This document states that plans should 'promote the conservation, restoration and enhancement of priority habitats, ecological networks and the protection and recovery of priority species; and identify and pursue opportunities for securing measurable net gains for biodiversity'.

Appendix 2. Toolbox Talk for Birkdale High School

Both the main school building and the science block are confirmed bat roosts used by common pipistrelles. The demolition will be undertaken under a bat mitigation licence from Natural England.



A common pipistrelle approximately 3.5 – 4.5 cm in length

Without a bat licence, it is illegal to deliberately capture, injure or kill a bat. Bats are protected from disturbance and their roosts are also protected[2].

UK bats are very small, the bodies of the smallest bats can fit inside a match box. Several UK species rest in gaps and crevices no wider than 1 cm.

The purpose of the work is to demolish the school, while protecting bats if they are present.

A check for bats will be done prior to the work and key bat roost features will be removed with an ecologist present but it is possible that a bat could be missed. Contractors must remain vigilant for bats or signs of bats. If bats or bat droppings are found, then all works should cease with further direction from the ecologist. **It's not anticipated any bats will require handling but if necessary only the ecologist should handle bats**[3]. No work should be completed without the ecologist on site unless expressly confirmed in writing in the table at the end of this toolbox talk.

The roosts will be replaced by the inclusion of two bat boxes on trees within the site and two on a nearby council-owned building.

Bat droppings look like mouse droppings, but crumble to dust, unlike mouse droppings. They may be present between roofing materials, in crevices in walls and on the wall tops.

[2] Disturbing or destroying a bat roost can lead to unlimited fines, up to six months in prison and seizing of items used to commit the offence, e.g. vehicles, plant or machinery.
[3] Bats in the UK have on rare occasions been shown to carry rabies and are easily injured.

Staff that have received: ***Toolbox Talk – Birkdale High School***

Signature	Name	Organisation	Date

Work that can proceed – Birkdale High School

Area inspected	Ecologist signature	Work that can be done in that area (include timeframe)	Date

Appendix 3. Bat Records

In accordance with best practice and the requirements of bat licensing, bat records collected during surveys are supplied to the relevant biological record centres and bat groups. The records to be supplied in accordance with this survey are shown below.

Date	Species	Site Address	OS Grid Reference	Notes
21/07/2026	Common pipistrelle	Birkdale High School, Wheelwright Way, Dewsbury, WF13 4JB	SE2342422689	Two roosts. Roost 1 (one bat) in the northern end of the façade. Roost 2 (one bat) in the interior of the Science Block.
29/07/2026	Noctule	Birkdale High School, Wheelwright Way, Dewsbury, WF13 4JB	SE2340922649	Commuting and foraging activity
21/07/2026	Leisler's bat	Birkdale High School, Wheelwright Way, Dewsbury, WF13 4JB	SE2340922649	Commuting and foraging activity