

**Bat Survey Report and Method Statement
European Protected Species (Bats)**

Reasonable Avoidance and Mitigation Measures

**Higher House Farm Barn,
Hawkshaw Lane,
Hawkshaw,
BL8 4LB**

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**Report prepared by:
Dave Anderson
Batworker.com
dave@batworker.com
07894 338290**

Executive summary

In December 2025 Batworker consultancy was commissioned to undertake a follow up survey of Higher House Farm Barn, Hawkshaw Lane, Hawkshaw, BL8 4LB to assess the potential for impact on protected species.

An initial daytime survey had been carried out on 28th February 2020 in order to support plans to convert the property for residential use. This was followed up with a repeat daytime visual survey on 18th May 2022 and 6th June 2022.

The building, when assessed in combination with location and surrounding habitat, had been observed to have a low level of bat roost potential.

Static bat detector monitoring was carried out from 18th May to 6th June 2022. One emergence survey was carried out on 8th June 2022. No bats were observed emerging from or returning to roost within the building.

The follow up daytime survey found no physical evidence to suggest use by bats at a time when such evidence would be expected and despite numerous undisturbed horizontal surfaces being present.

Survey effort is considered appropriate to characterise the roost potential of building and that the presence of a significant or low conservation value bat roost is unlikely on site.

“The presence of a significant bat roost (invariably a maternity roost) can normally be determined on a single visit at any time of year, provided that the entire structure is accessible and that any signs of bats have not been removed by others”. - Mitchell-Jones, A (2004) Bat mitigation guidelines. English Nature.

Reasonable avoidance measures are recommended within this report as an appropriate approach to the proposed development.

The overall purpose of the Method Statement is to ensure that bats and their roosts are fully protected to ensure the ‘favourable conservation status of the species’. This method statement is designed to minimise or remove any potential disturbance to bats. By following the Reasonable Avoidance Measures and mitigation included in this document the work can take place, ensuring the Continued Ecological Functionality of the site.

Site Location

Higher House Farm, Hawkshaw Lane, Hawkshaw, BL8 4LB
NGR: SD7597315823



Surrounding Habitat



The property is located in a rural position with surrounding habitat a mosaic of improved, semi improved, and rough in-bye grassland, with limited semi natural deciduous woodland cover present to the west.

Connectivity to the wider landscape is poor. Bat foraging potential is low.

Survey summary and site assessment

Pre-existing information on the bat species present at this site.

A search of the MAGIC website revealed no EPS licence applications within a 1km radius.

From personal experience of surveying for and researching bats in Lancashire, Yorkshire and Cumbria, the following species were considered.

Common Pipistrelle – known to roost on sites where suitable foraging habitat is available.

Soprano Pipistrelle – known to roost on sites where suitable foraging habitat is available.

Whiskered/Brandt's – species often found roosting in buildings close to woodland.

Natterer's – a typical upland bat with foraging bats being recorded high on heather moorland. Often roosting in barns.

Daubenton's – a species commonly associated with aquatic habitats.

Long Eared bat – a woodland species which has been recorded foraging over in by meadows and rough grassland sites. Often roosting in barns.

Survey Personnel.

Personnel on surveys included: David Anderson, an experienced ecologist and bat researcher with 25 years experience of fieldwork and bat ecology, a founder member of the East Lancashire Bat Group and 'Batworker.com', formerly a Natural History Curator and manager of the East Lancashire Biological Records Centre. (Natural England licence No:2015-15784-CLS-CLS, Conservation, Science and Education).

Survey Summary

Survey	Date	Timings
Preliminary Roost Assessment	18.05.2022	1 Hour
Static Bat Detector Monitoring	18.05 – 06.06.2022	Sunset to Sunrise
Emergence survey	08.06.2022	3 Hours
Followup Daytime Survey	10.12.2025	1 Hour

Survey constraints

Access to all areas of the interior and exterior of the building was possible and good visual inspection at ground level was possible. Evidence of bat activity such as bat droppings or staining on external walls and surfaces is frequently removed by the action of wind and rain; apparent absence of evidence is therefore evaluated with caution.

In many situations it is not possible to inspect every locations where bats are present therefore it should be assumed that an absence of bat evidence does not necessarily equate to evidence that bats are absent.

Some species such as pipistrelle sp bats are opportunistic and it is possible for individuals to be found during works, even where surveys have had negative results during preliminary and activity surveys.

Preliminary Bat Roost Assessment Survey.

The site consists of a two storey stone built barn with double pitched slate roof, a single skin portal style barn adjoins the rear of the building.

External walls are generally well pointed, however gaps are present at the gable ends. Timber fascia boarding has some gaps behind. Roof slates are generally close fitting, however some lifted slates were observed. Slates are lined with a bituminous roofing felt in good condition.

When condition of the building, location and surrounding habitat are taken into consideration the buildings were assessed as offering low potential for roosting bats.





Preliminary Roost Assessment – Visual Survey.

A visual survey of the property found no evidence to suggest use by bats despite multiple undisturbed horizontal surfaces being present.

No droppings, urine splashing, grease staining or feeding remains were observed within the building.

Static Bat Detector Monitoring - 18th May to 6th June 2022

An Anabat Express zero crossing static bat detector was placed within the barn to monitor bat activity for a period of 20 nights. The detector was programmed to record bat activity from 30 minutes prior to sunset until 30 minutes after sunrise. Bat activity was analysed post survey using AnalookW to identify species recorded and record timing of bat activity.

Distant common pipistrelle bats were recorded throughout the survey period with activity predominately at +1 hours after sunset until one hour after midnight. No preemergence chatter, social calling or echolocation at times to suggest bats returning to roost within the barn were recorded.

Emergence Survey 8th June 2022

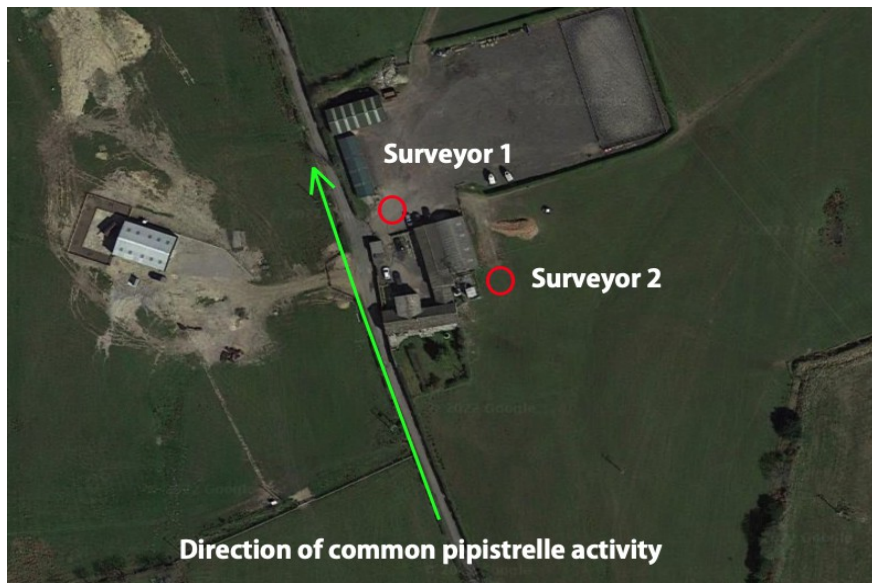
Start Temp: 14.8c Finish Temp: 13.2c 50% Clear sky Wind: Bfd1 westerly
Start: 21.20 Sunset: 21.36 Finish: 23.06

Surveyors equipped with Anabat Walkabout and Anabat Scout full spectrum detectors aided with Canon XA50 and XA25 infrared video cameras with infrared flood and spot lights were positioned around the building to monitor for emerging bats.

Recorded bat calls were analysed post survey using Anabat Insight software. Video footage was reviewed on a 42" 4K monitor at realtime post survey.

Between 22.00 and 22.37 distant foraging and social calling common pipistrelle bats were recorded. Bats were observed to commute along hedgerow associated with Hawkshaw Lane. Timing was consistent with bats emerging from a distant roost and foraging along the western boundary of the site.

No bats were recorded emerging from the barn.



Followup Daytime Survey

A repeat daytime visual search for physical evidence in the form of droppings, grease staining, feeding remains or urine splashing was carried out using a Teslong TD500 HD Video endoscope, Olight Seeker 4 Pro 2500 lumen torch, Extendable Pole Mounted HD GoPro Session camera with LED floodlight and Leica Trinovid 10x42 Close focussing binoculars.

Multiple dusty and undisturbed horizontal surfaces were present within the barn. Roof timbers and the underside of roofing felt were observed to be heavily cobwebbed and dusty.

No evidence was observed to suggest use of the barn by roosting bats.

Interpretation of results

Static bat detector monitoring and activity surveys were carried out from 18th May to 6th June 2022 and 8th June 2022 respectively. No activity to suggest bats using the barn was recorded. No bats were observed emerging from or returning to roost within the building. A low level of Common Pipistrelle bat activity was recorded during the survey with bats observed to commute along Hawkshaw Lane.

The surveys found no evidence of bats using the building to roost.

Survey effort was considered appropriate to characterise the roost potential of building and that the presence of a significant or low conservation value bat roost is unlikely on site.

“The presence of a significant bat roost (invariably a maternity roost) can normally be determined on a single visit at any time of year, provided that the entire structure is accessible and that any signs of bats have not been removed by others”. - Mitchell-Jones, A (2004) Bat mitigation guidelines. English Nature.

A follow up survey in 2025 found no evidence to suggest use of the barn by roosting bats, and given previous activity survey results it is considered unlikely that low conservation value roosts are present within the building, however reasonable avoidance measures are recommended within this report.

Impact Assessment

Short-term impacts – Disturbance Low risk:

Roof stripping where necessary will be undertaken by hand and under supervision.

Long-term impacts - Roost loss: No impact on a local bat population.

Long-term impacts - Fragmentation and isolation:

Minimal risk, the impact of the proposed development on local bat species will be insignificant.

Predicted scale of impact: No loss of roosting sites of a common and relatively widespread species.

Method Statement and Reasonable Avoidance Measures

The overall purpose of the Method Statement is to ensure that bats and their roosts are fully protected to ensure the 'favourable conservation status of the species'. The Method statement is designed to minimise or remove any potential disturbance to roosting bats.

Common pipistrelle bats are considered an opportunistic species and it is possible for individuals to be found during works, even where surveys have had negative results during preliminary and activity surveys.

A Method Statement is normally required by the local planning authority to ensure that procedures are in place before the development works are carried out and will form part of the EPS Licence application where necessary.

No work should commence without contractors receiving a toolbox talk.

All contractors will be made aware of the legal protection afforded all species of bats in the UK and procedures will be in place to mitigate for the potential impact on bats before any building work is undertaken.

Timing of works

Roof work should take place following an evening temperature of +5c

Work to affected roof areas will take place under supervision, with the batworker 'on call'.

Roof slates should be removed by hand and under supervision where necessary.

The underside of roof slates should be checked for dormant bats prior to stacking/removal.

In the unlikely event bats are found during works. The area should be carefully covered and work stop until the batworker can attend to assess the appropriate way forward.

A compensatory bat box (Greenwood Eco Habitats two crevice box) will be placed on site prior to work commencing. The bat box will remain on site as part of proposed biodiversity enhancement.

A copy of the Method Statement should be available to site / project managers in advance of any works being carried out.

The existence of a Method Statement helps to establish a defence against prosecution for intentional (WCA), deliberate (Habitat Regulations.) or reckless (WCA) disturbance of bats or damage to roosts. All work should take place under the supervision of the ecologist.

Nesting Bird Mitigation Strategy

Demolition, building and vegetation clearance works will be carried out outside the bird nesting season (i.e. outwith March to August inclusive)

or

Following a nesting bird survey carried out by a suitably experienced ecologist no more than 48 hours in advance of works commencing to ensure that no nesting birds will be harmed/disturbed during works.

If an active bird nest is detected at any point, works in that sector will immediately cease and an area of 5m radius around the nest will be cordoned off and clearly marked using hi-visibility tape and appropriate signage to prevent disturbance to nesting birds.

Any noisy machinery, or activity, will be moved at least 10m away from the location of the nest.

Works within the cordoned off area where active bird nests have been detected will only proceed once an experienced ecologist has confirmed the nests are no longer active.

Nesting bird compensation/mitigation measures.

Two Schwegler House Sparrow Terrace boxes to be placed west or eastern facades of the building once work has been completed to provide nesting opportunities.

Boxes should be positioned below eaves height.