

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

Reasonable Avoidance and Mitigation Measures

**Outbuilding at Barrack Fold Farm,
Knowsley Road,
Ainsworth,
BL2 5PU**

31.08.2023



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Executive summary

In November 2022 Batworker consultancy was commissioned to undertake a survey of an outbuildings at Barrack Fold Farm, Knowsley Road, Ainsworth, BL2 5PU to assess the potential for use by bats and breeding birds.

A daytime survey was carried out on 16th November 2022 to support development plans.

The buildings, when assessed in combination with location and surrounding habitat was observed to have a negligible and low level of bat roost potential.

A dusk emergence survey carried out on 30th August 2023 observed no bats emerging from within buildings, with bat activity limited to a single foraging Common Pipistrelle observed foraging along hedgerow to the east.

Survey effort is considered appropriate to characterise the roost potential of buildings 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.

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.

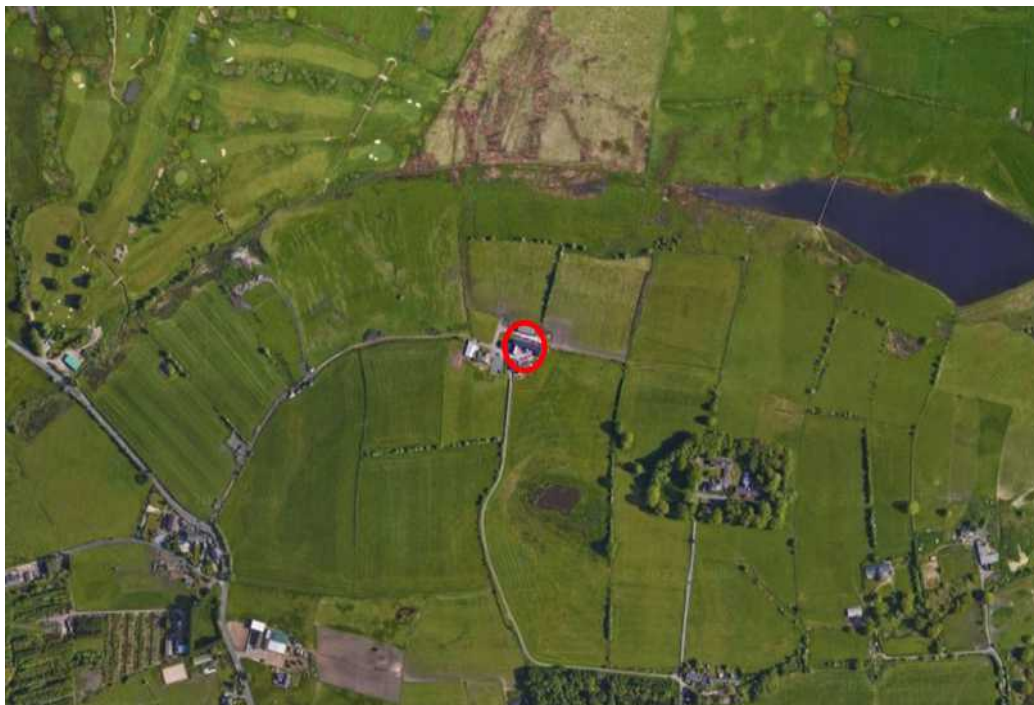
Compensatory bat boxes recommended within the method statement provide a sufficient level of biodiversity enhancement commensurate with the development.

Site Location

Barrack Fold Farm, Knowsley Road, Ainsworth, BL2 5PU
NGR: SD7624911088



Surrounding Habitat



The property is located in a rural position with surrounding habitat dominated by improved and semi improved grassland with limited hedgerow present on field boundaries. Reservoirs are present approximately 500m to the north east.

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.gov website revealed no EPS licence applications within a 1km radius.

A previous bat survey in 2010 observed a low level of common and soprano pipistrelle bat foraging activity on the site despite activity surveys and static bat detector monitoring. No bats were recorded roosting on site.

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 bye 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). Sharon Anderson and Sarah Dunham, experienced bat workers.

Survey Summary

Survey	Date	Timings
Preliminary Roost Assessment	22.11.2022	1 Hour
Visual Survey	30.08.2023	1 Hour
Dawn Survey	30.08.2023	3 Hours

Survey constraints

Access to all areas of the 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.

Preliminary Bat Roost Assessment.

The property consists of a two adjoining buildings.



Building B1

Is a recently converted stone and brick built L-shaped detached barn with a double pitched slate roof. A single storey porch is present on the frontage.

Walls are generally well pointed and sealed with no cracks, gaps or crevices suitable for roosting bats. Soffits and fascia boarding are close fitting. The gable ends are pointed and sealed.

Roof slates are generally close fitting with no lifted, missing or slipped slates present. The ridge is well sealed. Slates are lined with a modern breathable membrane.

Overall when considered in combination with surrounding habitat the building was assessed as offering negligible bat roost potential.



Building B2

Building B2 is a single storey brick built outbuilding with double double pitched slate roof adjoining the eastern gable end of Building 1.

Walls are generally well pointed and sealed with no cracks, gaps or crevices however large open gaps were recorded at wall top level. Blocked openings were present on gable ends and the eastern facade.

Roof slates are generally close fitting with a sealed ridge, however some lifted, missing or slipped slates are present and gaps were present on gable ends.

Overall when considered in combination with surrounding habitat the building was assessed as offering low bat roost potential.



Visual Survey

Visual surveys of the buildings were carried out on 22nd November 2022 and 30th August 2023. Surveys focussed on a search for physical evidence of present of roosting bats, such as scattered or concentrated piles of droppings, feeding remains, urine splashing or grease marking.

No physical evidence was observed that would suggest the use by roosting bats despite the presence of numerous undisturbed horizontal surfaces.

Nesting Birds

No evidence to suggest use by nesting birds was recorded during surveys.

Dusk emergence Survey - 30th August 2023

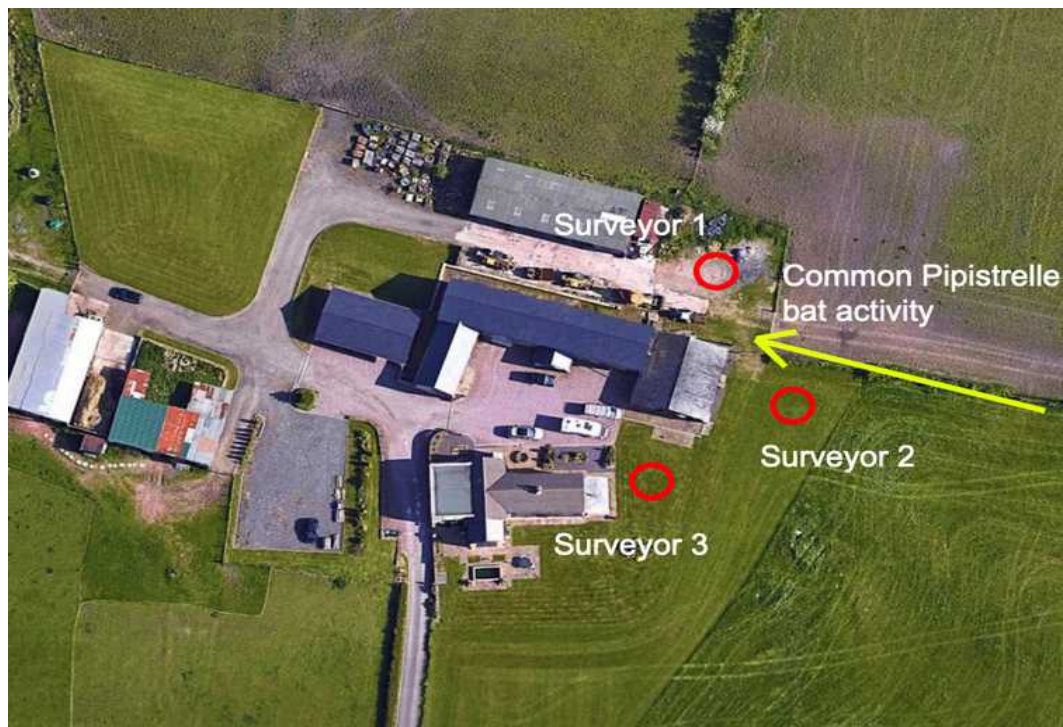
Start Temp: 13.8c Finish Temp: 13.1c 80% Clear Sky Wind: Bfd 0/1 Westerly Precipitation 0
Start: 19.50 Sunrise: 20.07 Finish: 21.37

Surveyors equipped with Anabat Walkabout, Anabat Chorus, Anabat Scout and Anabat Swift full spectrum detectors aided with two Canon XA50 HD and a Canon XA25 infrared video cameras with infrared flood and spot lights positioned covering 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 by two separate surveyors.

At 21.45 distant Common Pipistrelle bat activity was recorded to the east of the building with a single bat observed foraging along the hedgerow before arriving on site and foraging along the north of the buildings. A low level of activity was recorded.

No bats were recorded emerging from within the buildings on site.



Survey summary

Illumination levels at end of survey.



Eastern facade



Soouthern Gable End



Northern Gable End

Interpretation of results

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

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It is considered that reasonable avoidance measures contained within this method statement and the placement of bat boxes for biodiversity enhancement offers an appropriate approach to the proposed development whilst ensuring the continuing ecological functionality of the site.

Impact Assessment

Short-term impacts – Disturbance Low risk: Roof stripping where necessary will be undertaken by hand.

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.

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 with the batworker on call.

Roof slates should be removed by hand where necessary.

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.

One bat box (Greenwood Eco Habitats two crevice box) will be placed on site prior to work commencing.

Bat boxes 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.