

Preliminary Bat Roost Assessment Report

**Land adjacent 5 Stubbins Lane,
Ramsbottom,
BL0 0PU**

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

Summary

In November 2024 Batworker consultancy was commissioned to undertake a survey of land adjacent to 5 Stubbins Lane, Ramsbottom, BL0 0PU to assess the potential for use by bats and breeding birds.

The land has outline planning permission for a single dwelling (Application Number: 67718), with the following conditions:

- 8 The obstruction of roof line of the existing buildings to either side could cause harm to bats and development shall not in any circumstances occur unless a bat assessment has been provided to and agreed by the Local Planning Authority.
- 9 No works to trees or shrubs shall occur between the 1st March and 31st August in any year unless a detailed bird nest survey by a suitably experienced ecologist has been carried out immediately prior to clearance and written confirmation provided that no active bird nests are present which has been agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

A daytime survey was carried out on 24th November 2024 to support development plans. No evidence of use by bats was recorded during the survey. The trees on site are considered to be of negligible potential for roosting bats.

When location, condition of the buildings, and surrounding habitat were taken into consideration the buildings were assessed as offering negligible bat roosting potential. The A676, traffic noise, and associated street lighting present is considered likely to have a significant negative effect on bat activity in the surrounding area.

The proposed development offers a 800mm gap between the new building and 3 Stubbins Lane, it is unlikely to affect the microclimate within the loft space and it is not considered that potential roost features on the gable end would be obscured sufficiently to prevent access to a maneuverable bat species such as Common Pipistrelle.

Given the lack of roosting potential it is considered that the development proposals do not risk negative impacts on roosting bats, and that reasonable avoidance measures offer an appropriate approach to managing risk of negative impacts during development.

The surveyor considers survey effort to be reasonable to assess the roost potential of the buildings and no further survey work is deemed appropriate.

The surveyor does not consider the proposed development and change of use is likely to result in a breach of the Conservation (Natural Habitats &c.) Regulations 1994 (as amended) therefore the proposed development does not require an EPS Licence (EPSL) to proceed lawfully.

Introduction

In November 2024 Batworker consultancy was commissioned to undertake a survey of land adjacent to 5 Stubbins Lane, Ramsbottom, BL0 0PU to assess the potential for use by bats and breeding birds.

The land has outline planning permission for a single dwelling (Application Number: 67718), with the following conditions:

- 8 The obstruction of roof line of the existing buildings to either side could cause harm to bats and development shall not in any circumstances occur unless a bat assessment has been provided to and agreed by the Local Planning Authority.
Reason. In order to ensure that no harm is caused to a Protected Species pursuant to policies EN6 – Conservation of the Natural Environment and EN6/3 – Features of Ecological Value of the Bury Unitary Development Plan and Section 11 of the National Planning Policy Framework.
- 9 No works to trees or shrubs shall occur between the 1st March and 31st August in any year unless a detailed bird nest survey by a suitably experienced ecologist has been carried out immediately prior to clearance and written confirmation provided that no active bird nests are present which has been agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority.
Reason. In order to ensure that no harm is caused to a Protected Species pursuant to policies EN6 - Conservation of the Natural Environment and EN6/3 - Features of Ecological Value of the Bury Unitary Development Plan and National Planning Policy Framework Section 15 - Conserving and enhancing the natural environment.

A daytime survey was carried out on 24th November 2024 to support development plans.

Survey and Site Assessment

Objectives of the survey

The survey was carried out to determine roost potential of the buildings and trees, current usage by bats, and other protected species, of the site and to establish status of the bat species using the site prior to development work being carried out.

Survey site location



A central grid reference for the site is SD7914717247

Site Description

The property consists of an area of hardstanding and domestic garden between numbers 3 and 5 Stubbin Lane. The site has a series of immature deciduous trees and 'leylandii' cypress trees within the garden area.

Number 5 Stubbin Lane to the east of the site is rendered with well sealed gable ends and close fitting roof slates. The north east facing gable end of 3 Stubbin Lane has gaps present on the wall top allowing access below slates.

The property can be considered to offer negligible bat roosting potential.



Pre Existing data on local bat species

A search of the MAGIC (www.magic.gov.uk) website revealed two EPS licence applications within a 1km radius.

2017-29122-EPS-MIT approximately 850m to the north east relating to destruction of a Common Pipistrelle maternity roost.

2019-39548-EPS-MIT approximately 740m to the east relating to destruction of a Common Pipistrelle resting place.

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, often also associated with lowland woodland, but 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 typically woodland species which has been recorded foraging over in by meadows and rough grassland sites. Often roosting in barns.

Surrounding Habitat



The property is located in an urban position with surrounding habitat limited to mature domestic gardens with some semi natural deciduous tree cover and riparian tree cover present to the east. The presence of the A6 76 and associated street lighting immediately adjacent to the property is likely to have a significant negative effect on bat activity.

Connectivity to the wider landscape is poor. Overall foraging potential for bats can be considered low.

Proposed Development



The proposed development consists of the construction of a single dwelling with associated access and landscaping.

Field Survey Methodology

Visual inspection

An inspection was carried out to search for and identify potential feeding perches, roosting opportunities and signs of bat use both internally and externally.

The visual inspection focussed on searching for feeding remains and bat droppings both within the building and on external walls.

Crevices and other potential roost sites were investigated for smear/grease marks, lack of cobwebs, urine staining.

Equipment used included:

- ! Exposure Diablo 1300 lumen LED torch
- ! Teslong TD500 HD video endoscope
- ! Leica Trinovid 10x42 close focusing binoculars

Personnel

All surveys were conducted by Dave Anderson MSc, Natural England Science, Education and Conservation bat licence holder (2015-15784-CLS-CLS) a bat surveyor and ecologist with over 20 years experience. Sarah Dunham an experienced bat surveyor.

Survey Summary

Survey	Date	Timings
Visual	24.11.2024	1 Hour

Survey constraints

Access to all areas of 5 Stubbins Lane was possible and good visual inspection at ground level was possible. 3 Stubbins Lane was assessed from the ground only.

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 location 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.

Survey Results

Visual Inspection - Bats

Trees on site were observed to have no obvious suitable potential roost features present. Potential roost features in the form of gaps on the gable end of 3 Stubbins Lane at the wall top/roof slate interface were noted.

No evidence (in the form of scattered droppings, urine splashing, feeding remains or grease marking) to suggest use by bats was recorded despite suitable undisturbed horizontal surfaces being present.

Visual Inspection – Nesting birds

No evidence to suggest use by nesting birds was recorded, however the presence of mature shrubs and immature trees on site offer nesting opportunities.

Evaluation of the results

No evidence of use by bats was recorded during the survey.

When location, condition of the buildings, and surrounding habitat were taken into consideration the buildings were assessed as offering negligible bat roosting potential. The A676, traffic noise, and associated street lighting present is considered likely to have a significant negative effect on bat activity in the surrounding area.

The proposed development offers a 800mm gap between the new building and 3 Stubbins Lane, it is unlikely to affect the microclimate within the loft space and it is not considered that potential roost features on the gable end would be obscured sufficiently to prevent access to a maneuverable bat species such as Common Pipistrelle.

Given the lack of roosting potential it is considered that the development proposals do not risk negative impacts on roosting bats, and that reasonable avoidance measures offer an appropriate approach to managing risk of negative impacts during development.

Conclusion

No evidence was recorded to suggest bats were roosting within the building.

No bats were observed or recorded using the building for roosting.

The property is considered to be of negligible potential for roosting bats.

The surveyor considers survey effort to be reasonable to assess the roost potential of the building and no further survey work is deemed appropriate.

The surveyor does not consider the proposed development and change of use is likely to result in a breach of the Conservation (Natural Habitats &c.) Regulations 1994 (as amended) therefore the proposed development does not require an EPS Licence (EPSL) to proceed lawfully.

Proposed Biodiversity Net Gain

The installation of a Greenwood's Ecohabitats Two Chamber Bat Box (<https://www.greenwoodsecohabitats.co.uk>) or Kent Bat Box within the site would provide roosting potential for the local bat population.

Precautionary Method Statement and Reasonable Avoidance Measures - Bats

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.

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.

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 - Work should take place following an evening temperature of +5c

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

Removal of roof slates/tiles will be carried out by hand.

A compensatory bat box (Two Greenwood Eco Habitats two crevice box) will be placed on site prior to work commencing and will be used in an emergency to house any bats found during works.

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.

Accidental exposure of bats - EMERGENCY ADVICE

In the unlikely event of bats or their roosts being exposed or vulnerable to harm, suspend further work in that area. Cover the exposed bats to reduce any further risk of harm and seek advice immediately.

Call Dave Anderson (Batworker) on 07894 338290 (mobile); a site visit will be arranged to assess the situation, contact Natural England where necessary, and recover any bats / safely remove them from site.

Nesting Bird Mitigation Strategy

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 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.

E Bibliography

Barn Owls and Rural Planning Applications	Barn Owl Trust 2009
Barn Owl Survey Methodology and Techniques for use in Ecological Assessments	Shawyer, C. August 2011
Bat Mitigation Guidelines	Natural England 2006
Bat Survey Guidelines 4 th Edition	Bat Conservation Trust 2023
Bat Workers Manual 3 rd Edition	JNCC 2004

Bats and the Law

Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981, principally those relating to powers and penalties, have been amended by the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 (CRoW Act). The CRoW Act only applies to England and Wales.

Section 9(1)

It is an offence for any person to intentionally kill, injure or take any wild bat.

Section 9(4)(a)

It is an offence to intentionally or recklessly* damage, destroy or obstruct access to any place that a wild bat uses for shelter or protection.

(*Added by the CRoW Act in England and Wales only)

This is taken to mean all bat roosts whether bats are present or not.

Section 9(4)(b)

It is an offence to intentionally or recklessly* disturb any wild bat while it is occupying a structure or place that it uses for shelter or protection.

(*Added by the CRoW Act in England and Wales only)

The Conservation (Natural Habitats, &c.) Regulations 1994

Section 39(1)

It is an offence

(a) deliberately to capture or kill any bat

(b) deliberately to disturb any bat

(d) to damage or destroy a breeding site or resting place of any bat.

The difference between this legislation and the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 is the use of the word 'deliberately' rather than 'intentionally'. Also disturbance of bats can be anywhere, not just at a roost. Damage or destruction of a bat roost does not require the offence to be intentional or deliberate.

Countryside and Rights of Way (CRoW) Act (2000)

Part III Nature conservation and wildlife protection

74 Conservation of biological diversity

- (1) It is the duty of (a) any Minister of the Crown (within the meaning of the Ministers of the [1975 c. 26.] Crown Act 1975), (b) any Government department, and (c) the National Assembly for Wales, in carrying out his or its functions, to have regard, so far as is consistent with the proper exercise of those functions, to the purpose of conserving biological diversity in accordance with the Convention.

SCHEDULE 12 AMENDMENTS RELATING TO PART I OF WILDLIFE AND COUNTRYSIDE ACT 1981

1. In section 1(5) of the 1981 Act (offence of intentional disturbance of wild birds) after "intentionally" there is inserted "or recklessly".

The Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act (2006)

PART 3, (40): Duty to conserve biodiversity

(1) Every public authority must, in exercising its functions, have regard, so far as is consistent with the proper exercise of those functions, to the purpose of conserving biodiversity.

(3) Conserving biodiversity includes, in relation to a living organism or type of habitat, restoring or enhancing a population or habitat.