

Bob Leatham: Tel: 01204 844545 / 07505 172 087
email: bob@pennineecological.co.uk

Patrick Leatham: Tel: 07545 385 898
email: patrick@pennineecological.co.uk

Ian Ryding: Tel 01772 600441 / 07707 039 254
email: ian@pennineecological.co.uk

Stuart Macpherson: Tel: 07883 438 666
email: stuart@pennineecoligal.co.uk

- Protected species survey & licensing
- Habitat survey
- Habitat creation & management
- Arboricultural survey & impact assessment
- Invasive species survey & control
- Management plans

www.pennineecological.co.uk

Rachel Ann Lucy Architect (RALA)

Date: 12th May 2022

For the attention of: Rachel Baldwin

Dear Rachel,

Re: Preliminary Bat Roost Assessment: Dry Gap Farm, Ramsbottom, BL0 0RX

PENNINE ecological have been commissioned to undertake an ecological assessment at the above site. The purpose of this study is to address any potential issues in relation to protected species resulting from the proposal to build a two-story extension on the south elevation of the building (see Figure 1 below). Based on the proposals, potential impacts are considered to be confined to bats and breeding birds only. As such, a preliminary bat roost assessment (PRA) and breeding bird assessment was undertaken on the 10th May 2022. The sites grid reference is SD 8061 1797 and the location is shown below;

Figure 1: Aerial image of Dry Gap Farm



1. Desk Top Study:

A desk top consultation study with Lancashire Environment Record Network (LERN) was not undertaken for this study. However, searches for statutory sites and bat licence records were undertaken as follows;

Statutory and Non-Statutory Designated Sites:

Details of statutory sites were sought from the Natural England web site search:

<http://www.natureonthemap.naturalengland.org.uk/MagicMap.aspx>

There are no statutorily designated wildlife sites within 500m radii of the site. The Natural England (NE) Impact Risk Zone tool was also reviewed and consultation with NE would not be required for this development.

There are no non-statutory designated sites within 500m radii of the site.

European Protected Species Mitigation Licences:

Details of European Protected Species Mitigation Licences (EPSML) for bats was sought from the Natural England web site search:

<http://www.natureonthemap.naturalengland.org.uk/MagicMap.aspx>

There are no EPSML in relation to bats within 500m radii of the site. The nearest EPSML record is approximately 950m south-west of the site, adjacent to the M66 motorway. The licence permits the destruction of a common pipistrelle roost.

2. Bat Ecology and Legislation:

Bats are comprehensively protected by European legislation.

All British bats and their roosts¹ are afforded protection under Schedule 5 of the Wildlife & Countryside Act (1981) (as amended) and are listed in Schedule 2 of The Conservation of Habitats and Species (Amendment) (EU Exit) Regulations 2019 (SI 2019/579). When dealing with cases where a European Protected Species (EPS) (all UK bats) may be affected, a planning authority is a competent authority within the meaning of the Regulation 7 of the Regulations, that has a statutory duty as the local authority to have due regard to the provisions of the Regulations in the exercise of its functions.

Paragraph 180 of the National Policy Planning Framework (as revised in July 2021) states:

180. When determining planning applications, local planning authorities should apply the following principles:

- a) if significant harm to biodiversity resulting from a development cannot be avoided (through locating on an alternative site with less harmful impacts), adequately mitigated, or, as a last resort, compensated for, then planning permission should be refused;*
- b) development on land within or outside a Site of Special Scientific Interest, and which is likely to have an adverse effect on it (either individually or in combination with other developments), should not normally be permitted. The only exception is where the benefits of the development in the location proposed clearly outweigh both its likely impact on the features of the site that make it of special*

¹ The term roost is generically referred to as a place that bat/s use for the any of the above reasons, however it should be noted that under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations (2019) (EU Exit) (Regulation 43 (d) the term roost is not used but refers to "a breeding site or resting place of such an animal" and is afforded legal protection. The roost, breeding site or resting place of bats, which ever terminology is used is legally protected whether or not bats are in occupation

scientific interest, and any broader impacts on the national network of Sites of Special Scientific Interest;

- c) development resulting in the loss or deterioration of irreplaceable habitats (such as ancient woodland and ancient or veteran trees) should be refused, unless there are wholly exceptional reasons⁶³ and a suitable compensation strategy exists; and,*
- d) development whose primary objective is to conserve or enhance biodiversity should be supported; while opportunities to improve biodiversity in and around developments should be integrated as part of their design, especially where this can secure measurable net gains for biodiversity or enhance public access to nature where this is appropriate.*

Use of Buildings by Bats:

- a) Summer breeding roost.
- b) Hibernation.
- c) Transitional or temporary roost.

Roost selection is often closely correlated to suitable foraging habitat within a reasonable commuting distance from the roost and different sites are used depending upon insect densities and abundance, climatic conditions can also affect their ability to successfully forage. All British bats are insectivorous.

Up to eleven bat species have been regularly recorded in Lancashire, most of which use built structures, notably occupied residential properties for roosting. The most frequently encountered species is the Pipistrelle bat; its abundant status in Lancashire is reflected throughout the UK.

3. Survey Methodology

A daytime survey was conducted on the 10th May 2022. The buildings were inspected externally and internally for evidence of bats and potential places / points of internal access that may be of value to bats. Close focusing binoculars were used to identify places that are frequently used by bats as roosts or as access into roost chambers.

During the survey the surrounding habitat was evaluated in relation to bats as very often roost selection is closely correlated with the surrounding habitat.

The daytime survey was conducted by Mr. Patrick Leatham, who is an experienced ecologist and full member of CIEEM. The results of the survey were discussed with Mr Stuart Macpherson, a highly experienced bat surveyor who holds a Natural England Class 2 bat licence (2021-10079-CL18-BAT). Mr Macpherson's evaluation of the site and conclusions concur with those of Mr Leatham's.

Constraints:

The building was fully inspected both externally and internally and there were no visual restrictions to any of the elevations. Therefore there are no constraints to the survey.

4. Bat Survey Results

Building Assessment

The main building is a two storey stone farm cottage with a stone flag roof. There are wooden fascia boards along the east and west elevations of the main building. The loft inspection identified a wooden roof truss upon which the stone flags were directly laid. There was evidence of an internal brick wall skin in parts of the

building. The loft space was dusty with lots of cob webs. No evidence of bats (droppings or feeding remains) was identified, however mouse droppings were recorded.

An outbuilding which was likely the former outside toilet and washroom for the cottage, is connected to the south elevation of the cottage. This will be removed as part of the proposals. The outbuilding is a single storey stone building with a Welsh slate roof. The roof is supported by a wooden truss and felt underlay situated beneath the slate roof. No evidence of bats was identified within the outbuilding.

The cottage building possesses a number of potential roost features which have been described below:

1. Gaps between the stone wall and wooden fascia along the east and west elevations. These may allow access into the roof space and any internal wall cavities that may be present.
2. Gaps within the stone flag roof on the cottage building roof.
3. Gaps within the Welsh Slate roof on the outbuilding.

Habitat Assessment

The property is located within a rural setting and is surrounded predominantly by horse and sheep grazed pasture. Approximately 200m south of the building there is a mosaic of optimal bat habitat in the form of mature woodland, water bodies, hedgerows, lines of trees and scrub/ruderal mosaic. The surrounding habitat is considered to be of high value for bats.

Preliminary Roost Assessment

Based on the PRF's identified and the surrounding habitat, the bat roost potential for Dry Gap Farm is considered to be **Moderate**.

5. Bird Survey Results

During the survey bird activity levels were moderate with swallows, house sparrows, and great tit all observed within close proximity to the building.

On the western elevation of the cottage (within the courtyard) a number of house sparrows were observed flying under the stone flag roof near the gutter. On two occasions nesting material was being carried by birds towards the cottage indicating that the house is in current use for nesting, or soon will be. The potential roost features for bats also provide good nesting opportunities for birds including house sparrows.

The open stables to the north of the site were favoured by the swallows and it is likely that these buildings would be more suitable for swallows.

6. Recommendations

6.1 Bat Recommendations

Since the property is concluded to possess moderate potential for crevice dwelling bats, it is recommended that two dusk emergence or dawn re-entry surveys are undertaken. The surveys are required to establish whether or not bats are using the building and if present how they are using it.

The survey will need to be conducted during the main active season of bats i.e. between May – August. Two dusk/dawn surveys are accepted as being a reasonable level of survey effort where moderate potential has been identified. In addition, a data search of local bat records could be sourced to compliment the surveys.

Figure 2: Extract from Bat Conservation Trust: Bat Survey Guidelines 2016 3rd Edition

Table 7.3 Recommended minimum number of survey visits for presence/absence surveys to give confidence in a negative result for structures (also recommended for trees but unlikely to give confidence in a negative result).		
Low roost suitability	Moderate roost suitability	High roost suitability
One survey visit. One dusk emergence or dawn re-entry survey ^a (structures). No further surveys required (trees).	Two separate survey visits. One dusk emergence and a separate dawn re-entry survey. ^b	Three separate survey visits. At least one dusk emergence and a separate dawn re-entry survey. The third visit could be either dusk or dawn. ^b

^a Structures that have been categorised as low potential can be problematic and the number of surveys required should be judged on a case-by-case basis (see Section 5.2.9). If there is a possibility that quiet calling, late-emerging species are present then a dawn survey may be more appropriate, providing weather conditions are suitable. In some cases, more than one survey may be needed, particularly where there are several buildings in this category.

^b Multiple survey visits should be spread out to sample as much of the recommended survey period (see Table 7.1) as possible; it is recommended that surveys are spaced at least two weeks apart, preferably more. A dawn survey immediately after a dusk one is considered only one visit.

Following the completion of the surveys, further recommendations will be made in respect of any issues in relation to bats.

6.2 Bird Recommendations

The proposals will impact buildings which are known to support breeding birds.

It is advised that the demolition of the buildings is undertaken between September 1st – February 28th inclusive to prevent impact on nesting birds.

If works are required between March 1st – August 31st inclusive, then checks for nesting birds by a suitably experienced ecologist should be undertaken.

To ensure that there is no overall loss of nesting provisions for house sparrows, it is recommended that bird nest boxes are incorporated into the design of the development. At least two sparrow terrace nest boxes should be installed to compensate for the loss of nesting habitat on site.

If you require clarification on any issue, please contact me at the above address.

Yours faithfully

Patrick Leatham

Patrick Leatham BSc (Hons), MCIEEM.

Site Photographs: May 10th 2022



Photograph 1: Overview of the south elevation and the outbuilding where the two story extension is proposed.



Photograph 3: View of the western elevation with the gap between the stone and fascia board. House sparrows observed entering this gap.



Photograph 2: View of the east elevation with gap present between stone wall and fascia.



Photograph 4: View of the east elevation. Stone roof has gaps between flags.



Photograph 5: Wooden roof truss supporting the stone flags. Internal brick wall observed.



Photograph 7: Welsh slate roof on outbuilding with gaps allowing access to felt underlay.



Photograph 6: View of the loft space which had mouse droppings. No bat evidence recorded.



Photograph 8: View inside the outbuilding with wooden truss and roof underlay.