

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

Reasonable Avoidance and Mitigation Measures

**The Nurseries,
Leigh Lane,
Walshaw,
Bury, BL8 1RL**

13.02.2022



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Executive summary

In January 2022 Batworker consultancy was commissioned to undertake a preliminary bat roost assessment of The Nurseries, Leigh Lane, Walshaw, Bury, BL8 1RL to assess the potential for impact on protected species.

Previous surveys carried out in 2018 (*Bat Survey of Buildings at Leigh Lane, Bury – Martin Prescott Environmental Services*) identified use of the main house by roosting bats.

“Evening emergence surveys did not record any emergence from the bungalow, but an emergence of a Brown Long-eared Bat from the house. A dawn re-entry survey recorded a Common Pipistrelle and a Brown Long-eared Bat returning to roost in the house.”

“Bats were not roosting in the bungalow at the times of the surveys. Roosting has not been confirmed despite many previous surveys. There is still the very low possibility of a minor transitory roost.”

A daytime assessment and emergence survey was carried out on 11th February 2022 in order to support residential development plans including demolition of existing buildings. No bats were observed to be using the buildings, however the survey was carried out at a sub optimal time of year for observing evidence of bat presence. Current and historical evidence suggests use of the house by a small number of Common Pipistrelle and Brown Long eared bats. Observed bat activity suggests small non breeding roosts located within surviving elements of the building structure. No evidence has been observed to suggest use of the building by a maternity roost.

“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 roosts consist of small numbers of a common species and can be characterised as of low conservation value. Survey effort is considered appropriate to initially characterise the roost potential of building and design suitable mitigation for works. It is considered highly unlikely that the conservation value of roosts on site will have increased since previous surveys given the unheated nature and deterioration of buildings on site. It is considered that a precautionary approach to development with suitable reasonable avoidance measures with mitigation in the form of timing of works and compensatory bat boxes would be an appropriate approach to roost compensation commensurate with that expected by Natural England for the purposes of licencing should it be necessary.

No work will take place until two further emergence and dawn surveys are carried out to confirm number and location of bat roosts. Survey work will inform an EPS licence application as necessary.

No demolition will be undertaken prior to a Natural England EPS Development Licence application being successful.

Five compensatory bat boxes (Three Greenwood Eco Habitats three crevice boxes and two Greenwoods Ecohabitats Medium Hollow boxes.) will be placed on site prior to work commencing and will form suitable commensurate mitigation for any necessary EPS licence application.

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

The Nurseries, Leigh Lane, Walshaw, Bury, BL8 1RL
NGR: SD7830111202



Site Layout



The property is located in a rural position with surrounding habitat dominated by a mosaic of semi natural deciduous woodland, scrub, improved and semi improved grassland, and open water.

Connectivity to the wider landscape is high. Foraging potential for bats can be considered to be high.

Survey summary and site assessment

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

Bat record data: records were obtained from Magic.gov.uk. A search of the MAGIC (www.magic.gov.uk) website revealed no bat EPS licence applications within a 1km radius.

Previous surveys carried out in 2018 (*Bat Survey of Buildings at Leigh Lane, Bury – Martin Prescott Environmental Services*) identified use of the main house by roosting bats.

“Evening emergence surveys did not record any emergence from the bungalow, but an emergence of a Brown Long-eared Bat from the house. A dawn re-entry survey recorded a Common Pipistrelle and a Brown Long-eared Bat returning to roost in the house.”

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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). Sharon Anderson, an experienced bat surveyor.

Survey Summary

Survey	Date	Timings
Visual	11.02.2022	1 Hour

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 during preliminary and activity surveys.

Survey Results

Visual Inspection – Bungalow.



The property consists of a block built bungalow with a double pitched slate roof, a single storey extension is present on the southern facade and a leanto is present on the western gable. External walls are generally well pointed with no obvious cracks, gaps or crevices. Gaps were present on the eaves and gable ends, behind remaining fascia boarding and under missing ridge tiles and lifted roof slates.

The building was assessed as offering high roosting potential.

The Main House



The main house consists of a two storey brick built detached house with single storey extensions present to the east and south facades. The property is in a poor condition with missing roof sections, areas of collapse and evidence of internal fire damage.

Gaps were present both on external walls and behind fascia boarding. The southern gable had gaps below roof slates. The building suffers from high levels of both weather and light penetration.

The building was assessed as offering moderate bat roosting potential.

Outbuildings.

Outbuildings on site were assessed as offering negligible roosting potential.

Interpretation of results

A daytime assessment and emergence survey was carried out on 11th February 2022 in order to support residential development plans including demolition of existing buildings. No bats were observed to be using the buildings, however the survey was carried out at a sub optimal time of year for observing evidence of bat presence.

Current and historical evidence suggests use of the house by a small number of Common Pipistrelle and Brown Long eared bats. Observed bat activity suggests small non breeding roosts located within surviving elements of the building structure. No evidence has been observed to suggest use of the building by a maternity roost.

"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 roosts consist of small numbers of a common species and can be characterised as of low conservation value. Survey effort is considered appropriate to initially characterise the roost potential of building and design suitable mitigation for works.

It is considered highly unlikely that the conservation value of roosts on site will have increased since previous surveys given the unheated nature and deterioration of buildings on site.

It is considered that a precautionary approach to development with suitable reasonable avoidance measures with mitigation in the form of timing of works and compensatory bat boxes would be an appropriate approach to roost compensation commensurate with that expected by Natural England for the purposes of licencing should it be necessary. If work is carried out between May and September further surveys and a Natural England EPS licence may be needed to cover proposed works.

Whilst it is possible that further survey work may identify further roosts, it is considered that these will likely consist of small day roosts of common species, low conservation value and bat boxes will be suitable compensation.

Impact Assessment

Short-term impacts – disturbance Low risk: Roof stripping where necessary will be undertaken by hand and under supervision following further emergence survey work carried out between May and September and installation of compensatory roost boxes.

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.

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 -

No work will take place until two further emergence and dawn surveys are carried out to confirm number and location of bat roosts. Survey work will inform an EPS licence application as necessary.

No demolition will be undertaken prior to a Natural England EPS Development Licence application being successful.

Careful timing of roofing works affecting roof slates or structural timbers must be scheduled to occur within the period of least impact to bats – either during the autumn (late October and November) or early spring (late February and March). During these months it is likely that any roosting bats will have relocated naturally to alternative roosts, however individual bats can be found at any time.

Work to affected roof areas will take place under supervision of the bat worker. Removal of roof slates will be carried out by hand and under supervision where necessary.

Compensatory Roosts

Five compensatory bat boxes (Three Greenwood Eco Habitats three crevice boxes and two Greenwoods Ecohabitats Medium Hollow boxes.) will be placed on site prior to work commencing and will form suitable commensurate mitigation for any necessary EPS licence application.

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 and recover any bats / safely remove them to compensatory bat boxes on site.