

Preliminary Roost Assessment

The Stables

41 Arthur Lane

Ainsworth

BL2 5PR

For

Lee Spillard



Gritstone ecology

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1 Introduction

1.1 Purpose of the report

The report is written by Stewart Bradshaw, for Lee Spillard. Stewart carried out a Preliminary Roost Assessment of The Stables at 41 Arthur Lane, on 6th May 2020. The survey report will be used to provide supporting information for a planning application, at the site.

1.2 Survey aims

The aim of the survey was to determine the actual or potential presence of bats and the need for further survey or mitigation.

1.3 Surveyor details

Stewart is licenced to disturb, take and handle all species of bats in all counties of England under licence number 2015-15615-CLS-CLS. He has 10 years' experience in ecological consultancy, including the planning and preparation of bat surveys, and mitigation licences.

1.4 Proposed development

The development proposals are for the demolition of the stables, and construction of a residential property.

1.5 Site context

The Stables is located to the south of 41 Arthur Lane, Ainsworth, BL2 5PR, GR SD 75778, 10810 approximately 4km west of Bolton Town Centre.

The site includes a detached stable block, with a small yard. Habitat within 50m of the barn includes; hedgerows, trees, grazed pastures, and an un-lit countryside road. Habitat within 500m includes, open farmland, hedgerows, mature trees, blocks of woodland, ponds, and watercourses.

The site and surrounding area provide high quality foraging, commuting, and roosting opportunities for bats.



1.6 Site location



1.6a – The Stables – site location.



1.6b – The Stables – aerial photograph, looking south.



2 Methods

2.1 Survey timings

The survey was undertaken on 6th May 2020. Weather conditions during the survey were bright, warm and dry with a temperature of 20°C.

2.2 Desk study

No desk study of the site was undertaken, prior to the preliminary roost assessment, and no other ecological surveys have been carried out in relation to the proposals.

The development has a small footprint, and impacts beyond the site boundary are unlikely. A site-specific investigation was considered more suitable.

2.3 Habitat assessment

The habitat on site and in the surrounding area was assessed using Ordnance Survey mapping, and aerial photography. Habitat features on site, and those in the surrounding area were assessed for their suitability for use by bats during the site visit.

2.4 Building inspection

A systematic search of the exterior of the building was made to identify potential or actual bat access points and roosting places, and to locate any evidence of bats such as live or dead specimens, bat droppings, urine splashes, fur-oil staining and or squeaking noises. Bat specimens and droppings are the most reliable type of evidence; the other types are not always the result of bat activity. Sometimes bats leave no visible sign of their presence on the outside of a building (even when they do wet weather can wash evidence away.)

The search included (where present) the ground beneath potential access points, windowsills, window panes, walls, behind peeling paintwork and lifted rendering, hanging tiles, weatherboarding, eaves, soffit boxes, fascia's, lead flashing, gaps under felt, under tiles / slates and in existing bats boxes. Gaps in brickwork and stonework were searched (where present). All evidence of use by bats, or features with the potential to be used by bats was recorded and photographed.

A systematic search of the inside of the building was undertaken to identify potential or actual bat access points and roosting places, and to locate evidence of bats. Bat specimens (live or dead) and droppings are the most reliable type of evidence. Other evidence can include urine splashes, fur-oil staining, feeding remains, squeaking noises, bat fly (Nycteribiid) pupal cases (Hutson 1984) or odour.

Areas inspected include;

Within rooms

- floors and surfaces
- behind wooden panelling
- in lintels above doors and windows
- behind window shutters and curtains
- behind pictures, posters, furniture, peeling paintwork, peeling wallpaper, lifted plaster and boarded up windows
- inside cupboards and in chimneys accessible from fireplaces.

Within roof spaces



- the tops of gable end and dividing walls
- the top of chimney breasts
- ridge and hip beams and other structural timbers
- mortise and tenon joints
- all beams
- the junction of roof timbers, especially where ridge and hip beams meet
- behind purlins
- between tiles and the roof lining (where accessible)
- under flat felt roofs.

The areas listed above were inspected (where present), any additional areas with potential for use were also inspected.

2.5 Equipment

The equipment listed below was available for use during the surveys and was used where required.

Clulite CB2 1,000,000 candlepower torch. Rigid Seesnake CA-300 digital endoscope with 0.9m cable reach with 17mm and 6mm imaging heads. Digital camera with 50x zoom. 10x42 close focussing binoculars, 4m ladders, bat handling gloves, DNA sampling tubes.

2.6 Survey limitations

None. All accessible areas of the building were inspected in detail at a time of year when bats are active.



3 Results

3.1 External inspection



3.1a – The front of the stables.

The building is a detached stable block, it was built approximately 20 years ago, and is used daily. It has an unequally pitched roof, covered with Marley concrete roof & ridge tiles; roof pitches face north & south, gables face east & west. End tiles at the verges are sealed with cement. Wooden fascia boards are fitted at the eaves and gable ends.

Walls are white painted single layer concrete blockwork. Lintels are concrete, window & door frames are wooden, all glass is intact.

The building is well maintained, and in good condition. Roof tiles are tightly fitted with no damaged, missing, or slipped tiles. Ridge tiles are fitted tightly, and fixed in place with cement. End tiles at the verges are sealed with cement. There are no gaps between roofing materials. Wooden fascia boards are fixed tightly against walls with no suitable gaps. Walls are in good condition with no gaps or cracks, and no missing mortar.

Window and door frames are fixed into place with cement, with no suitable gaps or crevices around the frames.

There are few features externally which are likely be used by roosting bats, and no evidence of use by bats was present during the inspection.



3.2 Internal inspection



3.2a – The roof structure.

Internally, the building is split into two stables and a storage room. There is no internal roof void and the roof structure and underside of roofing materials is exposed. The building has a trussed timber roof structure, lined with bitumen felt. Walls are single layered concrete blockwork and are not lined. Floors are concrete.

Roof timbers are fixed tightly against the inside of the gable end walls with no suitable gaps, and fixed to the top of blockwork at the wall-plate. Timbers are dusty and cobwebbed. The roof lining is intact with no tears or gaps, and there are no holes or gaps in the roof which could give access to roosting bats.

Walls are single layered concrete blockwork, there is no wall cavity or internal lining, and there are no other features (in the walls) which could be used by roosting bats. There are no other enclosed spaces internally which are suitable for use by roosting bats.

Stable doors are occasionally left open and could give access to bats in flight, however no indications of use by bats were found.

3.3 Evidence of use

No indications of use by bats was present during the survey, either internally, or externally.

3.4 Level of potential

The building has **negligible potential** for use by roosting bats. This is as the stable is well maintained, in good condition, and as the structure of the building offers no suitable roosting opportunities.



4 Evaluation

4.1 Bats

The building is set in an area which, in general, provides high quality habitat, for foraging, commuting and roosting bats, and bats are likely to be present locally.

The hedgerows, trees, pastures, and open land surrounding the site are likely to be used by foraging bats.

The stable is well maintained, and in good condition. There are no features externally, which are suitable, or likely to be used by roosting bats; the building has no gaps which could give direct access to roosting bats in flight, and no evidence of use was found during the inspection.

The roof is covered with Marley concrete roof and ridge tiles. The tiles are in good condition with no damaged or missing tiles, ridge tiles are sealed with cement. End tiles at the gable end verges are sealed with cement. There are no gaps or crevices in the roof materials, or structure, which are suitable for use by crevice dwelling bats.

The building has no roof void, or other enclosed spaces, and is in daily use; the lack of any evidence of use inside the barn, such as droppings or feeding remains, reduces the likelihood of a significant roost being present.

The walls constructed of a single layer of concrete blockwork, with no insulation or lining. The walls are in good condition, with no cracks or missing mortar which could be used by crevice dwelling bats.

The stable doors are occasionally left open. These could allow access for bats, however no indications of use by bats were present during the inspection, and roof timbers were dusty and cobwebbed.

Although field signs of bats do not always persist in buildings, the lack of any droppings, feeding remains, or other evidence of use by bats, reduces the likelihood of the presence of a significant roost.

Taking into account the habitat surrounding the site, and the features present, the house and garage, and stables are unlikely to be used by roosting bats and have a **negligible suitability** for use.

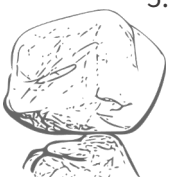
The construction of a new property within the same site is unlikely to impact on individual bats or bat habitat.

4.2 Legal and planning context

All species of bats in the UK and their roosts are legally protected by UK and European legislation. The UK the legal protection is summarised as follows:

You will be committing a criminal offence if you:

1. Deliberately* capture, injure or kill a bat
2. Intentionally or recklessly disturb a bat in its roost or deliberately disturb a group of bats
3. Damage or destroy a bat roosting place (even if bats are not occupying the roost at the time)
4. Possess or advertise/sell/exchange a bat (dead or alive) or any part of a bat
5. Intentionally or recklessly obstruct access to a bat roost even if bats are not present at the time



*In a court, 'deliberately' will probably be interpreted as someone who, although not intending to capture/injure or kill a bat, performed the relevant action, being sufficiently informed and aware of the consequence his/her action would most likely have).

If bats or bat roosts are present in the building, the proposed demolition of the stable would likely result in an offence being committed.

5 Impact assessment

5.1 Bats

The development proposals are for the demolition of the stables, and construction of a residential property.

The building has no features which are suitable, or likely to be used by roosting bats. The building has **negligible suitability** for use by roosting bats.

The proposed work is unlikely to impact on bats or bat roosts; and, once completed is unlikely to provide any increase in levels of disturbance for bats locally.

The proposals are unlikely to impact on bats or bat habitat either during construction, or as a result of the continued use of the site.

6 Required actions

The building has a **negligible suitability** for use by roosting bats, no field signs of use by bats were found internally or externally during the inspection, and no further survey work is required with regard to bats.



7 References

Department for Communities and Local Government (2012). National Planning Policy Framework.

Collins, J. (ed.) (2016). Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines. (3rd ed.) The Bat Conservation Trust, London.

Mitchell-Jones, A.J. (2004). Bat Mitigation Guidelines. English Nature.

Mitchell-Jones, A.J. & McLeish, A.P. (2004). The Bat Workers Manual. (3rd ed.) JNCC



8 Appendix 1 – Photographs



1 – The north facing front of the stable block.



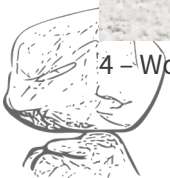
2 – Roof tiles are in good condition with no suitable gaps.



3 – Cement at the gable end verges is intact with no suitable gaps.



4 – Wooden fascia boards are fixed tightly against blockwork with no suitable gaps.

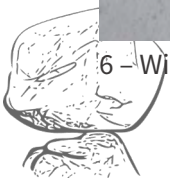




5 – Walls are in good condition with no gaps or cracks.



6 – Window and door frames are sealed into the walls with no suitable gaps.





7 – The building has no enclosed roof void, and has a timber trussed roof structure.



8 – Timbers are covered in dusty cobwebs with no gaps between timbers and blockwork.

