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**Preliminary Ecology report:
39 Bradshaw Road,
Tottington,
BL8 3PW**

OS grid reference:
SD 7644 1234

Commissioned-by:
Harold Kenyon

Survey Date: 6/9/23

Previous survey: day-time preliminary bat assessment - 14/4/22

Report Date: 18/9/23

Previous reports: day-time preliminary bat assessment - 21/4/22

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N.b. Copyright applies to all my reports and they must not be altered in any way whatsoever by anyone other than myself, or combined with any other report/s, irrespective of who wrote them, without the proposed changes being submitted to me in writing and agreed by me in writing.

1. Summary.

(This summary should be read in conjunction with the conclusions and recommendations.)

Following a preliminary bat assessment in April last year, I was asked to undertake an Ecology survey. This concentrated on the stream to the rear of the property, and an access route to the rear of the property across the field behind it.

The external assessment of the building with respect to bats and nesting birds was updated.

This is a small-scale project involving a mid-terraced property. I understand the proposal is to build a single-storey extension to the rear and a porch to the front, with remedial work to the front wall. Remedial work to the rear wall has already been undertaken.

The stream carries little water and the steep banks are heavily overgrown, with a variety of grasses and herbaceous plants, including the non-native, invasive Himalayan balsam.

No evidence of water vole or otter was seen. Given the small-scale nature of this project it seems unlikely that there will be any significant impact on any species using the stream or its banks in any case.

The likelihood of great crested newts being able to hibernate on this site was considered to be negligible.

There is unlikely to be a risk of disturbing ground-nesting birds in the field.

I am told the roof and fascias of the property will not be impacted by the work. As the new build involves only a single-storey rear extension and porch at the front, assuming fascias are not affected - even by remedial works to the front wall - the only risk to bats will be of disturbance; though a single-storey extension could put any bats emerging from the west-facing fascia of the adjoining property at greater risk of predation by any neighbourhood cats.

South and west-facing fascias have a degree of risk of use by a maternity colony of pipistrelles, and building works especially when power tools are used for any length of time, could cause enough disturbance to impact bats at a very vulnerable stage in their life cycle.

Similarly, if the currently available access to the cellar is closed-off when a bat or bats has ventured in there to hibernate in winter, the bat/s will be trapped inside the building. The likelihood of hibernation taking place is relatively small, but bats can be hard to discover even by experienced surveyors.

There has been no evidence of nesting by birds such as the house sparrow in association with the adjoining property to the east, but the possibility of it happening in the future remains.

My recommendations are:

- As there has been no bat activity survey work here, I recommend not planning to start construction, or suddenly start intensive use of power tools, during the main bat maternity colony season of May to August inclusive.
- If this is unavoidable there needs to be bat activity survey immediately before works start (within 24-48 hours) to double-check no maternity colony is present.
- If either fascia needs to be removed, or works to the roof become unavoidable, the bat consultant must be contacted for advice.
- If possible, completely seal the access to the cellar before November to minimise the risk of incarcerating a bat. If the access is to be sealed between November and March inclusive, the bat consultant needs to check as far as possible on the absence of bats in the cellar.
- If the construction begins during the main bird nesting season (April to August inclusive) the Ecologist needs to check no birds are nesting close enough that the nesting process may be impacted.
- Ensure contractors understand that if at any time bats are found to be roosting or are suspected of roosting, or birds are suspected of nesting, at this property or either adjoining properties, work **must** stop **immediately** and advice be sought from the Ecologist. With respect to bats they have a legal obligation to do this. As far as practicable the feature that was sheltering the bat/s should be replaced. Further advice **must** be sought from the bat consultant, even if the bat has flown off.
- Attempts to prevent/limit the invasion by Himalayan balsam should continue by pulling or repeated cutting before it seeds each year, avoiding the use of herbicides.

2. Introduction

In 2022 I was asked to assess the importance of this property to bats prior to extension/remedial works being undertaken.

I was informed there will be a single-storey extension to the rear and a porch to the front and the front wall needs reconstruction for structural reasons. Remedial work to the rear wall has already been undertaken.

In 2022, there was bat access available at front and rear fascias of the house and also the rear fascias of both adjoining properties. However, the rear elevation was tented with protective sheeting. Although bats could potentially still access the rear fascia, it seemed the sheeting was likely to deter them, and I considered the roosting potential at the front fascia alone was insufficient to require bat activity survey work to accord with good practice.

Incidentally I commented on any issues discovered with respect to other protected/priority/invasive species and species of conservation concern. In this case it seemed there was nesting activity by the house sparrow at the rear eaves of the adjoining property.

I have now been asked to produce an Ecology report. There is a stream to the rear of the property, and it is assumed this is the primary reason for the additional Ecology survey request by the planning authority. Access to the rear of the property will be via a gate on the western boundary of the pasture behind it. The route will be approximately 20m long and close to the northern boundary of the field.

This report should be read in conjunction with the day-time bat survey report of April 2022, which covers bats in greater detail.

Fig. 1 below shows the property, stream and the proposed access route for items such as a cement mixer. I understand the stream is culverted into a pipe from the property westwards.



Fig. 1. Approximate extent of property outlined in red.
Approximate line of stream shown in blue.
Approximate access route to facilitate the work shown in orange.

The site is in a rural location, essentially surrounded by pasture. There are no significant belts of woodland, or large water bodies, within 2kms:

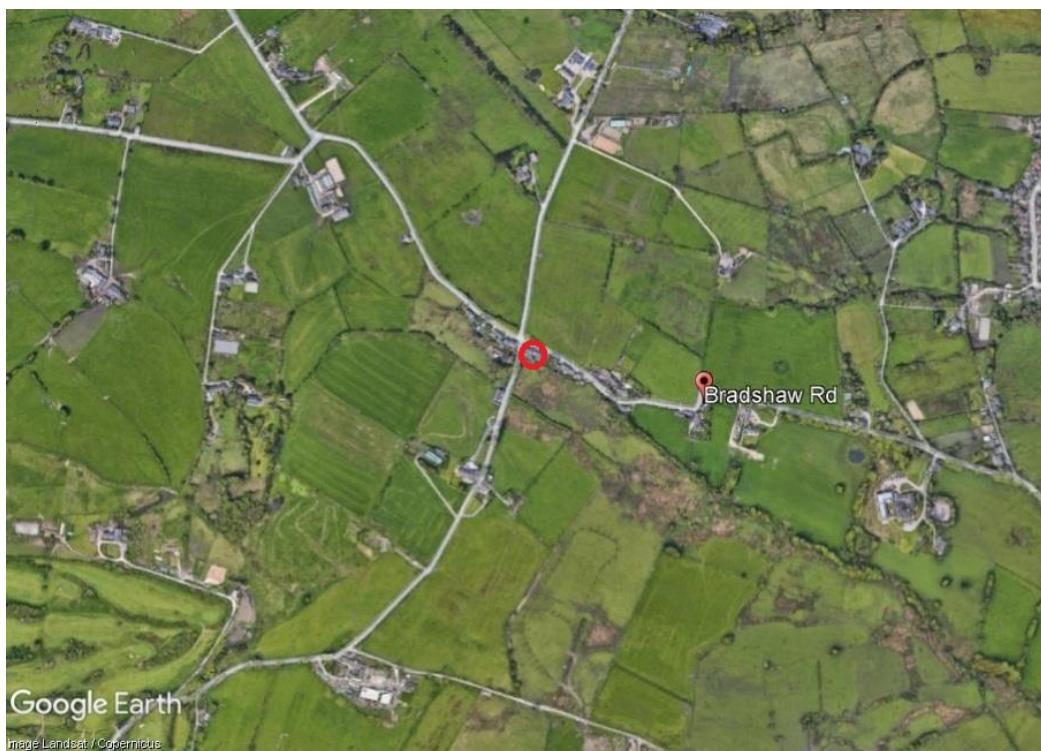


Fig. 2. Location of property indicated by red circle

Existing Records.

A data search from GM Biological Records Centre discovered 4 records of great crested newt (*Triturus cristatus*) within 1km, with the nearest being associated with a pond about 250m away. The pond and stream do not have a direct link.

There were also 12 records of brown hare (*Lepus europaeus*), all more than around 500m away and a record of kingfisher about 850m away. There were no records of water vole (*Arvicola Amphibius*) or otter (*Lutra lutra*) within 1km. There's a record of a sett of the badger (*Meles meles*) just over 500m away.

A range of biodiversity priority species of bird have been recorded within 1km, including the ground-nesting lapwing (*Vanellus vanellus*) and sky-lark (*Alauda arvensis*), all at least 500m away, apart from starling (*Sturnus vulgaris*) about 400m away.

There were 45 records of pipistrelle bats (*Pipistrellus spp*) within 1km, the nearest at virtually the same location as 39 Harwood Road, but it was a record of a bat in flight. The records were mainly of bats in flight apart from 3 grounded bats. None of the grounded bats were near this property. There were also 8 records of Daubenton's bat (*Myotis daubentonii*), but none within 900m and a record of noctule (*Nyctalus noctula*) also more than 900m away.

A search of DEFRA's Magic database discovered no European Protected Species licences have been granted for bats or great crested newts within 1km.

3. Legislation.

The Wildlife and Countryside Act of 1981 provides protection for some species, as currently do the designations under the European Habitats Regulations of 1994. Badgers are covered by the Protection of badgers Act 1992, revised in 2015.

Between 1995 and 2010 certain more vulnerable habitats and species were the subject of National or Local Biodiversity Action Plans. This strategy for the protection of biodiversity has been superseded by UK post-2010 Biodiversity Framework, which is largely now implemented at county level.

Section 41 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006 lists species "of principal importance for the purpose of conserving biodiversity". The list was updated in 2014.

For the purposes of a small-scale site assessment such as this, detailed information on the protection of particular species and their biodiversity status is not being provided. However, all native reptiles and amphibians are of concern, as are mammals that could occur in this locality such as the water vole (*Arvicola Amphibius*), otter (*Lutra lutra*), hedgehog (*Erinaceus europaeus*), brown hare and badger (*Meles meles*).

The National Planning Policy Framework of 2012 (2) states that "the planning system should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment" by a number of means, including "minimising impacts on biodiversity and providing net gains in biodiversity where possible, contributing to the Government's commitment to halt the overall decline in biodiversity, including by establishing coherent ecological networks... ."

See bat survey report of April 2022 for more detailed information with respect to bats.

Breeding birds.

The Wildlife and Countryside Act of 1981 gives protection to the nests of all wild birds whilst being built or in use, including by newly fledged birds that have not left the immediate vicinity of the nest. The bird nesting season is generally considered to be 1st March to 31st July for most species but can extend a number of weeks either side of this depending on the species concerned and weather conditions in that particular year. Natural England cite the nesting season as being 1st March to 31st August. Additionally, the barn owl (*Tyto alba*) is protected under Schedule 1 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981.

A consortium of organisations, via their report on "The population status of birds in the UK: Birds of Conservation Concern 5 (2021)" have listed species according to their conservation need based on red, amber, green basis, where red is of the highest conservation concern.

Non-native, invasive plant species

The species thought most likely to occur on this site was Himalayan Balsam (*Impatiens glandulifera*).

4. Survey

I visited the site during the day on **6th September 2023**.

I assessed the stream, access route to the rear of the property and adjacent habitat types from the perspective of being able to support protected and priority species and species of conservation concern. I also looked for non-native invasive species.

Incidentally I reassessed the exterior of the property with respect to use by bats and breeding birds, though the main bird nesting season is now over for 2023.

Having been involved with bat survey work for 35 years and consultancy work for 26 years, it is always my objective to carry-out my work in a manner consistent with accepted Good Practice Guidelines (3) and consistent with the code of practice of the CIEEM. I hold Natural England Class Licences CL21 (Annex B) and 18. Amongst other things these cover me to apply for Low Impact Licences for clients and undertake bat survey work. I also have a CL29 Barn Owl Class Licence. I have a wide range of additional ecological expertise. My credentials are expanded-upon in Appendix 1.

5. Findings

Protective sheeting has now been removed from the rear elevation of the house. There is open access available to the cellar:



Rear of house showing available access to cellar in red

The absence of the sheeting also means bats now have easy access to the rear fascia, and undisturbed access to the west-facing fascia of the adjoining house to the east.

Both bats and house sparrows could potentially access the west-facing wall-head of the adjoining property via the gap between the fascia and the wall:



At the rear of the property is a small, paved area where the extension will be built. A ramp has been constructed to allow access from the pasture beyond, as equipment such as a cement mixer will be brought on site that way:



Ramp as viewed from north and east respectively

At the time of the survey the stream was more of a ditch with shallow water in it:



Views west along the stream towards the ramp, and east, away from it respectively

There wasn't much water in the stream in April 2022 either:



Stream as viewed from the ramp in April 2022

The stream banks are occupied by rank grasses and herbaceous plants, including the non-native, invasive Himalayan Balsam:



Main areas of Himalayan balsam outlined in red

It was evident the client had recently cut some of the Himalayan balsam on the northern bank next to the ramp, so this area was undoubtedly more overgrown until recently.

Moving eastwards through the field accessed by the ramp, the characteristics of the stream remain similar and the banks are even more overgrown:



Currently vegetation obscures the stream almost entirely.

Table 1 shows summarises the findings of the Ecology survey.

Table 1. Summary of potential impacts on considered species

<u>Species</u>	<u>Comments</u>	<u>Likelihood of impact of work</u>
Bats	Roosting potential at front and back fascias and under roof slates. Also access under west and south-facing fascias of adjoining property to east, and south-facing fascia of adjoining property to the west	In the absence of re-roofing and works directly affecting fascias, possible disturbance only.
Great crested newt	Possible habitat available in association with the stream and banks. Small pond about 350m away and two more about 480m away.	Minimal – no physical impact on stream expected. No potential hibernation sites at risk.
Breeding birds - house	Possible nesting house sparrows at neighbouring eaves to west. Potential at west-facing eaves of property to the east.	In 2022 appeared far enough removed to be able to continue nesting if work done in the nesting season.
Breeding birds – vegetation on banks of stream	Possible nesting in rank grass and herbage.	Probably minimal as no physical impact on stream expected.
Breeding birds – grassland	The field is grazed and the risk of use for nesting by species such as the lapwing and sky lark is relatively low.	Even assuming ground nesting species use the field, the access route leaves most of the field undisturbed. Any disturbance is likely to be very limited and of negligible significance.
Water vole	Possible habitat available in association with the stream and banks, even though stream is more of a ditch with water in it. Vegetation on banks tall and overgrown. No evidence of holes or grazing lawns.	Minimal as no physical impact on stream expected.
Otter	Unlikely to be a regular haunt as far removed from larger water courses/bodies – nearest over 1km away.	Minimal as no physical impact on stream expected.

Hedgehog	Possible habitat available in association with the stream banks.	Minimal as no physical impact on stream expected.
Brown hare	Possible habitat in field to rear of property.	Minimal, even though access to the rear of the property will be provided across the field.
Badger	Possible, faint badger path seen adjacent to property on either side of bank, leading to field, but could have been made by fox or even domestic cat.	Minimal as small scale works will be taking place during the day only and not involve the apparent path or immediate vicinity.
Other reptiles and amphibians	Possible habitat available for some species in association with the stream and banks.	Minimal as no physical impact on stream expected.
Himalayan balsam	Invasive along stream banks.	Nil unless seeds transferred via footwear/tyres across field and to other sites.
Other non-native, invasive plant species	Possible small patch of Japanese knotweed 20m or more along the northern stream bank, beyond both the neighbouring property and the hard standing next to it.	Not noticed at the time but possibly captured in photographic evidence:  Won't be affected by development and sufficiently far removed to not present an imminent threat.

6. Conclusions/Discussion

Appendix 2 gives an outline of the criteria used in assessing the level of risk of use by bats.

Given the small-scale nature of this project it seems unlikely that there will be any significant impact on any species using the stream or its banks. The likelihood of great crested newts being able to hibernate on this site was considered to be negligible.

There is unlikely to be a risk of disturbing ground-nesting birds in the field but, should the work start during the bird nesting season, the relevant area should be checked by an ecologist to confirm the absence of nesting birds.

I am told the roof and fascias of the property will not be impacted by the work. As the new build involves only a single-storey rear extension and porch at the front, assuming fascias are not affected - even by remedial works to the front wall - the only risk will be of disturbance; though a single-storey extension could put any bats emerging from the west-facing fascia of the adjoining property at greater risk of predation by any neighbourhood cats.

South and west-facing fascias have a degree of risk of use by a maternity colony of pipistrelles and building works, especially when power tools are used for any length of time, could cause enough disturbance to impact bats at a very vulnerable stage in their life cycle.

Similarly, if access to the cellar is closed-off when a bat or bats has ventured in there to hibernate in winter, the bat/s will be trapped inside the building. The likelihood of hibernation taking place is relatively small, but bats can be hard to discover even by experienced surveyors.

There has been no evidence of nesting by birds in association with the adjoining property to the east, but the possibility of it happening in the future remains.

7. Recommendations

These recommendations should be read in conjunction with the conclusions above.

As there has been no bat activity survey work here, I recommend not planning to start construction, or suddenly start intensive use of power tools during the main bat maternity colony season of May to August inclusive.

If this is unavoidable there needs to be bat activity survey immediately before works start (within 24-48 hours) to double-check no maternity colony is present.

If either fascia needs to be removed, or works to the roof become unavoidable, the bat consultant must be contacted for advice.

If possible, completely seal the access to the cellar before November to minimise the risk of incarcerating a bat. If the access is to be sealed between November and March

inclusive, the bat consultant needs to check as far as possible on the absence of bats in the cellar.

If the construction begins during the bird nesting season (April to August inclusive) the Ecologist needs to check no birds are nesting close enough that the nesting process may be impacted.

Ensure contractors understand that if at any time bats are found to be roosting or are suspected of roosting, or birds are suspected of nesting, at this property or either adjoining properties, work **must** stop **immediately** and advice be sought from the Ecologist. With respect to bats they have a legal obligation to do this. As far as practicable the feature that was sheltering the bat/s should be replaced. Further advice **must** be sought from the bat consultant, even if the bat has flown off.

Attempts to prevent/limit the invasion by Himalayan balsam should continue by pulling or repeated cutting before it seeds each year, avoiding the use of herbicides.

Currently Japanese knotweed is not an imminent threat to this site.

8. References

1. Eaton, M. A. et al. (2015). Birds of Conservation Concern 5: the status of all regularly occurring birds in the UK, Channel Islands and Isle of Man. British Birds 114: 723-747.
2. Department for Communities and Local Government (2012). National Planning Policy Framework.
3. Ed. by Collins, J. (2016). Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines - Third Edition. Bat Conservation Trust.

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Appendix 1 - Angela Graham's Experience.

- I hold Natural England Class Licences CL21 (Annex B) - Registered Consultant 163 - and CL18 (CL18 (2015 11871 - CLS-CLS). CL21 covers me to apply for Low Impact Class Licences for clients - a more stream-lined system for quickly obtaining a licence from Natural England when a roost of a small number of common bat species will be impacted-upon by the development. CL18 covers me for survey/consultancy/scientific work. I have a supplementary licence to possess up to 10 live/dead bat specimens (20123429). I have a CL29 licence to disturb barn owls.
- I'm a member of The Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management.
- I undertake my work in accordance with the principles outlined in the Bat Conservation Trust's "Good Practice Guidelines".
- I have been involved in bat conservation for over 30 years, initially as a member of the South Lancashire Bat Group from its inception in 1987 and as a volunteer with the Nature Conservancy Council (NCC) - first licenced in 1989. Later, and for many years, I was Co-ordinator/Chair and Trainer for the South Lancashire Bat Group. I trained the people who currently run the group, one of whom has been a Trustee for the Bat Conservation Trust. I was a founder member of the Greater Manchester Bat Group in 2002 and ran the group for 4 years.
- Over the last 27 years I have done increasing numbers of bat surveys on a consultancy basis, firstly part-time then full time from December 2003.
- My experience in applying-for European Protected Species Licences with respect to bats spans over 20 years.
- From 2003 to 2008 I represented the bat groups of the north-west region at national bat worker meetings, hosted by the Bat Conservation Trust.

Other experience includes:

- Attending bat-worker conferences every year since 1988 (mainly England, some in Wales) plus additional symposia on specific topics such as mitigation and woodland bats.
- Helping with winter surveys of underground hibernation sites in Clwyd and north Lancashire.
- Participating in "Bat Detector Workshops" during the 1990s in different areas of the country, concerned with locating bat roosts and feeding sites/commuting routes.
- Sitting on local council "Wildlife Advisory Groups" (WAGs) in the Greater Manchester area from the early 1990s until around 2005.
- Helping local authorities and the Greater Manchester Ecology Unit formulate their Biodiversity Action Plans for bats.
- Administering the bat casework for English Nature (now Natural England) in the South Lancashire and Greater Manchester areas over 1998-2000.
- Assisting with research involving mist netting, harp trapping and radio-tracking.
- Continuing to attend courses run by recognised experts to ensure I stay up-to date both with respect to bat survey-work and conservation, and issues such as health and safety.
- Re-passing the Construction Site (CITB) Operatives test in June 2017.
- Contributing to the Bat Conservation Trust's survey standards guidelines.

Other ecological experience includes:

- Bird watching for fun since 1982 with a general interest in wildlife, ecology and conservation for a similar period.
- Attending short courses and field training with respect to grasses, flowering plants, British mammals including water voles, reptiles and amphibians, non-native invasive plant species, Extended Phase 1 Habitat Surveying, National Vegetation Classification, Environmental Impact Assessment and use of GIS.
- Taking part in British Trust for Ornithology breeding bird surveys annually.
- A year-long sandwich placement assisting with badger research, including radio-tracking.
- Short periods of voluntary work with the Lancashire Wildlife Trust and Royal Society for Protection of Birds.