

Preliminary Bat Roost Assessment

Land Adjacent to 88 Watling Street, Affetside

Bury, BL8 3QW

Prepared for

Mr & Mrs McKenzie

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Version 01

Report prepared by Miranda Cowan Ecology Ltd. (MCIEEM & Tech cert ArborA)

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1. Introduction

1.1. Background

Miranda Cowan Ecology Ltd. was instructed by Mr and Mrs McKenzie in December 2021 to undertake a Preliminary Bat Roost Assessment (PRA) of their residential property located at 88 Watling Street, Affetside, Bury, Greater Manchester, BL8 3QW.

Mr and Mrs McKenzie propose to commission the construction of a new dwelling, to be adjoined on the north facing aspect of No. 88 Watling Street, see **Figure 1.1**. The new dwelling will sit at a lower elevation than the existing property and there will be no requirement to undertake modifications of the roof structure. The new dwelling shall comprise of three bedrooms, a garden and provision for front parking.

Greater Manchester Ecology Unit (GMEU) have requested a bat assessment due to potential impacts arising from the development upon any roosting bats within the property. A PRA represents a first stage survey to determine the presence of any Potential Roost Features (PRF) that could be used by winter hibernating / summer roosting bats. Where PRF are confirmed to be suitable for roosting bats, additional bat surveys are required, and any necessary mitigation will need to be approved by Natural England (NE) before a development can commence.

The PRA was undertaken on the 22nd of December 2021 by Miranda Cowan Ecology Ltd, BSc (Hons), PGCert FdSc, MCIEEM (Bat Class licence WML – CL17-2021-52426) and Sarah Taylor (Level 2-CL18 licence holder).

1.2. Survey Aims

The aims of the PRA were to:

- Determine the potential of the property for roosting bats, by identifying and describing PRF and any access / egress points into the building.
- According to standard assessment criteria the property with PRF were graded as Negligible, Low, Medium or High.
- Where necessary, recommend further surveys, mitigation measures (including avoidance of ecological impact), compensation and biodiversity enhancement, if required.

1.3. Legislative Context

All bats are protected in the UK under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended) and Schedule 5 of the Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981 (as amended). In summary, in the UK, it is an offence to:

- Deliberately capture, injure or kill a bat.
- Deliberately disturb a bat in a way that would affect its ability to survive, breed or rear young, hibernate or migrate or significantly affect the local distribution or abundance of the species.
- Damage or destroy a roost (this is an absolute offence).
- Intentionally or recklessly disturb a bat at a roost.
- Intentionally or recklessly obstruct access to a roost.

The legislation also applies to sites that are not currently occupied, as bats can return to roosts year after year.

Some UK bats species are also included in the list of habitats and species, which are of Principle Importance for the conservation of biodiversity in England as required under Section 41 (S41) of the Natural Environmental and Rural Communities (NERC) Act. The S41 list is used to guide decision-makers, including local planning authorities, in implementing their duty under Section 40 of the Act, to have regards to the conservation of biodiversity in England, when carrying out their normal functions.

Natural England is the Government body responsible for nature conservation in England. Local planning authorities must consult them before granting planning permission for any work that would be likely to result in harm to bats or their habitat. Natural England consults with the BCT to provide advice.

“Development” licences for European Protected Species (EPS) are issued by Natural England for any actions that may compromise the protection of bats, under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended).

The architectural drawings for Hill Top Cottage include the following:

- Proposed Ground Floor Plan (Scale 1:50):** Shows a layout with a Lounge (2000), Dining Area (3050), Kitchen (4100), and Kitchen Area (4100). It also includes a WC, a staircase, and a car parking space (2700 x 5000).
- Proposed First Floor Plan (Scale 1:50):** Shows a layout with three Bedrooms (3700, 3200, 3700), a Bathroom, and a Landing.
- Proposed Front Elevation (Scale 1:100):** A two-story elevation showing a central entrance and windows.
- Proposed Side Elevation (Scale 1:100):** A side elevation showing the roofline and a proposed ground floor level to be raised to match the neighboring property.
- Proposed Rear Elevation (Scale 1:100):** A rear elevation showing a proposed external finish to be raised to match the neighboring property and a proposed new gPVc window to match the neighboring property.
- Proposed Side Elevation (Scale 1:100):** A side elevation showing the roofline and a proposed single dwelling.
- Proposed Site Plan (Scale 1:500):** A site plan showing the location of Hill Top Cottage relative to Lynton, Farm Cottage, and Hill Top Cottage.

2. Methods

2.1. Desk Study

Defra's Multi-Agency Geographic Information for the Countryside (MAGIC) interactive map was used to identify any Special Areas of Conservation (SAC) or Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) within 10 km of the property of which were relevant to bats. MAGIC was also used to determine the presence of any bat European Protected species licencing within 2 km of the property.

Aerial imagery was assessed to establish the presence of surrounding semi-natural habitat. Where PRF are found within a building, the potential for the PRF to be used is often enhanced where there is surrounding habitat for bats to commute and forage along.

2.2. Preliminary Bat Roost Assessment (PRA)

The PRA followed methodologies detailed in *the* Bat Conservation Trust guidelines (Collins, 2016). This involved an inspection of the external and internal structure (where accessible) of the property. External features were assessed using close-focusing binoculars and a high-powered torch to identify PRF, such as gaps under tiles / corrugated roofing sheets, eaves, gaps above doors and between the brickwork. A ladder was also used to gain close inspection of tiles along the lower elevation of the roof, for where it joined the side wall of the property to include the guttering and cladding at the rear and front aspects of the property.

An internal inspection of the loft void was not possible as there is no loft hatch within the property. The internal design of the upstairs ceiling is aligned to the shape of the loft, which indicates a small loft space.

Any potential entry / exit points were noted on a plan and described. In addition, any direct evidence of bats, such as scratch marks, oil stains, droppings and feeding remains were also recorded.

The site was assigned a level of roost suitability in accordance with the Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines (Collins, 2016), see **Table 2.1**.

Table 2.1: Bat roost suitability and descriptions (PRF Potential Roost Features)

Bat Roost Suitability	Description of Features
Confirmed presence	Bat presence confirmed as part of the Preliminary Bat Roost Assessment.
High	Buildings with many PRF and suitable for use by a larger number of bats including maternity colonies.
Moderate	Buildings with a smaller number PRF, but still supporting features that could be attractive to bats and potentially support maternity colonies.
Low	Buildings with limited PRF but which could be used on a sporadic or occasional basis by a low number of bats, but which are unsuitable for maternity roosts.
Negligible	Buildings which appear unsuitable for roosting bats due to a clear lack of roosting spaces such as voids and/or absence of suitable access points.

3. Results

3.1. Data Search

There are no European Protected Species Licence for bats within 2km of the property. In addition, there are no SAC or SSSI designations within 10 km of the property, where bats are a qualifying feature.

Review of aerial imagery shows the proposed property to be located in a small rural village, surrounded by grazed pasture bounded by stone walls and no areas of woodland, hedgerows or trees linked between the property and wider landscape. Whilst there are a small number of trees within the immediate vicinity of the property, the overall value of surrounding functional habitat is assessed as poor for bats.

3.2. Preliminary Bat Roost Assessment

The property of 88 Watling Street is an end terrace with an apex roof. The north facing gable end is painted black, with the roof tiles sitting flush to the walls and held down by capping stones. All potential gaps beneath the tiles are otherwise neatly cemented, with no PRF (no access points) on the north facing aspect of the property.

The property has slate tiles which are mostly flush, with a single gap beneath a tile at the front of the property, close to the overhang. This tile was inspected using ladders and torchlight, where it was visible that the gap did not extend inwards. Wooden cladding at the rear and front of the property is mostly well-sealed with some gaps between the cladding and wall, which were consistently clogged with accumulations of cobwebs and not suitable as a PRF.

A small porch at the front of the property had a gap between the wooden cladding and at the edge of the roof tiles. Close inspection revealed the gaps to extended inwards by 1-2 inches and met with further wooded cladding attached to the brick work.

For all areas inspected, there was no evidence of bat droppings stuck to stonework, wooden cladding or windows.

Following inspection of the features identified during the survey, the property is assessed as having negligible value for roosting bats.

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3.3. Photographic Plates

Plate 1: Front view of property & gable end



Plate 2: Sealed tiles on gable end.



Plate 3: Gaps inspected at front of property



4. Conclusion and Recommendations

The PRA has confirmed 88 Watling Street to be of Negligible value for bats. There were a small number of PRF that could be inspected with use of a ladder and torch light. These features were superficial and in the case of wooden cladding, any gaps were otherwise clogged with cobwebs. The gable end did not have any PRF.

Based on the concluding assessment of Negligible roost potential for bats, the proposal does not present any ecological constraints and no further surveys for bats are required.

Survey information presented in this report is valid for two seasons. Where no works have been completed within this time frame, a further PRA maybe required.

5. References

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