



Saunderson Road - Bat Roost Report

1. Introduction

1.1 Introduction

Living Ecosystems was commissioned by Nicol Thomas Ltd Architects in January 2013 to assess a former mortuary building at Stottercliffe cemetery in Penistone for its potential as a bat roosting site.

1.2 Site Description

The building is located off the drive leading to Stottercliffe cemetery, Off Thurlstone road in Penistone, Yorkshire, at grid reference is SE 24099 0355. The cemetery drive is lined with mature trees forming a corridor. The building is approximately early 20th century in date with solid brick walls and a slate roof. The building was a former mortuary, although it has apparently been undisturbed and abandoned for the past 30 years. It is approximately 25m². The building is in close proximity to good bat foraging habitat, namely mature trees and woodland to the south and southwest. There is grassland to the east and west.

Map 1: Showing location of site: The site is located at Saunderson Road Penistone Sheffield S36 9DU, lat/long 424063, 403559.



1.1 Proposed works

The current planning application is for the provision of 22 social housing units on behalf of Yorkshire Housing Ltd.



1.2 Aims of Study

An external and internal inspection of the building was carried out to determine evidence of roosting and provide recommendations.

2. Methodology

2.1 Desk Study

An ecological data search was carried out to find existing records of protected species, sites and habitats in the vicinity of the site using Magic Map, Nature on a Map and the NBN Gateway. This produced the following records of protected species and habitats in a 2.5 km radius of the site.

No nationally designated sites [eg SSSI, NNR, SPA, SAC etc] were identified. Nor are any statutory Local Nature Reserves listed as existing within 2.5 km of the site.

Two relevant local records for protected species were found. There is a record of great crested newts at Royd Moor Reservoir 2.220 metres to the north-west of the Saunderson Road site; and there is also a single record of an unidentified bat 490 metres to the east of the Saunderson Road site [See aerial photograph below].



2.2 Field Study

The surveyors were Richard Parkinson an Ecological Consultant who has 25 years of relevant experience and Candice Howe, who has three years of specialist bat work experience and is a Natural England Roost Visitor Trainee. The survey was undertaken on 15th January 2013 at 12:00pm until 13:00pm. The temperature was 0-1°C and the weather was cold with snow on the ground although not actively snowing. There was partial cloud cover and slight breeze.

The inspection was carried out in accordance with BCT (2007) Good Practice Guidelines and JNCC Bat workers manual (Mitchell-Jones and McLeish, 2004). Due to the time of year a preliminary building inspection was carried out only. The site is not a known roost and therefore initially a licensed bat worker was not required. Upon the discovery of any roost evidence the survey was to be abandoned immediately and a licensed bat worker recommended to ensure there was no unlawful disturbance.

There was limited access to the external walls of the building and only the southeast aspect was inspected. Internal inspection of the building was carried out, however the roof void was separate from the rooms with only a small hole visualising the roof void through the ceiling. The roof void itself was partitioned, with a larger space directly above ceiling and a smaller apex roof void which could not be seen in full (please see pictures).

3. Results

3.1 Desk Study

There was a single local relevant record of an unidentified bat 490 metres to the east of the Saunderson Road site [See aerial photograph above in section 2.1].

3.2 Field Survey

The surrounding habitat was of medium quality which could be used by bats for foraging and commuting. This consisted of grassland, and a corridor of mature trees running alongside the building. To the south and south west is Stottercliffe wood which is good bat foraging habitat. The tree-line and river/stream to the north of the site provides connectivity to the wider landscape.

The building itself is an approximately early 20th century, solid brick structure with a slate roof and some roof insulation was noted through holes in the ceiling. There were some crevices and potential access points noted in the south east facing brickwork just below the roof (See photographs). Due to the snow covering the roof it was unknown whether there were sufficient gaps in the slate roof. There is known to be a low level of human disturbance as the building had been boarded

up and reportedly not used for the past 30 years. Due to these features there is a high likelihood that bats would be present at some point during their annual cycle.

There was no evidence of bat presence or roosts seen during the inspection, ie droppings, carcasses, urine staining, etc. The larger roof void could be seen through a hole in the ceiling however the smaller roof void was not fully visible and therefore could not be inspected.

4. Assessment

4.1 Constraints on study information

The snow on the roof obscured visibility and we were unable to see any gaps or cracks in the roof slates which might indicate access points. The time of year the survey was undertaken was only suitable for a building inspection and summer roosts are more easily found during inspections in the period of May to August.

The main constraint however was that there was limited safe access to the roof void. As a result of this the roof void could not be adequately inspected. Additional surveys would be needed to definitively identify the presence of a bats/bat roost. Without more information regarding the presence/absence of bats, including the species and numbers present, it is impossible to make an informed assessment of any impacts resulting from the proposals.



View of the interior of the loft



View from the loft into the roof Void which could not be properly inspected

4.2 Legislation and policy Guidance

All bat species and their roosts (defined as any structure or place used for shelter or protection) are protected by the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 and Conservation (Natural Habitat, &c) Regulations 2010.

5. Recommendations

5.1 Further Survey

The very limited safe access to the roof void in the apex of the roof, meant that the void could not be adequately inspected. Without more information regarding the presence/absence of bats, including the

species and numbers present, it is impossible to make an informed assessment of any impacts resulting from the proposals. Additional surveys would therefore be required to definitively identify the presence of a bats/bat roost. The building itself has features which indicate a high likelihood that bats may be present and the surrounding habitat is of good quality and therefore of value to bats. As the site is relatively small (less than 1 ha) BCT guidelines recommended one transect survey on 3 visits during March to September, the optimum period being June to August. One of the surveys should consist of an emergence and re-entry survey within a 24 hour period. An automated survey is recommended in one location for 3 consecutive nights on 3 occasions during March to September.

Although definitive evidence for the presence or absence of bats can only be ascertained by carrying out the surveys above there is a high probability that bats may be present. Assuming this to be the case some general deductions can be made about the probable impacts of the proposed housing scheme on bats. The structure with roost potential is to remain as it is *in situ* so no bat roost will be lost. However the proposed housing units will back onto the structure. It may be advisable to shield this structure from excess light to and other disturbance. Few other significant impacts are likely providing possible commuting routes along the edge of Stottercliffe Woods are maintained. Although less than 1 ha of possible foraging habitat will be lost much better and larger areas of foraging habitat exist immediately to the south and west in Stottercliffe Wood. In summary providing the structure with bat potential is protected from possible disturbance and light; and commuting routes along the northern edge of Stottercliffe woods remain accessible to bats then the impact of the development should not be significant. As it is not possible to carry out the necessary surveys until later in the year I request that these surveys and any necessary mitigation measures resulting from them be conditioned in this instance [Please see below - Justification for 'exceptional circumstances' in relation to the required EPS Bat surveys for The Saunderson Road site in Penistone].



Structure with bat potential [above] at the Saunderson Road site.



A very similar Structure [above] in woodland near Wigan contained a colony of brown long eared bats when surveyed in 2010.

Justification for 'exceptional circumstances' in relation to the required EPS Bat surveys for The Saunderson Road site in Penistone.

According to official Natural England guidelines [*Bat Mitigation guidelines* - English Nature Peterborough 2004] bat activity and emergence surveys are best carried out during June to August inclusive though May and September can be possible during appropriate weather in certain circumstances.

The short time envelope during which valid great crested newt and bat activity & emergence surveys can be carried out during any given year places an inevitable constraint on planning applications which are compiled outside this time envelope, as in the current case. In these circumstances only two options are available.

1. To hold the application in abeyance until a survey has been carried out.
2. To incorporate the survey and any necessary mitigation measures as a 'condition' of the 'planning consent'.

In this case I would favour option 2 as a reasonable approach as holding the application in abeyance could threaten the viability of the scheme entirely. I respectfully request that the necessary surveys and any resulting mitigation measures be adopted as a 'condition' of the 'Planning Consent' in this instance. The conditions should require a bat emergence survey of the standing building on the site and two bat activity surveys during optimal conditions in 2013 [June and July being the best times in this instance].

Richard Parkinson

10th January 2013

Appendix 1: Bat Roost Report Form

Address (Locality)	Building on Stottercliffe cemetery site, off Thurlston road, Penistone
Grid Reference	SE 24099 03551
Roost Type	Building (previously mortuary but unused for past 30 years)
Age	Pre 20 th Century
Wall Construction	Solid brick , no cladding or hanging tiles.
Roof Covering	Slate with loft insulation present.
Position of bat access points	Unknown
Bat Roosting site(s)	Unknown
Number if bats at date and time	None noted
Species	n/a
Droppings	None found
Other Information	Not a known bat roost site
Other Visits	Recommend further surveys

Description of problem	Proposal for residential housing to the south west of the building
Is there any threat to roost	Unknown at present
Attitude of owners	n/a
Recommendations for action by SNCO	Further surveys needed initially
Sketch	See photographs

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Appendix 2 – Photographs – Saunderson Road Bat Survey



